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Algorithmic Sovereignty and Digital Colonialism: Legal and International Relations Perspectives on AI Governance in the Global South

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ABSTRACT

The increasing pace of spreading artificial intelligence technologies has restructured world power relations, world orders, and economies of the world constructs. Although the focus of AI innovation lies in technologically developed states, its application is becoming a more dominant influence in the social, political, and economical life of the Global South. Such asymmetry has led to the intensification of the debate on algorithmic sovereignty and digital colonialism, in which the control of data infrastructures, computational resources, and algorithmic systems is concentrated in the hands of few states and corporations. This qualitative research paper explores the intersections of AI governance regimes on international law and international relations theory to reproduce or destabilize structural inequalities. The article is based on the principles of doctrinal legal analysis, postcolonial theory, and the literature on global political economy and investigates the experience of algorithmic dependency that Global South states undergo and the possibilities of normative options that may be adopted in order to claim technological sovereignty. The results indicate that without the presence of integrated regulatory systems, capacity-building processes, and collaboration between South and South, the issue of AI governance will be prone to reinforce neo-colonial trends in technological

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superiority. The conclusion of the paper suggests a sovereignty-based framework of reasonable AI governance based on legal pluralism, data justice and multilateral institutional reform.

Keywords: Algorithmic sovereignty, digital colonialism, AI governance, Global South, international law, postcolonial theory, technological dependency.

1. Introduction

Artificial intelligence is one of the technological infrastructure that is characterizing the twenty-first century. It has been used in the sphere of governance, finance, agriculture, security, health systems, education, and military strategy. However, the design, training and application of AI systems are very skewed all over the system globally. Small groups of technologically advanced countries are in control of the world, leading in the creation of AI research, the amount of patents, semiconductor producers, and the cloud computing networks (Crawford, 2021; OECD, 2023). In the meantime, the reliance on imported AI systems, overseas cloud systems and externally owned digital platforms is the new reality in most African, South Asian, Latin American and even southeast Asian nations.

Such imbalance of the structure raises grave concerns about sovereignty in the digital age. The classical international law defines the idea of sovereignty as the supremacy in the territorial limit (Krasner, 1999). Nevertheless, the digital infrastructures have no boundaries defined by state borders and the traditional patterns of sovereignty do not regulate transnational systems of algorithms. This has spawned the notion of algorithmic sovereignty in order to explain the capacity of a state to guide, design, and operate algorithmic systems that will have impacts on its population and economy.

In the meantime, scholars have also begun to conceptualize contemporary technological disparities as some form of digital colonialism. Digital colonialism does not rely on territorial occupation and resource extraction as is the case with historic colonialism but the extraction of data, dependence on infrastructure, intellectual property regimes, and platform monopolization (Couldry and Mejias, 2019). AI enhances such processes because they require massive amounts of data, supercomputing infrastructures, and custom algorithms owned by technology-

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dominant multinationals located in technologically powerful countries to a large degree.

In this paper, AI governance will be examined in relation to international laws and the international relations theory to produce or mitigate digital colonial forms. In the paper, there is no highly normative or technical approach but divides into the qualitative analysis in the context of the postcolonial international relations theory, dependency theory, and the doctrinal legal interpretation. The most obvious argument made here is that the algorithmic sovereignty in the Global South is not merely constrained by technological possibility, but by the structural features of the global political economy, intellectual property regimes, and systems of establishing normative regulation which are governed by the strong states.

The research presents three questions that are connected to one another. Firstly, how do the regimes of governance of AI currently existing recreate or reflect global power distribution? Second, what are the legal alternatives taken by the Global South states to have the algorithmic sovereignty within the existing international forms? Third, how can the multilateral reform rebuild AI governance to do away with digital colonial entrenchment?

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Sovereignty in the Digital Era

The sovereignty concept is conventionally thought of as the power of a state over its land and people. The assumption of the territorial superiority is the Westphalian principle, which is the basis of the political power (Krasner, 1999). This structure has been complicated by the digital technologies since the information flows are not limited to any particular country, the cloud systems are diffused throughout the geographical borders of the countries and algorithms systems frequently exist outside the jurisdictional space of the countries.

