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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND ITS ROLE IN RESHAPING GLOBAL POLITICAL GOVERNANCE

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Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative force reshaping institutional structures, regulatory frameworks, and power dynamics within global political governance. This study examines how AI influences global governance through institutional adaptation, geopolitical competition, and regime-complex coordination between 2023 and 2026. Using a qualitative research design based on structured document analysis, the study analyzes major governance instruments, including multilateral resolutions, summit declarations, binding regional legislation, and international standards frameworks.

The findings reveal a significant shift from voluntary ethical principles toward formalized, risk-based regulatory architectures characterized by lifecycle oversight, compliance mechanisms, and supervisory institutions. AI governance increasingly operates within a regime-complex structure, where overlapping governance layers—multilateral institutions, summit diplomacy, regional regulation, and standards bodies—interact through cooperation and contestation. The analysis further demonstrates that AI governance functions simultaneously as a tool of risk mitigation and as an instrument of geopolitical positioning, with regulatory leadership serving strategic influence objectives.

State capacity and regulatory cooperation are identified as critical moderating variables affecting governance effectiveness and coherence. Moreover, democracy, information integrity, and legitimacy concerns have become central drivers of institutional innovation in AI governance.

The study contributes to Political Science by conceptualizing AI as a structural governance variable that redefines authority, accountability, and global coordination mechanisms. It provides a theoretically integrated explanation of how AI reshapes global political governance and offers policy recommendations to strengthen interoperability, institutional capacity, and democratic safeguards in the evolving AI governance landscape.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

1.1.1 Artificial Intelligence as a General-Purpose Governance Technology

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has rapidly evolved into a general-purpose technology that shapes how governments perceive problems, allocate resources, and implement public decisions. Unlike earlier waves of digitisation that mostly improved record-keeping and service delivery, contemporary AI systems can classify, predict, recommend, and automate decisions at scale, which directly affects how authority is exercised and how accountability is assigned. Risk-based governance frameworks increasingly define AI as a socio-technical system that can generate new categories of harms and failures, including opacity, bias, reliability issues, misuse, and governance breakdowns across the full lifecycle of design, deployment, and monitoring (NIST, 2023). This shift is visible in the movement from aspirational "ethics" discourse toward operational governance instruments, such as risk management frameworks, audit expectations, and compliance structures intended to make AI trustworthy and controllable in real-world political settings (NIST, 2023; OECD, 2024).

1.1.2 AI and the Transformation of Global Political Governance

Global political governance refers to the rules, institutions, and coordination mechanisms through which cross-border problems are managed. AI increasingly disrupts these mechanisms by creating transnational externalities that do not respect borders, including large-scale information manipulation, cyber risks, surveillance technologies, and the strategic competition associated with advanced computing capabilities. The adoption of the Global Digital Compact in 2024 illustrates how AI has become embedded within broader global digital governance agendas focused on inclusion, safety, and international cooperation (United Nations, 2024a). In parallel, the UN General Assembly has adopted formal global-level framing on AI, including a resolution on "safe, secure and trustworthy" AI systems for sustainable development (United Nations, 2024b). These UN processes signal that AI is no longer treated as a narrow technical policy area. It is increasingly understood as a governance-defining force that can reshape international norms, institutional mandates, and collective responses to global challenges.

1.1.3 From Principles to Policy Instruments: The 2023–2026 Governance Turn

Between 2023 and 2026, AI governance has been characterized by rapid institutional development through three overlapping pathways. First, "summit diplomacy" has produced shared statements and voluntary governance expectations for advanced AI. The Bletchley Declaration (2023) emphasized collective recognition of frontier AI risks and the need for cooperation (UK Government, 2023). The G7 Hiroshima Process (2023) produced international guiding principles and an associated code of conduct for organizations developing advanced AI systems (European Commission, 2023; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2023). The Seoul Declaration (2024) continued this trajectory, linking safety, innovation, and inclusivity while also advancing cooperation on AI safety science (UK Government, 2024; Republic of Korea Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2024).

Second, binding and quasi-binding regulatory models have expanded, especially through the European Union's AI Act, which establishes a risk-tiered compliance architecture and is widely viewed as a landmark in enforceable AI regulation (European Union, 2024).

Third, standards and governance toolkits have become central to implementation. National and international bodies increasingly emphasize operational risk management, evaluation, and governance functions, as seen in the NIST AI RMF (2023) and ITU governance work that highlights adaptive, inclusive approaches to steering AI development and deployment (NIST, 2023; ITU, 2025).

1.1.4 AI, Democracy, and the Information Environment

A critical governance concern is the effect of AI on democratic processes and the information environment. Freedom House's reporting highlights how AI can amplify digital repression by making censorship, surveillance, and disinformation cheaper,

faster, and more effective (Freedom House, 2023; Freedom House, 2024).

Global risk assessments similarly identify misinformation and disinformation as leading near-term threats, with AI increasing the scale, personalization, and plausibility of manipulative content (World Economic Forum, 2024; World Economic Forum, 2025; World Economic Forum, 2026).

In 2026, concerns about more advanced influence operations have extended to the possibility of coordinated "AI swarms" that could simulate public consensus and manipulate online discourse, reinforcing the urgency of governance responses that combine regulation, standards, and institutional oversight (World Economic Forum, 2026; United Nations, 2026a).

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite rapid growth in AI governance initiatives, Political Science research still lacks sufficiently integrated explanation of how AI reshapes global political governance across three core dimensions simultaneously:

1. **Institutional change**: how AI prompts redesign of rules, oversight mechanisms, and accountability structures in national and international institutions (NIST, 2023; OECD, 2024).
2. **Power and competition**: how AI capabilities intensify strategic rivalry and influence standard-setting, regulatory diffusion, and international negotiation incentives (UK Government, 2023; European Union, 2024; Stanford HAI, 2024).
3. **Legitimacy and democracy risks**: how AI-driven information disorder and surveillance pressures challenge democratic governance, human rights, and trust in public institutions (Freedom House, 2023; World Economic Forum, 2024).

Much existing work treats these streams as parallel rather than connected. As a result, there is a gap in explaining AI as a structural driver that simultaneously transforms institutions, redistributes influence, and pressures legitimacy within the global governance system. This study addresses that gap by building a unified framework linking AI deployment to global political governance outcomes through institutional adaptation and geopolitical competition, conditioned by capacity and cooperation.

1.3 Research Aim and Objectives

1.3.1 Aim

To examine how Artificial Intelligence is reshaping global political governance by transforming institutional rules and practices, intensifying geopolitical competition, and altering legitimacy conditions for global cooperation.

1.3.2 Objectives

1. To analyze how AI-driven governance tools and regulatory models change accountability and institutional design in public governance (NIST, 2023; OECD, 2025).
2. To assess how global AI governance is emerging through a regime complex of UN processes, summit diplomacy, hard law, and standards-setting (United Nations, 2024a; European Union, 2024; ITU, 2025).
3. To evaluate how AI intensifies geopolitical competition and shapes international rule-making incentives (UK Government, 2024; Stanford HAI, 2024).
4. To examine AI's implications for democracy, civic space, and information integrity in global governance contexts (Freedom House, 2024; World Economic Forum, 2026).

