

Ethics of AI in global health research

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How to translate universal principles to local realities: the Chilean experience in AI

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An online experiment, aimed to explore the moral dilemmas faced by autonomous vehicles, which obtained responses from millions of participants from all over the world, evidenced important “cross-cultural ethical variation” in their decisions¹. The rapidly growing field of AI in research and for clinical uses, have prompted several organizations and governments to launch guidelines and frameworks, and even “AI principles” intended to be used globally. There is consensus regarding some important principles, such as transparency, justice and fairness, non-maleficence, responsibility and privacy; however, the way how these principles are implemented in different settings need to be addressed locally, according to the culture and context of each country or region where AI is deployed. In different areas of research, it has been documented that researchers from the “global South” are under-represented, even when the focus is based on a country or region in this region². Likewise, most of the present guidelines and draft policy documents on AI are written by specialists from more developed countries and organizations. Not surprisingly, there are few guidelines from Africa or South America.

In the present report, I will briefly present the Chilean initiative aimed to have local standards on the development and use of AI, in order to position the country as a world hub for data science, entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem, and inclusive technological revolution for the 21st century. To elaborate this national policy, the Chilean National Council of Innovation for Development organized an interdisciplinary and diverse group of 12 experts from academia, the productive sector and civil society, and convened in a broad and open manner more than 1,300 people who participated in workshops, 400 who participated in meetings in each of the country's region, and more than 5,300 people who attended 15 meetings in which AI was examined from multiple perspectives and disciplines³. The draft document generated by all these initiatives was then submitted to a public consultation process, in which more than 200 people participated. After a thorough analysis, with further meetings with national experts, the first Chilean AI policy was launched in 2020. This AI Policy is based on four principles: AI with focus on the well-being of people, respect for human rights and security; AI for sustainable development; inclusive AI; and globalized AI. In order to achieve an inclusive AI, the actions will place special emphasis on the attributes of integrity and quality of the data to guarantee that their biases are known and adequately treated. This national policy was structured in three axes: 1st: talent development, technology infrastructure, and data management; 2nd: it includes basic and applied research, technology transfer, innovation, entrepreneurship, improvement of public services, economic development based on technology, among others; and 3rd: includes ethics, normative aspects and socioeconomics effects.

To become a useful instrument for people, it is of special importance that AI is developed with gender and sexual diversity perspective, including groups that have been historically relegated such as native people, people with special disabilities, or the most vulnerable sectors of the economy. Likewise, AI must be developed with special consideration for children and adolescents from a perspective of protection, provision and participation.

A special characteristic of this policy is to consider that every action related to AI must be approached in an interdisciplinary manner, enhancing the contribution of the various areas of knowledge. In its own words, “it is impossible to address it from the exclusive view of experts”.

References

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