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Artificial Intelligence and Democratic Peacebuilding in South Asia

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ABSTRACT

There are opportunities and threats to peace and security in South Asia related to artificial intelligence. AI's place in the military and the belief in AI's use for peacebuilding are often considered mutually exclusive. This chapter reverses that idea and shows that with effective governance of democratic institutions, AI can support peacebuilding in South Asia. Based on the rational actor model, the study explores three related dimensions to consider the possibilities for AI to influence peacebuilding across the region. First, AI can support peacebuilding that includes the enhancement of active mechanisms for the prevention of conflict and the reconstruction of societies after the cessation of conflict. Second, the technologies of AI can stop the occurrence of conflict among nations through more refined intelligence, advanced early warning systems of potential crises, and more effective crisis communication to prevent the occurrence of conflict through misjudgments and misinterpretations. Third, AI can enhance and support the processes of diplomatic negotiations and confidence-building activities among the actors of the region. The chapter argues that when AI is incorporated into democratic systems with the values of transparency, the protection of human beings, and responsibility, it can be both legitimate and effective.

Introduction

The modern global order faces challenges due to rapidly expanding technology and intensifying geopolitical competition. The impact of AI technology on the ways in which states conduct diplomacy and balance their security threats and strategic interests is profound. South Asia, a region of nearly two billion people, with more than one nuclear power, and with security concerns, historical rivalries and enmities, is in critical positions to make choices about the ways in which AI will be integrated in its governance and security[1]. These choices are not only of importance to the region. The ways in which South Asian states choose to develop and use AI technologies will impact the stability of the region and the lives of the many millions of people of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and neighboring states, and will set important precedents for the world. South Asia is a region where technology, democratic political institutions, and security concerns intersect. The ability of South Asia to govern AI technologies for the peace and security of the region will provide the rest of the world with the ability to govern technologies for the peace and security of the world.

The implications of this study for modern society are numerous and complex. First, regarding the combination of advanced forms of artificial intelligence with security and defense systems, how might democratic societies retain control over technologies that operate beyond the comprehension of humans regarding war and peace?[2] It is reasonable for citizens of a democratic society to want to know how their governments build and implement AI systems that will determine the tools of war and of diplomatic and security engagements. AI systems that work in the shadows erode the democratic principles of informed and active participation in defense and security decisions of a society. Second, the AI militarization is creating security dilemmas, whereby states see their competitors gaining an advantage through technology and feel the need to fast-track the development of AI, to not be the least advanced[3]. In the context of South Asia, this is even more unacceptable due to the historically rapid technological competition between India and Pakistan that has led to military confrontations. An AI arms race in South Asia will create an environment where the misjudgment, malfunction, or misapprehension of AI will provoke an inevitable and

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[2] Lessig, Lawrence. 2006. *Code: Version 2.0*. Basic Books.

[3] Lindsay, Jon, and Gartzke, Erik. 2017. "Cybersecurity and Cross-Domain Deterrence: The Consequences of Complexity." In *US National Cybersecurity*. Routledge, London. https://deterrence.ucsd.edu/_files/LindsayGartzke_ConsequencesofComplexity_Draft.pdf

disastrous escalation of a military crisis. Third, AI has the potential to actually improve peace and governance in South Asia by addressing the challenges that South Asian societies face[4]. The same technology that could create new military hegemony could be used to conflict prevention mechanisms and diplomatic engagement and aid the reconstruction of regions that are most affected by war. The way AI will be regulated will determine whether this technology will create peace or provoke new conflicts.

Artificial intelligence (AI) consists of various methods of computing that allow machines to perform functions that once solely belonged to the domain of human cognition. A few of these methods include algorithms that allow a machine to learn and improve based on experience, natural language processing (NLP) that allows machines to understand and manipulate human language, computer vision that allows machines to analyze and interpret visual data, and systems that are fully capable of making autonomous decisions with little to no human input[5]. The opportunity that the application of AI to peace and security concerns brings is unprecedented. AI systems can analyze data and discern information light-years faster than the best human analysts. The potential of AI technologies can be realized to measure and analyze the complex and even abstract security predicaments and challenges that have resisted the conventional means and methods of diplomacy and military intervention. The same features and technologies of AI that make the systems potentially dangerous to the security and safety of humanity can be applied to solve difficult security problems. Choosing to develop AI systems can be dangerous. AI systems will amplify the biases of their historical data[6]. Systems can be malfunctioning and be a tool for harm.

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[4] Brundage, Miles, Avin, Shahar, Wang, Jasmine, Belfield, Haydn, Krueger, Gretchen, Hadfield, Gillian, Khlaaf, Heidy, Yang, Jingying, Toner, Helen, Fong, Ruth, Mahraj, Tegan, Koh, Pang Wei, Hooker, Sara, Leung, Jade, Trask, Andrew, Bluemke, Emma,Lebensold, Jonathan, O'Keefe, Cullen, Koren, Mark, Ryffel, Théo, Rubinovitz, JB., Besiroglu, Tamay, Carugati, Federica, Clark, Jack, Eckersley, Peter, Haas, Sarah de, Johnson, Maritza, Laurie, Ben, Ingerman, Alex, Krawczuk, Igor, Askell, Amanda, Cammarota, Rosario, Lohn, Andrew, Krueger, David, Stix, Charlotte, Henderson, Peter, Graham, Logan, Prunkl, Carina, Martin, Bianca, Seger, Elizabeth, Zilberman, Noa, Ó hÉigeartaigh, Seán, Kroeger, Frens, Sastry, Girish, Kagan, Rebecca, Weller, Adrian, Tse, Brian, Barnes, Elizabeth, Dafoe, Allan, Scharre, Paul, Herbert-Voss, Ariel, Rasser, Martijn, Sodhani, Shagun, Flynn, Carrick, Gilbert, Thomas Krendl, Dyer, Lisa, Khan, Saif, Bengio, Yoshua, and Anderljung, Markus . 2020. " Toward Trustworthy AI Development: Mechanisms for Supporting Verifiable Claims." arXiv. https://arxiv.org/pdf/2004.07213

[5] Dignum, Virginia. 2019. *Responsible Artificial Intelligence: How to Develop and Use AI in a Responsible Way*. Springer Publishing.

[6] Mittelstadt, Brent. 2017. " Designing the Health-related Internet of Things: Ethical Principles and Guidelines." *Information*, 8(3): 77. https://doi.org/10.3390/info8030077