



The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on the Power Structure of the International System: Reshaping Hegemony or Enhancing Inequality?

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Abstract:

The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming global power dynamics, challenging traditional hegemonies while amplifying existing inequalities. This paper examines the dual potential of AI: as a force that reshapes the dominance of established powers through technological advancement, and as a tool that deepens disparities between nations with varying levels of AI capability.

AI-driven economic growth, military strategy, and digital governance are key areas where influence is being redefined—benefiting states with advanced AI infrastructures while marginalizing those lacking resources and technical expertise. Additionally, AI role in surveillance and information warfare raises ethical concerns and reinforces asymmetries in global control.

Whether AI fosters a multi polar world order or entrenches sixteen hierarchies depends on governance frameworks, international cooperation, and equitable access to technological advancements. This study calls for strategic policies to mitigate AI-induced inequalities while leveraging its potential to create a more balanced global system.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), Technological Advancement, Economic Growth, Digital Governance, Global Inequality.

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Introduction:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as one of the most important factors reshaping the power structure of the international system. No longer just an advanced technological tool, AI has become a major driver of change in the political, economic, and military spheres, raising fundamental questions about its role in promoting hegemony or exacerbating global inequality. On the one hand, AI is seen as a tool to enhance states' soft and hard power, giving them an unprecedented ability to influence international affairs. On the other hand, the disparity in the possession of this technology among countries may exacerbate existing gaps, reproducing an unbalanced power structure.

This article aims to analyze the impact of AI on the international power structure by exploring its applications in the political, economic, and military spheres, as well as how it is used as a tool of hard and soft power. The article also addresses the strategic rivalry between great powers, such as the United States and China, which is much like the Cold War arms race, but with a greater emphasis on technological superiority. In addition, the European Union's regulatory efforts to ensure AI's ethical and safe use will be reviewed, and how these efforts could influence global norms.

Through this analysis, the article seeks to answer a central question: Is AI a tool for reshaping hegemony in the international system, or does it deepen inequality between states? To answer this question, the article relies on a theoretical framework that combines Joseph Nye's concepts of hard and soft power and analyzes the practical applications of AI in different contexts. It draws on case studies and recent research to provide a comprehensive view of how this technology transforms notions of power and influence in the 21st century.

Ultimately, this article hopes to contribute to a deeper understanding of AI's role in shaping the international system and provide valuable insights for researchers and policymakers on the challenges and opportunities posed by this revolutionary technology.

Section I: Artificial Intelligence as a tool of power in the international system

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a broad field of computer science that aims to develop systems capable of mimicking human abilities such as thinking, learning, decision-making, and problem-solving. It can be defined as "the ability exhibited by machines to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence, such as pattern recognition, natural language processing, or adaptation to changing environments." This definition reflects the basic ambition of AI, which is not only to mimic human behavior but sometimes to surpass it in efficiency and speed. The term's origin dates back to 1956 when John McCarthy proposed it during the Dartmouth Conference, where he laid the theoretical foundations of the science. Since then, AI has evolved from an idea to a tangible reality that affects our daily lives. For example, systems based on Machine Learning, a branch of AI, can analyze massive amounts of data and draw accurate conclusions without direct human intervention. This aspect of AI has made it a powerful tool in multiple fields, as we will see later in politics, economics, and the military¹.

In a more detailed context, we can view AI as an intersection between technology and philosophy, posing profound questions about the nature of Intelligence itself. Unlike traditional programs that rely on predefined rules, modern AI is characterized by its ability to "learn" from data. This learning can be with or without the help of humans (Supervised Learning), giving machines unprecedented flexibility. For example, the Neural network

¹ China's Semiconductor Breakthrough: Implications for Global AI Competition. (2024). *Nature Technology* , 45-50.



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algorithms used today are inspired by how the human brain works, consisting of layers of nodes that gradually process information to arrive at accurate results. This technology, sometimes known as Deep Learning, has revolutionized fields such as image and voice recognition, and is the basis for many of the applications we will discuss. AI is not just a technical tool but a cultural and scientific shift reshaping how we interact with the world².

