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Artificial Intelligence: An Algorithmic Mechanism of Institutionalizing the Social Imaginaries of a Dehumanized Global Society?

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Abstract

In the context of the information and network society, with the incorporation of information and communication technologies, one of the most marked and controversial challenges of this last decade has been the growing integration of artificial intelligence (AI) systems in contemporary society, generating a series of ethical, social, economic and political dilemmas that deserve to be addressed. Therefore, the objective of the study is to analyze the implications of AI systems in the workplace and in daily social interactions. Applying the methodological approach of qualitative research, based on the methodological design of interpretive phenomenology, semi-structured and in-depth interviews have been conducted with 20 researchers and intellectuals from 11 countries of the Ibero-American continent: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Spain, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela; all the participants in the study are associate members of the Ibero-American Network of Imaginaries and Representations. The findings reveal that, based on the established core social imaginary of "AI as an expression of modern Western instrumental rationality", social imaginaries have been institutionalized, both regarding the implications of AI in the workplace and in everyday social interactions. In the first case, the social imaginaries of ethics in AI systems, the reproduction of socioeconomic inequalities and the complementarity between human beings and AI stand out; while, in the second case, the institutionalization of social imaginaries of dehumanization of AI, social alienation of humans from their being and algorithmic subjugation of everyday social life stand out. In short, given the configuration of the dominant social imaginary of the "new global order based on AI systems", the research calls for the construction and institutionalization of the radical social imaginary of practical ethics in AI systems, which translates into technological policies and regulatory frameworks at a global and local level, implementing socio-institutional transformations, based on the paradigm of multilevel and multidimensional governance.

Keywords: *Social Imaginaries, AI, Artificial Intelligence, Workplace, Everyday Social Interaction, Capitalist Western Modernity, Dehumanized Global Society.*

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Introduction

With the emergence of the information and network society during the 20th century (Castells, 2001), the fourth wave of the industrial revolution based on the globalization of communications and network interactions had begun, which had generated significant effects in the different areas and levels of society, such as in the employment economy, in education, in the daily interaction of people, and other areas. This situation generated in the context of the network society, according to Beck (2002) translates into the configuration of a global risk society, expressed in: the rise of informality in the economy as a result of the flexibilization of work and the deregulation of labor relations, growth of unemployment, predominance of multinationals in national economies, multidimensional transnationalization, loss of legitimacy of the State, crisis of political representation, high rates of violence and organized crime, among others.

On the other hand, from Bauman's (2003) perspective, the configuration of the information and network society has led to the transition from a solid society with networks of close social, economic, political, and cultural relations and greater physical proximity, to the establishment of another type of liquid society, where those relations pass to a state of liquefaction and therefore more fragile social, economic, political and cultural relations are configured and, generally, at a distance and in a virtual/digital way.

In this context, during the last few years of the 21st century, with the incorporation of information and communication technologies (ICT) in the various dimensions of daily life, significant changes and transformations have occurred in society. A good part of daily activities has been digitalized and virtualized, which has deepened with the COVID-19 pandemic. In this process, one of the most marked and controversial challenges has been the growing integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in contemporary society, generating a series of ethical and social dilemmas that deserve exhaustive research. AI, according to (López, 2021) are:

Software systems, and in some cases also hardware, designed by human beings who, given a complex objective, act in the physical or digital dimension by perceiving their environment through data collection, interpreting the structured or unstructured data they collect, reasoning about the knowledge or processing of information derived from that data, and deciding on the optimal action or actions to take to achieve the stated objective (p. 144).

This phenomenon poses significant challenges in terms of how AI may impact humanity, with potential consequences ranging from job loss to the erosion of empathy and compassion in human interactions. All of this would eventually translate into the institutionalization of the social imaginaries of a dehumanized global society. According to the notion of the social imaginary, the social world is increasingly constituted and articulated based on the system of instituted social significations and these significations exist as the effective imaginary (Castoriadis, 2007). Thus, the purpose of the article is to analyze and understand the instituted social imaginaries regarding AI systems in the workplace and in everyday social interactions, from the perspective of Ibero-American researchers and intellectuals.

Artificial intelligence and social imaginaries

AI is a global socio-technological phenomenon developed and implemented by humans in the search for solutions to multidimensional problems, thereby improving human living conditions. In this search, this phenomenon has significantly transformed various areas of contemporary

society, influencing not only technological and economic aspects but also social imaginaries, generating threats and concerns in the daily life of human society.

The origin of AI dates back to around 1936 when the mathematician Turing created a calculation machine, and the term was established in 1950, the year in which "Computing Machinery and Intelligence" was published (Brito et al., 2019). However, formally and officially, the discipline of AI was institutionalized in 1956, through the conference "The Dartmouth Summer Research Project on Artificial Intelligence", organized by John McCarthy in Hanover, United States(Brito et al., 2019; Ortega-Esquembre, 2023; Otero, 2023).

The development and evolution of AI over the last 70 years have been towards the mechanization of thought through machines designed for that purpose and, on the other hand, the creation of intelligent agents through algorithmic procedures. In this sense, from *the perspective of those who defend its use and widespread application* in the different areas and levels of global society, they argue that speculations about the risks to humanity are, at best, a form of academic pastime (López, 2019), which would soon languish. Meanwhile, from *the perspective of prospective sociology*, AI, despite its contribution to the improvement of certain aspects of daily life, and its deepening use and application in the various sectors of society, constitutes a threat and concern for the existence of humanity. That is, transformational changes are noted in the forms of human culture and society. Also, human subjugation to evolved forms of AI is foreseen, as well as a serious risk to the survival of the human species itself, through the arrival of digital doubles or computer companions (Brito et al., 2019; Sandoval et al., 2022).

These two perspectives, from the approach of Umberto Eco (1984), account for the dualism generated by AI in society, between *apocalyptic and integrated*, according to which, the former, criticizes the negative influence of the technologies expressed in AI systems because they see them as a threat that impoverishes culture and destroys critical thinking, producing cultural standardization; the latter, accept these technologies as a natural evolution of modern society and as a democratization of access to culture, science and technological innovation. However, Eco proposes a deeper analysis that includes the ambivalence and complexity of cultural phenomena. Likewise, it is necessary to recognize both the risks and the possibilities of AI systems in the different areas of daily life.

