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Artificial Intelligence, Early Warning Systems, and Preventive Diplomacy: Rethinking International Mediation in High-Intensity Conflict Zones

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Abstract
The article is on the increasing application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in preventive diplomacy and early warning systems, its potential impact on international mediation, legitimacy, and ethical governance being given a special focus. It also talks about how predictive analytics is not only influencing the way decisions are made but also changing the power structures and at the same time, causing worry about how much AI-based conflict prediction can be relied upon. Utilizing a qualitative, multi-source research approach, this paper relies on the documentary analysis of the early warning systems of the international organizations, interdisciplinary literature, and comparative case studies. It was discovered that AI could support preventive diplomacy, among other ways, by providing real-time situational awareness, facilitating data triangulation, and minimizing the warning, response gap. Nevertheless, considerable challenges remain, such as the possibility of algorithms being biased, a low capacity of the systems to detect political dissent, the decline of local knowledge, absence of transparency and accountability, and cybersecurity risks. The article further states that proper use of AI is not possible without sufficient ethical and institutional control mechanisms. It puts forward a model of human, AI collaboration in mediation based on human discretion, participatory data governance, interpretable AI, and technological empowerment of the regions, with an emphasis on African institutional contexts.
Keywords: Artificial intelligence; Preventive diplomacy; Early warning systems; International mediation; Conflict prevention.

Introduction

Preventive diplomacy is a term defined by the United Nations as measures taken to stop a dispute from escalating into a violent conflict. Normally, for the accomplishment of these measures, political intelligence, person-to-person communication, and the experience of skilled diplomats to come to conclusions have been used (United Nations, 2012). However, changes in the world have led to the emergence of new forms of conflict characterized by the use of digital misinformation, cyber operations and algorithm-driven polarization that have made it difficult for traditional approaches to work (Tufekci, 2017). In response, technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI)-powered early warning systems are enabling

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international actors to better predict and address potential crises. As an example, the African Union and the European Union are employing machine learning technologies to predict conflicts and aid decision-making by diplomats (Karlsrud & Rosen, 2021).

Nevertheless, along with these capabilities, ethical and practical issues come up when using AI in preventive diplomacy. For instance, algorithmic systems may perpetuate systemic inequalities contained in the historical data (Benjamin, 2019), disregard the knowledge of the local communities (Abebe et al., 2021), and even put in question the impartiality and credibility of the mediation interventions (Lanz, 2019). Despite the fact that AI improves the detection of potential threats on a large scale through the analysis of massive data and sensing from a distance (Cederman & Weidmann, 2017; Hegre et al., 2019), the effectiveness of AI is limited because of the "warning, response gap" phenomenon, where timely alerts are made but enough political or institutional actions are not taken (George & Holl, 1997; Gowan & Stedman, 2018).

This paper explores the relationship between AI-based early warning systems, mediation, and preventive diplomacy. The author asserts that even though AI is capable of providing great improvements in forecasting, the success of conflict prevention is firstly down to the political will of the actors, the capacity of the institutions to work together, and the embedding of technology in diplomatic frameworks that are sensitive to context and people-centered.

Conceptual Discourse

Preventive Diplomacy and Early Warning

The principle of preventive diplomacy and early warning supports establishing and maintaining peace between two hostile states, emphasizing the necessity of securing peace prior to the eruption of conflict among them.

Preventative diplomacy has traditionally held a pivotal role in the international processes of preventing the violating conflict and minimizing its intensification. Its modern expression is most probably linked with the Agenda for Peace developed by Boutros-Boutros-Ghali that officially established such tools as early warning, confidence-building measures, mediation, and preventive deployment as the keys to maintaining peace and security in the world (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). In its basic concepts, preventive diplomacy aims to prevent conflicts before they escalate into armed conflict as well as contain violence when some prevention efforts fail. Contrary to reactive peacekeeping or post-conflict peacebuilding, preventive diplomacy is conducted in an uncertain, politically charged, and frequently unnoticed environment, and information and timeliness are the key factors of success.

Early warning, in its turn, has been widely known to be the informational foundation of preventive diplomacy. It consists of the organized gathering, examination and publication of indicators of increasing tensions or of the possibility of a violent conflict. Conventionally, these indicators are political instability, economic shocks, human rights violations, election wrangles, and elite mobilisation trends (Lund, 1996). Early warning systems are not only intended to forecast conflict but also provide timely action at the political level by interested parties which in this case refer to the state, regional organisations, and international institutions. However, researchers keep highlighting the long-standing so-called warning-response gap, in which believable warnings do not result in preventive action because of political inertia, conflicting priorities, or lack of organisational capacity (George and Holl, 1997; Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall, 2016).

Gradually, preventive diplomacy has become an institutionalised more analytically sophisticated practice, more of a state-centric ad hoc practice. The United Nations, African Union, European Union, and other regional organisations have come up with early warning units, situation rooms, and mediation support mechanisms, which aim at enhancing anticipatory capacity. These institutional innovations represent an increasingly considered understanding that violent conflict is hardly ever spontaneous or unforeseeable; on the contrary, it is usually preceded by patterns of grievance build-up, elite polarisation, and social disintegration that can be observed (Brown, 1996). The preventive diplomacy has therefore become more dependent on political interpretation in which warning signs are put into historical, cultural and structural backgrounds.

