European Journal of **Technology** (EJT)



AI in Public Governance: Ensuring Rights and Innovation in Non-High-Risk AI Systems in the United States



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Abstract

Purpose: The area of artificial intelligence (AI) is one of the most rapidly developing areas in IT. This paper aims to contribute to the ongoing effort to create an AI governance framework that takes public confidence in AI policy into account. The article begins by talking about how important public trust is for the proper regulation of new technologies. Subsequently, it assesses public sentiment on AI technology as it relates to governmental functions.

Materials and Methods: Researchers have looked at how people in the US feel about AI, how it's being used, and whether it's suitable for public administration tasks to use AI. **Findings:** According to the findings, people have different opinions on whether AI is acceptable and if its judgments impact the job market, the justice system, and national security in the long run. The 2018 AI Public Opinion Survey found that while many Americans are worried about AI, many also see its potential.

Implications to Theory, Practice and Policy: Public trust is fundamental to effective AI governance, as discussed in the article's conclusion.

Keyword: *AI Policy, AI Framework, IT Governance, Public Sector, Public Values, AI Governance*



1.0 INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence (AI) is an emerging technology that poses serious questions about how it will affect people at all socioeconomic levels in the United States and how to best govern it. Several recent studies have investigated the widespread use of AI in many societal spheres, such as the legal system, security, recruiting, and different branches of government. Artificial intelligence (AI) is being seen by both public and commercial organizations to do more with less. While AI offers many potential benefits, some have raised concerns regarding the safety of automated decision systems (ADS) and the reliability of AI as a tool for public organizations. Using ADS without constituent awareness may lead to value failures in both public and commercial organizations, according to research on AI systems. This might have detrimental effects on society in the US. Public organization principles including justice, openness, and human responsiveness are the primary focus of AI governance study, although other studies have looked at public opinion on AI. This article establishes a connection between the two by stating that, while talking about AI governance, public trust must take center stage. Here are some research topics that this project aims to answer (Beatriz Botero Arcila, 2024):

- i. To what extent does American opinion influence AI policy?
- ii. When it comes to artificial intelligence (AI), how can the theory of governance help us comprehend it, reduce risks, safeguard human values, and gain public confidence?

Public organizations may get a better understanding of how their decisions on the use and regulation of AI technology impact on their capacity to uphold shared values by answering these questions. Also, we make the case that academics trying to build a good AI governance framework should prioritize public trust. Scholars rarely mention or even emphasize public trust, according to a new analysis of current AI governance models. But for new technology to gain public acceptance, trust is key. Public trust should therefore be a greater focus for AI governance academics, according to our argument. While we acknowledge that previous research has examined public sentiment towards AI, our primary goal is to determine how much public confidence there is in AI, especially when it comes to government-sponsored initiatives, rather than to gauge public preferences or wants for AI in general or about human services. In addition, we make a clear connection between the need to create a reliable framework for AI regulation and the relevance of maintaining public confidence. Our analysis identifies knowledge gaps in establishing public trust in AI for public services and regulating its use in the private sector.

The significance of public trust in regulating emerging technologies is first discussed in this study's literature review. The article continues by discussing AI as a new technology and how current AI governance frameworks disregard the idea of public trust. After that, we will go into a more detailed analysis of studies that have examined the relationship between AI and public sentiment. Using a representative sample of Americans, the article then assesses their views towards AI and governance, specifically on data privacy, criminal justice, and fairness in AI employment. At the end of the article, we go over how this view should guide the US AI governance model and all the other concerns that come up for researchers in the field of technology governance (Bygrave & Schmidt, 2024).

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Flynn et al. (2012) and Flynn & Bellaby (2007), public participation in the policymaking process improves the reception of emerging technology. An intriguing policy

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dilemma arises from the ongoing development of new technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), hydrogen fuel (HF), nanotechnology, and many more. Government institutions stand to gain from these advancements, but they must first increase public confidence in them (Macoubrie, 2006; Paulsen, 2021). Since policymaking is inherently social and cultural, including the public in the process via open dialogue which includes the airing of worries about potential dangers and misconceptions raises the likelihood that new technologies will be well-received. The use of hydrogen power, wind farms, carbon capture and storage, and nanotechnology all hold promise for lessening our reliance on fossil fuels, bettering the environment, strengthening the economy, and, in some cases, starting a dialogue about possible dangers and risks. Nonetheless, major public problems affect each.

