

Nordic AI Meet 2026

O1. AI in Democracy & Society (Wed 10:15-11:15)

1. Articulations of AI in Swedish Parliamentary Discourse, 2010–2025

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Abstract: AI is often presented as a technological inevitability rather than a political choice. If this view takes hold, questions that are genuinely open – e.g., how to weigh (economic) efficiency against equality, or the value of data against personal privacy – get settled without deliberation. Parliaments are key areas where framings of AI are both made explicit and open for contestation. This work-in-progress paper asks how AI has been articulated as a political issue in the Swedish parliament, and whether that articulation depends on who is doing the articulating.

Our corpus consists of 5,680 parliamentary documents mentioning AI, drawn from the Swedish parliament's open archive and covering roughly 2010 to 2025. Two genres are of particular interest. Government bills express the position of the executive and are drafted in order to become law. Private members' motions are proposals from individual members of parliament (MPs); they rarely pass, but they show what elected representatives want on the agenda.

We analyse the material in two complementary ways. First, we use computational text analysis to map the vocabulary of the debate, grouping terms that consistently occur in similar contexts in order to identify the themes around which parliamentary talk about AI is organised. Second, we compare the two genres directly: how each frames AI, which policy areas it ties AI to, which actors it calls upon to act, how its attention is distributed over time, and how positively or negatively it speaks about the technology.

Our early findings reverse the expectation we started from. We assumed a top-down process, through which AI had been pushed onto the political agenda by the government. Instead, MPs emerge as the enthusiasts. Their motions frame AI predominantly as an opportunity, while government bills strike a far more even balance between promise and concern. Motions tie AI to every policy area we examined more densely than bills do, with the widest gaps in innovation, education and labour. They call on the Swedish state and government to act considerably more often, whereas bills point towards the EU and international frameworks. Government documents led the discussion until around 2017, after which motions take over and now dominate it. Finally, a sentiment analysis shows that motions are significantly more positive in tone (+1.25 against +0.67; $t = 2.92$, $p = 0.004$).

Taken together, the results suggest that motions treat AI as a cause to be championed while bills treat it as one policy area among many – and that political enthusiasm for AI is concentrated in the documents that carry the least binding force. These findings remain preliminary, and our measures of framing and tone are still being refined. We present the work at this stage in order to receive feedback on both.