Nevertheless, preventive diplomacy is still very political despite the advances. Normative issues

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like what amounts to a credible warning, the priority of whose knowledge and when intervention is appropriate are normative issues and disputed. The early warning is not created in a vacuum, but is influenced by power relation, geopolitical interests, and institutional requirements. As a result, there is strong preventative effort put on certain conflicts and no effort put on others, which supports the accusations of selectivity and inconsistency in international conflict prevention (Bellamy and Williams, 2011). These difficulties have encouraged both scholars and practitioners to consider new tools and practices that can help to increase the accuracy of early warning, its timeliness and its credibility, which is why the growing interest in artificial intelligence and data-driven analytics.

Artificial Intelligence (AI), Early Warning Systems, and Anticipatory Risk Governance

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) in conflict prevention marks a seismic shift in the identification, interpretation, and management of risks. Thanks to improvements in computational power, machine learning and big data analytics, it is now possible to systematically process large and diverse datasets, such as satellite imagery, mobile phone metadata, archives of online news and social media data (Mayer-Schönberger & Cukier, 2013). These setbacks will overcome the shortcomings of traditional early warning systems based on retrospective reporting, fragmented information (the various alerts), and qualitative (appraising, judgment) assessments.

Artificial intelligence systems are good at noticing similarities in large amounts of data and different trends. Algorithms can detect changes in conversation, speech, or mobilisation through the analysis of thousands of news articles and social media posts with natural language processing (NLP). In the same way, satellite and drone imagery of population movements, infrastructure damage and environmental changes are monitored through computer vision technologies. This allows identification of new risks before they escalate into obvious political or violent crises, which greatly improves situational awareness and enhances the likelihood of proactive preventive diplomacy (Cederman & Weidmann, 2017; Hegre et al., 2019).

Apart from technical enhancements, AI brings about a more profound transformation in the logic of risk governance. AI systems enable anticipatory governance, which refers to systems that rely on forecasting and probabilistic modelling of future risks rather stopping risks as they emerge. As Amoore and Raley (2017) argue, algorithmic systems render decisions not in response to present realities, but to future possibilities. The logic of anticipation fits easily within the preventive frame of politics of diplomacy, but raises significant ethical and political issues. Models do not provide justification for decisions where actual violence occurs but does where potential violence does. This makes it hard to distinguish prevention from pre-emption, thus justifying interventions based on uncertain predictions and incompleteness.

AI systems don't just report the world. They shape how risks are conceived and prioritized. Algorithms are trained on historical data, which often reflects existing institutional biases, inconsistent reporting practices and structural inequality. Consequently, predictive models may skew towards labeling marginalized and conflict-affected areas as high-risk locations (O'Neil, 2016), naturally reinforcing existing patterns of surveillance. Data-driven analysis appears objective. Thus, the embedded biases conceals and renders an impression of scientific neutrality which is inherently political.

As AI equipped early warning systems debuts, it is also expected to shift power in the field of preventive diplomacy. Early warning has traditionally relied heavily on analysts, regional experts, and diplomats, who could apply particular contextual knowledge and interpretative judgement to complex situations. Unlike other systems that use technical skills and algorithm to help citizens with low capabilities, awaits greater sophistication. As data models rather than dialogue and negotiation increasingly influence decisions, this shift risks fostering a technocratic model of conflict prevention (Amoore, 2020).

Empirical proof exists for AI already enhancing early warning time capabilities. Machine learning models can use multiple data sources such as economic indicators or spatial information to allow better conflict forecasts (Hegre et al., 2019). A near real-time monitoring of troop movements and population displacements using satellite and drone imagery is facilitated by initiatives such as the Yale Humanitarian Research Lab. Likewise, the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED)

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offers fine-grained, continuously updated conflict data which can feed into predictive analytics and allow timely responses (Raleigh et al., 2010).

Nonetheless, there are significant ethical challenges. Debates about AI in conflict prevention are still central to concerns about data privacy, mass surveillance problems and algorithmic bias (Floridi et al., 2018). The use of personal or community-level data, generally without consent, raises important questions about rights and accountability, as well as abuse. Further, overreliance on algorithmic predictions may undermine confidence in diplomatic processes when affected communities see interventions as external imposition or uncalled for.

Because of this, the effectiveness of early warning and preventive diplomacy in AI implementation should not hinder the more general governance of the AI system. In order to prevent conflict accurately, it takes more than forecasting. It also takes contextually appropriate political responses. In essence, AI systems should enhance human judgement instead of replacing it. Further, these systems should be positioned in institutional structures with transparency, accountability and oversight. If there are no precautionary safeguards, anticipatory technologies can generate fear, increase inequalities and ultimately undermine the very objectives of preventive diplomacy.

Mediation, Legitimacy and Trust

The term mediation is used to refer to the process of transaction between the customer of the service and the service provider that leads to a definite exchange or resolution of a service related issue.