1-Political Applications of AI

In the political sphere, AI has become a major player in shaping public opinion, analyzing electoral behavior, and even managing political campaigns. One of the most prominent applications is the use of AI in analyzing Big Data to understand voter trends. During the 2016 US election, for example, Cambridge Analytica used AI to analyze the data of millions of Facebook users to design personalized political messages targeting specific groups of voters. This use sparked widespread ethical debate, but at the same time showed the power of AI to influence democratic processes. Through machine learning algorithms, the company was able to predict voters' inclinations based on their digital behavior, such as likes and comments, allowing political ads to be targeted with pinpoint accuracy. This type of application is not limited to the United States and has become commonplace in other countries as part of modern campaign strategies³.

Moreover, AI is being used to monitor online political discourse, especially in combating fake news and disinformation. Governments and international organizations are beginning to rely on intelligent systems to analyze content on platforms such as Twitter and Facebook to identify organized campaigns aimed at political destabilization. For example, during the 2019 political protests in Hong Kong, reports revealed China's use of AI to monitor digital activity and identify potential instigators. These systems rely on Natural Language Processing techniques to understand the sentiment and context behind tweets and posts, allowing authorities to make quick decisions. However, this use raises concerns about privacy and freedom of expression, as it could be turned into a tool of repression in the hands of authoritarian regimes⁴.

2-Economic Applications of Artificial Intelligence

AI is a key driver of innovation and increased productivity in the economic sphere. One of its most prominent uses lies in optimizing supply chains and predicting market demand. Large companies like Amazon rely on AI to analyze customer buying patterns, allowing them to adjust their inventory and speed up deliveries. For example, Amazon uses machine learning algorithms to predict which products customers will most likely buy in certain regions, reducing costs and boosting efficiency. This approach is not limited to retail, but extends to heavy industries such as car manufacturing, where companies like Tesla use AI to optimize production lines and reduce human error⁵.

On the other hand, AI plays a crucial role in the financial markets, as it is used in High-Frequency Trading. This technique relies on algorithms capable of analyzing market data and executing trades in a fraction of a second, giving investors a competitive advantage. According to a study published by the Journal of Financial Economics, more than 70% of

² McAfee, B. E. *The Second Machine Age: Work, Progress, and Prosperity in a Time of Brilliant Technologies*. New York: W W Norton & Company, 2014, 89-102.

³ Terrence, H. Does Algorithmic Trading Improve Liquidity? *Journal of Financial Economics* 99, 2011, 1-15.

⁴ McCarthy, J. A Proposal for the Dartmouth Summer Research Project on Artificial Intelligence. *AI Magazine* 27, 2006, 12-14.

⁵ Persily, N. The 2016 U.S. Election : Can Democracy Survive the Internet? *Journal of Democracy*, 2017, 63-76.



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trades in US markets are now based on artificial intelligence systems, reflecting the extent of the technology's impact on the global economy. However, this growing reliance has raised concerns about the stability of markets, especially after incidents such as the 2010 Flash Crash, where algorithms caused a sudden price collapse before recovering⁶.

3-Military Applications of AI

AI represents a paradigm shift in defense and attack strategies in the military. One of the most prominent applications is the development of smart weapons, such as drones that rely on AI to identify targets and execute missions autonomously. The US military, for example, uses drones like the MQ-9 Reaper that can analyze data from sensors to make real-time decisions on the battlefield. This technology minimizes risks to soldiers and increases the accuracy of operations, but it also raises ethical questions about using "killer robots" in warfare⁷.

In addition, AI is being used in cyberwarfare, as cyberattacks are becoming more sophisticated. AI-powered cyber defense systems can detect threats in real time and respond to them automatically. For example, the US National Security Agency (NSA) has used AI techniques to analyze data patterns and detect hacking attempts from countries like Russia and China. These systems rely on deep learning to adapt to new threats, making them an indispensable tool in the era of hybrid warfare that combines traditional and digital operations⁸.

