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AI and the Reproduction of Social Inequalities: Exploring Bias, Access, and Digital Power Structures in the Modern Era

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) is now having a major influence now on the shaping of decisions within important areas such as jobs, education, healthcare, and public services. While it is often seen as a tool that brings speed, accuracy and neutrality. In recent research shows that AI can also carry forward and increase existing social inequalities. This happens mainly because AI systems learn from data that reflect real world unfairness such as discrimination based on caste, class, race, gender, or ability.

This paper reviews and discusses how AI technologies may unintentionally affect people from marginalised communities. It explains how bias enters AI systems through historical data, design choices and lack of proper testing. Case studies from different sectors like recruitment, law enforcement and education are used to highlight real life problems caused by AI tools. These examples show that AI systems can favour certain groups while putting others at a disadvantage, regularly without anyone noticing it.

In these paper explores the use of Social Network Analysis (SNA) as a method to better understand how AI influences social relationships and power dynamics in digital spaces. SNA helps reveal which communities gain visibility and influence through AI-driven platforms and which groups remain excluded or marginalised, offering a clearer picture of digital inequality beyond just biased algorithms.

The study argues that treating AI as just a technical tool is not enough. Instead, it should be seen as part of a larger social system, influenced by human values, power structures and historical context. To reduce the harm caused by biased AI, the paper suggests including human oversight, community participation and transparent decision-making in the development and use of AI. The review also points out gaps in current knowledge and offers directions for future research and policy changes.

Keywords/Topics

Artificial Intelligence, Social Inequality, Algorithmic Bias, Ethical AI, Algorithmic Fairness, Transparency in AI, AI Governance, Human Oversight in AI, AI and Social Justice

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