Mediation takes one of the centre stages of preventive diplomacy, and the process is used to communicate with the conflicting groups, de-escalate the obstacles, and negotiate alternative resolutions. Mediation requires more than technical expertise because it also involves the nature of perceived legitimacy of the mediator. According to classical mediation scholarship, the pillars of legitimacy of a mediator are impartiality, inclusiveness and transparency (Bercovitch and Houston, 2000). Parties are more willing to co-operate when they feel that the mediator is knowledgeable about their interests, he or she respects their agency and does not have a secret agenda.

The increasing integration of AI in mediation assistance and early warning puts pressure on these values in many nuanced ways. The black box nature of many systems of algorithms is one of the most common issues that are mentioned. When the mediators base their work on AI-driven risk measurement or advice that can be hardly justified, the parties might be concerned about how decisions are being made and in whom they may benefit (O'Neil, 2016). The lack of transparency through opacity makes it hard to justify interventions, and makes it hard to counteract incorrect assumptions fundamental to models.

In conflict environments where there is historical grievance, outside influence and any power imbalance, trust is especially frail. Under these circumstances, data-based interventions might be viewed as surveillance or control devices as opposed to peace-neutral tools. According to Zartman and Touval (2007), the process of mediation is successful when parties feel that it is voluntary and does not interfere with their autonomy. Unless seen as externally imposed or founded on misinterpretations of local realities, AI-assisted preventive measures may lead to resistance, as opposed to cooperation.

Another serious challenge is inclusivity. An AI system is normally based on information that are easier to obtain in digitally connected and media-saturated spaces. These datasets frequently under-represent marginalised groups, rural communities, and informal actors, which results in incomplete or misrepresented conflict dynamics. The mediation strategies guided by such incomplete data can also fail to include important stakeholders or to understand the origins of tension, which undermines their legitimacy (Ramsbotham et al., 2016).

Meanwhile, AI can be used to make the mediation better when applied reflexively and ethically. The decision support systems can be used to enable the mediators to spot patterns that were not considered, predict spoilers, and determine the probable effects of various intervention strategies. Together with qualitative feedback of local actors and field-based diplomacy, AI is able to complement human judgment instead of substituting it. How this can be done is to make sure that technological tools do not take over the relationship and dialogical mediation.

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To ensure the development of trust in AI-assisted preventive diplomacy, this process should be institutionally designed. These encompass effective communication regarding the manner in which information are gathered and processed, provisions of challenging algorithmic results, and ongoing interaction with local stakeholders in order to legitimize results. The mediators should be ready to not only tell what the data indicate but why a certain interpretation has been taken. Transparency here is not technical only but relational and this builds on the view that mediation is a joint exercise and not a form of coercion.

In sum, legitimacy and trust remain the normative foundations upon which preventive diplomacy rests. While AI offers powerful new capabilities for early warning and anticipatory governance, its integration into mediation processes must be guided by ethical reflection and political sensitivity. Preventive diplomacy cannot be reduced to prediction alone; it is ultimately a human practice rooted in dialogue, recognition, and negotiated authority. Ensuring that AI strengthens rather than erodes these foundations is one of the central challenges facing contemporary conflict prevention.

Bridging the Warning–Response Gap

Despite the major technological progress in early warning systems, in particular, artificial intelligence (AI), predictive analytics, and real-time data integration, the warning-response gap is one of the most threatening issues in conflict prevention. Having correct and timely warnings does not necessarily result in decisive/effective action. As George and Holl (1997) argue so notoriously, intelligence failures do not relate more to lack of information, but rather to the inability of the decision-makers to respond to the existing warning signals. This observation is extremely applicable in the modern age of AI-enhanced early warning.

Current literature supports the point that the bottleneck in the prevention of conflicts is rather political and institutional than technological. As an example, Gowan and Stedman (2018) emphasize that geopolitical interests, selective engagement, and risk-averse political decision-making usually influence responses to early warning. States and international organisations can have plausible evidence regarding a forthcoming violence but they opt not to intervene because of the fear of sovereignty, alliances of states, or fear of the cost of such an intervention. Early warning under these circumstances is political inconvenience not operationally feasible.

Besides, in large organisations bureaucratic inertia can slow the responsiveness of an organisation e.g. the United Nations or regional bodies. The hierarchical nature of decision-making, lack of mandates, and inter-agency competitions tend to delay the process of translating warning signals into concerted action (Furnari, Oldenhuis, and Julian, 2021). The fact that resources are limited also makes this more difficult, especially in areas where the peace operations are already stretched to the limit. In cases where AI systems offer accurate risk estimates, lack of logistic capacity, funding, or human resources can make such estimates useless.

The other vital aspect of the warningresponse gap is that of signalto noise overload. The AI systems are powerful but can produce large amounts of data and forecasts that can overwhelm the policymakers. Without proper prioritisation mechanisms, the decision-makers might not be able to differentiate between high-risk situations and those that are less urgent (Hegre et al., 2019). This too much information paradox may unintentionally result in decision paralysis and not active participation.

Sealing this divide thus necessitates not only a level of technological expertise, but also an institutional change and normative adherence. First, there should be early warning systems embedded in decision-making structures that are capable of responding fast, uniformly and in a responsible way. These involve setting out the action protocols, set points of intervention and simplified channels of communication between analysts and policymakers. The integration of AI outputs into the current diplomatic and security systems is a key to the operational relevance of these tools instead of considering them as independent ones.