Scholars have thus come to suggest such like terminologies like digital sovereignty, data sovereignty or cyber sovereignty. The sovereignty of algorithms is based on them though, in this specific instance, it is the administration of AI systems and the design, execution, responsibility and control process executed. It incorporates the control, infrastructural detachment, data and epistemic agency in

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the operations of laying down norms.

However, the fact that sovereignty does not just exist as a rule of law, it is a constitutional problem in the world politics. Technology increases the strength of the states and their strategic capabilities in the realist approach. In as much as liberal institutionalist views are involved, asymmetries may be contained in cooperation in the form of multilateral modes of governance. A sovereignty may be oftentimes limited by structural dependency in the global economies, though, so is a critical and postcolonial view (Acharya, 2014).

The article is scathing of international relations where the concept of algorithmic sovereignty, it must be interpreted within the context of the hierarchy of globalized capitalistic relationships and intellectual property regimes in which technologically hegemonic nations are advantaged.

2.2 Digital Colonialism and Data Extractivism

The idea of digital colonialism is based on the dependency theory and postcolonial studies. Because of dependency theorists like Wallerstein (1974) viewed the world system as being split into core and periphery states whereby peripheral states source raw material and labor and core states source high-value production.

In the 21 st century, data serves as raw material. AI systems are trained on massive data sets produced around the world, behavioral, biometric, linguistic data as well as cultural data mined out of users in the Global South. Nevertheless, the economic worthiness of these datasets is concentrated rather in the hands of corporations that are based in the Global North (Couldry and Mejias, 2019).

Table 1 illustrates the structural analogy between historical colonialism and digital colonialism.

Table 1: ***Comparative Features of Historical Colonialism and Digital Colonialism***

Dimension	Historical Colonialism	Digital Colonialism
Primary Resource	Minerals, agricultural commodities	Data
Infrastructure	Railways, ports, telegraph	Cloud computing, undersea

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Dimension	Historical Colonialism	Digital Colonialism
Control		cables
Governance Mechanism	Territorial administration	Platform governance
Economic Model	Monopoly trade systems	Platform monopolies
Legal Framework	Colonial charters	Intellectual property regimes

The continuity lies in asymmetric control over resource extraction and value generation. In the AI context, data generated within Global South societies are harvested, processed, and monetized elsewhere.

3. Methodology

The study is qualitative, doctrinal and theoretical. It is not based on quantitative modelling, instead it combines legal analysis, international relations theory with political economy scholarship.

The paper examines legal documents on an international level, regional regulatory mechanisms, policy statements and academic literature to determine trends in AI regulation. It also applies comparative case study of regulatory models that have come out of the European Union, China and some of the states in the Global south.

The qualitative approach enables an interpretive analysis of the conceptualisation, operationalisation and limitation of sovereignty in the discourse of AI governance. The methodology is based on the constructivist epistemology, where the governance structures are subjected to normative assumptions and power relations.

4. Artificial Intelligence and Global Political Economy

The politics economy of AI is characterized by obvious asymmetries in the ability to innovate, the presence of high-level computational infrastructure, and intellectual property concentration. The high-performance cloud infrastructure is also geographically concentrated like advanced semiconductor manufacturing. It is the possibilities of algorithmic sovereignty developed within these structural conditions. Table 2 presents a simplified distribution of AI innovation capacity based on global

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policy reports.

Table 2: ***Approximate Distribution of AI Innovation Indicators (2023 Estimates)***

Region	Share of AI Patents	Share of Top AI Firms	High-Performance Compute Capacity
United States	35%	High	Very High
China	40%	High	Very High
European Union	15%	Moderate	High
Global South (combined)	<10%	Low	Limited

Source: OECD AI Policy Observatory (2023)

Of importance is the concentration of the power of computation. The training of AI models consumes large amounts of computing resources that are capital-intensive. The nations that do not have local cloud infrastructure are forced to use international vendors, which further supports dependence.

The dependency theory proposes that the peripheral states get structurally absorbed into the global systems as consumers of high-value technology, but not as producers (Wallerstein, 1974). Unless sure steps in the form of industrial and regulatory policies are taken, AI governance will be recreating this dynamic.

