

2026 to 2053 - From Democratic Liberalism to Neurocratic

Determinism

The Evolution of Western Democracy in the AI Era

Abstract

This essay attempts to develop a factual case for a speculative position: that Western democratic liberalism could be in progress towards a proposed ideological shift towards what is termed herein as ‘Neurocratic Determinism’, within a window spanning 2026 to 2053. It follows an earlier analysis, ‘The Decline of Modern Western Liberal Democracy: Aligarchy & Neurocratic Determinism’, but narrows the question to a dated transition: what mechanisms could connect the democratic condition of 2026 to an ideological order in which prediction, personalisation, automated classification, and behavioural conditioning fundamentally materially shape the formation of political preferences? The argument does not claim that such an outcome is inevitable, that algorithmic systems (transformer based large language models) has already replaced democratic agency, or that algorithms uniformly manipulate citizens. Evidence herein instead proposes to illuminate a convergence of conditions: democratic backsliding and weak institutional trust; the concentration of computational and behavioural infrastructure; the growing use of generative AI systems in communication and administration; imperfect but consequential synthetic media; the expansion of automated profiling; and the measurable association between algorithmic surveillance and reduced perceived autonomy. These findings support a conditional pathway rather than a forecast. Neurocratic Determinism is defined as a proposed political condition in which citizens remain formally free while the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural environments through which preferences are formed become increasingly predicted, ranked, personalised, and adjusted by systems controlled by states and infrastructural firms. The essay distinguishes this speculative construct from established findings, identifies regulatory and democratic counter-pathways, and proposes future research capable of testing whether the Systemised Self and Hollow Demos are becoming empirically observable.

Keywords: *artificial intelligence, liberal democracy, algorithmic governance, political autonomy, behavioural prediction, Neurocratic Determinism, Systemised Self, Aligarchy, Hollow Demos, Hollow Absolute*

Contents

1. Introduction: A Dated Democratic Question
2. Scope, Method, and Evidentiary Discipline
3. What Democratic Liberalism Is Being Transformed?
4. Theoretical Differentiation: A Distinctive Vocabulary
5. The 2026 Baseline: Strain Without Collapse
6. The AI Era as a New Layer of Political Mediation
7. From Persuasion to Preference Architecture
8. Administrative Prediction, Surveillance, and the Governable Citizen
9. The Political Economy of the Aligarchy
10. Three Conditional Stages to 2053
11. Neurocratic Determinism and the Hollow Demos
12. Discussion, Hypotheses, and Future Work
13. Alternatives and Counterforces
14. Conclusion Glossary of Technical Terms References

1. Introduction: A Dated Democratic Question

The question addressed here is whether democratic politics can retain meaningful popular authorship when the processes through which citizens notice, interpret, evaluate, and communicate political possibilities are increasingly organised by predictive and adaptive algorithmic systems. For example, despite the appearance of a political system, could the political subject themselves be altered if the formation of preference becomes an incremental and progressive technical process.

The earlier essay by the authors herein, ‘The Decline of Modern Western Liberal Democracy: Aligarchy & Neurocratic Determinism’: argued that Western liberal democracy may decline toward a Hollow Demos governed within a wider Hollow Absolute (Galu & Kairos, 2026). This follow up essay asks whether the period from 2026 to 2053 could conceivably mark a movement from institutional liberal democracy toward the proposed political ideology of Neurocratic Determinism: that is, the decline of democratic liberalism into neurocratic determinism. The proposed endpoint is not proposed as a conventional form of dictatorship, it is proposed as a hybrid order in which political choice remains visible and formally protected while the infrastructures of attention, identity, eligibility, recommendation, and prediction increasingly determine the conditions within which choice is experienced.

