

# Algorithmic assemblages of power: AI harm and the question of responsibility

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**ENG Abstract.** Current debates on AI harm primarily focus on issues directly associated with AI systems, such as algorithmic harm or bias. In this article I argue that AI harm should be analyzed through a power-aware lens using a systemic and multidimensional approach that accounts for the multiple scales at which harm unfolds—macro, meso, and micro. Reducing AI harm to mere technical failure or a lack of representation in data risks oversimplifying the issue. AI is not just a set of technologies, but a sociotechnical assemblage—a complex interplay of communities, markets, resources, labor, processes, practices, regulations, institutions, and knowledge systems. Its current form not only impacts society at multiple levels but also actively reproduces harm and structural violence at scale, exacerbating power asymmetries both within and across nations. This raises the question of who should be held accountable for harm across multiple scales and what frameworks should be established to address it. A feminist critique of AI frames harm through an ethics of care, emphasizing the need to place human rights at the core of AI governance, ecosystems, and systems.

**Keywords:** algorithmic; artificial intelligence; decolonial feminism; human rights; machine learning; violence.

## ESP Ensamblajes algorítmicos del poder: IA, daño y la cuestión de la responsabilidad

**ESP Resumen.** Los debates actuales sobre el daño causado por los sistemas de IA se centran principalmente en los sesgos algorítmicos o de los datos. En este artículo argumento que el daño producido por la IA debe analizarse desde una perspectiva de poder, utilizando un enfoque sistémico y multidimensional que tenga en cuenta las múltiples escalas en las que se manifiesta el daño: macro, meso y micro. Reducir el daño de la IA a un simple fallo técnico o a la falta de representación en los datos corre el riesgo de simplificar el problema. La IA, como un ensamblaje sociotécnico hegemónico, reproduce activamente el daño y la violencia estructural a gran escala, exacerbando las asimetrías de poder tanto dentro de los países como entre ellos. Esto plantea la cuestión de quién debe ser responsable del daño en múltiples escalas y qué marcos deben establecerse para abordarlo. Una crítica feminista de la IA enmarca el daño a través de una ética del cuidado, subrayando la necesidad de colocar los derechos humanos en el centro de la gobernanza, los ecosistemas y los sistemas de IA.

**Palabras clave:** aprendizaje automático; derechos humanos; feminismo descolonial; inteligencia artificial; violencia algorítmica.

**Summary.** 1. Introduction. 2. Algorithmic assemblages of power. 3. Reframing AI harm beyond bias: A systemic and multidimensional approach. 4. Violence, harm and injustice in automated societies. 5. Response-able AI: A feminist ethics of care. 6. Conclusion. 7. Data availability. 8. Declaration of LLM Use. 9. References.

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### 1. Introduction

Walter Ferguson or Mr. Gavitt is a legendary calypso singer and songwriter, died on February 25, 2023 at the age of 103 in the small coastal village of Cahuita, Costa Rica. In his song *Computer* he tells the story of

how his pension was taken away from him by the government:

Some time ago they gave me a pension  
For me and my family  
Computer made them to understand

I got a lot of money and property  
 Computer tell them this  
 Computer tell them that  
 And the officials they all agree  
 Computer tell them the devil knows what  
 And they take the pension from me, yeh! yeh!

The song was at once an act of denunciation of the failure of automated decision-making systems («Computer made them to understand I got a lot of money and property»), a demand for epistemic justice («Computer tell them the devil knows what»), and an unjust outcome («And they take the pension from me»). Mr. Gavitt clearly understood that ‘the computer’ was doing something wrong that negatively impacted his life. Nevertheless, he had no means to reject the computer’s result and reclaim his pension back. This case exemplifies how harm can unfold in contemporary algorithmic cultures. Walter Ferguson was algorithmically aware (Ananny and Crawford, 2018, p. 5): he had the ability to recognize that algorithms were at work, to understand their effects, and to question their results. However, despite his awareness of this algorithmic injustice (Birhane, 2021), he was unable to reverse the result or obtain redress. This injustice was a result of structural violence, sociotechnically mediated.