Second, political will should be reinforced by means of normative frameworks that focus on preventative measures rather than on responding. They include the principles of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) that emphasize the ethical necessity of responding to early warning signals, but their application is inconsistent (Bellamy, 2015). These norms can be strengthened with the help of AI-generated insights, which can offer evidence-based

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reasons to justify early intervention, though only when decision-makers are ready to make changes.

Lastly, it is important to promote partnerships between international organisations, regional organisations and local actors. The credibility and legitimacy of responses can be improved through multi-level coordination which would improve the chances of a timely action. At that, AI must not be regarded as a substitute of political processes but as the means of more informed and responsive governance. The ultimate solution to the warning-response gap is to match the institutional preparedness and political devotion with technological capacity.

The Role of the Well-Rounded Mediator

The work of mediators is also changing dramatically in a world that is increasingly based on data and where conflicts have become a significant concern. This article develops the idea of the well-rounded mediator to reflect the changing skill base needed to be effective in engagement at the intersection of preventive diplomacy, early warning and conflict resolution. Though such traditional mediation competencies as negotiation, communication, impartiality and trust-building are still indispensable (Bercovitch and Jackson, 2009), they are no longer deemed sufficient on their own.

Modern mediators are also required to acquire digital literacy and develop the ability to work with AI-generated information. This involves the ability to understand predictive model strengths and weaknesses, interpret data visualisations and critically evaluate the results of an algorithm. With the rising role of AI systems in informing early warning systems, mediators would need to convey technical knowledge into actionable strategies, which are conscious of political and social factors (Horowitz, Scharre, and Velez-Green, 2020).

Another critical aspect of the mediation aspect of technologically mediated environment is the ethical aspect of mediation. The application of AI provokes the concerns of data privacy, consent, bias, and accountability. Mediators should be prepared to address these issues so that the use of technology does not deprive of trust or further increase inequalities. To illustrate, the use of biased data sets may result in the wrong identification of conflict actors or oversurveillance of some communities, thus making the mediation process more difficult (Floridi et al., 2018).

The mediator is also a facilitator of the linkage between the technical professionals and the political players. Through breaking down complex information to presentable stories, mediators are able to enable an informed discussion between disputing parties and decision-makers. Such an intermediary position is especially critical in situations when the lack of trust in technology or third parties can become a barrier to the acceptance of AI-driven insights.

Moreover, the fusion of mediation and preventive diplomacy puts the importance of flexibility in the limelight. Mediators are also getting engaged in the early stages of interventions where the intention is not to settle the ongoing conflicts but rather to avoid the escalation of such conflicts. In this case, the capacity to incorporate early warning information in mediation efforts becomes a valuable resource. This change is indicative of a wider move towards the active management of conflict, which places anticipation and prevention as high as resolution.

The balanced mediator is, at the end of the day, a skillset amalgamation of the classic diplomas and the ability to use technology and understand what is right and wrong. This development is not only desirable but also required to operate in the complexity of the modern warfare setting.

African Institutional Context

The use of AI in early warning and preventive diplomacy has to be put in the context of the particular institutional and socio-political structures in which it is used. Regional structures in Africa, especially the ones designed by the African Union (AU), offer a platform through which technological innovations can be integrated into conflict prevention efforts in Africa. One of the major mechanisms, the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) was set up within the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), and it is a mechanism that monitors, analyses, and predicts conflict dynamics across the continent (African Union, 2015).

CEWS is a system that integrates data gathering of various sources such as field reports, open-source information, and regional early warning systems in order to produce timely analysis to the decision-makers. In theory, AI and improved analytics

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in CEWS can contribute to its predictive capacity and performance in a significant way. Nevertheless, there are still a number of issues that impede its potential.

The institutional capacity is still a significant limitation. The technical infrastructure, qualified staff, and financial resources are constraints that many African states and regional organisations are constrained by to establish and maintain systems powered by AI (Aning and Edu-Afful, 2019). Moreover, the problem of data fragmentation and interoperability also makes it difficult to integrate information among various platforms and institutions. The benefits of AI-driven analysis can be lost without harmonised systems of data.

Another important challenge is the political coordination. The success of the early warning systems is the ultimate outcome of the will of the member states to take action over the information they are given. Sovereignty issues, the lack of compatibility of national interests, and the degree of commitment to collective security may be the obstacles on the way to coordinated responses. This interplay between technology and politics is reflected in this dynamic through the wider dynamic of warning-response gap discussed above.

Noteworthy, to make AI tools relevant and legitimate, localisation is indispensable. The African institutions have not only to adopt but also to influence the creation of AI-based early warning systems. This involves the integration of local knowledge, languages, and conflict dynamic in the data model and also making sure that communities have been actively involved in the design and implementation of such technologies. According to Aning and Edu-Afful (2019), the community-based method of peacebuilding plays a significant role in building trust and sustainability.

In addition, the concerns of ethics are especially relevant in the African context where the history of external intervention and data exploitation have created distrust in technologically oriented programs. It is thus important to provide transparency, accountability and community consent in order to foster confidence in AI-enabled systems.