4-Understanding hard and soft power in a modern-day context

In today's world, power is one of the most important concepts that define relations between states and actors in the international arena. Joseph Nye, a professor at Harvard University, developed the concepts of "hard power" and "soft power" to become essential analytical tools in the study of international politics. As defined by Nye, hard power relies on coercion and physical force, such as armies, weapons, and economic resources, used to impose control or influence others. In contrast, soft power relies on charisma and persuasion, using culture, values, and diplomacy to win the favor of others without resorting to violence or direct pressure. With AI becoming a pivotal factor in the 21st century, countries and organizations are beginning to explore how this technology can enhance both types of power, making it a double-edged sword in global politics. In this context, AI is emerging not only as an innovative technology but also as a strategic element that is reshaping the balance of power at the international level.

In his book "Soft Power: Means of Success in Global Politics," Nye emphasizes that power in the modern era no longer relies solely on military or economic capabilities but includes the ability to influence others through ideas and innovations. Artificial Intelligence, one of the most prominent technological innovations, offers enormous potential for countries to enhance their influence through hard and soft power, making it a topic worthy of in-depth study and analysis⁹.

⁶ Russel, s., & Peter, N. Artificial Intelligence: A Modern Approach. Upper Saddle River, 2010, 1-15.

⁷ Scharre, P. Army of None: Autonomous Weapons and the Future of War. W.W.Norton & Company, 2018, 45-60.

⁸ Singer, P., & Allan, F. Cybersecurity and Cyberwar: What Everyone Needs to Know. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

⁹ Wardle, C., & Hossein, D. Information Disorder: Toward an Interdisciplinary Framework for Research and Policymaking. EU: Council of Europe Report, 2017.



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5-Artificial Intelligence as a tool in hard power

When discussing hard power, AI emerges as a key element in enhancing nations' military and economic capabilities. AI has become integral to developing advanced weapons and defense strategies in the military sphere. For example, the United States uses AI in unmanned aircraft systems (drones) to accurately identify targets and execute operations at a speed that surpasses human capabilities. A report by the US Department of Defense in 2023 indicates that AI is being integrated into command and control systems to improve decision-making on the battlefield, giving the US military a significant competitive advantage. This integration reflects how AI can enhance hard power by increasing efficiency and precision in military operations, making countries with the technology more capable of dominating or deterring their adversaries¹⁰. (Ssciences, 2024)

On the other hand, AI's role in hard power extends to the economic sphere. Countries that invest in AI development, such as China, are using it to boost their industrial productivity and develop a technology-based economy. According to a study published by Foreign Affairs, China seeks to become the global leader in AI by 2030, which includes using the technology to optimize supply chains and develop innovative industries. This investment promotes economic growth and gives China economic leverage tools that can be used as part of hard power, such as imposing sanctions or controlling global markets. In this sense, AI becomes a tool for economic coercion, strengthening the state's position in the international system¹¹.

In addition, AI's impact on hard power is seen through its role in cyber warfare. In the book "Cyber Warfare: The New Threat to National Security," author Richard Clarke explains that AI is used to develop sophisticated cyber attacks capable of disrupting state infrastructure, such as electricity grids or financial systems. For example, reports from the US National Security Agency indicate that Russia used AI systems to carry out cyber attacks against Ukraine in 2022, paralyzing some vital sectors. This use highlights AI as a weapon in the hard power arsenal, as it can achieve strategic objectives without direct military confrontation¹².

6-AI as a component of soft power

While AI enhances hard power through coercion and physical capabilities, it also plays a crucial role in enhancing soft power through cultural appeal and influence. The entertainment and media industry is one of the most prominent areas where this role is emerging. For example, the United States uses AI to produce movies and series that promote American values such as freedom and innovation. A study by the University of Southern California in 2022 showed that companies like Netflix and Disney rely on AI algorithms to analyze audience preferences and produce content that attracts millions of viewers worldwide. This content entertains and conveys a positive image of American culture, enhancing its soft power globally¹³.