In this article I argue that violence and harm in AI systems take multifaceted and dynamic forms that are often overlooked in current debates, which predominantly focus on bias and algorithmic harm. To understand AI harm we need to approach AI from a systemic and multidimensional perspective as a sociotechnical assemblage. This requires considering multiple scales (macro, meso, and micro), the dimensions of harm, the full AI life cycle, and its temporalities. To develop this argument, the text is structured as follows: First, I characterize algorithmic assemblages of power. Next, I examine the systemic nature of harm and its multidimensionality. Finally, drawing on feminist and decolonial approaches, I discuss the concept of responsibility as response-ability (Barad, 2003) in the context of AI harm.

## 2. Algorithmic assemblages of power

In scholarly literature, AI systems are usually treated as if they were singular entities (Almeida et al., 2022). However, both in technical and sociocultural terms, AI systems are part of broader societal assemblages (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 503) and are shaped by power relations. If we think in mathematical terms, AI systems can be defined as a «machine-based system that for explicit or implicit objectives, infers, from the input it receives, how to generate outputs such as predictions, content, recommendations, or decisions that can influence physical or virtual environments» (OECD, 2023). However, these computational arrangements encompass other computational forms and their materialities such as data, data structures, models, mathematical functions, programs, applications, hardware, networks (Dourish, 2016, Almeida et al., 2022) as well as immaterial components, human actors, institutions, processes, norms, protocols, practices, narratives, and imaginaries.

Conceiving AI systems as a result of a heterogeneous set of components – an arrangement – is also useful for the understanding of algorithms as social constructs, as sociotechnical assemblages. AI systems «are not just mathematical entities» (Beer, 2017, p. 3), are contextual, situated, and shaped by social and cultural values (Beer, 2017, p. 3; Noble, 2018, p. 2). Thus, algorithmic assemblages (Kitchin and Dodge, 2011; Lury and Wakeford, 2012; Beer and Burrows, 2013; Gillespie, 2014; Ananny, 2016) result from the ensemble of mathematical and infrastructural, but also the social and the environmental, the human, and the non-human. The understanding of AI systems as sociotechnical assemblages, not only as abstract entities, calls attention to the ways in which AI systems can produce harm and therefore have deep societal implications.

Gillespie’s (2014) conception of algorithmic assemblages as «the emergent social and cultural formations that arise through the interplay between computational logics and the various contexts and actors that engage with them» (p. 166) allows us to extend the discussion to the macro social (world system), meso (countries and institutions) and microsocial (individual and communities) arrangements that shape the character of relationships within a sociotechnical assemblage. These relationships between and among the digital materialities, computational processes, social actors, and socio-cultural practices (Striphas, 2015, p. 56) in any given algorithmic assemblage are dynamic, contingent, and asymmetric. The entities conforming an algorithmic assemblage are intertwined, but diverse in nature and have different types and levels of agency (Siles et al., 2024). Consequently, a particular arrangement at a given moment and within a specific context generates «a specific kind of knowledge or outcome» (Lury and Wakeford, 2012, p. 4), shaped by the ongoing tensions between disparate forces. For this reason, sociotechnical systems are always a reflection of power relations and their structural configurations in a certain context and temporality.

Understanding the intrinsic socio-technical nature of algorithmic assemblages, along with the instability and dynamism resulting from the interplay of actors, computational techniques, processes, and sociocultural contexts, offers analytical possibilities essential for explaining how power/knowledge mechanisms operate through them. Therefore, these specific and shifting socio-technical arrangements can explain the multiple forms of violence, harm and injustice. In the next section, I propose a reframing of the question of harm in relation to the multifaceted impacts of AI across multiple scales and dimensions.

## 3. Reframing AI harm beyond bias: A systemic and multidimensional approach

Critical studies of data, algorithms, and AI have offered analytical perspectives that allow addressing the genealogy of the problems anchored in the imaginaries, development, and deployment of AI as a sociotechnical construct. The main contribution of these critical approaches, including intersectional and decolonial feminist studies, critical race theories,

STS, indigenous and ancestral epistemologies (Mihambi, 2020; Aguilar, 2020), human rights and critical philosophies of technologies, is to refocus the debate on the axis of power and structural violence that deepens social asymmetries that lead to exclusion, inequality, injustice, and social control algorithmically mediated.

