

Replacing irreplaceability

algorithmic profiling, AI, and the fear of fragmentation.

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10 points on replacement and irreplaceability

Edited volume with Niall Martin:

The Replaceability Paradigm:

*Replacement and Irreplaceability
from Dante to DeepDream*

1. dread of replacement
2. anachronistic fear
3. the great replacement
4. battle of irreplaceability
5. transforming fear
6. individual – population
7. old model: discipline
8. new model: security
9. normation – normalization
10. old fears, new fears

1: dread of being replaced & enslaved by AI

- [ChatGPT: the friendly face of your AI **replacement**](#)
- [AI is not here to **replace** us](#)
- [AI will **colonize** the galaxy by the 2050s according to the father of deep learning](#)
- [AI and **privacy**: everything you need to know](#)
- [AI vs humans: why the **slave** could soon become the master](#)

2: a modern fear in contemporary times

Alongside this liberalistic ideal grew up in the nineteenth century from Goethe and the Romantics, on the one hand, and from the **economic division of labour**, on the other, the further tendency, namely, that individuals who had been liberated from their historical bonds sought now to distinguish themselves from one another. No longer was it the 'general human quality' in every individual but rather his qualitative uniqueness and **irreplaceability** that now became the criteria of his **value**.

Georg Simmel, *Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben*, 1903, p. 339.

3: The Great Replacement Theory

The Great Replacement Theory is a white nationalist far-right conspiracy theory disseminated by French author Renaud Camus. The original theory states that, with the complicity or cooperation of "**replacist**" elites, the ethnic French and white European populations at large are being demographically and culturally replaced with non-white peoples—especially from Muslim-majority countries—through mass migration, demographic growth and a drop in the birth rate of white Europeans.

Source: wikipedia

4: a battle over irreplaceability

- The modern subject is the irreplaceable subject
- Enlightenment and its shadow side
- Who qualifies as irreplaceable and when?

Unlike the concentration camp, the gulag, and the killing field, which had as their intended end the extermination of a population, the Atlantic trade created millions of corpses, but **as a corollary to the making of commodities.**

Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self Making in Nineteenth-Century America*

5: a transformation in the fear of replacement

- At first afraid of being replaced by others in the working place
- Replacement through AI positions AI as the irreplaceable future
- Economics of replaceability
- Spectre of the irreplaceable from the future sparks new fears

6: from the individual to the population

- But these metaphors of (ir)replaceability are anachronistic
- New power formations adhere to a different logic
- Where the old logic thinks from the perspective of the irreplaceable individual, the new logic thinks from the perspective of the population

7: old model - discipline

- Plague as example
- Quarantine as the logic of countering the plague
- How to get people to conform to a norm – how to make people normal

8: security & smallpox

One will get the “**normal**” **distribution**; of cases of and deaths due to smallpox (*la petite vérole*) for every age, in each region, town, and different areas of the town, and in terms of different occupations. Thus one will have the normal, **overall curve**, and different curves considered to be normal. What technique will be used in relation to this? It will be to try to reduce the most unfavorable, deviant **normalities in relation to the normal, general curve, to bring them in line with this normal, general curve.**

Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 1976, p. 62.

