



The Political Justification of Global Governance in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

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Abstract: *Although the concept of “AI governance” is frequently used in the debate, it is still rather undertheorized. Often it seems to refer to the mechanisms and structures needed to avoid “bad” outcomes and achieve “good” outcomes with regard to the ethical problems artificial intelligence is thought to actualize. In this article we argue that, although this outcome-focused view captures one important aspect of “good governance,” its emphasis on effects runs the risk of overlooking important procedural aspects of good AI governance. One of the most important properties of good AI governance is political legitimacy. Starting out from the assumptions that AI governance should be seen as global in scope and that political legitimacy requires at least a democratic minimum, this article has a twofold aim: to develop a theoretical framework for theorizing the political legitimacy of global AI governance, and to demonstrate how it can be used as a compass for critically assessing the legitimacy of actual instances of global AI governance. Elaborating on a distinction between “governance by AI” and “governance of AI” in relation to different kinds of authority and different kinds of decision-making leads us to the conclusions that much of the existing global AI governance lacks important properties necessary for political legitimacy, and that political legitimacy would be negatively impacted if we handed over certain forms of decision-making to artificial intelligence systems.*

Keywords: Political Justification, Global Governance, Age of Artificial Intelligence

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