The word ‘determinism’ requires some care, Neurocratic Determinism does not mean that neuroscience has established that free will is an illusion, nor that every thought can be decoded from neural signals. ‘Neurocratic’ identifies the location of political power, perception: the cognitive, affective, and behavioural interiority of persons as mediated by technical systems. ‘Determinism’ identifies an operational tendency: systems can increasingly arrange probabilities, prompts, incentives, classifications, and feedback loops before a citizen’s unmediated preference appears.

The thesis herein is conditional of course, current evidence does not prove a future ideology, but it perhaps establishes mechanisms that could support one if they become interoperable, concentrated, and weakly contestable: behavioural extraction, algorithmic ranking, targeted communication, automated surveillance, biometric classification, AI-assisted administration, and decision delegation. The case proposed herein for 2053 rests on convergence, not a single technology.

2. Scope, Method, and Evidentiary Discipline

The starting point is 2026, but the empirical baseline necessarily draws on research published before that date. The endpoint, 2053, is a scenario horizon rather than an observed state. This distinction structures the method. Claims about current democratic conditions, technology use, or measured psychological effects are suggested as empirical. Claims about how those conditions may combine by 2053 are treated as speculative extrapolations. Claims about the Systemised Self, Hollow Demos, Aligarchy, and Hollow Absolute are theoretical interpretations within the project's framework.

The essay uses a mechanism based approach, instead of asking whether AI causes democratic decline in general, it asks which links in a possible chain are already observable. The relevant chain is: institutional dissatisfaction can increase acceptance of technical substitutes; data extraction can make persons increasingly legible; models can classify and rank them; personalised environments can shape exposure and incentives; automated administration can make classifications consequential; concentrated infrastructure can reduce public control; and repeated dependence can weaken confidence in unaided judgment. No individual link establishes Neurocratic Determinism. Together, if they become mutually reinforcing, they provide a plausible pathway.

The evidence is also deliberately mixed, comparative democracy datasets measure autocratisation and rights; surveys measure trust and satisfaction; field experiments test advertising and feed effects; regulatory documents identify legal counterweights; technical and labour reports indicate the scale of AI adoption and exposure. Each source has limits: a survey does not establish causation, an experiment may not generalise to an election, a regulator's warning is not a measured future outcome, and an investment statistic is not the same as political control.

The analysis extends the provisional Algorithmic Alienation Index (AAI) from the earlier project: $AAI = [(F + I + D + E) / 4] \times (1 - R)$. Freedom loss, identity ambiguity, decision erosion, emotional alienation, and resistance are not presented as clinical measurements. They are dimensions for future research into whether system-mediated environments are experienced as reducing agency. The AAI is therefore a heuristic for studying the conditions of the Systemised Self, not proof that a person has become ideologically determined.

3. What Democratic Liberalism Is Being Transformed?

Democratic liberalism combines popular authorisation with limits on power. Democracy requires meaningful participation, contestation, political equality, and the possibility of replacing rulers. Liberalism adds rights, privacy, free expression, association, constitutional restraint, independent courts, and protections for minorities. Dahl's (1971) account of polyarchy is useful because it treats modern democracy as participation and public contestation rather than as a literal assembly of all citizens. Habermas (1989) adds the importance of a public sphere in which citizens can exchange reasons and recognise one another as participants in a common political world.

This arrangement has always been mediated. Parties represent interests; newspapers select events; bureaucracies classify cases; experts translate complexity; and elections compress diverse preferences into institutional decisions. The relevant question is not whether mediation exists but whether it remains visible, plural, contestable, and answerable to citizens. A constitutional state may preserve formal choice while citizens lose control over the infrastructures that make some choices salient and others practically unavailable.

Earlier theorists describe aspects of this vulnerability. Weber (1978) shows how technical administration can distance power from ordinary judgment; Tocqueville (1835/1840/2000) warns that democracy can coexist with dependence; and Mair (2013), Crouch (2004), and Brown (2015) describe institutional, political, and economic forms of democratic hollowing.

