SIV851 Nov 14.

ML, data analytics ⟹ inequality

- Weapons of Math destruction by Cathy O'Neil
- Also, discussed in NYT

https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/14/opinion/academia-tech-algorithms.html

- And other similar concerns:

https://thewire.in/184238/collidoscope-social-science-21/
http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0263775816633195?journalCode=epda&

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- Often biased for profit and hence anti-poor
- Algorithm development dominated by private sector and corporates – more reasons for bias
- Limited role of academics – adds to the dangers
- There can be bias in both data and algorithm.
- Tend to be opaque. Only a few can understand and participate.
- Algorithmic decision making often closes door for grievance redressal.
- Feedback loops driven by predictive analytics often perpetrate injustice.
- Many examples.

Questions:

1) Does this mean we analytics? Can transparency and scrutiny mitigate the problem or is analytics necessarily and inevitably evil?
2) If scrutiny and transparency can make analytics safe, at least in the sphere of governance, what democratic, legal and technical measures are required?
3) 'Panopticon', 'big brother', 'mass surveillance', 'kafkaesque' ... are dangers of digitization in governance. Understood.

How to move forward? What are the specific consequences, risks and mitigations of these lazy generalizations? Are there enough reasons to abandon digital identity?

Final task: Please submit a report, latest by Nov 27, with your views, analysis and recommendation for the above. We will have a meeting on the 29th where you can present (5 mins) the salient points of your analysis and recommendation. We will finish with a follow up discussion.

You may find it helpful to refer to:

The digital person: technology and privacy in the information age — by Daniele J Solove

https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2899131