

The Rise of Artificial Intelligence: A Comparative Analysis of Use of AI by the Authoritarian and Democratic Regimes for Aggrandizing Social Security



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Abstract: *Throughout the course of history, there has been an advent of technology from time to time which changed the nature and dynamics of power and security. Also, there has been a constant struggle between authoritarianism and democracy as the most suitable system for the world. The technology is Artificial intelligence and the countries offering those two systems are China and USA. The AI race has become a struggle of the system between the two contenders. It is believed that AI would be the driving force for the world. This paper will give a comparative analysis between the Chinese and US-led democratic systems in the use of AI for establishing societal security.*

Key Words: Artificial intelligence, Authoritarian regime, Democracy, Social Security

Introduction

The development of full Artificial Intelligence (AI) could spell the end of the human race. It would take off on its own, and re-design itself at an ever-increasing rate. Humans who are limited by slow biological evolution, couldn't compete, and would be superseded." These are the words uttered by one of the greatest scientists, Stephen Hawking in an interview with BBC. A general human mind would either be scared after reading this or would completely reject this phenomenon. However, the speed of the rise of AI in the world has started to clearly alarm some alarms for its rapid growth and adaptation in the world. In

his book "Homodeus", an Israeli historian and author, Yuval Noah Harari emphasized over the power of algorithms and how the human minds would be replaced by the algorithms and data in decision making. (Jones, 2014) Again the idea is quite hard to digest but the rise of AI and the quest for it by the big powers like China and the USA has started to give signals about it to become a potential driving force in the upcoming world order. Artificial Intelligence is being called the fourth industrial revolution and like the previous industrial revolutions, it enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of the previous ones. Not long ago, Artificial Intelligence was just a dream

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portrayed in fictional novels or movies but now the world has already entered into the age of Artificial Intelligence. It has already started to become an integral part of our daily lives. From Transportation, Manufacturing, Healthcare, Education, and Media to Customer Service, AI has become a favourite tool on an industrial level. Artificial Intelligence has reached to the hands of a normal individual in some form. Consciously or unconsciously we all are using AI in some form. May it be in writing small texts, emails or essays, capturing photos from our cell phone cameras to other daily used appliances, AI has spread like a fire in the jungle and it is not coming slow by any chance. So, this massive rise of technology has gained the attention of big countries to the level that the world is witnessing a technological race. Every developed or developing country is trying its best to get a hold of this new technological revolution. As the Russian President famously said 'The country leads the way in AI research will come to dominate global affairs' The new AI race has already begun in the world in which the authoritative regime of China and the democratic regime of the US are at the forefront. (McIntosh, 2022) Where the big countries are in a competition to lead the world in Artificial Intelligence, the smaller countries bandwagon in this regard. It is believed that one way through which China will surpass the US is the control and spread of AI technologies in the world by China. As a prominent computer scientist, Kai-Fu Lee believes that China becoming the new AI superpower in his book 'AI Superpower: China, Silicon Valley, and the New World Order', this paper will analyze how the rise of this new technology has triggered almost a new technological cold war (Hugenholtz, 2023b). A new debate has started in the world about how this new technology would become a new toy for the regimes in the world, especially the authoritative ones to strengthen their control over societies which could lead to massive exploitation. Whereas, there are warnings about authoritarian tendencies in the champions of democracies, how the governments keep an eye over their masses' activities through various means in the name of

security. So, this research intends to compare the use of AI by both authoritative and democratic regimes in order to enhance social control without damaging their reputations. In continuation to this, the Western-led democracies are raising voices through disguised propaganda against the authoritarian regime of China about its aspirations with Artificial Intelligence to control not just the Chinese society but also the societies of the world personified through cooperation and trade. Whereas, those democracies themselves aim to capture the world with their versions of Artificial Intelligence technologies. Some like Kai-Fu Lee have already made China a global leader in AI while others still believe in the legitimacy of the USA as a unilateral superpower in AI. To make it simple, China is giving a tough time to the USA in the field of Artificial Intelligence and some circles believe that China is already winning the AI power game. So, this paper will also try to understand the rationale behind the Western voices against China. Do democratic regimes offer something better than the authoritative regimes, to the world in the use of AI for social security? (Whyman, 2023).