AI does not create these tensions from nothing. It adds a new layer of mediation. The system can observe behaviour continuously, infer latent preferences, generate persuasive content, rank possible experiences, and alter its outputs in response to each reaction. The citizen is no longer merely represented by a party or classified by a state office. The citizen becomes a live model inside an adaptive environment.

4. Theoretical Differentiation: A Distinctive Vocabulary

The proposed vocabulary overlaps with established theories but is not interchangeable with them. Danaher's (2016) algocracy names governance by algorithmic decision systems and highlights the problems of opacity, resistance, and accommodation. Aligarchy shifts the analytical focus from the decision mechanism to the ownership and control of the infrastructure: data reservoirs, cloud systems, compute, interfaces, models, and technical

standards. An algorithm can be studied as an algocratic instrument: Aligarchy makes that political economy explicit.

Crouch's (2004) post-democracy describes a condition in which elections and formal participation persist while political initiative becomes concentrated among professional elites and corporate interests. The Hollow Demos is narrower and more psychologically mediated. It names a population that remains electorally active but is increasingly represented as data, sentiment, behavioural profiles, and predicted preferences. Post-democracy describes the institutional hollowing of popular rule; Hollow Demos describes the weakened collective subject that those institutions claim to represent.

Brown's (2015) analysis of neoliberal rationality explains how market calculation can reorganise citizens, institutions, and public purposes. The Hollow Absolute extends the diagnosis to an integrated technical order in which market, state, platform, and security systems may coordinate populations through prediction even when no single actor commands the whole. Its 'absolute' quality is operational rather than philosophical: it approaches total connectivity without guaranteeing a common good.

The novel contribution is therefore relational: Aligarchy identifies the infrastructural elite; Hollow Demos identifies the politically diminished population; Neurocratic Determinism identifies the mode of governance between them; and Hollow Absolute identifies the wider order in which they converge. This vocabulary has three analytical advantages, it separates ownership from technique, institutional decline from subject formation, and empirical mechanisms from a speculative endpoint. It also makes the thesis testable: researchers can examine who controls infrastructure, how citizens experience mediated choice, and whether collective agency is actually weakened rather than assuming that any algorithmic system is already deterministic.

5. The 2026 Baseline: Strain Without Collapse

V-Dem reported 45 countries undergoing autocratisation in 2024, compared with 42 in 2023 and 12 two decades earlier (V-Dem Institute, 2025). Freedom House recorded deterioration in 60 countries during 2024, while 34 improved, marking a nineteenth consecutive year of aggregate global decline (Freedom House, 2025). These global measures do not prove a uniform Western trajectory.

Trust and satisfaction reveal a related problem: across 30 OECD countries surveyed in 2023, 44% of respondents reported low or no trust in national government, compared with 39% reporting high or moderately high trust (OECD, 2024). The difference by perceived political agency was striking: 69% of people who felt they had a say in government actions trusted national government, compared with 22% of those who did not. This is an association, not proof that participation alone would produce trust, but it directly links legitimacy to experienced agency.

Pew Research Center found that median satisfaction across 12 high-income democracies fell from 49% in 2021 to 36% in 2024 (Wike & Fetterolf, 2024). International IDEA reported that at least one losing candidate or party rejected results in approximately 20% of national elections and that global turnout fell ten percentage points from 2008 to 2023 (International IDEA, 2024). These indicators suggest a legitimacy deficit, not democratic collapse.

The EU's 2024 parliamentary election complicates a simple decline narrative. Turnout reached 50.74%, with about 180 million votes cast, while 42% of respondents later held a positive image of the European Parliament (European Commission, 2025). Respondents nevertheless expressed concern about disinformation, cyberattacks, and covert foreign influence.

Dissatisfaction may increase receptiveness to frictionless administration, personalised truth, or technical security, but it can also motivate democratic reform. The pathway remains politically contingent.

