Narratives of Artificial Intelligence in Global Governance: Discourse, Power, and Responsible Innovation

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Abstract

The quick development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) prompted a great deal of attention concerning its global governance. For global policy, innovation, security, and ethics are paramount. These factors also shape important social perceptions relating to the risks and the value of the opportunities associated with AI, the stakeholders involved in AI policy and decision making, and the futures that are imagined and prioritized. This paper explores the three dominant narratives the governance of AI: positioning AI as an economic engine, a security challenge, and as an enabler of sustainable development. The paper employs the Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) and the Science, Technology and Society (STS) frameworks to study the narratives of leading global players (e.g. the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)). These narratives are frequently written from a Global North perspective and largely overlook the imbalances of power, the voices and perspectives of the Global South, and the issues of governance on Artificial Intelligence (AI) from a Gender perspective, and other marginalized voices in the narratives of AI governance. Centering inequity in AI governance calls for the expansive revision of the narratives to incorporate more civilizational, geopolitical, and moral frameworks. These actions would guarantee that AI development is socially and ethically responsible while also providing fairness in the distribution and accessibility of the benefits and risks it poses. This article aims to broaden the AI governance narratives through discourse analysis to build a future that is democratic and just.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, Global Governance, Narratives, Discourse Analysis, Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI), Science, Technology, and Society (STS).*

Introduction

Once a technological curiosity, the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is now a transformative innovative technology shaping the world order. Having first been the domain of computer scientists, the development of AI now spans a multiplicity of fields, including, but not limited to, economics, security, ethics, and social change. The inclusion of AI technologies in decision making processes at the level of cross national governance structures, since the mid-2010s, has helped to

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underscore the importance of sophisticated AI in the fields of policy-making, economic growth, civil liberties, development, environmental protection, and peace and security. It is now effective at advancing transformative social AI technologies. The interventional social AI technologies of the mid-2010s have helped to underscore the importance of sophisticated AI systems of social change, world governance, and cross national decision making. The impact of AI on world governance confirms the importance of understanding the automation of decision-making processes.

AI governance has to go beyond the simplistic approaches of regulatory control and the social and economic narratives of technological AI. Power thematic narratives on AI technology economic growth, risk, and governance of development and the environment are produced and framed by institutions of global governance in the UN, the EU, and the OECD (OECD, 2019; United Nations, 2021). The narratives of risk are framed by the same institutions through the same policy and ethical guidelines and social agreements on cross global governance constructed on the technological myths of AI, shaping the policy environment and development of technology.

This paper serves to highlight the relationship between the governance of AI technology and the narratives driven by global stakeholders. These narratives, as tools of political strategy, determine the course of technology, the hierarchy of voices in decision-making, and the future technological landscape of societies.

This article focuses on the discourse of three dominant narratives in the global governance of AI: as an engine of economic growth, as a global security threat, and as a means of achieving sustainable development. Engaging with these narratives, this article analyses the discourse on the role of AI in reshaping global governance, the power relations inherent in these narratives, and the implications on Responsible Innovation and the governance model on the balance of political power.

Literature Review

Concerns about the governance of new technology, particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI), have increasingly become a focus of global policy discussions. AI is penetrating new sectors like healthcare, finance, and national security, and even covering the more recently added sustainability of the environment. This calls for cross-border regulation. Primary global institutions, the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), are addressing the challenges with advocacy policy documents and frameworks on the ethical, economic, and geopolitical governance of AI (OECD, 2019; United Nations, 2021).

Regulation formulation is not the only dimension of AI governance. Framing technologies involves pervasive descriptions that shape anticipated standards concerning AI's potential, the threats AI poses, the development, and adoption of AI. For example, the EU describes AI as a tool for economic growth and enhanced global competitiveness with ethical standards of transparency, accountability, fairness, and rationality. On the other hand, the OECD identifies the pressing need for fairness standards and accountability to drive global cooperation on AI standards to provide

balanced governance of AI technologies. These strategic approaches derive from the global perspectives of the North, focusing on AI development and possibly neglecting the global South, in areas of equity, social justice, and technological development (Jasanoff & Kim, 2015).

