The Enduring Struggle for Egalitarian Governance: Elites, Power, and Political Ideals

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Abstract: This paper critiques the persistent issue of elite capture in political systems, examining how the concentration of power undermines the core principles of democracy and justice. It analyzes historical and contemporary examples—from ancient Rome's patrician rule to modern democratic issues like campaign financing and centralized systems such as socialism and monarchies—highlighting the enduring dominance of elites. Despite these challenges, models of decentralized governance, including Athens' democracy, Switzerland's referendums, and Brazil's participatory budgeting, offer alternatives to elite control. The paper also explores the potential of AI-driven governance to enhance efficiency, impartiality, and transparency as innovate suggestion, while addressing concerns over bias, discrimination, and power centralization. It proposes a hybrid model combining human judgment with AI efficiency to promote fairness and public engagement, though acknowledging the risks of exacerbating inequalities and overlooking human complexities. Ultimately, the paper emphasizes the need for continuous reforms focused on decentralization, transparency, and citizen participation to achieve truly participatory governance. It concludes that whether human-led or AI-assisted, governance must resist elite capture, prioritize inclusivity, and ensure collective well-being. The study calls for further research into the practical implications of AI integration, particularly its impact on power structures and inequalities.

 Keywords: Elite capture, democracy, governance, political reform, innovation, political system.

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الصراع المستمر من أجل الحوكمة العادلة: النخب والسلطة والمبادئ السياسية

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ملخص: تنتقد هذه الورقة المشكلة المستمرة لسيطرة النخب على الأنظمة السياسية، حيث تستكشف كيف يؤدي تركيز السلطة إلى تقويض المبادئ الأساسية للديمقراطية والعدالة. وتتناول أمثلة تاريخية ومعاصرة، بدءًا من حكم البطارقة في روما القديمة وصولًا إلى قضايا الديمقراطية الحديثة مثل تمويل الحملات الانتخابية والأنظمة المركزية مثل الاشتراكية والملكيات، مسلطة الضوء على الهيمنة الدائمة للنخب. وعلى الرغم من هذه التحديات، تقدم نماذج الحوكمة اللامركزية، مثل الديمقراطية الأثينية، والاستفتاءات في سويسرا، والميزانية التشاركية في البرازيل، بدائل للسيطرة النخبوية. كما تستكشف الورقة إمكانية استخدام الحوكمة المدعومة بالذكاء الاصطناعي لتعزيز الكفاءة والحيادية والشفافية كاقتراح مبتكر، مع معالجة المخاوف المتعلقة بالتحيز والتمييز وتركيز السلطة. وتطرح نموذجًا هجينًا يجمع بين الحكم البشري وكفاءة الذكاء الاصطناعي لتعزيز العدالة والمشاركة العامة، مع الاعتراف بالمخاطر المحتملة مثل تفاقم التفاوتات الاجتماعية وإغفال تعقيدات الطبيعة البشرية. في النهاية، تؤكد الورقة على الحاجة إلى إصلاحات مستمرة تركز على اللامركزية والشفافية ومشاركة المواطنين لتحقيق حوكمة تشاركية حقيقية. وتخلص إلى أنه سواء كان الحكم بقيادة بشرية أو بمساعدة الذكاء الاصطناعي، يجب أن يقاوم السيطرة النخبوية، ويعطي الأولوية للإدماج، ويضمن الرفاه الجماعي. وتدعو الدراسة إلى مزيد من البحث حول الآثار العملية لإدماج الذكاء الاصطناعي، لا سيما تأثيره على هياكل السلطة والتفاوتات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: سيطرة النخب، الديمقراطية، الحوكمة، الإصلاح السياسي، الابتكار، النظام السياسي

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1. Introduction

The concept of governance has long been examined in relation to the tension between political ideals and the realities of power. Throughout history, political systems have aspired to create just, participatory societies—whether through democracy, socialism, or Islamic governance—yet many have struggled to overcome the dominance of elites. Despite noble aspirations for equality and representation, power has often been concentrated in the hands of a select few, undermining the foundational principles of these systems. This challenge of elite capture has remained a recurring issue from ancient Rome to modern democracies, where the ideal of governance "by the people, for the people" often gives way to rule by elites.