According to the above, AI is conceived as software and hardware systems, designed and implemented by human beings, acting physically or digitally in response to certain proposed complex objectives, by perceiving their environment through obtaining and interpreting structured or unstructured data, processing and identifying the meaning of the information derived from that data, deciding and developing optimal actions that must be carried out to achieve the established objective (Barrios-Tao & Díaz, 2024; López, 2021; Ortega-Esquembre, 2023).

In line with the prospective vision regarding AI, it is a "powerful force" with devices, data, and algorithms that reconfigure society, its interactions, and individual and collective identities. That is, as humans we create these computing devices, but at the same time, they construct us (Barrios-Tao & Díaz Pérez, 2024), colonize our interiorities, and deconstruct us, with the tendency and risk of self-destruction. In the interiority of humans, AI systems exploit their intimacy, emotions, and feelings. Thus, the subjectivities and intersubjectivities of humanity are reconfigured at the pace and interests of AI systems, paradoxically, established by humans themselves. This phenomenon, in addition to the metapsychological dimension of individuals: lie of Western civilization (Farias, 2023), would be occurring as part of the process of

nullification and trivialization of evil (Espinosa, 2022), according to which the human species discarded its instinct of self-preservation for the sake of *satisfaction*, sacrificing its well-being and self-destructing itself.

Employment and Ethics in Artificial Intelligence

The integration of AI in the workplace poses numerous ethical challenges that require in-depth analysis to ensure its responsible and beneficial implementation. In this sense, as AI systems develop and evolve towards solving more complex problems, and adopting human consciousness, thought, and behavior, the human factor will soon be relegated to the background to the point that the supervision of simple and complex systems will be carried out by autonomous AI systems, which will guarantee their optimal functioning without any human supervision (Brito et al., 2019). Given this situation, the adoption of human surveillance and supervision actions of AI is relevant, due to the risk situations that its implementation and deepening in certain sectors, areas, and dimensions of human society imply. This is where ethics in AI is relevant and decisive, accompanied by a regulatory system at a global and local level.

Because, in addition to the benefits provided to certain areas, sectors, or groups, AI causes harm to others. As is the case with the automation of production processes, affecting the work environment, both in the private and public sectors, where robots/intelligent machines displace human labor, increasing the unemployment rate. Personal technological dependence is accentuated, and *interpersonal relationships* are replaced by *virtual interaction*, weakening relationships of proximity and trust between people. Human creativity and critical thinking slow down when the initiative is ceded to AI systems. In this way, the complexity of AI development outside of a code of ethics allows us to foresee a potential scenario of submission, with the consequent extermination of the human species (Brito et al., 2019; Cotino, 2019; López, 2021; Sandoval et al., 2022).

Now, considering that AI systems have been developing and evolving from weak/inferior versions (specific: algorithms that support human processes and activities) to strong/superior versions (general: algorithms, artificial neural networks, and intelligent agents oriented towards the adoption of human consciousness, thought and behavior) (Cotino, 2019; López, 2021; Terrones, 2022). Then, to the extent that the development of strong AI systems tends to become a threat, rather than a support for improving the conditions and quality of life of humans, it is necessary and urgent to incorporate ethics in the design, development, and implementation of such AI systems.

Ethical actions regarding AI systems revolve around the practical implementation and institutionalization (globally and locally) of codes of honor for those who design, develop, and implement them. This is to prevent damage and harm to human rights, especially those related to labor rights. Because the replacement of human labor by intelligent machines will bring with it a wave of unemployment, hopelessness, and fear of seeing many people's skills and abilities minimized in the face of intelligent machines (Brito et al., 2019; Otero, 2023). Therefore, it is necessary to adopt, ethically, the approach of sustainable artificial intelligence (IAS) (Terrones, 2022), the approach of governance of ethics in AI: inclusive and participatory in its design, development, and implementation (López, 2021), and humanistic approach and governance of AI that respects dignity and human rights, and with it a culture of trustworthy AI (Cotino, 2019), and the approach of surveillance and control of AI systems (Brito et al., 2019): invention of devices and algorithms that guarantee the control and behavior of these entities at the service of human interests, as long as these interests are ethical.

The European Union (EU) has opted for high standards of ethics, law, and fundamental rights. In other words, it introduces ethical and legal barriers to AI systems that do not apply to US multinationals, Chinese companies, universities, and the public sector, among others (Cotino, 2019). This panorama of the technological behavior of global actors, guided by the principles and values of modernity and Western civilization, leads to an ontological and deontological rethinking of human existence. In other words, in the context of technological interference by AI systems in the various areas and levels of society, it is necessary to configure a new global order that is coherent and relevant to the dynamics of the network society proposed by Castells (2001) and the global risk society proposed by Beck (2002). Where the radical and instituting social imaginaries of Castoriadis (2007) and the sensitive reason of the actors, proposed by Maffesoli (2022), are the motors in the process of configuration of that new global order.

Artificial Intelligence and the Dehumanization of Society

With the presence and accelerated development of new information and communication technologies (ICT), the digitalization of society and social interaction in virtual social networks; the dynamics, form and meaning of these social relationships between individuals have changed dramatically in recent times. As Bauman (2003) argued, in modern societies, social relationships between individuals have progressively undergone changes and transformations, where spaces and times have been reduced to a minimum, we have gone from heavy/solid modernity to light/liquid modernity, from the era of hardware to the era of software, in which social relationships have become fluid to move on to liquefaction processes. That is, we have moved from social relationships of greater physical proximity and therefore solid to virtual relationships at a distance, more liquid, fragile and short-lived, where the type of relationships and the configuration of individual and collective identities are more dynamic, flexible and changing, which easily fade over time. In this context, the social imaginaries of society are being reconfigured, attributing new meanings and social significances to the elements that dynamize liquid modernity.

