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CHAPTER V

Confronting Human Rights Issues in Artificial Intelligence: A Catholic Theological Perspective

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Abstract

Various representatives and interdisciplinary collaboration is integral to preventing bias and ensuring fairness in AI system development. Taking a more comprehensive perspective on the ethical considerations of artificial intelligence (AI) within the confines of the Catholic faith necessitates the involvement of individuals hailing from diverse backgrounds, including those belonging to underprivileged communities, as well as experts specializing in various disciplines such as sociology, psychology, ethics, and human rights. This all-encompassing approach ensures that AI technologies are developed while duly considering the social, cultural, and ethical dimensions while safeguarding the rights of all individuals, particularly those susceptible to discrimination. The Catholic theological perspective highlights the significance of human labor and the need to protect human dignity in the context of AI advancement. AI should complement rather than replace human labor, respecting the value of meaningful work, fair pay, and workers' rights. The duty to explain supports an AI decision-making process with transparency, responsibility, and consistency with the recommendations of The Rome Call for Ethics. This ensures that AI systems operate within the bounds of human dignity, are understandable, and can be challenged by individuals. This dedication to advancing ethical and human-centered artificial intelligence (AI) aligns with the Catholic obligation to safeguard human rights, foster human progress, and contribute to collective welfare.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Catholic Theology, Human Rights, Holistic, Human-Centric

Introduction

The rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) poses profound questions about human rights and dignity. As AI systems become more advanced and integrated into daily life through smartphones and other devices, there is a risk

that human autonomy and self-determination could be undermined. (Francis, 2023b). Recognizing AI's potential benefits and threats, the Roman Catholic Church has emphasized centering on human dignity in debates around new technologies (Pontifical Academy for Life, 2023).

The Catholic Church acknowledges that AI innovations can improve quality of life, health, mobility, and more. However, the unreflective adoption of AI also risks perpetuating or exacerbating social inequalities, concentrations of power, and other human rights violations (Tighe et al., 2022). Recent Church documents have raised warnings about the potential for AI systems to erode human dignity and rights if development proceeds without sufficient ethical guardrails (Francis, 2019).

This essay examines Catholic perspectives on human rights and dignity in the age of artificial intelligence. Given the speed at which AI capabilities are advancing, it is increasingly urgent to build governance systems, regulations, and technology practices that uphold moral values (Jobin et al., 2019). As AI becomes deeply embedded into core social functions and human environments, Catholic voices emphasizing dignity and justice can critically contribute to policy debates.

The central questions explored are: What are the perspectives of Catholic theologians and philosophers regarding human dignity and ethics in developing AI technology? What core principles of AI ethics are formulated by the Catholic Church to protect human rights?

Moreover, what is the proper role of the Catholic Church in advocating and mediating AI policies globally today? To answer these questions, the paper surveys recent publications by Catholic ethicists and institutions grappling with emerging issues in AI accountability, transparency, bias, autonomy, and concentration of power in the technology industry. It also examines Church doctrine on human dignity, work, inequality, and the common good to guide ethical technology development. Finally, it proposes areas where further theological analysis is needed regarding the impacts of AI on vulnerable populations.

Upholding dignity in the age of intelligent machines remains an immense challenge, but one that Catholic social teaching is well-positioned to inform. Catholic voices can call for AI systems designed, governed, and used for empowerment rather than exploitation by emphasizing all people's ultimate worth and creative capacity. Realizing this vision demands ongoing reflection by theologians and active moral leadership from the Church as a global institution.

Literature Review

Man, as Imago Dei

The idea that every human being is made in the image and likeness of God is the foundation of Catholic theology's conception of human rights and dignity. The basic principle of Catholic theology is that every human has dignity, which does not depend on external factors such as intelligence, ability, or social status. (Gunarso et al., 2022) Therefore, any technology, including AI, must respect and value the dignity of every human being.

Christian faith sees the declaration of God's image and likeness in Genesis 1:26-27 as conveying God's original plan for human beings. Catholic theology has interpreted these words broadly by pointing to the unique character and qualities given to human beings, such as reason, moral responsibility, and the capacity for relationships (Puffer, 2017). These qualities distinguish humans from other creatures and give humans a special status in the world. Therefore, according to Catholic theology, the use of AI cannot demean or threaten human dignity, as humans are created in the image and likeness of God.