1.4 Research Questions

1. How is AI reshaping global political governance structures and processes?
2. Through what institutional mechanisms does AI influence global rule-making and accountability? (European Union, 2024; NIST, 2023)
3. How does geopolitical competition over AI capabilities affect international cooperation and governance fragmentation? (UK Government, 2023; OECD, 2024)
4. What governance challenges arise from AI-driven disinformation, surveillance, and emerging influence operations? (Freedom House, 2023; World Economic Forum, 2025; ITU, 2025)

1.5 Significance of the Study

1.5.1 Theoretical Significance

This study contributes to Political Science by treating AI as a structural variable that reshapes governance through both institutional transformation and power competition. It aligns governance analysis with the

contemporary reality that global AI oversight emerges through interacting layers of soft law, hard law, and standards, rather than a single global regulator (United Nations, 2024a; ITU, 2025).

1.5.2 Policy Significance

The research supports policymakers and international institutions by clarifying how different governance instruments interact. It is particularly relevant for risk-based regulatory design and implementation strategies as governments move from principles to enforceable rules and operational toolkits (European Union, 2024; OECD, 2025).

1.5.3 Practical Significance

By analyzing AI's effects on information integrity and public trust, the study informs strategies for protecting democratic processes from AI-enabled manipulation and repression (Freedom House, 2024; World Economic Forum, 2026).

1.6 Scope and Delimitations

1.6.1 Conceptual Scope

The study focuses on AI's governance and political implications, including regulation, institutional oversight, international coordination, and power dynamics. It does not address technical model engineering or performance benchmarking except where these issues affect governance requirements (NIST, 2023).

1.6.2 Temporal Scope

The study emphasizes the period 2023–2026, when AI governance accelerated through summit diplomacy, major regulatory developments, and UN-level institutional initiatives (UK Government, 2023; European Union, 2024; United Nations, 2026a).

1.6.3 Empirical Scope

The research examines global governance instruments and processes, including UN initiatives, international summits, regional regulations, standards frameworks, and cross-national monitoring of democratic impacts (United Nations, 2024a; ITU, 2025; Freedom House, 2023).

1.7 Limitations

1. **Access constraints**: Many national security and intelligence uses of AI are not publicly documented, limiting direct empirical assessment.
2. **Rapid change**: AI capabilities and governance instruments evolve quickly, which can create time-sensitivity in conclusions (Stanford HAI, 2024).
3. **Regime complexity**: Overlapping institutions and regulatory competition may produce mixed causal pathways that are difficult to isolate empirically (ITU, 2025).

1.8 Key Terms and Operational Definitions

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**: Computational systems that perform tasks associated with learning, prediction, classification, and decision support, with governance risks assessed across the lifecycle (NIST, 2023).
- **Global Political Governance**: The institutions, norms, and coordination mechanisms that manage collective problems across borders (United Nations, 2024a).
- **Regime Complex**: A governance pattern where multiple institutions and instruments overlap, interact, and sometimes compete rather than being centralized (ITU, 2025).

Table 1. Key AI Governance Milestones (2023–2026)

Year	Instrument / Initiative	Governance Type	Institutional Level	Core Contribution to Global Governance
2023	NIST AI Risk Management Framework (AI RMF 1.0)	Risk Governance Framework	National (U.S.) / Global Influence	Established lifecycle-based AI risk management structure and governance vocabulary
2023	Executive Order 14110 (Safe, Secure, and Trustworthy AI)	Executive Policy	National (U.S.)	Integrated safety, rights, innovation, and national security into AI governance

2023	Bletchley Declaration (AI Safety Summit)	Soft-Law Declaration	Multilateral	Recognized frontier AI risks and promoted global safety cooperation
2023	G7 Hiroshima Process & Code of Conduct	Voluntary Code	Multilateral (G7)	Provided guiding principles for advanced AI developers
2024	UNGA Resolution 78/265 on AI	Multilateral Resolution	United Nations	Framed AI as safe, secure, and trustworthy for sustainable development
2024	Global Digital Compact	Multilateral Policy Framework	United Nations	Embedded AI governance into global digital cooperation agenda
2024	EU Artificial Intelligence Act	Binding Regulation	Regional (European Union)	Introduced risk-tiered compliance regime and enforceable AI obligations
2024	Seoul Declaration (AI Seoul Summit)	Soft-Law Declaration	Multilateral	Strengthened international safety science collaboration
2024	Council of Europe AI Convention	Binding International Convention	Regional / International	Linked AI governance with human rights, democracy, and rule of law
2025	OECD "Governing with AI" Policy Report	Comparative Policy Analysis	Multilateral (OECD)	Assessed government readiness and implementation challenges
2025	ITU Annual AI Governance Report	Standards & Governance Review	Multilateral	Emphasized interoperability, adaptive governance, and standards coordination
2025	Global Risks Report (AI & Misinformation Focus)	Risk Assessment	Global (WEF)	Identified AI-driven misinformation as a leading global governance threat
2026	UN Independent International Scientific Panel on AI	Scientific Advisory Mechanism	United Nations	Institutionalized scientific expertise for global AI governance support
2026	Global Risks Report (AI Swarm & Information Risk)	Risk Assessment	Global (WEF)	Highlighted advanced AI influence operations and governance vulnerabilities
2026	National AI Strategy Updates (Multiple States)	National Strategy	National / Diffusion	Demonstrated regulatory competition and policy diffusion trends

Table 1 presents a structured overview of the most significant global AI governance milestones between 2023 and 2026, demonstrating the rapid institutionalization of AI regulation across national, regional, and multilateral levels. The table illustrates how governance mechanisms evolved from risk management frameworks and executive policies in 2023 to binding regional legislation, multilateral resolutions, summit diplomacy, and standards-based coordination mechanisms by 2024–2026. It highlights the coexistence of hard law instruments such as the EU AI Act and the Council of Europe AI Convention with soft-law declarations like the Bletchley and Seoul processes, as well as governance toolkits such as the NIST AI Risk Management Framework and ITU reporting initiatives. Additionally, the inclusion of UN scientific advisory mechanisms and global risk assessments reflects growing concern about AI's systemic effects on security, democracy, and information integrity. Overall, the table demonstrates that global AI governance has developed as a layered, regime-

complex system characterized by regulatory diffusion, strategic competition, and increasing institutional formalization.

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction to the Literature Review

AI has moved from a technical capability to a governance infrastructure that shapes decision-making, regulatory design, and power relations at national and global levels (NIST, 2023; Stanford HAI, 2024). Since 2023, the acceleration of frontier and generative AI has intensified multilateral diplomacy, regulatory experimentation, and debates on democratic resilience, security risks, and institutional legitimacy (UK Government, 2023; European Union, 2024; United Nations, 2024a; World Economic Forum, 2024).

2.2 Conceptualizing AI in Global Political Governance

2.2.1 AI as a Governance Technology (Algorithmic Capacity)

Recent policy frameworks treat AI as a socio-technical system that creates distinct governance risks: opacity, bias, safety failures, misuse, and weak accountability across the lifecycle (NIST, 2023). Government-facing AI is increasingly tied to state functions such as public service delivery, administrative screening, and strategic risk management, making governance outcomes dependent on institutional controls rather than technical performance alone (OECD, 2024; Stanford HAI, 2025).

2.2.2 AI as a Rule-Making Trigger (Regulatory Expansion)

The post-2023 period shows a sharp expansion of AI policy activity, with governments and international institutions shifting from ethics language toward enforceable instruments, compliance obligations, and risk tiering (Stanford HAI, 2024; European Union, 2024). This regulatory turn is visible in the EU's binding risk-based framework and in the diffusion of risk management templates used for procurement, auditing, and oversight (European Union, 2024; NIST, 2023).