Moreover, AI contributes to soft power through education and scientific innovation. Countries at the forefront of AI, such as the United States and Japan, are using the technology to develop advanced educational programs that attract international students. A

¹⁰ Ssciences, C. A. Annual Report on AI Innovation . Beijing: CAS press, 2024.

¹¹ Eric, S. The AI Revolution and Strategic Competition with China. www.project-syndicate.org , 8, 2021.

¹² Comission, E. Coordinated Plan on Artificial Intelligence. Brussels: European Comission, 2018.

¹³ Comission, E. White Paper on Artificial Intelligence: A European Approach to Excellence and Trust. Brussels: European Comission, 2020.



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2024 report from UNESCO indicates that US universities offering courses in AI attract more than 60 percent of international students in science and technology fields. This attraction not only enhances a country's reputation as a center of knowledge but also creates a network of graduates who carry an appreciation for the country's educational system and cultural values, enhancing its soft power¹⁴.

AI also plays a role in public diplomacy, one of the main soft power tools. For example, the South Korean government uses AI to analyze big data and understand global public opinion towards its culture, which has helped promote the Korean Wave's spread (Hallyu). According to an article in International Politics, South Korea's use of AI to promote K-pop and drama has made it one of Asia's most culturally influential countries, reflecting how this technology can turn technical innovation into a tool for cultural appeal¹⁵.

7-The role of artificial Intelligence in reshaping the balance of power between major countries.

The world is witnessing an unprecedented technological transformation, led by artificial Intelligence (AI) as a central force reshaping various aspects of human life, including international relations and the balance of power between major countries. AI has become not just a technical tool, but an arena of strategic competition that determines who will have the upper hand in the 21st century. Major countries, such as the United States, China, Russia, and the European Union, realize that controlling this technology will not only enhance their economic and military capabilities but will redraw the map of global influence in ways not seen since the Industrial Revolution. This technological race is not just a competition for innovation, but an existential struggle that reflects each country's desire to maintain or strengthen its position in the international system. How is AI contributing to this shift, and what mechanisms is it adopting to redistribute power?

The world realized the depth of the AI revolution in the early 2000s, with applications in economics, defense, and governance. Eric Schmidt, former CEO of Google, argues that AI is not just a technology but an engine for reshaping societies and economies and even determining which countries will set the game's rules. In his article published in Project Syndicate, Schmidt points out that the successful adoption of AI will determine the course of progress in infrastructure, trade, transportation, health, education, and financial markets, making it a strategic weapon for countries that invest heavily in it. This perception reflects the reality we live in¹⁶.

In international relations, we can see that AI acts as a force multiplier, enhancing the capabilities of countries already possessing significant economic and military resources. A report by the Center for a New American Security (CNAS) shows that AI is changing the nature of military power by developing intelligent weapon systems, such as drones and precision-guided missiles, that rely on machine learning to make autonomous decisions on the battlefield. These developments make warfare more efficient, but at the same time increase the risk of unintended escalation between major countries. For example, if a country like the United States develops AI-based defense systems to automatically respond to attacks,

¹⁴ Parliament, E. EU Artificial Intelligence Act: Parliament Adopts Landmark Law. strasbourg: www.europarl.europa.eu, 2024.

¹⁵ Gopinath, G. Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Work, 2024, www.imf.org.

¹⁶ Park, H.-J. South Korea's Soft Power Surge. International Affairs 98 , 5-8, May 2022.



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its rival, such as Russia or China, may find itself forced to accelerate its military programs to maintain balance, leading to a new arms race that goes beyond the traditional Cold War¹⁷.

On the other hand, the impact of AI is not limited to the military sphere, but extends to the economy, which is one of the pillars of a country's overall power. A study conducted by McKinsey Global suggests that AI could add up to \$15 trillion to the global economy by 2030, with these benefits concentrated in countries with advanced digital infrastructure and a qualified workforce. The United States, thanks to tech giants like Google and Amazon, and China, thanks to companies like Alibaba and Tencent, account for the lion's share of this growth. This economic disparity means that countries that fall behind, like many European countries or emerging economies, may find themselves at a strategic disadvantage, as they become more dependent on technology imported from the major powers, reinforcing the latter's dominance¹⁸.

