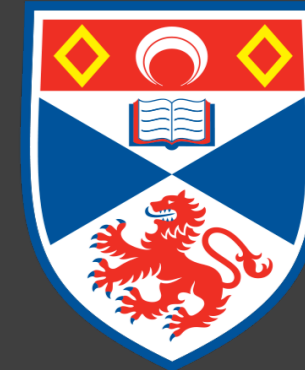


The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Personal Identity



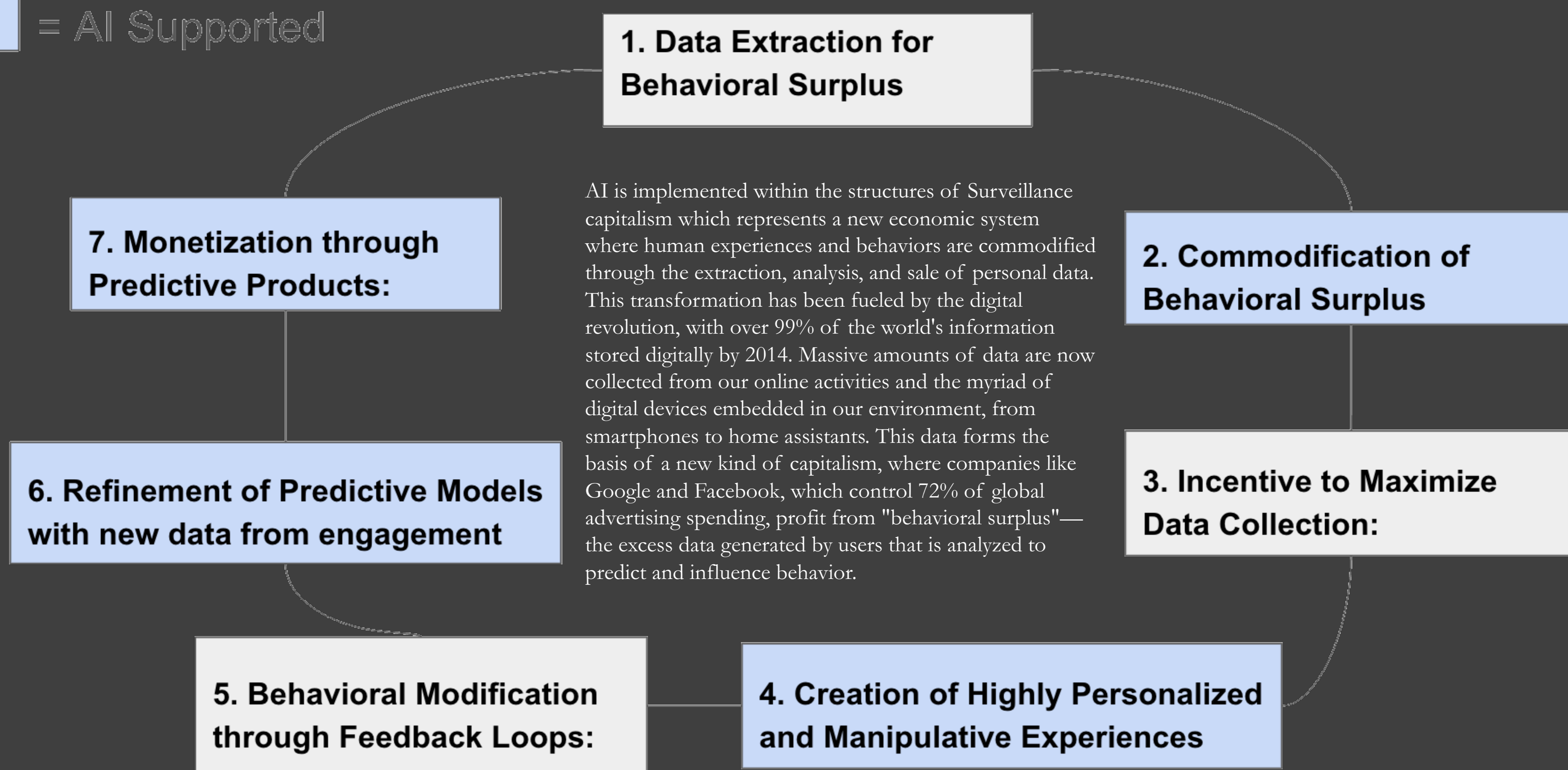
Historically, philosophy has often made a clear distinction between *episteme* (knowledge or science) and *tekhne* (craft or process). Episteme is seen as theoretical knowledge, while *tekhne* is practical, technical know-how. This separation has led to a marginalization of technics (and thus technology) in philosophical discourse, treating it as secondary to pure intellectual pursuit. I believe that this is a suppression of the true role that technics plays in human existence. The emergence of technics is not just a parallel development alongside humanity but is deeply intertwined with the genesis of humanity itself. The development of technology has shaped humanity in the same way that humanity has shaped the development of technology. In this way, I will focus on the emerging technics of artificial intelligence and how they will most significantly shape our understanding of ourselves.