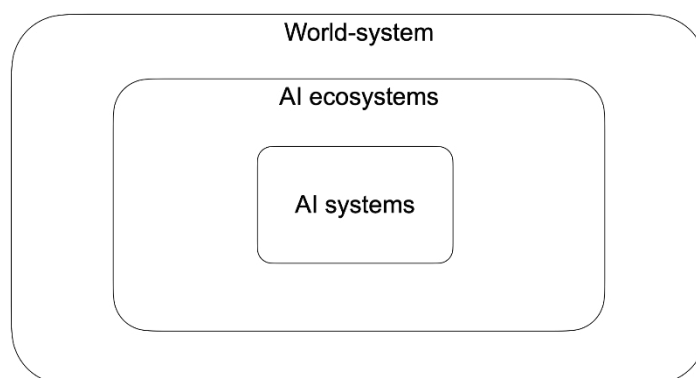
These critical visions around AI are disputing the dominant narratives that promote these technologies as the new solution for social problems offering a future of economic prosperity. These narratives hide the instrumental interests of investors, corporations and governments of industrialized countries, which see in AI both a fertile ground for capitalist accumulation, and a new frontier of power: with the expansion of the military capacity of states, the expansion of transterritorial political influence and the capture of imaginaries to impose a world model associated with the values of the market, modernity and neoliberal freedom (Ochigame, 2019; Ricaurte, 2022). The biggest success of AI narratives is to condense the desires and aspirations of the political, economic, military and technological elites of industrialized countries.

Unfortunately, this debate is not merely discursive. The political, economic, and military interests of

governments and industry materialize through political regimes, regulatory frameworks, infrastructure and computing capacity, research and innovation agendas, and commercial treaties—all supported by substantial investments that draw a clear line between those who govern the world and those subordinated to this order. The AI agenda, defined by the U.S. and major corporate actors, directly and indirectly shapes the global AI ecosystem and facilitates the deployment of both hard and soft power through algorithmic assemblages (Ricaurte et al., 2024).

Addressing AI harm requires a systemic approach that considers AI systems across their entire life cycle, within broader AI ecosystems, and as part of a world-system (Wallerstein, 1979) shaped by geopolitical, economic, and military tensions. In its current form, hegemonic AI is a tool to automate violence at scale (Ricaurte, 2022). If AI technologies are aimed at preventing harm, they need to be understood in their sociotechnical nature (GPAI, 2024). This approach highlights the multiple and interconnected layers of AI assemblages: the sociotechnical, the sociopolitical and the geopolitical (Image 1).

Image 1. Algorithmic Assemblages of Power. Source: Own production



For this reason, this article seeks to frame the discussion of harm within a context that highlights the connections between AI assemblages and the relationships across different scales and dimensions. As we know, the critical study of algorithmic cultures has mainly focused on the harms resulting from biases. First, in datasets that, when used in the training of machine learning models that produce discriminatory results for populations not represented in them (Miceli et al., 2021). Second, in biases resulting from the deployment of algorithms, that – when put in the wild – disproportionately affect marginalized populations (Noble, 2018; Buolamwini and Gebru, 2018). In other words, discussions on AI harm have largely centered on AI systems themselves, while other scales, dimensions, temporalities, and their interconnections remain overlooked. This perspective can be described as a narrow approach to AI harm. However, I argue that by focusing only on the tree, we risk losing sight of the forest.

To counter this limitation, this article aligns with critical scholars (Miceli et al., 2022) who advocate for

«moving the research focus beyond bias-oriented framings by adopting a power-aware perspective». As these authors note, this turn entails «accounting for historical inequities, labor conditions, and epistemological standpoints» inscribed in AI data and cultures. AI systems are ideologies, values and social constructions, are «opinions embedded in math» (O’Neil, 2017). This perspective is consistent with the view that AI systems should be analyzed «as assemblages of institutionally situated code, practices, and norms with the power to create, sustain, and signify relationships among people and data» (Ananny, 2016) through algorithmic mediation.

