DEBATE

WHO REALLY MASTERS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE?

Friday 27 september, 4:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m., Plenary Room

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Sébastien Imbert, Merav Griguer, François Mattens and Hubert Etienne

When we deal with artificial intelligence, a vast subject, often more questions than answers emerge, as there are multiple psychological, sociological and geopolitical ramifications. But what is AI? 'A set of technologies that allow machines and computer tools to perform tasks that we normally associate with human intelligence, said François Mattens. This is a deliberately broad definition, and from the outset of this debate, the challenge that this technology poses for humanity in the future is set out. Even if, in practice, it's already present in our lives: 'When you watch Netflix and they give you a suggestion about movies, it's never a coincidence. The algorithm assumes you'll like it, based on what you've already watched. Same on Google, Instagram or Spotify.' In a world where we're thinking about replacing judges with AI in the belief that it would be fairer, where banks and insurance companies are already using it to decide whether or not to grant loans and set rates, the questions of ethics and regulation arise.

But then, faced with such a level of precision in the knowledge of our habits, it is crucial to question the governance of these technologies to which we give our data. Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon and Microsoft, also known as GAFAM? Yes, but not just that: part of the technology that these companies produce eludes them, as it may, in the near fu-

MODERATION

François Mattens, Director of Public Affairs at XXII

SPEAKERS

Hubert Etienne, Chairman and founder of Quintessence AI

Merav Griguer, Lawyer, co-head of data protection and cybersecurity teaching at Paris-Panthéon-Assas University

Sébastien Imbert, Chief Marketing Officer of Septeo

ture, reach the notion of singularity, a hypothesis according to which AI could act autonomously without human intervention and bring about unpredictable changes in society. 'People like Elon Musk or OpenAI are already thinking about it,' added François Mattens. According to Sébastien Imbert, Septeo's Marketing Director, formerly with Microsoft, citing Ray Kurzweil's latest book (***The singularity is nearer***, 2024), we can expect that by 2029, the Turing test, which has until now been the benchmark for assessing the performance of AI, will have been surpassed. 'By then, we'll probably be in contact with AIs that will be at our level because they'll be more capable than us of solving certain problems. They'll adapt to their interlocutors. We're witnessing new models and it's exciting.'

Our memory capacities have been reduced because we rely on the Web

Hubert Étienne

For him, it isn't so much a question of who controls AI, but above all, who controls its computing power. Because the GAFAM also depend on their storage capacities, financed by investment funds and banks, where ethical experts work to provide a responsible and respectable framework for our use of AI. 'So who controls AI? What's needed is for all these players to align their efforts to make good use of it,' concluded Sébastien Imbert. For the time being, there is no indication that the use of generalised AI can be considered a positive development, given the many dangers involved, as demonstrated by Hubert Etienne, an ethicist in artificial intelligence who worked at Meta, who


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Merav Griguer and François Mattens

imagines two possible paths: an AI that has reached technological singularity, is more intelligent than human beings and would either want to exterminate them or love them. 'We can consider that today, we're already a little enslaved by machines. Our memory capacities have been reduced because we rely on the Web,' he believes. How far could this enslavement go? According to OpenAi or Deep Mind, the two most powerful laboratories in this field, the objective, which is almost science fiction, would be to create GenIA, a kind of God who would make all of humanity's strategic decisions: investment, political decisions... and even decide on our love lives. But do we really want it?

From a purely legal perspective, Merav Griguer noted the adoption of the AI Act in 2024 by the European Parliament, which provides for fines of up to 35 million euros and 7% of annual turnover and which raises concerns among the large companies involved. Will this text be enough to instil ethics? 'Personally, it seems impossible to me. We must always try to regulate, but that's wishful thinking', she said. Hubert Etienne was even more clear-cut on the issue. 'There are lots of jobs that I would like to see disappear, linked to bureaucracy, and for us to no longer have to file tax

returns, for everything to be automated. But I'm not saying that we should fire all civil servants', he added, assuming that some jobs could be reoriented towards other tasks with more meaning for the human beings who perform them.

We need to debias people because it's people who communicate their biases

Hubert Étienne

This is also one of the benefits of AI, which could replace humans only in unfulfilling, repetitive and laborious jobs. That's the argument put forward by Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI. Hubert Etienne cited the example of content moderators, employed for half a dollar an hour in Third World countries to sort through the content published on social networks and delete content containing violence, pornography and hatred, with all the trauma that these jobs entail. 'That's all the hard work of AI,' he lamented. In practice, not all states that are pioneers in AI have the same use for it or the same vision. In the United States, as Sébastien Imbert pointed out, we think of 'maximum innovation for maximum economic profitability with minimum regulation', while in China, AI is used as a tool for 'maximum societal surveillance'. Hence the importance of a regulatory body that achieves consensus. The UN? Merav Griguer and Sébastien Imbert weren't convinced. A new organisation, similar to the World Trade Organisation (WTO), seems more appropriate.

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The fact remains that beyond these artificial intelligences, which we imagine will very soon reach a singularity making them autonomous, we mustn't forget the extent to which they are biased because they are produced by human intelligence and are therefore, by nature, subjective. Hubert Etienne explained about machine learning, a technique used to teach AI from data fed to them, such as images, videos, text: 'If I train my AI to recognise shapes and in my training database I have 70% chairs and 30% tables, it will be better at recognising chairs because it will have seen a lot more of them.

It depends on the diversity of the elements I have, too; if everything's the same, it'll be a little complicated to detect things that are a little innovative, such as designer chairs, for example. We're in the realm of observational, statistical and algorithmic biases.'

But how can we prevent these biases from also occurring on racial and sexist themes, such as AI classifying people of colour or according to their gender, for immoral and discriminatory purposes? Hubert Etienne concluded: 'We also need to debias people because it's people who communicate their biases.' Proof that AI hasn't quite won the game yet.