Public worries revolve around hydrogen's flammability, even though it is generated utilizing advanced industrial procedures and safety standards. Existing research does not provide a clear explanation for safety and risk mitigation. Furthermore, historical public tragedies, such as the Hindenburg catastrophe, captivate both the public and experts in the field. It is because of these problems and misunderstandings that the public has rejected the policy regarding hydrogen (Cavalcante, 2023).

The use of wind farms to generate power in coastal regions and on hills at high elevations is another new technology. The idea of using wind power to generate energy seems good at first glance. But now more than ever, the public is very concerned about issues of justice and citizen confidence. The failure to include citizens in the policy-making process has led to a gap in wind energy policies (Chen, Gascó-Hernandez, et al., 2023). The key to avoiding NIMBYism and winning over the public is active participation.

To address complicated issues, leaders of public organizations should initiate conversations with community members and use network governance. Therefore, policymakers should consider the importance of public participation and procedural fairness while developing new energy sources (Chen, Ahn, et al., 2023). Another example of a new technology that has sparked heated debate is carbon capture and storage. Carbon capture and storage have the potential to mitigate climate change without completely replacing our energy-generating system, which has kept climate activists and business leaders in conflict. There is still a lack of consensus on legislation at the federal and state levels, as well as uncertainty around the technology and its potential financial effects. For well-rounded policymaking to occur in the face of such complex social, technological, and political challenges, the public must have faith in government agencies and decision-makers. Nevertheless, there is evidence that groups driven by profit rather than public interest have pushed and manipulated policies regarding carbon capture and storage.

Public organizations need to keep in mind that public opinion and how people perceive new technologies are both susceptible to manipulation. According to Druckman and Bolsen (2011), the public and commercial sectors must work together to establish trust for emerging technological policies, such as AI, to be successful. Thus, inclusivity, open discourse, and honest information sharing will be crucial for AI adoption. It has been noted that this goes against the grain of the usual practice of keeping private-sector AI developments under wraps. Managers in the public sector, independent of private sector interests, would do well to keep in mind that public support is crucial to the success of any AI policy agenda (Georg Stettinger et al., 2024).



AI as an Emergent Public and Private Sector Technology

The public good and the provision of services to citizens are shaped by the decisions made by public organizations and bureaucrats. Additionally, they provide direct assistance to individuals when they make decisions and think about how those decisions might affect the law. Bureaucrats used to be able to provide effective services with little performance problems before AI was introduced to public services. Traditional bureaucracy was seen as sluggish and trailing, therefore public opinions towards these services were not always good. Government employees are being aided in decision-making and service delivery by the ever-improving artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) algorithms. More people than ever before are using online government services. Many front-line services are being replaced by algorithms, which lack public understanding. Public officials are also gaining a deeper understanding of their constituents than in the past thanks to cutting-edge e-government services. Public officials and people alike must have access to algorithms capable of efficiently processing the vast amounts of data acquired from individuals via various channels, such as email, system logs, search queries on government websites, and individual health records (Kretschmer et al., 2023).

The replacement of public officials with contemporary algorithms has altered public perceptions of the efficiency and effectiveness of government agencies. Robotic speech systems and other AI-powered smartphone apps, for instance, assist residents in applying for social benefits (such as healthcare services). Algorithms are also employed in online welfare systems to process, verify, and approve or deny benefits for people who apply electronically. When making choices, public officials in these situations depend on the data given by the computer system. Some people's government benefits have been impacted by biased judgments made by the algorithms. For both the public and government employees, these kinds of events are a source of unneeded emotional distress and dissatisfaction (Moon, 2023).

AI Governance by Public Organizations

The importance of public trust is lacking, according to a comprehensive analysis of academic frameworks for AI governance. The bulk of the suggested frameworks have their origins in the post-WWI Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was approved in 1948. The United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, which were established more recently, are also followed by them. Human safety, justice, openness, accountability, privacy, and data protection are all tenets of this value set. Many groups, both public and private, on a global and national scale still adhere to these ideals. Nonetheless, public trust is only implied as a fundamental premise in a single suggested AI governance structure.

