

Algorithms and natality.

An Arendtian
perspective on algorithmic
policy

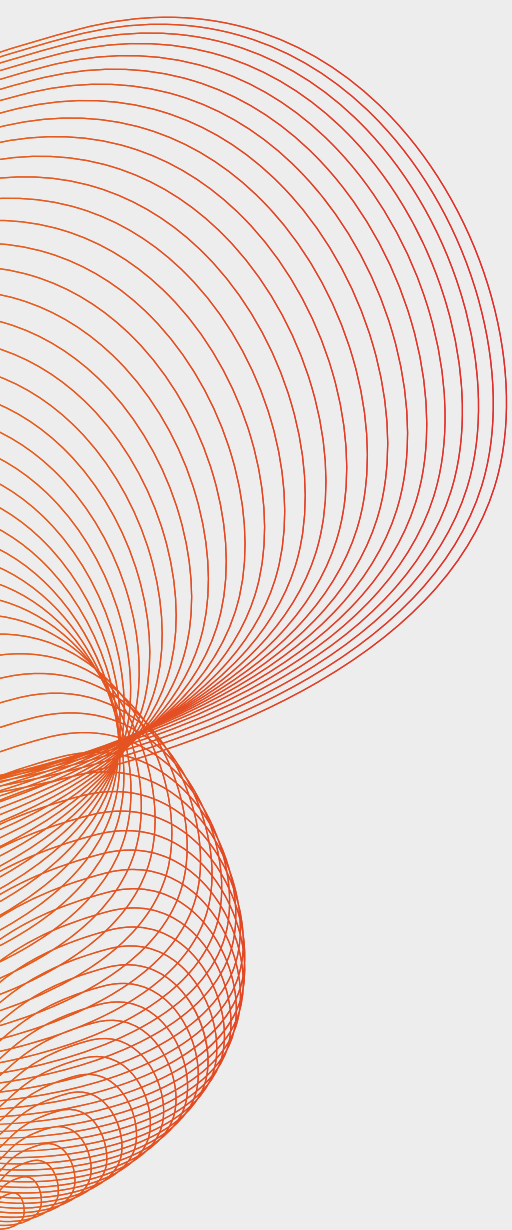
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NextGen@ICANN78,
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Hamburg



Goodmorning everybody!



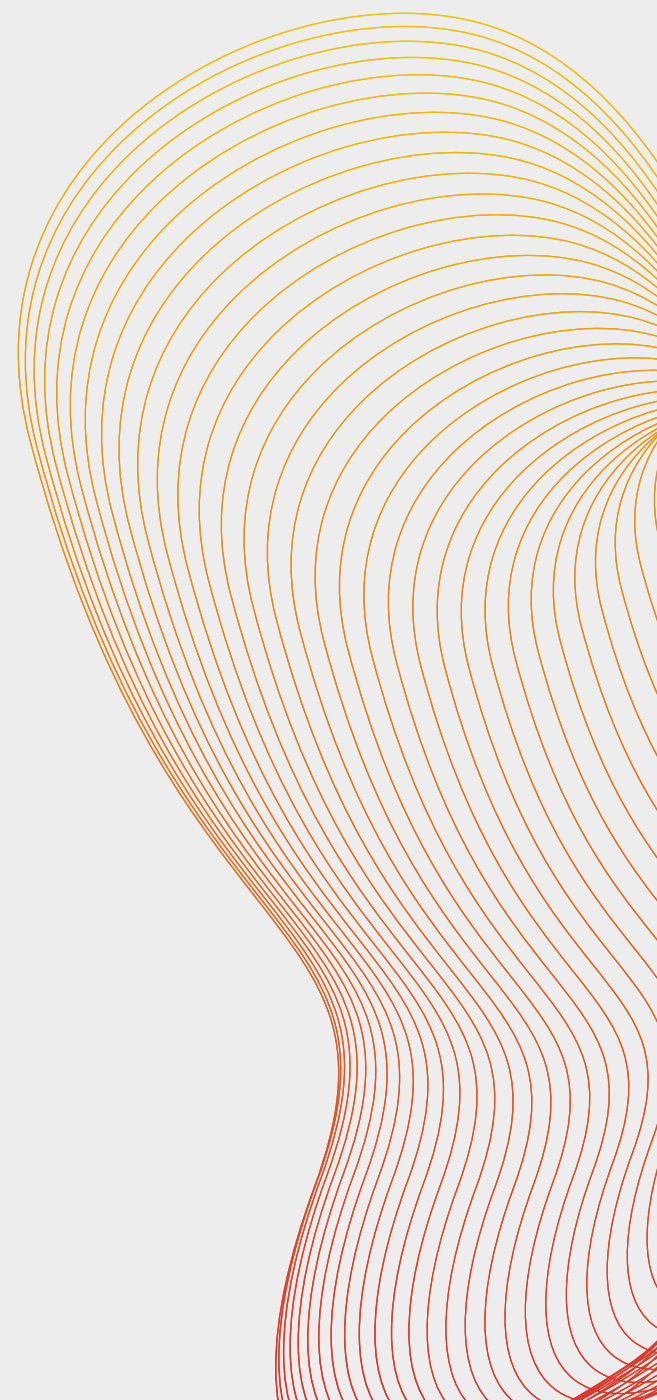
- BA student in **Philosophy, Politics and Economics** @Ca' Foscari University, Venice.
- **Digital Humanities** with Ca' Foscari Honors College.
- Active in Digital Citizenship and Policy in the EU.
- Interested in STS, and Digital Innovation Policies.



