Problem Definition and AI

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(Updated December 4, 2020)
Facial Recognition Company Lied to School District About its Racist Tech

Opinion | THE PRIVACY PROJECT

We’re Banning Facial Recognition. We’re Missing the Point.

The whole point of modern surveillance is to treat people differently, and facial recognition technologies are only a small part of that.

Congress agrees big tech creepy, can’t agree how

When AI Sees a Man, It Thinks 'Official.' A Woman? 'Smile'

A new paper renews concerns about bias in image recognition services offered by Google, Microsoft, and Amazon.

Wrongfully Accused by an Algorithm

In what may be the first known case of its kind, a faulty facial recognition match led to a Michigan man’s arrest — he did not commit.

A start-up is using photos to ID you. Big tech can stop it from happening again.
REALITÄT ist nur eine FRAGE der Wahrnehmung!

Julia Petruschke

(Berlin, near the WZB, September 2019)
Problem definition → policy frames

Problem definition: “policy problems are not a priori givens but rather are matters of definition; what is at issue in the agenda-building process is not just which problems will be considered but how those problems will be defined” (Elder and Cobb, 1984, 115)

Policy frames: “the presentation or discussion of an issue from a particular viewpoint to the exclusion of alternate viewpoints” (Baumgartner et al., 2008, 106) (Gilardi et al., 2020)
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(Gilardi et al., 2020)
Problem Definition in the Digital Democracy (PRODIGI, 2021–2025)
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1. How are problems framed as politically relevant in a context increasingly dominated by digital technology?
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2. How can problem definition be measured using computational social science approaches?
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2. How can problem definition be measured using computational social science approaches?

3. How do political actors frame policy responses to digital technology's implications for democracy (e.g., AI), and why?
1. How are problems framed as politically relevant in a context increasingly dominated by digital technology?
2. How can problem definition be measured using computational social science approaches?
3. How do political actors frame policy responses to digital technology’s implications for democracy (e.g., AI), and why?
4. What impact do different policy frames have on opinions regarding policy responses to digital technology’s implications for democracy?
Expectations

1. Policy frames used by non-party actors on social media predict those present on the political agenda.
2. Policy frames combining themes that are seldom discussed together are more likely to spread from non-party actors to the political agenda.
3. Policy frames that spread from social media to the political agenda have a stronger effect on opinions than other frames do.
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Why it matters: substance
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- Understand policy responses to digital technology’s implications for democracy
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- Understand policy responses to digital technology’s implications for democracy
- Highly salient problem, acute need for expertise
Literature on digital technology and politics doesn't consider problem definition. Agenda setting and problem definition literatures don't consider the role of digital technology.
Why it matters: theory

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- Agenda setting and problem definition literatures don’t consider the role of digital technology
Why it matters: methods
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- Elusive problem: the empirical measurement of policy frames with observational data
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Potentially useful for many different questions
References