The theology of the Imago Dei also highlights the importance of the responsibility to serve that accompanies technological upgrades. (Herzfeld, 2002) It encourages a careful and thoughtful approach to developing and implementing AI. Technological upgrades - including AI - should be undertaken with a deep sense of responsibility and service, ensuring they are used appropriately to promote the common good and respect for human rights. This theological framework becomes the guiding principle for evaluating the ethical implications of AI and its potential impact on human rights. This raises the urgency of promoting human development, preserving human dignity, and ensuring AI's alignment with values of justice and solidarity (Tighe et al., 2022). By grounding AI approaches in Catholic theology, human rights issues that support the well-being and dignity of all individuals can be addressed.

Furthermore, the view of Divine Providence in Catholic theology reminds us of God's continuous care and guidance, including in the development and use of technology. In the context of rapid technological advancement, the Catholic perspective encourages individuals and communities to approach AI and human rights issues with moral discretion and to seek assurance that technology can be controlled to achieve the general welfare. Technology can be made accessible to all

individuals, especially those who are marginalized and vulnerable (Green, 2018). This aligns with the Catholic commitment to social justice and the poor and marginalized.

In light of the Church's active engagement in the dialogue around the ethics of AI, it is argued that the Catholic perspective provides a valuable breakthrough to understanding human rights issues in AI. By grounding the discussion on the fundamental principles of human dignity and the imago Dei, the Church provides an overarching framework for evaluating the ethical implications of AI. This leads to careful consideration of the development and construction of this technology (Francis, 2023a).

Human Dignity and Its Relationship with AI

The Catholic Church's view on the ethical implications of AI is closely related to the imperative to preserve human dignity. The Church acknowledges that every human being's rights and dignity must come first in the development and application of AI (Francis, 2023c). Human dignity is the core foundation of Catholic theology. It is the basis for understanding and cultivating every individual's worthiness and fundamental rights. Therefore, the Catholic view on AI and human rights focuses on ensuring that technology respects and fosters human dignity in all its manifestations.

This anthropocentric concept, which places humans at the core of ethical thinking, is fundamental to the Church's approach to AI. It introduces the idea that AI should not be viewed simply as a tool or object but rather as a technology that can potentially impact human life and rights in a cutting-edge way (L Floridi et al., 2021). Therefore, any use of AI that violates or denigrates human rights - such as infringement on the private sphere, discrimination, or denigration of Catholic theological principles - contradicts Catholic theological principles (Gaudet et al., 2023).

However, the Church also recognizes the challenges to anthropocentrism, especially in ethical and philosophical circles. (Graves, 2022) The idea that human existence has a network of interconnections with other existence - rather than the exclusivity of human existence itself - poses a significant philosophical challenge. It prompts a reconsideration of the architecture of value and calls for a more inclusive and technocratic approach that does not simply attribute judgment to humans (Tasioulas, 2022). The Catholic view on AI ethics introduces the need for

a comprehensive understanding of human dignity that encompasses the interconnectedness of all existence and its ethical implications.

Therefore, facing the issue of human rights in AI, the Catholic perspective suggests a balance between respecting the intrinsic dignity and value of each human person while recognizing the interconnectedness and value of non-human existence in the AI ecosystem (Luciano Floridi et al., 2018). By integrating the Catholic principles of human dignity, solidarity and care for creation; the Church's perspective on AI ethics highlights the need for inclusive and responsible development and use of AI that preserves human rights for all.

In this context, the Rome Call for AI Ethics document provides valuable principles that align with the Catholic perspective on AI ethics. It expresses the urgency for transparency, inclusiveness, and accountability in the development and use of AI. It encourages the development of AI that serves the individual and humanity as a whole, respecting the dignity of the human person and ensuring that no one is excluded (RenAIsance Foundation, 2023).

When integrated into AI ethics, the relational quality of human experience explains the need for an approach that is dynamic and responsive to the various drivers and changes in the system. This emphasizes the importance of processing ethical practices that do not have static goals to achieve but rather an ongoing process that evolves in response to the day-to-day lives of individuals affected by AI technologies (Luciano Floridi et al., 2018). This ethical framework promotes wholeness and flourishing by working with the multidimensional aspects of human experience. It reflects the core values that Catholic views on human rights held in the context of AI.

