

HUMANITY AT THE CROSSROADS. TO “UNINSTALL” ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE OR TO INVEST MORE IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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ABSTRACT

The answer to the dilemma in the title is evident: artificial intelligence cannot be decommissioned, just as states or multinational corporations will continue to invest in artificial intelligence. This paper, far from having a technical approach due to considerations related to the competence of the authors, actually aims to highlight the now immutable character of artificial intelligence through the spectrum of the indisputable benefits it generates in the most varied fields of activity, excluding, however, the thaumaturgic character promoted by the apostles of technology. It is an analysis of democracy marked by the intervention, if not sometimes the intrusion, of artificial intelligence, but also a review of the attempts to regulate artificial intelligence precisely so as not to cancel the progress made by the democratic evolution of society, with concrete reference to human rights.

KEYWORDS: artificial intelligence, democracy, global issue, implications, regulation

1. Introduction

Artificial intelligence is one of the biggest challenges facing Humanity nowadays. In an extremely turbulent and disturbed time, generated by elements converging towards a possible general crisis, artificial intelligence surprises daily, penetrating our existence as individuals, professional and business communities, nations, and even transnational communities.

Initially developed through a programming language built on the human archetype of what intelligence and behavior meant, artificial intelligence is the new

industrial revolution, just as steam power or electricity or information were, in turn, the foundation of economic development and social progress. This Fourth Industrial Revolution, which leaps cutting-edge technologies (not only artificial intelligence but Internet, quantum communication, biotechnology, virtual reality), is changing the world we live in at a rapid pace (from the way we communicate to the way we work, as people and economies), so that the global social system is reshaped, mainly in political, economic, military and social aspects (Schwab & Davis, 2018; Chen, 2023).

The issue of artificial intelligence presents many challenges for national governments and intergovernmental organizations, multinational corporations, and existing global discussion forums. The benefits of introducing AI in the economy (enhance productivity, increase efficiency, improve decision-making process), society (in sectors such as medicine, education, art, leisure), and the military (gathering intelligence, guiding vehicles, preparing for battle) are already recognized and promoted. By introducing into the analysis aspects regarding the nature of the political regime or the instruments used by states in promoting foreign policy, AI also generates competition, or even confrontation, to establish a new world order. To conclude this aspect, the opportunities and challenges generated by the implementation of AI must be taken into account in the design of strategies, regardless of the nature of the regulated field, to prevent surprises, manage disruptive effects, and ensure the necessary conditions for resilience.

2. Research Methodology

In order to elaborate the paper, we resorted to observing the security environment from the perspective of transformations determined by the intervention, sometimes aggressive, of artificial intelligence on the organization and functioning of the global system, but also of the concerns it generates at the level of the most varied actors but emblematic of the category of gender to which they belong. In this sense, documents issued during and after conglomerate meetings with global impact were studied.

The two research objectives aim at:

- Perception of artificial intelligence as a global issue.
- Identify efforts to regulate artificial intelligence.

3. The Context of Framing the Problem Discussed. AI and Global Order

In terms of societies' functioning and the ability of governments to lead them, including by stimulating the democratic participation of citizens in the decision-making process, there are some great fears that not only states as individual decision-makers must face but also Humanity itself. In this context, we are talking about: the possibility that artificial intelligence will surpass human intelligence and escape from human control, thus reaching a catastrophe regarding the human civilization's destiny; the worry that machines will replace people in (almost) all fields of activity; enhancing the power of governments in terms of (absolute) control over their citizens and possibly over foreigners on their territory; the transformation of international relations and the identification of AI as a tool to ensure/consolidate economic and military preeminence (Wright, 2018; Valori, 2023; Vijayakumar, 2023). It is already noticeable that the global order is changing under the effect of artificial intelligence, thus becoming a game changer. Concerns regarding the regulation of artificial intelligence, the potentiation of positive consequences, and the reduction of negative or insufficiently known ones already fill the agendas of governments and international organizations, as well as of big companies and "*debating clubs and informal decision-making structures*". This extraordinary interest posed by such diverse actors demonstrates that AI has become a matter of global interest that requires a consensual approach.

