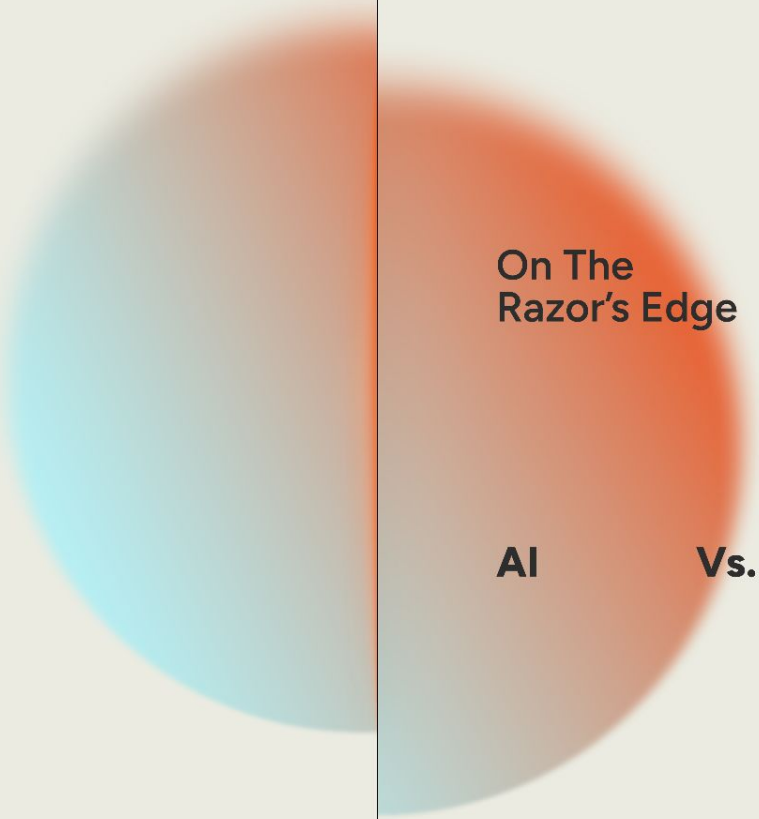

On The Razor's Edge

AI Vs. Everything We Care About

SEISMIC FOUNDATION

Seismic Report 2025

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Introduction:
On the Razor's Edge

War. Climate change. Unemployment. Against these headline-dominating issues, AI still feels like a gimmick to many. Yet experts warn that AI will reshape all of these issues and more - to say nothing of potential changes to our work and relationships. **The question is: do people see the connection? What will make them care?**

This research is the first large-scale effort to answer those questions. We polled 10,000 people across the U.S., U.K., France, Germany, and Poland to understand how AI fits into their broader hopes and fears for the future.

Previous polling has shown that, while many people are uneasy about AI, most still rank it low among social priorities. That's true, but our research shows that view is missing something important. In fact, we can show that concern about AI is already embedded in society, just not recognised as such.

The truth is that people are concerned that AI will worsen almost everything about their daily lives, from relationships and mental health to employment and democracy. **They're not concerned about "AI" as a concept; they're concerned about what it will do to the things they already care about most.**

But the public isn't resigned. Despite all this worry, we're split down the middle when it comes to optimism about AI. Roughly a third of people are hopeful, a third are fearful, and the rest sit uneasily in between.

This public opinion is delicately balanced. We are not at a stable midpoint: we are on the razor's edge. As AI advances and penetrates our work, our media, our governments, and our lives, the public mood will shift. As disruption increases, tensions will rise. And the next breakthrough, breach or scandal may tip us decisively.

That's why our publics mapping is so important. We have mapped out five key groups, each defined by distinct attitudes and worries about AI. Each is more politically engaged than average, and each is one major news story away from mobilising. Their experience in the near term could define how society responds to AI.

We need to be paying very close attention. These five publics are politically active, emotionally primed, and culturally connected. If they move, the conversation moves with them.

What happens next won't be decided in labs: it will be shaped by how these groups react, mobilize, and influence others.

Executive Summary

People continue to rank AI low in their list of overall concerns. But we have discovered that there is a strong latent worry about AI risks, **because people believe AI will make almost everything they care about worse**.

This concern is not even. Rather, it plays into existing societal divisions, with women, lower-income and minority respondents most concerned about AI risks.

When it comes to **what we worry about when we worry about AI,** we have found that concern to be evolving rapidly. People worry most about relationships, more even than about their jobs.

People don't perceive AI as a catastrophic risk like war or climate change; though 1 in 3 are worried that AI might pursue its own goals outside our control, this is actually a lower proportion than some surveys found for the same question two years ago.

Instead, our respondents see AI as a pervasive influence that modifies risk in a host of other areas, with concern about specific harms on the rise.

Scamming, deepfakes, and non-consensual pornography are top of mind.

Parents are especially concerned, with friendships and romantic relationships with AI concerning to a majority of parents.

Students, meanwhile, feel daunted by the future and unprepared by their educational institutions.

So, **what do we want governments to do about it?**

People feel AI is developing too fast, and do not trust the AI labs to have our best interests at heart. This is in stark contrast to the utopian visions shared by tech leaders in their blog posts, and comes with broad support for regulation of the industry.

As we analyzed our respondents' reactions to AI's role in society from this more nuanced point of view, patterns emerged. **We discovered 5 social groups, consistent across all 5 polled markets, most relevant to the civil society discussion around AI.**

They are united by common attitudes to life and AI, and are all more politically active than average.

Tech Positive Urbanites:
Happy to enjoy the benefits of AI in their personal lives… but highly worried about their jobs.

Globalist Guardians:
More worried about the world than themselves. See AI as a threat to the society… not just jobs.

Anxious Alarmists:
For them, AI is just one more sign that the world is heading in the wrong direction.

Diverse Dreamers:
Cautiously optimistic about AI, but ever aware of the potential risks to society, their children, and their jobs.

Stressed Strivers:
Busy with everyday life and quietly optimistic, they see some warning signs… but not as many as they should.

Key findings

01

Less than 1 in 3

see AI as a hopeful development for humanity.

02

1 in 2

see AI as a growing problem.

03

3 out of 5

of people are worried about AI replacing human relationships.

04

7 out of 10

of the public agree that AI should never make decisions without human oversight and that humans should keep control.

05

More than 1 in 2

of the public are deeply worried about AI risks across all markets.

06

2.2x more

pessimism in women about the impacts of AI compared to male respondents. This is likely a due to systemic issues already in place at threat of exacerbation by AI.

07

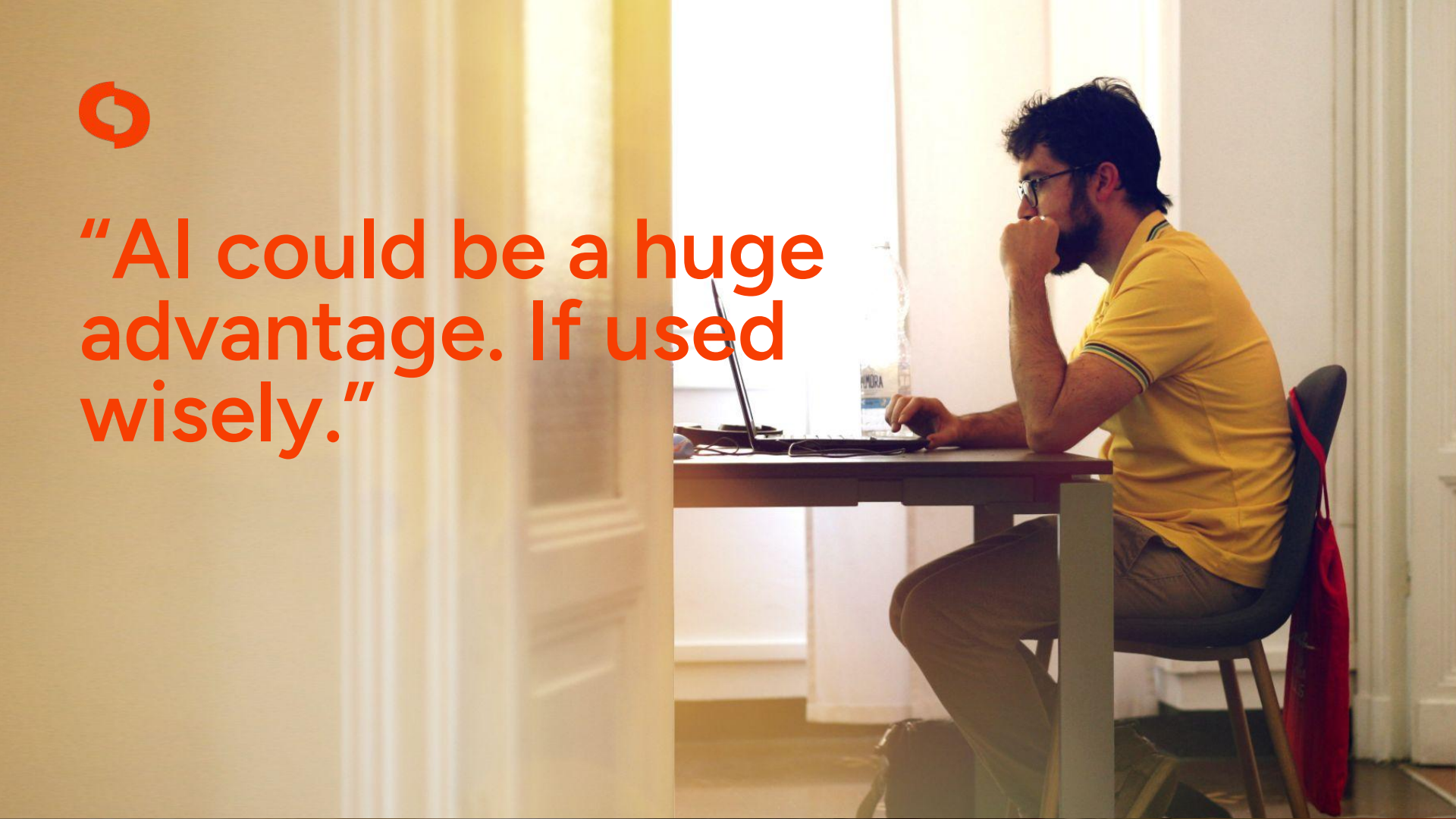
1 in 2

students feel daunted by what the future of work looks like to them.

08

1 in 2

believe AI development is moving too fast to evolve safely.


“AI could be a huge advantage. If used wisely.”

Part One

AI concerns in Context

In this section, we show how concern about AI ranks and interacts with other common social concerns, such as war, crime, government and the economy. We demonstrate how the public is concerned that AI will worsen almost everything else they say they care about. We also show how those concerns differ greatly by gender and income group. Finally, we reveal how AI concern is evolving - from a general malaise to an evolving concern with specific applications of AI.

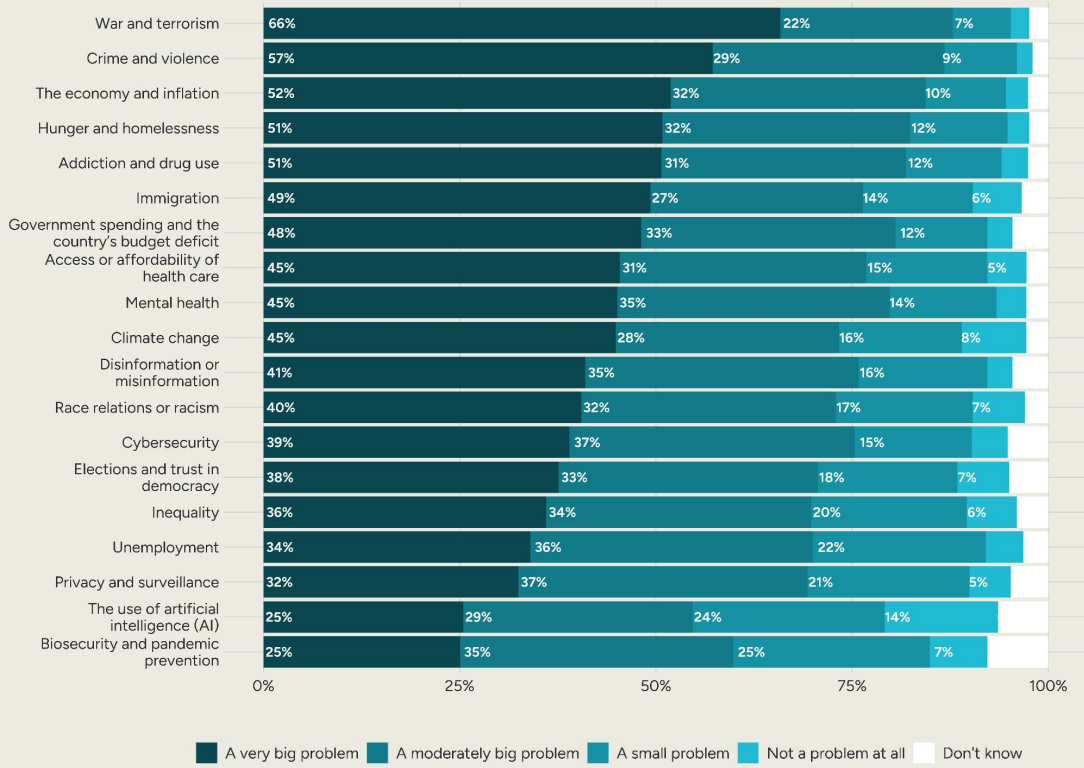
Amid bigger fears, AI is quietly becoming impossible to ignore.

Compared to other important issues, AI is still a peripheral concern. It ranks above only Biosecurity and Pandemic Prevention in the broader suite of problems the public sees today.