Theoretical Framework

The pursuit of this paper will be seen through the lens of 'Societal Security' theory by Bary Buzan from the Copenhagen School. The theory was developed at the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union which led to the creation of some new states. The theory gives a response to the perception that the society is under threat. This means that things which give a group of people an identity which makes them who they are such as shared values through which a society identifies specific threats. Basically, the theory assumes that any society becomes insecure when it feels a fear of losing its identity from a phenomenon like migration.

History and Evolution of Artificial Intelligence

There have been several industrial revolutions throughout the course of the history of this

world. Every industrial revolution has produced something new which later on turned into a new industrial revolution by compensating and enhancing the value of the previous one. Although it took some time for Artificial Intelligence to get to the level of the Industrial Revolution, its blueprints could be found in the ancient times of human evolution. It has always been a dream of human innovators to create something which could perform everything which a normal human mind or body can.

Ancient Foundations (400 BC 1206)

In the same quest, humans have achieved a lot of milestones but the journey for automated machines started back from the Greek times in 400 BC roughly, Greek poet Hesiod mentioned a bronze man in his works and days. It was widely believed to be named as 'Talos' which was a metal guardian forged by the god Hephaestus to be the guardian of Crete. Thus, humanity's written record of a fascination with artificial intelligence began. (Shashkevich, 2019)

Early Mechanical Creations (1206 - 1843)

Moving on to 1206, an Arab scholar Al-Jazari designed mechanical creations which could play music and rowboats, the mechanical musician's drum set was built with movable pegs to allow for different melodies and songs which suggested an early programmable device. In the same quest, by 1495 Leonardo da Vinci introduced his plan for artificial intelligence in knight's armor and some evidence indicates that he may have even built a prototype for a patron. Mark Rozheim, a roboticist, famous for his work with NASA, successfully recreated the machine from da Vinci's notes in 2002 and found its movement fluid, suggesting pioneering robotics work centuries ahead of its time. In 1763, Thomas Bay's essay on inverse probability and binomial parameters was read to the Royal Society after his death. Roughly 200 years later his ideas became the basis for Bayesian inference and the Bayes theorem which are now leading concepts in machine learning. In

1818, Mary Shelly anonymously published 'Frankenstein' or the modern Prometheus, to great and enduring literary respect. The tale of a scientist's success and horror in creating a sentient being is considered one of the earliest science fiction novels and perhaps the first reach of Artificial Intelligence into pop culture (Ezzahra, 2023). In 1843, lady Ada Lovelace wrote seven pages of notes that comprised the world's first modern computer program. She along with Charles Babbage, who is widely considered to be one of the first modern computer creators, made a brilliant duo with their respective focuses on software and hardware. In 1898, Nikola Tesla organized an exhibition to present the first wireless remote vessel in the form of a small boat. He reportedly told a New York Times writer that he was looking at the first race of robots and mechanical men. Moving on to 1914, at the University of Paris, Leonardo Torres Y Quevedo unveiled his automated chess player. The simple algorithm defeated human opponents in end games every time. Moreover, it also signalled that any illegal moves were made by the human.

Resurgence and Technological Advancements (1920 - 1997)

In 1920, the word robot became popularized by a Czech writer, Carol Chapek in his science fiction play R-U-R. Thus, robots largely replaced the word automation globally. In 1950, Alan Turing published Computer Machinery and Intelligence, prior to 100 Years inspired by the world of Lady Lovelace. Introducing his imitation game was widely known as 'The Turing Test'. Although highly respected, the test's efficacy is widely debated today by those who claim that it only evaluates whether or not a computer can convince a person that it is human instead of whether it actually has reached human cognitive capability. 'The Dartmouth Summer Research Project' on artificial intelligence of 1959, officially coined the term A.I. It boosted interest and investment in neural network research (Jungheer, 2023). Over the course of a few years, the term machine learning became popularized. Frank Rosenblatt's perceptron, a

pioneering neural network, leads Stanford researchers to develop 'Madeline', a multiple adaptive linear element. The first artificial neural network was applied to a real-world problem which is still in commercial use today. In 1965, Gordon Moore, co-founder of Intel, noted that the number of transistors on microchips was doubling every two years, while the cost of computers was halving day by day. This insight was taken as a prediction and became known as Moore's Law. The law suggested that every couple of years the computer increases in power and decreases in price exponentially which is being proven day by day through the mass access of computing devices.