Not only is this important, but academics still have a clarion call to establish an effective AI governance framework and a coordinated research program on AI governance. Emergent technology policy relies heavily on public confidence, as mentioned before. Academics and government agencies have ignored such a crucial notion when it comes to artificial intelligence. This could be because policymakers have had a "blind spot" when it comes to AI when it comes to public confidence. Even well-intentioned public institutions may be impacted by the degree to which the public trusts them in contemporary democracies. More and more, people want trustworthy public services and organizations that use safe algorithms that won't hurt people. Furthermore, AI has shown potential in assisting with the resolution of wicked issues, such as the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. On the other hand, technological progress has always had both beneficial and bad outcomes, with the public bearing both the cost and the benefit. When



people don't have faith in the government, it may make them unhappy, make them lose respect for those in charge, and lower the credibility of government agencies. Public trust should therefore be a fundamental tenet of research on AI governance. However, how does the general population feel about artificial intelligence (Robles & Mallinson, 2023)?

Public Attitudes toward Artificial Intelligence

Public opinion on AI policy and governance is largely ignored. New technology will have pros and cons, and government AI uses might boost public value. Most Americans think technology leaves others behind. Policy decisions concerning AI and other technological advances may not reflect these sentiments. "People might happily accept new technology, though they might not care nor use it all," said public and private sectors. The US public feels that firms pushing for greater AI in public and commercial sectors are driving fast technology adoption. The public doubts public entities' use of AI to offer services. Tech companies employ targeted advertising and other methods to persuade people to buy new goods. Pressures like these affect public organizations. Indeed, public entities are under pressure to effectively employ finite resources for the public good. While this is happening, commercial corporations are urging government agencies to adopt AI to improve service delivery (Silja Vöneky & Schmidt, 2024).

3.0 MATERIALS AND METHODS

Utilizing data derived from a 2018 nationally representative poll titled Artificial Intelligence: American Attitude and Trends, we evaluate public sentiment towards AI governance issues. There are 2000 replies in the dataset, and the data contains demographic information (gender, age, race, marital status, ideology, political party, and education) as well as public opinion on various social consequences of AI. We extract useful information for policymaking and use the data to learn how the public perceives AI.

The possibility of common technique bias in the survey results is the first thing we think about. The original survey included procedural controls, and we used those controls to our advantage when analyzing the data. Even though the dependent and independent variables were gathered simultaneously, which might lead to bias, the survey design was such that respondents were given clear instructions, their anonymity was guaranteed, and complicated questions were avoided wherever feasible (Beatriz Botero Arcila, 2024). Respondents would not have realized the causal links between prospective independent and dependent variables and there is the proximal separation of these items in the actual survey since we are utilizing these data secondary. To further rule out common response bias, we ran all our measures through Harman's single-component test. The result showed that only one factor explained 14% of the variation, which is far lower than the 50% threshold for concern.

We aimed for a comprehensive knowledge of public concerns and confidence in AI by using a multi-faceted approach. Several issues with AI regulation are associated with the dependent variables that were selected. First, we look at how people generally feel about AI in terms of its trustworthiness, transparency, fairness, and safety. After that, we have a look at how people feel about certain applications of AI in the HR and criminal justice sectors. Citizen concerns about AI's potential bias and unfairness stem from the assumption that it can automate such tasks. Several questions were used to gauge public opinion on the criminal justice system's openness and fairness and the employment process's transparency and fairness. Data and privacy issues are subsequently considered. AI-powered automated processes have the potential to transfer data in a digital format,



which might include personally identifiable information (PII). Some examples of personally identifiable information include a person's health records, birth certificate, social security number, home address, and driver's license. We next consider how much public backing there is for ongoing AI research and development (Bygrave & Schmidt, 2024). This will allow us to evaluate issues of civil rights and privacy head-on. Lastly, we expand the scope of the research to consider public sentiment towards the potential negative effects of AI in general. Because of the dangers that artificial intelligence and robotics pose to people, it is critical to understand how these technologies might affect public confidence and to craft AI policies that safeguard civil society. We look at the gender, ideology, education, and racial differences in these views. Nominal and ordinal categories are used to measure these independent variables.

