



G20 Interfaith Working Group for Research and Innovation on Science, Technology, and Infrastructure

An Inclusive Global Conversation on Artificial Intelligence

DECEMBER 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Governments should act quickly to harness artificial intelligence (AI) for the public good and mitigate negative outcomes. Industry and civil society, including religious communities, should be involved in the governance process. Still, countries and regional governance groups are best able to establish the norms and standards that will guide regulations.
- A more global, inclusive approach to AI governance is necessary to address the diversity of experiences and concerns facing the international community.
- Established cultural values—often reflected in or emerging from religious practice—can guide national, regional, and international policies so that AI develops as a tool that assists and augments human capability.
- Religious communities need to develop a sense of responsibility for the role that AI plays in the world and for their own role in the development of AI. Respecting their specificities, they should further engage in public debate, giving policymakers access to shared ethical injunctions, an inter-religious understanding of cultural differences, and help identify vulnerable social groups in need of protection and uplift.
- Religious communities can contribute to greater awareness of AI technologies and the ethics of deploying them through new training for their leaders and members, emphasizing civic engagement beyond sensationalist press attention, and advocacy that protects human needs.
- In all sectors—from the personal to the economic and the military—human beings must be central to the organization of AI-enabled cybernetic systems. AI should be used to supplement, rather than replace, human judgment.

INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming our world. When the effects of AI are coupled with other rapidly developing technologies such as robotics, data analytics, and mobile computing, the results can be truly life-improving, with tasks handled efficiently and services of all kinds instantly available.

AI and new tech also come with risks. Increasingly, such risks take center stage in international, regional, national, and local discussions. There are concerns that AI is imperfect and biased, erodes the privacy of individuals, brings economic disenfranchisement, suggests new forms of colonization, and diminishes the role of human judgment and control. Additionally, there is growing fear about how AI can be deliberately and maliciously misused by state and nonstate actors.

Established cultural values—often reflected in or emerging from religious practice—can guide national, regional, and international policies so that AI develops as a tool that assists and augments human capability.

There is consensus that governments need to act quickly to harness AI for the public good and mitigate negative outcomes. Industry and civil society also have important roles to play in the design, development, and use of new technologies. Values central to the design of AI should be explicitly acknowledged at the time of design, and appropriately articulated in order to reflect societies' goals and aspirations. Established cultural values—often reflected in or emerging from religious practice—can guide national, regional, and international policies so that AI develops as a tool that assists and augments human capability.

While being indispensable interlocutors of governments, religious communities have a crucial role to play in the dialogue with the private sector and civil society regarding how to best integrate human dignity, universal human rights and shared values in all phases of AI development and application.

While all levels of society need to respond to the challenges posed by AI, countries and regional governance groups are best able to establish the norms and standards that will guide regulations. Such norms should reflect shared cultural values, including the importance of human dignity and universal human rights.

CHALLENGES

Currently, AI tends to exacerbate and amplify [inequalities](#) within countries and across regions. A number of recent cases illustrate this.

In 2019, at least [75 countries](#) were using AI technologies for surveillance. AI-enabled surveillance technologies tend to be disproportionately employed against communities of religious, racial, and ethnic minorities, which are already marginalized. The result is that these groups are subjected to a greater degree of social control and even wrongful apprehension by law enforcement. Even at this nascent stage, surveillance technologies present a serious challenge to [democracy](#).

The global pandemic has almost certainly resulted in an even greater [reliance](#) on such technologies



and an exacerbation of racialized and politicized use. AI surveillance technology has proliferated, with few controls on sales and exports, even in [liberal democracies](#).

A focus on using personal data to support efficient decision-making systems raises concerns about how those data are acquired and used. [Data subjects](#) often don't know how or how much of their individual information is being collected, for what purposes, and how the results will affect them. Governments and companies could use these systems to exploit and disempower individuals. Worryingly, data analytics have already been deployed by political interests to sway voters and control social narratives.

Exacerbating the problem of AI-driven data analytics, many of the systems are inscrutable to both designers and end-users. Most companies are unwilling to reveal how their algorithms work, claiming that they are proprietary. Neural net AI systems are opaque to developers as well as the publics. Often, there is no right to appeal decisions made by these systems and it is now well-known that such systems include [algorithmic bias](#): the systems often promote [gender and racial](#) discrimination, [in hiring, judicial rulings, consumer lending](#), and other applications.