Furthermore, with the persistent advent of AI systems, during the last decades, the transformations in the structures of social relations based on and determined by virtual social networks, digitalization and the mediatization of society have deepened in the world. Today, machines and artificial intelligent agents are shaping a new personal and social identity of individuals, diminishing and degenerating the dignity and human sense of these identities. As Turkle (2011) argues, we seem determined to give human qualities to objects and we are happy to treat each other as objects; so, we fear the risks and inconveniences of relating to people, and our life on the network allows us to hide from each other. In virtuality, personal identities are configured on the fly, so that the individual who treats people as objects is vulnerable to seeing himself as an object. This phenomenon accounts for a serious process of dehumanization of society.

This frank process of dehumanization of society can be analyzed and understood from the perspective of *desynchronization* as a social pathology derived from *social acceleration*, proposed by Hartmut Rosa as a risk in the regular dynamics of the temporal structures of society (Ortega-Esquembre, 2023). According to this approach, Western modernity is subject to a growing process of social acceleration, which has been causing pathological effects in modern societies. In these societies, social acceleration occurs in three dimensions or areas: technical acceleration, acceleration of social change, and acceleration of the pace of life.

Technical acceleration is rooted in the transformation of the means of transport,

telecommunications, and the deliberate production of goods or merchandise that become obsolete more and more quickly. The *acceleration of social change* occurs through the "contraction of the present", proposed by Hermann Lübbe, according to which changes in practices and orientations of action are appreciated through generational rhythms, producing effects on the rapid deterioration of the stock of cultural knowledge and professions; in the growing intergenerational gap, expressed in the creation of worlds of life that are alien to each other; and in the creation of an ascending social change, from which subjects do not escape, with the consequent increase in anxiety disorders, stress or depression. The *acceleration of the pace of life* is expressed in episodes of shortening of the time dedicated to eating, reduction of hours of sleep or the development of multitasking; that is, the feeling of terror of subjects due to the loss and scarcity of time (Ortega-Esquembre, 2023). According to the above, the processes of social acceleration in recent times have led to a transformation of individual and collective forms of identity. These social transformations would be conditioned by the digitalization and virtualization of society (Turkle, 2011), by the fluidification and liquefaction of social relations in liquid modernity (Bauman, 2003) and the configuration of new social structures in the network society (Castells, 2001).

Materials and Methods

The methodology of the study is based on the qualitative approach (Hernández-Sampieri & Mendoza, 2018), because it seeks to understand the perspectives of social actors regarding the phenomena that surround them, their experiences, opinions, meanings, and senses that they attribute to AI systems in the workplace and in everyday social interactions (Salgado, 2007). The methodological design that has guided the research is interpretive phenomenology because it is oriented to the analysis and interpretation of the subjectivities and intersubjectivities of the actors, expressed in their social imaginaries (Quispe-Mamani et al., 2022; Sandoval, 2002).

Participating Actors and Research Techniques

The subject population of the study is made up of 20 researchers and intellectuals from various academic disciplines of the Social Sciences and Humanities, belonging to 11 countries of the Ibero-American Continent: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Spain, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. All the participants of the study are associate members of the Ibero-American Network of Imaginaries and Representations (RIIR). The sampling technique applied is intentional, in addition to theoretical sampling, therefore the participants were selected under methodological criteria of key informants: availability of privileged/relevant information on the phenomenon investigated, accessibility, willingness, and interest to participate in the study (Quispe-Mamani et al., 2023). Given that, in qualitative studies, emphasis is placed on the analysis of the essence of social phenomena from the deep experience of the actors, the sample of the study is a small and representative number of actors, socially and culturally (Duque & Aristizábal, 2019).

For the collection of qualitative data, two research techniques have been applied: documentary review and interview. These techniques have been applied in two moments: first, the documentary review has been applied, understood as a technique for collecting data from various written, audiovisual, photographic, and other documents; generally, the documents reviewed and analyzed have been secondary sources related to the topic investigated from the project phase to the final preparation of the scientific article (Valles, 1999); the bibliographic record form has been applied as the data collection instrument, where the relevant information identified has been summarized and recorded, document by document, based on the content analysis technique

(Quispe-Mamani et al., 2023). In a second moment, the interview technique has been applied, both semi-structured and in-depth, because it is a dynamic, flexible, and open technique, and therefore has allowed the collection of qualitative data related to the social imaginaries of the actors regarding AI systems in the workplace and in daily social interactions (Lopezosa, 2020).

Data Analysis Procedure

The data analysis and interpretation process were based on five phases: *first phase*, after a selection and prior contact with the key informants, the interview guide was applied, which was recorded in a videoconference via Zoom, after prior written informed consent. These interviews were transcribed/recorded manually in Word documents and edited to assess the quality of the data collected. The data collection was carried out between July and August 2024.

In the second phase, based on the qualitative content analysis technique (Duque & Aristizábal, 2019), the research team has read and analyzed 10 transcribed interviews with greater richness and density of data (quotes/rooting), through the qualitative data analysis software Atlas.ti (Barquín et al., 2022; Quispe-Mamani & Ayamamani-Collanqui, 2023) the behavior patterns of the actors were identified, which were translated into the emerging analysis subcategories, which served to code the data available in the other transcribed interviews.

The third phase is through the application of the qualitative data analysis software Atlas.ti v.24 and based on the qualitative content analysis, during the data coding process in the interviews/primary documents, the research team has identified 1042 quotes, distributed and grouped into three categories: one central/nuclear and two main ones around the social imaginaries of the actors regarding AI systems in the workplace and in daily social interactions, and in a differentiated number of emerging analysis subcategories.

The fourth phase, with the primary documents coded and the emerging analysis subcategories, agreed upon, using the Atlas.ti v.24 software, the density or frequency of interventions/testimonies of the actors expressed in the form of roots/citations for each emerging analysis subcategory has been identified, to then prioritize their representative citations.

The fifth phase, the analysis, discussion, and interpretation of the data and results of the study was carried out using two techniques: qualitative content analysis and discourse analysis.

Finally, a triple methodological combination has been carried out to guarantee the scientific nature of the research: first, the interrelation between phenomenology and Atlas.ti (Klüber, 2014); second, the methodological triangulation between two different data collection techniques (documentary review and interview, to analyze the same phenomenon); and third, the triangulation of researchers, analyzing the data in a complementary way between the six experts of the interdisciplinary team (Forni & De Grande, 2020; Llanos-Contreras et al., 2021).