The foundational question "What is AI?" has evolved since John McCarthy defined it in the 1950s as "the science and engineering of making intelligent machines." Today, AI can be understood as a **non-human system that simulates cognitive functions traditionally associated with human intelligence, operating autonomously and often driven by opaque motives**. AI encompasses a wide range of technologies, including machine learning, deep learning, and neural networks. Machine learning algorithms enable AI to imitate human learning by improving performance over time, while deep learning leverages multilayered neural networks to process large, unstructured datasets with minimal human input. The key challenge in AI lies in the relationship between datasets and algorithms, as illustrated by Pedro Domingos' observation that "a dumb algorithm with lots of data beats a clever one with modest amounts." This complexity, especially in tasks like chess, far exceeds human processing capabilities, leading to reliance on unsupervised learning and other advanced methods. AI's effectiveness often relies on observational data, which, while limited in proving causality, can still drive critical business decisions, such as predictive maintenance in manufacturing. The ever-increasing demand for data fuels AI development, as more data enables more powerful AI systems, creating a **dual incentive** for both data collection and AI utilization.

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Personal identity, a complex concept, is often defined by the features and characteristics that individuals use to define their unique selves. In Western philosophy, discussions around personal identity typically focus on two main aspects: *characterization* (the features that define who a person is at any given moment) and *persistence* (what allows a person to remain the same over time). Traditional theories, such as John Locke's memory theory, suggest that personal identity persists through the continuity of consciousness and autobiographical memory. Dan P. McAdams' narrative theory, propose that our identities are shaped by the **stories we create about our lives**—integrating past experiences, present actions, and future goals into a coherent narrative. McAdams identifies key components of narrative identity: the ideological setting, personal imagoes (idealized self-representations), nuclear episodes (significant life events), and a generativity script (plans for leaving a legacy). These narratives are influenced by recurring themes of agency and communion, which reflect core motivations, and by factors like gender and socioeconomic status. Understanding personal identity as both characterized by contingent, self-selected features and persistent through a cohesive life narrative provides a framework for analyzing the potential impact of AI on these dimensions, particularly how AI might influence our self-conception and continuity over time.

 = AI Supported



In today's consumer society, rooted in neoliberal ideology, individuals are increasingly seen as isolated consumers who must constantly improve their marketability and lifestyle choices. This shift has minimized the importance of social connections and community, placing the burden of success or failure squarely on the individual. As AI technologies become more embedded in our daily lives, they increasingly shape our personal identities by curating and influencing the information we are exposed to and the choices we make. AI platforms, which play a dual role as both **facilitators** of self-expression and **influencers** of identity, have the power to subtly alter how we perceive ourselves.

AI's impact on personal identity can be examined through McAdams' Narrative Identity framework, which includes key elements like ideological setting, personal imagoes, nuclear episodes, and generativity scripts. AI systems, through hyper-personalization, can reinforce specific beliefs while marginalizing others, effectively narrowing the ideological landscape available to individuals. This process can **pigeonhole users into predefined categories**, limiting the diversity of human identity and subtly shifting personal values to align with AI-driven norms

Overall, AI's deep integration into personal identity formation risks **diminishing human autonomy** by embedding external control into the very fabric of our self-conception. This raises profound ethical questions about the extent to which we are willing to allow AI to shape our identities and the long-term implications of this shift on our sense of self and agency.