Mutuality and Mutual Benefit in Ethical Research and Development

Furthermore, the Catholic view underscores the principle of mutuality between researchers and beneficiaries of AI technologies. This principle promotes the need for a discrete and modest relationship regarding the beneficial impact of AI technologies on individuals and society. Without mutuality of esteem, the relationship between AI development ethicists and the communities they serve risks fracturing. (Luccioni & Bengio, 2019) A relationship with mutuality and mutuality of esteem assures that AI technologies are not simply public domination but a collaborative development of those who wish to be affected.

In addition, the Catholic view puts forward the need for ethical research and development of AI that takes part in the intrinsic value of each person and the

respect for their dignity (Luccioni & Bengio, 2019). It asks researchers and developers to actively engage with the ethical implications of their work and consider potential impacts on human rights. In addition, it asks them to ensure that AI technologies do not cause disaster or disrupt individual rights and freedoms. On this view, Catholic theology calls for rejecting the development of AI technologies that only have the primary agenda of wealth and power alone. It advocates a more inclusive and participatory approach in considering the needs and views of marginalized communities. It encourages them to participate actively in developing and evaluating AI technologies.

The rapid development of digital innovation and technological progress has brought profound ethical reflection across international and interdisciplinary platforms. There is a growing awareness and commitment at the international level to establish an ethical framework for AI. This is exemplified through initiatives established by private and public actors, such as the OECD and UNESCO (United Nations, 2022). Integrating the Rome Call for AI Ethics and the Catholic view on AI ethics supports ethical AI development that prioritizes human development, inclusive relationships, and mutual respect. It calls for a shift from exclusive anthropocentrism to a more inclusive and technocratic value architecture. It recognizes the importance of human rights, safety measures, and transparency in developing and implementing AI technologies.

Discussion

Interconnection Network of Rights and Responsibilities

According to Catholic theology, recognizing the interconnected web of rights and responsibilities is central to safeguarding human rights in AI (Luciano Floridi & Cowls, 2019). The Catholic perspective emphasizes that the rights of individuals are intertwined with their corresponding responsibilities to each other and with the common good. This understanding of the relationship between rights and responsibilities underscores the need for AI ethics to protect the rights of individuals and nurture a sense of responsibility in the design and use of AI technologies. From a Catholic perspective, the ethical imperative lies in ensuring that the development and use of AI systems are rooted in promoting human rights and encouraging a culture of ethical accountability.

This relational view of human rights in the context of AI expresses a call for collaboration and dialogue among stakeholders (Prabhakaran et al., 2022). It seeks to bring together proposals from different sectors of society - including

marginalized communities - to ensure that the development of AI technologies respects and protects the rights of all individuals. By seeking an inclusive approach to AI ethics, the Catholic view addresses power differentials and structural injustices that, if left unchecked, perpetuate discrimination and injustice in AI systems.

Rights and responsibilities are part of the reciprocal relationship in the Catholic perspective and AI ethics. (Sartor, 2020) This reciprocal relationship means that while individuals have rights, they also have responsibilities in correspondence to each other and the common good. It encourages the development and use of AI to prioritize the dignity of each person, ensuring that individuals can benefit from technological advancements without ostracizing particular objects or data points.

Developing Ethical Awareness and Adaptive Praxis

A critical component of defending human rights in the context of AI - as advocated by the Catholic perspective - involves developing ethical awareness and adaptive praxis (Rossi & Mattei, 2019). This approach recognizes that ethical thinking in the development and application of AI systems is not static but evolves in response to human interaction with technology's complex and dynamic nature. Further, it emphasizes the ongoing discretion of ethical implications as AI technologies evolve. It urges stakeholders to remain mindful of the evolving impact of these technologies on human rights.

The Catholic view highlights the need for practitioners and decision-makers in AI to begin engaging in ethical reflection during its development and dialogue (Smith-Loud et al., 2023). Acknowledging the limitations of one's viewpoint and proactively pursuing alternative concepts and experiences that could offer significant perspectives on the possible effects of artificial intelligence (AI) technology on human rights are part of this. To guarantee an accurate understanding of the ethical aspects of AI and its influence on human rights, practitioners and decision-makers are encouraged to collaborate with specialists from disciplines like theology, ethics, philosophy, social science, and law (RenAIsance Foundation, 2020).

