

Algorithmic Warfare: How Decision-Support Systems Reshape Military Practices and Regulation

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Warfighters continue to evolve and expand the use of algorithms and data science tools across the range of their activities. One of the most significant uses, however, is arguably within decision-support and intelligence production. For example, the Israel Defense Forces use tools to identify threats, their location and track their movement in real-time. These systems are not neutral, and they are skewed towards data which can be made machine readable. They provide a description of the battlefield, which constitutes and regulates the contemporary conduct of warfare. These technologies have influenced ideas and continue to prevent meaningful discourse around alternative practices and the regulation of military behaviour. This, it is imperative that academia undertake a critical analysis and conceptualisation to highlight consequences of warfare's collective data fixation. This panel builds on recent research on algorithmic warfare to present papers that contribute to discussions on how technologies are imbued with assumptions about war that are often difficult to challenge. Furthermore, by taking technological mediation seriously, it seeks to demonstrate how technology enables certain perceptions and courses of action of military actors on the battlefield while constraining others. Finally, it seeks to place these developments in the context of regulation, inquiring whether and how the risks of algorithmic warfare can be mitigated.

Track Classification: International Studies and Emerging Technologies Working Group