The AI governance frameworks are not neutral. They derive from a particular perspective that relies upon a particular set of geopolitical, economic, and cultural theories. Powerful global actors set the tone for the geopolitical allocation of and access to AI technologies, while lesser jurisdictions contend with exploitative norms of development. Thus, an integrated text of AI governance becomes an illustration of the geopolitical and economic theories framing the exploitative governance of AI (Hajer, 2009).

The disciplines of Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) and Science, Technology and Society (STS) provide frameworks for the critical analysis of AI governance. Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) demands that the processes of innovation should be anticipatory, reflexive, inclusive, and in response to the needs of society. RRI requires the active participation of a large group of stakeholders, including direct users of technology, community and civil society, and policymakers in the development of technology in the context of artificial intelligence (AI). Through the approach of inclusiveness and reflexivity, RRI aims to offset mainstream technocratic paradigms of innovation, which focus on economic development and technology effectiveness at the cost of social value (Stilgoe et al., 2013). This mutually reinforcing dynamic between technology and society is also present in the Science and Technology Studies (STS) scholarship, which challenges the social values, political, and cultural structures, which shape the development of AI. The two important analytical prisms to this tradition include sociotechnical imaginaries and governance mechanisms of emerging AI technologies. However, researchers have noted that the sociotechnical imaginaries have been largely constructed in the eyes of the Global North, thus silencing the Global South, women, and other unrepresented groups (Jasanoff & Kim, 2015; Milan and Treré, 2019).

In political science and international relations, narrative methodologies are used to shed light on how language and narrative are used to justify and form systems of governance. These are risk-based, opportunity-based, and policy-choice narratives, which are essential to AI governance. The policy documents by AI often demonstrate clashing interests by developing artificial intelligence as an economic giant, a governance issue, and an ethical concern. These divergences are demonstrated by the arguments made by the United Nations and the European Union. The EU documents emphasize AI's economic potential, whereas the UN documents underline AI's ethical ramifications and security risks, especially in surveillance and authoritarian armaments (Cath et al., 2018; Zeng et al., 2021).

While the literature on the governance of AI continues to grow, important gaps persist. Most of the research continues to lay out the ethical frameworks and the regulatory proposals for AI, while glossing over the importance of governance narratives. As Muniesa (2014) points out, there is more to innovation than material.

Innovations are also performative, realized through the stories that assign worth to certain technologies and dictate the course of their advancement.

Additional gaps in the literature on AI governance also includes the lack of attention to divergent value systems of global actors, and the inequitable power relations that exist between regions and groups. These inequitable gaps signal the need to attend more critically to the narratives in AI governance, particularly those that emanate from the Global South and particularly, the other more marginalized groups.

To conclude this piece, the literature on politics and social, ethical, and humanitarian aspects of artificial technologies emphasizes the need for the analysis of social discourse. Though the RRI and STS frameworks capture the essence of responsible innovation, the discourse literature on the governance and policy of AI technologies remains precariously underdeveloped. This study aims to capture some of these discourses to advance the literature on AI governance toward more inclusive and responsible frameworks.

Objectives

This study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- Analyze the dominant narratives on the governance of AI. This consists of examining how the United Nations, European Union, and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development shapes the discourse on AI and its economic, security, and sustainability ramifications.
- The implicit power relations in the discourse of artificial intelligence that is dominant should be examined carefully. Researchers need to question how different geopolitical actors are using AI strategically to form and strengthen their own political orders, and at the same time evaluate the large-scale implications of such activities on the world politics of AI regulation.
- Assess the uneven presence of agency in the agency of artificial intelligence and, especially, cohorts that have been disregarded the most: the Global South and women and examine the systemic processes that keep them marginalized.

Theoretical Framework

In the current paper, two main theoretical frameworks are used to question the accounts of AI governance: Discourse Theory of Power and Sociotechnical Imaginaries. Together, these frameworks provide analytical tools that can be used to analyze how hegemonic discourses are created and the consequences of these discourses on global governance.

Based on Foucaultian analysis, Discourse Theory of Power as an extension of Foucaultian theory states that power can act not simply through legality but also through indirect means such as language and narratives (Hajer 2009). The paper will analyze the manner in which hegemonic actors will develop discourses of AI governance as part of economic progress, security threats, and sustainable development. Policy analyses of the United Nations, European Union and Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development indicate the way discursive power influences policymaking and developmental patterns of AI.