5. AI Governance through International Legal Fragmentation

However, the world has no AI binding treaty as of today. Governance rather works based on soft law tools, national laws, regional laws and corporate self-regulation. Such disintegration benefits the states that have the capacity to control and dominate the technology.

European Union has gone a step further in establishing an extensive regulatory framework by its AI Act. Despite the language serving as a right-protective measure, its extraterritorial scope is an effective export of European law making. International companies have to follow its requirements, which affects the practice worldwide.

This is paradoxical in Global South view. The EU model can also lead to increased

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protections but on the other hand, it will strengthen regulatory dependency as the developing states must meet standards developed without much involvement of the developing states.

In a similar way, the tech World Trade Organization TRIPS Agreement intellectual property regimes restrict the policy space in technological development. High IP protections could also become an obstacle to national innovation in developing countries as it would limit access to proprietary algorithms and training data.

6. Geopolitical Rivalry and the Global South: AI as Strategic Infrastructure

Artificial intelligence has now been the focus of geopolitical rivalry, especially between the United States and China. The creation of AI is now being presented as a key national security concern, which has influenced global trade policy, and export controls, as well as technology partnerships (Kania, 2018). The competition stretches beyond innovation leadership and into infrastructure leadership, semiconductor supply chain, clouds, and digital platforms. In the case of the Global South countries, this competition creates a possibility and limitation.

According to the realist international relations approach, AI presents a strategic capability equivalent to the nuclear or industrial capacity. The dominance in technology is depicted in the form of military superiority, economic power, and influence (Mearsheimer, 2014). The United States in response has placed export limitations on high tech semiconductor chips and AI-related technologies to limit access in geopolitical rivals (Allen, 2023). In its turn, China has increased its national AI policy and extended its digital infrastructure projects overseas with the help of the Digital Silk Road-related programs (Triolo and Allison, 2020).

To Global South states, the dependency can be created through belonging to either of the technological blocks. Africa and Asian nations are dependent on Chinese telecommunications infrastructure (5G networks and surveillance systems) and, at the same time, are dependent on American cloud services and software ecosystems. This two-fold reliance makes algorithmic sovereignty harder since regimes tend to be modelled in accordance to the norms in imported systems.

Table 3 shows how AI influences have been structured geopolitically in the chosen

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areas.

Table 3: ***Geopolitical Distribution of AI-Related Influence***

Domain	United States	China	Implications for Global South
Cloud Infrastructure	Dominant (AWS, Microsoft, Google)	Expanding (Alibaba Cloud, Huawei Cloud)	Dependence on foreign compute
Semiconductor Manufacturing	Advanced design leadership	Growing fabrication capacity	Restricted access through export controls
Surveillance AI	Limited export	Significant export to developing states	Adoption of external governance models
Regulatory Standard Setting	OECD, NIST frameworks	State-centric AI governance	Limited participation in rule-making

Global South often incorporates AI systems that include regulatory assumptions developed in other places. This dynamic confirms what Acharya (2014) refers to as normative diffusion in the absence of a significant normative agency. Standards are transnational, yet the involvement in their development is unequal.

Moreover, the policy autonomy is limited by the geopolitical competition. States which are interested in diversifying technological relationships can be diplomatically pressured or punished economically. The algorithmic sovereignty is, therefore, involved in a wider geopolitical alignment.

7. Case Studies: Algorithmic Dependency in Practice

7.1 Sub-Saharan Africa: Infrastructure Reliance and Data Extraction

In Sub-Saharan Africa more areas are being used in AI, which includes agriculture, fintech, health diagnostics and public administration. Nonetheless, the computational infrastructure in the country is small. Most multinational corporations based off-continentally are the ones that offer cloud services. Consequently, local datasets have a tendency to be processed and stored on overseas servers, which can be an issue of jurisdiction, privacy, and extraction of economic value.

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Empirical research indicates that African startups often make use of application program interface and machine learning systems built by major technology companies (Birhane, 2020). Even though these tools reduce barriers to entry, they incorporate foreign standards of governance and licensing barriers. This reliance is an asymmetry of the structure and not a voluntary subordination.

