

Feminist Digital Justice

- Visions for an international trade and economic order that brings sustainable peace

Nandini Chami, IT for Change, April 27th 2022

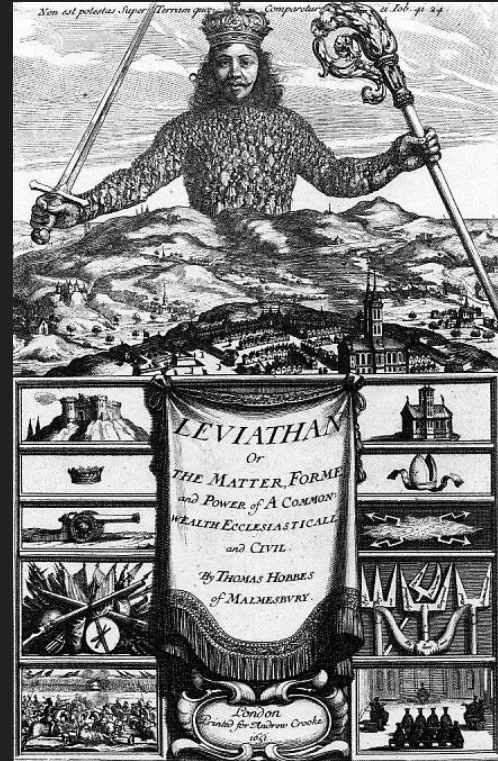
What the Russian invasion of Ukraine reveals - Big Tech companies are quasi-state actors today in the international order!

Feb 2022:

Ukrainian leaders appealed to Apple, Meta and Google to restrict their services inside Russia.

Apple Pay, Google Pay suspending services in Russia revealed the enormous infrastructural power of digital platforms

Google's chief executive had meetings with EU officials on countering Russian disinformation



Moral panic over Chinese surveillance tech detract attention from digital neo-colonialism

China's Digital Silk Road

The Smart Burkina project (launched 2021) consists of the installation of fiber optic network cables to enhance digital connectivity and facilitate e-government as well as the installation of a surveillance system to address insecurity and crime amidst a terrorist insurgency in Burkina Faso

See [link](#).

Clearview AI (facial language) and Primer.AI (natural language processing) in Ukraine - war is big business for US tech firms

While a few years ago, European firms were also involved in these practices, despite their countries being members of the Wassenaar arrangement on export control of arms and dual use technologies

The Italian company Hacking Team was contracted to target Ethiopian journalists and opposition leaders in the diaspora, using spyware to access their files, passwords, and intercept their communications. FinSpy, a commercial software developed by UK- and Germany-based Gamma International, was purchased to perform similar operations.

See [link](#).



THE US AND CHINA

dominate the entire global AI economy



of all funding of **AI start-ups**
in the past five years

Source: UNCTAD 2021



of the world's top
AI researchers

Source: UNCTAD 2021



of the **market capitalisation**
value of the world's 70 **largest**
digital platform companies

Source: UNCTAD 2019



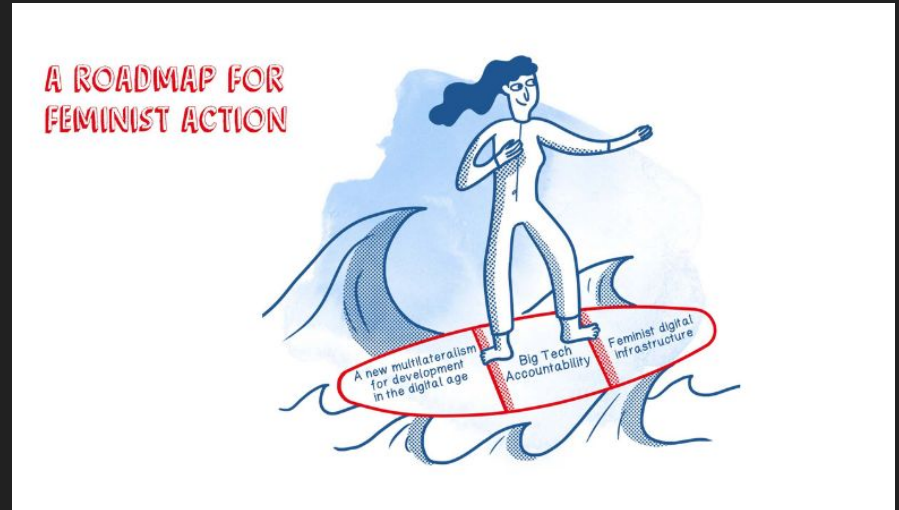
The current bi-polar digital economic order and the economic feuds that it perpetuates is anti-feminist

- Perpetuation of gendered labour hierarchies and undermining of women's labour futures
- Simultaneous devaluation and valorisation of women's care work (for digital capital)
- Colonisation of life-words
- De-democratisation and institutional governance deficits

A development process that shrinks and poisons the pie available to poor people, and then leaves women scrambling for a larger relative share, is not in women's interest.

