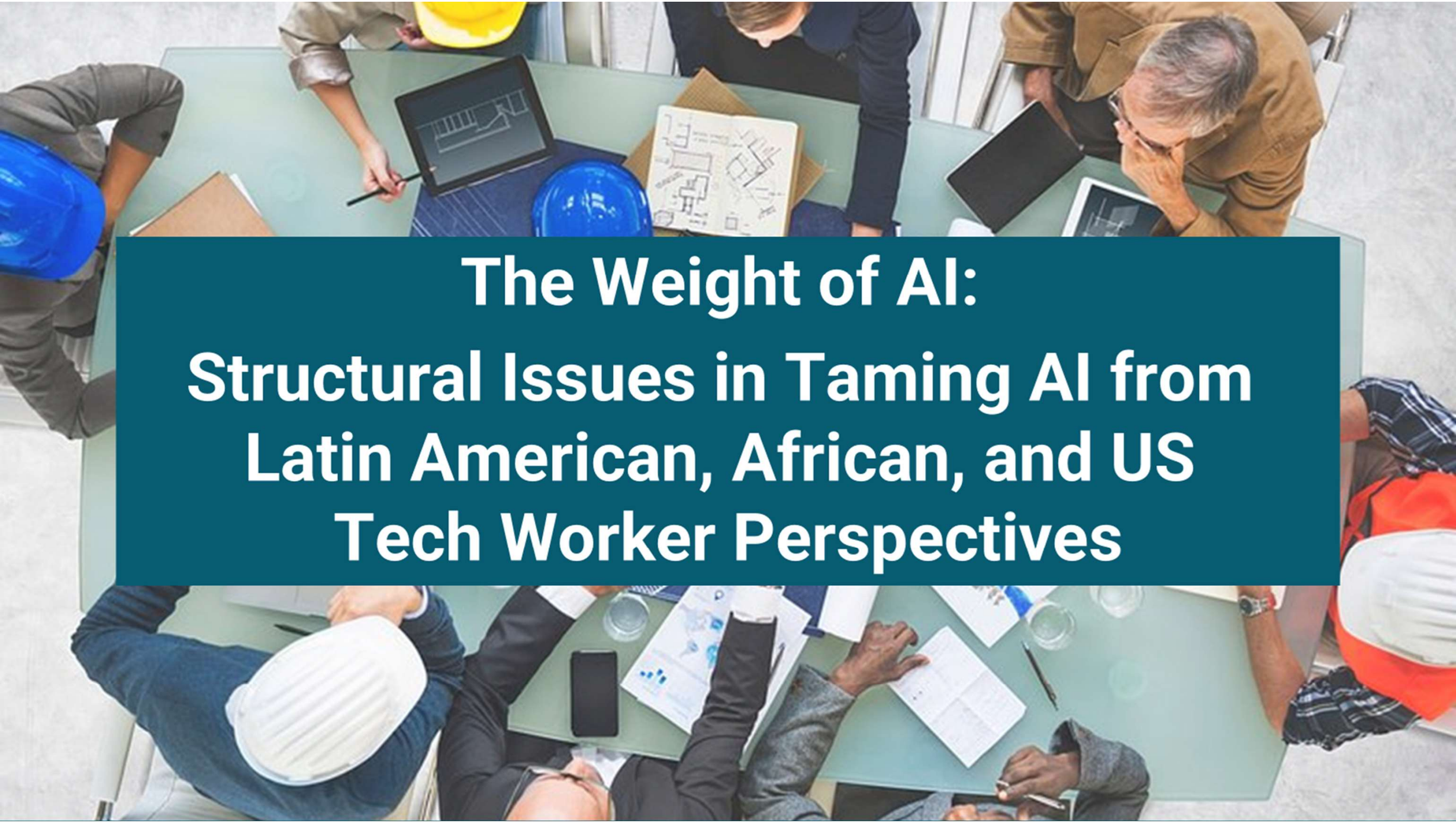


The Weight of AI:
Structural Issues in Taming AI from Latin American, African, and US Tech Worker Perspectives

AI, Software, and Wetware: Listening to Latin American Voices

Karen Smiley – She Writes AI

Katrin Fischer – Brandeis University

Mary Marcel – Bentley University

Conference of the Association for Business Communication
Baltimore, MD – October 14-17, 2026

Preview

- Latin-American context
- Overview: **AI, Software & Wetware** interview series
- Latin-American voices:
  - Key themes
  - What is specific to Latin America?
- Latina voices from the **She Writes AI Everywhere** book series
- Takeaways