Input Layer

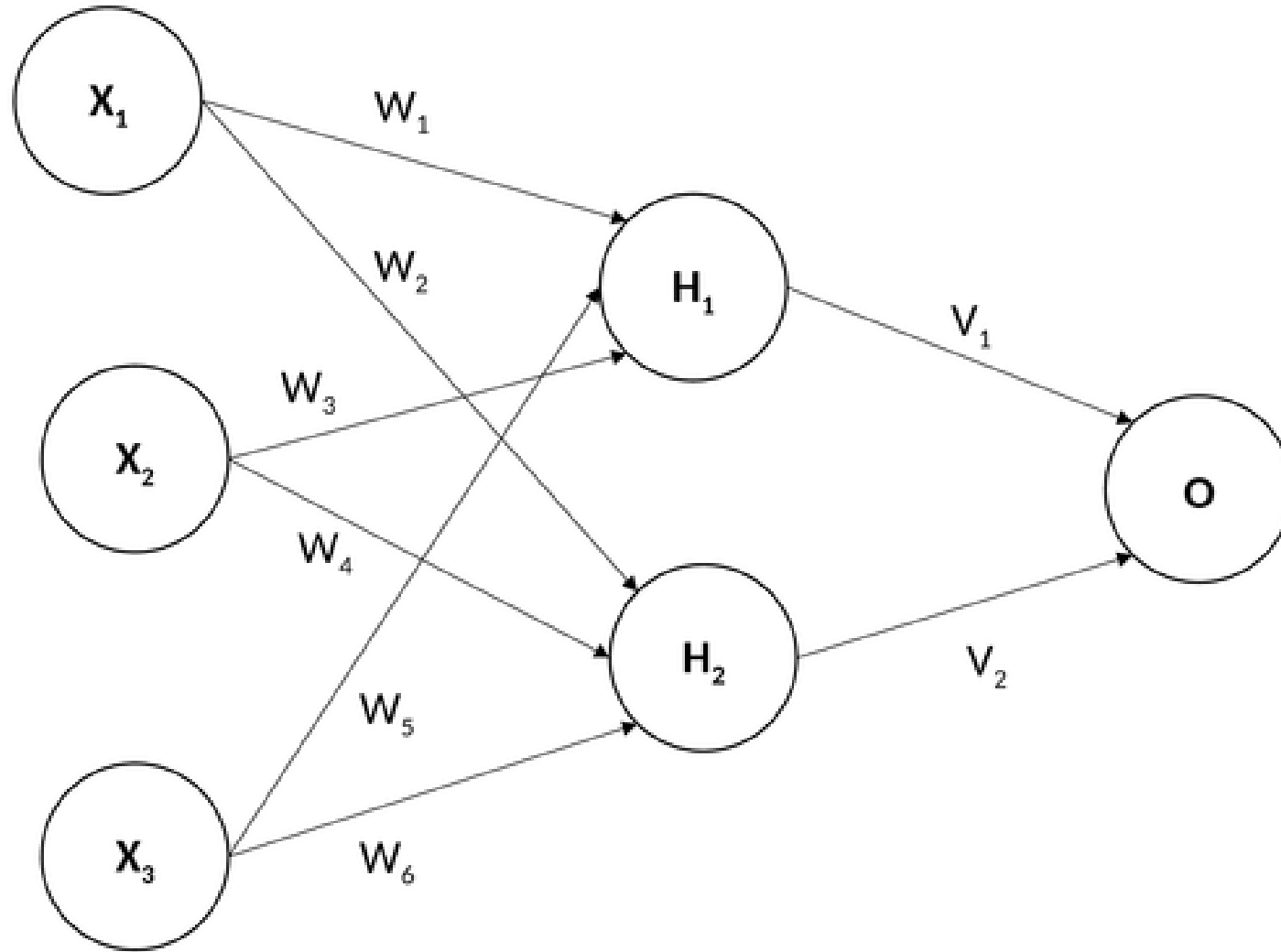
X_n = Predictor Variables

Hidden Layer

H_n = Hidden Nodes

Output Layer