This paper delves into the persistent struggle within political systems to resist elite dominance, exploring both historical and contemporary examples of governance models that have failed to meet their ideals. It examines how, across different contexts—whether democratic, socialist, or Islamic—political systems have devolved into systems of elite rule, sidelining the very principles of equality and participation upon which they were founded. Additionally, the paper highlights instances where efforts to counter elite capture have succeeded, offering valuable insights into strategies for fostering more inclusive, transparent, and accountable governance.

The study will critically examine the mechanisms that allow elites to maintain power, despite the egalitarian principles of various political systems. It will also explore successful strategies for resisting elite domination, providing a comprehensive analysis of how governance structures can evolve toward models that more effectively serve all members of society. Through this examination, the study aims to contribute new perspectives on achieving governance that truly reflects its foundational promises.

2. Democracy and Innovation in Governance

Democracy embodies the ideals of public participation, accountability, and equality, serving as a cornerstone of modern governance. At its core, democracy enables power to originate from the people, either directly or through their representatives (Paralegal Advice, 2015). This foundational principle has manifested in various models shaped by historical, cultural, and socio-economic contexts. To sustain and adapt democratic systems to evolving challenges, political reform becomes essential, addressing inefficiencies, responding to societal demands, and mitigating external pressures. These reforms often

emphasize enhancing transparency, inclusiveness, and institutional balance, ensuring governance remains resilient and relevant (Anderson, Rainie & Vogels, 2021).

Furthermore, the relationship between democracy and reform is dynamic. In established democracies, reforms aim to counter polarization, reduce institutional distrust, and recalibrate power imbalances. On the other hand, emerging democracies focus on creating stable institutions, fostering inclusive processes, and building public trust. Context-specific approaches are crucial, as one-size-fits-all solutions often fail to address unique societal dynamics. Civil society plays a pivotal role in reform processes, with grassroots movements and advocacy campaigns historically driving significant changes. Moreover, the rise of digital technologies has further amplified citizen participation, enabling more effective engagement, accountability, and mobilization (Giuliano, Mishra & Spilimbergo, 2009).

In addition, globalization adds complexity to the interaction between democracy and reform. While it facilitates the dissemination of democratic ideals, it also introduces challenges such as economic disparities and cultural homogenization, which strain democratic institutions. Consequently, innovative reforms must address these pressures, balancing global interconnectedness with local sovereignty and inclusivity. International bodies, while instrumental in supporting transitions and reforms, must navigate tensions between global frameworks and national autonomy. Thus, resilient democratic systems hinge on their ability to adapt through deliberate, inclusive reforms that align governance with societal aspirations (Mpolomoka et al., 2024). Moreover, the enduring influence of elites—both traditional and emerging—poses challenges to equitable governance and democratic ideals. Historically, traditional elites—defined by their wealth or political power—have maintained control over societal resources and decision-making structures. However, the rise of new elites, particularly in sectors like technology and finance, has reshaped governance dynamics. These groups, often operating transnationally, wield considerable influence over public opinion, democratic processes, and institutional frameworks. As a result, this concentration of power raises critical concerns about accountability, transparency, and equity (Wedel, 2017).

The development and governance of artificial intelligence (AI) further illustrate these tensions. A small group of corporations and experts dominates AI innovation, raising ethical issues such as algorithmic bias, systemic inequality, and a lack of representation in decision-making processes. Therefore, addressing these concerns requires regulatory

frameworks prioritizing fairness, inclusivity, and transparency. Without such oversight, AI could deepen societal inequalities and undermine democratic ideals, perpetuating elite capture in new and technologically advanced forms (Taeihagh, 2021). Additionally, globalization exacerbates elite influence, enabling transnational networks to amplify their power. As a result, robust governance structures are needed to counteract these asymmetries, holding elites accountable while ensuring democratic resilience. Civil society, academia, and international organizations play essential roles in advocating for equitable governance models that align elite contributions with societal development (Henriksen & Seabrooke, 2020).