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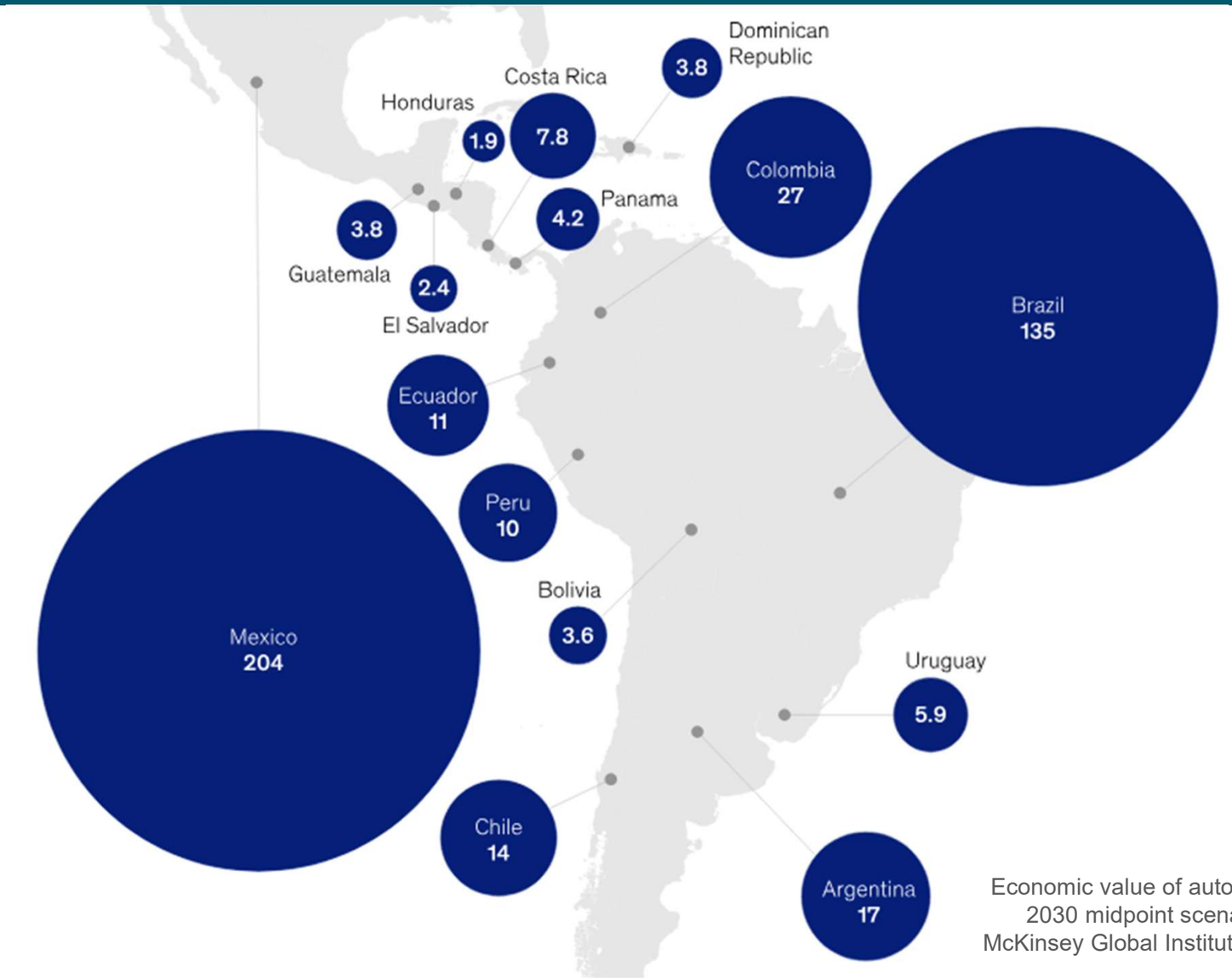


The Latin-American Context

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Economic Diversity of the Region

AI could generate $450 billion of economic value across LatAm by 2030.