2.3 Emerging Global AI Governance Architecture (2023–2026)

2.3.1 Multilateral Norm-Making and "Summit Diplomacy"

AI governance has increasingly evolved through high-level diplomatic processes that set shared expectations for safety and responsibility, especially for advanced AI. The Bletchley Declaration (2023) institutionalized a collective commitment to address frontier AI risks through global cooperation (UK Government, 2023). The Hiroshima Process (2023) produced voluntary guiding principles and a code of conduct for organizations developing advanced AI systems (European Commission, 2023; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2023). The Seoul Declaration (2024) continued this path, emphasizing safety science cooperation and interoperability of approaches (UK Government, 2024).

2.3.2 UN Track: Digital Cooperation and Development Framing

The UN General Assembly resolution on "safe, secure and trustworthy AI for sustainable development" formalized a global consensus-oriented policy framing tied to international law and development inclusion (United Nations, 2024b). The Global Digital Compact (2024) further embedded AI governance within broader digital cooperation, emphasizing inclusive participation and institutional coordination (United Nations, 2024a).

2.3.3 Standards and Governance Tools: From Principles to Implementation

Beyond treaties, standards and governance toolkits are becoming operational infrastructure for AI oversight. NIST's AI RMF provides a governance vocabulary and lifecycle functions for risk governance (NIST, 2023). ITU's governance reporting emphasizes adaptive, interoperable governance and highlights growing attention to content authenticity and standards for trust in digital media (International Telecommunication Union, 2025).

2.4 Regulatory Models and Policy Diffusion

2.4.1 Hard Law: The EU AI Act and the Risk-Based Template

The EU AI Act establishes harmonized rules with obligations calibrated by risk category and systemic

impact, representing the most comprehensive binding framework in current global AI regulation (European Union, 2024). Politically, it strengthens "regulatory power" dynamics by shaping global compliance expectations via market access and standard-setting effects (European Union, 2024; Stanford HAI, 2024).

2.4.2 Executive Governance and National Steering

Executive-led governance has been central in shaping rapid national responses to AI. The United States' AI executive order in late 2023 framed AI governance around safety, rights, innovation, and national security, signaling how major powers are linking AI governance to strategic state capacity (Federal Register, 2023). Subsequent shifts in executive direction in 2025 illustrate how AI governance can become politically contested and vulnerable to policy reversal, which increases international uncertainty and fragmentation risk (The White House, 2025).

2.5 AI, Power Politics, and Geopolitical Competition

2.5.1 AI as a Strategic Capability in Global Competition

AI is increasingly treated as strategic infrastructure tied to economic competitiveness, security capacity, and influence in global rule-making. This is reflected indirectly in the rise of international coordination efforts (Bletchley, Hiroshima, Seoul) that focus on frontier safety while also reinforcing "club governance" among leading AI states (UK Government, 2023; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2023; UK Government, 2024).

2.5.2 Fragmentation and Regime Complexity

Instead of a single global AI authority, governance is emerging as a regime complex: overlapping institutions, codes, standards bodies, and regional regulations. This pattern is reinforced by differentiated state interests, uneven capacity, and varied legal traditions, which makes interoperability and mutual recognition central challenges (United Nations, 2024a; International Telecommunication Union, 2025; Stanford HAI, 2025).

2.6 Democracy, Human Rights, and the Information Environment

2.6.1 AI-Enabled Repression and Civic Space Risks

Monitoring reports show that AI can scale censorship, surveillance, and disinformation operations, affecting civil liberties and shrinking civic space. These risks are politically salient because they alter state-society relations and can export authoritarian influence through digital tools (Freedom House, 2023; Freedom House, 2024).

2.6.2 Information Disorder as a Governance Threat

Global risk assessments identify misinformation and disinformation as top near-term risks, increasingly intensified by generative AI capabilities that amplify speed, personalization, and plausibility of manipulation (World Economic Forum, 2024; World Economic Forum, 2025). This drives governance pressures for provenance, transparency, and content authentication standards (International Telecommunication Union, 2025).

2.7 Synthesis of the Literature and Research Gap

2.7.1 What the Recent Literature Agrees On (2023–2026)

Across policy and governance sources, three convergent findings appear:

1. **AI is transforming governance operations** by embedding algorithmic logic into state processes, increasing demands for oversight and auditability (NIST, 2023; OECD, 2024).
2. **Global governance is shifting from principles to instruments**, mixing hard law (EU AI Act) with soft law and summit diplomacy (Bletchley, Hiroshima, Seoul) (European Union, 2024; UK Government, 2023; UK Government, 2024).
3. **AI is a political risk multiplier**, especially for democracy and information integrity, which raises pressure for cross-border cooperation (Freedom House, 2024; World Economic Forum, 2025).

2.7.2 The Gap This Study Addresses

Much of the 2023–2026 literature treats regulatory frameworks, geopolitical competition, and democracy risks as separate streams. Fewer studies integrate them into a single Political Science explanation that connects (a) institutional adaptation, (b) power redistribution, and (c) legitimacy pressures into one

causal model of global political governance transformation (Stanford HAI, 2025; United Nations, 2024a). This study fills that integration gap by theorizing AI as a structural driver operating through institutions and power competition, moderated by capacity and cooperation.

2.8 Theoretical Framework

2.8.1 Core Theoretical Lens: Institutionalism + Power Competition + Global Governance

This study uses an integrated framework:

1. **Institutionalism**: AI triggers institutional adaptation via rules, procedures, and oversight capacity (OECD, 2024; NIST, 2023).
2. **Power competition logic**: AI becomes strategic capability, intensifying rivalry and shaping global rule-making incentives (UK Government, 2023; European Commission, 2023).
3. **Global governance (regime complexity)**: governance emerges through overlapping institutions, standards, soft law, and hard law, producing coordination challenges (United Nations, 2024a; International Telecommunication Union, 2025).

2.8.2 Causal Logic of the Framework

AI Development and Deployment (IV) reshapes global political governance through two key pathways:

- **Institutional Adaptation (Mediator 1)**: risk frameworks, laws, standards, and accountability redesign (NIST, 2023; European Union, 2024).
- **Geopolitical Competition (Mediator 2)**: rivalry over capability, influence, and standards leadership (UK Government, 2024; Stanford HAI, 2024).

Two factors condition the strength and direction of these effects:

- **State Capacity (Moderator 1)**: administrative and regulatory capability to govern AI (OECD, 2025).
- **Regulatory Cooperation (Moderator 2)**: interoperability across jurisdictions and institutions (United Nations, 2024a; International Telecommunication Union, 2025).