Contemporary AI Landscape (1997 - Present)

By the end of the 60's interest in AI was waning and matched by concerns. The release of Stanley Kubrick's popular film released in 2001, 'The Space Odyssey' reflected growing questions about the implications of artificial intelligence and the excitement died down even around 'Eliza', the first interactive Chatbot. This led to the setting of an AI winter with the coming of a new decade. The first Star Wars movie, A New Hope, was released in 1977. To roaring success, it made two friendly and helpful robots beloved cult classics but it was just a movie. However, interest in funding in the field of AI returned particularly supported by the Japanese government in which breakthroughs included John Hopfield's invention of an associative neural network and Paul Benioff's proposal of a quantum computing model of the Turing machine. Spurring an ongoing quest to harness quantum mechanics and processing power and yet with no substantive results, at the end of the decade a second AI winter began. In 1997, it became clear that AI had flourished again during its time outside of the limelight when IBM's deep blue computer defeated world champion and grandmaster 'Gary Kasparov' at chess. Although certainly a defining moment in the history of AI, the successful scientist appeared unaware of the artificial chess champion in existence more than 100 years in the past,

Quevedo's winning automation. The omission of any reference to Quevedo supported Marvin Minsky's suggestion that the progress in the field of AI is slow by researchers unfamiliar with its history which allowed the repetition of mistakes made by others before them." To make a long story short it is to say that we now live in a world enmeshed in big data and AI. Apple's Siri, OK Google, and Microsoft's Cortana are recognizable voices, Deepmind's AlphaGo defeated the world Go game champion, and surgeries are being performed with robotic arms. (Roser, 2024) AI is aiding human doctors in identifying diseases. Driverless cars and real-time translation programs are seen within our grasp. With this and many more, we are still nowhere near to creating a true artificial replication of the human consciousness. Perhaps the concept itself serves as a driving force or ideal rather than a truly desired goal. With every day, the world is witnessing new advancements and in this quest, big countries are trying to gain the maximum of this new industrial revolution. There is an ongoing race between big countries like the USA and China to achieve new heights in the field of Artificial Intelligence and this has led the world to the debate about authoritarian and democratic use of artificial intelligence. However, before getting into that debate, it is pertinent to know the history and evolution of AI in democratic and authoritarian parts of the world (Kretschmer, Meletti, & Porangaba, 2022).

History and Evolution of AI in Democratic parts of the world

As to talk about the history and evolution of AI in the democratic parts of the world, indeed the modern form of AI came into being in the democratic world. It was the west where the historical research work of AI could be found. Most of the basis of research done on AI is to be found in the Western academic discourse. It was the Western media in which futuristic AI technologies were portrayed. As mentioned in the previous part, except for the example of Al-Jazari, almost all of the available evidence about AI shows that Artificial Intelligence in

the world was born in the Western world which is also the modern birthplace of democracy. So, just like the spread of democracy in the world started from the West, the spread of AI also began from the West. USA is the country where the research for AI was founded and the country has led in research of AI for a very long time. Other democratic countries like Britain, France, Israel, Japan, Germany, India, Brazil, and Singapore, are among the rising and leading in the field of AI. However, the advent of and spread of AI didn't just stick to the democratic world, it went into the hands of authoritarian regimes as well. This was where the concerns of the democracies started to rise. How technology has risen and evolved in the authoritarian world, is to be seen in the next part. (Turner & Lichtenauer, [2021](#)).

History and Evolution of AI in Authoritarian parts of the world

If one looks into the matter of the use of AI in the authoritarian part of the world today, it is being led by China. It is China which is seen as the biggest threat by the democratic world for the use of AI. As mentioned earlier, it is true that the USA has led the field of AI for a very long time but according to Harvard Business Review, China has changed the game. From a research perspective, China has become a world leader now. This change has been a dramatic and a rapid one which shows that the country seems right at the corner of becoming the world leader. However, it was not so long before China had to send its scientists abroad to do research on Artificial Intelligence. In 1950 China sent 26 scientists from the Chinese Academy of Science to the Soviet Union to study their experiences in science and technology. The same decade is considered as the birth of AI in China when the country introduced 'The Twelve Year Plan' for emerging technologies about which China was totally blank and that included cybernetics. From that onwards the country never stopped and went to the extent that it became a major power in AI and a major threat to the democratic world in this technology (Bosher, [2022](#)). Despite many ups and downs, starting

