PATRICK NICOLET

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Virginie ROBERT

Mr. Nicolet, you will talk about geopolitics and data. All of this, as I am sure you have noticed, is a little intrusive, because if you will have sensors in your body mapping your emotions, that does not leave much room.

Patrick NICOLET

I will focus on the geopolitical importance of data, starting with a few figures to set the stage: there is an explosion of data production, and it is forecasted to be multiplied by 20 between 2015 and 2025, the majority of which will be data generated by machines rather than human interaction. We also note that the volume of cross-border data exchange has multiplied by 45 between 2005 and 2014, and the infrastructure supporting all this, called cloud computing which covered less than 30% of global data in 2010, is expected to cover more than 50% by 2025. From a geopolitical standpoint, it is worth noticing that the main part is controlled by US companies, and more recently through big investments from Chinese companies. But each major country or group of countries is now developing specific strategies and priorities around data.

Despite a lack of governmental direction, American firms were the first to identify the power of data to generate value (e.g. the GAFA – Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon together with Microsoft whose market capitalisation and volume of CAPEX allow them to spend up to USD 1 billion of capital expenditure per month). This is not only on cloud but also software, hardware and all the services they develop.

China looks at data more as a source of power rather than as a source of wealth. A good example of that is the social credit system they are developing, leveraging personal data as well as data issued from the community to rank citizens and then define what public services they can access e.g. obtaining a passport to exit the region or country.

In Russia, there are converging evidence that data is actively leveraged to support the national intelligence strategy, including deception in Western elections – although formal attribution has not been made in every cases.

Europe has given the classic social-democratic answer through the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), trying to manage the schizophrenia of Europeans who, as consumers willingly give away their data without any consideration for their privacy to the big American players while asking for protection and the right to be forgotten as citizens.

We see a clear imbalance about what we do related to the importance of data, and this will fundamentally influence the geopolitical relationships. I would propose, to be practical, three areas where we might want to focus. The first is the redefinition of trust through technology. Trust is fundamental to all human interactions, whether in business or between states, and technology is fundamentally changing how trust will be handled. Part of this trust will be in technology. The citizens trust technology more than they trust their government: how is it you let foreigners sleep in your own bed just because a platform (Airbnb) is telling you it is okay to do so but you would not leave your door open trusting the police to keep your place safe? How to build trust with other nations when people distrust their own government?

The second topic is around ethics. It is a fundamental concern with the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI), and I am not even speaking of other transgressive trends such as transhumanism. How is it that we had an extensive debate when biotechnology arrived, and here, probably because the level of abstraction is too high, we are not having it? This creates fundamental questions about how you are going to design the technology and solutions going forward.

Finally, we need to address the question of the governance and I will take one example: cybersecurity. A cyber-warfare is ongoing as we speak. All our companies and corporations are currently being attacked, and it is something new, in a context of little to no-regulation, and we must protect ourselves. It impacts the cost of doing business or

operating your administration, so it is a tax on top of it. Microsoft's General Counsel, Brad Smith has launched Tech Accord, an initiative to develop common rules of engagement, a Geneva Convention for the cyberspace.

Finally, Capgemini has contributed to a study on the European geopolitical strategy for data, together with the French Institute of International Relations. We will continue to work on this topic, because it is a topic that did not receive the level of attention it should have. I have tried to explain that there are already broad implications which we do not see and to which we do not pay enough attention, in particular in Europe. Our partners are much more aware of the power of data than we are, and we should be conscious of this.

Virginie ROBERT

It is a very sharp contrast with the world of smart cities, where everything is for eco-sustainability and growth, and the world you are describing is much more worrisome.