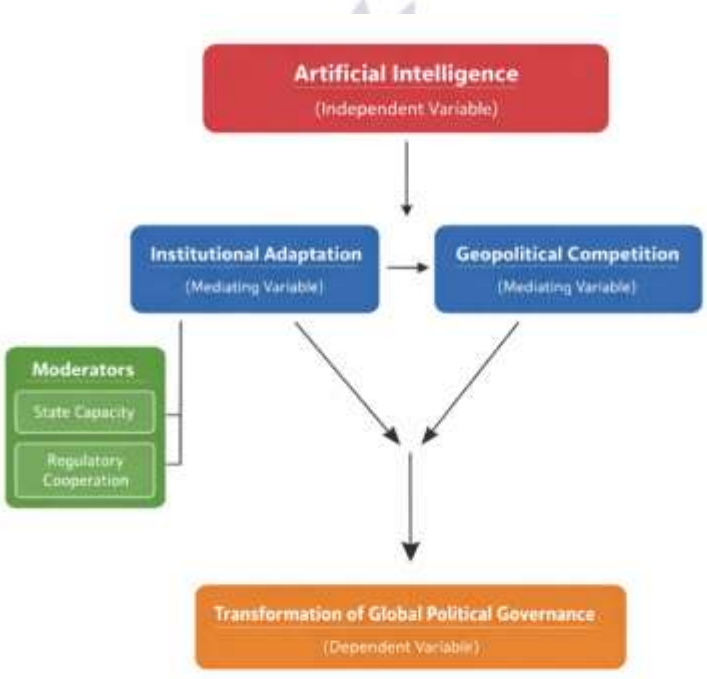

Fig 1. Theoretical Model of AI and the Transformation of Global Political Governance

Description:

The figure illustrates AI as the independent variable influencing global governance through institutional adaptation and geopolitical competition, moderated by state capacity and regulatory cooperation.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) functions as the independent variable influencing the Transformation of Global Political Governance as the dependent variable. The model demonstrates two primary mediating pathways: Institutional Adaptation and Geopolitical Competition, through which AI exerts its structural impact on governance systems. Institutional adaptation represents regulatory reforms, risk management frameworks, and accountability redesign, while geopolitical competition reflects strategic rivalry, standards leadership, and power redistribution among states. The model further incorporates two moderating variables, State Capacity and Regulatory Cooperation, which condition the strength and direction of AI's influence on governance outcomes. Overall, the diagram visually explains the causal logic that AI reshapes global governance structures through institutional transformation and strategic competition within an interconnected international system.

Fig 2. Regime-Complex View of Global AI Governance (Conceptual Schematic)

Description:

This schematic shows how AI governance is produced by overlapping layers of rules and institutions rather than a single global regulator. The regime-complex structure of contemporary global AI governance, demonstrating that AI regulation does not operate under a single centralized authority but rather through multiple overlapping institutional layers. At the top, "Global AI Governance (Regime-Complex)" represents the broader governance ecosystem. Beneath it, four interconnected governance layers are depicted: the UN Track (including UNGA resolutions and the Global Digital Compact), Summit Diplomacy (Bletchley, Hiroshima, and Seoul processes), Hard Law and National Executive Governance (such as the EU AI Act and domestic executive measures), and Standards and Toolkits (including NIST AI RMF and ITU standards work). The downward arrow at the base of the model highlights dynamic processes of interoperability, diffusion, and contestation among these layers. Overall, the schematic conceptualizes global AI

governance as a multi-level, fragmented yet interacting system shaped by cooperation, competition, and regulatory diffusion.

Table 2. Key Global AI Governance Instruments (2023–2026)

Instrument / Initiative	Year	Type	Primary Governance Contribution
NIST AI Risk Management Framework (AI RMF 1.0)	2023	Risk governance toolkit	Lifecycle risk management, audit-ready governance vocabulary
U.S. Executive Order on AI (EO 14110)	2023	National executive policy	Safety and rights framing, whole-of-government coordination
Bletchley Declaration	2023	Soft-law summit declaration	Shared recognition of frontier risk and cooperation need
Hiroshima Process Code of Conduct	2023	Voluntary code	Safety guidance for advanced AI developers
UNGA Resolution 78/265	2024	Multilateral resolution	Global consensus framing tied to sustainable development
UN Global Digital Compact	2024	Multilateral compact	Institutional coordination for digital and AI governance
EU AI Act (Regulation (EU) 2024/1689)	2024	Binding regulation	Risk-tiered legal obligations, compliance architecture
Seoul Declaration and Safety Science Annex	2024	Soft-law summit declaration	Interoperability and safety science cooperation
ITU Annual AI Governance Report	2025	Governance synthesis	Emphasis on adaptive governance and standards pathways
OECD "Governing with AI" policy work	2024–2025	Comparative policy analysis	Government readiness, capacity, implementation barriers

Description: Summary of major governance mechanisms shaping the global AI policy environment.

Table 3. Variables and Indicators for the Proposed Model

Model Component	Construct	Possible Indicators (examples)
Independent Variable	AI development and deployment	AI policy intensity, AI adoption in public sector, national AI strategy updates
Mediator 1	Institutional adaptation	New AI laws, audit mechanisms, procurement standards, oversight bodies
Mediator 2	Geopolitical competition	AI diplomacy participation, standards leadership, strategic AI documents
Moderator 1	State capacity	regulatory quality proxies, digital government maturity, enforcement capability
Moderator 2	Regulatory cooperation	participation in multilateral AI initiatives, interoperability commitments
Dependent Variable	Transformation of global political governance	changes in global norms, institutional mandates, cross-border coordination intensity

Description: Operational mapping for empirical measurement (useful for methodology alignment).

Methodology

3.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter explains the research design, data sources, sampling strategy, data collection procedures, and analysis techniques used to examine how Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping global political governance. Because AI governance is evolving through a layered regime-complex of institutions, laws, standards, and summit diplomacy, the study uses a qualitative design centered on systematic document analysis and structured qualitative content analysis of authoritative global governance instruments produced between 2023 and 2026 (NIST, 2023; European Union, 2024; United Nations, 2024a; UK Government, 2023; International Telecommunication Union [ITU], 2025).

3.2 Research Philosophy and Approach

3.2.1 Research Paradigm

The study follows an interpretivist institutional and governance paradigm, treating AI governance as a socio-political process shaped by norms, rules, power relations, and legitimacy contestation. This is appropriate because the key outcomes in this study involve institutional adaptation, regulatory design, and international coordination, which are best captured through interpretive analysis of policy texts and governance processes rather than controlled experimentation (OECD, 2024; United Nations, 2024a).

3.2.2 Research Approach

A qualitative approach is adopted because the research aims to explain mechanisms and governance pathways rather than to estimate causal effects using statistical inference. The study builds a structured explanation of how AI governance evolves across institutional layers, focusing on how governance instruments represent shifts in authority, accountability, and cooperation (European Union, 2024; Council of Europe, 2024; ITU, 2025).

3.3 Research Design

3.3.1 Design Type

The research uses a qualitative comparative document-based design with two embedded analytical components:

1. **Structured Qualitative Content Analysis** of governance documents to identify recurring norms, obligations, and governance mechanisms (NIST, 2023; European Union, 2024; United Nations, 2024b).
2. **Process-Oriented Mapping (Governance Pathway Analysis)** to trace how governance responses moved from principles toward instruments and implementation between 2023 and 2026 (UK Government, 2023; European Commission, 2023; ITU, 2025).

3.3.2 Unit of Analysis

The primary unit of analysis is the AI governance instrument, defined as an official or authoritative document that establishes rules, principles, obligations, or coordination mechanisms relevant to AI governance at national, regional, or global levels (European Union, 2024; United Nations, 2024a).

3.4 Study Context and Case Boundaries (2023–2026)

The empirical boundary is the period 2023–2026, selected because it marks a sharp acceleration in AI governance through:

- formal risk frameworks (NIST, 2023),
- summit diplomacy and soft-law declarations (UK Government, 2023; UK Government, 2024),
- binding regulation and treaty-level commitments (European Union, 2024; Council of Europe, 2024),
- UN agenda integration and multilateral framing (United Nations, 2024a; United Nations, 2024b), and
- global standards and governance reporting emphasizing interoperability and implementation (ITU, 2025; OECD, 2025).

