

Chapter 6

AI-Based Chatbots as Civil Servants: A Utopia or a Dystopia?

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ABSTRACT

In this chapter, governments use of artificial intelligence-based (AI-based) chatbots analysis with the perspective of utopian or dystopian insights for digital competencies of governments. Thus, the aim of this chapter is to identify the main characteristics of the use of AI-based chatbots in government and to determine whether this issue should be evaluated with a utopian or dystopian approach. The rapid development of chatbots has started to create a new civil servant mechanism in digital government. Civil servant, public interest-value, public service and technological determinism that chatbots, which can be seen as the determinant of digital competencies as the main elements of the digital government. This dimension will create for the state and society a utopian community, while the potential risks and problems related to cyber centralisation are dystopian. In this context, chatbots of selected countries in digital government services are compared with evaluation.

INTRODUCTION

Recent developments in artificial intelligence (AI) technologies have led to the socio-economic transformation of societies and governments. Developing in a multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary manner by directly affecting many sectors from economy to health, education to security, AI are technologies that govern-

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ments should also use and at the same time keep under their administration. In order for governments to keep pace with the private sector and society and to meet the requirements of the digital age, the use of AI in the public sector is becoming a essentially, not an option. Especially considering the generative AIs that have emerged due to the developments in the field of natural language processing of AI, it is a reflection of this necessity that governments also aim to benefit from these technologies. And also governments determined their regulatory frameworks for AI Technologies. The use of AI-based chatbots in the governments should also be evaluated within this framework. In digital era, chatbots used in the governments are turning into civil servants and transforming the understanding of public service.

Academic literature on the practice of AI-based chatbots in digital government have increased especially in the last 5 years. However, it is understood that there are not enough studies on the many different dimensions, benefits and harms of chatbots and that different aspects of the existing literature should be re-evaluated (Cortes-Cediel et. al., 2023). Similarly, classification (Makasi et. al., 2021) and comparative studies on chatbots in digital government are also limited (Van Noordt & Misuraca, 2022). Moreover, there is no academic study to date that addresses the characteristics of chatbots towards AI and their effects on the state and society in the context of their utopian and dystopian features. And also the issue of enhancing digital competencies through AI-based chatbots is not sufficiently covered in the literature (Bilan et. al., 2023). In addition, there are just a few studies on the civil service of chatbots (Li & Wang, 2024) and their effects on bureaucracy also side of public interest and public value, which makes it important to examine this area (Sevinc Cubuk et. al., 2019). Studies in this area are mostly aimed at improving customer service management and efficiency-effectiveness, similar to those used in the private sector (Chen et. al., 2024). However, examining these aspects provides an incomplete framework for the development of investigations into AI. This framework, which can be characterized as a continuation of New Public Management (NPM), needs to be changed and different elements need to be taken into consideration to pave the way for a paradigmatic revolution. With these sides of AI-based chatbots using in digital governments needs a complementary analysis for delivery of public service.

AI-based chatbots are used by many governments as digital instruments in the delivery of public services. From sectoral public organizations (Gabarron et.al., 2020) to smart cities (Mohasses, 2019); local governments (Y. Wang et. al., 2022) to federal states (Chen et. al., 2024); governments (de Souza Monteiro et. al., 2023) to global organizations (UN, 2024), chatbots are literally beginning to turn into civil servants. Especially, from the digital government approach, this situation have seen as a necessity for digital competency of governments (Abbas et. al., 2022). But this necessity will become major issues for societies. In particular, governments authoritarian tendencies (digital authoritarianism), excessive network and data

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