The interplay between governance and innovation underscores the need for systems that adapt to rapid societal and technological changes. Innovation disrupts traditional governance models, offering opportunities for progress while introducing challenges such as inequality and social instability. Consequently, governance frameworks must evolve to foster environments that encourage creativity while addressing these disruptions. Forward-thinking governance can support innovation through participatory decision-making, cross-sector collaboration, and policies that balance progress with social equity (Abdullah Kaiser, 2024). Furthermore, innovation within governance itself is equally critical. Agile governance—focused on flexibility, responsiveness, and adaptability—has gained prominence as a means to address modern complexities. Technological advancements, such as blockchain, digital platforms, and AI-driven decision support systems, are transforming governance by enhancing transparency, efficiency, and public participation. However, careful implementation is vital to prevent these tools from exacerbating existing disparities or creating new forms of exclusion (Filatotchev, Aguilera & Wright, 2020).

Innovation in political systems, governance, and democracy refers to the process of introducing new methods, strategies, and technologies that enhance efficiency, transparency, participation, and accountability to protect current and future generations internets (Awashreh, 2013). This can involve reforms to improve representation, the use of digital tools to engage citizens, or policies that adapt governance to modern challenges such as economic inequality, and technological advancements. Innovation aims to address systemic inefficiencies, empower citizens, and ensure that political systems remain responsive, inclusive, and just (Milakovich, 2021).

Global challenges, such as climate change and cybersecurity, demand innovative governance approaches that facilitate international

cooperation. In this regard, multilateral institutions and cross-sector partnerships are instrumental in navigating competing interests and cultural differences to address these pressing issues. Social innovation, driven by inclusive governance, highlights the importance of engaging diverse stakeholders to meet societal needs effectively (Adanma & Ogunbiyi, 2024). Finally, the relationship between governance and innovation emphasizes the need for ethical considerations and sustainability. Adaptive governance systems that embrace experimentation and continuous learning can effectively integrate innovation while maintaining democratic ideals. Balancing these forces is critical to fostering equitable and resilient societies in an increasingly interconnected and rapidly evolving world (van Assche, Valentinov & Verschraegen, 2021). Whether through AI-driven tools or human-led decision-making processes, governance systems must prioritize inclusivity, accountability, and fairness to resist elite capture and address the challenges of modern governance. By doing so, they can ensure that power remains distributed and that decisions reflect the collective will rather than the interests of a privileged few (Buhmann & Fieseler, 2023).

3. Methodology

The article employs a historical-analytical methodology to examine political systems over time and assess the impact of elite capture on governance. By exploring both historical and contemporary examples, such as ancient Rome, modern democracies, socialism, Islamic governance, China, and monarchies, the author traces recurring patterns of elite dominance across various governance models. The article compares different political systems, including democracy, socialism, Islamic governance, and monarchy, using case studies from the U.S., Romania under Ceaușescu, and Islamic Caliphates. This comparative analysis highlights the ways elites maintain control even within systems that claim to promote equality and representation. Additionally, the article critically examines the disconnect between political ideals—such as equality, representation, and justice—and the reality of elite capture. It explores historical governance failures and how elites manipulate political power, while also identifying instances of resistance to such dominance. The theoretical reflections in the article consider whether more equitable and participatory governance is possible by learning from past successes and failures, suggesting potential pathways for reform and more inclusive political systems.

3.1 Analysis theme

The theme table (1) outlines key concepts related to elite capture in political systems, historical resistance to elites, and the potential of AI robot-governed regimes. Elite capture refers to the concentration of power and wealth within a small, influential group, which undermines democratic principles and often results in governance that favors the elite over the broader population. Historical examples such as ancient Rome, feudal Europe, and the Soviet Union demonstrate how centralized power often marginalizes egalitarian ideals, leaving few avenues for meaningful democratic participation. Despite these challenges, solutions such as decentralized governance and increased democratic participation through transparency and accountability offer potential ways to counteract the concentration of power.

