
A Relational Feminist Perspective on AI

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Understanding artificial intelligence (AI) as sociotechnical has consequences for research and development, since addressing its societal implications requires knowledge about social life. Yet efforts to make this knowledge usable can weaken its capacity to explain inequalities and challenge established assumptions. Those affected by gendered and intersecting inequalities are often expected to identify, explain, and challenge institutional harms themselves, without necessarily gaining influence. Drawing on research connecting mathematics and gender studies, this talk examines these tensions through two examples: efforts to incorporate intersectionality into algorithmic models and the experiences of civil society organizations involved in participatory AI in Global South contexts. Together, they illustrate why designing for inclusion does not automatically generate influence. From a relational feminist perspective, the talk investigates how power relations shape people's opportunities to influence or reject decisions, how solidarity can expand these opportunities, and how institutions can remain responsible for the harms they produce. It concludes by discussing how plurality can strengthen objectivity.

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