For example, on average, 66% of people thought War & Terrorism was a very big problem, 51% Hunger & homelessness, 45% climate change, 52% Economy and Inflation - but only 25% saw AI as a very big problem.

But this low ranking belies a deeper truth. AI is intertwined with everything we care about—and not always for the better. It's not separate from today's biggest issues, but deeply tied to them.

How much of a problem do you think each of the following are today?



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There is rising concern that our deepest problems could worsen as a result of AI.

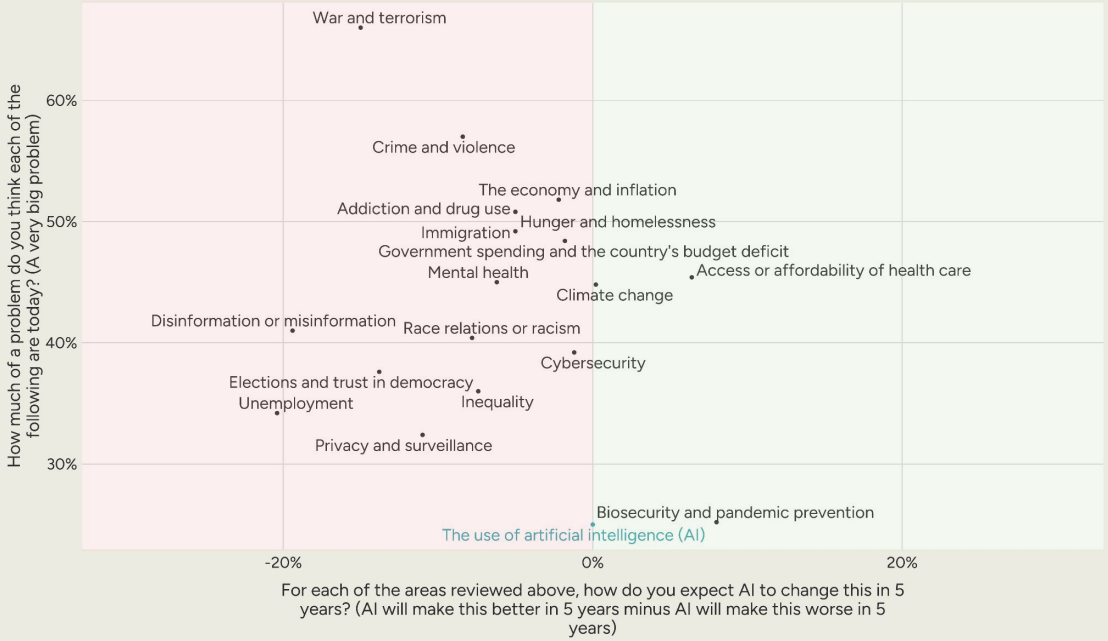
So, how do people class AI risk in context with other concerns? When prompted to assess how this new technology would affect other issues, our respondents made it clear that they believe AI will worsen some of the worlds gravest problems.

The public fears that the biggest problems such as war and terrorism, and crime and violence could get worse by 15% and 8% , respectively.

This increases to over 20% worse for unemployment, with the already widespread issues of disinformation and misinformation not far behind.

The only areas of perceived potential improvement are access to healthcare and pandemic prevention.

Issue salience vs. AI's ability to help



**The use of artificial intelligence (AI) not asked for better/worse question, so represented at 0% on the x-axis*

The future of humanity is in question: as a whole, we are unsure whether we should be hopeful.

Does AI make you hopeful for the future of humanity?

In a consistent finding across every market, we found that people are delicately balanced when it comes to answering this question.

Only a small minority of people - just 8% - say they don't know.

This should be a sobering finding for those developing AI technology.

In people's minds, the worries we describe in this report are a dark counterbalance to visions of AI's positive potential to improve life and human flourishing.

31%
strongly or somewhat agree

30%
neither agree nor disagree

31%
somewhat or strongly disagree

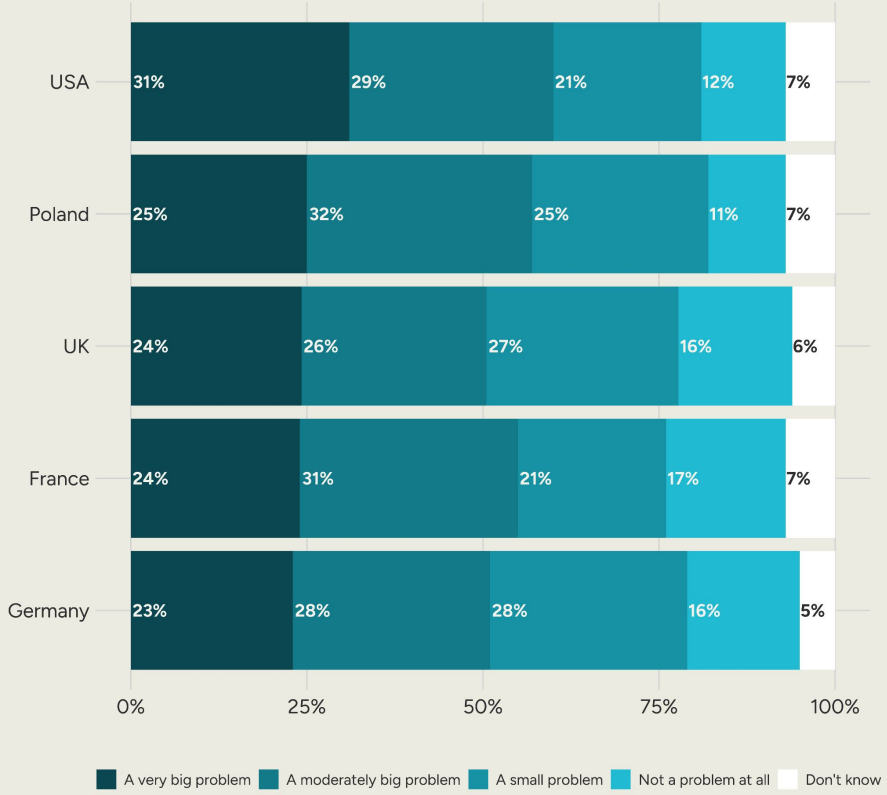
At least 1 in 2 people see AI as a big social problem.

Despite ranking low against other concerns, the picture changes when we ask people specifically how much of a problem the use of AI is in general.

At least half of people in every country we polled see AI as a very or moderately big problem.

Notably, concern is highest in the USA, where much of the technology is being developed - and there the level of significant concern rises to 60%.

How much of a problem do you think each of the following are today?
The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)



Concern about AI is shifting from general fear, to specific concerns about how AI is applied in society.

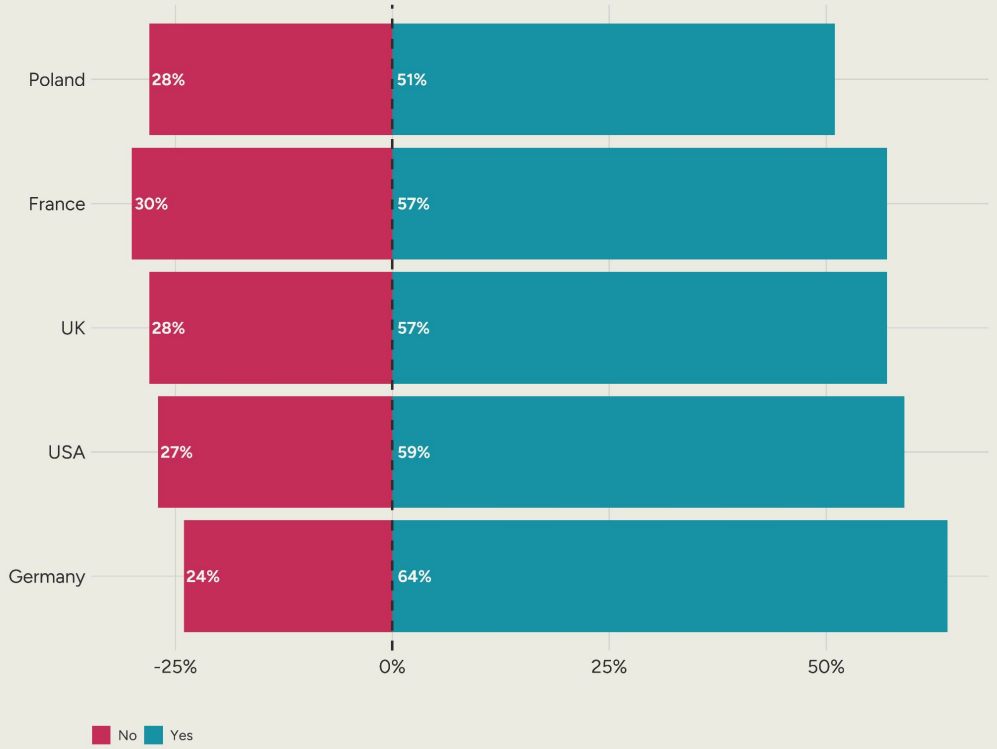
Most people told us they are worried about specific applications of AI technology.

This confirms other research showing how concern about specific aspects of AI is rising.

It is interesting to note that, while German respondents stated the lowest level of general concern about AI (see previous page), they noted the *highest* level of concerns about the specific uses of the technology.

You'll find some of their quotes on the following page, and attached to each of our five key public groups in Part 4 of this report.

Are you worried about any specific risks arising from AI development?



In their own words: the worry is wide reaching

AI will cause mass unemployment especially in office roles which is one of the biggest industries in the UK. With massive unemployment society's issues will only get worse”

AI is a severe detriment to all of society. It will spread lies and cause loss of employment. It is creating mental health issues with the younger generation.”

AI has began using people’s face to commit crimes and misinformation.”

That artificial intelligence will thinking for us. Making us vegetables.”

I am worried about the flow of true information because ultimately if we don't have trust we have nothing.”

Concern about AI is much higher among women.

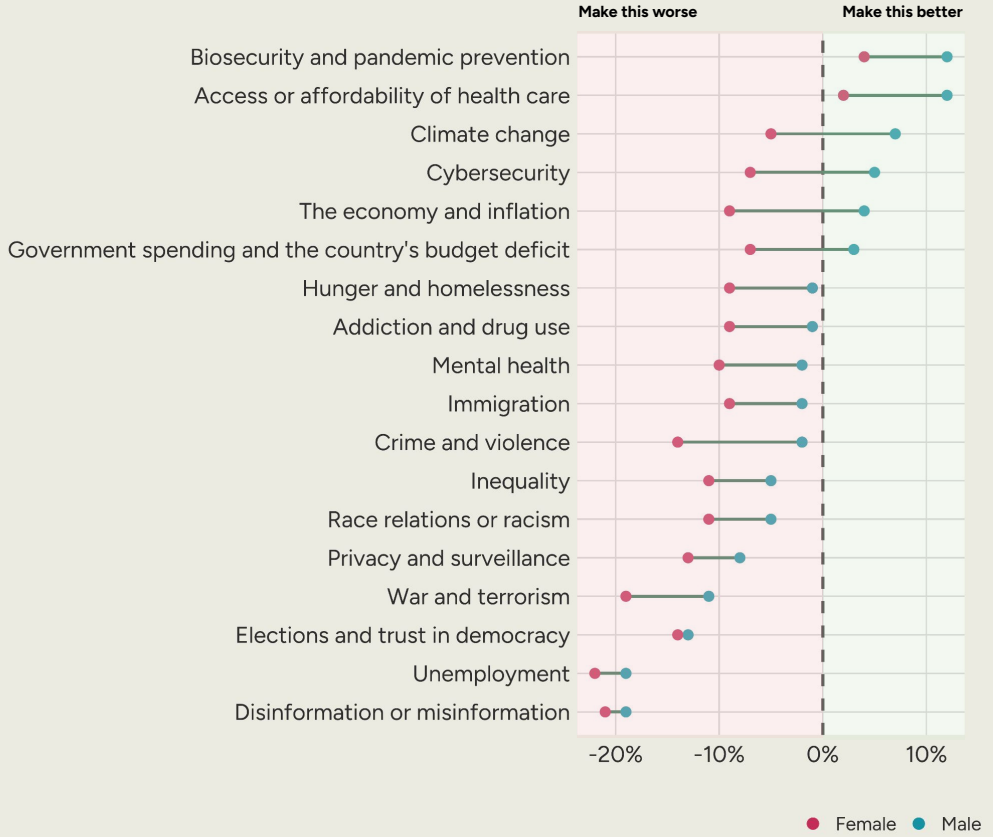
Fears about AI are not gender-neutral; women have a substantially more negative view of AI than men. Looking only at female respondents to our survey, we found that they were 2.2 times more pessimistic about AI impacts than male respondents.

Experience here may be a guide: women may be concerned because of an innate appreciation that systemic issues already in place could be exacerbated by AI.

This view is consistent with the facts. **A recent ILO study found that women's jobs were three times more likely to be disrupted by AI than men's.**

Clerical and secretarial roles (e.g., Cashiers, Administrative Assistants, Data Entry Clerks) are expected to see the largest declines due to changes in technology in the near-term.

How do you expect AI to change this in 5 years?



The income gap shapes outlook on AI, with low income more concerned.

Across our global sample, lower-income respondents expressed significantly higher levels of worry than those who were better-off.