The table (1) also highlights historical efforts to resist elite domination and promote more egalitarian systems, with examples from ancient Athens, Switzerland's direct democracy, and Iceland's 2008 reforms. These examples show that it is possible to implement governance models that empower citizens, though such systems often face the challenge of elite structures reasserting control over time. Similarly, AI robot-governed regimes present an intriguing opportunity for impartial and efficient governance based on data and logic, but concerns over algorithmic biases and lack of cultural understanding present significant challenges. A hybrid model, combining human judgment with AI efficiency, offers a possible solution to this problem. Finally, the article addresses the ongoing challenges in achieving inclusive and accountable governance, suggesting that reforming political systems to limit elite control and encourage citizen involvement is essential for ensuring equitable governance.

Table 1. Themes

Theme	Description	Examples	Challenges	Potential Solutions
Elite Capture in Political Systems	The concentration of power and wealth within a small, influential group undermines democratic ideals.	Ancient Rome, Feudal Europe, U.S. democracy, Soviet Union, Monarchies.	Centralization of power, economic inequalities, influence of corporations, and media control.	Decentralized governance, stronger democratic participation, transparency, and accountability.
Historical Resistance to Elites	Instances where governance systems have resisted elite capture and promoted more egalitarian participation.	Ancient Athens, Swiss direct democracy, Iceland's 2008 reforms, Zapatistas.	Elite structures often reassert control over time, resistance can be temporary.	Participatory models, community governance, citizen involvement in decision-making.
AI Robot-Governed Regimes	The potential of AI robots to govern without human biases, prioritizing data and logic.	Theoretical concept of AI governance.	Potential biases in AI decision-making, lack of empathy, and understanding of human culture.	Hybrid governance models combining human judgment with AI efficiency, transparency, and oversight.
Governance Reform Challenges	The ongoing difficulty in establishing truly inclusive, transparent, and accountable governance.	Systems failing to deliver on promises of equality and justice.	Resistance from entrenched elites, economic influence, and centralization of power.	Reforming political systems to limit elite dominance, ensuring more equitable and participatory decision-making.

4. Results & Discussion

This section explores the complexities of governance systems, focusing on the ways in which elite control has historically shaped political structures and the challenges faced in achieving truly egalitarian governance. It begins by examining how democratic ideals often conflict with the concentration of power in the hands of a few, as seen in modern democracies like the United States. It then looks at how socialist and authoritarian regimes, despite their promises of equality, also succumb to elite dominance. Through historical and contemporary examples, this section highlights the enduring grip of elites, while also considering potential pathways for reform, including the possibility of AI-driven governance systems.

4.1 Rethinking Governance: Power, Elites, and the Path to Reform

Democracy aims to promote equality, transparency, and collective decision-making, yet modern democracies often struggle to fully realize these ideals. In the U.S., for example, elite capture undermines democratic promises, as political campaigns depend on financial donations from corporations and affluent individuals, creating conflicts of interest. Issues like healthcare reform, climate change, and income inequality are often shaped by lobbying from industries that benefit from the status quo (Öhman & Zainulbhai, 2009). Moreover, gerrymandering and voter suppression further distort equal representation, reducing marginalized communities' influence in the democratic process (Glasberg, Armaline & Purkayastha, 2021). Thus, these challenges highlight the tension between democratic ideals and the realities of elite power (Ojo, 2022).

Similarly, socialist ideologies aiming to reduce inequality often fail in practice due to centralized power structures. In Romania, for instance, Nicolae Ceaușescu's rule exemplified how socialist governance can devolve into dictatorship, as power was concentrated in his hands, using repression and control to maintain authority (Stanciu, 2015). This, in turn, reflects how elite capture undermines the foundational promises of equality and shared wealth (Henderson, McNab, & Rózsás, 2005).

In a similar vein, Islamic governance, particularly under the Rightly Guided Caliphs, emphasized justice and public welfare, but later dynastic rule consolidated power within families or clans, straying from early Islamic principles of inclusive leadership (Ghannouchi, 2020). Likewise, China's socialist system, though still officially communist, has become dominated by a centralized, single-party structure, where

decision-making often prioritizes stability over broad public representation (Zeng, 2024). Similarly, in hereditary monarchies, political control remains within family structures, often stifling responsiveness to public needs (Rose & Kavanagh, 1976).