6. The AI Era as a New Layer of Political Mediation

Algorithmic selection shapes social reality by deciding which items become visible, timely, and relevant (Just & Latzer, 2017). Surveillance capitalism converts behavioural experience into data that can support prediction and intervention (Zuboff, 2019). Danaher (2016) describes algocracy as governance through algorithmic systems whose authority can be difficult to contest because their operations are complex, distributed, and presented as technically necessary.

The evidence rejects a universal ‘algorithm makes people radical’ thesis. In four experiments involving nearly 9,000 participants, Liu et al. (2025) manipulated more than 130,000 YouTube recommendations and observed approximately 31,000 interactions. Even deliberately slanted short-term recommendation environments produced limited and inconsistent effects on policy attitudes. The experiments used a naturalistic YouTube-like interface and real recommendations, but their duration restricts conclusions about cumulative exposure, identity formation, or effects across platforms.

Gauthier et al. (2026) provide a contrasting result. In a seven-week field experiment on X conducted in 2023, enabling the algorithmic feed for users who had used a chronological feed shifted measured political attitudes and account-following in a more conservative direction. The feed promoted conservative content and demoted traditional media; users followed conservative activist accounts that remained after the algorithm was switched off. However,

the study found no significant effect on affective polarisation or self-reported partisanship, and disabling the algorithm for existing users did not symmetrically reverse attitudes. The result is platform, period, and direction specific rather than proof of universal manipulation.

Together with the Facebook and Instagram experiment reported by Guess et al. (2023), these studies show context dependence. Ranking can substantially alter exposure and behaviour without reliably changing every political outcome. Its power may lie in cumulative salience, network formation, and asymmetric path dependence rather than immediate ideological conversion. Generative AI increases the scale at which such environments can produce personalised text and synthetic media. EDMO's monitored fact-checking sample found EU-related disinformation rose from 5% of stories in January 2024 to 15% in May, but this was not a measure of all content, reach, or persuasion (European Digital Media Observatory, 2024). Regulatory recognition is visible in the European Commission's (2024) electoral-risk guidelines; their existence does not establish their effectiveness.

7. From Persuasion to Preference Architecture

The crucial transition is from persuading a citizen to organising the environment in which preference forms. A social-media field experiment costing US\$8.9 million and reaching two million voters found no average turnout effect, although estimated effects varied among modelled groups (Aggarwal et al., 2023). Another randomized election study found very small vote-share effects despite more than 1.1 million Facebook and Instagram impressions (Coppock et al., 2022). Votta et al. (2023) likewise found that targeting can outperform an untargted message without delivering the dramatic additional returns often attributed to 'micro' targeting. These bounded effects contradict claims of omnipotent persuasion.

However, controlled research indicates that personalisation can matter under some conditions. Simchon et al. (2024) found that personality-tailored political advertisements were more persuasive than non-personalised advertisements and demonstrated methods for generating and evaluating such messages at scale. This does not establish that generative AI has changed an election. It establishes that a system capable of inferring traits and producing adaptive messages may have a measurable persuasive advantage in particular contexts.

Synthetic media can work through uncertainty rather than belief. In a representative UK experiment, synthetic political videos increased uncertainty, which mediated lower trust in news (Vaccari & Chadwick, 2020). Across five preregistered experiments with 2,215 participants, deepfake detection varied by format (Groh et al., 2024), while Barari et al. (2025) found deepfakes about as credible as other false media in their setting. These studies do not measure election outcomes; they suggest that synthetic abundance may erode confidence without consistently deceiving everyone.

Preference architecture combines modelling, ranking, and feedback. The system infers the person, ranks a world for that profile, and updates both after each response. The citizen still experiences choice internally, but the field of attention becomes adaptive and partially engineered. This is proposed as the beginning of the Systemised Self.

8. Administrative Prediction, Surveillance, and the Governable Citizen

Prediction becomes politically consequential when classifications affect employment, insurance, education, benefits, policing, migration, credit, or public services. The FTC's investigation of nine major platform companies found extensive data collection and little or no ability for users and non-users to opt out of some automated uses (Federal Trade Commission,

2024). This regulator-selected sample does not estimate all platforms or prove political control; it establishes institutional-scale extraction.