This broader approach to AI harm extends beyond the study of datasets to encompass algorithmic cultures, AI ecosystems, and their interconnectedness with the world-system. Our aim is to refocus the discussion on power, violence, injustice, and harm across different levels and scales, emphasizing the need to distinguish the responsibilities of various social actors and recognize the broader scope of harm that extends beyond AI systems. Broadening the understanding of the systemic and multidimensional

nature of harm resulting from AI may allow us to redefine political, research and advocacy agendas to protect human rights, sovereignty and democracy.

#### 4. Violence, harm and injustice in automated societies

Reframing the understanding of AI harm requires defining violence as the source of that harm. Violence, in this context, is understood broadly as «wherever there are social structures and institutions that generate political oppression, economic exploitation, or a significant social advantage of one group over another» (Mider, 2013, p. 705): «Violence is force in action» (Mider, 2013, p. 704). From a power-aware perspective, violence can be defined as the capacity to produce harm as a result of power asymmetries, and harm is the effect of that violence on specific populations and territories. In other words, violence is aimed at the «reinforcement of dominant power structures» (Eubanks, 2018, p. 7). From an intersectional perspective, violence emerges from interlocking systems of oppression (Collins, 1990, p. 541). This understanding requires considering the various ways in which violence is exerted on individuals and groups due to these asymmetries—economic, political, racial, gender-based, epistemic, symbolic, among others.

Traditional definitions of violence, harm, and injustice must be expanded to account for the emerging configurations of power and influence in automated societies. As previously noted, numerous complex challenges remain to be fully understood in addressing violence, harm, and injustice stemming from the exercise of algorithmically mediated power across macro, meso, and micro scales. The interconnectedness of macro-level systems of violence, structural and institutional violence at the meso level, and the micro-level «minimally observable, semi-autonomous action» (Ananny, 2016) of algorithmic agency (Siles et al., 2024) when systems are deployed makes it difficult to capture the full scope of AI's societal impacts.

##### 4.1. AI violence

Decolonial feminist thought provides tools to analyze how structural violence is related to current algorithmic cultures in global automated societies. From a critical standpoint, hegemonic sociotechnical systems respond to economic and political interests, rooted in a historical colonial and patriarchal order (Ricaurte, 2019). These interconnected systems enabled by a sociotechnical mediation reflect both historical and ongoing violence against marginalized bodies and territories (Ricaurte, 2022).

The imperial expansion of automated societies (Adams, 2024, Tacheva and Ramasubramanian, 2024) demands more efficient tools to enhance capitalist accumulation, exert social control and systemic violence. As a result, some of the most profound implications associated with the automation of society (Stiegler, 2016) are the accelerated concentration of power in a handful of global actors, the scale and the pervasiveness of this condition, and the actual impossibility of rejecting this social order. Surveillance capitalism's (Zuboff, 2019) ambition and automated society's fulfillment is one

of total reach: phagocytizing every process, body and territory for the benefit of the market. As I have argued elsewhere, the automation of existence (Stiegler, 2016) that requires expansive processes of datafication, algorithmic mediation, and automation is deepening global inequalities (UNCTAC, 2021) and reproducing violence at scale (Ricaurte, 2022).

More concretely, this entails automating death (Ricaurte, 2022, Katibah, 2024), amplifying surveillance (Zuboff, 2019), defining and predicting what and who constitutes a risk and a threat (Varon and Peña, 2021, Costanza-Chock, 2020), creating a new class of invisible, precarious workers (Gray and Suri, 2019, Miceli and Posada, 2022), and expanding the frontiers of extractivism that drive the current climate crisis, disproportionately targeting racialized bodies and territories (Millán, 2022). These processes are accompanied by governance mechanisms, institutional transformations and the reconfiguration of markets, territories, knowledge systems, norms, practices, discourses, social relations and subjectivities. Thus, sociotechnical assemblages play a crucial role in reproducing systemic violence.