This involves active participation in developing transparency and accountability processes that evaluate and address the ethical implications of AI technologies. By integrating ethical awareness in the programmatic design and implementation of AI systems, the Catholic perspective seeks to ensure that

individuals' evolving needs and rights are upheld alongside the unfolding of technological advancements (Aizenberg & van den Hoven, 2020). It also emphasizes the importance of collective responsibility and a commitment to understanding and mitigating the harms that can arise from AI technologies.

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Furthermore, the Catholic Church calls for AI ethics to be theoretically realized in concrete actions to protect human dignity (Cuda, 2021). This drives practices such as mentoring and data literacy for vulnerable groups, more inclusive algorithmic research, and advocacy for AI policies involving the public. According to McDonough (2020), this action-oriented focus is essential to ensure AI truly benefits all levels of society, especially those left behind.

In addition, the Church also calls for AI ethics to be inclusive by involving a diversity of cross-cultural and religious perspectives, not just Western views (Ballesteros et al., 2020). Thus, the resulting AI ethical standards truly reflect universal human values. At the level of the Church institution itself, Pope Francis continues to call for critical reflection and concrete action to address the challenges of technological developments for the faithful (Francis, 2020). With this adaptive ethical approach and concrete action, the Church seeks to ensure AI continues to uphold the dignity of all people without exception amidst the raging currents of technological progress.

The Catholic view emphasizes the importance of avoiding objectification and discrimination of individuals in AI systems. This includes recognizing the dignity and worth of each person and ensuring that AI systems do not perpetuate or enhance bias, stereotypes, or injustice (Taylor, 2017). To prevent biases and guarantee justice, it also asks for the involvement of many viewpoints and experiences in creating and assessing AI systems. To ensure justice in developing and assessing AI systems, it is imperative to consider diverse perspectives and experiences to mitigate biases. This can be accomplished by involving members of diverse and marginalized populations in the AI technology creation and decision-making. This can question any presumptions or biases inside the system and offer insightful information. (Prabhakaran et al., 2022)

Working with specialists from interdisciplinary domains, like sociology, psychology, ethics, and human rights, can also shed light on the possibility of bias and discrimination. (Aizenberg & van den Hoven, 2020) The Catholic perspective promotes a comprehensive approach to AI ethics that considers AI systems' social, cultural, and ethical components by participating in dialogue and collaboration. This strategy promotes the creation of AI systems that consider the rights and needs of every person, especially those disproportionately impacted by discriminatory actions.

The Catholic view also emphasizes the need for transparency and accountability mechanisms to identify and address ethical issues in AI systems (Rome Call for AI Ethics, 2020). Regular algorithmic audits by interdisciplinary teams can help assess AI systems for discrimination or biases against vulnerable groups (Mittelstadt, 2019). Finding and mitigating harms early is critical from the Catholic perspective focused on human dignity.

In addition, efforts to expand access, literacy, and empowerment around AI systems among marginalized communities are significant (Ballesteros et al., 2020).

The Catholic Church can play a vital role here through community education and capacity-building programs guided by its social teachings (Cuda, 2021). Reorienting the development and application of AI towards serving vulnerable groups, not further advantaging the powerful few, is also part of a comprehensive Catholic social justice perspective on these technologies (McDonough, 2020).

Human Works as an Essential Part of Human Dignity and its Protection in the World of AI

The Catholic viewpoint stresses the need to preserve and advance human labor in the autonomous world of artificial intelligence, acknowledging it as a vital component of human dignity. It is imperative to guarantee that artificial intelligence technologies neither overtake nor reduce human work but augment and elevate it. (Luciano Floridi et al., 2018)

It emphasizes the importance of meaningful employment, equitable compensation, and individual worker rights. It also urges that ethical issues, like preserving worker rights in the face of automation and preventing job displacement, be considered when implementing AI systems. In addition to providing people a way to make a living, meaningful work helps people develop their sense of purpose, satisfaction in life, and personal integrity. AI can help increase productivity by decreasing monotonous and boring jobs, freeing up human labor for higher-order thinking and creative problem-solving. This can lead to new career prospects. (Evans-Greenwood et al., 2018)

By preserving the value and dignity of human work in developing and using AI technologies, the Catholic perspective seeks to ensure that AI systems serve the common good and support human flourishing rather than contributing to injustice, diminishment, and degradation of human labor. (Agarwal, 2022) To establish a future where AI serves the greater good of all individuals without decreasing human dignity, it should be guided by social justice, solidarity, and respect for human rights. Human labor is widely believed to be essential to achieving professional goals and serving society; thus, it should not be diminished or destroyed in an AI-driven world.