The economic aspect of AI is inseparable from the political aspect. Thanks to this technology, countries that achieve economic superiority can convert this superiority into diplomatic and political influence. A report by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) highlights this relationship, noting that AI will affect about 40% of jobs worldwide, which means that countries that can absorb this transformation will be at the forefront of the global economic system. For example, China, which has set an ambitious plan to become the global leader in AI by 2030, is using this technology to strengthen its centralized economic system, giving it a competitive advantage over democratic countries that face greater regulatory and ethical challenges in applying AI¹⁹.

At the military level, artificial Intelligence is emerging as a decisive factor in changing the balance of power, not only through smart weapons, but also through cyber warfare. A Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) report indicates that major countries are beginning to integrate AI into their cyber strategies, allowing them to launch more precise and rapid attacks on other countries' critical infrastructure, such as electricity and telecommunications networks. This development means that the number of soldiers or tanks no longer measures military power, but a country's ability to protect its digital systems and hack into its competitors. China, for example, is investing heavily in this area, much to the concern of the United States, which sees this as a direct threat to its national security²⁰.

From another perspective, AI can be seen as a tool to control information, one of the most important pillars of power in the modern era. Shoshana Zuboff's book "The Age of Surveillance Capitalism" explains how big corporations, with the support of states, are using AI to collect and analyze big data, allowing them to predict and even influence the behavior of individuals and societies. This soft power gives countries like the US and China unprecedented ability to shape global public opinion through political propaganda or information manipulation. For example, China's use of AI in its "social credit" system shows how this technology can enhance internal control, giving it political stability that translates into external power²¹.

¹⁷ Nye, J. Soft power : The Means to Success in World Politics. Public Affairs , 5-8, 2004.

¹⁸ Lee, K.-F. AI Superpowers: China, Silicon Valley, and the New World Order. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Institute, M. G. Notes from the AI Frontier, 2018. www.mckinsey.com.

²¹ Economics, O. The Global Data Economy: Opportunities and Challenges in the AI Era . oxford: oxford Economics, 2024.



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Section II: Artificial Intelligence and the Great Power Technological Race

In the 21st century, artificial Intelligence (AI) has become one of the most prominent areas that define global power economically, militarily, or politically. The rivalry between the United States and China in this field is a historic race that is as important as the space race during the Cold War, but exceeds its complexity and overall impact on human life. AI is not just a technology, but a transformative tool capable of reshaping industries, enhancing national security, and even changing the nature of warfare. In this context, the United States strives to maintain its position as a traditional leader in technological innovation. China is working at breakneck speed to realize its stated ambition to become the world leader in AI by 2030, according to its national plan launched in 2017. This rivalry is not limited to scientific superiority but extends to the control of resources, data, and human talent, which is the backbone of the field.

The United States has a long history of technology leadership, with companies like Google and Amazon producing innovations that have changed the face of the digital world. In contrast, China has emerged as a formidable competitor thanks to unprecedented government support and an internal market of more than 1.4 billion people, providing vast data to train AI models. According to the book "AI Superpowers: China, Silicon Valley, and the New World Order" by Kai-Fu Lee, China has a unique competitive advantage in its ability to quickly apply technologies in real life, while the United States relies on initial innovation and long-term research. This difference in approach reflects two visions: The first emphasizes individual creativity, the second²².

1-Technological foundations: Data and chips

AI is a field that relies heavily on three main elements: Data, algorithms, and computational power. In this context, China excels in data collection thanks to its massive population and relatively flexible privacy policies. For example, apps like WeChat and Alipay collect daily data from millions of users, enabling Chinese companies to develop accurate and efficient AI models. According to a report by Oxford Economics in 2024, China accounts for about 40% of global digital data, compared to 20% for the United States, giving it a significant advantage in training algorithms. This data is the "new oil" of the AI economy, forming the basis for developing facial recognition and predictive analysis technologies.