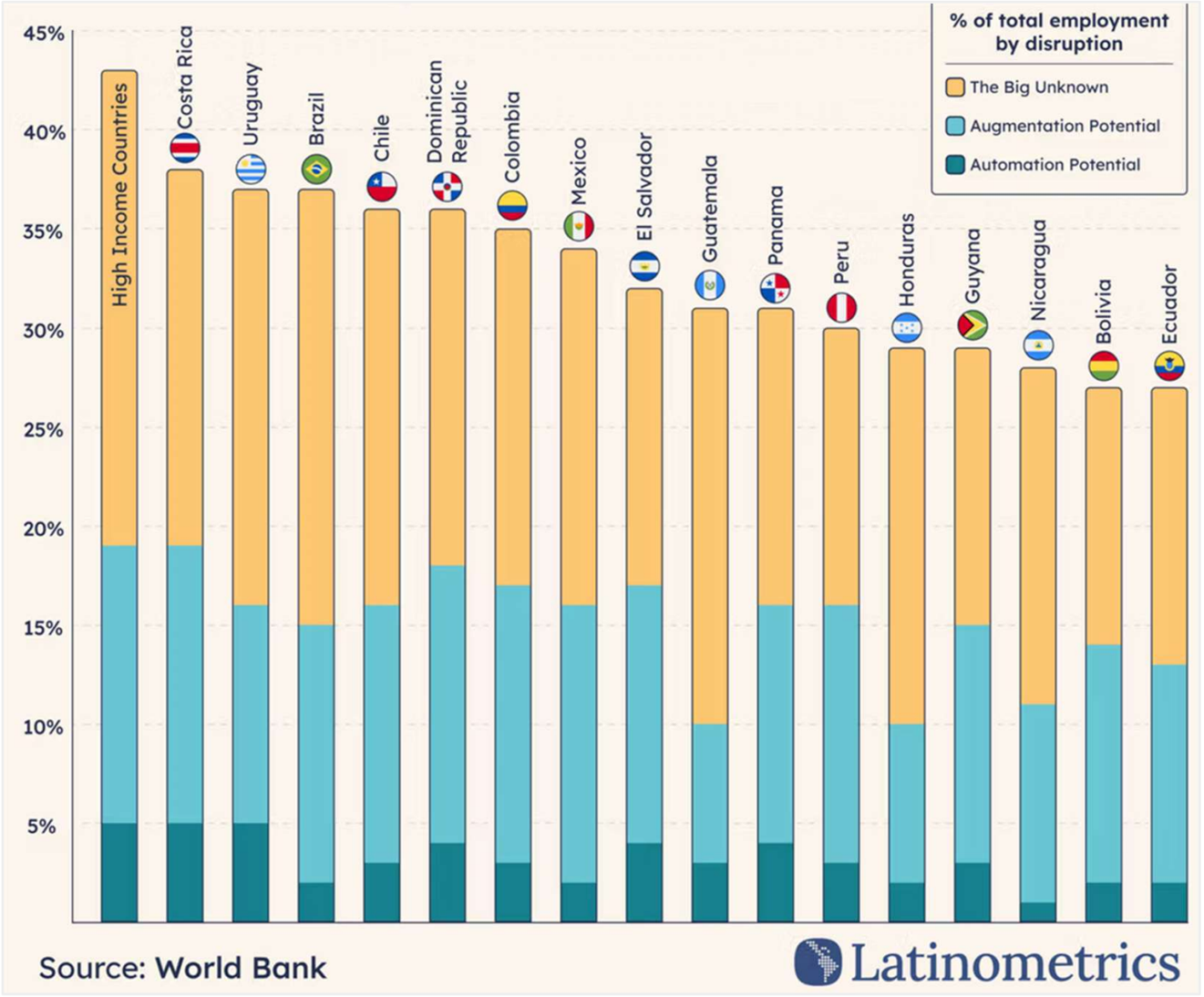


Economic value of automation, 2030 midpoint scenario, McKinsey Global Institute, 2026.

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Impact of AI on Jobs

World Bank says that few jobs will be eliminated



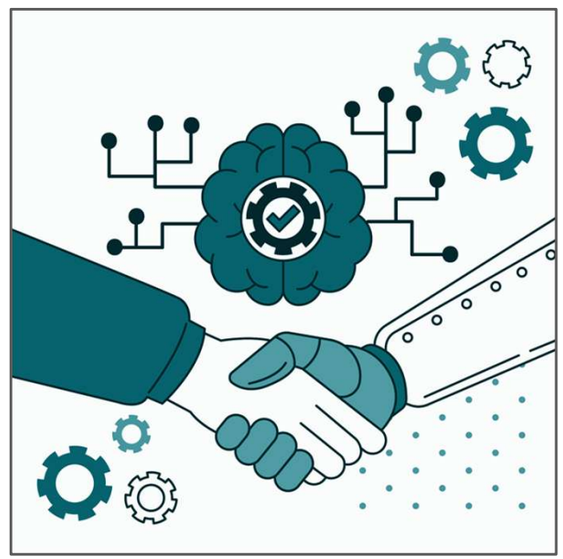
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McKinsey: People, AIs, and Robots