According to the dependency theory, African states provide data and labor and value is captured in the core economies (Wallerstein, 1974). Also, the biometric identification systems implemented in some African countries are frequently provided by foreign companies, which casts doubt on the authority over the information about citizens.

7.2 India: Infrastructure Digital and Conditional Sovereignty

With India, this case is more complicated. India has established a domestic data governance capacity and digital identity systems through its programmes like Aadhaar and India Stack digital public infrastructure framework (Arun, 2019). These efforts are reminiscent of efforts to establish digital sovereignty through the development of public digital rails as opposed to only depending on foreign platforms.

Nevertheless, India at the same time hosts large activities of the global technology firms and depends on foreign cloud infrastructure. The presence of the domestic digital infrastructure and the foreign technological dependency exemplifies what can be called as conditional algorithmic sovereignty. The concept of sovereignty has been partially developed in the design of governance but is limited by infrastructural dependence.

The controversies concerning localization of data in India also demonstrate the conflict between economic and sovereign interests. Proponents believe that local storage will increase regulatory control and national security, whereas critics have concerns of trade restrictions and less innovation (Aaronson and Leblond, 2018).

7.3 Latin America: Regulatory Innovation without Structural Power

Other states in Latin America have also been inspired by the European Union General Data Protection Regulation by implementing data protection frameworks. The example of this trend is the Lei Geral de Protection de Dados in Brazil (Doneda

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& Almeida, 2020). Although these frameworks contribute to the privacy of greater protection, they do not change the nature of infrastructural dependence on multinational cloud providers core.

The regulatory emulation is what the scholars of international relations describe as a convergence in regulations. Nevertheless, convergence does not entail sovereignty. Latin American states will not be able to conduct their AI research ecosystems and computational capacities, which means they will be reliant on external AI providers even with the adoption of advanced legal protections.

8. Intellectual Property Regimes and Structural Constraint

The intellectual property law is central in influencing the algorithmic sovereignty. Members of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) are bound to safeguard patents and trade secrets, including AI-related innovations (WTO, 1994). Although IP protection encourages the innovation, it may limit the spread of technology to the developing economies.

The monopolization of AI patents in technologically advanced states inhibits the capacity of Global South companies to create their competing models without licensing. In addition, proprietary training datasets can be veiled as trade secrets, and they cannot be duplicated or examined (Burrell, 2016).

Table 4 is an example of structural asymmetries in AI-related intellectual property.

Table 4: ***Structural Characteristics of AI Intellectual Property Regimes***

Feature	Effect on Core States	Effect on Global South
Patent Protection	Secures market dominance	Raises entry barriers
Trade Secret Protection	Protects proprietary datasets	Limits transparency
Licensing Fees	Generates revenue streams	Increases operational costs
Enforcement Mechanisms	Strong institutional capacity	Limited enforcement leverage

The global IP regime therefore reinforces digital colonial structures by privileging knowledge ownership concentrated in the Global North. Reform proposals include compulsory licensing for essential AI technologies and greater transparency

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requirements, though these remain politically contentious.

9. Data Localization and Sovereignty Claims

The data localization laws have been one of the approaches of asserting the possibility of algorithmic sovereignty. They are attempting to expand the control over regulation and protect the national security by forcing certain forms of data to be stored on the territory of states.

However, localization is not a panacea. This is with or without domestic computational infrastructure, local data can still be executed on hosts in the cloud owned by foreign companies located within the country. In the circumstances where this is true, the sovereignty is not real but formal.

In addition, some localization requirements are either deterrent to foreign investment or not congruent to trade commitments within the agreements of the World Trade Organization (Aaronson and Leblond, 2018). The challenge is finding the balance point between sovereignism and economic integration.

There is also the issue of human rights in the consideration of localization. The excessive state control of the information may enable internal espionage, which will create the problem of home colonialism and totalitarianism. The algorithmic sovereignty must therefore have a democratic answerability.

10. Knowledge Framework of Algorithms Sovereignty

Such findings give way to the conclusion that the notion of algorithmic sovereignty should be a multidimensional concept and it should be a fusion of the legal change, expansion of infrastructure and international partnership. Sovereignty does not reduce to holding territorial data; it consists of normative and technological power, regulatory involvement.