Why?



- Algorithms are **sequence of steps** aiming at a goal. Learning technologies use **data** to acquire skills.
 - Algorithmic decision-making is increasingly **common**.
 - What should be the relationship between AI and **public decision-making**?
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- **Machine Learning** can be used to distribute public **benefits** and **burdens** (ex. criminal justice)
 - When it is **right** to use AI to take **decisions**?
 - Algorithms have a strong temporal vector, leaning in the past.
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Toolbox:

Arendt's natality

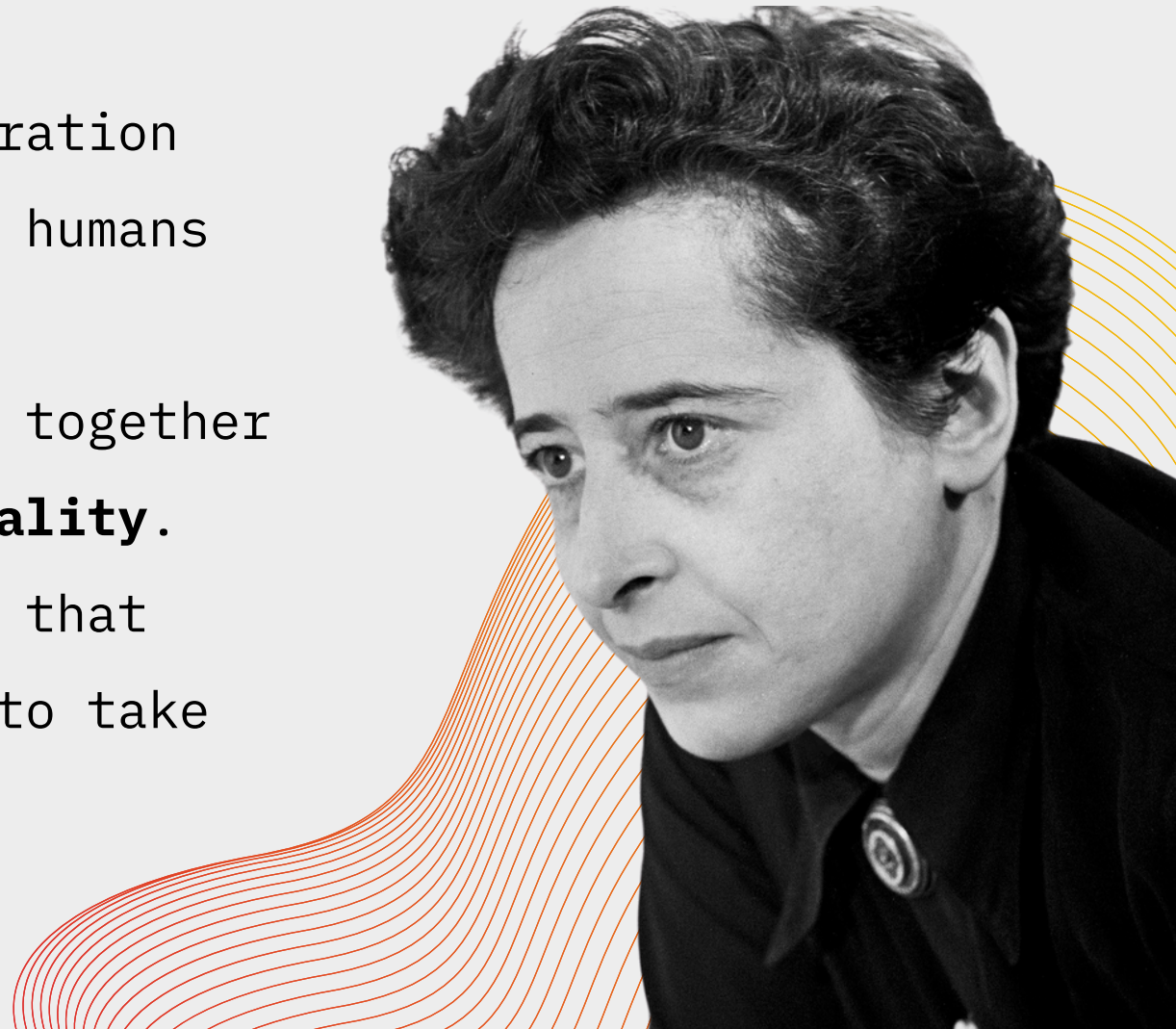
- Arendt is a **prominent figure** of 20th century political theory
- In *The Human Condition* (1958): **human birth** is the **key** reality of political life.
- Human action is a “**miracle**”, the possibility of performing something **unexpected** and **improbable**.

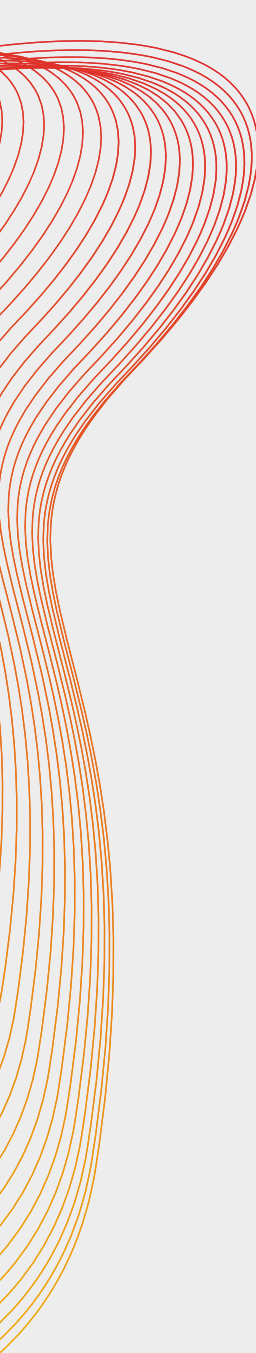


Toolbox:

Arendt's natality / 2

- Politics is...
- more than administration
- the realm in which humans appear as **unique**.
- is how humans come together in **liberty** and **equality**.
- related to **speech**, that makes it possible to take shared **decisions**.

