

BANDAS Lectures #2

Reimagining Sociodigital Futures in a Datafied World

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Abstract

Advances in computing, in particular the increasing pervasiveness and importance of digital technologies and digital data, introduce new means to measure, represent and predict social life through numbers. This process has been described as the datafication of social life. It has fuelled utopian visions about a sociodigital future of open and transparent societies that strengthen grassroots movements and democratic processes. At the same time, fears associated with increased surveillance and control as well as reinforced inequalities and systemic discrimination have emerged.

The starting point for my talk is that the future does not simply happen but is made. More specifically, futures of digital innovations and their embedding in aspects of our social, political, cultural, economic and everyday lives are made through expectations, imaginaries, visions and hypes that shape discourses, and define what is thinkable and desirable. They are largely driven by powerful actors such as technology companies, governments, and research and development who determine how (social) problems are framed, and what kinds of social or digital innovations can be sought. However, these "big" futures also depend on "little" futures that happen in the everyday lives of diverse groups of people who experience, perform and negotiate these big futures from different socio-cultural and socio-economic positions (Michael 2017). In my talk I focus on the ways in which big and little futures are imagined and reimagined, made and remade by different social actors in three domains: education, demographic ageing and the public sector. The exploration of these examples will allow us to explore some of the tensions and opportunities to create more inclusive and participatory sociodigital futures in a datafied world.



Juliane Jarke is professor for Digital Societies at the University of Graz. Her research focusses on the increasing importance of digital data and technologies in the public sector, for education and ageing populations. Theoretically and conceptually, her research is situated in the areas of critical data/algorithm studies, new materialism and feminist STS. Juliane follows a design-oriented and participatory approach that adapts and expands upon empirical social research, digital and ethnographic methods, combining them with approaches from human-computer interaction (HCI) and participatory design research.

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