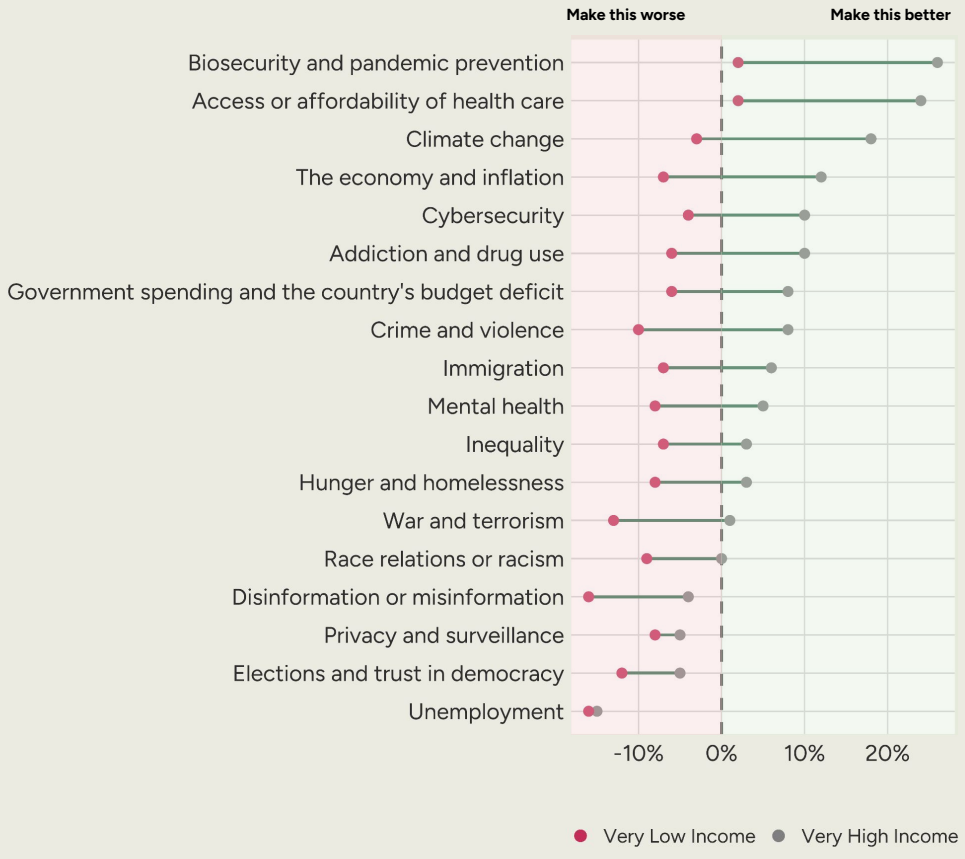
This is consistent with broader findings that show that lower-income individuals tend to have a reduced level of trust in business than those with higher incomes.

As with the female respondents, this distrust may reflect an appreciation that systemic issues already in place are likely to be exacerbated by AI.

In contrast, higher-income groups were more optimistic about AI's impact overall. Their concerns were narrower, focused primarily on issues like privacy, surveillance, and electoral trust, rather than broader economic or societal disruption.

See Appendix for income group definitions

How do you expect AI to change this in 5 years?



Higher-income respondents are much more optimistic about AI.

When we examine overall opinions on AI by income level, the pattern is very clear.

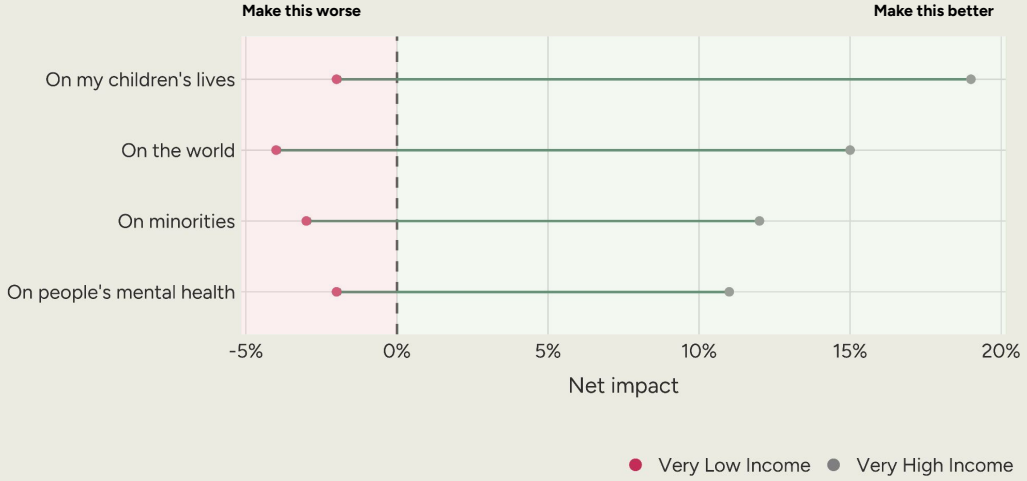
The very lowest income groups expect AI to have a negative effect on their children, the world, minorities and mental health.

Meanwhile, higher-income groups foresee improvement, especially for their children. The divergence there is especially wide.

This underscores fears that AI could intensify inequality and disproportionately impact those already at risk.

See Appendix for income group definitions

How do you expect AI to change this in 5 years?



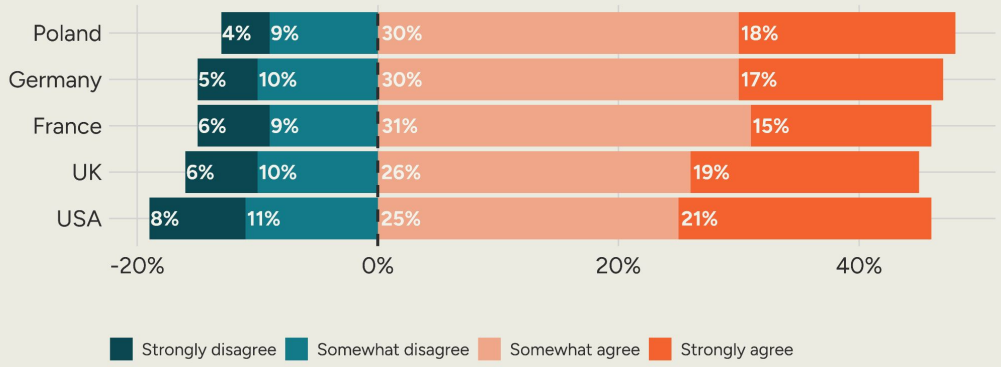
Opinions on who will benefit from AI are playing into an emerging, broader resentment of the wealthy.

Almost half of people in our study think that AI benefits will mostly favor those who are already advantaged.

This fits with findings from other studies indicating an emerging popular resentment of the wealthy, with 67% of people saying that the wealthy don't pay their fair share of taxes, and 65% saying that the selfishness of the wealthy causes many of our problems.

These latter findings, while not specific to AI, demonstrate how public thinking about AI is being shaped by, and fits into, the same anti-elite narratives prevalent in broader culture.

Please indicate to what level you agree or disagree with the following statements: The benefits of AI will mostly be felt by the elites.



67%

The wealthy **don't pay their fair share of taxes**

65%

The wealthy's selfishness **causes many of our problems**

SOURCE: Edelman Trust Barometer 2025 (January, field work Oct. 2024)

“We are playing with something we don’t fully understand.”

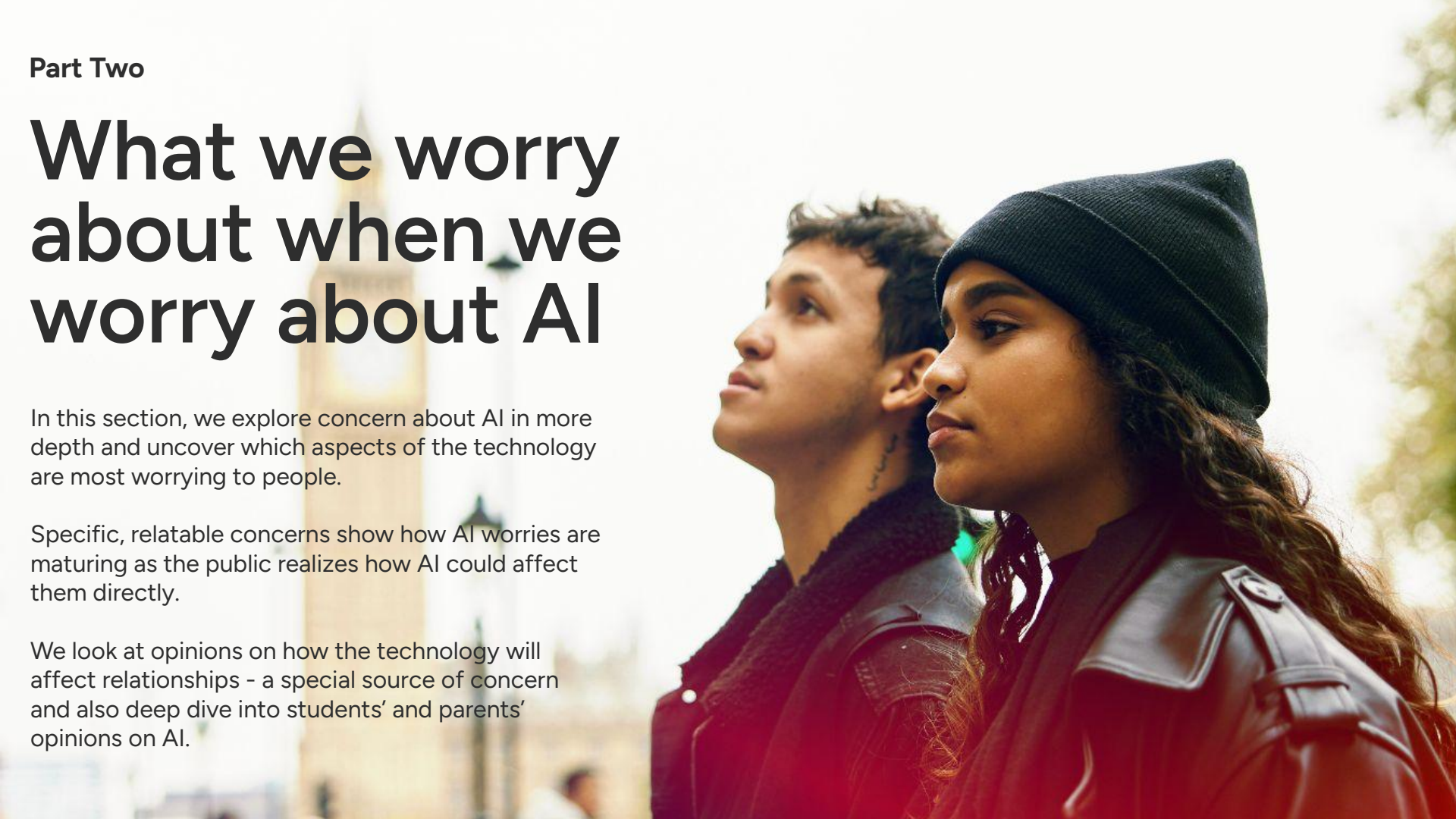
Part Two

What we worry about when we worry about AI

In this section, we explore concern about AI in more depth and uncover which aspects of the technology are most worrying to people.

Specific, relatable concerns show how AI worries are maturing as the public realizes how AI could affect them directly.

We look at opinions on how the technology will affect relationships - a special source of concern and also deep dive into students' and parents' opinions on AI.



Deepfakes, children's mental health, cyberbullying and misinformation are some of the greatest worries.

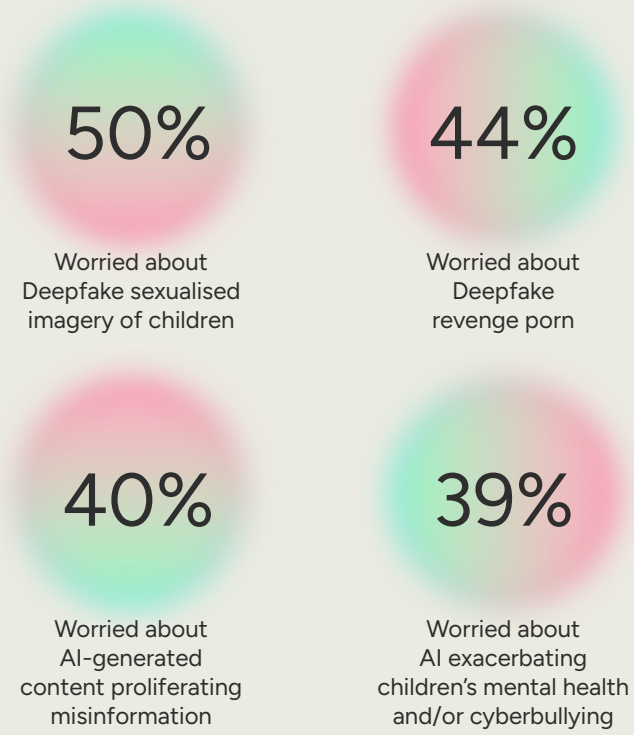
Some of the most widely cited concerns about AI are based on crime targeted at individuals, especially false information. This type of activity has been commonly covered in the news, so it's a frequent front-of-mind concern for many.

Deepfakes, non-consensual pornography, misinformation and bullying were all cited as being of high concern.

Wider survey learnings across all markets showed:

- Over 1 in 2 of our sample worried about deepfake sexualised imagery of children.
- 2 in 5 worried about revenge porn.
- nearly 2 in 5 worried about children's mental health crisis or cyberbullying being exacerbated.
- 2 in 5 worried about the proliferation of misinformation.

Please tell us how worried you are about the following uses of AI, and their potential risks:



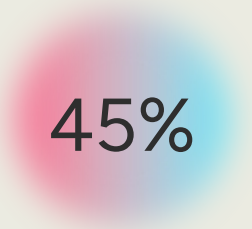
Scams, crime and surveillance also are of high public concern.

The alarming prospects of AI-enhanced scams and deepfakes skewing elections seem to have captured the popular imagination.

