

Head Chair: Janmesh Kalra

Vice Chair: Saketh Somayajula

Legal: Nafeesa Karim

UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development Topic: Automation & Artificial Intelligence as a Replacement for Human Capital

Background

In the last couple of years, Artificial Intelligence technology, otherwise known as AI, has grown immensely as it continues to dominate a large portion of the workforce. With the rise of artificial intelligence, jobs that require lots of labor have been replaced. Artificial Intelligence has also become a more attractive financial alternative to other forms of labor. As a result, the World Economic Forum or WEF predicts that 65% of jobs that children in primary school are dreaming of, will “no longer exist”. The shift to automation requires workers to be more skillful in the “growing areas” and tackle new occupations in many cases. The change in need for skills imposes a major difficulty for many older people in society. Many times the older members of society can find it harder to learn certain skills since they would have to be re-educated. Artificial Intelligence as a replacement for human capital can be closely attributed to a similar incident in history. When the Second Agricultural Revolution occurred globally we saw an increase in the amount of technology involved within the field of agriculture. As a result of mechanization and development, many people shifted from jobs in agriculture to jobs that were more knowledge-based. Similarly, automation is on the verge of replacing many of the tertiary

and quaternary sector jobs, which require world economies to shift into more-developed fields.

Artificial Intelligence imposes a major threat for those employed in the physical labor field,

i.e.

paperwork, scheduling, accounting, etc. Automation is a risk to those who are working in the manufacturing industry as shipping will be fully automated in the near future. Tasks that require

a great deal of “human” strength will be replaced by robot and other types of machinery.

According to the McKinsey Global Institute, between 400 million and 800 million jobs will be replaced by automation in 2030. The loss of jobs imposes a great fear even among

developed

economies like the United States as people will be laid off. Automation and Artificial

Intelligence have also decreased the value of “college degrees” in society. US News states that our “upward mobility” is declining, implying that the social ladder is becoming even harder to climb.

UN Involvement

During many recent UN assemblies, Artificial intelligence has been discussed as it continues to be developed and gains more importance in work environments, and the supranational

organization has stated its belief in technology of the future and supports the development of

artificial intelligence,. Recently, the UN began a Artificial Intelligence Center in the Netherlands

This location will be used in order to develop artificial intelligence technology. During 2015, the

UN had a assembly with ECOSOC and the Second Committee to discuss how artificial

technology would help accomplish the 17 goals of sustainable development in several countries.

Currently, the UN is pushing artificial intelligence into lots of their agendas, holding several summits and conferences centered around the topic around the world believing that it is the key to the future. The UN has further, through it's agendas has begun planning to have a new AI advisor to lead the development of artificial intelligence. One of the most recent discussions of artificial intelligence within the UN was the "AI for Good Global Summit". During this summit, many officials and experts participated in discussions regarding how AI could affect the quality of life. The UN discussed issues such as solving global issues such as poverty, using artificial intelligence to analyze patterns of poverty in areas. However, the summit also discussed several cons of artificial intelligence including loss of jobs among people. In addition, many people view artificial intelligence as detrimental as people use it for wrong purposes. The UN overall views artificial intelligence as the leading part of socioeconomic development and will continue to hold discussions and summits regarding the development of artificial intelligence.

Bloc Positions

European Bloc: The European Bloc is aiming towards re-skilling people as one of their primary solutions. According to the European Commission, Closing the Skills Gap 2020 will re-skill an approximated 10 million people by the year 2020. Germany has over 40% of Europe's industrial bots in use, and it remains a leader in automation

Latin American Bloc: The Latin American bloc still has nations that are yet to enter the “more-developed” world. Many countries in this bloc still rely on agriculture to facilitate the economy. Automation has yet to trickle down into some rural parts of many countries in this bloc. But the rise of foreign corporations exerts dominance over the manufacturing and processing of goods in the area. According to the Council on Foreign Relations, many Latin American nations such as Argentina and Brazil have the potential to automate their economies. Although factors like an unreliable source of electricity have prevented the automated growth of many countries.

North American Bloc: Almost the entirety of North America has the capacity to automate many of its industries. The United States finds that nearly 50% of new college graduates can now no longer find jobs that directly correspond with their degree. Automation has disrupted multiple parts of the American and Canadian economy, as is continuing to do so. Commerce in the United States and Canada is consistently shifted from a brick-and-mortar store to the web. Most of the revenue generated for businesses today is actually from these online “web” sales.

African Bloc: Many nations in the African bloc are far from developing into an economy reliant on automation. Although as more-developed nations begin to use automation, less businesses

will require an African workforce. Africa was very attractive to many corporations because of its

cheap labor, but with the rise of automation that benefit is left out. Currently, African labor remains the cheaper alternative to robots. But many corporations are working together through trade in order to figure out a way to bring the cost of automation down.

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