This conceptualization of AI violence and consequent harm considers that algorithmic assemblages perpetuate existing power imbalances in society (Noble, 2018, p. 6), but also across societies. It is important to make this distinction explicit, because AI violence operates at the same time in two directions, within societies as a form of internal control of radicalized and precarious bodies, and across societies as a form of extraterritorial control of territories that are necessary to provide data, natural resources, and precarious labor. As such, AI violence produces physical, economic, epistemic, socio-cultural, cognitive-emotional, environmental harm and thus deepening and expanding local and global injustice. However, the challenge is as Eubanks notes, that these forms of violence are replicated and reinforced «in ways that are invisible or difficult to challenge» (Eubanks, 2018, p. 4).

This clarification aims to emphasize that, within the socio-technical assemblages where violence is produced and enacted, harm takes multiple forms and is perceived and experienced differently. Its impact varies in scale and temporality, particularly for those bodies and territories that, due to existing asymmetries and power imbalances, are most exposed to becoming its targets. This also underscores the urgency for powerful actors to take responsibility for harm, particularly governments, which have a social duty to uphold human rights and dignity, legislators, who must establish strong counterweights to corporate power in a context where regulation lags behind technological advancement, and companies, which must fulfill their legal, ethical, and social responsibilities, prioritizing the public good over profit.

This contextual, cumulative, and historical understanding of AI harm is essential for achieving both global and local justice. AI-related injustices must be situated, contextualized, and analyzed as the processual outcome of power relationships shaped by a given sociotechnical assemblage. In this context, powerful actors have a greater capacity to cause harm and should therefore be subject to public scrutiny and legal accountability.



From a feminist perspective, achieving global and local justice is an ethical-political commitment. This entails advancing technical, legal, political, and cultural strategies to disrupt the cycle of outcomes that perpetuate violence and harm people's lives. Justice, in this sense, seeks to re-center the rights of individuals, communities, and territories, acknowledging the multidimensional nature of violence and its manifestations across different scales, dimensions, and temporalities. This is why a systemic analysis of AI harm requires a multi-scalar and multidimensional approach that recognizes the interconnected forms of violence collectively producing harm at the macro, meso, and micro levels and across different temporalities.

In contemporary automated societies, our collective responsibility is to expose the multiple, intertwined ways in which violence and harm are enacted through AI assemblages. These systems operate within an exclusionary model of the world, reinforcing social orders of classification that legitimize dispossession, and the extermination of bodies and territories deemed disposable (Ricaurte, 2022).

#### **4.2. The macro social scale: The geopolitics of AI and global governance**

AI emerged first as an aspiration of a white patriarchal elite in the U.S. in elite research institutions (Ochigame, 2019). The anthropocentric, patriarchal, colonial, and neoliberal values embedded in this concrete sociotechnical imaginary, gave birth to a field and a set of technologies that embodied the dream of human superiority: intelligence, productivity, optimization, and power, in other words, eugenic technology (Chan, 2025) of domination. The AI project as an ideology, received the material support of the financial, military and political elites. As a promise, the imaginary of this technology was constructed as the most capable of achieving the goals of maximization of profit, and, simultaneously, offering political, military and social control. The increasing digitalization of the world, with the production of data and the development of computing capacity, made finally, the dream of AI more close to materialize despite the high cost to the environment, the territories from where the resources to produce the materiality of AI systems, the communities that inhabit those territories, the invisible workers that feed the AI supply chain, the marginalized people that these systems are used against, and the captive users dispossessed from their data and knowledge.

While the idea of progress associated with AI remains a contested assertion, and the hype surrounding it is part of an instrumental narrative, the effects of AI are undeniable and real. Geopolitical interests are sociotechnically mediated, and geopolitical tensions involve winning the AI race. The coming to power of the financial elites in the U.S. backed by the most important AI corporations and actors is another evidence of the fact that racial capitalism is backed by digital colonialism, and that today, algorithmic assemblages are constructed as the preferred mediation to consolidate the economic, political and military power of the U.S.

AI geopolitics dominated by the U.S. makes global AI governance a complex task. The support of AI for

war and genocide, the rejection of the Paris agreement, the negation of human rights, institutionalized disinformation, and the lack of recognition of the diversity of gender and diversity inequalities, only makes the AI ecosystem, and AI systems in general, more dangerous than ever. With political, regulatory, and commercial restrictions imposed by the U.S. to the rest of the world, regulatory initiatives to counterbalance this power led by the European Union or innovation and commercial strategies led by China are limited in their capacity to change the current balance of forces.