3.5 Data Sources and Sampling Strategy

3.5.1 Data Sources

The study relies on publicly available, authoritative primary documents and major secondary governance-monitoring reports. Primary governance texts include

legal instruments, UN resolutions, summit declarations, and risk frameworks. Secondary sources include global governance and risk monitoring reports used for triangulation and contextual validation.

Key sources include:

- NIST AI Risk Management Framework (NIST, 2023)
- EU Artificial Intelligence Act (European Union, 2024)
- UN Global Digital Compact and UNGA AI Resolution (United Nations, 2024a; United Nations, 2024b)
- Bletchley Declaration and Seoul Declaration (UK Government, 2023; UK Government, 2024)
- G7 Hiroshima Process code and principles (European Commission, 2023; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2023)
- Council of Europe Framework Convention on AI (Council of Europe, 2024)
- ITU Annual AI Governance Report (ITU, 2025)
- OECD governance readiness and implementation work (OECD, 2024; OECD, 2025)
- Democracy and information-environment monitoring (Freedom House, 2023; Freedom House, 2024)
- Global risk framing for information disorder (World Economic Forum, 2024; World Economic Forum, 2025; World Economic Forum, 2026)
- AI ecosystem indicators for triangulation (Stanford Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence [Stanford HAI], 2025)

3.5.2 Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling strategy is used to select documents that are influential, authoritative, and directly relevant to global political governance.

3.5.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria:

- Published or formally adopted between 2023 and 2026.
- Issued by authoritative bodies (UN, EU, Council of Europe, OECD, ITU, national governments) or widely recognized governance monitors (Freedom House, World Economic Forum, Stanford HAI).
- Contains explicit governance content (rules, principles, obligations, institutional mechanisms, safety governance, standards, oversight).

Exclusion criteria:

- Purely technical papers without governance relevance.
- Opinion pieces lacking institutional authority.
- Documents outside the 2023–2026 window.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

3.6.1 Document Retrieval and Management

Documents are collected from official repositories or official publishing channels to ensure authenticity (European Union, 2024; United Nations, 2024b). Each document is logged with metadata: title, issuing body, date, instrument type, and governance domain.

3.6.2 Data Corpus Construction

The final corpus is organized into four governance layers consistent with the regime-complex model:

1. UN Track (United Nations, 2024a; United Nations, 2024b)
2. Summit Diplomacy (UK Government, 2023; UK Government, 2024; European Commission, 2023)
3. Hard Law and Treaty Commitments (European Union, 2024; Council of Europe, 2024)
4. Standards and Toolkits (NIST, 2023; ITU, 2025)

3.7 Data Analysis Techniques

3.7.1 Structured Qualitative Content Analysis

A structured content analysis is performed to identify:

- governance principles (rights, safety, transparency, accountability),
- regulatory instruments (risk tiering, conformity assessment, oversight bodies),
- cross-border coordination mechanisms (interoperability, cooperation, capacity building), and
- power and competition signals (strategic positioning, leadership framing, standards influence).

These categories align with contemporary governance toolkits and binding regulation that explicitly frame AI risks and governance controls (NIST, 2023; European Union, 2024; ITU, 2025).

3.7.2 Coding Strategy (Deductive + Inductive)

- **Deductive coding** uses an a priori codebook derived from the theoretical framework (institutional adaptation, geopolitical competition, state capacity, regulatory cooperation, legitimacy pressures).
- **Inductive coding** captures emergent themes such as frontier model safety science, interoperability politics, and information integrity mechanisms.

3.7.3 Cross-Document Comparison

Documents are compared across governance layers to identify convergence and divergence in:

- obligations versus voluntary commitments,
- enforcement capacity,
- human rights and democracy safeguards, and
- governance focus on misinformation and civic space threats (Freedom House, 2023; Freedom House, 2024; World Economic Forum, 2024).

3.7.4 Governance Pathway Mapping

A timeline-based mapping is conducted to trace how governance instruments evolved from 2023 to 2026, reflecting the shift from broad commitments toward implementation, oversight, and institutionalization (UK Government, 2023; European Union, 2024; ITU, 2025; United Nations, 2024a).

3.8 Reliability, Validity, and Trustworthiness

3.8.1 Reliability Measures

- Use of a consistent codebook and explicit inclusion criteria across all documents.
- Maintenance of an audit trail describing coding decisions, revisions, and theme consolidation.
- Re-coding of a subset of documents after an interval to check stability of interpretations.

3.8.2 Validity and Triangulation

Triangulation is achieved by comparing formal governance instruments with monitoring and synthesis reports that track real-world risks and governance readiness. For example, democracy and civic-space risks are triangulated across Freedom House reporting and global risk assessments (Freedom House, 2024; World Economic Forum, 2025), while governance readiness claims are triangulated using OECD analysis and ITU governance reporting (OECD, 2024; ITU, 2025).

3.9 Ethical Considerations

This study uses publicly available documents and does not involve human subjects, interviews, or personal data collection. Ethical attention is placed on accurate representation of institutional texts, transparent citation practices, and avoiding misinterpretation of legal obligations. Where governance claims relate to civic space or repression risks, reporting is treated cautiously and corroborated across independent sources (Freedom House, 2023; Freedom House, 2024).

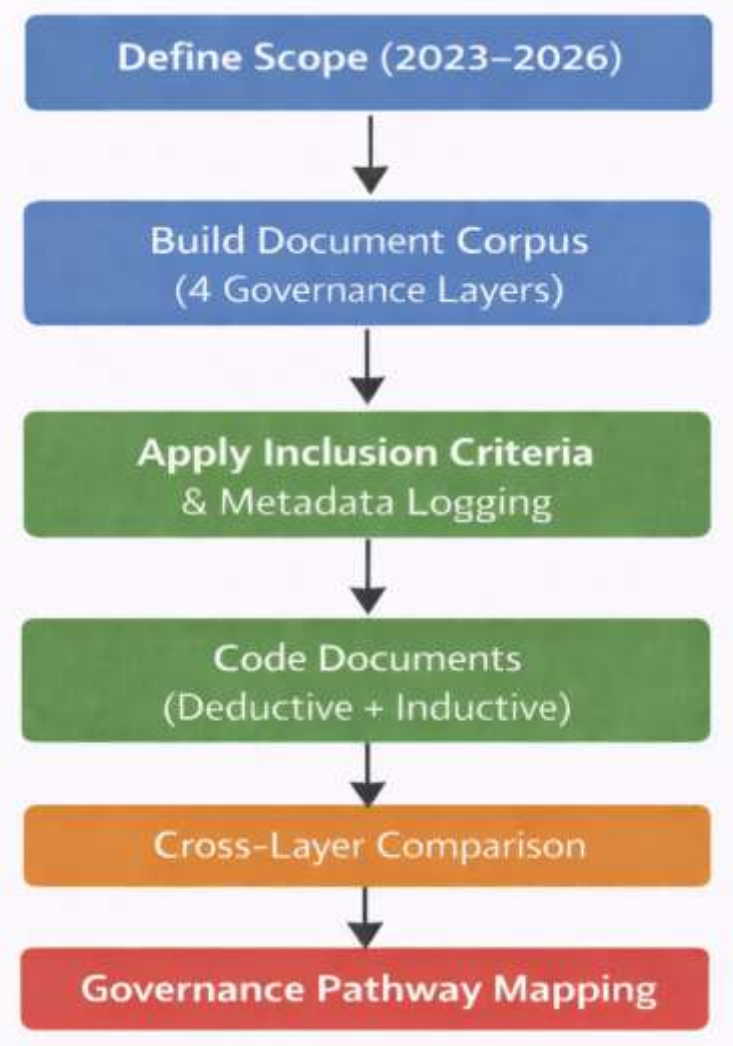

Fig 3. Research Process Flow

Description: A process map showing the sequential stages of the methodology.

