

AI の「安全規制」は誰のため？：巨大企業の利益と米中競争が生む二つの罠

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OUR KEY VIEWS

- AI の安全規制は必要だが、設計次第では新規参入を妨げ、既存の巨大企業の利益と地位を守る仕組みになり得る。
- 企業間で開発を減速させる協調が成立しても、米中の技術・安全保障競争は続く。他国に先を越されまいとするプレッシャーが、安全確認を後回しにさせる恐れもある。
- 問われるのは、開発のスピードだけでなく、技術の方向性と利益の分配である。AI が労働者の能力を支え、生産性向上の成果が広く還元されるかが重要となる。
- 安全確保と競争の維持を支える制度が求められる。独立した評価機関や規制の検証、国際協力を通じて、AI の将来を少数の大企業や大国の都合だけに委ねないことが必要だろう。

AI の開発を一旦減速させるべきではないのか。開発の最前線にいる大手 AI 企業の経営者たちから、そんな声が上がった。AI が人間の制御を離れて、社会に深刻な被害をもたらす前に、安全性を確かめる時間が必要という。開発を急いできた大手 AI 企業の経営者自身がブレーキを求めるのだから、その警告には耳を傾けなければならないだろう。

だが、筆者はこの動きに疑問も抱いている。安全のための減速が、結果として先行する大手 AI 企業の利益を守ることにつながるのではないか。これが一点目の問題だ。

歴史を振り返ると、革新的な技術を巡る投資競争は、過剰設備や価格下落を招くことがあった。技術の普及によって社会が恩恵を受けても、投資した企業が十分な収益を得られるとは限らない。そのため、企業には、競争を緩めて投資回収を確実にしたいという誘因が生じる。こうした誘因を考えると、AI の開発速度について、もし企業同士が足並みを揃えるのなら、一種のカルテルに近づく恐れはないか。

もちろん、安全性を訴える経営者が競争制限を企てていると断定する証拠はない。しかし、安全性への懸念と自社の利益を守る動機は、両立し得る。問うべきは、経営者の本心ではなく、どのような制度が設けられ、それが誰に利益をもたらすかであろう。

「安全規制」が既存企業を守るとき

ここで注意したいのは、企業の自主的な協調を政府などの公的な規制に置き換えれば、問題が解決するとは限らないことである。規制の設計次第では、政府自身が競争制限を支えることになりかねない。安全のための規則が結果として、既存の AI 大手企業の利益や地位を守る盾になり得る。

例えば、高額な安全性試験や監査、詳細な報告体制をすべての開発企業に一律に求めるとしよう。潤沢な資金と専門人材を揃える大手 AI 企業には吸収可能なコストであっても、新興企業や大学の研究チームには重過ぎるかもしれない。問題は、規制によって参入が難しくなること自体ではない。必要な安全基準は守らせるべきだが、リスクの大きさに見合わない固定的な費用を課すと、独創的な技術を持つ新興企業の市場参入が難しくなる。

さらに、新規モデルの開発や公開を許可制にし、その審査基準を、大手 AI 企業が、すでに採用している設備や手法に合わせるとどうなるか。同じ安全性を別の方法で実現できる企業を排除することになりかねない。既存企業には規制対応の猶予を認め、新規参入者には厳しい条件を課せば、結果として既存企業の利益と地位を保護することになる。形式的には万人に開かれていても、実際には少数の既存大手だけの市場になりかねない。

規制当局が専門知識を企業に頼らざるを得ないことも、問題を複雑にする。高度な技術のリスクを評価するには、開発者の協力が不可欠である。しかし、規制される側が、規制の物差しまで事実上規定するのなら、公共の安全を守るはずの制度が、既存企業を守る制度へ変質する恐れがある。経済学でいう「規制の虜」問題である。規制の虜は、既存企業への安全規制を緩める形でも、新規参入者に過大な負担を課す形でも生じ得る。問題は、規制の強弱だけでなく、その設計と運用が誰の利益に資するかである。

規制によって企業数が減ること自体は、直ちにカルテルを意味しない。とは言え、外部からの参入が難しくなれば、既存企業間の競争を緩める協調行動を維持しやすくなる。安全確保のため、開発や公開の一時的な制限が必要となる場合もあるだろう。しかし、その対象や期間、必要性を、独立した立場から検証し、危険の抑制に必要な範囲を超えて、既存企業の利益を守る制限になっていないかを点検しなければならない。

企業間の約束だけなら、利益を増やそうとする企業の抜け駆けや、安い価格で参入する企業によって協調が崩れる余地はある。しかし、参入を規制で封じれば、競争を回復させる市場の自律的な力が損なわれる。既存企業が技術やサービスを改善する努力を多少怠っても、すぐには地位を脅かされないからである。市場で獲得した優位性が、制度によって守られる優位性へ変わる点に、規制の潜在的な弊害がある。安全性を金科玉条に競争政策が緩められてしまえば、規制を利用した市場支配を見逃しかねない。

米中間の競争で AI 開発を止められない

もっとも、仮に企業間の協調が成立しても、参加企業には抜け駆けする誘因がある。国外の企業が市場に参入できる限り、協調行動は揺さぶられる。さらに、中国などで進む技術開発まで止められるわけではない。他国に先を越されまいとする競争が、安全性の確認を後回しにさせるリスクが残る。これが第二の問題である。

英誌『エコノミスト』の9月19日号の「Can the AI arms race be stopped?」は、この難しさを、米中対立の視点から論じていた。AI は民生にも軍事・諜報にも使える技術（デュアルユース）であり、米国が一方的に開発を減速させれば、中国に優位性を譲る恐れがある。相手国に先を越されることへの恐怖が、安全性への懸念を押しつける。双方が AI のもたらす危険を理解していても、立ち止まることのできない軍拡競争の罠に陥るリスクがある。