Law provides a counterexample and a possible failure point. GDPR Article 22 limits solely automated decisions with legal or similarly significant effects, subject to exceptions, while the EU AI Act prohibits or regulates defined practices (European Commission, n.d.; European Parliament & Council of the European Union, 2016). The adverse pathway requires circumvention, weak enforcement, or formally compliant systems too distributed for effective appeal. A public agency may retain responsibility while depending on a vendor model that affected citizens cannot meaningfully test.

Experimental evidence suggests that surveillance is experienced differently when algorithmic. Across four experiments, algorithmic rather than human surveillance reduced perceived autonomy in several studies and increased resistance intentions in some conditions; informational framing reduced these effects (Schlund & Zitek, 2024). The findings are not longitudinal, but they indicate that automated observation can alter experienced agency.

NIST's evaluation of 189 face-recognition algorithms from 99 developers, using 18.27 million images, found substantial demographic differentials in false-positive rates for many systems (Grother et al., 2019). Later performance may differ, but the finding shows how probabilistic identity can turn error into unequal access when embedded in civic infrastructure.

9. The Political Economy of the Aligarchy

Neurocratic Determinism requires ownership of the infrastructure through which algorithms become socially effective. Stanford's 2025 AI Index reported US private AI investment of \$109.1 billion in 2024, compared with \$9.3 billion in China and \$4.5 billion in the United

Kingdom; global corporate investment reached \$252.3 billion (Stanford Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence, 2025). Investment is not political control, but persistent asymmetry can shape who builds large models and sets standards.

The same report found that surveyed organisations reporting AI use rose from 55% in 2023 to 78% in 2024, while generative AI use in at least one business function rose from 33% to 71%. These survey measures indicate normalisation, not accuracy or legitimacy.

The ILO estimates that one in four workers is in an occupation with some generative-AI exposure, while emphasising transformation rather than replacement (Gmyrek et al., 2025). If transformation is paired with automated performance scoring and weak worker voice, discretion may contract without mass unemployment.

Aligarchy is not a conspiracy or formal government, it is a class-like arrangement of firms, states, investors, platform owners, cloud providers, and standards bodies whose decisions determine how persons become legible. Governments may retain sovereignty on paper while lacking the capacity to replace systems supporting security, welfare, elections, or communication.

10. Three Conditional Stages to 2053

The first stage, from 2026 to approximately 2035, is the normalisation of predictive mediation. AI assistants, recommender systems, workplace analytics, and automated services become ordinary. Citizens consult systems before deciding, institutions delegate routine judgments, and political organisations automate message production and audience analysis. Habituation, not total automation, makes the system a default intermediary.

The second stage, from approximately 2035 to 2045, is the integration of personal and administrative profiles. If legal firewalls weaken, data from platforms, employers, devices, public services, finance, and biometrics may become more interoperable. Probabilistic profiles could then move from advertising into access, eligibility, risk assessment, and mobilisation, governing citizens through model-mediated permissions rather than one ideological command.

The third stage, from approximately 2045 to 2053, is the delegation of political agency. Citizens may still vote, but an assistant could summarise candidates, filter issues, predict consequences, recommend positions, and transmit preferences. Parties may compete less through shared programmes than through control of models, data, and standards. Representing and producing a preference become difficult to separate.

Each stage has alternative outcomes. Strong privacy law, public compute, open standards, labour power, plural media, independent auditing, and democratic control of data could interrupt the trajectory. The 2053 scenario becomes plausible only if convenience repeatedly defeats contestability, if emergency powers normalise exceptional surveillance, if market concentration persists, and if citizens accept prediction as a substitute for judgment.

11. Neurocratic Determinism and the Hollow Demos

Neurocratic Determinism names the possible political form produced by the three stages. Its defining feature is not that machines think instead of people. It is that systems increasingly govern the conditions under which people think, feel, decide, and act. The subject is formally free but increasingly situated inside environments calibrated to probable responses.

