

MEANINGFUL HUMAN CONTROL? SOCIOTECHNICAL IMAGINATIONS OF AI, DRONE SWARMS AND THE FUTURE OF WARFARE

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Abstract:

Sociotechnical imaginations of our social order as well as of our everyday life are inscribed in the design of technological projects and artefacts - not only on the individual but also the sociocultural level. Imaginaries of today's AI as a decision-making entity is not only part of the Hollywood science fiction narrative, but is partly driving contemporary military discourses and practices that build i.a. on biomimetic concepts of emergent and adaptive behaviour. For example, drone swarms are imagined as distributed brains that can solve complex problems. At the same time, defence officials deflect urgent questions of arms control, referring to these imaginaries as the product of a Skynet/Terminator-style fantasy.

In our panel we want to analyse sociotechnical imaginaries of AI and how they influence the development of autonomous weapon systems on the technological, political and military level. We also ask for alternative imaginaries to make the consequences of lethal autonomous weapon systems more visible.

Key words:

autonomous weapon systems, future of warfare, imagination