Referring to the standard term ("leitmotif") by which each era summarizes its beliefs and explains the algorithm that ensures the functioning of the universe, Henry Kissinger considered that science and technology are "*the governing concepts of our age*" (Kissinger, 2015). In the context of the historical perspective on the international system and the analysis of the international security environment

transformation, the role of technology (or industrial revolutions) as an engine of progress, but also a generator of power in the competition between nations, has been a constant in the field of research. Any international order changes under the impulse of economic and military factors, both being amplified by a third one, the technological one. Access to technology determines the position occupied by each state in the regional and international hierarchy. A new global order is being discussed; states are no longer the only actors involved in structuring the system. We live in the era of global governance “that involves formal and informal mechanisms as well as governmental and non-governmental bodies” (Heywood, 2015). The diversity of the phenomena that influence the operation of the system and thus become topics of debate from the sub-national level to the global level, generating concerns for public and private actors alike, imposed the transition from “international” to “global” of the analysis and action framework. This does not mean a diminution of the sovereign state's importance but emphasizes the system's dynamics and complexity under the challenge of problems whose solution no longer belongs exclusively to the state's authority.

Artificial intelligence is not, per se, a pressing global problem, as are food insecurity or military conflicts, human rights violations, or authoritarianism, which generate concern through the very meaning of terms that suggest deterioration. The concern is related to the risks that may emerge when: these systems grow more advanced (surpassing and dominating human intelligence); great powers or corporations engage in fierce competition to gain supremacy, including by improper use of AI (intentional or accidentally destructive) in order to obtain a gross manipulation and massive control of the population, for the exclusive pursuit of economic profit and political benefits; or when the artistic

creation is perverted into products that may be perfect but incapable of conveying emotion. Representative from this point of view is the statement of May 30, 2023, contained in a single sentence, by some scientists specializing in AI, but also by some public figures: “*Mitigating the risk of extinction from AI should be a global priority alongside other societal-scale risks such as pandemics and nuclear war*” (Center for AI Safety, n.d.).

Despite the indisputable social, economic, military, and, not least, political benefits obtained by implementing AI systems, the technology raises, at the same time, serious questions regarding its “morality” and the ultimate limit of applicability beyond which would start to generate destructive effects:

- “AI Poses 'Risk of Extinction,' Industry Leaders Warn” (Roose, 2023).
- “Robot Developer Warns Artificial Intelligence Developments Could Lead to Catastrophe” (Pressman, 2017).
- “AI expert's dire warning: Uncontrollable robot intelligence could wipe out humans” (StudyFinds, 2024).
- “Is the AI apocalypse actually coming? What life could look like if robots take over” (Strick, 2023).
- “Five ways AI might destroy the world: ‘Everyone on Earth could fall over dead in the same second’” (Rose, 2023).
- “ChatGPT creator says there's 50% chance AI ends in ‘doom’” (Cuthbertson, 2023).
- “The Future of AI Is War” (Klare, 2023).

Like any other global concern, artificial intelligence generates emulation in statements and favors taking positions and commitments that entail institutional and political constructions. The year 2024 has already offered, in just the first two months, two moments of global dialogue (through the variety of participants) on topics of global interest, among them AI.

3.1. World Economic Forum

The tagline under the auspices of the annual meeting in Davos in January 2024 of the World Economic Forum was Transformation – a fact explicable by the undeniable reality of the avalanche of opportunities and challenges to which nations and states are obliged, in order to survive or to develop themselves, to capitalize or mitigate them, depending on the means available and the strategic objectives pursued. The four key themes put on the agenda of this global public-private dialogue framework were (World Economic Forum, n.d.):

- Achieving Security and Cooperation in a Fractured World.
 - Creating Growth and Jobs for a New Era.
 - A Long-Term Strategy for Climate, Nature and Energy.
 - Artificial Intelligence as a Driving Force for the Economy and Society.
- The main aspects of the discussions on this topic were the ways in which AI can benefit all, finding the legislative balance between innovation and societal risks, and the way in which AI interferes with other transformative technologies.

3.2. Munich Security Conference

A globally recognized forum, the Conference has a significant impact on international security policy as a result of the identification of the most relevant aspects capable of altering the quality of the international security environment, but also of the coagulation, for a few days, of a community of decision-makers and experts having competences in the fields of security and defense. Although we are talking about a public policy (the security policy) in the classical sense of the term and which must be the result of a political decision, the Conference, in fact, annually reiterates, through the diversity of participants (representatives of states and governmental organizations, but also non-governmental

organizations, the media, industry or academia), the comprehensive approach to security which has as its final goal the interest and involvement of a wider public. Cross-border, free movement, global problems that call for common solutions, and the states' membership to different formal and informal institutional architectures allow the establishment of a direct link between international security policy and the public as a collective actor.