A sovereignty based structure model would include the following structural pillars. First, there is the need to institutionalise the fair representation in the global AI standard-setting organisations. The governing bodies that are in place favor the domination of the states in the technological field. Inclusive representation should be practiced in order to avoid regulatory imperialism.

Second, the intellectual property regimes should possess flexibilities to permit diffusion of technology. The example of the pharmaceutical patent discussion might

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demonstrate that the practices of technology transfer and forced licensing might be adopted to enable equity (Sell, 2003).

Third, the Global south states can work together regionally to enhance the bargaining power. The South-South digital partnership can contribute to the common research infrastructure construction, talent transfer, and the multinational corporations negotiation.

Table 5 outlines components of a sovereignty-centered AI governance model.

Table 5: ***Elements of a Sovereignty-Centered AI Governance Framework***

Pillar	Description	Intended Outcome
Regulatory Participation	Inclusive representation in global forums	Normative agency
Infrastructure Development	Investment in domestic compute capacity	Reduced dependency
IP Flexibilities	Compulsory licensing mechanisms	Technological diffusion
Regional Cooperation	South-South AI partnerships	Collective bargaining power
Data Justice Principles	Protection of citizen rights	Democratic legitimacy

This framework emphasizes that sovereignty is relational and negotiated rather than absolute.

11. International Relations Perspectives Revisited

In realist terms, the latter can be reduced to material capabilities, which defines algorithmic sovereignty. The states without economic and technological strength will find it hard to establish their independence. Nevertheless, liberal institutionalism proposes that the occurrence of asymmetry may be reduced by multilateral forms of governance through collaboration and common standards.

The constructivist theory also emphasizes on normative discourse. The presentation of AI governance as a human rights issue, development issue, or security issue influences the policy consequences. States of the Global South are able to act as agents by creating discourse and promoting alternative paradigms of

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governance (Acharya, 2014).

The critical international relations theory continues to play a critical role in exposing the way global capitalism forms the technological dependency. Digital colonialism is not an unintended side effect of digital capitalism but rather the continuation of hierarchies inherent in trade, finance, as well as intellectual property systems.

12. Conclusion (Interim)

The discussion up to this point shows that AI governance is performed under established asymmetries of world power. In the Global South, algorithmic sovereignty is limited by the infrastructural dependency, intellectual property regimes, geopolitical rivalry, and regulation diffusion processes that are dominated by influential states.

Nevertheless, sovereignty is not excluded. By adopting strategic design of regulations, regional collaboration, and multilateral reform, Global South states will be able to increase agency in the AI governance environment.

13. Multilateral Governance and the Limits of Soft Law

The modern system of global governance of artificial intelligence is marked by fragmentation and development of soft laws. Instead of an international treaty which is binding, the AI is currently governed by voluntary principles, ethical guidelines, regional regulations and industry-driven standards. Such regulatory pluralism is associated with the novelty of AI technologies and the geopolitical rivalry over the rules of their governance.

The Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which was adopted in 2021, is one of the most notable multilateral initiatives related to the area. The recommendation expresses the human rights protection principles, transparency, fairness, and sustainability (UNESCO, 2021). Notably, it also contains clear allusions to capacity building in developing nations and the necessity to decrease the technological gap in the world.

Nonetheless, being a soft law tool, the UNESCO Recommendation has no enforcement mechanisms. It is executed based on political will and the ability of

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institutions in a country. In Global South countries that have a weak regulatory framework, compliance on the high level of ethical principles can be idealistic, not practical. Furthermore, soft law tools run the risk of being token gestures that cover structural inequalities.

Likewise, the continued discussions regarding a Global Digital Compact through the United Nations are also supposed to explain common principles in regards to digital governance. Although the Compact is said to offer inclusive consultation, its success will be determined by whether it will deal with material asymmetries like infrastructure concentration and intellectual property regimes. Normative declarations will not work to alter structural dependency without redistribution mechanisms and promises of technology transfers.