66%: Skills needed for **work done by a combination of people and AI**

21%: Skills needed for **AI-led work**

13%: Skills needed for **people-led work**



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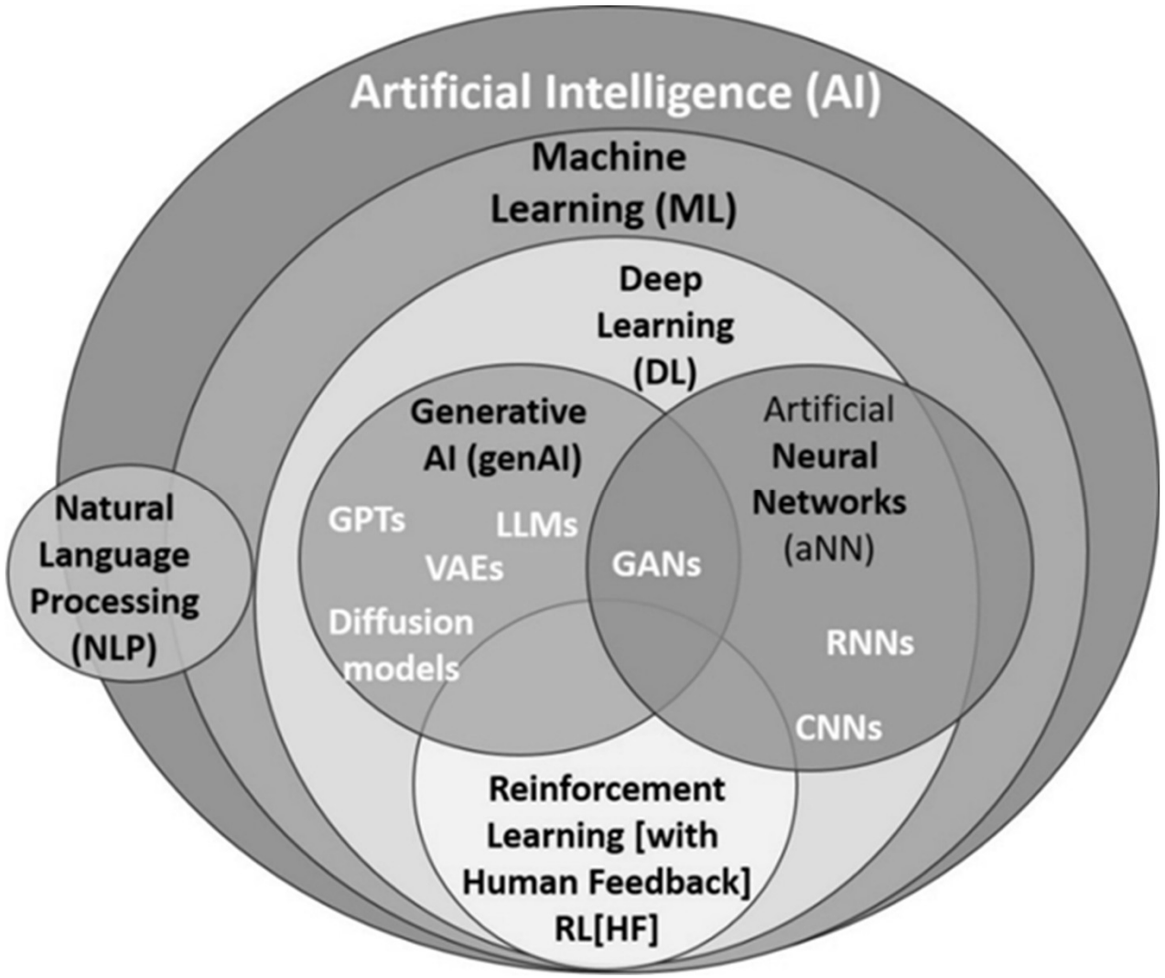
Methodology

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The “AI, Software, and Wetware” Interview Series

Artificial Intelligence spans

- classical statistical methods
- data analytics
- machine learning
- generative AI
- other non-generative AI



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Authentic Voices from People Worldwide

- Weekly interviews since Aug. 2024
- 133 interviews to date
- 10 standard + 1 open-ended question(s), with follow-ups
- Zoom or written; all transcripts human-edited
- Published via Substack, LinkedIn, podcast



AI, Software, & Wetware series

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Core Research Questions

1. Experience with AI
2. Examples of AI use
3. Concerns about AI
4. Attitudes towards AI collection
5. Building users' trust

Interview questions and slides

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Dual Approach to Data Analysis

Computerized Text Analysis

- Sentiment Analysis using natural language processing and machine learning
- Clustering
- Correlation Analysis

Traditional Textual Analysis

- Close reading
- Human interpretation
- Identifying response patterns: themes, categories, concepts
- Reading “between the lines”

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Latin American Voices

Costa Rica









Chile





Peru



Mexico



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Key Themes

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AI → Productivity

Interviewees said AI

- improves productivity and efficiency
- automates repetitive or routine tasks
- accelerates creative processes
- expands access to knowledge and resources
- can support economic mobility



"AI tools can enhance our work by simplifying and speeding up repetitive tasks that we hate, and I do hate."

