



Ethics and Data Governance in AI: An African Societal Ethnography

Chiwesekora Chokwa¹

¹ University of Malawi

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Correspondence: cchokwa@outlook.com

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Author notes

Chiwesekora Chokwa is affiliated with University of Malawi and focuses on African Studies research in Africa.

Abstract

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) has raised significant ethical concerns in African societies, particularly regarding data governance and its impact on privacy, equity, and technological development. The research employs a combination of qualitative interviews with policymakers, community leaders, and technology users, complemented by quantitative surveys targeting the general public. Data is collected through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to ensure comprehensive coverage of diverse views. A notable finding from the qualitative interviews was that community members often felt their rights were not adequately protected when it came to data privacy, with a proportion as high as 60% expressing concerns about unauthorized access to personal information. Quantitative surveys revealed that 45% of respondents preferred more transparent AI applications. The study underscores the need for enhanced ethical guidelines and community engagement in AI development, especially given the diverse cultural contexts within Malawi's society. Developers should prioritise user-centric design principles to foster trust. Policymakers must establish clear data protection regulations that are accessible and understood by all stakeholders. Community organizations could be instrumental in bridging the gap between technical implementation and ethical considerations.

Keywords: *Ethnicity, Community, Anthropology, Qualitative Research, Quantitative Research, Governance, Intersectionality*

ABSTRACT-ONLY PUBLICATION

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