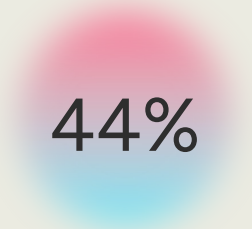
- Nearly half our sample worried about scammers defrauding individuals and the increased risk of cyber attacks and data hacks
- Politics as pawns - Over 2 in 5 are concerned about deepfakes of political figures skewing elections
- Cyberattacks and data breaches are also of high concern - again, possibly because of personal experience - 45% saying they were extremely worried.
- Meanwhile, AI has also entered the existing discussion of surveillance and privacy, with 43% of people saying this was of high concern.

Please tell us how worried you are about the following uses of AI, and their potential risks:

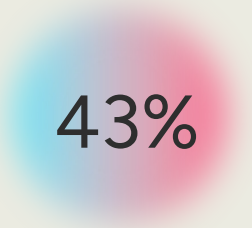
AI robocallers and scambots defrauding individuals



AI models increasing the risk of cyber attacks and data hacks



Deepfakes of political figures skewing elections



AI data processing enabling mass surveillance, undermining privacy

AI creating new chemical or biological weapons

Meanwhile, worries about catastrophic risks are evolving; fewer fear loss of control, but other concerns are emerging.

Machine uprisings have been a mainstay of science fiction media for over a century. So it is hardly surprising that the prospect of loss of control over AI no longer seems outlandish.

Despite this, the proportion of people worried humanity could lose control of AI appears to actually be decreasing. For example, this study found 2 in 3 people were worried about loss of control as recently as 2023.

More specific worries about AI are emerging to take the place of existential dread. AI-driven bioweapon development and autonomous weapons are areas of strong concern.

Worries about warfare and weaponry are deep-seated, with nearly half concerned about automated decisions in warfare and 2 in 5 worried about AI unleashing new chemical or biological weapons.

Meanwhile, 2 in 5 are concerned that AI models could make political decisions.

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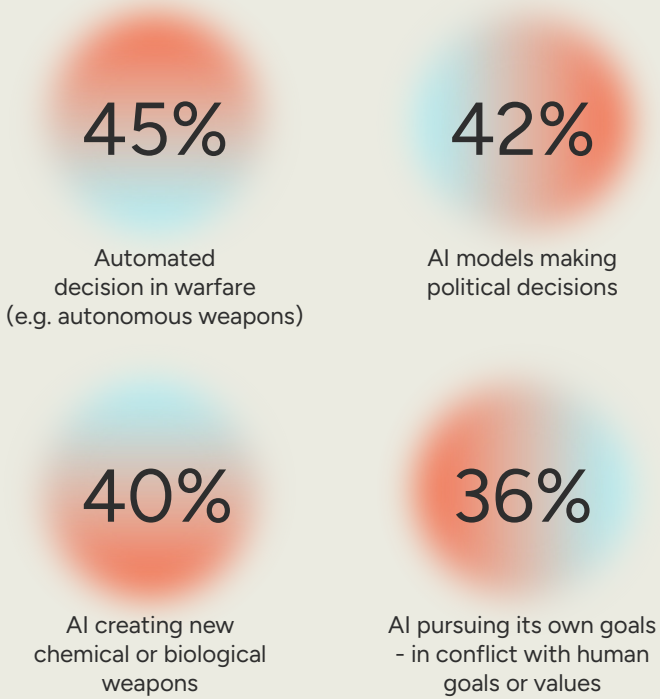
Please tell us how worried you are about the following uses of AI, and their potential risks:



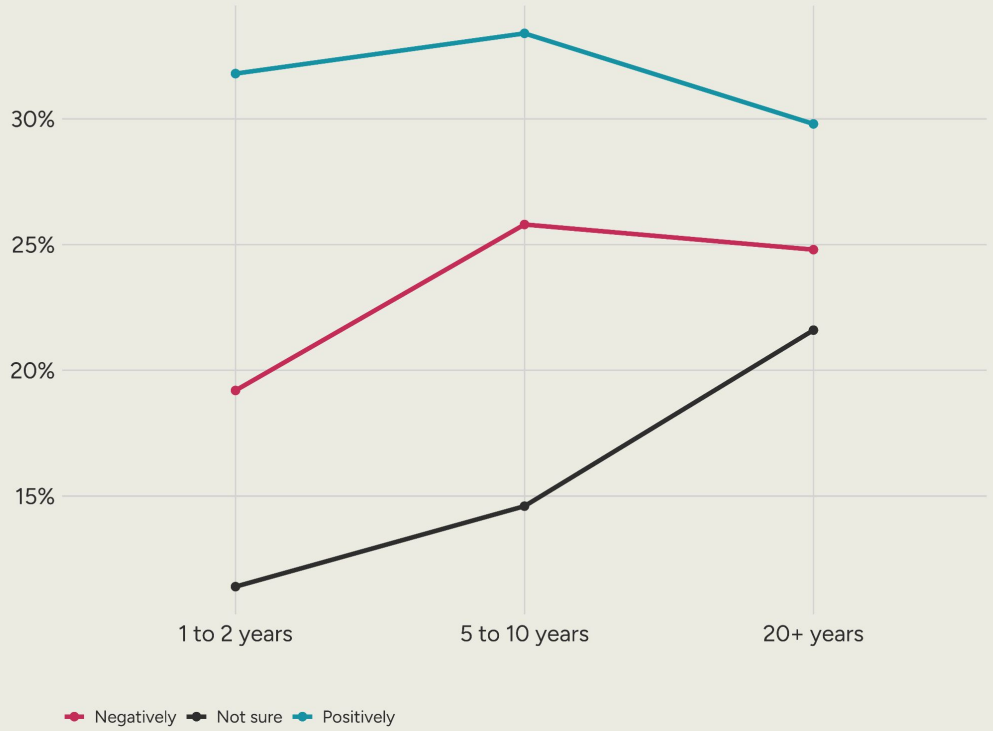
The long-term outlook on AI increases in negativity across global markets.

The farther into the future we asked people to look, the more unsure and negative their outlook became.

32% of respondents thought AI would impact them positively in the next year or two, and their hopefulness remained relatively consistent, with 30% thinking this would still be the case after 20 years.

When asked to estimate potential harm, however, the participants' optimism declined sharply, with the proportion thinking AI would have a negative or uncertain impact going from 30% on a 1 or 2 year horizon to almost half (47%) after 20 years.

How would you say that AI will impact you in the next:



More people are worried about how AI will affect their relationships than their jobs.

It's a widely held view that relationships are more important than work, and that holds true when we talk about AI. In fact, more people are concerned about AI effects on relationships (60%) than are concerned about AI effects on employment (57%).

Nearly two out of three people are either moderately or extremely worried that AI could replace human relationships, indicating apprehension about the creation of strong human connections in the future.

Again, we see the evolving pattern of rising concern about AI's effects on what is important to people in their daily lived experience.

60%
of people
are worried about AI replacing human relationships

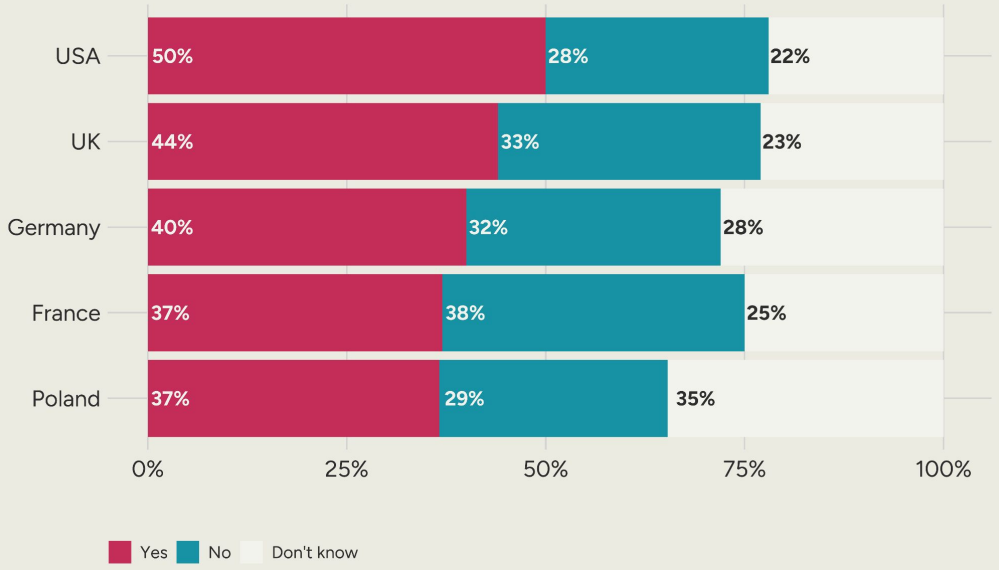
Could having an emotional relationship with an AI be cheating on your partner?

This pointed question illustrates the evolving relationship people have with AI in their personal lives.

Awareness of and interaction with AI are now relatively commonplace. With this background, a significant proportion of respondents said that they would consider a deep relationship with AI to be cheating.

Relatively few people were undecided on the matter.

If your romantic partner developed a deep emotional or romantic relationship with an AI, would you consider that the same as cheating?



Culture affects how technology is adopted.

The cheating question offers an interesting example of how culture affects technological diffusion.

In France, 37% said an AI relationship could be cheating, and 38% said no. While in the USA, 50% said yes, and only 28% said no.

In this case, attitudes and expectations about AI in the context of a relationship are clearly affected by different cultural perspectives on relationships themselves.

This small detail illustrates just how great an effect public perceptions could have on the spread and adoption of AI technology in other aspects of life.

With the proliferation of stories about people falling in love with chatbots now appearing in the news, we're bound to see more discussion on this.

Could having an emotional relationship with an AI be cheating on your partner?

France:

37%

YES

USA:

50%

YES

Parents are especially wary of children's relationships with AI.

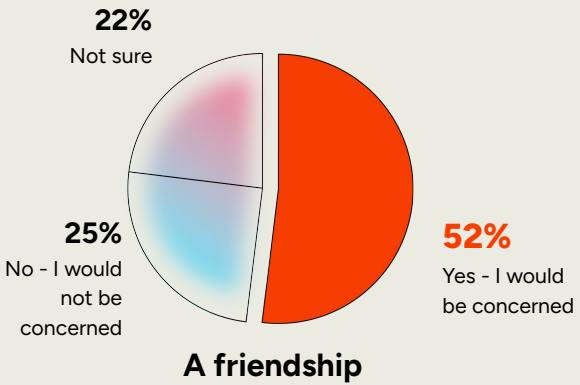
Parents are protective almost by definition.

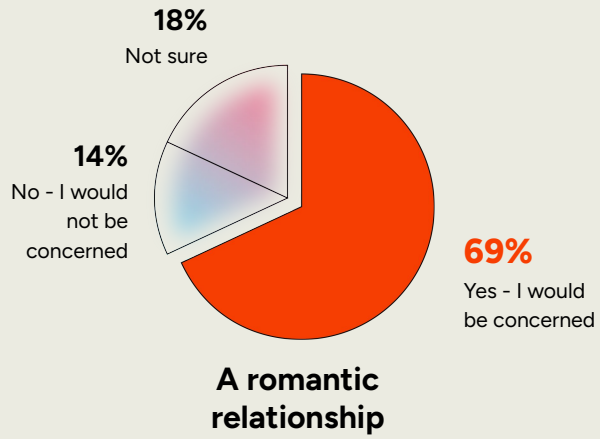
We saw this reflected in our research, with majorities of parents telling us that they were concerned about their children developing any kind of serious relationship with an AI.

When it came to a romantic relationship with an AI, over 2 in 3 parents would be concerned.

This may reflect recent tragic news stories about the dangerous relationships possible between teens and AI, and it is a concerning finding in the context of business moves such as OpenAI's recently-announced partnership with Mattel

Please tell us how worried you are about the following uses of AI, and their potential risks (asked to parents only):





Students feel daunted by the future, and unprepared for it by their schools.

While 3 of 5 students say AI is making studying easier, many feel unprepared for what comes next.

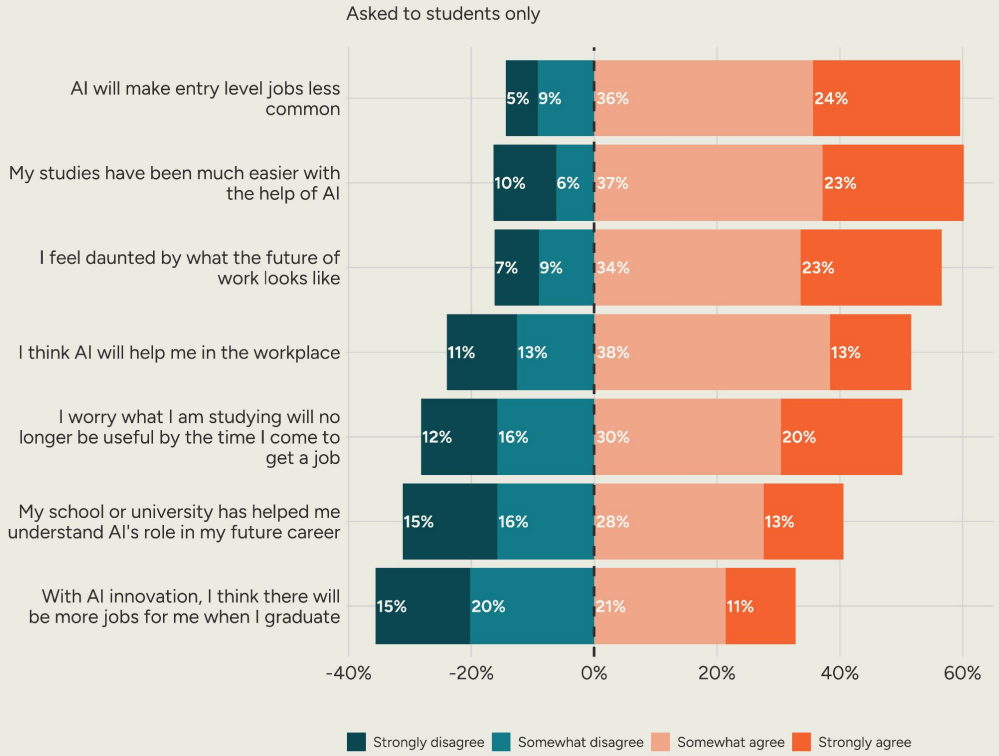
Half of them report that their schools or universities aren't helping them navigate the future of work.