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AI → Partner

Interviewees described AI as

- Starting point
- Brainstorming partner
- Collaborator
- **Not as decision-maker!**



"I use it to challenge my assumptions, explore options, and pressure-test ideas. But the decision is always mine. The AI is a thinking partner, not the decision maker."

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Transparency + Accountability = Trust

Concerns about

- data privacy
- surveillance
- bias and discrimination

Feelings of

- having lost control over sensitive personal data
- resignation

Call for

- transparency, privacy, data protection



"All our data is already somehow exposed and it feels like we lost control of our information."

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Consent + Credit + Compensation (‘3Cs’)

Concerns about

- copyright and intellectual property
- fair compensation for artists
- creator consent
- the use of creative works without permission



Interviewees emphasized the importance of

- fair compensation
- proper attribution
- informed consent

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What is specific to Latin-America?

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Opportunity Requires Inclusion



Democratizing creativity:

"... more people have the power to become artists in some way and experience what creating art is."



Shared benefits, shared future:

"We will need to make sure that all people will be included in this revolution."

Guidance over warnings:

"Humans deserve maps more than warnings. … I would develop an educational program, the basics."



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Concern About Weak Data Protections

Existing regional laws are insufficient for regulating

- big technology companies
- social media platforms
- other bad actors



The EU's GDPR is seen as a model for

- stronger regulation
- greater transparency
- enhanced accountability

LatAm user experience is different

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AI’s Impact on Local Communities

AI may strengthen communities by:

- Expanding educational opportunities
- Enabling skills development
- Advancing socioeconomic mobility

Affordable public education supports AI readiness.

AI poses risks to local communities through:

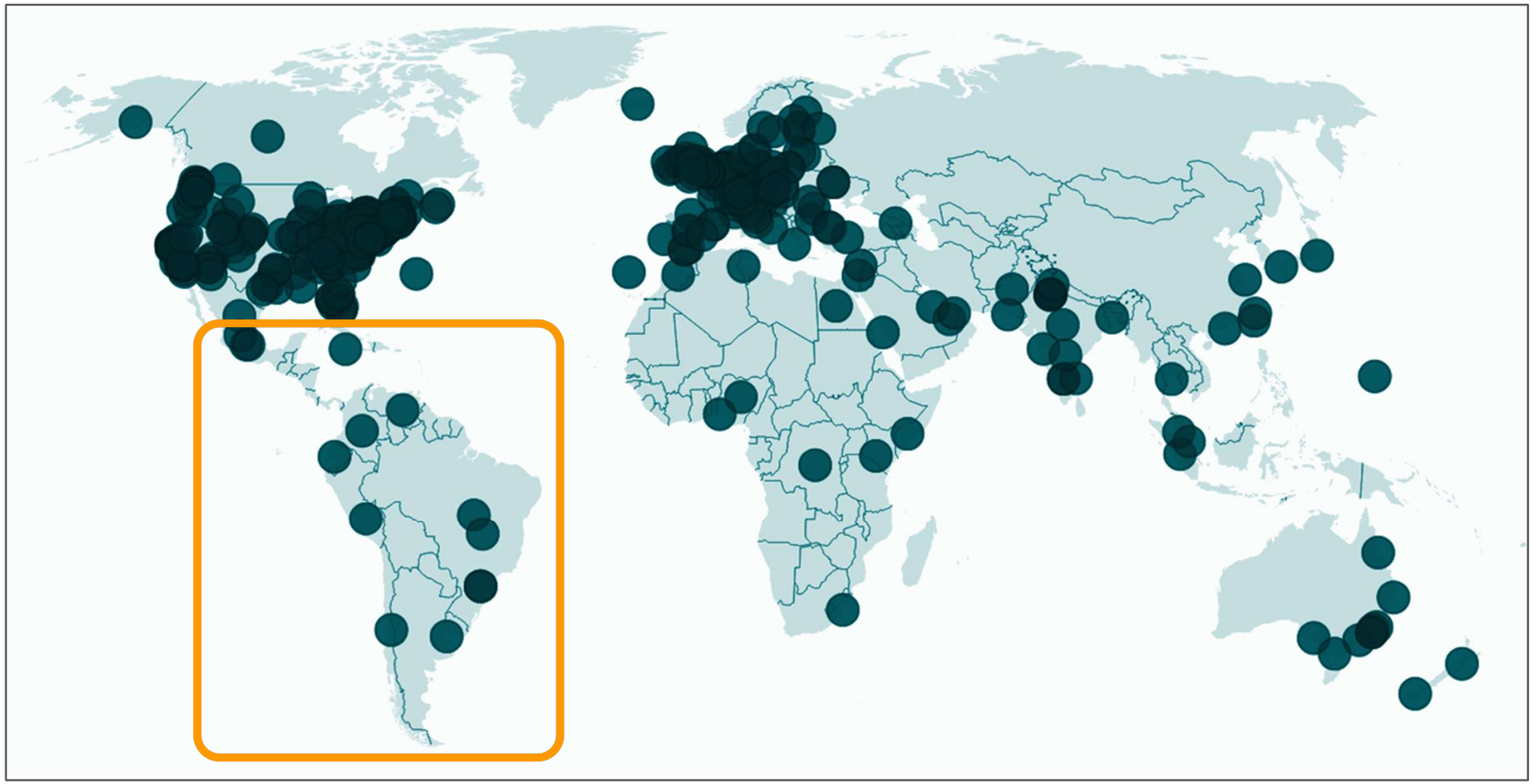
- Resource-intensive data centers (e.g., in Chile)
- Increased water consumption, pollution and environmental degradation
- Impacts on households and agricultural livelihoods