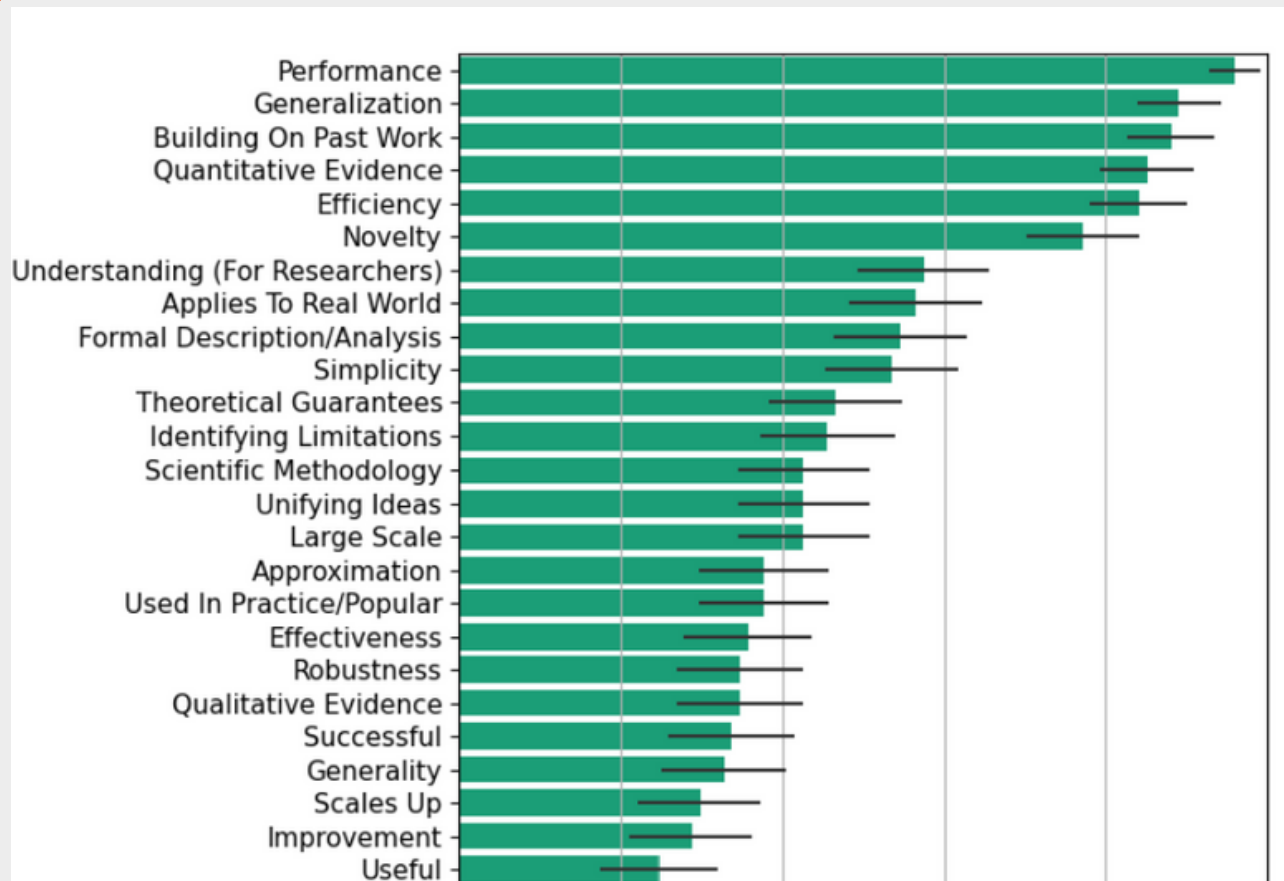




Machine learning and education

- ML can be a useful tool: dropout, moderation of MOOC forums, ITS.
- Known unknowns (bias, opacity etc).
- Unknown unknowns:
 - Evaluation and contested definition;
 - Personalization and determinism;
 - Limits to agency of teachers, students, top-down proceduralization.





Birhane, Abeba, et al. "The values encoded in machine learning research." Proceedings of the 2022 ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency. 2022.