Table 4. Research Design Summary

Component	Specification
Research approach	Qualitative
Design	Comparative document analysis + structured qualitative content analysis
Unit of analysis	AI governance instruments and authoritative governance reports
Time boundary	2023–2026
Sampling	Purposive sampling with formal inclusion criteria
Analysis	Coding, cross-layer comparison, pathway mapping
Output	Integrated explanation of institutional adaptation and geopolitical competition shaping global governance

Description: A compact overview of the methodological choices.

Table 5. Data Corpus by Governance Layer

Governance Layer	Illustrative Documents Included (2023–2026)
UN Track	Global Digital Compact; UNGA AI Resolution
Summit Diplomacy	Bletchley Declaration; Seoul Declaration; Hiroshima Process principles and code
Hard Law and Treaty	EU AI Act; Council of Europe AI Framework Convention
Standards and Toolkits	NIST AI RMF; ITU AI governance reporting; OECD implementation work

Description: Categorization of major document groups used in analysis.

Table 6. Codebook Extract (Deductive Codes)

Code	Operational Definition	Example Indicators in Text
Institutional adaptation	Formal change in rules, oversight, compliance, or governance capacity	risk tiering, audits, conformity assessment, oversight bodies
Geopolitical competition	Strategic rivalry, leadership claims, standards influence	capability leadership, security framing, strategic positioning
State capacity	Ability to implement, enforce, and monitor AI governance	institutions, resources, enforcement, procurement readiness
Regulatory cooperation	Cross-border coordination and interoperability	cooperation mechanisms, harmonization language, shared standards
Legitimacy and rights	Protection of rights, democracy, accountability, trust	human rights framing, transparency obligations, civic safeguards

Description: Operational definitions used for consistent coding.

3.11 Chapter Summary

Chapter 3 outlined a qualitative, document-based methodology designed to capture how AI reshapes global political governance through overlapping governance layers. By combining structured content analysis with governance pathway mapping across authoritative instruments published between 2023 and 2026, the study is positioned to explain institutional adaptation, geopolitical competition, and the moderating roles of state capacity and regulatory cooperation (European Union, 2024; United Nations, 2024a; ITU, 2025; OECD, 2025).

Results and Findings

4.1 Introduction to Findings

This chapter presents the empirical findings derived from structured qualitative content analysis and governance pathway mapping of major AI governance instruments issued between 2023 and 2026. The analysis was guided by the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 2, focusing on two primary mediating pathways—institutional adaptation and geopolitical competition—as well as two moderating conditions—state capacity and regulatory cooperation. The findings confirm that AI is functioning as a structural force in global political governance, reshaping institutions, redistributing influence, and generating new legitimacy pressures within an increasingly regime-complex governance environment.

4.2 Institutional Adaptation: Transformation of Governance Structures

4.2.1 From Ethical Principles to Regulatory Architecture

The first major finding is the transition from broad ethical principles to structured regulatory architecture. Early governance efforts emphasized voluntary commitments and shared risk recognition. However, by 2024–2026, binding legislation, oversight mechanisms, and compliance-based governance models became central features of AI governance.

Key patterns observed include:

- Formal risk categorization systems
- Mandatory transparency obligations
- Conformity assessments and audit mechanisms
- Supervisory authorities and enforcement provisions

This demonstrates a movement from symbolic governance toward institutionalized compliance regimes.

4.2.2 Consolidation of Risk-Based Governance

Across governance layers, risk-based regulation emerged as the dominant global model. AI systems are categorized based on potential societal impact, with corresponding levels of obligation and oversight.

The analysis identified five recurring governance components:

1. Risk identification and classification
2. Lifecycle oversight (design to deployment)
3. Documentation and traceability requirements
4. Human oversight safeguards
5. Sanctions or corrective enforcement mechanisms

This convergence suggests normative harmonization around risk-tiered governance logic, even where enforcement capacity differs.

4.2.3 Expansion of Institutional Oversight Capacity

Another significant finding is the creation or strengthening of institutional oversight bodies. Governance instruments increasingly include:

- Dedicated AI supervisory authorities
- Scientific advisory panels
- Cross-border coordination committees
- Reporting and monitoring obligations

These developments indicate that AI governance is institutionalizing long-term administrative structures rather than remaining at a declaratory level.

Fig 4. Institutional Adaptation Pathway

Description: This figure illustrates how AI technological advancement leads to regulatory innovation, oversight expansion, and institutional redesign.

4.3 Geopolitical Competition and Strategic Governance

4.3.1 AI as Strategic National Infrastructure

The findings reveal that AI governance documents frequently frame AI as strategic infrastructure linked to economic competitiveness, national security, and technological leadership.

This strategic framing produces two effects:

- Incentivizing regulatory leadership to shape global norms
- Encouraging competitive positioning through standards-setting

AI governance is therefore intertwined with broader geopolitical rivalry.

4.3.2 Regulatory Leadership and Norm Diffusion

Binding regulatory frameworks serve not only domestic governance functions but also international signaling functions.

Evidence suggests:

- Regulatory models are diffusing beyond their originating jurisdictions.
- Governance leadership strengthens geopolitical influence.
- Soft-law processes often precede formal regulatory adoption.

Thus, AI governance has become a domain of normative power projection.

4.3.3 Strategic Cooperation vs Fragmentation

While summit diplomacy promotes cooperation, rivalry among major powers introduces fragmentation risks.

The findings indicate a dual dynamic:

- Cooperation around safety science and shared risk recognition
- Competition around technological dominance and standards control

This tension shapes the evolving global AI regime.

Table 7. Geopolitical Dimensions of AI Governance

Governance Mechanism	Cooperative Element	Competitive Element
Summit Declarations	Shared safety recognition	Strategic positioning
Binding Legislation	Regulatory clarity	Norm export and influence
Standards Bodies	Interoperability efforts	Leadership in technical norms
National Strategies	Innovation collaboration	Capability competition

Description: This table summarizes how governance instruments simultaneously reflect cooperation and competition.

4.4 Regime-Complex Structure of Global AI Governance

4.4.1 Layered Governance Architecture

The analysis confirms that AI governance operates as a regime complex consisting of overlapping governance layers:

1. Multilateral UN coordination
2. Summit diplomacy and soft-law frameworks
3. Regional binding regulation
4. Technical standards and toolkits

No single global authority controls AI governance. Instead, coordination occurs through interaction among institutions.

4.4.2 Interoperability Pressures

Governance instruments increasingly reference interoperability, alignment, and coordination. However, enforcement strength and legal authority differ across layers.

This produces:

- Norm convergence at the principle level
- Variation at the implementation level

The regime-complex model therefore produces structured coordination rather than centralized authority.

