

Conference

AI and warfare

Investigating the technological and political domains of current conflicts

International conference in Berlin, Germany

Wednesday, 16 October – Friday, 18 October, 2024

Global conflicts and challenges to international security are among the most pressing issues of our time. Artificial intelligence is increasingly shaping the ways in which warfare is conducted, adding both complications and urgency to the issues caused by the current major geopolitical shifts. AI is one of the driving factors of technological change in warfare in general, with its major effects mainly related to new degrees of complexity in automation and new forms of human-machine interaction. On the one hand, this change introduces new capabilities in weapons systems, in particular in the fields of processing information, generating knowledge and the automation of decision-making. Most prominently, this results in a decreasing level of human intervention and control, thereby reshaping the relationship between human operators and autonomous weapons systems. On the other hand, AI-related developments do not only concern the kinetic dimension of warfare but also expand into what military theory calls the ‘information domain’. Shaping and controlling narratives has been an integral part of conflicts and warfare for a long time, with disinformation and propaganda campaigns utilising the most recent (media) technologies for this purpose. The functionality of AI applications will increasingly be integrated in these efforts, as can already be observed with the dissemination of manipulated content on social media. AI-based technologies are also deployed in cyber warfare, which is not limited to the singular hacking of a system, but rather targeted to directly affect whole digital military infrastructures or civilian entities in politics, the economy or research.

The objective of the conference *AI and warfare* is to explore these domains of modern warfare in order to develop a more accurate picture of the various effects of AI in military contexts. Another goal is to broaden the perspective of the military deployment of AI beyond questions of weapon systems and their control, by particularly looking at adversarial uses of AI in hybrid forms of warfare in the information domain. The conference particularly aims to develop and establish a dialogue between the research on these two domains that are often explored separately.

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Wednesday, 16 October 2024 · Location tbd

17:30-18:00 Registration

18:00 **Opening keynote**
Kim Lane Scheppele (Princeton University)

19:30 Reception

08:15-08:45 Registration

08:45-09:00 **Welcome note & Introduction**

Thomas Christian Bächle (Alexander von Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society, Berlin/University of Bonn), Christoph Ernst (University of Bonn)

09:00-10:45 **Military AI technologies and practices**

AI decision making from battlefield to desktop: The sociotechnical stakes of the techno-military-industrial pipeline

Sarah Ciston (Alexander von Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society, Berlin)

Automation and secrecy in intelligence ethics

Nicholas Johnston (University of Technology Delft, Netherlands)

Challenges for open source investigation in the age of AI-driven warfare

Patrick Brian Smith (University of Salford, UK)

10:45-11:15 Coffee Break

11:15-12:45 **Military AI and the political domain: Regulation, policies, control**

The biopolitics of artificial swarm intelligence – Complexity, emergence and control in military swarming

Jens Hälterlein (Paderborn University)

The “wicked-problem” character of multilateral efforts to control critical AI applications

Georgios Kolliarakis (German Council on Foreign Relations, Berlin/European External Action Service/Service for Foreign Policy Instruments, Brussels, Belgium)

AI and future warfare: Data, targeting and death

Tanvi Tuhina (European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights, Berlin), Andreas Schüller (European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights, Berlin)

The very long game. 25 case studies on the global state of defence AI

Joseph Verbovsky (Helmut Schmidt University/University of the Federal Armed Forces Hamburg)

12:45-14:15 Lunch

14:15-16:00 **Military AI and information warfare**

Prebunking AI-generated disinformation: Strengthening democratic legitimacy through strategic communication

Dierk Spreen (Berlin School of Economics and Law/Bundeswehr Center of Military History and Social Sciences, Potsdam), Natascha Zowislo-Grünwald (University of the Bundeswehr Munich), Franz Beitzinger (University of the Bundeswehr Munich)

Killer robots within the ibero-american social networks: Looking for interagency engagements

Sabrina Evangelista Medeiros (Lusófona University, Lisbon, Portugal), Luís Campani (InterAgency Institute), Samuel Martins (University Institute of Lisbon, Portugal)

Synthetic realism: Exploring the aesthetics and politics of generative AI in a time of widespread violence

Donatella Della Ratta (John Cabot University, Rome, Italy)

AI war imaginaries: How image-generative AI models (mis)represent Russia's war against Ukraine

Mykola Makhortykh (University of Bern, Switzerland), Miglė Bareikytė (European University Viadrina Frankfurt/Oder)

16:00-16:30 Coffee Break

16:30-18:00 **Panel Discussion**

from 18:00 Day 1 concludes

Friday, 18 October 2024 · HIIG · Französische Straße 9, 10117 Berlin (Room: Capella)

09:00-09:30 Registration & Welcome

09:30-10:45 **Military AI and human-machine relations**

Redrawing expertise ecologies with sensory augmentation AI in military operations
Denisa Butnaru (University of Constance), Adrien Bécue (Thales Group, France)

Pattern recognition and the electronic battlefield: A media historical perspective on AI experiments
Sebastian Kawanami-Breu (Humboldt-University Berlin)

10:45-11:15 Coffee Break

11:15-13:00 **Military AI and imaginations of future warfare**

Microtargeting, AI and asymmetric warfare between narratives and politics
Massimiliano Panarari (University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy)

A war without friction? Sociotechnical imaginaries of AI in the promotion of C4ISR software
Daniel Møller Ølgaard (Royal Danish Defence College, Copenhagen, Denmark)

The myth of "targeted killing". On responsibility of AI-powered targeting systems in the case of lavender
Rainer Rehak (Weizenbaum Institute for the Networked Society, Berlin), Christian Heck (Academy of Media Arts Cologne)

13:00-14:00 Conference closing and snacks