Since the framing of AI in mass media is not neutral by nature, the interests of the most powerful actors are overrepresented, thereby affecting the perception of the population and making decisions on the policy agenda. As Jasanoff and Kim (2015) underline, sociotechnical imaginaries portray the views of prospects in the future as a result of the interplay of science, technology, and society. Such imaginaries form the frameworks of the technology in AI governance. As an illustration, the Ethics Guidelines of Trustworthy AI by the EU (2019) and the OECD AI Principles (2019) provide value frameworks that are based on rationality, transparency, fairness, and accountability. But these imaginaries have been dominated by Global North and hence marginalize the Global South and other marginalized communities. Such omission is central to the understanding of the values that AI governance frameworks are yet to realize, especially when it comes to social equity, justice, and development.

Responsible Research and innovation (RRI) are also a component of this investigation. RRI believes that technical innovation must be prospective, retrospective, participative, and responsive to the demands of society (Stilgoe et al., 2013). This involves active involvement of varied groups of stakeholders such as peripheral actors in the AI domain in the creation of the technology direction. The current research uses RRI to suggest that the responsible governance of AI cannot be limited to the engineering principles of the past, which predicts in advance the social consequences of the technology and makes sure that technologies respect the rights and maintain a sense of equity.

Lastly, the concept of global governance, represented by the Coordinated Plan on AI (2021) provided by the EU and AI Principles (2019) provided by the OECD, provides the institutional context of the explored narratives. The frameworks define the global approach to AI regulation by making pledges to transparency, fairness, and accountability. However, researchers like Jasanoff and Kim (2015) have noted that the instruments are mainly focused on the issues of the Global North without considering the goals of the developing states and disadvantaged groups. With this in mind, this paper challenges these governance structures across the globe to determine whether they support or challenge dominant discourses about AI and global development.

Findings & Discussion

AI as an Engine for Economic Growth

Among the most commonly studied accounts on artificial intelligence (AI) in the framework of global governance is the ability of artificial intelligence to facilitate the growth of the economy. Governing bodies of the world like the European Union (EU), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have continued to front AI as a key driver of economic growth. In particular, the Coordinated Plan on Artificial Intelligence (2021) by the EU defines AI as a pillar of competitiveness and innovational potential of Europe (European Commission, 2021, p. 3).

Likewise, OECD Principles on AI (2019) assert that AI will be able to generate

inclusive growth, sustainable development, and well-being, which gives weight to the common belief that the material gains of AI, especially those of superior AI systems, will be unevenly distributed between developed and non-developed economies. This conceptualization of AI understands AI as a tool and an instrument to realize economic ends. However, as much as the story foreshadows the technological advancements and possible benefits, which a country might attain by undertaking competitive action on the international level, it also highlights the relevant social issues, such as the labor displacement, the expansion of social disparity, and the digital divide.

For instance, when the OECD talks about "fairness" in the deployment of AI, it remains within the boundaries of an economically driven discourse, mainly focusing on growth and the development of markets to the exclusion of the social inequities that may deepen under Global North and Global South relations. Economic AI inequities are a function of the disparity of technological resources and infrastructure within a country. Advanced economies in the Global North are able to deploy and leverage AI, while countries within the Global South struggle to access and use AI technologies and economically valuable resources.

AI as a Security Risk

The potential risk AI poses to global security is yet another narrative that is prominent in the discussions surrounding the governance of AI. The UN and the EU identified issues such as AI-enabled surveillance, military use of AI, and cyber warfare as major risks of AI. In a speech in 2021, the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, stated that AI could become a means of oppression and conflict, and the world would need to deal with the consequences if there were no international collaboration to mitigate the risks (UN News, 2021). The EU also prioritizes the risks of autonomous weapons and argues the need to include the potential malicious use of AI in the Ethics Guidelines on Trustworthy AI (2019).

The security narrative is sometimes an assertion of the prerogatives of the militarized power states, such as the United States sees AI as a competitive edge in the military and defense domains. The EU, in its turn, gives more emphasis to governance methods that protect human dignity and democratization. These geopolitical differences are a premonition of emphasis on civil rights, privacy, democratization of technology and how national and state interests may take precedence over security and defense debates.