ウクライナでのドローン戦は、そうした軍拡競争圧力を具体的に示しているという。ドローンの速度や通信技術、攻撃精度のわずかな改善が戦場に直ちに導入され、相手側も対抗策を急ぐ。AI でも同じ力学が働き得る。しかも、米中が協調を約束しても、データセンターの内部で何を開発しているのかを互いに外部から確かめるのは難しい。開発停止に両国が応じて、その順守を検証できなければ、相手の抜け駆けへの懸念は消えない。

国家が国内の有力企業を安全保障上の担い手として位置付ければ、参入条件を厳しくする一方で、既存企業には開発支援を行うこともあり得る。国内の市場構造を固

定しながら、外国との技術競争を加速させるのである。その結果、国家と巨大 AI 企業が互いの力を強め、開発の意思決定が一層狭い範囲に集中するリスクにも注意が必要だろう。防衛調達や開発支援によって、この相互依存が深まれば、軍産複合体に通じる問題も生じ得る。

企業は競争相手に先を越されまいと開発を急ぐ一方、足並みを揃えられるなら、投資負担を抑える誘因を持つ。国家は安全を求めながら、他国に優位を奪われることを恐れて、開発を促す。自らの利益と社会全体の利益が一致するとは限らない。企業間の協調も国家間の競争も、それだけで社会に望ましい開発の速度と方向を保証するものではない。カルテルへの懸念と AI 軍拡競争は、この点で表裏一体の問題となる。国有化によって企業の利益追求を抑えても、国家間競争や権力集中の問題は残る。

同時に、AI そのものが社会にもたらす危険も軽視できない。人類の絶滅といった極端な事態にまで話を広げなくても、重要なインフラへの攻撃や人々の監視に AI が使われれば、被害は甚大である。競争を維持することが、危険を他者に押し付けることになってはならない。企業が負担する費用だけでなく、社会が負う費用も勘案しなければならない。

安全な AI でも恩恵が行きわたるとは限らない

さらに、AI が技術的に安全なら十分というわけではない点も認識する必要がある。AI が人々のどんな仕事を支え、どんな仕事を置き換え、生み出した付加価値を誰が受け取ることになるのか。こうした選択も社会全体に大きく関わる。少数の企業が技術の方向性を規定すれば、安全性が確保されていても、その恩恵が社会に広く行きわたるとは限らない。デジタル技術は、労働者の能力を補い労働者の仕事を支えるためにも使えるが、技術の方向性次第では、労働者を代替するためにも使える。導入の目的が後者に偏り、生産性向上の成果が労働者に十分還元されなければ、一次所得分配をさらに歪め、労働分配率を抑える方向に働く。

過去 40 年、米国では、競争政策が企業の市場支配力の拡大に十分に対応できてきたかが問われてきた。財・サービス市場での価格設定力に加え、労働市場で企業が買い手として持つ独占力も一次所得分配を大きく左右する。

安全を守り既得権を作らないために

では、どのような制度が必要か。まず「AI の減速」という言葉を具体化しなければならない。危険な能力の開発を抑えることか、モデルの一般公開のスピードを抑えることか、兵器への搭載を抑えることか。それぞれ危険も対策も異なるはずである。対象を曖昧にした一律の規制は、安全性への効果検証を難しくするとともに、既存企業の利益を温存する手段になりやすい。

安全基準は、企業の規模や既存の技術方式に合わせるのではなく、能力や用途に伴う危険に応じて設けるべきだろう。共通の安全要件を、別の方法で満たしていると評価する道も残しておく必要がある。独立した評価機関や共同で利用できる試験設備を整えれば、安全性基準を引き下げずに、新興 AI 企業や研究機関の負担を軽減することができるだろう。その評価機関についても、資金や人材が特定の大手 AI 企業に依存しない仕組みと、利益相反の管理が必要になる。

規制を作る過程にも、競争を守る視点が必要になる。大手 AI 企業の知識を活用しつつ、新興企業や研究者、利用者、労働者などの意見も聞く必要がある。安全性を担う当局と競争政策を担う当局が協力し、参入阻害への悪影響を点検する。規制導入後も技術の進歩に応じて見直し、不要になった規制や手続きを残さないことも大切である。

ただし、損害賠償に備える資金や保険について、危険に比べて過大な一律負担を求めれば、新規参入を不要に妨げる恐れがある。AI の安全性の評価方法や被害を防ぐ技術に関する知識は、企業や研究機関の間で共有し、特定企業に頼らず安全性を評価するようにする。その際、悪用につながる情報については、共有する相手や範囲を慎重に判断する必要がある。こうした安全確保のための知識は、グローバル公共財として扱うべきだろう。

米中間でも開発全体の減速だけを目標とせず、重大事故の情報共有や危険の評価方法など、協力できる領域を探る必要があるだろう。相手への不信が強いからこそ、具体的に何を確かめられるのかが重要になる。

「規制か自由競争か」、「加速か減速か」という二者択一では、これらの問題は解けない。規制が企業の市場支配を助長することも、競争が危険な開発を加速させることもある。だからこそ、安全を守る制度と、その制度が既得権に取り込まれるのを防ぐ仕組みを、一緒に作らなければならない。

制度を整えても、安全と競争、国家安全保障の緊張は残る。だからこそ、何を守るために、どの負担を受け入れるのか、その判断の根拠と責任を明らかにする必要がある。AI の開発速度と方向性を決める権限は、少数の大手 AI 企業や大国の都合だけに委ねられるべきものではない。

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