AI assemblages are, then, more than just tools. And, as I have been trying to argue, AI is not neutral, and is amplifying not only social asymmetries, but the consolidation of totalitarian political regimes. AI is a social construction that emerges from privilege and power and is mediating the reconfiguration of the global order towards authoritarianism, the violation of rights, and the expulsion and erasure of those considered disposable. Created, governed, and used by the powerful, AI is a technology for extermination.

#### **4.3. The meso social scale: Countries and institutions**

To reinforce the framing of AI violence and harm in its systemic and collective dimension, targeted to specific populations or communities, it is important to unveil the mechanisms to make AI to assemble the preferred sociotechnical mediation in society. For this reason, the adoption of AI systems at the level of countries and institutions, specially promoted by U.S. corporations through lobby, investment and infrastructure is crucial to understand how AI condenses the possibility to exert simultaneously hard (through the use of autonomous weapons) and soft power (through automation of the social life).

As such, AI systems play a relevant role in the digital colonial agenda imposed on the countries that are not major players in the AI ecosystem. In countries of the majority world, AI systems are adopted and deployed as a political rationality to govern the social order (Ricaurte et al., 2024) that also benefits local elites. Because digital infrastructure, hardware and software are mostly owned by U.S. companies, the actual political, infrastructural, economic, military configuration of algorithmic assemblages pose relevant questions about state-level sovereignty and democracy in contemporary societies, in particular those of the majority world.

Countries like Brazil, which are striving to advance a digital sovereignty agenda for AI, have been accused of authoritarianism. Those who oppose the regime face threats, while various mechanisms—military, financial, commercial, propagandistic, sociotechnical, and legal—are deployed to serve the interests of U.S. corporations and the U.S. government.

#### **4.4. The micro social scale: Individuals and communities**

The macro and meso social scales and power configurations are mirrored in the everyday lives of individuals and communities. While hard power is deployed at the borders, in carceral systems, occupied territories, and during war, soft power—embodied in

the everyday use of AI systems for production, communication, and interaction—renders AI assemblages both invisible and pervasive. Harm and violence may take on more subtle forms, unfolding over longer periods, and manifesting in the production of subjectivities, cultural transformations, cognitive shifts, labor configurations, and epistemic erasure. As AI becomes more widespread and existence is increasingly automated, its disproportionate impacts harm the less privileged in every society and across the globe.

AI harm can manifest across multiple dimensions simultaneously, negatively impacting an individual or community, putting their life or survival at risk, both directly and indirectly. Walter Ferguson, a black son of immigrants, lived in Cahuita, a small fishing town on the coast of Costa Rica. These identity markers are crucial when addressing the unjust outcomes of automated decision-making systems. He was able to denounce the injustice through his music, but he could not achieve justice. In his case, economic harm resulted from social automation, while social harm limited his ability to improve his living conditions. He also faced epistemic harm, stemming from the opacity of the automated system and the institutional barriers preventing him from reclaiming his rights.

## 5. Response-able AI: A feminist ethics of care

Responsible, trustworthy, fair, and ethical are just a few of the adjectives often used in global governance discussions to define AI technologies, reflecting the narratives the industry promotes about the technologies they aspire to build. However, these values are often conveniently framed within the boundaries of corporate interests. In other words, accountability, reliability, fairness, and ethics are included in their discourse only as long as they do not challenge the ultimate goal of product development: to create market-optimized solutions that uphold an asymmetric social order. Large corporations invest significant resources in lobbying for flexible regulations that favor their interests (Ochigame, 2019). Proposals for more democratic, non-market-driven approaches to AI development remain rare.

Justice requires public recognition of the harm caused, and accountability for that harm in the form of shared responsibility (Barad, 2007; Cortés et al., 2020) by all actors, and concrete forms of redress (Davis et al., 2021). Identifying harm, acknowledging it publicly and rapidly, explaining when, how and to what extent harm was done, and what reparation entails should be part of making actors accountable for the impact of these systems on the world. But this also implies considering a broader understanding of AI violence.