To sum up, although AI has a great potential to improve early warning and preventive diplomacy in Africa, it requires the resolution of institutional, political, and ethical issues. The empowerment of regional institutions, like CEWS, local ownership and the encouragement of inclusive governance systems are critical steps to achieving the full potential of AI in conflict prevention.

Methodology

The current research paper practices a combination of qualitative and multi-source research design, which is intended to produce a profound analytical understanding of the role of artificial intelligence in preventive diplomacy and early warning. The methodology is based on interpretative knowledge as opposed to statistical generalisation, on contextual exposition and theory development. This is a suitable approach especially in the light of the political sensitivity, the ethical complexity and institutional diversity that are present in AI-aided conflict prevention.

The initial part of the methodology is the documentary analysis of AI-based early warning systems that are used by major international and regional organisations such as the United Nations (UN), African Union (AU), European Union (EU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Policy documents, strategy papers, technical reports and publicly available system descriptions are reviewed as a way of determining the conceptualisation, operationalisation and justification of AI tools within institutional frameworks. These systems are analyzed in terms of the mentioned purposes of these systems, the kind of data they base on and on what they are supposed to make decisions. Through comparative analysis of organisational strategies, the research determines similarities and differences in integrating AI into the preventive diplomacy of different governance settings.

Second, the interdisciplinary academic literature on the subject of peacebuilding and conflict studies, international relations, AI ethics and digital governance is thoroughly reviewed. This literature review has two purposes. Theoretically, it places AI-based early warning in more general discourses about preventive diplomacy, anticipatory governance and legitimacy. Analytically, it gives critical insights into algorithmic bias, transparency, accountability and the political meaning of data-based decision-making. The involvement of various disciplinary standpoints also allows the study to connect technical discourses of AI with normative and political discourses of conflict prevention.

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Third, utilizing a comparative case study of the areas in which AI-assisted early warning systems have been tested or are actively debated, the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and the Middle East, the research uses them. The choice of these regions was due to the exposure to chronic insecurity, the existence of international and regional preventative measures and the existence of documented AI-related interventions. The comparative approach is not aimed at ranking the effectiveness, but seeking to understand how the contextual aspects, including the political organisms, regional organisation and local perception influence the acceptance and operation of AI-assisted early warning systems. This allows determining patterns and context-specific challenges and opportunities.

Lastly, the results of the documentary analysis, the literature review and the comparison of cases are synthesized by the thematic approach based on the grounded-theory methods, according to Charmaz (2006). The coding process is iterative and is involved to determine the recurring themes, tension and conceptual connections among data sources. This inductive method lets the theoretical information develop out of the data instead of subjecting it to preset categories of analysis. The approach, in general, lays more emphasis on the depth, reflexivity and analytical coherence, thus providing a detailed insight into the changing role of AI in preventive diplomacy.

Discussion of Findings

Early Warning with the use of AI in Preventive Diplomacy

The paper suggests that artificial intelligence (AI) has rapidly altered the structure and the practice of prevention diplomacy by improving the level of early warning, speeding up information processing, and changing the meaning and response to the threat of violent conflict. In organizational and regional settings, artificial intelligence (AI) technologies are not substituting the old forms of diplomacy but are integrated into them as decision support systems. This combination is indicative of a more general process of moving to anticipatory governance whereby diplomatic action is increasingly being explained by anticipatory judgments as well as being explained by observable crises.

Capabilities and Innovations

One of the most notable applications of AI in preventative diplomacy is its ability to access huge amounts of (heterogenous) data in close real time. The results indicate that AI-based early warning systems have the potential to identify unobtrusive and fast-changing signs of escalation of the conflict that otherwise would go unnoticed by human analysts bound by time and resource limitations. Specifically, the methods of natural language processing have been used to track the discourse on the internet and detect the peaks of hate speech, inflammatory rhetoric and mobilising narratives that can be followed by outbreaks of communal or political violence (Hawkins, 2020). They prove particularly useful in the situations when the conventional media coverage is delayed, blocked, or cut short.

Another significant innovation is the satellite imagery analysis. The development of computer vision and machine learning has made AI systems capable of analysing high-resolution satellite images to detect patterns including troop movement, the creation of military infrastructure or the query of civilian populations on a mass scale (Li et al., 2020). These will improve situational awareness in distant or unsafe areas where diplomatic approaches are restricted. Notably, these indicators that are based on imagery will offer an independent source of verification that can be used to verify or refute the official accounts presented by the parties of a conflict.

In addition, the likelihood of political unrest or of violent escalation given certain circumstances has been estimated by machine-learning classifiers that have been trained on historical conflict data. The models of large-scale forecasting, including the ones produced by Hegre et al. (2019), use political, economic, demographic and environmental factors to create probabilistic evaluations of risk of conflict. These predictions do not provide a guarantee, but rather enable the preventive actors to channel their attention and resources towards various sensitive settings.

The analysis concludes that these technological advances are especially important to mediation and preventive diplomacy in unstable settings. Mediation situations and political missions are informed and engaged by real-time dashboards and automated notifications to be updated on the situation at all times (Karlsrud, 2019). Instead of only acting periodically or visiting the field, diplomats can be able to monitor changing dynamics and change their strategies. Such increased responsiveness is generally

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viewed as one of the most feasible benefits of AI-based early warning.