Our global data shows a group with deep concerns:

- 4 in 10 students—and over 50% in the UK, Germany, and Poland—worry that what they're studying today may be irrelevant by the time they enter the job market.
- 3 in 5 fear that AI will make entry-level jobs harder to find.
- 1 in 2 feel daunted by what the future of work looks like for them.

The message is clear: AI is a main focus of students' worries as they enter the working world.

How much would you say that you agree with the following statements:



Specific concerns are emerging as students encounter the job market.

Young respondents were the least likely to want additional regulations on AI (see page 36). But their concerns lie elsewhere - namely, with their own specific life prospects.

Students widely reported that AI helped them in their studies. But when it comes to their life after study, they're much less sanguine.

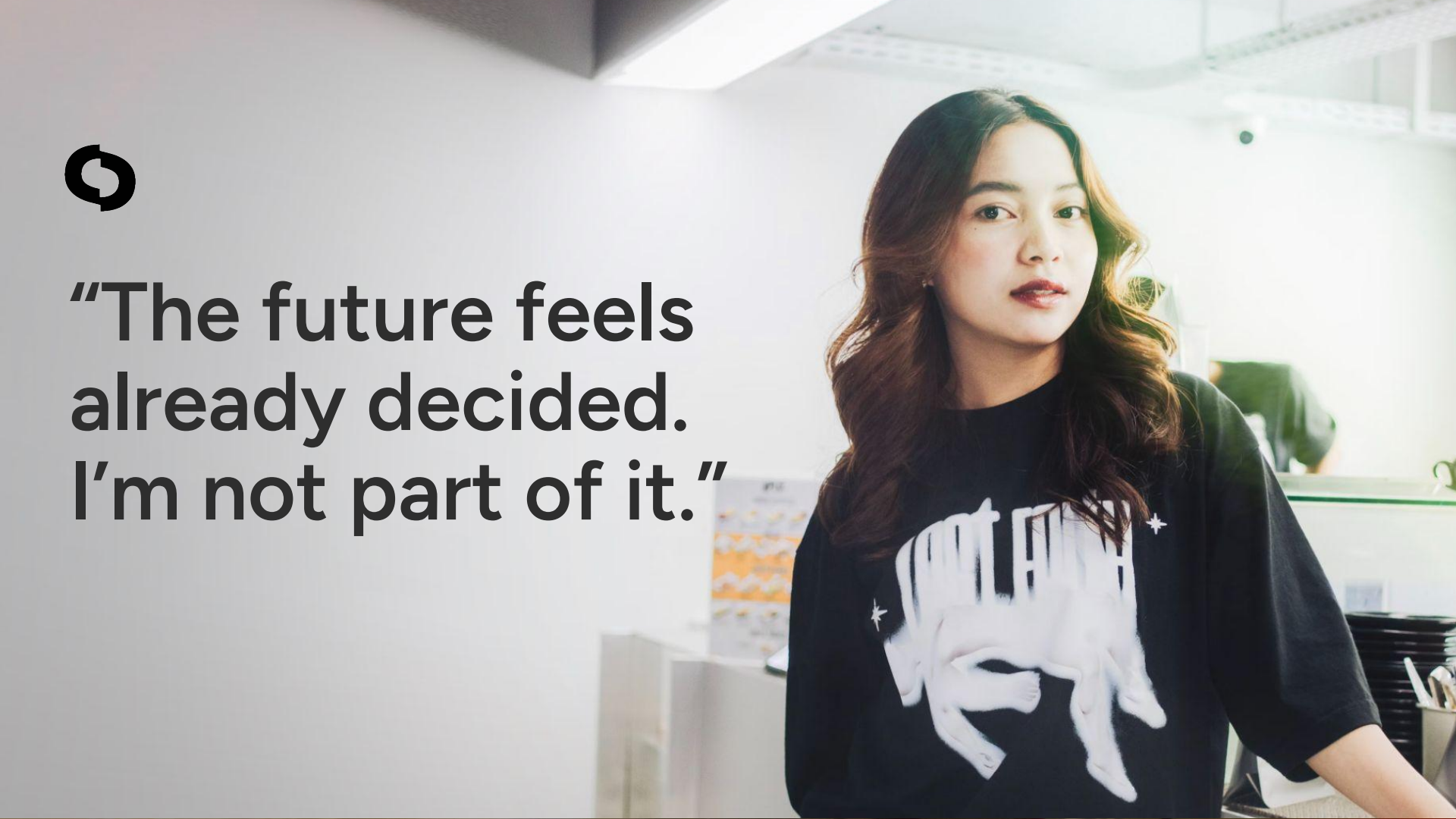
A majority is concerned that they'll struggle to find work in a world with AI, and half of them feel daunted by the future.

3 in 5

fear that AI will make entry-level jobs harder to find.

1 in 2

feel daunted by what the future of work looks like for them.


“The future feels
already decided.
I’m not part of it.”

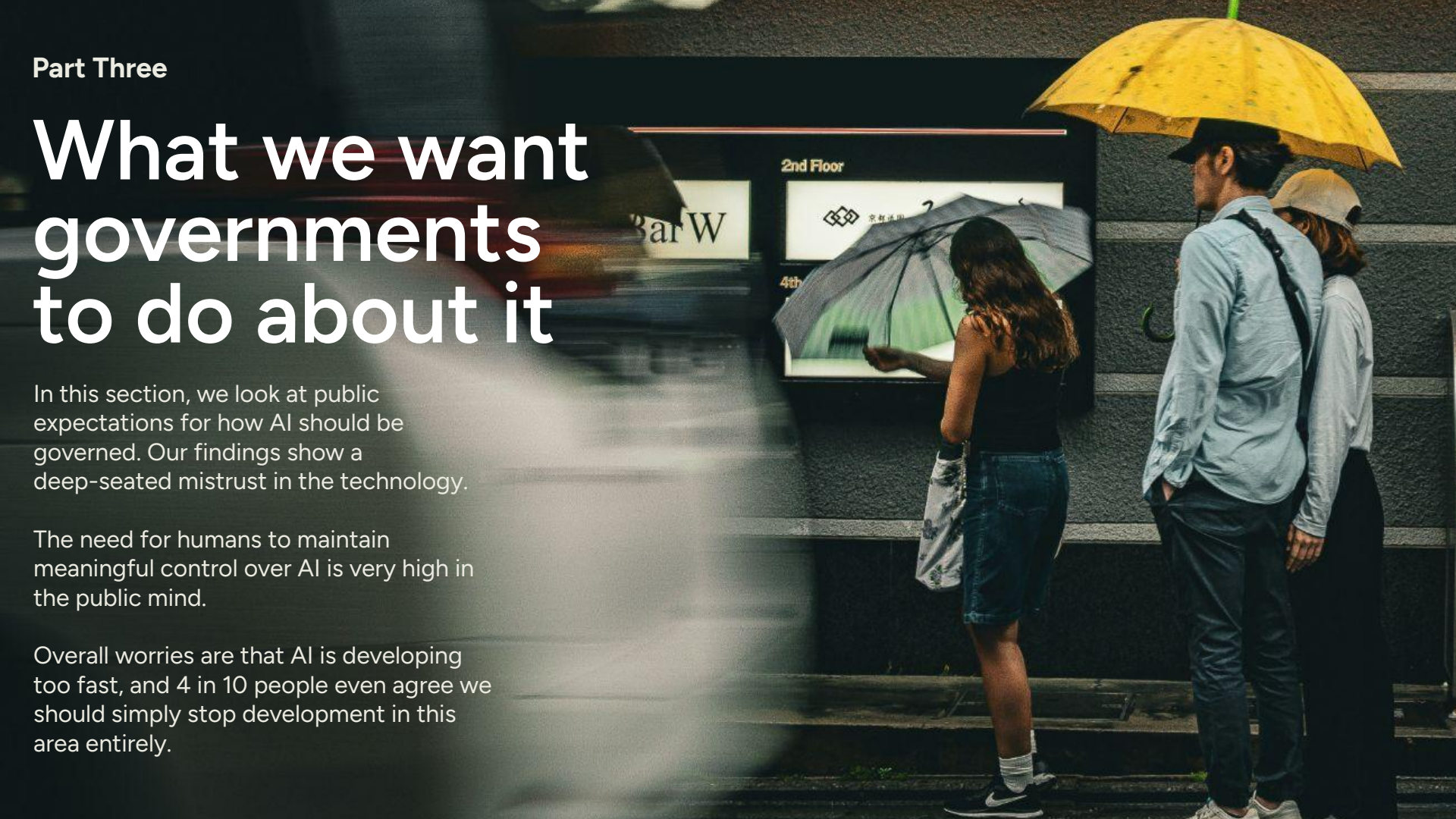
Part Three

What we want governments to do about it

In this section, we look at public expectations for how AI should be governed. Our findings show a deep-seated mistrust in the technology.

The need for humans to maintain meaningful control over AI is very high in the public mind.

Overall worries are that AI is developing too fast, and 4 in 10 people even agree we should simply stop development in this area entirely.



A deep distrust of AI means we believe humans should stay in control.

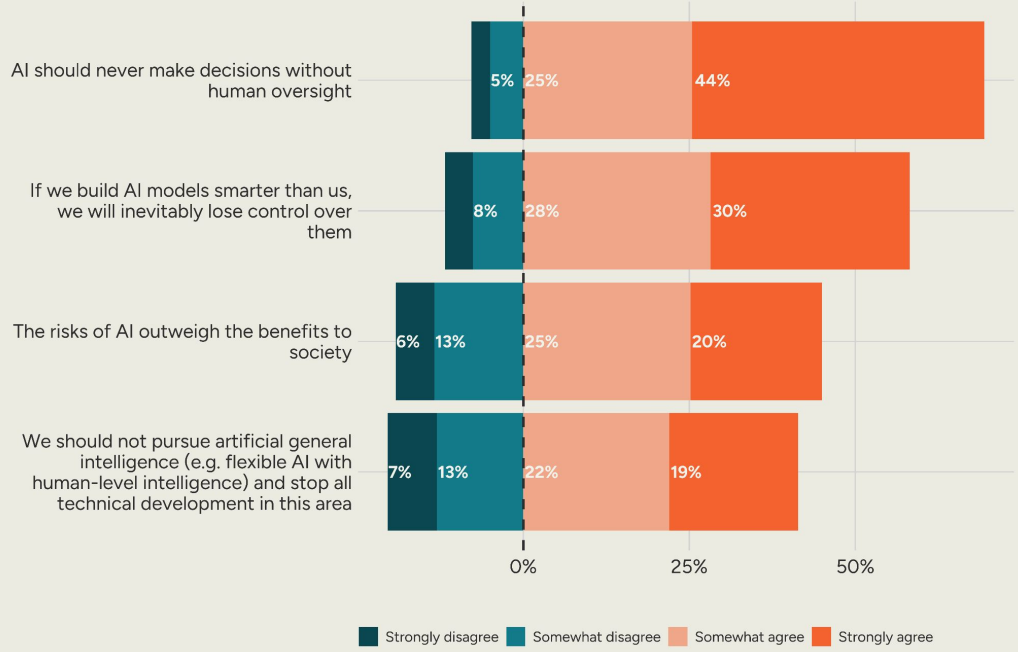
Across all markets the public were very clear: on a macro level, 70% globally either agreed or strongly agreed that AI should never make decisions without oversight.

Nearly two thirds also fear that we will inevitably lose control over this technology.

And nearly half the public think the risks outweigh the benefits.

Support is strong for even rather drastic propositions: **4 in 10 people agree that we should not pursue artificial general intelligence and should stop all technical development in this area.**

Please indicate to what level you agree or disagree with the following statements:



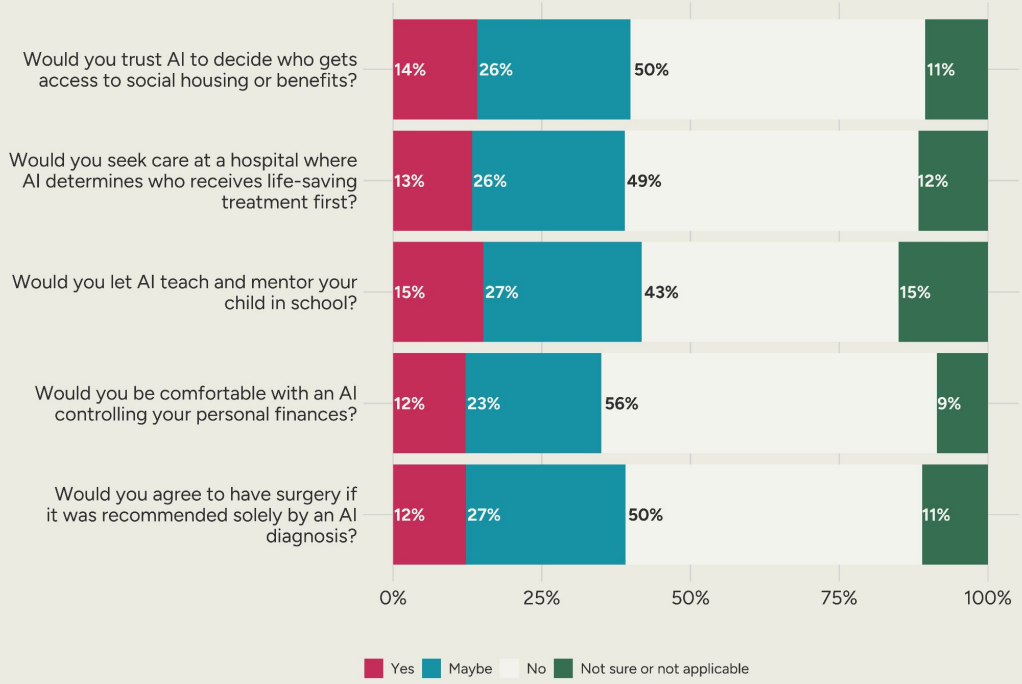
People are deeply uneasy about AI influence in their personal lives.