According to the liberal institutionalist opinion, multilateral cooperation provides channels of alleviating power asymmetries (Keohane, 1984). Nevertheless, critical legal theorists believe that international institutions tend to replicate interests of the dominant states in the name of universal norms (Koskenniemi, 2005). The AI governance forums are likely to repeat this dynamic in case the agenda-setting power is confined to technologically advanced states.

The main question is thus whether the multilateral AI governance would be able to go beyond symbolic ethics and address material inequality.

14. Reforming International Economic Law for AI Equity

The law on international economics has an instrumental role in the organization of technological asymmetry. The allocation of technological capacity and value capture is influenced by trade agreements, intellectual property regimes and investment treaties. Within the framework of AI, it is necessary to reform such structures to promote algorithmic sovereignty.

The Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) compels member states to institute strong intellectual property security. Although this was meant to encourage innovation, TRIPS has always limited access to vital medicines in developing nations until flexibilities like compulsory licensing have been invoked (Sell, 2003). Another argument on the necessity of AI technologies might arise with the necessary technologies that support the work in

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the field of communal health, education, or the adaptation to climate change.

Increasing the flexibilities of TRIPS to include AI-related patents and proprietary training datasets has the potential to increase the spread of technologies. The mechanism of compulsory licensing, technology transfer and exception of the public interest can allow Global South states to build local AI capacity without resorting to the breach of international requirements. Nonetheless, powerful states and multinational corporations that have a lot of vested interests in holding monopoly would probably oppose such reforms.

Digital sovereignty is also affected by investment treaties. Most bilateral investment agreements contain provisions that shield the foreign investors against regulatory practices that can impinge profits. Investor-state dispute settlement claims may be potentially brought into action by data localization policy or algorithmic transparency policy. It is important to reform the investment law so that regulatory autonomy in digital governance can be preserved.

Table 6 outlines points in the international economic law that need to be reformed to facilitate algorithmic sovereignty.

Table 6: ***International Economic Law and Algorithmic Sovereignty Reform Areas***

Legal Regime	Current Constraint	Proposed Reform Direction
TRIPS Agreement	Strong patent and trade secret protection	Expanded compulsory licensing for AI technologies
Bilateral Investment Treaties	Investor protections limiting regulatory autonomy	Explicit carve-outs for digital sovereignty measures
Trade in Services Agreements	Restrictions on data localization	Balanced exceptions for public interest and security
Technology Transfer Mechanisms	Weak enforcement	Binding capacity-building commitments

Reforming these regimes requires collective negotiation. Individual Global South states may lack bargaining power, reinforcing the importance of regional and South-South alliances.

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15. South–South Cooperation and Regional Governance

Algorithms sovereignty can be promoted through a practical route based on regional cooperation. Global South states can leverage their resources by sharing research infrastructure, coordinating regulatory strategies, and pooling resources.

A Digital Transformation Strategy by the African Union gives the continent a framework on which to coordinate, however, the actual implementation is uneven. On the same note, the regional blocs like ASEAN and MERCOSUR have also launched digital cooperation dialogue. Such attempts, however, tend to focus on market integration and not technological independence.

AI South-South collaboration may include a research center with joint investment, a cloud infrastructure, and training programs. Indian digital identity architecture, as an example of a model of a public digital infrastructure, proves that technological development led by the state in the case of political commitment is feasible (Arun, 2019).

Alternative normative paradigms that place more focus on data justice, developmental equity and community-based innovation, could also be expressed by regional AI governance forums. These structures would problematize hegemonic discourses that view innovation as the leadership of the private sector only.

In terms of constructivism, building of norms regionally has the capacity to transform the world discourse by providing new forms of governance (Acharya, 2014). This norm diffusion does not necessarily flow North to South but may arise on plural points of invention.

16. Decolonial AI Governance: Toward Epistemic Sovereignty

Epistemic sovereignty is also a category of algorithmic sovereignty, rather than limited to regulatory and infrastructural sovereignty. AI systems are programmed with cultural assumptions, rules of language and socio-political bias in training data. When such datasets are strongly biased in terms of Western context, Marginalizing non-Western epistemologies can be done using the results of the algorithm (Birhane, 2020).

