AI Ethics: From Rhetorics to a Rights-Based and Accountability Regime

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Redirect AI ethics discussion to a rights-based paradigm

Human rights and ethics are not mutually exclusive but are complementary.

A rights-based AI governance paradigm with workable remedies for consumers and citizens is an urgent imperative.

Human rights offers a robust framework because of legitimacy and enforceability.

Ethical frameworks should entail a robust commitment to accountability

Most ethical frameworks fail to provide mechanisms for public accountability, oversight and due process.

Industry-led self-regulation has not yielded much dividend; government regulation should be prioritised over self-regulation.

Principles of AI ethics should be validated through legitimate democratic processes.

AI guidelines need to emphasize potential for widening socio-economic inequality

AI-led economic transformation foundationally alters the opportunity structure for, and thus the social choices available to, certain groups and communities.

Instead of AI fueling widening economic outcomes and extending the technological gap between spaces, AI should be used to close this gap.

This calls for 'AI constitutionalism' that approaches AI and big data as fundamental resources needed for economic and social development in the 21st century.

Ethical frameworks for AI should contend with the political economy of data ownership and control

In this intelligence economy, countries and communities of the Global South lacking in data processing and AI capabilities are doubly disadvantaged.

Ethical AI should not just tackle the issue of 'misrecognition', but also address the issue of 'maldistribution'.

Liberal rights framework is limited to tackle this global inequality in AI paradigm; an AI commons approach grounded in collective rights is urgently needed.

Recognizing the economic right of nation states and communities to have sovereignty over data to self-determine their development pathways is crucial.

In conclusion...

Ethical AI discourse must address the here-and-now damage caused by the concentration of economic and political power, and entrenchment of social inequities in the design and deployment of AI systems.

Ethical frameworks for AI should acknowledge and address the claims of maldistribution along with that of misrecognition and create enabling conditions for nation states, communities and individuals to pursue their pathways to development.