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She Writes AI Community

Goal: To elevate the voices of women and nonbinary writers worldwide on AI and data

shewritesai.org



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“She Writes AI Everywhere” Book Series

Volume 1 published on March 8, 2026

➔ 24 chapters, 26 writers from 14 countries
(1 from Latin America, 1 from Africa)

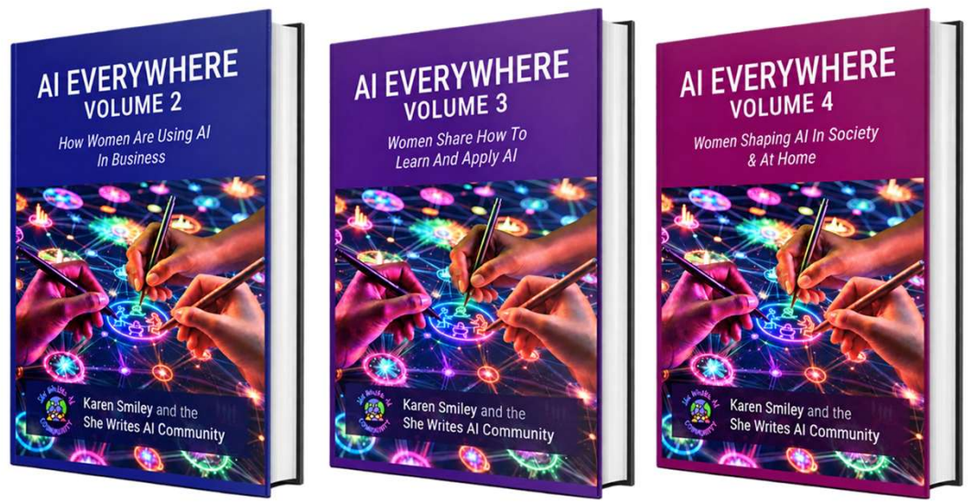
Volumes 2, 3, 4 publishing on Nov. 1, 2026

➔ 10 chapters each, 32 writers from 18 countries
(5 from Latin America, 2 from Africa)

aiEverywhereBooks.com

shewritesai.org/buy





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Voices of Latin American Authors of Book Chapters



Ana Mourão

Brazil, USA



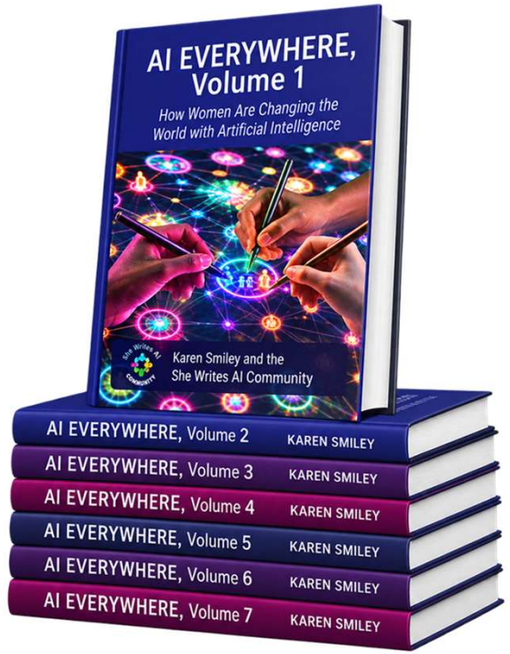
Cata Páez

Chile



Elena Calvillo

Mexico



aiEverywhereBooks.com
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Elisa Terumi, PhD