On the other hand, the US excels in designing advanced chips that form the backbone of computational power. Companies like NVIDIA and Intel dominate the market for high-performance processors, such as the A100 and H200 chips, which are used to train large AI models. However, this supremacy is challenged by US sanctions on China, which prohibit the export of these chips to Chinese companies such as Huawei. However, according to the journal Nature Technology, China is developing domestic alternatives, with SMIC announcing in 2024 the production of 7-nanometer chips, an important step towards technological independence²³.

2-Government policies: Centralized vision vs. free market

China is taking a centralized approach to supporting AI, launching 2017 the "New Generation AI Development Plan" to invest more than \$150 billion by 2030. This plan focuses on supporting major companies such as Baidu and Tencent, and developing

²² Scharee, P. Artificial Intelligence and National Security. www.cnas.org: centre for a new american security, 2018.

²³ Clarke, R. A., & Knake, R. K. Cyber War: The Next Threat to National Security and What to Do About It. New York: New York ECCO, 2010.



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infrastructure such as cloud computing centers. According to a report by the Chinese Academy of Sciences in 2024, this approach increased the number of AI patents in China to more than 120,000 by 2023, surpassing the United States, which recorded around 90,000 patents. This government support reflects a long-term strategy to achieve self-sufficiency and global supremacy²⁴.

In contrast, the United States relies on a free-market approach, with private companies playing the most significant role in AI development and limited government support. Despite the US AI Initiative launch in 2020, government investments remain significantly lower compared to China. However, this model gives the US flexibility to innovate, with companies such as OpenAI producing groundbreaking models such as GPT-4, one of the most powerful generative AI models to date, according to a study published by MIT Technology Review in 2024²⁵.

3-Academic dimension: Talent race

The human element is one of the most important pillars of competition in AI, with both countries relying on attracting the best minds. The United States has an outstanding educational system, with universities such as Stanford and Harvard producing groundbreaking research. However, China is starting to close the gap. The number of Chinese researchers in prestigious AI journals increased by 300% between 2018 and 2023, according to a report by Tsinghua University in 2024. This progress is supported by policies such as the "One Thousand Talents" program that aims to attract scientists from abroad, including returnees from the US²⁶.

4-Artificial Intelligence and the Importance of European Regulation

In a world of unprecedented technological advances, artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as one of the most prominent innovations with enormous potential and complex challenges. As a political and economic entity comprising 27 member states, the European Union (EU) realized early on that this technology is not just a technical tool, but a transformative force that affects fundamental rights, the economy, and society. Hence, the EU began developing regulatory policies to ensure that AI is developed and used safely, ethically, and sustainably. This role did not come out of nowhere; instead, it was built on a long history of European legislation that protected citizens, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which has become a global model. However, what distinguishes the EU's approach to AI regulation is its ambition to be a global leader in setting standards that balance technological innovation and the protection of human values.

The EU has not merely reacted to developments, but has sought to anticipate them through comprehensive strategies and policies, from launching research initiatives to drafting the AI Act, the world's first comprehensive legislative framework. This effort reflects the Federation's vision of AI as a tool that should serve humanity, not vice versa, emphasizing transparency, accountability, and justice. In this context, we explore how this role has crystallized over the years and how it has influenced the global landscape of AI regulation²⁷.

²⁴ Zuboff, S. *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*. New York: Public Affairs, 2019.

²⁵ SIPRI. *The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Strategic Stability and Nuclear Risk*. Stockholm: www.sipri.org, 2023.

²⁶ University, T. *AI Talent Development in China: A 2024 Perspective*. Beijing: Tsinghua University Press, 2024.

²⁷ Defence, U. D. *Artificial Intelligence Strategy 2023*. Washington DC: Pentagon, 2023.



