

# Cross-Border Data Flows and Digital Sovereignty: Legal Dilemmas in Transnational Governance

Mehmet. Kaya<sup>1\*</sup>, Hamza Shahid<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of International Relations, Istanbul University, Istanbul, Türkiye

<sup>2</sup> Department of Law, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan

\* Corresponding author email address: mehmet.kaya@istanbul.edu.tr

Received: 2025-01-29	Revised: 2025-03-22	Accepted: 2025-03-28	Published: 2025-04-01
<b>EDITOR:</b> Ghasem Eftekhari <sup>id</sup> Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran. Email: eftekhari@ut.ac.ir			
<b>REVIEWER 1:</b> Mustafa Kaan Tuysuz <sup>id</sup> Institute of Social Sciences, Siirt University, Siirt, Turkey. Email: AhmetKılıç@siirt.edu.tr			
<b>REVIEWER 2:</b> Jingjing Wang <sup>id</sup> Law School, Peking University (PKU), Peking, China . Email: jingwang@vip.sina.com			

## 1. Round 1

### 1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

Please consider further elaborating on the evolution of the term "digital sovereignty" by citing early definitions or foundational legal texts. This would clarify how the concept has shifted from cyber-defense to a more holistic governance tool.

The methodology is well-articulated, but it would benefit from a justification of why a systematic review was not appropriate. Could you briefly mention why legal doctrinal heterogeneity favored the narrative review?

The causal link between emerging technologies and cross-border data should be supported by a legal or economic study, such as WTO or WIPO reports.

This paragraph would be enriched by referencing empirical cases (e.g., India's withdrawal from foreign cloud-based platforms) to illustrate these concerns.

This is accurate, but GATS's limitations for digital trade should be clarified. It would be helpful to mention that digital trade provisions are under negotiation in WTO's Joint Statement Initiative.

This sentence should be updated to reflect the 2023 OECD Declaration on Government Access to Personal Data Held by Private Sector Entities, which goes beyond privacy guidelines.

Please specify the most recent draft (e.g., the 2022 Digital Personal Data Protection Bill) and its status to avoid outdated references.

Consider citing specific legal cases (e.g., Microsoft Corp. v. United States) to substantiate this conflict of jurisdiction.

This claim is valid, but it would benefit from a short discussion on how legal pluralism or mutual legal assistance (MLA) could serve as interim solutions.

This notion is normative. Please indicate which international instruments or scholarly sources advocate for cyberspace as a “commons” (e.g., UN GGE or IGF).

It would be beneficial to specify how fragmentation has concretely impacted cross-border legal disputes or trade agreements.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

## 1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

While this closing is powerful, it would be more impactful if it included a brief preview of the paper’s main findings to anchor the reader’s expectations.

Please provide a summary table of the legal instruments and jurisdictions analyzed to enhance transparency and reproducibility of the literature selection process.

The term "strategic data" should be better defined and sourced. Consider referencing existing legal definitions or cybersecurity frameworks to avoid ambiguity.

A comparative table outlining features, legal tools, and critiques of both models would enhance clarity and pedagogical value.

Consider naming at least two countries as examples (e.g., China or Iran), and reference recent legal developments to substantiate this point.

Please expand this with an example involving cross-border content moderation or data access dispute involving a multinational platform (e.g., TikTok or Facebook).

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

## 2. Revised

Editor’s decision: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.