Results and Discussion

Since the study is based on the qualitative approach to research, the results and discussion are presented simultaneously, to provide coherence, sense, and meaning to the resulting data, expressed in the emerging analysis subcategories for each constructed category. In this sense, this section describes three categories of analysis referring to the social imaginaries of the actors regarding AI systems in the workplace and in everyday social interactions, namely: first, the core social imaginary of modern Western society; second, unemployment and socioeconomic inequality; and third, transformations of everyday social interactions. Around each of these three categories of analysis, during the process of empirical research, a diversity of social imaginaries

has emerged, translated in the form of analysis subcategories.

Core Social Imaginary of Modern Western Society

To the extent that the dynamics and logic of the functioning and evolution of modern Western society are built around the myth and the Promethean idea of techno-scientific progress, calculating positivism and the principles of the market economy (Riffo-Pavón & Lagos-Oróstica, 2022), then, "AI systems, as the last link in that historical process in and from the West, constitute the instituted nuclear social imaginary of modern Western society" (Castoriadis, 2007). In that process, the substitution of the omnipotence of God by the omnipotence of man has been and is being sought, for the sake of human freedom. This process of substitution implies the transition from traditional society to modern society, that is, as Auguste Comte argued, the transition from the theological state through the metaphysical path to the positive/positivist state (Paláu, 1981). In this sense, modern society embodied in that social imaginary conceived as an abstract and socially constructed scheme (Pintos, 2005), is translated into the dominant social imaginary (Baeza, 2000), through a mathematical language; because the purpose of modernity is to calculate everything and keep everything under control. Therefore, the ultimate goal of modernity is the consonance between knowledge and power, that is, knowledge must determine some form of power, and therefore domination.

In the words of Wallerstein (Wallerstein, 2007)European universalism, translated into the power of domination, revolves around three constitutive elements or peripheral social imaginaries of Western modernity, namely: the civilization/barbarism distinction, essentialist particularism and universalist scientism (Gallegos Krause, 2021).

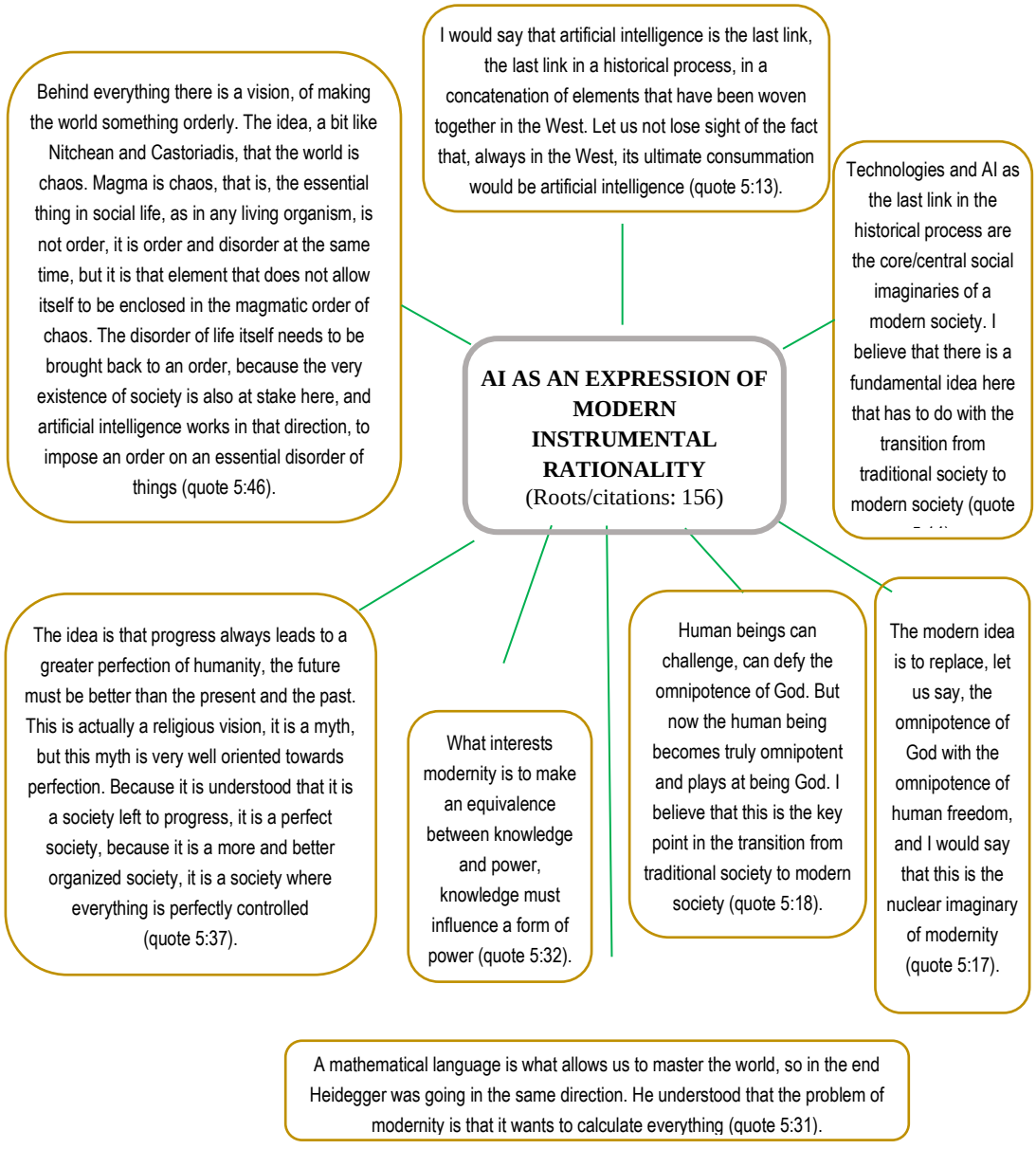

Figure 1. Semantic Network of the Nuclear Social Imaginary of Modern Western Society.