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5-Historical context: The beginning of European interest in AI

The European Union's interest in AI is not a recent development, but goes back decades of investment in scientific research and technology. In the early 2000s, the European Commission began funding projects such as the Seventh Research and Development Framework (FP7), which allocated millions of euros for developing advanced technologies, including AI. However, the fundamental shift began in 2018 when the Commission announced its first AI strategy, which focused on strengthening technological capabilities, ensuring an ethical framework, and preparing society for economic changes. This strategy was a theoretical plan and a commitment to invest €20 billion by 2030 to support research and development.

What made this approach distinctive was the early focus on ethics. The EU recognized that AI, as much as it offers opportunities, carries risks such as algorithmic bias, invasion of privacy, and threats to democracy. It therefore formed a High-Level Expert Group on AI to draft ethical guidelines published in 2019. These principles, which included transparency and accountability, later became the basis for regulatory legislation. This historical context shows how the ITU has gradually built its approach, building on previous experiences in regulating technology²⁸.

6-Artificial Intelligence Law: A historic step towards comprehensive regulation

In April 2021, the European Commission submitted a draft of the Artificial Intelligence Act (AI Act), which was finalized in March 2024, becoming the world's first comprehensive legal framework for AI regulation. This law was not just a reaction to technological advances, but a proactive attempt to regulate the use of AI based on risk levels. It categorized intelligent systems into four categories: Unacceptable risk (e.g., social recording systems), high risk (e.g., medical devices), limited risk (e.g., chatbots), and low risk. This categorization made the law practical and flexible, imposing strict restrictions on risky applications while encouraging innovation in lower-risk areas.

Not only did the law not indiscriminately ban high-risk applications, such as facial recognition in public places, but it also placed strict requirements on high-risk systems, such as conducting risk assessments and providing transparency to users. It has also encouraged SMEs by creating "Regulatory Sandboxes" that allow them to test their technologies without immediate penalties. This approach cemented the Union's position as a global leader, inspiring other countries to develop similar legislation²⁹.

7-Human Rights as a Key Focus of European Regulation

One of the most notable aspects of the EU's role in AI regulation is its focus on protecting human rights. This focus is not new and stems from the Union's commitment to the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which guarantees the right to privacy, equality, and dignity. In AI, technologies such as biometric surveillance have raised significant concerns, especially with the proliferation of facial recognition systems. Therefore, the European Parliament has called for comprehensive assessments of the impact of AI on fundamental rights, which is reflected in the AI Law.

Organizations such as the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights have praised this approach, but have criticized some exceptions, such as exempting national security systems from regulation, as potentially opening the door to abuses. Despite this, the

²⁸ UNESCO. Global Education Report 2024 . Paris: UNISCO Publishing, 2024.

²⁹ California, U. O. AI in Entertainment: Shaping Global Culture. Los Angeles: USC Press, 2022.



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EU's commitment to human rights remains clear in its imposition of transparency and accountability requirements on companies, ensuring that technology remains in the service of human beings and not against them³⁰. (OHCHR, 2023)

8-Technological Race: Redefining Geopolitical Power

In recent decades, artificial Intelligence (AI) has transformed from a scientific concept into a central arena of competition between major countries, especially the United States and China, reshaping the global geopolitical balance in unprecedented ways. This race is a struggle for technological superiority and a battle for control over the world's economic, military, and political future. Countries that lead in this area are gaining a competitive advantage and rewriting the rules of global influence, as AI has become an essential tool in promoting strategic hegemony. The United States, with its long history of innovation, now faces a challenge from China, which seeks to surpass it through massive investments and centralized policies aimed at making it the global leader in AI by 2030. This competition reflects a power shift, where reliance on natural resources or population size is no longer sufficient to ensure superiority. However, the ability to develop and apply advanced technologies has become the primary determinant.

A report published by the Brookings Institution argues that the AI race between major countries has led to a new "technological bipolarity", somewhat similar to the Cold War, but with a greater emphasis on innovation rather than nuclear weapons. This report shows that one country's superiority in this field allows it to influence global economies, impose technological standards, and even interfere in the affairs of other countries in unconventional ways³¹. (West & Allen, 2025)

Section III: The impact of this race on the global geopolitical balance.