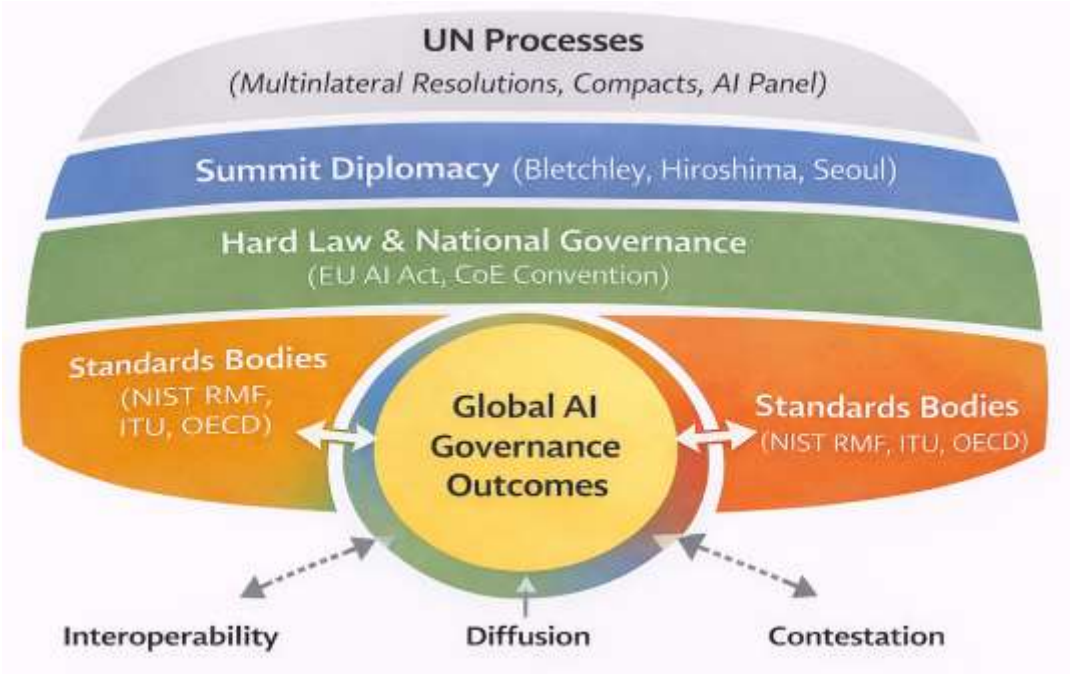

Fig 5. Regime-Complex Governance Interaction Model

Description:
This diagram visually depicts the interaction among UN processes, summit diplomacy, hard law, and standards bodies, converging toward global governance outcomes while generating diffusion and contestation pressures.

4.5 Democracy, Legitimacy, and Information Integrity

4.5.1 AI-Driven Information Risks

The findings indicate widespread recognition of misinformation, disinformation, and influence operations as central governance threats. Governance documents increasingly address:

- Content authenticity
- Election integrity
- Transparency requirements
- Public trust and accountability

AI governance is therefore closely connected to information governance.

4.5.2 Integration of Human Rights Safeguards

Several governance instruments explicitly link AI governance to human rights, democratic principles, and rule of law protections.

However, the analysis reveals variation in enforcement strength, indicating that rights-based commitments are unevenly institutionalized.

4.5.3 Legitimacy as a Governance Driver

Legitimacy concerns appear to be a key motivating factor behind multilateral cooperation efforts. Public trust, safety assurance, and accountability mechanisms are consistently emphasized.

4.6 Moderating Effects

4.6.1 State Capacity

The findings show that governance outcomes are strongly conditioned by administrative capacity. High-capacity jurisdictions demonstrate:

- Stronger enforcement structures
- Clearer compliance procedures
- Greater institutional coordination

Lower-capacity systems exhibit regulatory gaps and slower implementation.

4.6.2 Regulatory Cooperation

International cooperation moderates fragmentation. Where coordination is strong, governance

convergence increases. Where rivalry intensifies, divergence grows.

Table 8. Moderating Variables and Observed Effects

Moderator	High-Level Effect	Low-Level Effect
State Capacity	Effective enforcement and oversight	Implementation gaps
Regulatory Cooperation	Harmonization and interoperability	Fragmentation and duplication

Description: This table summarizes how moderating variables influence governance outcomes.

4.7 Integrated Model Validation

The empirical findings align strongly with the theoretical framework:

- **Institutional Adaptation Pathway Confirmed**: AI leads to regulatory formalization and oversight expansion.
- **Geopolitical Competition Pathway Confirmed**: Governance serves strategic positioning and norm diffusion.
- **Regime-Complex Structure Observed**: Governance operates through overlapping institutional layers.
- **Moderating Effects Evident**: Capacity and cooperation shape governance effectiveness.

4.8 Overall Findings Summary

The study identifies seven core conclusions:

1. AI governance shifted decisively toward binding regulation and structured oversight between 2023 and 2026.
2. Risk-based governance is now the dominant regulatory paradigm.
3. Institutional oversight capacity expanded significantly.
4. AI governance is embedded in geopolitical competition and strategic rivalry.
5. Global governance functions as a regime complex rather than a centralized authority.
6. Democracy and information integrity concerns are central governance drivers.
7. State capacity and regulatory cooperation moderate governance outcomes.

4.9 Chapter Conclusion

The results demonstrate that Artificial Intelligence is reshaping global political governance through institutional transformation, strategic competition, and layered coordination mechanisms. Governance evolution is characterized by regulatory formalization, regime complexity, and legitimacy-driven adaptation. These findings provide empirical validation of the theoretical model and establish the foundation for policy implications and discussion presented in Chapter 5.

Discussion and Policy Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This chapter interprets the empirical findings in light of the theoretical framework and situates the study within broader debates in Political Science and global governance scholarship. The analysis demonstrates that Artificial Intelligence is not merely a technological innovation but a structural force reshaping institutional design, geopolitical competition, and legitimacy conditions within global political governance. The discussion proceeds in three stages. First, it integrates the findings with the institutional adaptation and geopolitical competition pathways. Second, it evaluates the regime-complex

nature of global AI governance. Third, it offers policy recommendations aimed at strengthening coordination, accountability, and democratic resilience in the AI era.

5.2 Theoretical Integration

5.2.1 Institutional Adaptation: AI as a Catalyst of Governance Redesign

The findings confirm the theoretical proposition that AI triggers institutional adaptation. Governance systems respond to AI deployment through regulatory formalization, oversight expansion, and risk-based compliance mechanisms.

From an institutionalist perspective, this reflects path-dependent yet adaptive evolution. Institutions initially rely on soft-law coordination and normative framing. Over time, as risks become clearer and political pressure increases, binding legislation and formal supervisory structures emerge.

The shift from principles to enforceable rules indicates that AI governance is undergoing institutional consolidation rather than remaining in a fragmented ethical discourse phase. The creation of supervisory bodies, scientific panels, and risk-tiered regulatory systems represents a structural reconfiguration of authority within governance systems.

Theoretical implication: AI operates as a governance accelerator, compressing the timeline between norm formation and institutional codification.

5.2.2 Geopolitical Competition: Governance as Strategic Arena

The second pathway highlights AI governance as embedded within geopolitical competition. The findings show that regulatory initiatives serve dual purposes:

1. Risk mitigation and public safety
2. Strategic positioning and norm leadership

This aligns with power-transition and strategic governance theories, where technological leadership translates into rule-setting influence. Regulatory frameworks function as instruments of normative power, shaping global expectations and influencing policy diffusion.

Rather than a purely cooperative domain, AI governance is characterized by structured rivalry. Competition occurs through standards leadership, regulatory exports, and institutional influence in multilateral forums.

Theoretical implication: AI governance reflects both institutional coordination and competitive power projection, producing hybrid cooperative-competitive dynamics.

