

Seminar Title:**Can Machines Negotiate a Government? LLM Agents, Coalition Formation, and the Validity Problem in Computational Social Science****Abstract:**

In most parliamentary democracies no single party governs alone, and coalition partners must negotiate a joint programme of government. Formal models reduce these negotiations to points in an abstract policy space; in reality they are arguments about text. This seminar presents work in which large language model agents, endowed with seat shares and the full text of party manifestos, negotiate government programmes in natural language. The harder question is how we would know such simulations are valid rather than retrieval from training data. The seminar will set out the validation architecture for evaluating such simulations, including out-of-sample cases from the 2026 elections, and argue that this is a central methodological problem facing computational social science.