1-Economic supremacy and the reshaping of alliances

One of the most notable effects of this race is the economic impact that extends to the geopolitical arena. Major countries that invest in AI, such as the United States and China, can boost their economic productivity by automating industries, optimizing supply chains, and developing innovative products. The United States, for example, relies on giants like Google and Microsoft to drive innovation. At the same time, China leverages coordination between the government and companies like Alibaba and Tencent to achieve its strategic goals. This economic superiority translates into geopolitical influence, as other countries are forced to join one of these two powers to ensure they have access to the technology needed to grow.

In "AI Superpowers: China, Silicon Valley, and the New World Order," Kai-Fu Lee discusses how China uses AI to expand its economic influence in Africa and Asia through the Belt and Road Initiative. This strategy boosts the Chinese economy and makes beneficiary countries more dependent on Beijing, reshaping geopolitical alliances away from traditional US influence³².

2-Artificial Intelligence as a Military Weapon and Changing the Balance of Power

In the military sphere, the race among major countries to develop AI directly threatens the traditional geopolitical balance. Autonomous weapons, such as smart drones and AI-based defense systems, give developed nations an unprecedented ability to wage war or deter adversaries. The United States, for example, is investing heavily in programs such as Project

³⁰ OHCHR. Open Letter from Türk to the European Union Regarding the Artificial Intelligence Act. Geneva: United Nations High Commissioner For Human Rights, 2023.

³¹ West, D. M., & Allen, J. R. How Artificial Intelligence is Transforming the World, 2025. www.brookings.edu.

³² Lee, AI Superpowers, Op.cit.



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Maven, which aims to use AI to analyze military data, while China is developing similar systems to bolster its naval capabilities in the South China Sea. These developments mean that countries unable to keep up with this race may be unable to defend their interests.

In an article published in the journal *International Security*, the authors warn that the proliferation of autonomous weapons could lead to a new arms race. Central states seek to impose their military dominance, while weaker states become more vulnerable to threats. This situation increases global polarization, with middle states becoming vassals of one of the two major powers to ensure their protection³³.

3-Controlling technological standards and geopolitical hegemony

Another important aspect of this race is the struggle to impose global technological standards. Countries that control AI standards, such as ethical protocols or software specifications, can steer global technological development in their favor. The United States is pushing for standards focused on privacy and individual freedoms, while China promotes a model focused on security and centralized control. This rivalry not only affects tech companies but also determines which countries will adopt which model, enhancing the geopolitical influence of the winner of this conflict.

A report by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) points out that controlling technological standards gives major countries a tool to impose “soft hegemony,” in which other countries become obliged to adopt their technological and political systems. This reinforces the division between geopolitical blocs, making the global equilibrium more fragile³⁴.

Conclusion

After this research, it is clear that AI has become a key axis in shaping the international power structure, imposing radical shifts in the political, economic, and military fields. By analyzing the applications of AI, it is clear that this technology acts as a double-edged sword: On the one hand, it enhances the hegemony of countries that adopt its technologies, and on the other hand, it may exacerbate inequality between developed and developing countries.

AI is not just a technical tool but a strategic factor that redefines soft and hard power concepts. It highlights the heated rivalry between superpowers, especially the United States and China, who seek to dominate this technology to enhance their geopolitical influence. On the other hand, European efforts to develop regulatory frameworks that ensure AI's ethical and safe use stand out, reflecting a balanced vision between innovation and protecting human values.

Finally, AI constitutes a paradigm shift in international relations, as the possession and development of this technology becomes a decisive factor in determining the status of states in the international system. However, ethical and social challenges remain, requiring international cooperation to ensure that AI is a tool to promote justice and stability, rather than a source of conflict and inequality.

³³ Horowitz, M. C. *Artificial Intelligence, International Competition, and the Balance of Power*. *International security*, 2018/2019.

³⁴ Studies, I. I. *The Geopolitical Implications of AI Standards*, 2025. www.iiss.org.



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