Diplomatic Advantages

Beside technical abilities, empirical research proves that AI-based early warning systems have numerous diplomatic benefits generated. To begin with, artificial intelligence makes preventive action more precise in terms of time. High-speed processing of data and machine notifications reduce the gap between the appearance of warning indicators and the institutional recognition, therefore, bridging the long-standing warning-response gap documented in the literature of prevention of conflict (Williams, 2020). In the case of mediators when under extreme political pressure, previous response capacity can be able to save an escalation.

Second, AI-based insights help to identify potential points of diplomatic meetings. Predictive analytics can guide decisions about the time and manner of action by clarifying nascent fault lines, possible spoilers and incidences of increased vulnerability. This kind of strategic advice is especially useful when dealing with complicated conflicts involving several parties and competing interests, where a time-misjudged intervention can only worsen the situation instead of improving it.

Third, AI can facilitate information triangulation in the situation, where insecurity, state restriction, or logistical barriers restrict access. Information obtained through satellite imaging, social media, and remote sensing can complement reports in the field and support the arguments made by conflict parties. Such triangulation enhances the informational base of mediation and reduces reliance on single source narratives which can be partial and prejudiced.

Another benefit that has been discovered in the results is the use of AI to track ceasefires and peace accords. Violations in terms of unauthorized movements of the troops or re-established infrastructure destruction could be identified by image analytics and pattern-recognition tools, thus supporting verification mechanisms and confidence-building actions (Meier, 2015). These tools do not replace human observers, but may provide an increased area of monitoring, and early warning on possible failures.

Studies conducted via interviews that are considered as a part of the analysis indicate that the diplomats are getting more and more attached to predictive analytics as a tool to not only be functional but also to legitimatise politics. This can be justified by using quantitative risk assessment and visual presentation of data, which can be used in bureaucratic and political systems that tend to be risk-averse (Ruttinger and Schilling, 2021). In this respect, AI does not only inform the diplomacy: it transforms the internal politics of taking decisions by offering the allegedly objective data that justifies preventive action.

Risk, limitation and ethical issues

Though the research findings support the expanding applicability of AI in preventative diplomacy, they also demonstrate great risks, constraints, and ethical issues that make it hard to use. These issues indicate that AI is not a technical or neutral solution but a socio-political tool that is subject to design, governance, and interpretation.

Algorithmic Bias and Misclassification

One of the issues raised is the threat of algorithm bias and misclassification. AI systems are as sound as the data they are trained on, and datasets related to conflicts are often missing, skewed, or influenced by historical patterns of power imbalance. The evidence points to the fact that the models that are trained on incomplete or biased information can easily project a legitimate political opposition, protest, or mobilisation into signs of violent intentions (Benjamin, 2019). This misclassification may trigger some unnecessary diplomatic pressure or securitised reaction that undermines democracy practices.

This danger is particularly acute in some parts of the world like Africa and Middle East where conflicts are either underreported or distorted through the prism of external security. Abebe et al. (2021) warn that datasets used in AI systems all over the world often present the priorities of Global North and reporting cultures, which create systematic bias. This results in AI-based early warning potentially over-predicting violence in one situation and not identifying emergent threats in others, which strengthens the discriminative focus and intervention.

Local Knowledge Marginalisation

A second critical area is connected with the marginalisation of the local knowledge. The results imply that the use of data in decision-making may put

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the external technical know-how in the position of preference at the cost of the contextual knowledge of local actors, civil society organisations, and local leaders. This process is a reflection of more general arguments against liberal peace-building, grounded in insensitivity to local conditions in international interventions (Richmond, 2011).

In a situation where the algorithmic output is the main driver of mediation, there is a possibility of failure to capture subtle social processes, informal institutions, and cultural-based conflict-management practices. As proved by Autesserre (2014), this oversight may also reduce the legitimacy of peace operations and lead to failure. When trust and consent are central in the context of preventive diplomacy, the perceived marginalization of local voices may result in the cooperation fragmentation and the increase of distrust of the external actors.

Deficit of Transparency and Accountability

The lack of openness of numerous AI systems is also an additional difficulty. The models of machine-learning are often complex black-box entities that yield results that are not easily understood even by their creators (Burrell, 2016). The evidence proposes that such a lack of transparency makes the issue of accountability in preventive diplomacy complex as decisions may need to be explained to several stakeholders which are conflict parties, host governments, and international institutions.

Opaque algorithms might make it more difficult to convey the reason behind a specific alert raised or why early intervention was necessary to opaque algorithms (O'Neil, 2016). This challenge dilutes transparency and drives lack of trust particularly in the politically sensitive situation whereby external intentions are already perceived with suspicion. In the absence of explicit accountability measures, it is difficult to challenge or put right defective evaluations.

Cybersecurity and Data Exploitation Risk

Lastly, the results attract the focus to the threats of cybersecurity and data harvesting in relation to AI infrastructures. Early warning systems are based on large digital networks and data repositories that may be attacked in a cyberattack, data poisoning, or disinformation campaign. The story of how digital manipulation has been turned into a modern day weapon is recorded by Singer and Brooking (2018), which brings the potential of weaponisation of AI systems into view.

