Processando o Algoritmo: A Mundanização da Tomada de Decisão Automatizada

Sueing the Algorithm: The Mundanization of Automated Decision-Making

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This presentation addresses automated decision-making (ADM) in action through following imaginaries connected with the implementation and street-level application as well as critique of automated decision-making in the public sector. Taking the much-discussed Swedish Trelleborg model - introducing fully automated decisions on social benefit applications - as a case, the presentation draws a picture of how both bureaucrats and technology activists and journalists imagine the contours and workings of automated decision-making in the public sector. I trace the diverging and partly contradictory ideas of what ADM is and what consequences it has through in-depth interviews with the project manager responsible for the project and civil servants in Trelleborg as well as close readings of appeals to and decisions by the Parliamentary Ombudsmen and the Administrative Court of Appeal. The analysis shows how the meaning and understanding of ADM is constantly negotiated and is connected with changing imaginaries of benefits and dangers of implementing large-scale ADM

systems in the welfare context. The chapter also shows how such conflicts and negotiations contribute to the *mundanization* (Willim, 2017) of ADM namely strategies of developing everyday understandings of complex technologies that have implications for our everyday lives.

1.1 Background

In 2019, Simon Vinge of the Union for Professionals (Akademikerförbundet SSR) reported the municipality of Trelleborg to the Parliamentary Ombudsmen (Justitieombudsmannen JO). His complaint was that the authorities failed to respond to a freedom of information request related to RPA use to deliver automated decisions. As of May 2020, SSR and Simon Vinge have not heard back from the Parliamentary Ombudsmen.

The journalist Freddi Ramel similarly engaged in the discussion about transparency of the ADM system used in Trelleborg. After several failed attempts to get access to the source code from Trelleborg municipality and reaching out to the Danish company that was responsible for the coding, he took legal steps. In contrast to Simon Vinge, he submitted an appeal to the Administrative court of Appeal arguing that the source code of the software used falls under the Swedish *Offentlighetsprincipen* (the principle of public access to official records). The court followed his appeal and ruled that the source code has to be made accessible to the public and is fully included in the principle of public access[1].

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[1] https://www.dagenssamhalle.se/nyhet/kansliga-uppgifter-spreds-kod-till-bistandsrobot-31911?fbclid=IwAR3LsYY0uxmI64JR9yDSh4sFgSlwj6HvCq2UY7ABPbPCWU3rqpjcLsrdfAk

After the ruling of the Administrative court was made public another the journalists at *Dagenssamhälle* submitted a Freedom of Information Request in accordance with the principle of public access to official records to gain access to the source code as well. Trelleborg municipality forwarded the request to the Danish software company who delivered the code that was in turn shared with the journalists. The material was however not submitted to a security check and sensitive data including personal numbers (comparable to social security number), names and information about elderly care at home was delivered to the journalists[2].

References

Willim, R. (2017). Imperfect imaginaries: digitisation, mundanisation, and the ungraspable In G. Koch (Ed.), *Digitisation: Theories and Concepts for Empirical Cultural Research* (pp. 53-77). London: Routledge

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[2] https://www.dagenssamhalle.se/nyhet/kansliga-uppgifter-spreds-kod-till-bistandsrobot-31911