The conclusions of the AI Report referred to (MSC, 2024):

- The competition between Washington and Beijing for domain dominance, without ignoring other actors such as the European Union, the United Kingdom, India, and Israel, considering that “*the AI race is not just a bilateral one*”.
- The global risks generated by an unregulated AI, which manifests itself more and more acutely in the form of various incidents, the issue of disinformation, the promotion of sexist and racist attitudes, but also the security risk as a result of the improper use of technology in the military field.

Putting the two global dialogue events in the mirror, the same concern for economic, climate, and technological issues (relatively approached from different perspectives, in Munich being detached, due to the specifics of the meeting, the geopolitical approach), and about AI, the ultimate conclusion concerns the importance of finding the legislative balance between innovation and societal risks (Davos), i.e., regulation (Munich).

4. The Awareness Results regarding the AI Potential Risk. Regulation

There is a certain degree of permissiveness regarding the actors involved in addressing and solving common problems within a global order. Global problems are contextualized to local specifics, their regulation being possible on the different levels of security, which are not

mutually exclusive, from national to global (national-zonal-regional-international-global).

Entering “public life” relatively recently, but without being something new, generating confusion and fears, and creating an opportunity for development, artificial intelligence has caused global concern, forcing state and non-state actors to review their formal agendas and systemic. The concerns of two “global agoras” based on public-private partnerships have already been mentioned in this paper. Although we are dealing with a global problem, which can be debated and regulated at the national, regional, and global levels through the participation of actors capable of stimulating the enhancement of positive aspects and diminishing the possible risks that could result from the implementation of AI, states and intergovernmental organizations play a primary role in achieving AI governance. It is not easy because history and geographical belonging have imprinted the states with different backgrounds, and a global problem requires cooperation and harmonization of vision.

Why are states and international governmental organizations so crucial in AI regulation? On the one hand, states continue to be the leading actor on the international stage, even if their activity and existence (in the sense of supremacy) are under constant pressure and challenge. States are the actors most interested in the benefits brought by the implementation of AI; they compete with each other, including under this aspect, and they have obligations towards the individuals who bear their citizenship. On the other hand, intergovernmental organizations were created precisely for this reason – to face common challenges better; they have proven their ability to solve crises and have obligations towards member states just as states have duties towards international structures in which they participate. Besides, through the regulations the intergovernmental organizations provide, they

generate stability, harmony, predictability, and clarity for the member states, as well as a competitive and development-friendly environment.

- Perhaps the most crucial step in terms of efforts at the international level to regulate the field in question can be found inside the European Union, which, through the European Parliament, adopted on March 13, 2024, the Artificial Intelligence Act, which is considered to be the world's first comprehensive legal framework for AI (Hainsdorf et al., 2023; Wodecki, 2024; Time Magazine, 2024; Bertuzzi, 2024; European Commission, n.d.). The impact of the concerted European policy on international efforts to establish a set of universal primary rules for managing the use of AI entitled Thierry Breton, the European commissioner for the internal market, to state that “*Europe is NOW a global standard-setter in AI*” (Breton, 2024). The primary benefit of this law is to regulate the categories of risk generated by this technology, from unacceptable, which results in the categorical prohibition of the technology, to high, medium, and low hazard. Building a safe and reliable European society is an ongoing process. Because the next step is always the most important, no matter how remarkable the last accomplishment is, the great implementation challenge follows. The implementation process (fully applicable) will be considered complete two years after the entry into force of the regulation (established 20 days after the publication of the law in the Official Journal). However, there are also some exceptions explicitly provided for in the law.

- In turn, NATO, a political-military organization, demonstrates a definite interest in new technologies (like 5G, autonomous systems, biotech, quantum technologies), including artificial intelligence, proving once again that its adaptation to new realities is a permanent mission. In this case, the need for

adaptation is explained by the impact of new technologies on the character and manner of conducting conflicts, technologies that, as stated by Secretary General Stoltenberg, will change “*the way people live and work, as well as the way countries understand notions of defense*” (NATO, 2024).

- Concerns regarding the implications of the use of artificial intelligence are found at the level of many intergovernmental organizations that approach the issue from the perspective of the field of activity they regulate: the impact of AI on the manifestation of different types of freedoms and the construction of inclusive and open societies (OSCE); how to harness AI for health (WHO); the opportunities and risks that may arise as a result of the implementation of technology in the implementation of international trade (WTO) or on the future of work and human resource management (ILO); or the promotion of an attitude based on ethical principles and respect for human rights about what the use of artificial intelligence and other new technologies entails and generates (UN).