The dependent and independent variables' descriptive statistics are shown in Figure 1. There are two kinds of opinion inquiries. Either the likelihood of various issues arising or respondents' trust in the safety and usage of AI for national security are questioned. Among the issues, there is a great deal of diversity. Data privacy protection issues, for instance, average a very low (i.e., very unlikely) answer, in contrast to privacy and civil rights, which average a very high (i.e., very probable) one. Concerning privacy, AI's negative effects, and its lack of openness and transparency are evident across all the dependent variables.

To look at how people feel about AI and how it's progressing, we generated a set of ordinal logistic regressions. The studies were conducted using POLR in R (Cavalcante, 2023).

	Measures		Standard		
Variable	Minimum value	Maximum value	Mean	deviation	
DV: A1 safe, trustworthy (human values)	1 = A great deal of confidence	$4 \equiv No$ confidence	2.60	0.93	
DV: Confidence on A1 for national security	1 = A great deal of confidence	4≡No confidence	2,76	0.98	
DV: Data privacy protection	1 = Very important	4=Not at all important	1.35	0.65	
DV: Fairness and transparency (criminal justice)	I = Very unlikely	7=Very likely	4,32	1.64	
DV: Fairness and transparency (hiring)	1 = Very unlikely	7≡Very likely	4.53	1.50	
DV: Privacy and civil rights	1 = Very unlikely	7 = Very likely	5.21	1.58	
DV: Harmful consequences	1 = Very unlikely	7=Very likely	3.66	1.78	
DV: Support development	1 = Strongly support	5 = Strongly oppose	2.75	1.16	
Education	$1 \equiv No HS$	6 = Post-grad	3.40	1.51	
Gender	I = Male	2 = Female	1.52	0.50	
Ideology	1 = Very liberal	5 = Very conservative	3.30	1.48	
Political party: Independent/ other	0=Not independent/ other	1=Independent/other	0.42	0,49	
Political party: Democrat	0 = Not democrat	1 = Democrat	0.35	0.48	
Political party: Republican	0 = Not republican	1 = Republican	0.23	0.42	
Race	0 = White	1 = Non-white	0.36	0.48	

Figure 1: Data Analysis (Cavalcante, 2023)

https://doi.org/10.47672/ejt.2577



4.0 FINDINGS

Before examining how AI opinions vary across different demographic groups, it is first useful to consider the overall opinions of Americans toward AI. Figure 2 displays the distributions of opinion for our eight dependent variables. We find that while a plurality of the respondents express "a fair amount of confidence" that AI is safe and trustworthy, a majority have little to no confidence (52% combined). More respondents consider it likely that AI used in the criminal justice system and hiring is biased (46% and 52%, respectively) than unlikely (30% and 23%, respectively). A full 68% of respondents expect there to be problems with privacy and civil rights. Perhaps unsurprisingly, 74% of respondents view data privacy as "very important." For policymakers, it is important to consider, however, that the average person often has little knowledge of how much of their data is accessible to the public and private sectors. While a plurality of respondent's support AI development (46%), 30% are ambivalent. Most of the respondents (59%) have little to no confidence in the use of AI for national security. Finally, more respondents are positive regarding AI's potential for harmful consequences than are pessimistic. While there are bright spots of public support for AI, it is fair to say that trust is low overall and, especially, for specific uses of AI that are relevant to the public sector. Turning to our assessment of how these opinions vary in the population, Figure 3 presents a statistical analysis of eight separate models, one for each dependent variable. The table reports the results using odds ratios. When an odds ratio is greater than 1, it means that the independent (Chen, Gascó-Hernandez, et al., 2023).