Another new focus of governance discourses is artificial intelligence and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The EU and UNESCO have expressed this and made it clear that AI will help create a more sustainable world by dealing with climate change, human health, and disparities in social equity, all of which may serve as pillars of future governance. In its recommendation on the ethics of AI (2021), UNESCO gives priority to the main human rights, dignity, privacy, and ecological sustainability as key factors to be considered when using AI to achieve sustainable development.

The Coordinated Plan on AI of the EU has also tried to incorporate AI use in the process of social good. This initiative aims to match AI usage and moral and social

purposes. In this context, AI is envisioned to solve urgent global issues, including the optimization of resources, energy-saving, and innovation in health-care. Despite the effectiveness of these sustainability narratives, they face strong challenges. The criticism of AI sustainability efforts is that they tend to be more rhetorical, disconnected, and lack substance in addressing endemic social and structural injustices and actually doing anything with planet environmental and societal concerns. Additionally, the views of the Global South and localities have not yet been developed well enough, therefore, indicating how the role of AI in furthering the goals of society may be exaggerated.

Crossroads and Conflicts between Narratives

Three major discourses overruled the discussion of AI: AI as economic powerhouse; AI as a security risk; and AI as a sustainability vehicle. The narratives often overlap, creating tensions in global governance discourses. In the case of the EU, it is important to note that, at the same time, it is focusing on the economic potential of AI and its potential to provide social benefits through legislation, but it is also recognizing the risks of social exclusion and data-privacy breaches.

Moreover, the notion of security has the capacity to reduce the process of aligning AI with the transformative goals of sustainability goals of the AI treaty. This paradox may be demonstrated by the discrepancy between the social-good ambitions of the treaty and the strict export restrictions on AI technologies. Such contradictions are based on the lack of alignment of goals and the poor implementation of socio-economic purposes of the treaty in the interests of the security justifications of the AI regulation. The inconsistencies mentioned above represent one of the primary peculiarities of the modern AI regulation: clashing priorities. The inclusive AI governance call assumes the predominance of social equity, justice, and sustainability. However, mainstream discourses of the world tend to offer a fragmented and fragmented view of the ethical and societal impacts of AI in the long-range context, which puts negative externalities on the fringes of the policy discussion.

Marginalized Voices and Perspectives

The debate on AI governance fails to integrate critical marginalized views, such as Global South and women. Although the narrative of governance reflects that there should be inclusiveness, there is little substantive involvement of the Global South actors. Milan and Treré (2019) note that the lack of acknowledgment of data justice and digital activism as a problem that emerged in the Global South leads to the AI governance model being based mostly on the interests of the global North. Besides, even in the global North, there are considerable gendered perspectives on the implications of AI on women rights, gender inequity, and social exclusion that remain to be neglected. The economic competitiveness and security discourse of the OECD and the European Union largely ignore social justice and gendered patterns.

Not accounting for these perspectives, particularly those from the Global South or feminist scholars, becomes a form of epistemic injustice within the scope of governance literature (Fricker, 2007). Consequently, the window of narratives available on AI governance remains biased, upholding the epistemic violence of the

Global North and ignoring the narratives of those most impacted by the development and deployment of AI.

Implications for Responsible Innovation

This study focuses on the need for responsible innovation within the scope of AI governance. In this regard, the EU, OECD, and UNESCO initiatives on AI emphasize the need for the development of AI technologies that respond to social needs in ethically responsible and inclusive ways, alongside technical efficiency (Stilgoe et al., 2013). On the contrary, the available global governance narratives are devoid of social justice concerns, and the issues of equity and inclusivity for the underrepresented social groups. Global AI governance will be responsible only when the governance frameworks recognize the need to integrate and prioritize divergent, inclusive, and equitable social justice frameworks that respond to the needs of the global South. Such a transformative balance will require a fundamental shift in the AI narratives that are currently hyper-focused on economic growth and security. In other words, global AI governance needs to integrate social, ethical, and ecological elements to balance out the dominant economic approach.

Policy Recommendations

Considering the empirical evidence that has been delivered in the present paper, it is possible to outline several critical suggestions in terms of the improvement of artificial intelligence governance on the global scope:

Inclusive Policy formulation: Global governance structures should be re-balanced to embrace strong involvement of heterogeneous actors, which would include representatives of the Global South, marginalities and gender-oriented approaches. This inclusivity plays a crucial role in developing a more equal and accountable governance paradigm by recognizing the heterogeneous cultural, political and ethical variety with which the international milieu is being defined.