According to Figure 1, AI as an expression of modern instrumental rationality is the core social imaginary of modern Western society, which translates into the idea and logic of progress, which in turn leads to greater perfection of humanity. This ideal is typical of the myth and religious vision based on the promise of a perfectly organized, managed, and controlled society. In other words, for Moreira (Moreira, 2019) the myth of progress implies the increase of wealth, expansion of freedom, deepening of justice and, in short, the perfection of human civilization.

In line with the above, through progress and techno-scientific development, the dominant social

imaginary of "a new global order based on AI systems" has been institutionalized. Because the purpose of Western modernity and the spirit of capitalism (Weber, 2002) is to impose order for the subsistence of human society, but an order in the face of Castoriadis' *magmatic* order of chaos (Castoriadis, 2007), where the essential thing of social life and of every living organism is not order, but order and disorder at the same time. Thus, with the order imposed through AI systems, Western humanity prioritizes and institutionalizes the social imaginaries of calculation, precision, and perfection over the essential experiences of everyday life.

"What we are looking for is calculation and we are not interested in lived experience. That is the modern project, that is why Heidegger is here in the background and artificial intelligence is the last link in this chain that leads to greater standardization. I would say, without experience, I would say that it has to do with everything being very predictable, and for everything to be very predictable, everything has to be subject to a unit of measurement and the unit of measurement has to be independent of circumstances, situations, and contexts. What does it matter if it is Galicia, where I live, or Peru? That is something dispensable because it is part of the experience, the territory would have been replaced in that sense by the map" (Quote 5:54).

In this way, AI becomes the materialization of the project of Western modernity, of the control of the human being over nature, of the control of the human being over other humans, that is, with the modern project the human being is considered, not so much as a subject, but as a measurable, quantifiable and rationalizable object. In the words of Riffo-Pavón (2022), Riffo-Pavón & Lagos-Oróstica (2022) in Western modernity, hand in hand with *positivist-calculating rationalism*, the development of the symbolic imagination, proper to the subject-actors, is slowed down.

Unemployment and Socioeconomic Inequality

In the history of human society, the advent and introduction of technologies have always generated reservations, skepticism, expectations, changes, and transformations in the dynamics of socioeconomic structures at a global level. The emblematic cases regarding the incorporation of modern technologies are the industrial revolutions, processes in which those socioeconomic imaginings and practices were produced. At different times it has been argued that technologies would replace humans, largely, in their work activities. Such a situation has been gradually occurring, with the tendency for humans to depend on technology. In this regard, Diaz (2019) reports the following episode:

Our relationship with machines has intensified in recent years. Our dependence on them has increased at the same time as their relevance in a large number of activities and the role they play in them has increased. In this sense, the mobile phone is illustrative of current technology, since it has ceased to be a mere object to become an extension of our body, always close to us, increasingly performing more tasks, solving more problems, and intervening in our social life (p. 1).

Regarding the possibilities of substitution of human activities by technologies, with the active presence of AI systems, Gerlich (Gerlich, 2024) proposes a worrying scenario for the present and future, in the sense that the greatest negative impact of AI falls on the labor field. That is, AI-driven automation generates a 90% probability that unemployment rates will increase to 50% in the next 20 years, affecting both repetitive/routine activities and analytical activities, traditionally considered safer, such as consulting, finance, and broader service industries.

However, given the direct interference of technologies and therefore of AI systems in the

dynamics of socioeconomic structures at a global level, binary analyses between optimistic and pessimistic positions are regular and more frequent. However, while it is necessary to recognize the risks and possibilities of AI, the challenge is to develop analysis and understanding of the complexity and ambivalences that the AI phenomenon brings with it.

Category of analysis	**Analysis subcategory**	**Rooting *(Quotes)***	**Representative quote *(Testimony of the actors)***
Unemployment and socioeconomic inequality	Ethics in AI systems	139	The issue of ethical behavior affects each of us as users, educational communities, and certain ethical protections regarding technology affect the States themselves and the regulations that governments can offer regarding this type of technology (Quote 8:12).
	AI and socioeconomic inequalities	99	Technology, to put it in one sentence, is authoritarian and increases inequality, but when I say increases, I mean it in several quantitative senses, but I also mean it in a qualitative sense, that is, it increases the number of poor people, it increases the number of ethnic exclusions, sexual exclusion, and so on (Quote 10:11).
	Complementarity between humans and AI	90	Technology is human, and on the other hand, the human being is also a technological product in many ways, that is, we cannot exist without technology. The relationship with technology is constitutive of the human being (Quote 10:2).
	AI replaces routine human activities	53	Many of the jobs that people used to do, and are repetitive, are going to be, let's say, done by machines, that's a fact. I mean, that's it. You're going to find restaurants in Japan where no human being serves you, everything is done by machines, hospitals where you are served by specialized robots (Quote 1:1).
	Fetishization of AI	36	And then, this attempt at sacralization, of turning artificial intelligence into a new form of idolatry, of sacred fetish, making it seem that through it we will achieve the resolution of all problems (Quote 5:6).

	AI skills for work	30	I think we need to educate ourselves, first of all. If we don't educate ourselves to be able to use artificial intelligence and we don't understand what the process is, how it is structured, then we can easily fall prey to many unethical situations that are related to and are also present in artificial intelligence (Quote 17:1).
	Technology is politics and there are no technological policies	21	First of all, technology is political and therefore it is ideological. There is right-wing technology and left-wing technology, and technology is authoritarian (Quote 10:12)

Table 1. Unemployment And Socioeconomic Inequality in the Context of AI

As a result of empirical research, according to Table 1, seven social imaginaries have emerged regarding unemployment and socioeconomic inequalities in the context of AI, translated into the emerging analysis subcategories, such as: 1) Ethics in AI systems, 2) AI and socioeconomic inequalities, 3) Complementarity between AI and humans, 4) AI replaces repetitive human activities, 5) Fetishization of AI, 6) AI skills for work, and 7) Technology is politics and there are no technology policies.