from the Soviets in the times of the Cold War to becoming self-sufficient in technology, China has come a long way. If in the Cold War, every Soviet step was considered a threat to the USA and its allies, today it seems as if China has taken the place of the Soviets today. Nevertheless, the Soviets in the past or China in the present and the future are not the only authoritarian regimes using AI technologies, there are other authoritarian regimes in the world as well which find AI as their new favourite toy, especially, if one looks at the regimes of Middle Eastern giants like UAE and Saudi Arabia. These countries are investing massively in new technology (Picht, Brunner, & Schmid). Although the Middle East has been a favourite attraction for the West for monetary reasons, China has started to challenge the superpower in the spread of AI in the Middle East. Not to forget, middle-eastern countries are authoritarian regimes and concerns are there about how they will utilize this technology in their own societies. So, AI has already entered the authoritarian world but the number of democratic countries using AI is still high.

China's Dominance in AI

Out of 25 countries only, China is included in the top list of countries using AI. So, despite leading in number the democratic world is still concerned about the use of AI in the authoritarian world, especially China. The reason might be the level of interest and seriousness for the new technological revolution shown by China. It is not wrong to say that the concern by the democratic world is more towards China instead of other authoritarian regimes. It might be due to the contradictory ideological social set-up of China and how it has developed itself into a world power. So, it is to be seen through a comparative analysis between the uses of AI in the democratic regimes which are led by the USA and authoritarian regimes, specifically Communist China (AI's impact on IP laws: challenges and solutions., [2023](#)).

A Comparative Analysis

We know that Kai-Fu Lee in his book 'AI Super Power' predicted that China is the next big thing with regards to Artificial Intelligence. It is not wrong as China's rise has been so rapid and silent that until the capitalist world realized, it was already too late. Although there were other factors involved in China's rise, the communist country has always been quite straight and serious about Artificial Intelligence. Through a capitalist economic approach China, the communist party by maintaining its legitimacy took the country to become a superpower. Today, China is aiming for world supremacy due to the failures of the democratic systems in different parts of the world. As to talk about the use of AI by China for societal security, the country has taken a couple of initiatives which are not very new to some democratic states, however, China has taken it to the next level. For example, when talking about surveillance, Chinese society is considered one of the most watched and monitored societies in the whole world. (Zhang, 2021) The Chinese government has installed billions of cameras, which are now powered by AI, all across China through which people's activities are monitored. Now, is surveillance something new to this world? As a matter of fact, London was considered the most surveilled city back in 2012. If I talk about China's biggest critique in this regard, the USA, the country was found in colossal surveillance activities after the attack of Sep. 11. Moreover, the country's security agencies are famous for surveillance activities both nationally and internationally for keeping an eye on people. France introduced laws for surveillance back in 2015 which gave massive power to its intelligence agencies to monitor mobile phones and internet records without any warrant (Ezzahra, 2023). The French government aims to tighten online surveillance which shows its attraction for keeping an eye on its people. German authorities also seemed very attracted towards surveillance through AI when they used facial recognition technologies in Cologne at various venues. The Japanese security authorities are using AI technologies to keep a check on its citizens due to a lack of security

personnel. Japan's tech giant Hitachi introduced an AI-powered surveillance system back in 2017 to monitor every move of an individual in a crowded area. The company claimed that its cameras could capture 100 people in one frame and from those 100, it could pick one and monitor on the basis of its several gestures. (Mazzocco, 2022)

