PROGETTO

Supervisore: Roberto Mordacci

Titolo: Ethical and accountable use of AI in Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

Descrizione del progetto (*Numero di caratteri inclusi spazi*: 2.000-3.000):

Artificial intelligence (AI) has become an integral part of modern-day digital services. It has provided companies with an array of benefits such as increased efficiency, personalized services, and improved decision-making. AI consulting companies, specifically, provide businesses with the expertise and the resources needed to leverage the power of AI and machine learning to achieve their goals and stay competitive in today's rapidly evolving business landscape. They offer services such as AI strategy development, AI implementation, data analytics, training and education, research and development, and so on. However, since the data market is dominated by a few digital platforms – the GAFAMs (Google, Amazon, Facebook, Apple, and Microsoft) – it is becoming increasingly difficult for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to offer a competitive and adequate service without relying on their services. That is, AI consulting companies cannot but use data sets made available by GAFAM to train the algorithms for micro-targeting and data analytics, and this dependence poses two problems. The first is instrumental: since the datasets are trained within a global, transnational market, they do not reflect the features of the market in which national companies are operating. The second is ethical: the algorithmic predictions run the risk of being biased, generating, or reinforcing unintended discrimination. Overcoming a condition of dependence would require overcoming GAFAM's monopolism, but this seems unfeasible for two reasons. First, thanks to GAFAM's monopolistic position, SMEs can afford not to invest in research and development. At the same time, however, by relying on their service, SMEs reinforce and legitimate technological giants, thus making them challenge the condition of perfect competition. They create, indeed, a vicious circle. Second, GAFAM's monopolistic position seems guaranteed by the US government, which considers American Big Tech a key national security asset.

In light of these considerations, the specific research objectives are:

1. To identify new business strategies that enable the ethical use of predictive algorithms and AI by improving data cleansing services.
2. To investigate new business organization methods that allow companies to use GAFAM's services without triggering the vicious circle mentioned above.

3. To examine a possible alternative to the use of GAFAM's servers and products, through the pooling of data sets at the National and European level

4. To develop a new form of European public-private partnership to create an industrial base capable of enabling (i) respect for EU values in the use of data (see the GDPR) and (ii) an effective research and development capacity in technology, in line with the standard of accountability and transparency of the European Union.

Competenze da acquisire dal dottorando *(Numero di caratteri inclusi spazi: max 600)*:

The PhD Candidate will develop competences in the ethical debate surrounding the use of AI in an entrepreneurial context. In particular, the candidate will delve into the research area of the ethics and politics of digital transition, with the aim of delineating a theoretical framework for overcoming the dilemmas posed by the asymmetrical relation between small and medium-sized enterprises and big information giants.

Bibliografia *(max. 15)*:

Aresu A. (2020), *Le potenze del capitalismo politico. Stati Uniti e Cina*, La Nave di Teseo

GDPR, European Union (https://gdpr.eu)

Kalpokas I. (2019), *Algorithmic Governance: Politics and Law in the Post-Human Era*, London: Palgrave

Noble S. (2018), *Algorithms of Oppression*, NYU Press: New York

Posner E. and Weyl E. (2018), *Radical Markets: Uprooting Capitalism and Democracy for a Just Society*, Princeton University Press

Risse M. (2023), *Political Theory of the Digital Age: Where Artificial Intelligence Might Take Us*, Cambridge University Press

Srnicek N. (2016), *Platform Capitalism*, 1 ed. Cambridge: Polity Press

Teachout Z. (2020), *Break'em Up: Recovering Our Freedom from Big Ag, Big Tech, and Big Money*, All Points Books

Zuboff S. (2018), *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*, Public Affairs

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