Moving from the macro level to the individual sphere it's clear that the public across all surveyed countries want to keep control of key decisions, with the UK, France and USA being some of the most opposed on key areas.

When it comes to physical health 44-58% of the public would not want AI determining who receives life saving treatment first and 45-54% refusing to have surgery solely recommended by AI. The message is clear - when it comes to physical health people want a human connection.

Reticence about relinquishing control to AI is even more pronounced when people talk about their wallets, with at least half the public, rising to 60%+ in France and UK, feeling uncomfortable with AI controlling their hard-earned money.

Please share your opinion for each of the following scenarios:



We also discovered a deep-seated distrust of AI developers.

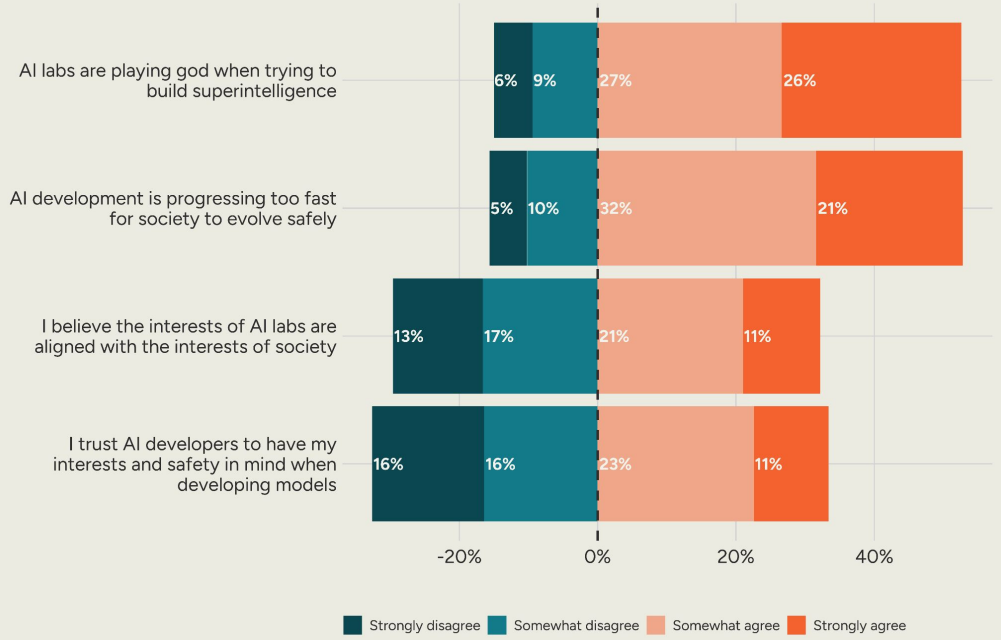
Trust in the people developing AI is low.

Over half of the public feel like AI labs are playing god when it comes to building superintelligence, and only a little over a third believe AI labs have our best interests at heart, with a similar proportion disagreeing, and the rest sitting on the fence.

A majority of people also think the technology is progressing too rapidly to be safe.

Coupled with our earlier finding about stopping all progress towards AGI (see page 33), this paints a picture of a public quite skeptical about the positive narratives promoted by AI leaders.

Please indicate to what level you agree of disagree with the following statements:



One in three are worried about weak rules, with another third undecided.

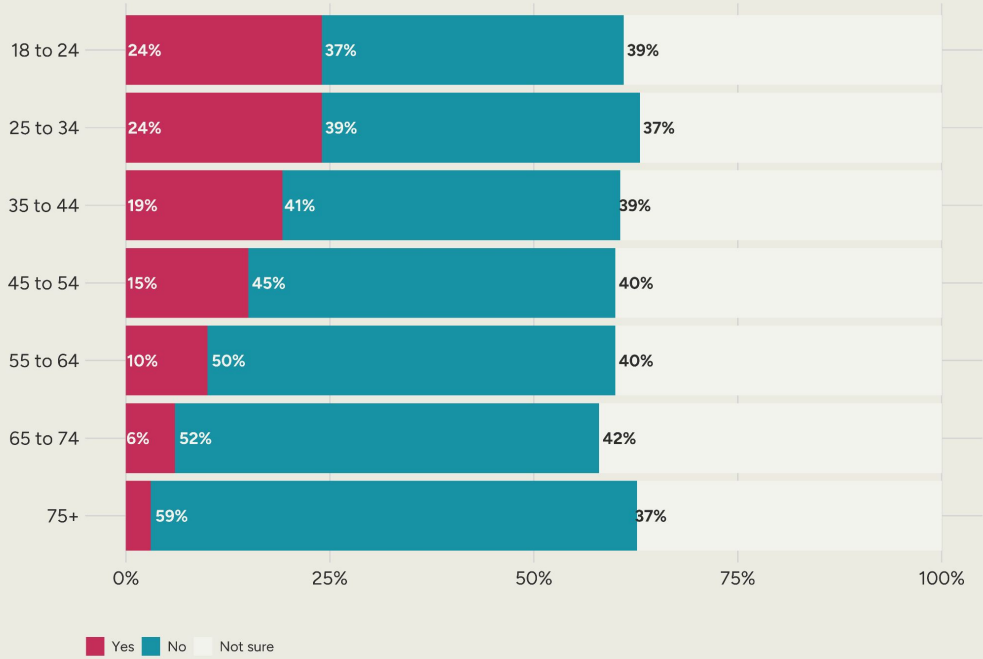
Across all age groups, there is increasing concern that there isn't enough regulation of AI.

Only a third of participants agreed that regulations were adequate, with the remaining majority either unconvinced or undecided.

Support for more regulation also rises significantly through age groups, with the concern at the lack of regulation rising to almost 2 in 3 in the older age brackets.

One thing is clear; even younger groups are concerned, with only 1 in 4 of the youngest believing there is enough regulation in place.

Do you think there is currently enough regulation around AI?



We found strong support for many AI governance measures.

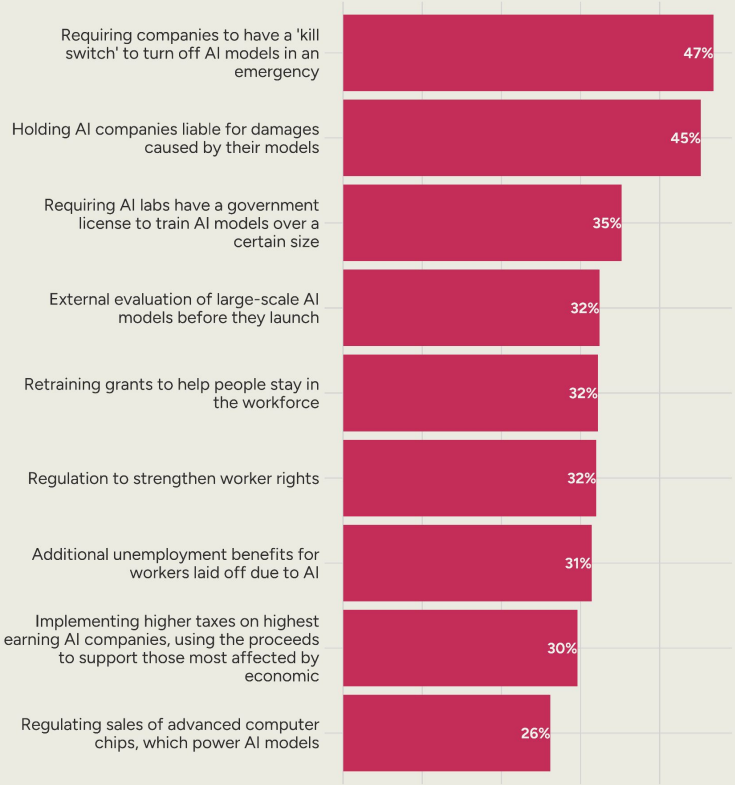
We asked people what they thought of some AI governance measures proposed by AI leaders in the International AI Safety Report 2025 and Managing Extreme AI risks. These sources constitute the state of the art for proposed AI governance approaches.

AI kill switches proved broadly popular, perhaps because of their dramatic and easily understandable name. The ability to hold AI companies liable for any damages caused by their models followed closely behind, demonstrating that people are keen to make sure companies are held to account.

Over a third were in favour of requiring government licences to train advanced AI.

Interestingly, only 1 in 4 wanted regulated sales of advanced computer chips - perhaps suggesting a lack of awareness in the role that these play in powering AI models.

What initiatives would you like the government to put in place? Please select all that apply.



Older people demand accountability, younger people want AI benefits.

If we look at proposed AI governance measures by age, there are some interesting findings.

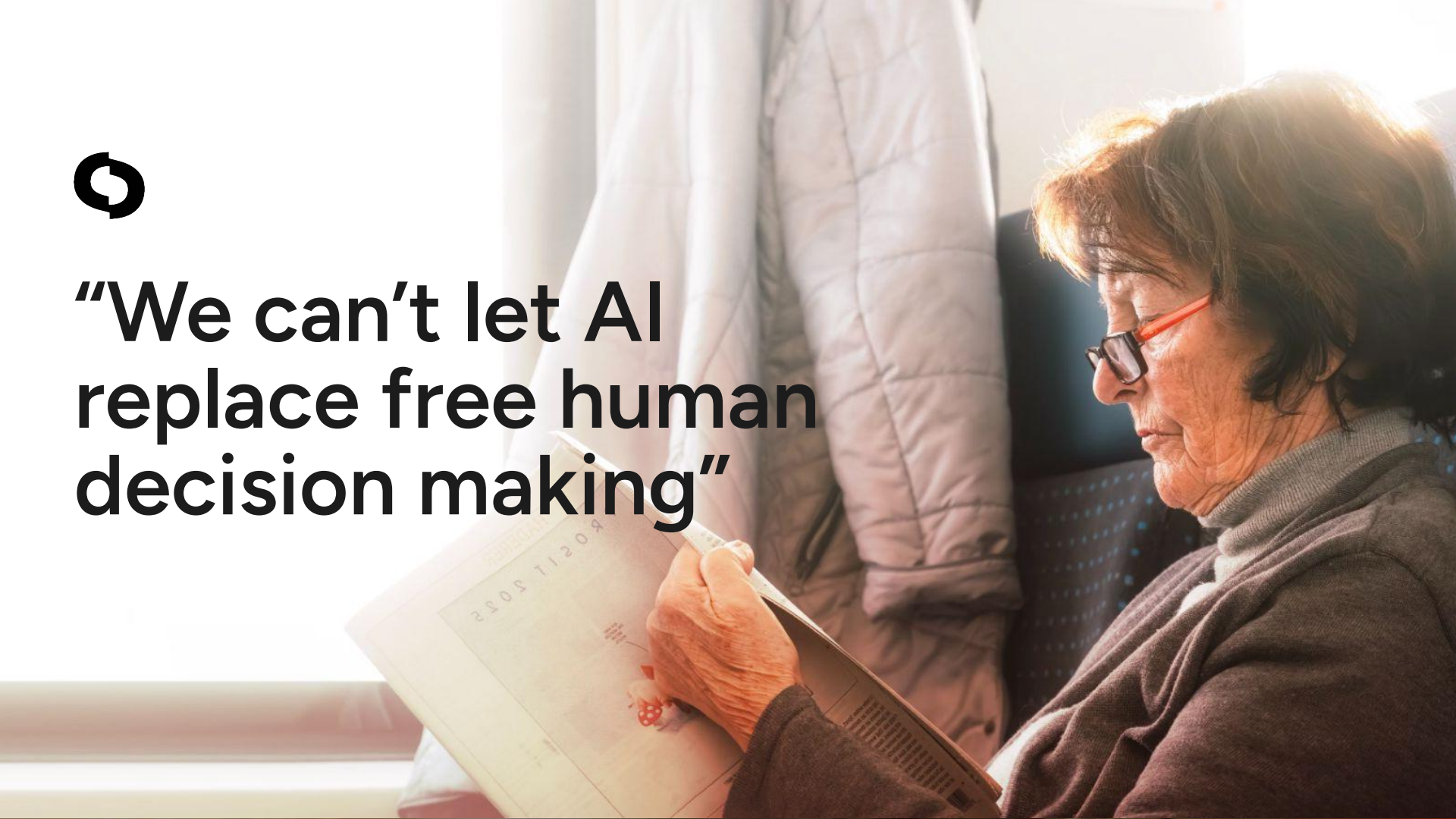
Generally, as the age range rises, so does the desirability of each initiative - with the oldest having some of the highest levels of seeing kill switches, licences, liability and external evaluation as necessary.

One initiative slightly bucks this trend: benefits for those displaced by AI. As we've seen, disruption to the job market is very much on the minds of students and graduates.

As you might expect, over 1 in 3 younger people believe that there should be additional unemployment benefits for workers laid off directly due to AI.

This is the only area where they are the highest age range - but it's important to note the other ages aren't very far behind.

What initiatives would you like the government to put in place? Please select all that apply.