Figure 2: Distribution of AI (Chen, Ahn, et al., 2023)

Predictors	Safe/ trustworthy Estimate	Criminal justice bias Estimate	Hiring bias Estimate	Privacy and civil liberties Estimate	Data privacy Estimate	Support for AI development Estimate	National security Estimate	Harmful consequences Estimate
0 = White & 1 = Non-white	0.89 (0.14)	0.95 (0.15)	1.05 (0.16)	0.83 (0.12)	1.46* (0.26)	0.95 (0.08)	0.93 (0.15)	1.79* (0.31)
0 = Male & 1 = Female	0.68* (0.10)	0.88 (0.12)	1.01 (0.14)	0.92(0.13)	1.06 (0.18)	0.63* (0.05)	1.16(0.17)	0.65* (0.10)
Ideology	1.29" (0.07)	1.02 (0.05)	0.96 (0.05)	0.87* (0.05)	0.92 (0.06)	1.17*(0.04)	0.96 (0.06)	1.05(0.06)
Independent	1.14 (0.23)	1.18(0.22)	1.00(0.19)	0.90 (0.17)	1.12 (0.25)	1.11(0.13)	1.46(0.29)	0.98(0.21)
Democrat	0.80(0.18)	1.37 (0.28)	1.16(0.25)	0.76 (0.16)	0.83 (0.22)	0.81(0.11)	0.87(0.20)	1.15(0.27)
Observations	634	673	664	669	710	1813	620	517
R ² Nagelkerke	0.072	0.007	0.014	0.030	0.025	0.075	0.024	0.049

Figure 3: Descriptive Analysis (Chen, Gascó-Hernandez, et al., 2023)

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Concern for privacy and civil rights, relevance of privacy, and support for AI research are all positively correlated with education level. An individual's likelihood of showing more concern for civil rights and privacy rises by 14%, their likelihood of putting more weight on data privacy rises by 12%, and their overall support for the growth of AI rises by 16% as they go up the ordinal scale of education. Regarding data privacy and worries about AI's potentially negative repercussions, the only variations between white and non-white respondents are negligible. People of color are more likely to see the overall negative effects of AI as probable (79% vs. 46%) and to consider privacy as less essential (76% vs. 47%). There is a gender gap in the following areas: 32% more likely than female respondents to think AI is secure and trustworthy, 37% more likely than female respondents to favor AI development, and 35% more likely than female respondents to think detrimental outcomes of AI are improbable. There seems to be no relationship between party and AI opinion, although ideology does. A more conservative outlook is associated with lower assurances that AI is secure and reliable (29% higher chances), more apprehension about the possibility of civil rights issues (13% higher odds), and stronger resistance to AI research and development (17% higher odds) (Kretschmer et al., 2023).

Discussion

To argue that public trust and acceptance of AI—an emerging technology—should play a more central role in AI governance, this study seeks to better understand these concepts. To do this, we combed through a mountain of literature on several new technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), hydrogen energy (HE), wind farms (WF), carbon capture and storage (CCS), and nanotechnology (NTS). Then, we restricted our study of AI survey data to focus on citizens' worries about governance. Our research shows that public and commercial organizations alike are increasingly worried about losing the public's confidence due to their heavy reliance on AI. Opinions on AI also differ significantly according to ideology, sex, ethnicity, and level of education. This lends credence to the idea that in a diverse American culture, people's faith in the government differs across socioeconomic lines; as a result, governments must consider the specific requirements of various groups to foster confidence in AI. A policy's failure to take public opinion into account during its creation and execution is worth noting (Moon, 2023).

To address these concerns, public organizations should prioritize public values, use transparent methods, and actively involve citizens in the policy-making processes. A good development is the increasing interest in artificial intelligence (AI) education, programming, and advanced research during the last few decades. This trend suggests that people are eager to be a part of policy innovation and make a difference via technology. Many Americans see artificial intelligence research and development as the natural progression of human progress, according to this survey. On the other hand, serious moral, ethical, and legal questions arose from the data analysis. Respondents in this representative sample of the country voiced serious worries on issues of civil rights, employment prejudice, criminal justice system bias, and privacy. Furthermore, they are skeptical about the efficacy of AI in safeguarding the country's security. There is a blurry boundary in the current literature on AI governance between safeguarding personal information, ensuring data security, and using massive datasets to inform public policy. The findings show that people in the US are worried about AI systems being designed to gather data, analyze it, and then provide that data to those who need it for decision-making, including hiring managers (Robles & Mallinson, 2023). Because no perfect legislation exists to control AI algorithms and safeguard personal data after it has been processed by an AI system, these worries are understandable. Therefore, we argue that such public feedback should be a fundamental tenet of AI regulation.

https://doi.org/10.47672/ejt.2577



Robles and Mallinson (Under Review) lament that public trust has been largely ignored in AI governance framework proposals. Ignoring public skepticism of the rapidly expanding use of artificial intelligence (AI) by governments of all stripes could have catastrophic consequences, considering the persistent erosion of faith in administration in industrialized democracies like the US.