The Systemised Self is the corresponding subject-form: a person whose self-understanding is increasingly mediated by rankings, predictions, assistants, and inferred profiles. Selfhood

remains experienced, but its social legibility and practical judgment are progressively outsourced.

The Hollow Demos is the collective result. Citizens continue to vote, post, protest, deliberate, and disagree, but the shared public subject is weakened. Political communities become collections of individually optimised feeds, targeted narratives, predictive categories, and emotionally managed publics. The demos is hollow because its members may be highly expressive while losing the capacity to constitute a common world and revise it together.

The Hollow Absolute is the wider order of operational coordination without a substantive common good. Aligarchy occupies infrastructural ownership; Hollow Demos describes the represented but systemised population; and Neurocratic Determinism names the relation between them. ‘Neuro’ concerns governance of cognition, emotion, attention, and behaviour, not a claim that AI is conscious or neural interfaces are already universal.

12. Discussion, Hypotheses, and Future Work

The evidence provides a conditional thesis not a forecast, feed changes and advertising do not uniformly transform attitudes, but exposure, network formation, uncertainty, tailored persuasion, and perceived autonomy change under some conditions. The decisive research question is whether modest effects accumulate across news, employment, finance, health, social recognition, and political advice.

The AAI can convert this question into measurement. Freedom loss would combine perceived constraint with observed option reduction; identity ambiguity would compare self-description with inferred profiles; decision erosion would measure recommendation reliance and unaided performance; emotional alienation would assess perceived affective induction; and resistance

would record refusal, switching, appeal, and collective contestation. Validation requires pre-registration, longitudinal and cross-cultural samples, behavioural indicators, and separation from clinical diagnosis.

Five hypotheses make the framework falsifiable. H1: greater cross-domain algorithmic reliance predicts lower perceived authorship and higher AAI scores over time. It is weakened if longitudinal studies controlling for prior dispositions find no relationship or improved independent judgment. H2: adaptive political ranking changes issue salience, network composition, or participation relative to non-personalised controls. Repeated null effects across platforms, durations, and populations would falsify the proposed mediation mechanism. H3: opaque automated decisions reduce perceived autonomy and successful contestation compared with explainable, human-reviewable decisions. Equal autonomy and appeal outcomes would count against the claim. H4: concentrated infrastructure ownership predicts lower media pluralism, weaker public audit capacity, and greater institutional dependency; stable pluralism under increasing concentration would challenge Aligarchy. H5: intensive personalisation reduces shared factual knowledge and cross-group collective action. Evidence that highly personalised publics sustain or improve common knowledge, association, and policy revision would falsify the Hollow Demos prediction.

Research should combine platform field experiments, panel surveys, administrative audits, infrastructure ownership data, and comparative institutional analysis. The theory gains credibility only if it identifies observations that could disconfirm it. Neurocratic Determinism should be rejected or revised if rising AI use coexists with durable agency, contestable decisions, plural ownership, common knowledge, and effective democratic correction.

13. Alternatives and Counterforces

The pathway to Neurocratic Determinism is not the only plausible trajectory. Data sovereignty could treat behavioural data as a civic and collective resource rather than an indefinitely extractable commercial residue. It could require local control, portability, purpose limitation, and democratic authority over whether data move between platforms, employers, and public agencies. Sovereignty is not automatically liberating: a state can claim national control while expanding surveillance. Its democratic value depends on citizen participation, independent oversight, and rights to refuse or contest extraction.

Digital human rights could provide a constitutional counterforce. Privacy, freedom of thought, explanation, human review, non-discrimination, and the right to leave a system-mediated environment would need to apply not only to final decisions but also to the production of profiles and rankings. The GDPR's limits on solely automated significant decisions and the EU AI Act's prohibited and regulated practices show that legal interruption is possible (European Commission, n.d.; European Parliament & Council of the European Union, 2016). Enforcement capacity is decisive: a right without technical access to audit or appeal can become symbolic.