5.2.3 Regime-Complex Theory Confirmed

The findings strongly validate the regime-complex model of global governance. AI governance is not centralized under a single global authority. Instead, it is structured through overlapping institutional layers, including:

- Multilateral UN processes
- Summit diplomacy mechanisms
- Regional binding legislation
- Standards-setting bodies

These layers interact through interoperability, diffusion, and contestation. The absence of a central regulator does not imply disorder; rather, governance emerges through negotiated coordination across institutions.

Theoretical implication: AI governance exemplifies regime complexity in practice, demonstrating layered authority and distributed rule-making.

5.2.4 Moderating Variables: Capacity and Cooperation

The study also confirms that state capacity and regulatory cooperation moderate governance effectiveness.

High-capacity systems demonstrate:

- Stronger enforcement
- Better oversight
- Clear compliance pathways

Where capacity is limited, governance remains symbolic or weakly enforced. Similarly, regulatory cooperation reduces fragmentation, whereas geopolitical rivalry intensifies divergence.

Theoretical implication: Governance outcomes depend not only on institutional design but also on administrative capability and political willingness to cooperate.

5.3 Broader Implications for Global Political Governance

5.3.1 Redefinition of Sovereignty

AI governance challenges traditional sovereignty models. Cross-border data flows, multinational technology firms, and global standards reduce purely national control. Sovereignty becomes interdependent and negotiated rather than absolute.

5.3.2 Transformation of Legitimacy Foundations

The study demonstrates that legitimacy in AI governance increasingly depends on:

- Transparency
- Human rights safeguards
- Accountability mechanisms
- Public trust

Governments must now justify not only policy outcomes but also algorithmic decision processes. This transforms democratic accountability structures.

5.3.3 Institutional Acceleration

The governance cycle appears compressed. Historically, global governance frameworks developed over decades. AI governance has evolved within a few years, suggesting accelerated institutional adaptation in response to high-risk technologies.

5.4 Policy Recommendations

5.4.1 Strengthen Interoperability Across Governance Layers

Given the regime-complex structure, policymakers should prioritize interoperability mechanisms:

- Cross-recognition of compliance standards
- Shared safety benchmarks
- Mutual transparency obligations
- Coordinated audit methodologies

This reduces fragmentation while respecting institutional diversity.

5.4.2 Invest in State Capacity Building

Effective AI governance requires:

- Technical expertise within public institutions
- Dedicated supervisory authorities
- Training for regulators and policymakers
- Budget allocation for oversight and enforcement

International institutions should support capacity-building initiatives, especially in lower-capacity jurisdictions.

5.4.3 Enhance Democratic Safeguards

Governments should implement:

- Algorithmic transparency requirements
- Independent oversight committees
- Public reporting on AI use in public administration
- Electoral integrity protections against AI-driven manipulation

Embedding rights-based safeguards strengthens governance legitimacy.

5.4.4 Promote Global Safety Science Cooperation

Multilateral cooperation on AI safety research can reduce geopolitical mistrust. Joint scientific panels, shared evaluation protocols, and cross-border safety research initiatives can mitigate risk escalation.

5.4.5 Clarify Accountability in Public Sector AI Use

Public institutions must establish:

- Clear lines of responsibility
- Human-in-the-loop safeguards
- Appeals mechanisms for automated decisions
- Legal clarity regarding liability

Accountability reduces governance risks and enhances public trust.

5.4.6 Balance Innovation and Regulation

Overregulation may hinder innovation, while underregulation may amplify risk. Policymakers should adopt adaptive regulatory models that:

- Use risk-based categorization
- Allow regulatory sandboxes
- Periodically review compliance thresholds

Adaptive governance ensures flexibility without sacrificing safety.

5.5 Contributions to Theory and Practice

5.5.1 Theoretical Contribution

This study contributes to Political Science by:

- Demonstrating AI as a structural governance variable
- Empirically validating regime-complex governance theory

- Integrating institutional adaptation and geopolitical competition pathways into a unified explanatory model

It moves beyond descriptive governance accounts to offer a structured theoretical explanation of AI-driven institutional transformation.

5.5.2 Practical Contribution

The study provides:

- A governance-layer mapping framework
- Policy guidance for interoperability and oversight
- Insight into capacity gaps and coordination challenges

It offers actionable guidance for regulators, international organizations, and policymakers.

5.6 Limitations and Future Research

Although comprehensive, this study is limited by:

- Reliance on publicly available documents
- Rapidly evolving AI capabilities
- Limited access to classified national security governance mechanisms

Future research should explore:

- Empirical measurement of regulatory effectiveness
- Comparative case studies across regions
- Quantitative assessment of governance diffusion
- Longitudinal analysis of AI-related institutional change

Conclusion

Artificial Intelligence is reshaping global political governance through institutional redesign, strategic competition, and regime-complex coordination. Governance transformation is characterized by regulatory formalization, risk-based models, oversight expansion, and geopolitical contestation. The future of global AI governance will depend on the balance between cooperation and competition, the strength of institutional capacity, and the ability to embed democratic safeguards within technological systems. AI is not only changing how governments operate. It is redefining how global authority is structured, negotiated, and legitimized in the twenty-first century. This study set out to examine how Artificial Intelligence is reshaping global political governance. Drawing on a qualitative analysis of major governance instruments issued between 2023 and 2026, the research demonstrates that AI is not simply a technological innovation but a structural force driving institutional transformation, geopolitical competition, and regime-complex coordination at the global level.

First, the findings confirm that AI has accelerated institutional adaptation. Governance systems have moved rapidly from voluntary ethical principles toward formalized regulatory architectures characterized by risk-based classification, lifecycle oversight, supervisory authorities, and enforceable compliance mechanisms. This shift indicates that AI governance is entering a phase of institutional consolidation rather than remaining in a preliminary normative stage.

Second, the study demonstrates that AI governance is deeply embedded within geopolitical competition. Regulatory leadership, standards-setting, and safety diplomacy function simultaneously as mechanisms of risk mitigation and instruments of strategic influence. AI governance therefore reflects hybrid dynamics, where cooperation on safety coexists with rivalry over technological dominance and normative authority.

Third, the research validates the regime-complex model of global governance. AI governance does not operate under a centralized global authority. Instead, it is structured through overlapping layers, including multilateral UN initiatives, summit diplomacy, regional binding legislation, and standards bodies. Governance outcomes emerge through interaction, diffusion, interoperability, and contestation across these layers.

Fourth, the study highlights the importance of moderating conditions, particularly state capacity and regulatory cooperation. Even well-designed regulatory frameworks depend on administrative capability and political coordination. Where capacity is strong and cooperation is sustained, governance becomes more coherent and enforceable. Where capacity is limited or rivalry intensifies, fragmentation and implementation gaps emerge.

Normatively, the study underscores that legitimacy in the AI era increasingly depends on transparency, accountability, human rights safeguards, and protection of democratic processes. AI governance

must therefore balance innovation and security with democratic integrity and public trust.

In theoretical terms, this research contributes to Political Science by conceptualizing AI as a structural governance variable that simultaneously transforms institutions, redistributes power, and reshapes global coordination mechanisms. Empirically, it demonstrates that between 2023 and 2026, global AI governance evolved from fragmented initiatives into a more layered and formalized regime complex.

Ultimately, the trajectory of global AI governance will depend on the balance between institutional adaptation and geopolitical competition, as well as the willingness of states and international institutions to sustain cooperative mechanisms. Artificial Intelligence is redefining not only how governance is implemented, but how authority, legitimacy, and power are structured in the contemporary international system.

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