O = Observed Outcome



Network Weights

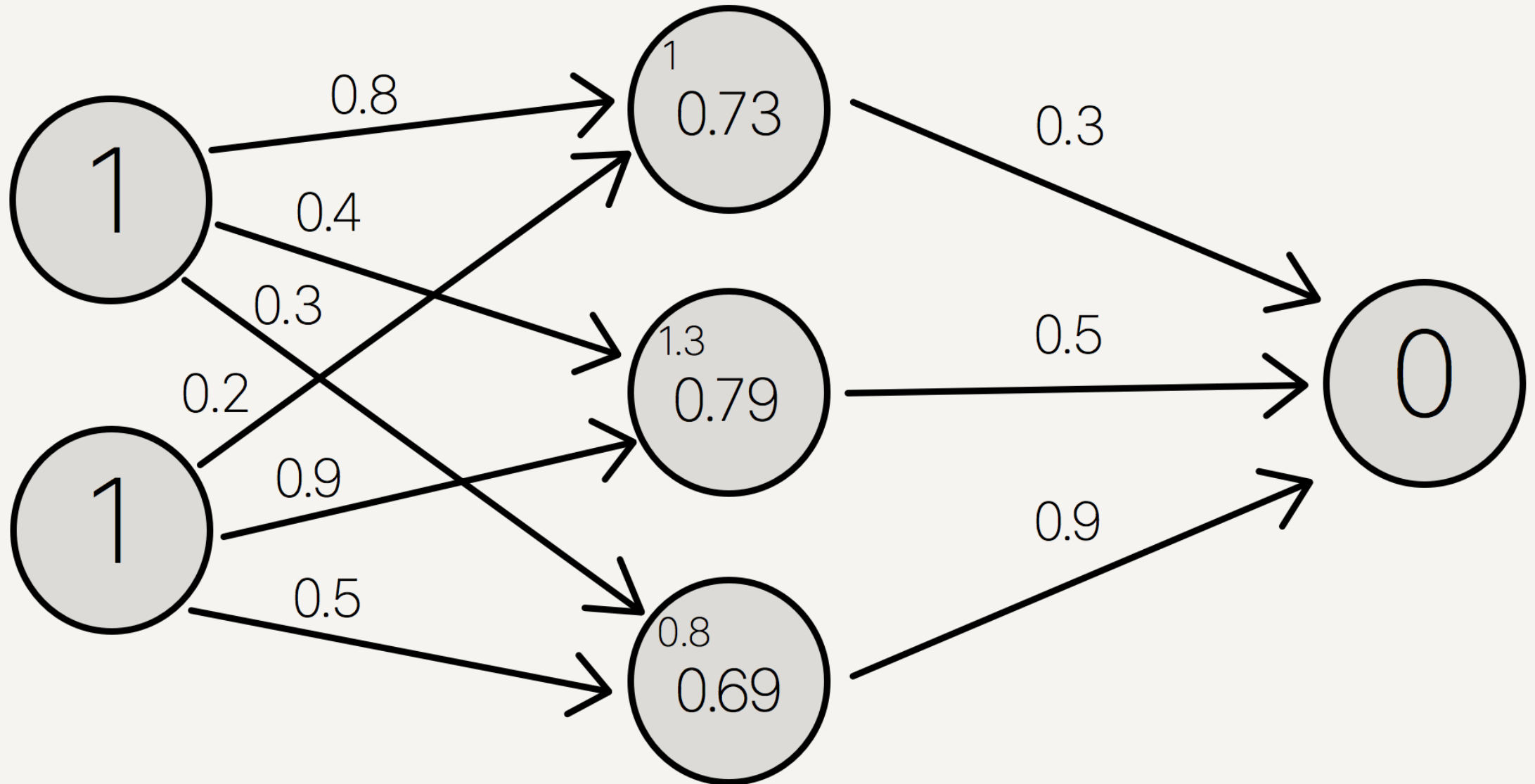
W_n = Connection weight from input to hidden layer

