Alternatives to Liberal Democracy and the Role of AI: The Case of Elections – SUPPLEMENT

13 **Table 1:** Liberalism, illiberalism and the Dark Enlightenment compared

	LIBERALISM	ILLIBERALISM	DARK ENLIGHTENMENT
ACADEMIC STATUS	A political, social and moral philosophy; variety of liberalisms	A field of academic research; a qualifier used in contemporary political, legal and philosophical scholarship	An emerging field of academic research; a qualifier increasingly used in contemporary political, social science and philosophical scholarship
IDEAS	*A system of political ideas* - predominant political ideology in the modern context - promotes private property, secularism and free enterprise - individual rights, civil liberties, representative liberal democracy conceptualisation of governing, consent of the governed, equality before the law - democracy for the many - historic delays in recognition of citizenship/rights, particularly for social minorities	*Political ideology/programme* - on the rise since the 1990s - not a comprehensive ideology as understood in political philosophy - fundamentally rejects liberalism - denigrates liberal concepts of equal political freedom and civil liberties for their alleged hypertrophic individualism - rejects tolerance, multiculturalism and the protection of minorities and their 'decadent' way of life - favours traditional social hierarchies, cultural homogeneity and nation-centrism - promotes protectionism at the nation-state level - promotes politicisation of cultural issues	*Political ideology/programme* - on the rise in the 2000s; Dark Enlightenment manifesto published in 2012 - internally incohesive ideology and political philosophy - fundamental rejection of liberalism; - reversal of the liberal enlightenment project - freedom is NOT feasible with democracy - combining libertarianism and autocratic vision of government - combining ideas of government from feudalism and futuristic ideas of society and of humans - denies liberal concepts of equal political freedom and civil liberties and favours high IQ individuals (examples being CEOs of high-tech companies)

			- supports eugenics (development of singularity based on linking biology and technology) - favours traditional social hierarchies, traditional values, discriminations of marginal groups, cultural homogeneity and nation-centrism - promotes protectionism at the nation-state level - promotes politicisation of cultural issues
DEMOCRACY	Liberal democracy understood as procedure and liberal content In practice, gender and racial issues solved with a delay	Illiberal democracy may exist within democracy (procedural democracy; electoral democracy; illiberal abuse of democracy – democratic backsliding) Deficient democracies	Democracy needs to be demolished and a new order established Combination of illiberalism and plutocracy Techno monarchy
INSTITUTIONS/ PARTICULARLY ELECTIONS	**FAVOURS LD POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS, INCLUDING FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS**	**IGNORES, DAMAGES LD INSTITUTIONS, INCLUDING FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS**	**IGNORES, DECOMPOSES LD INSTITUTIONS, INCLUDING FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS**
CONSTITUTIONALISM	Concept of constitutionalism as limited constitutional government	Routinely ignores constitutional boundaries of power and LD rules of the game Uses abusive practices Promotes majoritarian rules	Routinely ignores constitutional boundaries of power and LD rules of the game Uses abusive practices Promotes new (private) order (a patchwork of cities privately governed by corporations/ their CEOs)
FUNDAMENTAL INSTITUTIONAL PRECONDITIONS FOR DEMOCRACY	Inclusiveness: supports political participation; public deliberation, collective	Limits participation and representation; rests on immediate communication	Normatively no citizens' rights except the right to exit; in practice, limits participation and disrespects

