Bo Zheng

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Curriculum Vitae

Education

2019.7 – Present, ***PhD in Public Administration at The Maxwell School, Syracuse University***

- Research interest is in examining whether our social safety net is adequate in the age of AI.
- Core coursework content includes theory and methodology of public administration and public policy research, with additional courses to be taken within and outside the department to develop methodological skills and supporting knowledge in AI.
- Planned specializations are in social policy (established) and technology policy (customized).

2017.7 – 2018.6, ***Master of Public Administration at The Maxwell School, Syracuse University***

- Coursework in policy and management, including statistical foundations for research, centered on preparation for public service in the public, private, or non-profit sector.
- Additional coursework in data science from the School of Information Studies, Syracuse University.

2004.8 – 2008.7, ***Bachelor of Engineering at Tsinghua University***

- Major in Mechanical Engineering and Automation in the Department of Precision Instruments and Mechanology
- Minor in English Language in the Foreign Language Department

Research Experience and Academic Projects

2019. 7 – Present, ***Research Assistant at Center for Policy Research, The Maxwell School, Syracuse University***

- I work with Prof. Sarah Hamersma and I am devising research plans to study the impact of AI on Social Inequality. More specifically, I am developing proposals for two research projects:
  1) examining whether exposing judges to algorithmic risk assessment (e.g. recidivism risk score like COMPAS) introduces anchoring bias to their sentencing decisions; and
  2) examining how government use of outdated information technology delays the processing of unemployment claims in the wave of unemployment caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

2018.10 – Present, ***Chinese Translation for "Construction Conflict: From Escalation to Resolution"***

- This project is supported by the book's authors, Prof. Louis Kriesberg and Prof. Bruce Dayton, and the Maxwell School's Program for the Advancement of Research on Conflict and Collaboration (PARCC). Peking University Press will publish the Chinese edition.

2017.7 – 2018.6, ***Research Assistant at Center for Policy Research, The Maxwell School, Syracuse University***

- Supervised by Prof. Peter Wilcoxen, I worked on his NSF funded research project modeling electricity markets and examining cyber-security implications of the smart grid. I coded in R and Python to build econometric models for household, EV and PV power consumption/generation and investigated how sensitive personal information can be revealed from household electricity consumption data using Stata.

Summary of Research Interest

My research interest lies in examining whether our social safety net is adequate in the age of AI, and I'd like to study it from two different perspectives. First, in the near term, I will focus on how AI reshapes discrimination and what policy response is needed. Wider adoption of AI for generating decision support data intended to improve fairness and objectivity has the potential for allowing discrimination to further entrench into many areas and complicate the issue of AI alignment. If biased AIs are deployed on a large scale, they would discriminate consistently on a scale we have never seen before, despite many people's intuition that "machine objectivity" eliminates "human subjectivity".

In the longer term, I am more broadly interested in how it structurally impacts our society, especially in how it changes the dynamics of poverty and unemployment. This is guided by a more systemic view of our world informed by my undergraduate study in system engineering. AI helps decision-making one decision at a time, but our society is a system with parts interconnected. Now even if AI can be well- trained and unbiased in making one specific decision, the question still exist: how would the introduction of AI impact the greater system of which it is a part? How do we analyze the risk of such a system?

The relations between technology and society has always fascinated me. It led me to studying engineering and eventually led me to pursuing a PhD in policy. I hope my research will help us understand the risk of AI in our social systems and even devise new types of social support systems for people affected.