Given these systemic challenges, it is crucial to rethink governance structures. To this end, sustainable models should prioritize true representation and accountability, decentralize power, and emphasize transparency. Governments must be structured to prevent the concentration of authority and include diverse regional perspectives in decision-making. By leveraging technology for greater citizen engagement and focusing on policies that prioritize collective welfare over profit, political systems can evolve toward a more equitable, resilient, and participatory future (Faguet, 2024).

4.2 The Enduring Grip of Elites in Political Systems

The question of whether political systems can escape the grip of elites has been a persistent issue throughout history, reflecting both ancient and modern challenges in governance. From the early days of the Roman Republic, where political power was largely controlled by the patricians, to the contemporary struggles of modern democracies, elites have consistently found ways to consolidate power, often undermining efforts toward egalitarian governance.

In ancient Rome, despite reforms such as the creation of the Tribune of the Plebs, which aimed to give a voice to the common people (plebeians), real control remained in the hands of the patricians. Even with the shift to an imperial structure under figures like Julius Caesar and Augustus, power became further centralized, consolidating the elite's hold on the political system and diminishing the representative structures that had existed. This highlights how, even in systems designed to offer broader participation, elite control often reasserted itself (Athanasiou, 2024). Similarly, in early Islamic governance under the Rashidun Caliphs, there was an emphasis on justice, humility, and consultation, setting a model that resonated with the broader Muslim community. However, after the Rashidun era, the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties introduced dynastic rule, concentrating power within ruling families and elites. This shift, like in Rome, showed that even systems founded on egalitarian principles could fall under the control of elites (Rasheed, 2024).

The feudal system of medieval Europe also mirrored these challenges. Kings, lords, and the church held immense power over peasants and vassals, who had little political voice or mobility. While efforts like the Magna Carta in 1215 sought to limit the monarchy's

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absolute power, commoners still had little influence, showcasing the entrenched nature of elite dominance in governance (Heller, 2024). The American Revolution, which sought to break free from elite rule under a distant monarchy, was revolutionary but still preserved power in the hands of a small, educated, land-owning elite. Despite the rhetoric of equality, early U.S. governance was limited to white, land-owning men, creating an elite-dominated political system that took centuries of reforms to make more inclusive (Bessler, 2021). In the 20th century, communist revolutions promised to dismantle elite power, as seen in the Russian Revolution and the Establishment of the Soviet Union. However, these movements quickly gave rise to new elite structures, with the Communist Party consolidating power and figures like Stalin and Mao exerting total control. These examples illustrate that political movements opposed to elitism can still create new elite hierarchies (Skocpol, 1976).

In modern liberal democracies, the rise of economic elites has been particularly notable, with wealthy donors and corporations wielding significant influence through campaign financing, lobbying, and media control. In the United States, for example, the power of the "billionaire class" raises concerns about the extent to which democratic systems remain free from elite influence (Ciepley, 2023). The Arab Spring of 2010-2012, which sought to overthrow authoritarian regimes in the Middle East, also demonstrated the resilience of elite structures. Although the movements initially promised democratic reforms, many were suppressed, and new power struggles among elites emerged. In Egypt, for instance, initial democratic gains were reversed, illustrating how elite control can endure, even in the face of popular uprisings (Cavatorta, 2012).

These historical examples, alongside more recent instances, reveal that political systems often struggle to escape the grip of elites. Whether through wealth, military power, or party leadership, elites adapt to changing political landscapes, reasserting control and often stifling the potential for truly egalitarian governance. Despite these challenges, there are examples where governance has momentarily resisted elite capture, such as in ancient Athens, Switzerland, and Iceland, showing that it is possible, though difficult, for political systems to reflect the will of the broader populace (United States Institute of Peace, 2023). Nevertheless, the examples of elite capture across history—from Rome to modern democracies—highlight the ongoing challenge of achieving an egalitarian political system, where governance is truly reflective of the people, and not dominated by economic, political, or social elites. These patterns suggest that, while resistance to elite control is possible, maintaining

egalitarian principles in the long term remains a formidable challenge (Gilens & Page, 2014).