The demand for *the ethical dimension in AI systems* is the most marked radical and instituting social imaginary in social actors (E=139), which implies that, in the process of implementation and use of AI systems, including from their design, it is of capital and urgent importance to provide ethical principles and values, such as beneficence, transparency, responsibility, loyalty, honesty, integrity, freedom, autonomy, respect, equity, justice and explainability (Floridi et al., 2018; Floridi & Cowls, 2019). All of this is to reduce the uncertainty and risks of AI. The viability of practical and non-discursive ethics implies, in addition to its impact from the formative point of view in the family and the educational point of view from the school, the implementation of regulatory frameworks at a global and local level. However, given the complexity of the socio-technological phenomenon and its accelerated advances and changes in time and space, it requires a multi-level and multidimensional governance approach.

In this way, in an increasingly growing scenario of the substitution of human work by AI, with the consequent generation of unemployment, hopelessness, and fear of seeing many people's skills and abilities minimized (Brito et al., 2019; Otero, 2023), several investigations argue that the ethical dimension in AI systems must be transversal in their design, implementation and use (Acosta-Enriquez et al., 2024). Thus, Terrones (2022) proposes the ethical adoption of the sustainable artificial intelligence (IAS) approach. For his part, López (2021) advises the ethics governance approach in AI: inclusive and participatory in its design, development, and implementation. Cotino (2019), on the other hand, proposes a humanistic approach and governance of AI that respects dignity and human rights, and with it a culture of trustworthy AI. Likewise, Brito et al. (2019) recommend the surveillance and control approach of AI systems, which involves the invention of devices and algorithms that guarantee the control and behavior of AI at the service of the ethical interests of humans.

All countries must have an ethical framework on AI to establish national artificial intelligence

policies, to be able to legislate because this is a danger (Quote 6:30).

It is a political responsibility, but also an ethical one. Why ethical? Artificial intelligence also raises questions of profound ethical significance, that is, to what extent an algorithm can decide on a human life (Quote 5:56).

Moreover, the complexity of the development, implementation, and analysis of AI, outside of a code of ethics, according to Brito et al. (2019); Cotino (2019); López (2021) and Sandoval et al. (2022) allows us to foresee a potential scenario of submission, with the consequent extermination of the human species.

Regarding AI and *socioeconomic inequalities*, it is one of the most marked social imaginaries in social actors (E=99), which shows that AI systems have a direct and indirect impact on the generation of various socioeconomic inequalities, including unemployment; poverty; ethnic, and racial and sexual exclusion; access restrictions; digital, generational, geographic and hemispheric gap, among others. This situation responds to the extent to which global society is structured unequally and hierarchically, where a small group of economic, political, and techno-scientific power has institutionalized the dominant social imaginary of a new global order based on AI systems, according to which algorithms with a discriminatory tendency are developed and implemented, beyond social inequalities, based on the feeding or provision of biased or oriented data and information under recurrent patterns.

One thing is indeed the technology that we have access to today and another thing is the technology that they have access to. For example, people who are in Silicon Valley or who have a lot of economic resources have the technology that we will have access to in 10 years or more (Quote 6:18).

Let us think again about inequality. What algorithms do in general is reinforce the existing inequality, they do not liberate the algorithms. Why? Because the algorithm is trained with existing data (...) there is a lot of literature from the United States, that says: very well, blacks are generally bad and there are 70% of blacks in prison, the algorithm is fed with that data. So, if I am a black man and poor, I will have a 70% chance of being considered a thief (Quotes 10:31 and 32).

So, the people who have access first, to be able to know, internalize, and finally use technology, are obviously the societies, the human groups that have a higher economic, cultural, and social capital (Quote 12:15).

In line with the above, the mother of the socioeconomic inequalities generated by AI systems is unemployment, which is translated transversally into other inequalities. In this sense, several investigations maintain that the automation of production processes has affected employment at the private and public levels, displacing human labor and increasing the unemployment rate (Brito et al., 2019; Cotino, 2019; López, 2021; Sandoval et al., 2022; Shen & Zhang, 2024). The significant impact of AI is through the generation of massive unemployment, with a high probability that unemployment rates will increase up to 50% by 2040 (Gerlich, 2024).

On the other hand, one of the emerging social imaginaries revolves around the *complementarity between AI and human beings*, with a density or rooting of important data/citations (E=90), which allows us to maintain that, in the social imaginary of the actors, there is an interdependence between the two components of the socio-technological phenomenon because the relationship with technology is constitutive of the human being. From this perspective, the

origin, development, and implementation of technologies depend on the ingenuity and creativity of humans in the face of the needs of subsistence, improvement, and well-being in the different stages of their evolution and development, from the discovery of fire, coal, gas, electricity, automobile, telephone, internet to AI. Therefore, we can affirm that technologies have always been allies of humans in the daily lives of various sectors and areas of society. However, the question is: What made technologies translate into threats and risks for humanity itself? The answer, according to Cabrera (Cabrera, 2003, 2006) lies in the "imperative of technologies", that is, in the truth of modern technologies, which is mercantilism, according to which there is a customer for everything: consumption, novelty, and fashion. This argument connects with the theories of order and progress of A. Comte and the instrumental rationality of M. Weber, in modern Western society.

However, despite the mercantilist paths adopted by technologies, which ultimately transcend or depend on the ethical, political, economic, and cultural dimensions, the challenge of global human society is to revalue and redirect itself towards that originally instituted social imaginary of complementarity and interdependence between both components of the socio-technological dynamics.

It seems to me that artificial intelligence is an instrument of human production and that we, as humanity, must try to continue to have control over AI (Quote 2:69).

The performance and destiny of technologies certainly depend on ethics and politics, and as such is linked to the social imaginary that *technology is political*. However, *there are no technological policies* (E=21) at global or local level, duly institutionalized. Such policies can significantly reduce those biased and victorious positions and practices (pessimistic/apocalyptic versus optimistic/integrated) around technologies in general and AI, in particular. In this sense, the following testimonies of the actors are illustrative:

What will be the State policies, for example, in the event that artificial intelligence enters the agricultural world, in a very agricultural country, and artificial intelligence displaces tens of thousands of workers. So, there, obviously, there must be control. What I was saying to you a little while ago, we cannot give the possibility of omnipotence and omnipresence to artificial intelligence and new technologies (Quote 12:30).

It is too high a price to pay to give up the sovereignty of the country. As the concept of technological sovereignty is a very important concept, along with that of appropriation. What kind of technological sovereignty do we have? What kind of protection from the national State against private companies do we have? (Quote 10:17).