Duty to Explain: Enhancing Human Rights in AI Decision Making

Continuing the agenda to safeguard human rights in AI, integrating the Rome Call for AI Ethic with a Catholic perspective highlights the significance of transparency and accountability in AI systems. This is especially so regarding the

duty to explain which entails enhancing human rights in AI decision-making processes. It encourages the development of explainable AI systems, supporting transparency and traceability, thus ensuring the integration of the validity and ethics of automated decision-making (Winikoff et al., 2021).

By implementing the task of explanation, AI-based algorithmic agents are required to make their decision-making criteria understandable and display information regarding the goals and objectives behind their decisions. This allows human rights to be preserved and individuals to have the ability to compete and challenge AI decisions that may violate their rights. Through the integration of the Rome Call for AI Ethics and the Catholic perspective, a human-centric approach to AI can be imposed. Prioritizing preserving human rights and dignity in the creation and application of AI can be considered a moral need (Okolo et al., 2023).

The duty to explain can start by pointing out the fundamental difference between humans and machines. It introduces that when machines have the function of automatism, this diminishes and demeans the dignity that every human being has, as well as the capacity to make moral decisions (Doshi-Velez et al., 2017).This requires a deep understanding of the ethical implications of AI, along with a commitment to ensuring that AI will serve the common good and not perpetuate discrimination, injustice, or harm to individuals or communities (Kasirzadeh, 2021).

Furthermore, the duty to explain also includes addressing potential biased and discriminatory outcomes that may arise from AI algorithms. To safeguard human rights in AI decision-making, it is essential to integrate the duty to explain and support transparency and accountability in AI systems, to ensure that decisions made by AI are fair and unbiased, and to maintain the principles of equality and fairness. By doing so, AI can be guaranteed to perform its duties as a tool to support human dignity rather than aim to exploit or harm individuals (Aizenberg & van den Hoven, 2020).

Conclusion

Catholic theology highly respects human existence with all its attributes. The ability of human beings to create and innovate is a fundamental right in every era, including in this current age of rapid artificial intelligence (AI) development. However, if not carefully developed, AI technology can threaten human life and dignity through algorithmic bias, objectification, and discrimination in AI systems (Ballesteros et al., 2020). Therefore, core ethical principles like transparency,

accountability, and inclusiveness are critically needed in developing and deploying AI technology, according to the Catholic perspective (Rome Call for AI Ethics, 2020; Schwarz, 2022). With ethical AI comes the potential for mutually beneficial and complementary cooperation between humans and AI that can enrich human life. When guided by moral wisdom, AI technologies can support and enhance human capabilities to create, connect, and flourish. This is aligned with the emphasis Catholic social teaching places upon the dignity of meaningful work and economic systems subject to ethical human judgment (Francis, 2020; Francis, 2022).

The Rome Call for AI Ethics advocates for AI development to be accompanied by a duty to explain. This means that AI systems, especially those making sensitive decisions, should be interpretable and have their process. Conclusions explained to affected humans in ways they understand (Rome Call for AI Ethics, 2020). This ethical explanation ability empowers human judgment and oversight over AI technology rather than simply accepting machine outputs unquestioningly.

It improves human development through more informed cooperation with intelligent systems (Jobin et al., 2019). In the Catholic view, the ethical development of AI also leads to social justice. AI systems should be designed to benefit entire communities without taking away individual capacities and rights. Bias and discrimination issues can exacerbate inequality, while opaque AI systems reflect a technological paternalism at odds with consent and self-determination (Ballesteros et al., 2020; Schwarz, 2022). Instead, the Church advocates for prioritizing the poor and vulnerable by using AI to promote empowerment and social inclusion.

The evolving interaction between humans and intelligent machines raises critical ethical questions and challenges in protecting human rights and dignity. Catholic experts encourage an ongoing collaborative approach between key stakeholders, including religious institutions, policymakers, scientists, ethicists, and civil society, to address these complex issues (Rahwan et al., 2019). Together, they can develop adaptive solutions that allow human virtues to guide and oversee technological progress for the common good. In this way, every person's inherent dignity and worth can be recognized and upheld by developing morally directed AI technology that protects the rights of current and future generations.

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