Institutional alternatives also matter. Public-interest compute, open technical standards, interoperable services, not-for-profit platforms, cooperative data trusts, and publicly accountable recommendation systems could reduce dependence on a small number of infrastructure owners. Worker organisations could negotiate over automated performance systems, while citizens' assemblies and independent auditors could examine high-impact models. These arrangements would not eliminate prediction. They could distribute its benefits and prevent prediction from becoming a unilateral power over access, opportunity, and political visibility.

The strongest counterforce is a renewed conception of democratic autonomy. Autonomy should mean more than choosing among personalised options. It should include the ability to understand the conditions of choice, encounter disagreement, form associations outside dominant systems, and revise collective arrangements. A 2053 society with advanced AI could therefore remain democratic if it preserves plural infrastructures, public reasons, meaningful exit, and institutional power to replace systems that citizens cannot govern.

14. Conclusion

From 2026 to 2053, Western democracy may enter an era in which the decisive political struggle concerns not only who governs but who governs the formation of governable selves. The present evidence provides no basis for claiming that hyper-personalised and intensified AI use inevitably ends liberal democracy. It suggest to provide a factual basis for concern: democratic regression and weak trust are measurable; behavioural data are extracted at scale; AI adoption and computational investment are expanding; synthetic media can increase uncertainty; personalised communication can be persuasive under some conditions; automated surveillance can reduce perceived autonomy; and biometric and administrative systems can turn probabilistic classifications into practical constraints.

These conditions form a plausible pathway when combined with concentration, weak oversight, and habitual delegation. By 2053, elections and constitutions could survive while political agency becomes increasingly organised by systems that predict, rank, personalise, and condition the citizen's environment: that is the proposed meaning of Neurocratic Determinism. The Systemised Self would be its subject, the Hollow Demos its population, the Aligarchy its infrastructural elite, and the Hollow Absolute its integrated order.

The outcome remains a developing phenomenon: democratic liberalism can adapt if it treats cognitive and infrastructural autonomy as constitutional concerns, not merely as consumer preferences. The future will turn on whether citizens can contest the systems that model them, own or access the infrastructures through which they participate, and retain spaces in which judgment is not reduced to predicted behaviour. The most important democratic question is therefore not whether a person is still permitted to choose: it is whether the person can still participate in determining the conditions under which choosing becomes possible.

Glossary of Technical Terms

Algorithmic Alienation Index (AAI): A provisional heuristic for examining freedom loss, identity ambiguity, decision erosion, emotional alienation, and resistance in system-mediated environments.

Algocracy: Governance through algorithmic or computational decision systems, especially where technical processes become difficult for affected persons to understand or contest.

Aligarchy: The infrastructural elite that owns, controls, or sets the standards for platforms, cloud systems, data reservoirs, models, compute, and interfaces.

Behavioural data: Recorded information about actions, interactions, attention, movement, transactions, or responses that can be used to infer preferences or predict conduct.

Democratic liberalism: A political order combining popular participation and contestation with rights, constitutional limits, pluralism, and accountability.

Hollow Absolute (the): The speculative integrated technological order in which predictive infrastructure coordinates society without necessarily providing a substantive common good.

Hollow Demos: A collective political subject that remains formally active but is weakened as a shared, deliberative, and self-directing public.

Neurocratic Determinism: The proposed political condition in which cognitive, emotional, and behavioural environments are increasingly predicted, conditioned, and mediated by technical systems while formal freedom remains.

Preference architecture: The design of informational, social, and incentive environments that shapes which options become visible, salient, attractive, or practically available before an explicit choice.

Systemised Self (the): A technologically mediated subject whose identity, attention, decisions, and self-understanding are increasingly organised through data-driven systems.

Synthetic media: Digitally generated or altered text, images, audio, video, or interactive content produced through computational models.

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