Authoritarian Regimes and AI in the Middle East

Israel is a leading country in the surveillance industry and the country is doing a lot in the innovation and development in the AI industry. The country uses AI-based surveillance technology not just internally but externally as well. Recently, the country implemented a facial recognition surveillance system in Palestine. Now after a long list of democratic countries using AI, authoritarian regimes other than China are Saudi Arabia where everything is monitored and censored. Messaging apps in the UAE revealed the mass surveillance tendency of the Emirates government. Other than these powerful countries of the Middle Eastern region, other countries like Egypt, Qatar, Bahrain, and Kuwait, also have started to implant AI-based surveillance systems in their respective countries. (Mhajne, 2023). However, steps taken by most of the powerful authoritarian countries in the Middle East are not that much criticized by the West as much as China does. This could be major because China has now started to give a tough time to the Western system and ideology. Russia uses AI-powered surveillance for multiple reasons. The country is not so favourite of the West due to past scuffles which makes her more similar to China with regards to receiving criticism from the West. It seems as if any country which goes against the Western agenda or tries to surpass Western legitimacy or supremacy receives criticism which is more of propaganda. This is a typical Cold War psychic technique by the West. It seems as if the world is again going through a transition. As some democratic countries are being called into question, China is holding out its model as a thriving alternative.

Over the past four decades, China has increasingly asserted its power on the global stage through various means and is now on course to become the world's biggest economy and that is two years sooner than predicted pre-pandemic. (MHAJNE, 2023b). For China, this success legitimizes its model as an alternative to the liberal values of the West. For the US and its allies, this authoritarianism blueprint is being seen as a major threat to Western liberal values. Obviously, why wouldn't it? The West with its Western values has enjoyed supremacy and popularity in the whole world for a very long time. Even China started its progress through the capitalist model approach and still progresses in the world through cooperation through trade approaches. China has economic stakes in different parts of the world and those parts of the world including the USA also depend on China economically. The USA became a superpower through this approach but the USA may have forgotten that what comes up always comes down. This has been a scientific law and it has also been applicable to human civilizations as well. No matter how long one civilization has seen the rise, it fell anyway. China started by copying the US's economic approach and slowly and steadily, it started to develop its own and when the USA realized of another competition standing up in front of him, it was too late. China, through its right and firm economic policies, has taken its population out of poverty on a record basis. (Doshi, 2021)

Comparison of AI Usage: Democratic vs. Authoritarian

Now, talking about authoritarianism and democracy, these two are different approaches to rule the human societies which have always been there in humans in different forms. Representative democracy is the most common mode of government used by the Western world but 'rule by the people', as it is literally known in Greek, has been practised for millennia. In an era of absolute monarchy, aristocracy and tyranny the world over, the famous Greek city of Athens began its rise to

prominence on the Attic Peninsula. This legendary polis became one of the most radical political experiments in history and became the advent of modern-day democracy. However, it never put a complete end to authoritarianism in the world by any means. The authoritarian approach has always been there in the world even in the democratic governments. Democratic America feels insecure the authoritarian China because it has started to become a clear competition for its legitimacy and authority over the world. In this modern race, Artificial Intelligence has become a new benchmark tool which is being used by both sides for their societal security in order to prevent any foreign influence on each other (Ezzahra, 2023).

As discussed earlier, the advent of the Internet and AI was started from the West but it seems as though China was progressing and learning from the West it also learned the ability to be monitored and controlled through the Internet. This might be the reason why China developed its own internet and never allowed any Western social media websites to operate in China to secure its society from Western influence and to stop the Western world from keeping an eye on what's happening in China through the internet. On the other side, it is visible how the Western world uses the internet and social media platforms to collect information (although discreetly) and propagate its interests wherever and whenever desired. (Roberts et al., 2020). Artificial Intelligence is completely dependent on the internet and data information. Both of these things make Artificial Intelligence a lethal tool for any entity and could be used for any purpose. Now as to which system provides suitable ground for Artificial Intelligence to become a powerful tool, the first answer which would come to mind would be authoritarianism due to its nature and ability to control. However, there is a grey side of the picture. By control, it does not mean control through the military but it means social control. It is the acceptability of any system by the human masses which makes a system a social norm. The democratic system is considered as a social system when it is better