V_n = Connection weight from hidden to output layer

INPUT

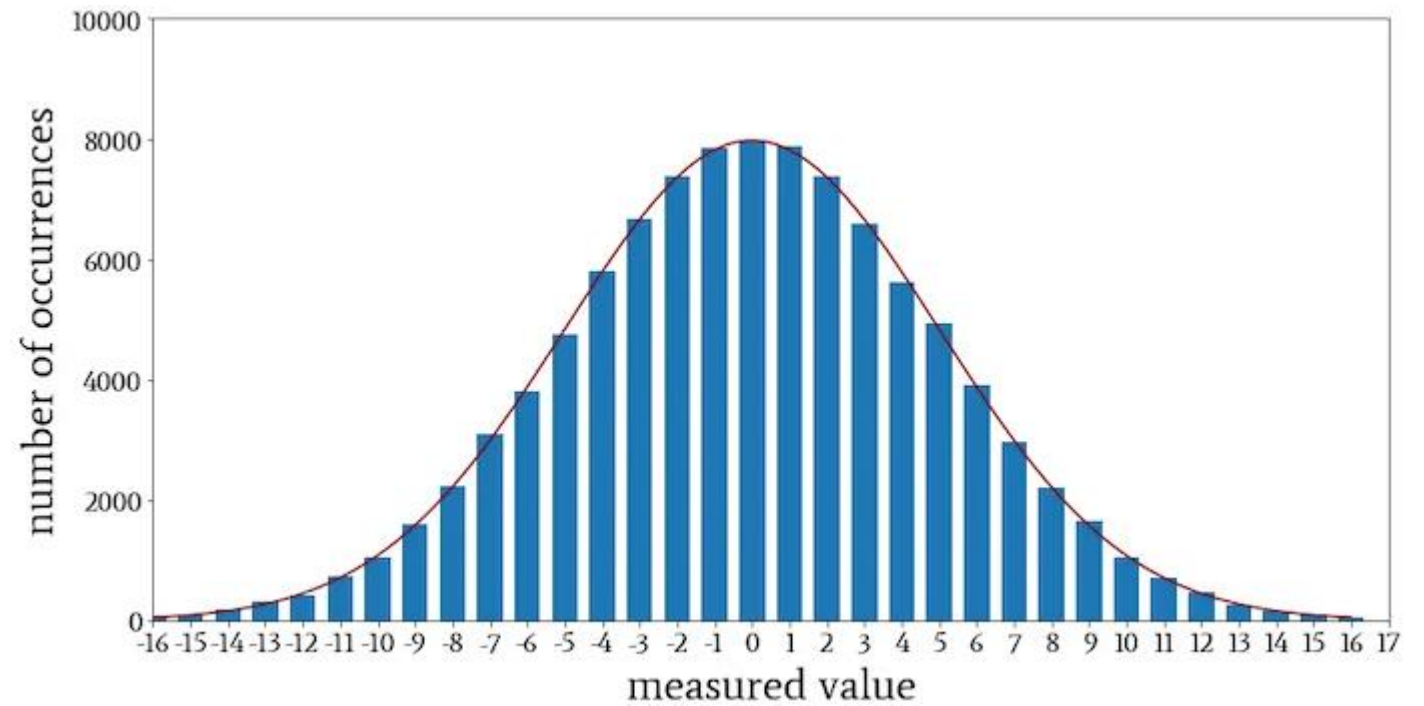
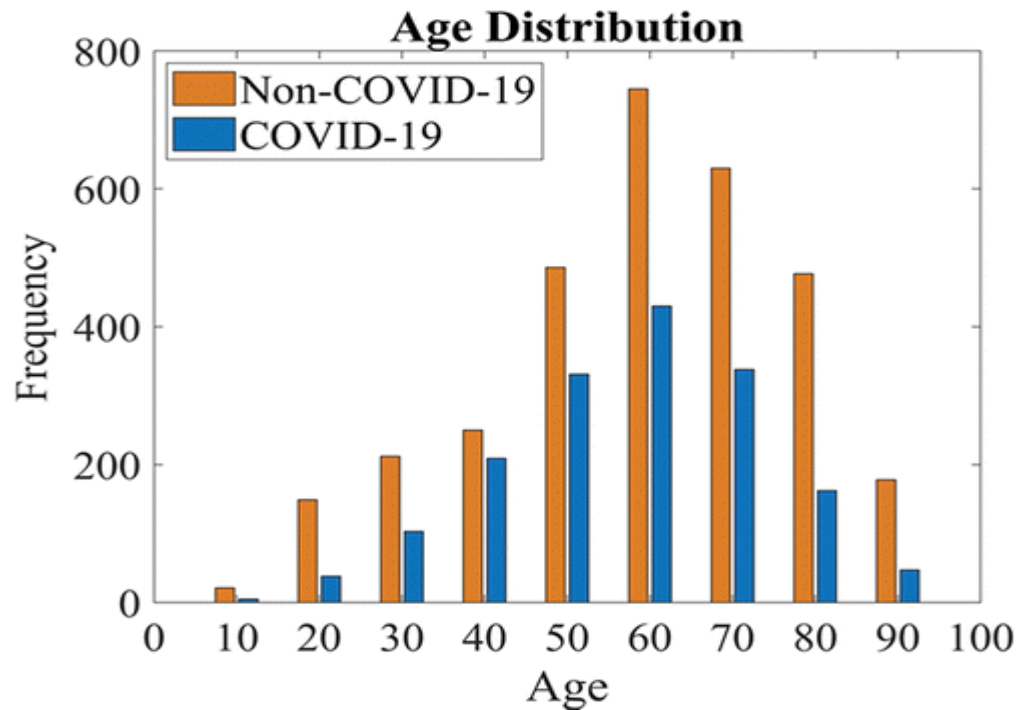
HIDDEN

OUTPUT



9: from normation to normalisation

- The distribution that we find in the population appears first
- The norm follows the normal



9: from normation to normalization

In the disciplines one started from a norm, and it was in relation to the training carried out with reference to the norm that the normal could be distinguished from the abnormal. Here, instead, we have a plotting of the normal and the abnormal, of different curves of normality, and the operation of normalization consists in establishing an interplay between these different distributions of normality and [in] acting to bring the most unfavorable in line with the more favorable. **So we have here something that starts from the normal and makes use of certain distributions considered to be, if you like, more normal than the others, or at any rate more favorable than the others. These distributions will serve as the norm.** The norm is an interplay of differential normalities.

Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 1976, p. 63.

10: alternative fears to replacement

- The fear of replacement is not attuned to the logic of security and management at the level of the population
- We are impacted by AI first and foremost by way of government and management at the level of the population
- Not at the level of replacement, enslavement, colonialism or privacy