These vulnerabilities are not only dangerous to the mediators and institutions but also to the populations of the conflict-affected regions whose information can be gathered and processed without sufficient protection. Hacks or manipulation may create fake warnings, erroneous interventions, or sensitive data that may have potentially grave implications on security and trust.

Implications for International Mediation

The empirical data provided has a strong implication on the development of international mediation and the practice of preventive diplomacy, in general. Artificial intelligence cannot be merely an addition to the already existing sets of procedural tools, but it will redefine the roles of mediators, their strategic orientations, and the power distribution that surrounds the process of diplomatic interaction.

Shifting Mediator Roles

One implication that stands out is the rebounding of the roles of a mediator. With the growing role of AI-generated insights, mediators have to operate as data interpreters having to integrate the results of computation with the political acuity, contextual awareness, and ethical considerations (Karlsrud and Rosen, 2021). This change requires substantial competency acquisitions, such as AI literacy, critical data analytics and greater awareness of algorithmic bias. Instead of mindlessly accepting the technical apparatuses, mediators need to have the ability to question core assumptions, contextualize predictive models, as well as convey associated uncertainties. The results demonstrate that the impact of the successful AI integration depends on the possibility of maintaining human agency and responsibility as the central elements in decision-making in the field of diplomacy.

Diplomatic Timing and Strategy of Engagement

Early warning systems, which are controlled by AI, also have an effect on the temporal dynamics and strategic calculus of diplomatic intervention. Early involvements are often prompted by predictive warnings, which themselves can have some political overtones and be seen as intrusive or premature (Lund, 1996). The evidence indicates that the timely action can alleviate it, but at the same time, it may create a

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backlash in case the local actors believe they are being mischaracterized or manipulated. This dialectic also highlights the importance of careful calibration; any warning produced by AI should inform, but not tell diplomatic options, as such that the mediators will be able to assess political willingness and legitimacy before acting.

Asymmetries of Power in Geopolitics

Lastly, there is the unequal allocation of AI capabilities, which creates geopolitical implications. The availability of advanced technologies, well-developed data systems, and expert knowledge continues to be unevenly distributed in the Global North, which could strengthen the established power inequalities in preventive diplomacy (Couldry & Mejias, 2019). The findings propose the argument that AI has the potential to strengthen and not disrupt hierarchical systems of global governance unless there is a conscious attempt to democratise access to and integrate regional organisations and local actors.

All in all, the analysis of the results shows that AI-based early warning systems create significant prospects of improving preventive diplomacy, as long as their drawbacks and potential ethical hazards are openly discussed and appropriately managed. AI can enhance human judgment, advance the accuracy of time, and expand situational awareness; however, it cannot replace political sensitivity and local interaction, as well as valid mediation procedures. Accordingly, the future trend of AI in preventive diplomacy will not depend on technological sophistication as much as on the normative and institutional structures according to which it will be operationalised.

Recommendations: Towards a Human-AI Hybrid Mediation Framework

The research paper shows that, despite the ways artificial intelligence is increasing the analytical and anticipatory capabilities of preventive diplomacy, its use without scrutiny or technocratic approach threatens the legitimacy, trust, and the effectiveness of international mediation. In line with this, the section further suggests a logical group of interdependent recommendations that can be used in operationalisation of a human-AI hybrid mediation framework. That type of framework identifies AI as a helpful tool instead of an independent decision-maker and incorporates technological innovation into the normative obligations to human judgment, participatory participation, transparency, and regional ownership. Combining with the empirical and analytical information described above, these suggestions attempt to ensure the diplomatic benefits of AI are as high as possible, and the ethical, political, and epistemic risks are diminished to the lowest value.

Human-Centred Interpretation and Political Judgment

One of the main suggestions that can be made after the analysis of the evidence is the reinstatement of human judgment as the foundation of preventive diplomacy and mediation. Although AI-based early warning systems are able to identify the patterns, correlations, and probable risks, they do not have the contextual intuition that can translate into political relevance, cultural undertones, and the historical resentments. In this regard, mediators should maintain the main role of making algorithmic outputs, placing them into more complex conflict discourses and power relations (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall, 2016).

The results show that predictive analytics have the best effectiveness when used as an invitation to investigate and not as a reference diagnosis. Human-centred interpretation helps to analyse the assumptions reflected in data models by mediators, investigate the plausibility of the predictions, and combine it with the qualitative knowledge gained by local actors and field observations. This interpretative role is particularly crucial in situations in which the AI systems may falsely categorize the legitimate political mobilisation as the intent to commit violence or omit informal structures of conflict-regulation.

In order to realise this recommendation, the mediation institutions are recommended to invest in the development of AI literacy among the diplomats and support staff. The training programs should include both the technical understanding and the critical thinking of the bias in algorithms, the epistemic ambiguity, and the ethical implications. Institutions can prevent the handing over of judgment to machines and preserve the interpersonal sources of mediation by training the mediators to negotiate with AI productions with confidence and scepticism.