- Sen, Gita and Grown, Caren. Development, Crises, and Alternative Visions

The deal for digital justice that feminists want (See [link](#))



1. We need to hold transnational digital corporations accountable for women's human rights violations

Developing countries need the space to institute rules on:

Terms of/Conditionalities for market access for digital platform companies offering services

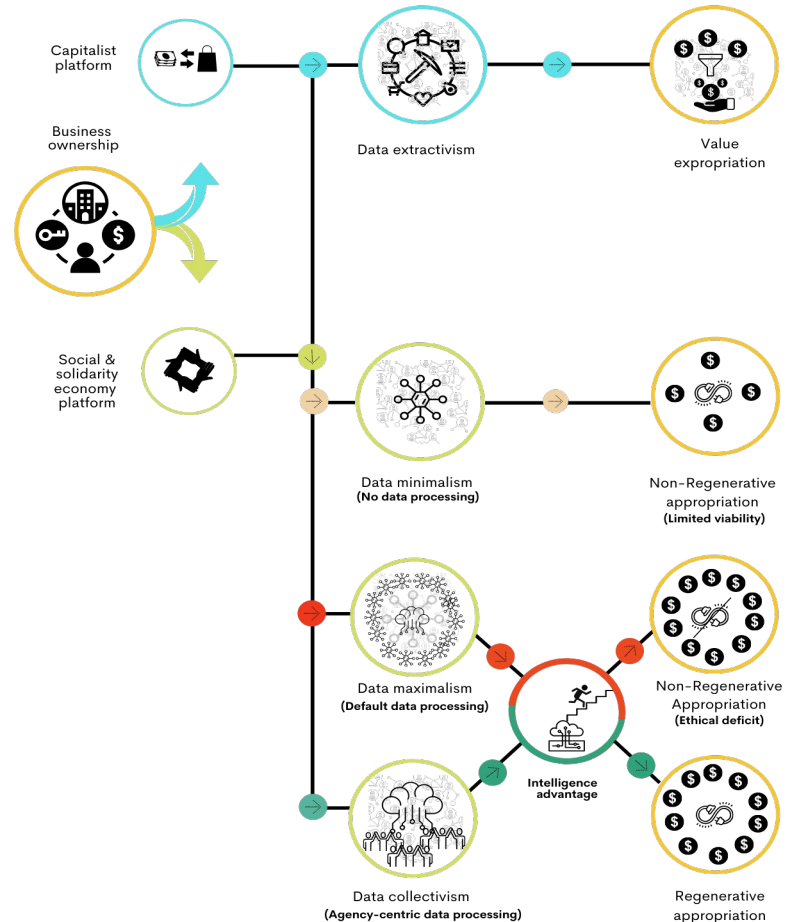
Foreign direct investment in the digital economy

Competition law and algorithmic scrutiny

Localising data and restricting cross-border data flows to protect human rights and strategic economic interests

Let's say No to the illegal joint statement initiatives on e-commerce, services domestic regulation, investments facilitation at the WTO that threaten to take away the right of developing countries to hold transnational digital corporations to account.

2. We need alternative platform-data models to support social and solidarity economy enterprises



3. We need democratic governance frameworks for the digital paradigm

Global digital governance frameworks should be modelled on the WSIS consensus, not follow business-as-usual multistakeholderism

A new global data constitutionalism that brings non-economic and economic aspects of data governance together

Data governance frameworks at the national level that move beyond hollow calls for data nationalism to an integrated approach that addresses democratic and distributive integrity considerations. (In other words, data regimes that do not compromise with surveillance capitalism while also enabling fair and equitable local economies to develop.)



Thank you!

Read more abt our work at www.itforchange.net

Write to: nandini@itforchange.net