Natality as normative principle

Mislocated efficiency

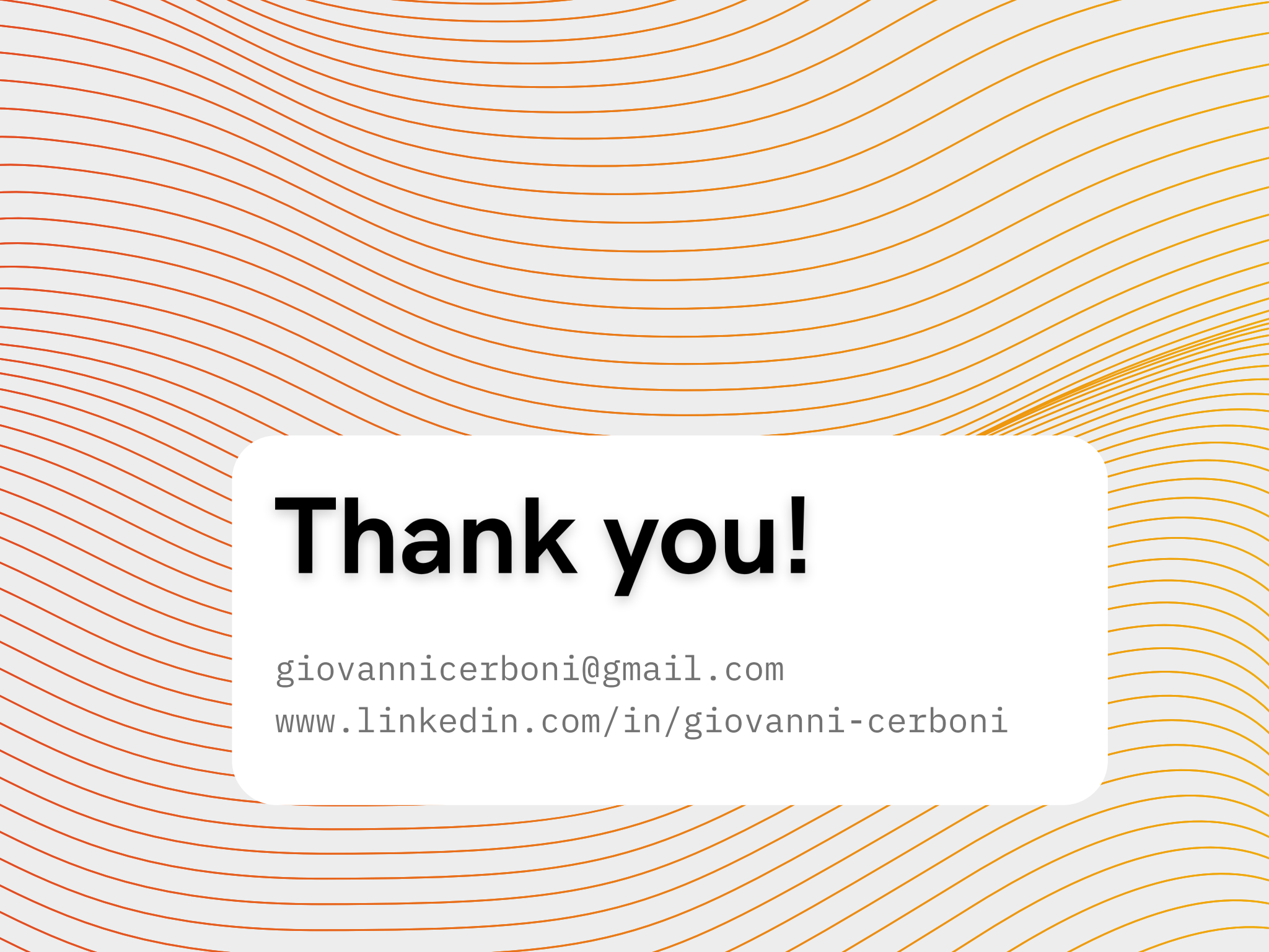
- Schooling is not only a process to be optimized, but a relational environment.

Protecting agency: speech and action

- Avoiding over-operationalization and generalization.

Protecting the future

- ML can solidify the status quo.



Thank you!

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