Brazil



Marcela Distefano

Argentina



Verónica Ponce Camacho

Ecuador

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Latin American culture and AI

Clash between WEIRD BigTech AI company values and Andean cultural values



Image By Cancillería Ecuador - Flickr, CC BY-SA 2.0



"In Andean cosmovision, there's a concept our grandmothers already practiced without giving it an academic name: ***Sumak Kawsay****, the good living. It's not about living with more; it's about living with meaning. …* ***When AI gives you more tasks instead of more peace, something went wrong.****"*

***WEIRD** = **W**estern, **E**ducated, **I**ndustrialized, **R**ich, **D**emocratic*

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How & why AI flattened a Latina voice

How:

*AI made her sound "**younger, softer, more from the northern hemisphere**"*

"correct, well-structured, and completely foreign. It didn't sound like a 45-year-old journalist doing radio from the Andes."



Why:

*Under-representation of **women** **and** 'low-resource' **dialects** like Andean Spanish*

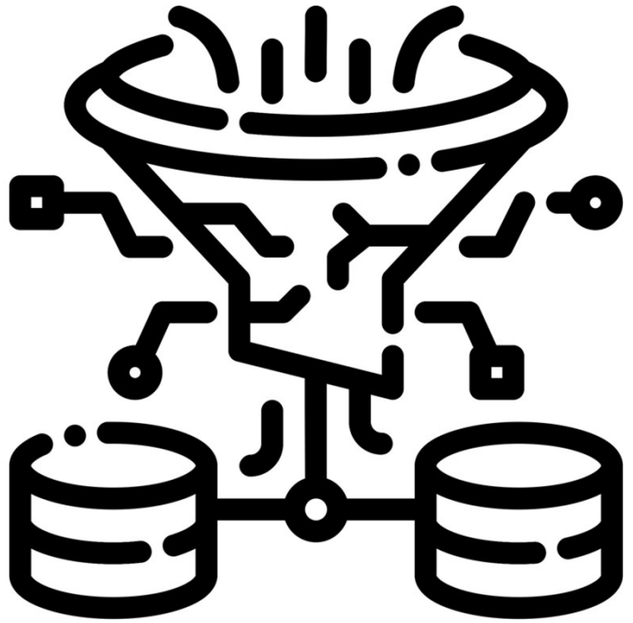
"These tools were trained mostly on data from young, English-speaking men from the Northern Hemisphere. Not out of malice, but out of habit … what was available on the internet did not represent us."

Instead of Andean Spanish, AI gave Vero ***"a version of me polished to the point of being unrecognizable."***

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“Low-Resource” languages and cultures





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Impact of ‘Low-Resource’ languages in global AI

AI translation errors can seriously harm people whose languages or dialects aren’t accurately represented in the AI tool.



Cristina Oliva-Patrick

Italy, USA

“According to Ariel Koren, founder of Respond Crisis Translation, a translator with the organization estimated that ***40% of asylum cases he worked on encountered problems linked to machine translation errors.***”

Example: a woman seeking asylum due to domestic violence by *“mi jefe”* (her father, not her boss)

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Communications Breakdowns in Multilingual AI

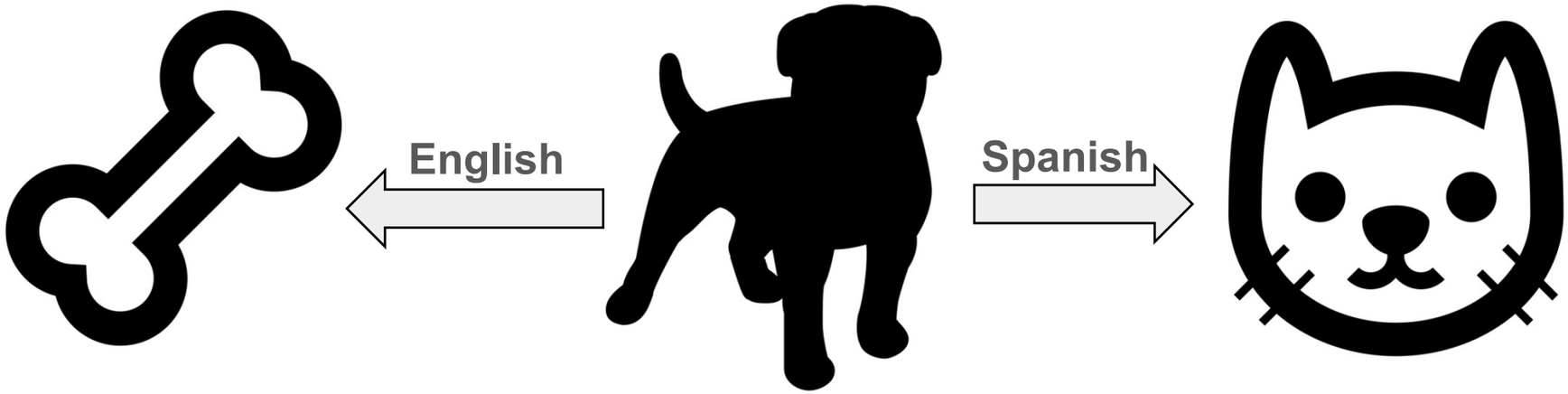
AI reasoning in English, then translating words to Spanish, is flawed.