	decision-making; freedom of the public sphere	with 'the people'; erodes the public sphere	representation; rests on immediate communication with 'the people'; erodes the public sphere
INTERNATIONALISATION AND COLONIALISM	Locke's argument supporting colonial practices Liberal democratic regimes' illiberal colonialism International democracy promotion based on Western interests	Illiberal state territorial interests Internationalisation of illiberalism Export of illiberal ideas	Techno-colonialism – an attempt to selectively reproduce settler colonial practices adjusted to twenty-first-century realities Networking, particularly accelerated by social media Territorial expansion into new territories on the Earth (Greenland, Canada) and outer space (Mars)
CURRENT EMPIRICAL TRENDS	A global autocratisation trend increasingly within LD systems as well; at the same time also democratisation in some countries	Illiberalism – a global phenomenon Promotion of illiberal democracy Also examples of the opposite trend – back to democracy (U-turn)	A global spread of neo-reactionary movements /on-line communities; Several extremely rich big tech CEOs' adopting Dark Enlightenment ideas Direct involvement of extremely rich CEO in government institutions and destruction of existing state institutions (USA) Direct involvement in elections in other countries
SOCIO-ECONOMIC BASES	In some historical periods, based on a strong middle class; currently, big and rising socio-economic inequalities within countries and globally	Big and rising socio-economic inequalities within countries and globally	Accelerated, historically unprecedented socio-economic inequalities, particularly within the USA and with the global and extraterritorial 'export' of US-based plutocracy

14   LD – liberal democratic

15 **Sources**: Boryczko et al., 2023; Cottiero et al., 2024; Domenech, 2024; Fink-Hafner, 2024; Frankenburg, 2022; Hughes,

16 2024; Jones, 2019; Laruelle, 2022, 2024; Madianou, 2024; Mallon, 2025; Musk, 2025; Nord, Angiolillo, et al., 2024;

17 Nyyssönen & Metsälä, 2020; Rosenblatt, 2021; Sedgwick, 2019; Sajó & Uitz, 2021; Scheiring, 2021; Stoler, 2021; Tait,

18 2019; Thiel, 2009; Vormann & Weinman, 2021; Zakaria, 1997.

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20   **Table 2:** Vulnerability of the prerequisites for free and fair elections to misuses of AI (AI-vulnerable prerequisites are in

21   bold)

	PREREQUISITES FOR FREE ELECTIONS	PREREQUISITES FOR FAIR ELECTIONS
BEFORE THE POLLING DAY	Freedom of movement; **freedom of speech** for candidates, the media, voters and others; **freedom of assembly and of association; freedom from fear** in connection with the election and electoral campaign; **absence of impediments to standing for elections** for political parties and independent candidates; **equal and universal suffrage**	**There is a transparent electoral process**; an election act and an electoral system grant no special privileges to any political party or social group; **absence of impediments to inclusion in the electoral register;** establishment of an independent and impartial election commission; impartial treatment of candidates by the police, the army and the courts of law; **equal opportunities** for political parties and independent candidates to stand for election; **impartial voter-education programmes;** an orderly election campaign; **observance of code of conduct**; equal access to publicly controlled media; impartial allotment of public funds to political parties – if relevant; **no misuse of government facilities for campaign purposes**
ON THE POLLING DAY	**An opportunity to participate in the elections**	There is access to all polling stations for representatives of the political parties, accredited local and international election observers, as well as the media; **secrecy of the ballot; absence of intimidation of voters;** effective design of ballot papers; proper ballot boxes; **impartial assistance to voters if necessary**; proper counting procedures; proper treatment of void ballot papers; proper precautionary measures when transporting election materials; **impartial protection of polling stations**
AFTER THE POLLING DAY	There are legal opportunities for complaint	There are official and expeditious announcements of election results; impartial treatment of any election complaints; **impartial reports on the election results by the media, and acceptance of the election results**

22   **Source**: Based on Elklit and Swensson (1997).

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Table 3: Taxonomy of segments in the election process with their particular vulnerabilities for AI (mis)use

