Stream #32

The Future of Policy Analysis Using Artificial Intelligence

Conveners:

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AI and machine learning technologies are rapidly transforming policy analysis, offering new tools to analyse data, test theories, and generate insights across multiple fields. These technologies promise unprecedented speed in navigating complex systems and regulatory environments, automating processes that traditionally require extensive time and resources. From processing vast datasets to predicting policy impacts, AI applications are proliferating throughout policy domains.

This transformation raises fundamental questions around policy. Significant concerns exist regarding algorithmic bias, transparency, replicability, dual use, function creep, privacy, accountability, ethics, and the environmental costs of AI systems. As AI increasingly informs public policies, including welfare programmes, social services, and educational systems that directly affect people's lives, critical examination of these tools becomes essential. How is AI reshaping social policy analysis and social science knowledge production? What are we gaining, and what might we be losing?

This stream invites both applications and critical analyses of AI/ML in social policy research. We welcome diverse perspectives that examine how these technologies are being used across different domains, countries, and contexts. We seek to explore not only the potential and practical applications of various AI-based approaches, but also their limitations, ethical dilemmas, and risks to knowledge production and democratic policymaking.

We invite papers that:

- Apply machine learning and AI methods to social policy analysis across policy domains;

- Demonstrate emerging research practices using AI/ML tools in policy contexts;
- Critically examine the integration of AI into policy analysis, addressing questions of fairness, equity, accountability, transparency, and replicability;
- Assess methodological innovations, challenges, and lessons learned from AI applications in social policy;
- Explore ethical and environmental concerns, including the resource costs and sustainability of AI-based analyses.

We encourage contributions that bridge technical applications with critical social policy perspectives from across policy domains.