- Powerful states are active players in the AI market, both in terms of investments and in terms of initiating multinational actions to regulate and advance possible solutions to capitalize on the opportunities and eliminate the risks generated by AI. The battle for global supremacy is between the United States and China, without neglecting the efforts made by European states such as Great Britain or Germany (or the European Union as an actor), Israel, and India. The analysis of the artificial intelligence domain from a national perspective can, for example, refer to the market value (reported globally) or to the industries most strongly marked by the use of artificial intelligence, but also to government initiatives because they correctly perceived the strategic character of the field and its potential as a new area of

competition at the global level. States organize summits and adopt declarations on AI safety, develop regulations and strategies (“Maintaining American Leadership in Artificial Intelligence” (Federal Register, 2019); American “Executive Order on Safe, Secure and Trustworthy Development and Use of Artificial Intelligence” (The White House, 2023a); American “National Artificial Intelligence Research and Development Plan” (The White House, 2023b); China’s “New Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan” (Webster et al., 2017); China’s “Global AI Governance Initiative” (Drexel & Kelley, 2023); The UK’s “National Artificial Intelligence Strategy” (HM Government, 2021); and “Artificial Intelligence Strategy of the German Federal Government” (The Federal Government, 2020)). States’ concern about the impact of AI on both public and private sectors will remain only at the declarative level as long as the legal framework is not properly regulated, which means establishing rights and obligations for AI creators and implementers alike in the economic, social and military spheres, drawing limits on what it means to use it, including the nature and extent of the consequences generated.

5. Conclusions

AI will continue to develop, changing our world, hopefully for the better. Today, there is a particular concern about how the new technological revolution about to invade and conquer our lives will transform the future of work, mainly through the physical-human disappearance of some professions, but also the future of business, how it will influence military performance not only by enhancing armaments but also by adapting decision support systems to the condition of a better and timely approach, how it will shape cybersecurity and help medicine (health care) and education, or will inspire leaders to herd their organizations, and last but not least, how it will articulate our leisure time.

Suspensions regarding AI's unbridled potential are already manifesting, with some warnings coming from tech experts and human rights activists. Thus, ideas such as: "Pausing AI Developments Isn't Enough. We Need to Shut it All Down" (Yudkowsky, 2023); "International Community Must Urgently Confront New Reality of Generative, Artificial Intelligence" (United Nations, 2023); "Open AI Leaders Call for Regulation to Prevent AI Destroying Humanity" (Hern, 2023); "World Powers Say They Want to Contain AI. They're Also Racing to Advance It" (Knight, 2023); "Should We Stop Developing AI For The Good of Humanity?" (Marr, 2023).

AI capabilities will become increasingly valuable because of the competition between states in this field. States already engaged in this struggle have different political regimes – liberal democracy, authoritarianism, and a hybrid regime oscillating between the first two, the context being the shaper of domestic politics.

Democracy, Winston Churchill said, is not a perfect and absolutely wise form of government. This truism, however, does not exclude the commitment of the political establishment and civil society to make it perfectable – to change the world we live in to reach a new stage of development, presupposing a transformation not only of material conditions but also of spiritual and political ones. Unfortunately, the reality is far ahead of the theory; the economic and social transformations and their impact on the human condition must be legislated, scientifically analyzed, and doctrinally interpreted. In a rough way, it is the inability to anticipate consequences and foresee the impact of those consequences. On the one hand, risks cannot always be correctly foreseen and evaluated; on the other hand, transformation usually aims at the progress

which, per se, is "the best", a fact that is politically convenient as it gives prominence to the promise of benefit at the expense of accepting the materialization of risk.

Democracy is a form of government that people embrace because it is open and transparent, supports human rights, recognizes the need for equality of opportunity, promotes legality, and is based on legitimacy. Relating the issue of AI to the democratic framework of a society organization in the 21st century, and especially noting the dual consequences of AI's intervention in the economy and society, one can speak of its interference in the collective mind (on the background of the increase in the importance of information from various online sources, due to the accessibility of information technology) and which determine attitudes of rejection or support, depending on the context (level of training, profession, age). Pandora's box, in this case, opens to litter society with fake news, mistrust, bias, and doubt, aspects that ethically mark the functioning of social relations and the viability of the governance process. Regarding the last aspect, the biggest fear is related to the elections that take place in 2024 in different countries, including Romania, where around four billion people are expected to participate. However, the governing process does not strictly have a political dimension. It is about the economy and the military, about social structures and social comfort in terms of cultural, environmental, or public health conditions. The relationship between AI and democracy and/or global order should not be focused strictly on technology. It should be integrated into a broader framework of analysis, one of an interdisciplinary nature.

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