4.3 Examples of Governance Resisting Elite Capture

Throughout history, some political systems have resisted elite capture, allowing for broader participation and more egalitarian governance. Although the concentration of power among wealthy elites has consistently undermined political ideals (Rose-Ackerman, 2004), there are notable instances where governance shifted away from elite domination: In ancient Athens, often regarded as the birthplace of democracy, citizens (excluding women, slaves, and non-citizens) participated directly in decision-making through the assembly (Ekklesia) and the council (Boule). Despite deep societal inequalities, particularly concerning slavery, the political system granted ordinary citizens' significant political power. Government offices were filled by lottery, ensuring that power did not remain concentrated in the hands of a small elite. This practice contributed to one of the earliest functioning democracies (May, 2019).

Switzerland has a long-standing tradition of direct democracy, where citizens have significant influence over decision-making. Despite the presence of wealthy elites, Switzerland's system includes regular referendums and initiatives, allowing the public to propose laws and constitutional changes. Mechanisms such as the popular initiative and referendum ensure that decisions reflect the majority's will, rather than elite interests alone (Helfer, Wäspi & Varon e, 2021). After the 2008 financial crisis, Iceland underwent a significant political transformation. The collapse of the banking sector led to widespread dissatisfaction with political and economic elites. In response, Iceland initiated a constitutional reform process in which ordinary citizens played a central role. A national assembly, composed of randomly selected citizens, was tasked with drafting a new constitution. This participatory approach marked a shift toward greater citizen involvement in political decision-making, although the final implementation was delayed (Johnsen, 2014).

The French Revolution of the late 18th century was a pivotal moment in political governance, as the monarchy and aristocracy were overthrown. The revolution sought to dismantle the feudal system and replace it with a republic accountable to the people. The National Assembly, made up of representatives from the Third Estate (commoners), took control, symbolizing a break from centuries of elite-dominated rule. Although the revolution led to instability and the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte, it was a significant attempt to remove power from

elites and place it in the hands of the broader population (Rosenblatt, 2018).

The Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) in Mexico represents a grassroots movement aimed at resisting elite capture. Since the 1990s, the Zapatistas have fought for indigenous rights, land reform, and an end to neoliberal economic policies favoring the wealthy. In southern Mexico, the Zapatistas have established autonomous regions governed by decentralized, community-based decision-making. This system distributes power among local communities, resisting control by political or economic elites (Reyes Godelmann, 2014).

The Paris Commune of 1871, though short-lived, is another example where power was placed in the hands of ordinary citizens. After the Franco-Prussian War, workers in Paris rose against the French government, establishing a socialist government with radical democratic ideals. The Commune aimed to decentralize power and place it in the hands of the working class. Though violently suppressed, it remains a historic example of a system where governance was not controlled by elites (Jones, 2018). In modern democracies, local governance structures such as participatory budgeting and community councils give ordinary citizens a direct role in decision-making, bypassing elite control. For example, Porto Alegre in Brazil has implemented participatory budgeting, allowing citizens to decide how public funds are allocated. Similarly, local town hall meetings in parts of the United States empower communities to make decisions on matters that directly affect them, ensuring governance at the local level remains closer to the people (Peabody, 2024).

These examples demonstrate that it is possible for governance to reflect the will of the broader populace, even if temporarily. However, maintaining these egalitarian principles over the long term is often challenging, as elite structures tend to reassert themselves. Despite this, these instances provide valuable lessons for future governance models that aim to resist elite control, particularly in the context of evolving technological governance models such as robot-governed systems (Demmers et al., 2004).

4.4 Challenges and Potential of AI Robot-Governed Regimes

The concept of AI-robot-governed regimes raises intriguing questions about the future of governance, particularly regarding efficiency, impartiality, and transparency. Proponents argue that AI robots, powered by advanced algorithms, could make decisions based solely on data and logic, free from the biases and emotional influences

often associated with human political leaders (Hurtado, Londoño & Valada, 2021). Such a system could offer more consistent, equitable, and efficient decision-making, appealing to those disillusioned with human governance's flaws. Furthermore, AI robots could be programmed to prioritize the well-being of all citizens, acting as neutral governing forces compared to human leaders whose actions are often influenced by personal interests or external pressures (Torresen, 2018).

