


# Chapter 3

## The Future of Human Autonomy: Will Agentic Artificial Intelligence Augment or Replace Human Decision-Making

**Ikrane Ouhnine**

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-3132-4087>

*Abdelmalek Essaâdi University, Morocco*

### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter explores how agentic Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping economic, social, and ethical structures. Unlike traditional automation, agentic AI autonomously adapts decision-making, replicating or surpassing human cognition. This shift induces a “phase change,” transforming institutions, labor markets, and societal norms. While AI enhances efficiency, it exacerbates economic disparities, challenging GDP as a sole metric. We propose alternative indicators integrating well-being, equity, and sustainability. In business, AI-driven models create new data asymmetries, requiring adaptive governance. Trust, as both a relational and regulatory principle, is essential for balancing innovation and accountability. Advocating for Human-Centered AI, transparency, and fairness, this chapter underscores the need for interdisciplinary collaboration and robust data-sharing frameworks to ensure inclusive and equitable AI-driven progress.*

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## INTRODUCTION

How is human autonomy being reshaped in the age of agentic Artificial Intelligence? This chapter addresses this central question by exploring how AI systems capable of autonomous reasoning, learning, and decision-making are redefining economic structures, institutional arrangements, and fundamental values.

Over the twentieth century, multiple waves of technological innovation have profoundly reshaped economic and social life to the point of being commonly referred to as “industrial revolutions” (Hatch et al., 2002). Mechanization, followed by mass production, revolutionized manufacturing and consumption processes. Subsequently, the rise of computing and the widespread adoption of the Internet ushered in the information society, where the digitization of exchanges and services became a new standard (Castells, 2010; Fielt, 2024).

Today, we are witnessing the emergence of what we refer to as agentic Artificial Intelligence, a form of AI capable of autonomous goal-setting, real-time adaptation, and decision-making without direct human input (Huang et al., 2023; Russell & Norvig, 2020). Unlike reactive or rule-based systems, agentic AI integrates planning, anticipation, and negotiation mechanisms to fulfill dynamic objectives, making it more than a tool, a partner, or even a substitute in decision-making. This shift signals the onset of what may be termed the Autonomous Revolution.

This new paradigm shift is part of a long historical trajectory comparable to two earlier major upheavals: the Agricultural Revolution and the Industrial Revolution. Each of these revolutions introduced an unprecedented mode of interaction with the world, radically transforming institutions, the division of labor, our conceptions of space and time, and the very structure of our societies. In the case of the Autonomous Revolution, the substitution process relies on multiple “equivalences” (informational, intellectual, and spatial): entire realms of activity once reserved for humans (evaluating options, problem-solving, planning, or decision-making) are now migrating into the algorithmic sphere (Orr & Dutta, 2023; F. Zhang et al., 2024). This substitution process reconfigures the value of human agency by translating formerly embodied tasks into computational actions. Much like a phase transition in physics, this shift upends the fundamental principles governing production, consumption, and social interaction. Although a source of opportunity, this third-social revolution, after the agricultural and the industrial, raises legitimate questions about the future of human autonomy and the preservation of fundamental values (Chesterman, 2019; Dodig-Crnkovic et al., 2024; Machkour & Abriane, 2020).

Unlike purely reactive systems or simple statistical learning models, Agentic Artificial Intelligence is characterized by internal objectives and action mechanisms that grant it a form of initiative. Beyond learning processes, these systems rely on planning, multi-agent collaboration (K. Zhang & Aslan, 2021), and the capacity

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