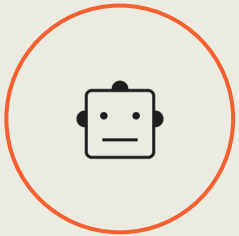


“We can’t let AI replace free human decision making”

Part Four

The AI Publics

Introducing our AI publics



Tech-Positive Urbanites

Globalist Guardians

Anxious Alarmists

Diverse Dreamers

Stressed Strivers

We conducted a segmentation analysis across the five polled countries in order to identify different constituencies of the public, each with their own distinct attitudes towards AI and society at large.

As part of the quantitative research, we asked respondents questions designed to be polarising. The process [1] segregated respondents into different attitudinal segments. As a result of this process, we isolated these specific five groups due to their higher concern about particular aspects of AI, and/or their perceived job exposure to AI, coupled with a higher propensity to take civic action.

1. Segments were identified using a model that groups similar views whilst balancing detail (selecting statistical distributions based on maximum likelihood to best fit the survey data) and simplicity (weighted custom indices made from the correlations between polarising questions within the survey)

Tech-Positive Urbanites

Happy to enjoy the benefits of AI in their personal lives... but no jobs are safe.

Tech-Positive Urbanites

Their views on AI

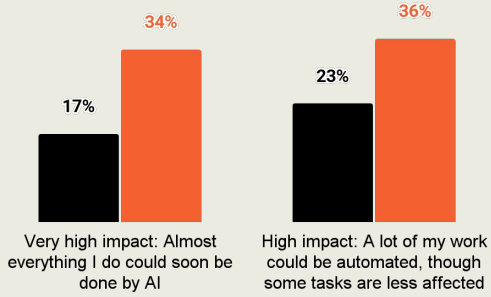
This segment, representing 20.2m people extrapolated across all our participating nations, is acutely worried about AI risks, especially through the lens of their own jobs.

They are 66% more likely to have used AI in their own work, and twice as likely to use it for their studies as the general population. They have hands-on experience, and see the benefits AI could bring. They are also more than twice as happy to have additional applications of AI in their day to day lives - from AI managing their health to their finances.

However, their jobs are the trigger points, and twice as likely as the average to consider their current role exposed to AI disruption, choosing "Very high impact: Almost everything I do could soon be done by AI" (34% vs 17% in our full sample).

7 in 10

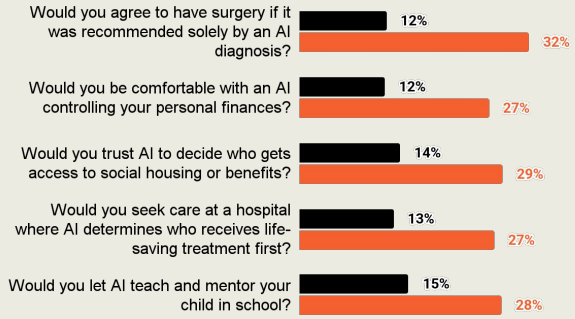
Perceive their job as high risk to AI automation



More than twice

as likely to say they are happy with AI in their daily lives

Please share your opinion for each of the following scenarios: (Yes responses only)



Full sample vs. Tech-Positive Urbanites

67% vs 58%

Are worried about risks from AI development

Unique views

Using the following scale, where do you sit between the following two statements...	Full sample	Tech-Positive Urbanites
Has AI already caused lasting harm to society? 0 = AI has not caused lasting harm, society can adapt and benefit as the technology evolves. 100 = AI has already done irreversible damage to how society functions and interacts.	52	68
How will AI affect the economy? 0 = AI adoption will gradually change the economy for the better in manageable ways. 100 = AI adoption will trigger rapid, destabilising economic shifts.	55	70
Who should regulate AI development? 0 = AI companies should self-regulate their own technological developments. 100 = Governments should regulate the technological developments of AI companies.	59	74

Tech-Positive Urbanites

Their views on AI

"I am worried that artificial intelligence could displace human jobs, make decisions opaquely, and be misused for manipulation or surveillance."

18-24, Male, Germany,
White, Voted for The Free Democratic Party

"I think technology and healthcare will improve, making life more convenient and connected. But I worry that the cost of living and housing will keep rising, making it harder for regular families to stay ahead."

35-44, Male, USA,
White, Voted for Trump

"That AI will replace the creative work of humans, resulting in higher unemployment rates."

18-24, Female, UK,
White, Voted for The Green Party

"AI is a risk for unemployment and it could get worse, but it's an asset for health."

25-34, Male, France,
White, Voted for Mélenchon

"There will be large layoffs, many professions will cease to exist, AI is already being used to fabricate fake news, etc. ... What will improve is efficiency in some areas."

35-44, Female, Poland,
White, Voted for another candidate

Tech-Positive Urbanites

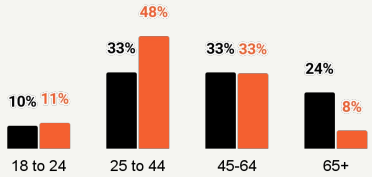
Their views on AI

This segment consists of people who are more likely to be highly educated, politically engaged young professionals and parents living in urban areas, often with stronger religious leanings.

They actively follow news and current events, frequently participating in protests and civic actions.

Familiar with AI and its narrow applications, they use it regularly and view it as broadly beneficial to their families, children, and society at large.

Age distribution



Ethnicity breakdown

42% are ethnic minorities where they live

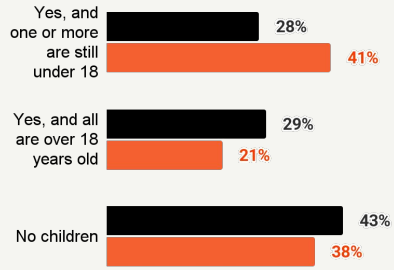
+15 pts vs. the full sample

Religious breakdown

81% identify with a religion

+12 pts vs. the full sample

Parenting status



Educational attainment

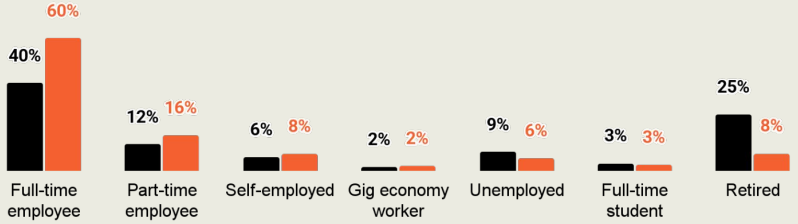
37% have a Bachelor's degree or higher

+12 pts vs. the full sample

Full sample vs. Tech-Positive Urbanites

Employment Status

Likely job roles: HR manager, Senior IT manager, Marketing manager



Worldviews and beliefs:

Using the following scale, where do you sit between the following two statements...	Full sample	Tech-Positive Urbanites
What role should government play in society and the economy? 0 = I prefer lower taxes, smaller government, and less public spending. 100 = I prefer higher taxes, a larger role for government, and more spending in public services.	42	73
Should individual freedoms be limited in the name of security and protection? 0 = Protecting individual freedoms is paramount, even if it means accepting more risk, liberty must come first. 100 = Public liberties should be restricted if it helps keep society safe, security must come first.	47	69
How important of a role does religion play in your life? 0 = Not at all important. 100 = Very important.	49	75
To what extent do you personally engage in civic or political action around issues you care about? 0 = Even when an issue matters to me, I tend to focus on my own life and leave decisions to leaders and institutions. 100 = When an issue matters to me, I take part in civic actions like protesting, petitioning, or canvassing.	46	73

Globalist Guardians

More worried about the world than themselves.
AI is a threat to society...not just jobs.

Globalist Guardians

Their views on AI

Globalist Guardians are almost **twice as likely** to worry that future generations will have it harder with AI as a risk to society as a whole, despite feeling that their own jobs are not as vulnerable to AI disruption. They represent 31.2m people.

They are the only segment of the population whose worries center on **existential risks.** Over half are extremely worried about AI making decisions in warfare (57%) and politics (54%), and half are worried about AI replacing human relationships (49%).
They see AI as likely to worsen existing societal problems and are particularly alarmed about climate change, where their concern greatly exceeds that of the general public.

They tend to mistrust AI developers, and are the **most likely segment (60%)** to think there is not currently enough regulation around AI.

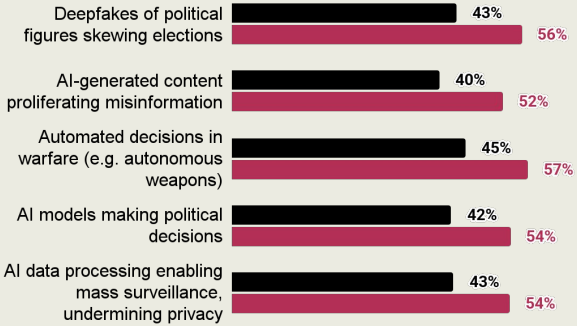
Unique views:

Globalist Guardians are much more likely to agree that:

Using the following scale, where do you sit between the following two statements...	Full sample	Globalist Guardians
Who should regulate AI development? 0 = AI companies should self-regulate their own technological developments. 100 = Governments should regulate the technological developments of AI companies.	59	83
What should guide the pace of AI development? 0 = If we, or our allies, don't push ahead with AI then our enemies will. 100 = AI development should be a global effort where nations coordinate openly and progress together.	60	82
How will AI affect human relationships and social interaction? 0 = AI will enhance our relationships by enabling better communication, connection, and empathy. 100 = AI will isolate people, reduce meaningful human contact, and damage our social bonds.	64	70

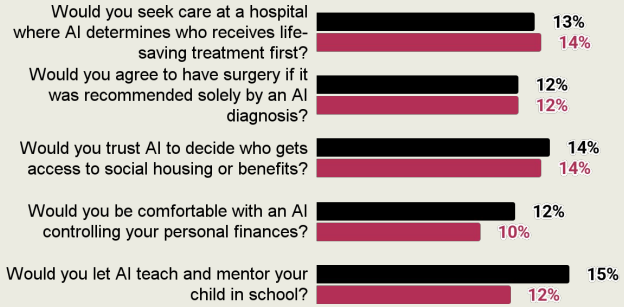
More than half

are extremely worried about various risks of AI



Resistant to AI

In day to day areas. *Please share your opinion for each of the following scenarios: (Yes responses only)*



Full sample vs. Globalist Guardians

Globalist Guardians

Their views on AI

"AI can lead to further inequality. Educated population will embrace AI more than the working class. The benefit of AI will therefore not be distributed evenly."

45-54, Male, UK,
Asian, Voted for The Green Party

"We make ourselves dependent and vulnerable; additionally, AI chews up huge amounts of energy while everyone talks about sustainability."

35-44, Female, Germany,
White, Voted for The Left

"AI is like the atom. Well used, it can help millions. Misused, it will kill millions. Because we will no longer be masters of our future."

75+, Male, France, White,
Voted for the Macron

"I watched the father on AI in an interview, and he said that if it is not implemented properly, it could take over the world and do away with humans. I live in Memphis where Musk has his XI supercomputer, and he has only tried to destroy the air quality since last year."

65-74, Male, USA,
White, Voted for Harris

"Loss of control or giving AI the right to make decisions. [...] The human mind is more complicated and human feelings than computer math that makes decisions learning from us especially the dark side of humankind."

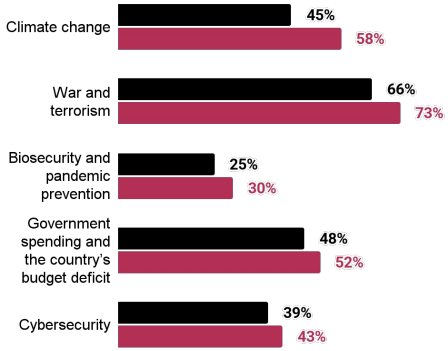
45-54, Male, Poland,
White, Voted for Trzaskowski

Globalist Guardians

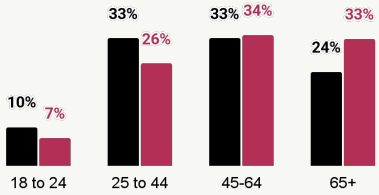
Their views on AI

Globalist Guardians are generally affluent, skew slightly older, and hold socially progressive globalist values. They are highly engaged with news and current affairs, and they show robust civic participation through high voter turnout, and signing petitions.

3 in 5
think that climate change is a very big problem



Age distribution



Ethnicity breakdown

18% are ethnic minorities

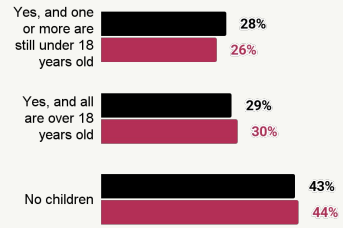
-10 pts vs. the full sample

Religious breakdown

68% identify with a religion

-1 pts vs. the full sample

Parenting status



Educational attainment

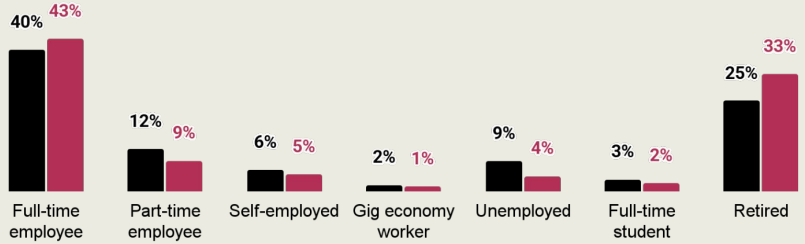
29% have a Bachelor's degree or higher

+4 pts vs. the full sample

Full sample vs. Globalist Guardians

Employment Status

Likely job roles: Product development manager, Business development manager, Finance director



Worldviews and beliefs:

Using the following scale, where do you sit between the following two statements...	Full sample	Globalist Guardians
How often do you keep up to date with the news & current affairs? 0 = I never follow the news or keep up with current events. 100 = I actively follow the news and stay highly informed about current events.	69	82
Do you think life will get better or worse for future generations? 0 = The next generation will have a better, more prosperous life than ours 100 = The next generation will face a harder, worse life than ours.	66	82

Anxious Alarmists

AI is just one more sign that the world is heading in the wrong direction.

