

PS643: AI, DATA, AND POLICY

Class Notes - 06-08-2024

- **What is a State? What is a Policy? Why should you care?**

Max Weber defines a state as an entity that holds a monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory. According to Hegel, state is defined by the ideas/change in ideas that the society as a whole follows by rational will for its own betterment. Hegel viewed the state as a culmination of ethical life and as a realization of freedom. However, Marx presents the idea that the state is not a separate entity but a part of society that can use certain power over the other parts of society. He also emphasized that ideas don't evolve but the technologies evolve and that is how state changes.

The primary attribute of the state is **government**.

Laws are not easily altered. Laws are made by the people's representatives.

Executives make the laws concrete and it is done with rules and regulations.

Rules are drafted and not merely passed. **Regulations** are hard constraints on what should be done and what should not be done.

- **Political Economy: What is that?**

Political economy is a field that studies the relationships between individuals, societies, markets, and governments, focusing on how economic theories and policies affect political structures and social outcomes. It provides insights into the ways in which power, resources, and institutions shape economic policies and outcomes.

Power comes from resources, their distribution, and usage.

The way society works is connected to political economy.

The **value** of an object comes from the attribute that helps the exchange of it with something else and not from its innate use. **Eg.:** Water has less value than a diamond. But water is more useful than a diamond for human survival.

Commodity is something that can be exchanged in a mature market. **Eg.:** Painting is not a commodity but a car is!

- **Basic AI Governance: Need & concepts**

There are three categories of reasons that back the need of AI governance. They are:

1. Safety problem - Apprehensions of technologies that they can harm people.
Hence they have to be regulated to not harm people.
2. Alignment problem - AI tries to optimize values which are very different from human values.
3. AI Governance - Why are we letting AI deployments at places where they are not supposed to be deployed? This will altogether avoid safety and alignment problems.

- A socio-technical system is a piece of technology that depends a lot on society. In case of AI, it depends on society for its development(research & funding), data, and cheap energy.
- AI is a system with political economy impacting the overall political economy. At an everyday level AI impacts society and its economy.
- **Two types of critiques:**
 1. Transcendent critique: Look at the system from outside and critique it.
 2. Immanent critique: Use logic from operation of the system itself to critique it.
- To critique any system we need a framework. The five frameworks that are used to critique AI are: **Fairness, Accountability, Transparency, Ethics, and Human Values. (FATEH)**
- **Fairness:** An attempt to prevent societal biases (concerning gender, race, caste etc.).
- **Accountability:** Find out who is accountable for any tragedy that occurs because of the use of these technologies.
- **Transparency:** An attempt to make models(technologies) explainable.
- These three are instrumental frameworks. They do not consider the impact of the system/technology.
- **Ethics:** Coming up with rubrics to decide a piece of technology/software to be made or not.
- **Human Rights:** Human rights are pretty much standard across the globe. This is an attempt to avoid AI models that violate any of the human rights.
- **Is data a commodity?**
It is neither a rivalrous nor an excludable (theoretically) commodity.