The policy drafting should also include Narrative Impact Assessments (NIA) that should be incorporated in a smooth manner. These tools would challenge existing hegemonic discourses in the field of AI policy, clarify how certain voices are marginalized in policy-making, and allow the introduction of alternative imaginaries into models of global governance. This would balance power dynamics and create equity in adjudicating the AI policies. International cooperation must be increased, which is a necessity of AI governance. Transnational cooperation must be guided by the development of global norms and frameworks that would ensure transparency, accountability, and ethical use of AI. The prescriptions to policies should put human rights, privacy and social justice as their priorities and balance between the need to support economic growth and the need to guarantee national security. The ethics and principles of the international level precondition the creation of strict and clear guidelines according to the use of AI. Regulatory architecture must look into responsible innovation, hence the need to envision and operationalize the AI technologies in line with their societal values, protect human dignity and alleviate the negative consequences such as invasive surveillance and violation of privacy.

Future Trajectories

To conclude, AI governance has significant potential in the future, and, at the same time, it poses a plethora of challenges that need intricate answers:

- Global Cooperation vs. Global Fragmentation: An alternative possibility in AI governance is the creation of a more unified international paradigm, which enforces uniform ethical codes, protects the privacy of data, and holds everyone globally accountable. On the other hand, a different course of action might happen whereby control is anarchic in the sense that states issue conflicting standards, and therefore create regulatory dissonance, which undermines cross-state cooperation in AI.
- Emerging Technologies and Unresolved Ethical Concerns: The further evolution of AI is guaranteed with the increased level of autonomy of decisions and enhanced automation, as well as the innovations in deep learning. This will require an advanced system of control and moral governance relating to independence, responsibility, and objectivity. The following wave of governance structures should utilize the new tools, which will be able to resolve these dilemmas and make sure that the predictive AI technologies are utilized to satisfy the major needs of society.
- Continued Development of Inclusive Governance Frameworks: The further development of inclusive governance frameworks will be a high-priority direction on which future policies will be formed. The development of AI governance frameworks along this line will ensure more equitable outcomes in the development of technologies. The participation of global governance bodies in inclusive frameworks will ensure that no one is left on the margins in the global AI policy continuum.

Strategic Interests

The governance of AI is directly related to strategic interests of a national and global order. The governance of technologies is a function of primary order values, and these values include economics, politics, security and spillover governance.

Economic values and interests within AI technologies and innovations lie within the North and the economically robust West. Economic blocs such as the EU and the OECD economically frame AI governance as an innovative driver for global competitiveness. Global North's strategic interest within the AI technologies economically focuses on growth, technological supremacy, and expanding national economies. This lopsided interest segmentation leads to the negative economically and technologically development policies for the Global South, as the latter lacks the financial resources for the AI technologies.

The geopolitical and national security interests within AI technologies are even more political value laden. The US and China see the technologies and innovations within AI as a new domain for expanding military power. As of now, AI integrated cyber and military technologies and tools are used for surveillance, cyber warfare, and military technologies. The value interests on national security directly reverse the

ethical governance of the global AI technologies.

With regard to social justice and sustainability, the Global South and different civil society organizations encourage the advocacy of AI governance for social justice, as well as for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. These entities highlight the importance of AI in addressing global challenges like climate change, inequality in health, and educational disparity, and on the importance of ensuring the related profits are equitably shared among countries. The principal concern, in this case, is that profits and power should not pursue AI technologies to the exclusion of the well-being of people and global sustainability.

Conclusion

The paper questions the discourse of economic, security, and sustainability antecedents, attempting to position AI as a driver of change and a potential threat concurrently. The discourses that are created in this framework are mainly reflective of the interests of the influential players in the world and the marginalization of the views, especially those of the Global South. This therefore leads policymakers to recommend the affirmation of Narrative Impact Assessments and unification of inclusive governance systems that give human rights, social justice, and equity as channels toward responsible and inclusive AI development. There are certain future directions of AI governance as outlined in the paper that reflect the urgency of geopolitical cooperation and the necessity of an all-encompassing approach to the ethical aspects of the latest developments in AI. Finally, AI governance should go beyond the centrality of the economic development approach, and adopt the ideals of global equity, justice, sustainability, and responsible innovation.

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