Rather, decolonial AI governance implies the diversification of training data, the integration of local knowledge systems and participation design procedures. With no

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epistemic inclusion, without the formal regulation of the systems of algorithms by domestic law, one may reenact cultural hierarchies using these systems.

Data justice is concerned with the notion of fair representation and community agency in the data control (Taylor, 2017). The concepts of data justice can be incorporated in AI regulatory environments to restore the relationship of digital colonialism by prioritizing the affected communities.

In addition to this, linguistic diversity is necessary. There is a possibility that the large language models, which are predominantly trained on English-language data, will not be efficient at representing African, South Asian, and Indigenous languages. Investment in multilingual AI research can be regarded, therefore, as part of algorithmic sovereignty.

Table 7 conceptualizes dimensions of decolonial AI governance.

Table 7: ***Dimensions of Decolonial AI Governance***

Dimension	Objective	Policy Implication
Infrastructural Sovereignty	Control over compute and storage	Domestic cloud investment
Regulatory Sovereignty	Authority over AI deployment	National AI legislation
Epistemic Sovereignty	Inclusion of local knowledge systems	Multilingual datasets and participatory design
Economic Sovereignty	Fair distribution of AI-generated value	Revenue-sharing and local innovation ecosystems

Decolonial governance does not imply technological isolationism. Rather, it seeks equitable integration into global digital systems.

17. Reconceptualizing Sovereignty in an Interdependent World

The discussion shows that the sovereignty in the AI era cannot be perceived as total independence. Digital systems in the world are interdependent in nature. Semiconductor chains of supply, cloud computing, and research partnerships cross the boundaries of countries. Hence, the notion of algorithmic sovereignty has to be redefined in terms of relational sovereignty.

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In relational sovereignty, interdependence is agreed upon but attempts to redress the imbalanced power relations. It stresses negotiated autonomy as opposed to isolation. This re-conceptualization is in line with the postcolonial international relations theory, which considers sovereignty as historically contingent and disputes around it (Acharya, 2014).

The states of the Global South do not necessarily have to be technologically self-sufficient, however, they can improve the bargaining power by acting as a bloc and diversifying their strategies. Sovereignty is thus a process and not a definite state.

18. Comprehensive Synthesis

This paper has explored the topics of algorithmic sovereignty and digital colonialism by qualitatively analyzing them based on the theory of international law and international relations. The results indicate that the governance of AI is entrenched in asymmetries of power in the world system organized by economic concentration, intellectual property, and geopolitical competition.

Digital colonialism occurs in the form of data extraction, infrastructural dependency and normative diffusion without fair participation. But sovereignty is not precluded. The structural inequality can be alleviated through strategic regulatory design, international economic law reform, regional cooperation, and decolonial epistemology.

The main theoretical input of the given paper is that it suggests to consider dependencies theory in connection with the current discussions of AI governance. It shows that AI is not only a technological innovation but also a location of geopolitical competition and postcolonial conflict.

19. Conclusion

Artificial intelligence is also a transformative possibility as well as a major threat to the Global South. Although AI applications offer developmental benefits, the overall order of the AI innovation and governance is subject to the risk of embedding digital colonial relationships.

The concept of algorithmic sovereignty becomes a required structure to explain those dynamics. It includes regulatory agency, infrastructural autonomy, intellectual

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reform, and epistemic encompassment. The concept of sovereignty, however, must be re-theoretised in relation and bargained within a global system of interdependence.

To avoid AI governance strengthening the across-history patterns of domination, multilateral reform, and extension of TRIPS flexibilities, protection of investment law, and South South cooperation are essential. The development of decolonial epistemologies to oppose algorithmic bias and prioritize local knowledge systems is equally important.

The future of AI governance will also define the way artificial intelligence will either increase inequalities all over the world or it can be a source of equal developments. Digital colonialism can be the politics of the algorithmic era unless there is conscious institutional changes. Through strategic reform, AI governance, however, may be reconstructed to aid in promoting justice, freedom, and equal participation in global collaboration.

Algorithmic sovereignty is, thus, not just a technical goal but a normative desire in the quest towards digital justice.

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