SEMINAR
Algorithmic Systems, Societal Values and Inequality

In recent years, a stream of literature discussing algorithmic systems and automated decision-making has attended to ways that data practices increasingly govern social life and commerce, and inscribe notions of health, gender, class, and race. Important questions include whether and how algorithms strengthen existing inequalities or even produce new forms of inequality, and whether they might lead to an erosion of citizens' trust as well as the undermining of democratic processes (e.g. Benjamin 2019; Eubanks 2018; Halford and Savage 2010; Mohamed et al 2020; Noble 2018; O'Neil, C. 2016; Zajko 2021; Zuboff 2018).

The purpose of this seminar is to present empirical cases of algorithmic systems and, on this basis, to discuss what they suggest in terms of societal values and tensions. The papers will tease out the logics of algorithmic systems, and their societal implications, suggest interventions, and alternative ways forward.

Speakers:

Galit Wellner, Faculty of Humanities, Tel Aviv University

Kenneth Kristensen, PhD fellow at the Department of Political Science, University of Southern Denmark

Minna Ruckenstein, Consumer Society Research Centre, University of Helsinki

Time
November 3rd - 12.00-15.00
From 12-12.30 registration and lunch

Location The seminar will take place at Odense Adelige Jomfrukloster, Albani Torv 6, DK-5000 Odense C- about 15 minutes walk from the train station.

How AI became Gender-biased
Dr. Galit Wellner, Tel Aviv University

AI algorithms are frequently considered as impartial and objective. After all, they do not have emotions or preferences. In fact, however, these algorithms have politics and are frequently gender biased. How do they become biased? The usual suspect is the dataset with which the algorithm was trained. But in many cases the bias is rooted in the developers' underlying assumptions that are inscribed in the operational logic. And sometimes, it develops with certain usage modes due to the feedback loops that constantly updates the system. In my talk, I show how datasets, algorithms and usage modes can be gender biased, and how they form a gender-biased AI system. Identifying the causes for the bias is a major step in the effort to avoid the bias.

The Gladsaxe model – using algorithms to identify vulnerable children?
Kenneth Kristensen, Political Science, University of Southern Denmark

In 2017 the municipality of Gladsaxe formulated a project with the aim to early identify and assist vulnerable children in risk of violence, sexual abuse etc. The municipality already had analogue activities, but the new project intended to use data based algorithms for early identification of vulnerable children – the socalled Gladsaxe model. This new approach implied ethical considerations on whether to apply algorithms or not. With a *public value* (e.g. Mark Moore 1995) and top management perspective, Kenneth Kristensen has researched the development of the Gladsaxe model, the intra-organizational development, the management and pollical considerations and the public discussion leading to the closure of the project before it was fully developed and implemented.

Rescoping Automated Decision-Making (ADM): technologies through societal frameworks
Minna Ruckenstein, Consumer Society Research Centre, University of Helsinki

Automatically executed decision-making models are used to classify, rank and sort: for example, to rate creditworthiness, to determine eligibility for benefits, or to identify those at risk. The goal of this talk is to first localize automated decision-making processes, and then re-localize them within a processual framework that encompasses societal aims and arrangements, promoted through ADM systems.
 Separating between systems that are add-ons to existing infrastructures and those that promote new kinds of infrastructural arrangements is fundamental to understanding ADM in society. Thus, a broader definition of ADM suggests that it is not a stand-alone technology, but rather a framework that covers economic, political, legal, and organizational contexts of ADM systems. Within this framework, empirical cases from the health field offer the opportunity to move beyond either-or stances, and study ADM as a process that develops over time and needs ongoing stabilization of human and machinic forces. The strength of a processual approach lies in the ability to hold together different perspectives, and all at once. We can clarify diverging and partly contradictory notions of what ADM does, and to whom, and highlight the related tensions, struggles, and consequences

Organizers
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In collaboration with **Human Health**
https://www.sdu.dk/en/humanhealth
and the **Network for the Anthropology of Technology**.
https://projects.au.dk/antech/

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