However, the idea of fully replacing human governance with AI robots presents several challenges. One major concern is that the algorithms governing AI robots could inherit biases from the data on which they are trained. These biases may reflect societal prejudices, such as discrimination based on race, gender, or socioeconomic status, embedded in historical data. If AI robots are trained on biased data drawn from past human decisions, they could perpetuate or even exacerbate these biases, reinforcing systemic inequalities in governance. Thus, while AI robots may appear impartial, their decision-making could still reflect biases unless their programming and training data are thoroughly scrutinized and adjusted (Rose-Ackerman, 2004).

Moreover, AI robots may struggle with the complexities of human emotions, ethics, and cultural contexts that are often essential for effective governance. Although they can process and make decisions based on data, the nuances of human societies require empathy, moral reasoning, and an understanding of diverse perspectives. Issues like social justice, personal freedoms, and cultural values are areas where AI robots might struggle to provide meaningful solutions that take into account these subjective dimensions. Therefore, while AI governance may offer certain advantages, it is essential to recognize the potential biases and limitations arising from their programming and training data (Booyse & Scheepers, 2023; Oritsegbemi, 2023).

5. Conclusion

Overcoming elite capture remains a critical challenge to achieving truly democratic, socialist, or just governance systems. While the concept of AI-robot-governed regimes offers the promise of efficiency and impartiality, it raises significant concerns about biases in decision-making and the potential for discrimination. For AI to be a viable solution, its algorithms must be transparent, and its processes must be under constant oversight to avoid perpetuating existing inequalities. A hybrid model, combining human judgment with AI efficiency, could strike a balance between accountability and reduced corruption. However, this approach carries its own risks, including the potential for AI to centralize power in

ways that undermine the very principles of fairness and equality it aims to promote. Whether in human-led or AI-assisted governance, the centralization of power remains a persistent threat, highlighting the need for continuous vigilance and reform.

Despite efforts to reform political systems—whether through constitutional changes, uprisings, or social movements—the challenge of elite capture continues to undermine the ideals of equality and representation. From ancient Rome to modern democracies like the U.S., and even in socialist states like the Soviet Union, the centralization of power has hindered the realization of truly participatory governance. Even systems that have made strides toward resisting elite dominance, such as ancient Athens and Switzerland, demonstrate the difficulty of maintaining egalitarian principles in the long term. Emerging governance models, like AI-robot regimes, while offering potential for impartial decision-making, must be carefully examined to ensure they do not perpetuate the very inequalities they seek to address. Ultimately, whether human-led or AI-assisted, achieving a truly democratic system requires continuous commitment to transparency, inclusivity, and accountability to prevent the concentration of power and ensure governance remains by and for the people.

The implications for society and political systems are profound. As political systems continue to grapple with the issue of elite capture, the need for reforms that prioritize decentralization, transparency, and citizen participation becomes even more critical. A governance model that truly represents the people must be designed to resist the concentration of power and ensure that decisions reflect the collective will, rather than the interests of a privileged few. For political systems to adapt to the challenges of the modern world, particularly with the potential introduction of AI technologies, there must be a careful balance between technological efficiency and human-centered values. Emphasizing transparency, inclusivity, and accountability at every level of governance, from local councils to national institutions, is essential in creating a political landscape that is resilient, equitable, and truly democratic. The future of governance lies in finding ways to foster collaboration between human judgment and advanced technologies, ensuring that power remains distributed and that the voices of all citizens are heard and respected.

This study faces limitations in capturing the full complexities of elite capture across diverse political systems. While historical examples offer insights, they may not fully address contemporary issues or technological advancements like AI. The focus on theoretical concepts may also overlook practical challenges in implementing hybrid governance models.

Furthermore, the potential consequences of AI integration, such as new forms of centralization or bias, require further exploration. Lastly, this paper serves as a critique of elite control over societies.

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