Thus, the challenges facing humanity are the development and implementation of an ethical framework that gives rise to technological policies, and these, in turn, support regulatory frameworks at different levels and areas at global and local levels (Hadzovic et al., 2024). As we have already stated above, all of this requires a multi-level and multi-dimensional governance approach.

To the extent that there are no global and local actions to promote and, in turn, control AI systems, the tendency of the social imaginary, according to which *AI replaces routine human activities* (E=53), will be greater, increasing apocalyptic positions regarding AI. In this sense, Smit et al. (Smit et al., 2020) have estimated that automation can cover up to 60% of all occupations, and in a third of the activities of said occupations; in addition, in the field of work activities that require analytical, critical and judicious thinking in the various sectors, AI would

make significant advances. This panorama shows that not only routine tasks would be at risk (Bankins & Formosa, 2023), but also more complex analytical tasks; a scenario that is not yet in the social imagination of the actors at the Ibero-American level. However, another of the social imaginaries of the actors is the need for *AI skills for work* (E=30), that is, given the scenario of displacement of routine human work as a result of AI, in the social imaginary of the actors there is a need for cultural change in the face of the incorporation of AI to avoid being displaced by machines. Therefore, it is necessary to redefine work roles, that is, workers are obliged to develop new skills and competencies that face the challenges of AI technologies (Bessen, 2018; Capraro et al., 2024; Muñoz, 2024).

Finally, the social imaginary of *the Fetishization of AI* (E=36) is another of humanity's challenges, because there are important sectors of society that maintain that, through technologies and AI systems, the resolution of all the problems of daily life will be achieved. In this sense, according to Cabrera (2022) in modern human societies we live the "technological dream", according to which social imaginaries of aspirations, promises, and technological achievements without limits are configured. Hence, it is argued that technology almost always fulfills what it promises. However, paradoxically, as humans we produce these technologies and computing devices, but at the same time, they construct us, colonize our interiorities, and deconstruct us, with the tendency and risk of domination, submission, and self-destruction (Barrios-Tao & Díaz, 2024; Berlinski et al., 2024). These are the risks to which global society is exposed with technological and scientific advances, whose scope and impact demand the transformation of traditional socio-political institutions, such as the nation-state, for their effective management (Beck, 2002).

Transformation of Everyday Social Interactions

With the advent of modern technologies in general and AI systems in particular, new social imaginaries have been reconfigured and instituted, providing new patterns, meanings, and social significance to the processes of social interaction of humans in everyday life. In this process, with the transition from close relationships to virtual and remote relationships, new imaginaries of individual and collective identity have been instituted, more dynamic, changing, and ephemeral in time (Bauman, 2003). From this perspective, as a result of empirical research, several social imaginaries have emerged that have been instituted with the interference of AI systems, such as: 1) Manifestations of dehumanization of AI, 2) Social alienation of humans from their being, 3) Algorithmic subjugation of everyday social life, 4) Mediatization, manipulation and delegitimization of the media, 5) Social acceleration at different levels and areas of society, 6) Dualism of AI in society, and 7) Positive transformations in everyday social interaction (see Table 2).

Regardless of the binary positions regarding AI, the reality is that, based on life experiences, in recent years, technologies and therefore AI have institutionalized social imaginaries of dehumanization in society (E=91). The manifestations of dehumanization are expressed in the words of Marszałek-Kotzur (2022) and Turkle (2011) in the fact that the ascending tendency of humans is to humanize the objects in their environment and vice versa, which generates risks and difficulties in the process of social interaction between humans; therefore, the individual who treats people as objects is vulnerable to seeing himself as an object (Bender, 2024). This logic and dynamics of behavior of individuals in society would be conditioned by the mechanical, abstract, and calculating rationality of Western capitalist modernity.

Furthermore, in terms of social actors, the social imaginaries of dehumanization are manifested

in the loss of the collective and the communal, because humans today tend to be, increasingly, individualistic/individualistic, that is, society is in the process of atomization, where each person is locked in his or her own small information fiefdom, from which it is very difficult to escape. It is increasingly common for humans to establish social relationships mediated by technologies; in this process, imaginary social meanings regarding emotions, empathy, love, ethnicity, imagination, and creativity are transformed in the process of social interaction. For Bender (Bender, 2024) the process of dehumanization by AI, precisely, translates into greater trust in technologies than in humans, naturalization of AI data as fundamental truth, overvaluation of information from dominant social sectors, and biased evaluation of the white racial prototype.

Category of analysis	**Analysis subcategory**	**Rooting** ***(Quotes)***	**Representative quote** ***(Testimony of the actors)***
Transformations of social interactions	Manifestations of dehumanization of AI	91	This scenario, let's say, dominated by an abstract, mechanical, standardized rationality, by universal force, is what ultimately favors the dehumanization of the world (Quote 5:55). If we are in a state of dehumanization, it is because we lose the human, the collective is lost. So, we are increasingly becoming more individual (Quote 6:9).
	Alienation of humans from their being	79	It is invading us, we are so alienated from wanting to be everywhere at the same time, I incorporate it as another companion. I grab my cell phone and with it I keep myself updated, informed, believing that this is being informed, but I am in that microclimate (Quote 2:54).
	Algorithmic subjugation of everyday social life	72	Through algorithms they try to focus us on a certain framework of values, to understand the world and to act in the world under a certain logic (Quote 12:59).
	Mediatization, manipulation and delegitimization of the media	70	Today, the concept of fake news has had a brutal impact on the credibility of the media. What some call a post-truth has been established, limited to the ideological patterns of a power group (Quote 8:37).
	Social acceleration at different levels and areas of society	60	Everything has been reduced in terms of duration, everything ends up being extremely structured and leaves very little room for reflection on what is being experienced (Quote 9:33).
	AI dualism in society	28	I do not believe it is fair to judge artificial intelligence in apocalyptic terms, nor is it logical to make a reading emphasizing the beatitudes and virtues and more that artificial intelligence will bring us (Quote 5:2).