Julia Díez López

Spain, Ireland

*Example: Asking a multilingual LLM to complete an analogy about a **perro** (dog).*



"The language changed; the concept map didn't. For a brand that depends on specific associations, that invisible drift is exactly what a fluency check won't catch."

Bone and cat Illustration by Boxicons on Unsplash.
Dog Illustration by Round Icons on Unsplash

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AI needs more LatAm perspectives!

LatAm users interact with massive global LLMs that:

- Are trained on data from North America and Europe, missing important dialects
- Reflect dominant cultural values
- Reproduce and reinforce biases

More LatAm perspectives are needed, including:

- AIs trained on local data and knowledge
- Regional datasets
- Stronger integration of LatAm contexts, values, priorities
- Spanish-/Portuguese language and culturally adapted models

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Takeaway: AI in Latin America

*"A group called **CENIA** … are doing a great job on legislation and also developing tools inside the country for AI usage. They created an **LLM for regional usage** and it's fed with academic research and collaborators from Chile and South America."*





*"The ethical future of this technology depends on the diversity of the voices that shape it, **voices as varied as the world it claims to serve** (UNESCO, 2024)."*

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Conclusion: Opportunity Requires Inclusion

AI can drive:

- human creativity and innovation
- economic growth
- social progress

But its benefits depend on:

- equitable access
- education
- inclusion
- effective governance



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Contact Us



Karen Smiley

She Writes AI
Everyday Ethical AI
karen@everydayethicalai.com



Katrin Fischer

Brandeis University
ktrnfischer@brandeis.edu



Mary Marcel

Bentley University
mmarcel@bentley.edu

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- **Anyela Vega (Costa Rica)**: sixpeas.substack.com/p/aisw-034-ai-software-wetware-anyela-vega
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- Elena Calvillo **(Mexico)**: **Vol. 1** “Rapid AI Prototyping Without Technical Debt” (also an AISW interview guest)
- Elisa Terumi, PhD **(Brazil)**: **Vol. 3** “RAG Systems: Bridging Language Models And External Knowledge”
- Julia Díez López **(Spain, Ireland)**: **Vol. 3** “Semantic Governance For Multilingual AI Pipelines: Guiding Language Models Across Markets, Cultures, And Languages”
- Marcela Distefano **(Argentina)**: **Vol. 2** “When The Algorithm Decides: The Urgent Case For Ethical Guardrails In AI-Driven Tax Administration”
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Credits (image sources)

Slide “The Latin-American Context”: https://revista.drclas.harvard.edu/ai-gender-and-power-rewriting-latin-americas-digital-future/

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Slide “Key Themes”: CENIA - https://cenia.cl/2026/02/10/latam-gpt-la-primera-ia-regional-abierta-creada-con-datos-latinoamericanos/

Slide “What is specific to Latin-America?”: Freepik by Magnifica (AI-generated), https://www.magnific.com/free-ai-image/futuristic-technology-concept_396780823.htm

Slide “She Writes AI Community”: map is from shewritesai.org/worldmap.html, logo is from shewritesai.org

Slide “She Writes AI Everywhere” Book Series: book images are from shewritesai.substack.com/p/buy

Slide “Voices of Latin American Authors of Book Chapters”: all images are from aiEverywhereBooks.com

Slide “Latin American culture and AI” (Sumak Kawsay): Image By Cancillería Ecuador - Flickr, CC BY-SA 2.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=34763164

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Slide “Communications Breakdowns in Multilingual AI”: Unsplash - Bone and cat illustrations by Boxicons. Dog Illustration by Round Icons.

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