Ethics of Artificial Intelligence Colloquium

We warmly invite everyone interested in the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence to join the AI Ethics Colloquium. This will be the first colloquium meeting of a series of meetings to be continued in the winter term.

When: 20th June 2024
12:00 noon to 1:30 pm

Where: Room 3A, NIG, Universitätsstraße 7, 1010 Wien

Speaker: Nikhil Mahant (PhD, Central European University Vienna)

Title: Moral Responsibility Without Moral Agency

Abstract: Most philosophical analyses assume that moral responsibility entails agency in the following sense: for an entity (E) to be morally responsible for an action/outcome (x), it is necessary that E is an agent. Call this the 'Agential' view of moral responsibility. I will provide three arguments for rejecting the Agential view. First, the concept of 'agency' is a rich notion—agents are thought to possess mental states, have some degree of causal efficacy, a capacity to be guided by reasons/sentiments, have freedom and interests etc.— and by requiring morally responsible entities to be agents, the Agential view puts a stronger requirement on the concept of 'moral responsibility' than is required. Second, it is well recognized that responsibility can have different 'faces' (e.g., accountability, answerability, attributability). I will argue that it is implausible that a single notion of agency can be the locus of all these distinct types of responsibility. Third, I will discuss two counterexamples to the Agential view which show that: (i) an entity can be morally responsible (by being answerable) without being an agent in the full-fledged sense, and (ii) there is a sense of moral responsibility (different from legal responsibility) on which entities that are not obviously agents (e.g., regulatory bodies) can be morally responsible (by being accountable). I will also propose an alternative, non-agential view of moral responsibility and outline some of its advantages in the debate concerning responsibility-gaps.

If you have any questions or are interested in presenting your research in this colloquium during the winter term, please feel free to contact: leonie.nora.bossert@univie.ac.at.