	Positive transformations in everyday social interaction	18	AI even allows us to work collaboratively with other researchers from other countries (Quote 2:39). If relationships are mediated by technology, they will bring us closer together as human beings (Quote 18:23).

Table 2. Transformations of Social Interactions in the Context Of AI

Related to the social imaginaries of dehumanization in society, some imaginary social significations emerged regarding the action and interaction of social actors in everyday life, such as the *alienation of humans from their being* (E=79) and *the algorithmic submission of everyday social life* (E=72). Both are social imaginaries instituted by AI systems in human society that, on the one hand, establish recipes and patterns of behavior for actors, up to situations of abstraction from the social being itself (social alienation) that, in the long run, through excessive or compulsive behaviors, the tendency is the degradation and loss of meaning of the human. In this way, humans in the context of AI systems, voluntarily and involuntarily, become instruments of technological submission.

You are becoming just another puppet of technology when it is a tool that should be used the other way around (Quote 7:9).

Precisely, in coherence with the above, the phenomenon of algorithmic submission of daily social life has been instituted in the imagination of social actors, which accounts for the process of algorithmic manipulation to think, feel, and be in a way, determined by a framework of values and techno-scientific logic, that is, with the process of *algorithmization* of social meanings in daily social interaction, algorithms are overvalued and imposed over social actors. Thus, the algorithm guides, models and molds the social behavior of actors in society. That is, in the context of *algorithmic culture*, the delegation of cultural work to automated systems occurs (Sued, 2022), where algorithms produce multiple narratives and model different experiences.

According to all that has been stated so far, AI systems, from their design and implementation, are crossed by the political and ideological dimension, and as such, in the process of action and communicative interaction in daily life, the various media, both mass and social/digital media, have given rise to the configuration of the social imaginary of *mediatization, manipulation and delegitimization of the media* (E=70), because with the introduction of technologies the phenomenon of "fake news" has been generated, which, in turn, has given rise to the phenomenon of "post-truth" (Belanche et al., 2024). These phenomena occur because there is the political intention of misinforming to obtain political gain and generate certain acceptance in public opinion. The mediatization of politics, according to Quispe-Mamani et al. (2023) implies the intervention of the government in the media, through the construction of socio-semiotic discourses, to manipulate the political behavior of citizens.

On the other hand, in the social imagination of the actors, given the interference of technologies and AI, in the context of modern Western society, the phenomenon of *social acceleration has been instituted at different levels and areas of society* (E=60). The whirlwind that exists with AI means that everything is going at a thousand miles an hour, and this makes everything become obsolete, quickly, in time. In this way, for H. Rosa, the acceleration of generational and intergenerational social change is producing harmful effects on the health of the population (Ortega-Esquembre, 2023).

We live in a very stressed, competitive society; goals become medium or short term, but this is leading to a social acceleration and making us sick (Quote 7:51).

Wasting time is almost a sin in the capitalist system, leisure has characteristics that are already very co-opted by the capitalist system (Quote 9:35).

Modern, capitalist societies are strongly regulated by temporality, that is, the more time we save in modernity, it seems that we have even less time (Rosa & Bialakowsky, 2018). In this way, with technologies and AI, the feeling of terror due to the scarcity and loss of time has been instituted in the social imagination of the actors (Ortega-Esquembre, 2023).

However, despite the institutionalization of social imaginaries of positive *transformation in everyday social interaction (E=18)*, which implies the significant contribution of technologies and AI in the socioeconomic and cultural development of modern society, from and in the different sectors; however, that socio-technological phenomenon has configured the social imaginary of *dualism in society* (E=28), that is, the emergence of binary positions, in favor of Fetishization or technological daydreaming, and against Apocalyptic or distrust of technologies and AI (Qi et al., 2023; Shen & Zhang, 2024). This dualism promoted in modern society would have occurred as a result of the institutionalization of the dominant and dichotomous social imaginaries: the imaginary of progress and the imaginary of tradition (Carretero, 2019) that is, between science and religion, and on whose radicality of both dominant social imaginaries lies dualism.

Conclusions

As the last link in the historical process developed in and from the West, AI systems have been institutionalized as the core social imaginary of modern Western and capitalist society, based on instrumental, positivist and calculating rationality; according to which, the freedom, development and perfection of humanity revolves around the idea and logic of techno-scientific progress. In this way, the dominant social imaginary of "a new global order based on AI systems" has been institutionalized today. Where privileges emerge around the social imaginaries of calculation, precision and perfection over the essential experiences of daily life.

Although the incorporation of technologies in the progressive historical process of humanity has contributed significantly to the subsistence, improvement and well-being of humans; however, it has also institutionalized the social imaginary of the reproduction of socioeconomic inequalities, with the tendency towards greater dependence/subordination and fetishization of humans with respect to technologies. Given this panorama, the study reveals the radical and instituting social imaginary of ethics in AI systems, which implies the adoption and practical implementation of an ethical framework that gives rise to technological policies and these, in turn, support regulatory frameworks at different levels and areas at a global and local level. All of this implies the transformation of traditional sociopolitical institutions, such as the nation-state, for their effective management. In this way, it would be possible to revalue and adopt that originally instituted social imaginary of complementarity between the two components of the socio-technological dynamics: humans and AI.

On the other hand, the presence and interference of AI systems in society has meant significant transformations in the process of daily social interaction, institutionalizing social imaginaries that transcend the ontology of the human being, such as dehumanization, manifested in the Fetishization of AI and technological illusion; social alienation, expressed in individualism and the atomization of society; and algorithmization, revealed in the overvaluation and imposition

of algorithms over social actors. These imaginary social significations have been deepened within the framework of the social imaginaries of mediatization of society and social acceleration driven by modern Western capitalist society itself.

Therefore, within the framework of the new global order based on AI systems, the construction and institutionalization of that radical social imaginary of a practical ethics in AI systems is proposed, which translates into technological policies and regulatory frameworks at global and local levels, implementing socio-institutional transformations, based on the paradigm of multilevel and multidimensional governance. In this sense, interdisciplinary research between social sciences and natural sciences is necessary, based on the mixed methodological approach, for the analysis, understanding and holistic explanation of the socio-technological phenomenon, and its subsequent effective, more humane and sustainable management, at the different levels of society.

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