One way of being accountable for the harm emerges from feminist critical reflection through the notion of response-ability (Barad, 2003, 2011). Response-ability can be interpreted as a fundamental belief in the interconnectedness of beings and the capacity to respond to that interconnectedness. Response-ability emphasizes the importance of considering the ethical and political implications of the practices and technologies we use to understand the world. In this sense, response-ability emphasizes the

responsibility of the observer to be accountable for the effects of their actions and the meanings they produce (Barad, 2003). This understanding of responsibility as response-ability implies a fundamental shift in the way responsible AI in corporate terms is understood today.

In algorithmic cultures, algorithmic responsibility has been defined as «the responsibility for addressing algorithmic bias and ensuring algorithmic accountability is shared by a broad range of actors, including algorithmic developers, users, and regulators» (Crawford et al., 2019, p. 3). However, because algorithmic assemblages are complex, there are multiple actors who need to be held accountable: «responsibility for algorithmic harm is a complex issue as it involves multiple stakeholders, including the creators and users of algorithms, as well as the organizations and institutions that implement and regulate them. All of these stakeholders have a role to play in preventing and mitigating algorithmic harm» (Crawford et al., 2019, p. 6). This multiplicity of actors and processes involved means that, many times, it is difficult to trace back the chain of decisions the source of harm lies resulting in responsibility falling in a void (Amoore, 2021). In a framework of shared responsibility, all parties involved in the design, development, deployment, use and regulation «have a responsibility to ensure that algorithms are transparent, accountable, and serve the public interest» (Crawford and Schultz, 2014, p. 3). Once again, the notion of algorithmic responsibility, as well as that of algorithmic harm, is often reduced to AI systems themselves, without considering their use and role as part of broader societal systems.

AI harm must be recognized as part of systemic violence and entrenched power differentials. This includes acknowledging the potential violation of human rights, the multidimensional nature of harm, and the varying degrees of responsibility held by those who govern, develop, and deploy AI systems. Governments and industry are the primary actors that should be held accountable for the harm caused by AI systems in real-world applications. However, governments have a particular duty to uphold human rights and ensure that individuals and communities have access to information and tools to monitor the consequences of AI deployment. AI accountability—on the part of both governments and corporations—must be rigorously regulated within a human rights framework.

This reflection on responsibility-response-ability from a feminist, intersectional, decolonial perspective is a call to reconsider not only the micro decisions in algorithmic design and development, but expand the chain of responsibilities to the deployment, use and disposal of AI systems. AI needs to be understood as an algorithmic assemblage of actors, norms, regulations, practices, forms of knowledge that are mediating our social relationships and our relation to the world.

## 6. Conclusion

In this text, I argue for the importance of incorporating a systemic and multidimensional understanding of AI harm into global debates on AI. As sociotechnical constructs, AI systems reflect the conditions of their creation, embody specific values, and serve particular

goals. As a hegemonic technology developed by the world's largest corporate powers, AI values align with preserving the existing social order. For this reason, the harm caused by hegemonic AI systems should not be seen as incidental but as inherent, embedded in their socio-political nature. This theoretical contribution examines the systemic and multidimensional character of AI harm at macro, meso, and micropolitical levels across the AI lifecycle. Drawing on Winner's assertion that artifacts have politics, I argue that AI itself is political. Given its genealogy, purpose, and operational mechanisms, hegemonic AI reinforces structural violence and power asymmetries on a large scale. Understanding AI as a sociotechnical assemblage means recognizing that harm extends beyond technical failure, it is systemic and multidimensional, implicating multiple layers of responsibility. Drawing from critical race studies, feminist STS, and decolonial approaches, I emphasize the need for a situated, contextual, and sociotechnical analysis of AI harm. Such an approach is essential for unpacking accountability and working toward global justice.

## 7. Data availability

Ricaurte, Paola (2025). Algorithmic Assemblages Scopus database [Data set]. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15001281>

## 8. Declaration of LLM Use

This article has used automated translation applications (DeepL) for the English revision.

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