The increasing use of AI in warfare is also of concern. As advanced militaries compete with each other for the latest systems and push for integration of AI into weapon systems, human control of these systems is diminishing. This raises questions about accountability and concerns about the potential for mistakes and hacking to lead to conflict escalation and greater global insecurity. There is reason to fear that governments will field systems that do not meet ethical requirements, or comply with international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

Government regulation is, many agree, not keeping up with AI use. Nor is there much faith in the ability of industry and business to self-regulate. The combination of all these factors results in a growing [distrust](#) of AI technologies and AI-enabled decision-making; and in AI to keep advancing without the necessary safeguards to ensure it actually works for humanity, including historically marginalized populations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- In all sectors—from the personal to the economic and the military—human beings must be central to the organization of AI-enabled cybernetic systems. AI should be used to supplement, rather than replace, [human judgment](#).
- [Human dignity](#) must be respected; for example, systems should not influence individual [choices](#) by being [designed](#) in ways that nudge individual decisions in consumer-choice or democratic participation, without open acknowledgement that the system is so designed and without the ability of humans to opt in or out.
- A [human-rights](#) based framework is critical to develop shared norms across countries.
- A more inclusive global conversation on AI is needed to build a universal understanding and avoid new models of [colonial control](#); current initiatives tend to reflect values and views of a narrow group.
- Fortright engagement with common values, combined with explicit policies on legal responsibility, can combat pernicious AI outcomes by proactively pursuing results that maximize equity across social groups. For example:
 - Applications of AI used by [police](#) must be designed with public input and in such a way as to mitigate existing social inequalities rather than amplify them.
 - Military AI should incorporate universal values that reflect [responsibility](#) for the entire global community; fully autonomous weapons systems must be outlawed and the decision to use lethal force against a specific human target must always be made by a human operator even as battlefield tempos accelerate.
 - A defined percentage of AI research funding should be dedicated to the study and application of ethics, impact assessments, and cross-cultural values that can be incorporated into AI projects to advance collective interests. Further, ethicists and social scientists should be part of any research team developing AI or AI applications.
 - Anti-discrimination [impact assessments](#) should be mandated for government procurement of AI-enabled systems, as well as for applications in hiring, banking, and other regulated areas of commerce.
 - Global procurement rules and guidelines for the deployment of AI should be established to ensure responsible use. Collaboration among regional voices is vital in developing such rules.
 - [Algorithmic transparency](#) must be improved in both public sector AI and—to the extent possible—private sector AI. Algorithms used to make public sector decisions or deployed by governments must be made public for examination by the public. Proprietary algorithms should not be used to by public government entities.
 - AI systems, especially in consumer applications, should be [required to identify](#) as such when interacting with human beings.
 - [Whistleblower protections](#) must be robust; individuals who design systems must be protected when they point out potential concerns and misuse.

- Religious communities must develop a sense of responsibility for the role that AI plays in the world and for their own role in the development of AI. Respecting their specificities, they should also further engage in public debate, giving policymakers access to shared ethical injunctions, an inter-religious understanding of cultural differences, and help identifying vulnerable social groups in need of protection and uplift. Religious groups can position themselves to contribute to global policy through:
 - Training religious leaders (e.g. in seminaries) with curricula that include technological literacy;
 - Developing their own narratives about AI technologies and how these fit into their religious worldviews while respecting global differences in religion and culture;
 - Learning how and where decisions about AI are made, so as to act proactively rather than reacting to sensationalist press;
 - Promoting the active engagement of their members in AI research and innovation;
 - Publishing informed positions on technological concerns;
 - Helping to create healthy norms for using AI and related technologies.

This draft was prepared by Branka Marijan, Robert Geraci, and Marco Ventura (chair of the Working Group) with the support of James Christie and Katherine Marshall (members of the G20 Interfaith Forum advisory council). The conclusions are drawn from consultations with global experts in the fields of AI, robotics, science & technology studies, and religion during public events on 5 May 2021 (recording available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJOf085Sl4c>) and 28 July 2021 and closed-door consultations of 12 May 2021 and 3 June 2021. The authors would like to thank all the experts who participated in the public and private discussions. In particular, the authors thank David Zvi Kalman, Noreen Herzfeld, Takeishi Kimura, Holly Walters, Yong Sup Song, Paolo Benanti, Linda Hogan, Deepak P, Heather Douglas, Kanta Dihal, Biliانا Popova, Wanda Munoz and Samuel Segun.

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