The American public's perception of AI and other emerging technologies can only improve if they have more faith in government agencies (Silja Vöneky & Schmidt, 2024). Communicating with the public and making sure they are aware of the benefits, drawbacks, and hazards of AI is essential to establishing confidence. There is always the chance that something may go wrong or be unresponsive while using new technologies. As more government agencies use AI and are willing to accept risks that might affect people's daily lives, these dangers only increase. In conclusion, the public may gain faith in public management, be better informed about the dangers associated with emerging technologies like AI and be more open to adopting this new technology if they are included in the conversation and given information on the pros and cons of AI (Beatriz Botero Arcila, 2024).

Additionally, public trust reflects a government's performance and a crucial indication of citizen contentment with the democratic process. Building consumer confidence in products, assuring product dependability, raising awareness, encouraging responsibility, and maintaining supervision are all responsibilities of public organizations that aim to develop and sustain public trust in artificial intelligence. A potential threat to public confidence arises, however, when public servants use their discretion to adopt and apply AI in public services without informing the public. People are worried about algorithmic mistakes and know that government agencies are adopting AI. Hence, governments should keep being accountable and transparent in their actions if they want to keep the public's confidence. Doing so will allow them to meet the requirements of residents while keeping public faith in AI adoption high, which will result in better and more inclusive public services. The relational mechanism ensures AI is properly and ethically provided by societal norms. By accessing information technology issues, risk concerns, and public tolerance for failure, organizations may create governance frameworks that promote public value. Strategic alignment, value delivery, resource management, risk management, and performance metrics build public trust, which is essential for corporate objectives and values. If public managers desire better AI governance, they should foster citizen-policy interaction to educate the public about AI and its potential to improve public services. Create a risk management system that can predict concerns to build public trust in AI (Bygrave & Schmidt, 2024).

Risk management requires collaboration between public, private, and AI developers. For effective monitoring and algorithmic bias reduction, public organizations must be involved in AI development. To ensure safety requirements are met in all instances, competent people and public bodies must assess and resolve algorithmic errors throughout design. Public managers may ensure safe and productive AI deployment by prioritizing public confidence and developing effective risk management procedures (Chen, Gascó-Hernandez, et al., 2023).

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMEDATIONS

In this paper, we argue that public trust which should be valued equally with openness and risk mitigation is neglected in proposed AI governance models. We further focus on one study that pulls data from a representative American population to show how people feel about AI



governance. The development of AI is generally supported, however there are significant issues over privacy, civil rights, and prejudice. Additionally, we discover significant racial, educational, and ideological disparities in the amount of support for AI and the amount of anxiety about AI's potential drawbacks. For governments to seek ways to foster trust across diverse populations in the US, it is crucial to comprehend these distinctions. One thing we're trying to do is get academics who study AI governance to agree that public trust is fundamental to good governance. It is just as fundamental as the other concepts that have been mentioned, such as privacy and equality. Even if it's not exhaustive, this article gives a good overview of the public's confidence in the US. Second, while using AI, government officials at all levels must keep public confidence and feedback in mind. Governments have seen similar NIMBY-style public resistance to other emerging technologies, such as windmills and hydrogen energy, but this doesn't happen.

The limitations of this study are acknowledged. On the other hand, these constraints provide avenues for further study. As said, we used a large-scale poll that already existed in 2019 to gauge public sentiment on AI. Trust in government is only one aspect of this extensive poll that covers a lot of areas. It is necessary to conduct more targeted evaluations for various demographics, technology, and periods. The exponential growth in AI applications in both the public and commercial sectors since 2019 further supports this view. It will be very difficult to gain widespread confidence in AI unless we acknowledge that different people have different views on the validity and fairness of government AI programs and private sector regulations about AI. Academics and professionals alike would do well to familiarize themselves with the wide range of popular opinions on AI. This notion should be at the center of attempts to establish an effective framework for AI governance, and these results should draw more attention to public opinion and trust among academics studying AI governance.



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