	BEFORE POLLING DAY	ON POLLING DAY	AFTER POLLING DAY
Electoral administration	Advanced machine-learning and AI models used for cleaning and auditing voter rolls Deep learning models tested for capturing biometric data and their use for voter identification AI models trained on matching identification documents or biometric voter identification (preventing duplicate registration) AI models used for predicting the capacity of polling stations needed	AI models for proving eligibility for voting: - biometric voter identification at polling stations (facial recognition, thumb-printing) - signature matching for verifying mail-in ballots) - miscalculated capacity of polling stations needed - surveillance of polling stations (lack of secrecy)	Official and expeditious announcement of election results, impartial treatment of any election complaints, impartial reports on the election results by the media and acceptance of the election results Issues with voting technology (e.g., a software bug that alters election results; overload of the systems used for counting or aggregating results; tampering with the supply chain involved in the movement or transfer of data); breaches of voter privacy; election results; and reports on election results and election complaints. AI can be used and misused in the presentation of election results, election complaints and reports on election results.
Civic education	LLM-based chatbots trained to answer frequently asked questions on elections		
Voter (de)mobilisation	GenAI-driven micro-targeting of voters AI-boosted participatory disinformation to spread doubt about the fairness of elections AI-boosted threats to particular segments of voters.	AI-boosted disinformation on the capacity of polling stations (e.g., waiting lines) Voter intimidation	AI-supported organisation of violent actions as reactions to the non-acceptance of election results
Campaigning – disinformation	GenAI used to increase the quantity and improve the quality of the supply of traditional forms of misinformation (e.g., fake news articles, misleading posts on social media platforms)		AI tools used for (dis)information about rigging elections and spreading statements on (non)acceptance of election results
	Deepfake videos promoting a boycott of elections, potentially impacting		

	election integrity; spreading deceptive information related to elections		
	Technology-related problems: hallucination of AI chatbots (ChatGPT, Gemini) used to answer questions on elections; AI models for providing election information tested and showing discrepancies with respect to information in different languages		
Campaigning – micro-targeting	Machine-learning techniques used for highly personalised micro-targeting of individuals or small groups for political advertising Chatbots mimicking politicians answering voters' questions Manipulation of voter opinions based on data gathered without consent and algorithms to deliver tailored messages that exploit cognitive or emotional biases AI-generated personal appeals to voters AI chatbots writing targeted messages AI chatbots communicating in multiple languages to target previously ignored citizens		
Campaigning – linking candidates and voters	Use of GenAI to develop and spread information LLMs – simultaneous translation tools GenAI used to produce speeches in various languages AI-generated videos and images of politicians with an aim to affect voters' beliefs		

	Deep fakes of celebrities supporting particular candidates		
	Deep fakes of non-existing relatives to make candidate's political views more acceptable		
	Candidate's chat bot used to answer policy questions		
	Candidate with speech impairment using speech synthesis while campaigning		
AI assisting party organisational activities	GenAI tools used by campaigns as assistants to provide information, scripts for communication and training purposes		
	Personalised AI-generated fundraising emails		
	AI tools used to distil the essence of political material to generate party programmes		
	LLMs used to analyse texts and as sparring partners in debates to learn about new political perspectives		
	Use of multimodal image creation AI systems to present various party programmes and pictures generated based on prompt envisioning the future assuming full implementation of party programmes		
	A generic AI-based door-knocking bot which can be used for training human canvassers		
External involvement	Foreign nation-state actors: - using GenAI text-to-video software to generate fake videos of real news anchors reporting on fake stories to spread disinformation)		

	- using text-to-image generators to create false and misleading images to alter public perception of facts during crisis - creating synthetic images for fake account profiles used to influence operations - altering authentic images or videos to support and influence operation narratives - using AI-generated text to enhance covert foreign influence operations with grammatically correct English language content and lower marginal costs - using GenAI-enabled chatbots for sophisticated social engineering and phishing campaigns - using GenAI audio to impersonate employees and gain access to sensitive information or convince organisations to take specific actions - using GenAI tools to clone the voices of unsuspecting victims as part of AI voice scams or disinformation campaigns
Cyber criminal	AI-supported evasion of cybersecurity defences to access electoral authority databases GenAI misused to search for phishing victims to access critical systems (websites, voter data sets, registration databases, even election results)

GenAI – generative artificial intelligence

Sources: Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency, 2024; Elliott, 2024; European Parliamentary Technology Assessment Network, 2024; Foos, 2024; Helming and Marsh, 2024; International IDEA, 2024; Regis et al., 2025.

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