accepted by human societies and that is only possible when humans feel safe socially under democracy. Also, it has been seen that the desire for democracy was only entered into the society by the leftists who felt neglected by the existing rulers and system by any means. However, have the democratic systems been successful in any other parts of the world except for the few Western societies? The answer is a No. (Coopeland, 2024). Even the champion of democracy has certain loopholes which raises a big question over the effectiveness of democracy over the societies. The Western democratic side led by America has always used the approach of propagating things about democracy and capitalism to be the dream and how evil other authoritarian systems are. This tactic was used in the Cold War against the Soviets and the same system is being used against China however, this time China has been quite successful in defending its system and the Western system's failure at certain points has paved the way for the Chinese system to become an attractive or alternative one. So, here the arguments of societal security by Bary Buzan prove that a society becomes insecure when it fears it will not be able to live as itself. Both the USA and China are two different societies with two different systems and both feel insecure through migration of people into each other countries bringing foreign influences which could overcome local system's influence, vertical competition presence in both of the societies how it questions the legitimacy of both local systems in China and USA and through horizontal completion between both Chinese influence and American influence. Artificial Intelligence has become a major tool by both sides to influence and maintain societal security (Ezzahra, 2023).

Policy Recommendations

Internationalization and regulation

Given the global impact of AI development, it is important for countries to cooperate internationally and establish regulatory frameworks for responsible and ethical development and use of AI technologies. This

could include initiatives such as international treaties, agreements and partnerships to address issues such as data privacy, security, impartiality and transparency.

Ethical guidelines and standards

Governments should work together with experts, industry stakeholders and the public to develop ethical guidelines and standards for the development and use of AI. This can help reduce potential risks associated with AI, such as algorithmic bias, discrimination and violation of privacy rights.

Investment in research and education

Governments should prioritize research and education investments in AI technologies and ensure that their workforce has the skills needed to succeed in an AI-driven economy. This may include funding for research institutes, universities and training programs focused on AI and related fields.

Encouraging diversity and inclusion

To ensure that AI technology benefits society as a whole, governments should encourage diversity and inclusion in AI development and implementation. This could also include initiatives to increase the representation of underrepresented groups in the AI research industry, as well as ways to address bias and discrimination in AI programs and programs

Transparency and accountability

Governments should promote transparency and accountability in AI programs by requiring developers and users to disclose information about algorithms, data sources, and decision-making processes revealed This can help build confidence in AI technology and allow for rational mechanisms of oversight and accountability.

Public awareness and engagement

Governments should prioritize public awareness and engagement to educate the public about the opportunities and challenges associated with AI technologies. This could include public forums, educational campaigns,

and initiatives to facilitate dialogue between policymakers, industry stakeholders and the public.

Supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs)

The government should support and encourage SMEs to integrate AI technology into their operations. This could include financing, tax incentives, and training programs that enable SMEs to remove barriers to adoption and use AI to increase their competitiveness and productivity

International trade and cooperation

Governments should encourage international trade and cooperation in AI and technology to promote innovation, economic growth and global competitiveness. This could include projects to facilitate the exchange of AI expertise, talent and resources across borders, and efforts to address barriers to international cooperation, such as intellectual property rights and data as they share contracts.

Conclusion

Every once in a while comes a general-purpose technology that changes everything. At the turn of the 20th century, it was electricity. Today, it is artificial intelligence. Also, throughout human history, there has been some technology which became a symbol of the power of any side over the others. If at the end 20th century it was media and nuclear technology, today it is artificial intelligence. It is believed that AI is

going to be the foundation of all the reality and of all the big existing and upcoming industries worldwide. America and China are the two countries which aim to dominate this technology. The race is already on and both are competing to dominate through this technology in various sectors. It is believed that China would surpass the US as a superpower with the help of Artificial Intelligence. If that happens so, there are possibilities of the spreading of the Chinese system and models (military, economic and social) in the whole world. AI is considered to be the key to economic growth and continuing China's rise as an advanced economy, helps it to escape the middle-income trap and is also crucial for maintaining performance legitimacy in the eyes of citizens. This makes the Chinese system more acceptable to Chinese society and makes all other foreign systems less attractive to them. On the other side, the USA still claims to be the leader in AI but they are looking over their shoulder because China is catching up and the USA is trying every means to stop China's rise but it's getting hard for the US to stop China's rise, who is aiming to be at the top by 2030. Anyhow, China's past progress and present aims for the future are proving day by day that China's rise is evident. This is also because of the failures and loopholes in the democratic system. So, would China's rise bring a secure social system for the world? Will the Chinese social system spread in the whole world just like the US did? Time will tell. However, this is only possible if there is social acceptance of that system.

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