

AI Literacy: A Primary Good

Paige Benton^{1, 2} [0000-0001-7047-0452]

¹ Department of Philosophy, University of Pretoria, Pretoria South Africa

² Centre for AI Research (CAIR), CSIR, South Africa

paige.benton@up.ac.za

Abstract. In this paper, I argue that AI literacy should be added to the list of primary goods developed by political philosopher John Rawls. Primary goods are the necessary resources all citizens need to exercise their two moral powers, namely their sense of justice and their sense of the good. These goods are advantageous for citizens since without them citizens will not be able to fully develop their moral powers. I claim the lack of AI literacy impacts citizens' ability to exercise their sense of justice and their sense of the good. Without citizens having the ability to understand how AI technology works – including being aware of the social and political implications and the limits and possibilities of this technology broadly speaking – this could impact their ability to participate in a free, equal and fair society and their ability to carry out their conception of the good. Thus this paper is a call for AI literacy to be regarded as a basic good in a liberal constitutional democracy in order for citizens to be able to exercise their freedom and equality.

Keywords: Basic Needs · Ethics of AI · John Rawls · Justice as Fairness
· Political Liberalism