Participatory and Inclusive Data Governance

The results also highlight that marginalisation of local knowledge and lived experience is one of the most vivid dangers linked to the use of AI to create early

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warning. Data-centric systems often give preference to external datasets and technical skills thus replicating inequalities among global actors and conflict-related communities. The study suggests the implementation of participatory data governance mechanisms as a solution to this issue by actively engaging the local stakeholders with the design, interpretation, and validation of early warning indicators.

Engaging community members, civil society organisations and regional experts in the process of defining what contributes to the signal of a meaningful risk can help to increase the accuracy and legitimacy of AI-based early warning (Abebe et al., 2021). Local actors have often access to contextualized information that may not be present in global datasets, such as understanding of informal power systems, cultural practices and indicators of escalation that may be undetected by digitised datasets. The knowledge of this sort is used to remove biases and prevent the misunderstanding of social dynamics.

Trust is also strengthened in participatory data governance. By making communities see their view of the world replicated in the analytical process, there will be a higher tendency to view preventive interventions as valid and responsive as opposed to imposed and surveillant. In practice, this can be accomplished by means of consultative workshops, co-creation of indicators and feedback processes where local actors can question or refine algorithmic evaluations. Such practices put AI-based prevention in line with the inclusivity principle of sustainable peacebuilding.

Reasonable, Transparent, and Ethical AI Systems

Another suggestion is associated with ethical design and control of artificial intelligence (AI) systems used in preventive diplomacy. The results indicate that the lack of transparency in algorithmic decision-making reduces accountability and complicates mediation procedures, particularly in cases where initial interventions have to be politically justified. To solve this problem, the research promotes the adoption of explainable AI (XAI) systems into the early warning systems.

Explainable AI seeks to make an algorithmic process and outputs understandable to end-users who are not experts in computing and, as a result, allow mediators to identify the derivation of inferences and forward such explanations to stakeholders (Arrieta et al., 2020). In the mediation situation, it is not a technical luxury but a normative requirement that things be explainable. Mediators should have the capability to explain the reason why certain risks are recognized, the manner in which data have been viewed, and the uncertainties that remain.

Ethical AI governance must also have clear accountability systems. Those institutions implementing AI devices need to define who makes decisions based on the output of AI algorithms and create the process of their review, challenge, and amend. Ethical afforestation boards, impact evaluations, and periodic audits may be useful in making sure that the AI systems meet human-rights policies and conflict-sensitivity policies. These actions serve to affirm the fact that it is human beings who are in charge of diplomatic action rather than machines.

Building Regional and Context-Sensitive Technological Capacity

The results demonstrate that availability of AI technologies and technical skills is not evenly distributed, and it has serious consequences of geopolitical power and ownership in preventive diplomacy. To curb the propagation of Global North supremacy, the study suggests a long term investment in local technological potential, specifically in the organizations, like African Union (AU) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

The development of regional capacity enables the formation of area-specific hybrid early warning tools that mirror the priorities, language, and dynamics of conflicts (Hultman and Lindberg Bromley, 2019). These systems will tend to be more inclined to include regional political expertise and will be seen as acceptable by the member states and the locals. Capacity-building measures should also consist of technical training, infrastructural development, and engagements between regional organisations, universities, and technology providers over a long period.

Notably, technological isolation is not part of the ownership of the region. Instead, it consists of fair cooperation where international experience is used to complement, and not replace, local leadership. The preventive diplomacy can shift to more balanced and pluralistic global governance architecture by reinforcing the regional AI capacity.

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Collectively, these suggestions define an anthropomorphic-AI hybrid mediation model, which can bring technological innovation into the normative basics of preventive diplomacy. Instead of diminishing the human judgment, participation, transparency and regional ownership, AI must amplify them. The results of the findings show the usefulness of AI in mediation is not as much based on predictive accuracy but rather the embedded technologies in ethical, political, and institutional practices. A well-crafted hybrid model provides a way of exploring the potential of AI and maintaining the legitimacy and trust that sustainable peace is ultimately built upon.

Conclusion

Artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping early warning and preventive diplomacy, offering unprecedented tools for anticipating and mitigating conflicts. Yet, technology alone cannot resolve the enduring warning–response gap: predictive power must be matched by political will, institutional capacity, and local legitimacy. Without these alignments, AI's promise remains largely theoretical. AI-based early warning systems can enhance conflict prevention but carry inherent risks. They may amplify biases, erode trust, or inadvertently shift power dynamics in fragile settings. A hybrid human-AI mediation model—grounded in transparency, local engagement, and regional capacities—offers the most responsible pathway for integrating AI into peace processes. Such models position AI as a complement to, rather than a substitute for, human judgment and political decision-making.

Future research must investigate participatory AI design in conflict-affected communities, comparative evaluations of AI-mediated interventions, and the application of generative AI in peacebuilding. Policy priorities should focus on bridging the warning–response gap through strengthened institutional linkages, coordinated stakeholder engagement, and targeted capacity building, particularly in resource-constrained contexts. By embedding AI within accountable, context-sensitive frameworks, policymakers and mediators can leverage its full potential to advance sustainable, inclusive, and proactive conflict management in Africa and beyond.

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