Anxious Alarmists

Their views on AI

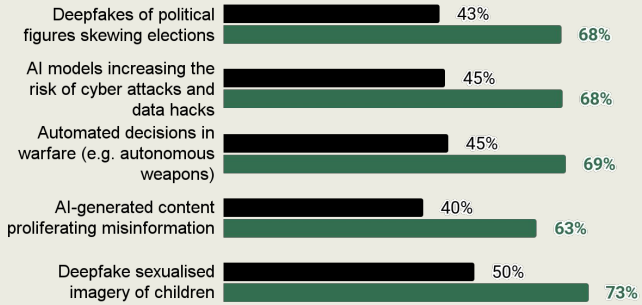
Anxious Alarmists represent 16.3m people who are more worried about AI risks than the full sample, especially through the lens of high-profile concerns like the economy, inflation, immigration, unemployment, and government spending.

They are **twice as likely** to believe AI will very negatively impact them in the long term (28% vs 14%). This is aligned with their overall pessimistic outlook on the future, with **the entirety of this audience** believing 'the next generation will have a harder, worse life than ours' (100% vs 59%).

1 in 2 do not trust AI developers to have their interests and safety in mind (47% vs 32%), leading to a much higher propensity to not be comfortable with the use of AI in their day to day lives.

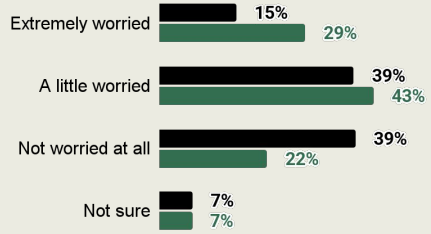
7 in 10 (71%)

Are worried about risks from AI development (vs 58% nat rep)



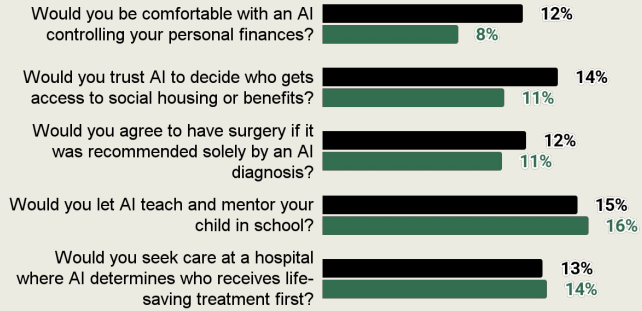
3 in 10 (29%)

Are extremely worried about disruption in their workplace (vs 15% global avg)



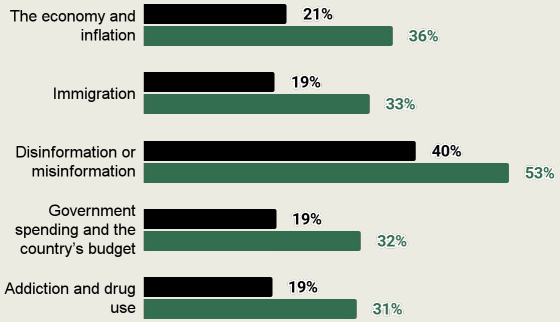
Resistant to AI

In day to day areas. *Please share your opinion for each of the following scenarios: (Yes responses only)*



+14pts

On average, more likely to believe that AI will make each of the below worse in 5 years time



Full sample vs. Anxious Alarmists

SEISMIC FOUNDATION

Anxious Alarmists

Their views on AI

"As in many areas, I fear that AI will be used for negative purposes."

35-44, Female, France,
White, Voted for Mélenchon

"Hallucination treated as fact; Concentration of power and removal of human autonomy. The inability of most AI commentators to actually understand AI without it being the wank fantasy of a sci fi nerdy teenage boy as opposed to the serious understanding of its limitations both philosophically and actually."

45-54, Male, UK, Other,
Did not vote

"AI can manipulate many things."

18-24, Female,
Germany, Turkish,
Voted for Alternative for Germany

"I believe giving AI that much power you never know what can happen they could shut down the banks they could take control of all our systems you just don't know what their capabilities are cuz they're not human."

35-44, Female, USA,
Hispanic or Latino, Voted for Harris

"Eliminating workers from many professions and replacing them with AI, easier spread of false information, more effective surveillance and manipulation of citizens."

65-74, Male, Poland,
White, Voted for another candidate

Anxious Alarmists

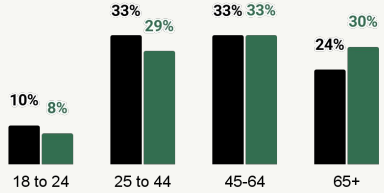
Their views on AI

Anxious Alarmists skew slightly older and are the most active news followers.

They are more worried about all societal issues than the general population but are particularly alarmed about high-profile concerns like immigration, healthcare affordability, the economy and inflation and government spending.

They are generally skeptical of new developments in the world and are often nostalgic about the past.

Age distribution



Ethnicity breakdown

25% are ethnic minorities

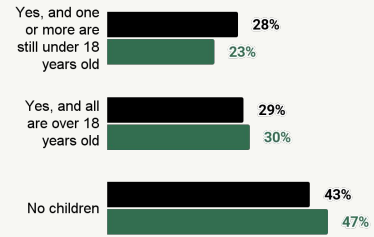
-3 pts vs. the full sample

Religious breakdown

67% identify with a religion

-2 pts vs. the full sample

Parenting status



Educational attainment

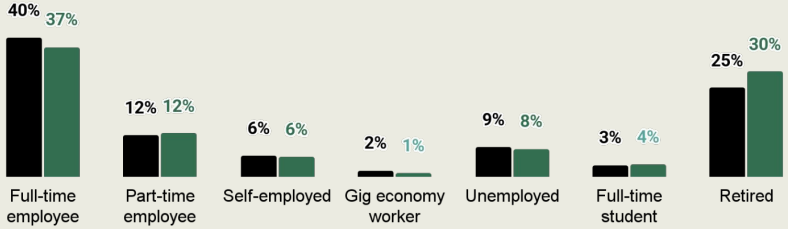
16% have a Bachelor's degree or higher

-9 pts vs. the full sample

Full sample vs. Anxious Alarmists

Employment Status

Likely job roles: Customer service manager, Delivery associate, Sales manager



Worldviews and beliefs:

Using the following scale, where do you sit between the following two statements...	Full sample	Anxious Alarmists
How often do you keep up to date with the news & current affairs? 0 = I never follow the news or keep up with current events. 100 = I actively follow the news and stay highly informed about current events.	69	93
Do you think life will get better or worse for future generations? 0 = The next generation will have a better, more prosperous life than ours 100 = The next generation will face a harder, worse life than ours.	66	92
How will powerful actors use AI? 0 = AI will be used responsibly by most countries and companies for beneficial reasons. 100 = AI will be used by most countries and companies for malicious reasons.	57	71

Diverse Dreamers

Cautiously optimistic about AI, but ever aware of the potential risks to society, their children, and their jobs.

Diverse Dreamers

Their views on AI

Diverse Dreamers represent 10.5m people who are as worried about AI risks as the wider population (6 in 10), especially through the lens of their jobs and their children.

They are **47% more likely** to say they strongly agree that "AI models pose a risk to children's safety" (25% vs 17%), and are a third more likely to be parents of children under 18 than the average in our sample.

They are **almost twice as likely** to strongly agree that they "believe the interests of AI labs are aligned with the interests of society" (21% vs 11%) - showing a mixed bag of hopes and fears. Despite this relatively high trust in labs, they are much more likely to feel strongly that AI development should be a cooperative endeavor and be regulated by governments, not self-regulated by the labs.

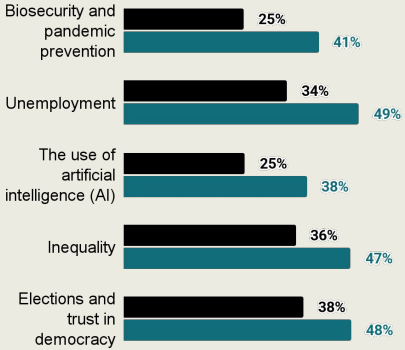
Unique views:

Diverse dreamers are much more likely to agree that:

Using the following scale, where do you sit between the following two statements...	Full sample	Diverse Dreamers
Has AI already caused lasting harm to society? 0 = AI has not caused lasting harm, society can adapt and benefit as the technology evolves. 100 = AI has already done irreversible damage to how society functions and interacts.	52	71
How will AI affect the economy? 0 = AI adoption will gradually change the economy for the better in manageable ways. 100 = AI adoption will trigger rapid, destabilising economic shifts.	55	73
How will powerful actors use AI? 0 = AI will be used responsibly by most countries and companies for beneficial reasons. 100 = AI will be used by most countries and companies for malicious reasons.	57	71
What impact do you think AI will have on the working lives of younger generations? 0 = I feel optimistic, AI will open up new kinds of jobs and allow future generations to thrive in more flexible, creative, and meaningful careers. 100 = I feel pessimistic, AI will reduce opportunities and leave future generations struggling to find secure and fulfilling work.	58	72
How will AI affect social inequality? 0 = AI will help level the playing field. 100 = AI will deepen economic divides.	60	73

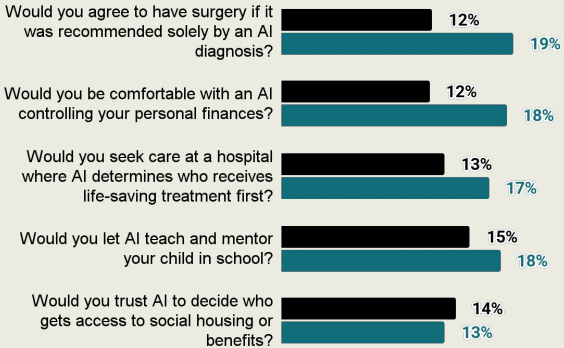
Top AI worries

They think these are "a very big problem"



Openness to AI

Please share your opinion for each of the following scenarios: (Yes responses only)



Full sample vs. Diverse Dreamers

SEISMIC FOUNDATION

Diverse Dreamers

Their views on AI

"I have no say in the development of AI because AI is programmed to keep me out."

65-74, Male, UK,
Asian, Voted for The Labour Party

"People, especially the elderly and uneducated, cannot adapt to the changes taking place."

45-54, Female, Poland,
White, Voted for Trzaskowski

"What worries me most about AI is identity fraud, AI is so realistic now they can make clips of actually people saying things they have never said before."

18-24, Male, USA,
Hispanic or Latino, Voted for Harris

"AI can become independent and make humans obsolete"

55-64, Male, Germany,
White, Voted for The CDU

"Too much development could lead to our downfall."

18-24, Female, France,
White, Voted for Macron

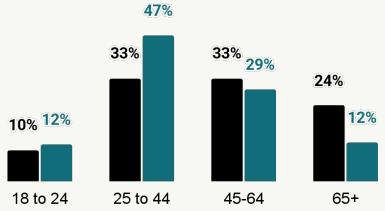
Diverse Dreamers

Their views on AI

Diverse dreamers, as the name suggests, are more likely to be from ethnic minorities, and are more religious than the general population.

They care the most deeply about mental health, privacy and surveillance, and government spending out of all our segments.

Age distribution



Ethnicity breakdown

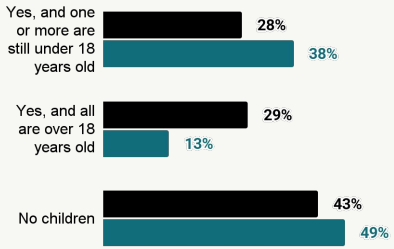
1 in 2 (47%) are ethnic minorities

Religious breakdown

85% identify with a religion

+15 pts vs. the full sample

Parenting status



Educational attainment

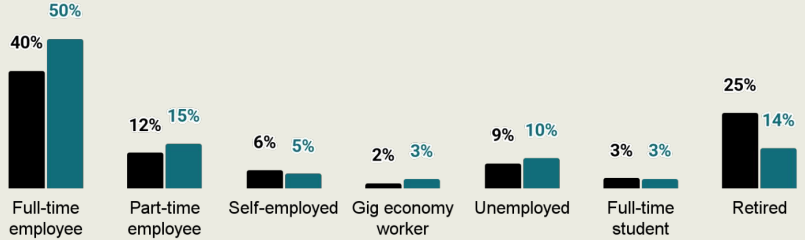
18% have a Bachelor's degree or higher

-8 pts vs. the full sample

Full sample vs. Diverse Dreamers

Employment Status

Likely job roles: Quality control foreman, Real estate agent, Restaurant manager



Worldviews and beliefs:

Using the following scale, where do you sit between the following two statements...	Full sample	Diverse Dreamers
What role should government play in society and the economy? 0 = I prefer lower taxes, smaller government, and less public spending. 100 = I prefer higher taxes, a larger role for government, and more spending in public services.	42	54
How important of a role does religion play in your life? 0 = Not at all important. 100 = Very important.	49	71
To what extent do you personally engage in civic or political action around issues you care about? 0 = Even when an issue matters to me, I tend to focus on my own life and leave decisions to leaders and institutions. 100 = When an issue matters to me, I take part in civic actions like protesting, petitioning, or canvassing.	46	72

Stressed Strivers

Busy with everyday life and quietly optimistic, they see some warning signs... but not as many as they should.

Stressed Strivers

Their views on AI

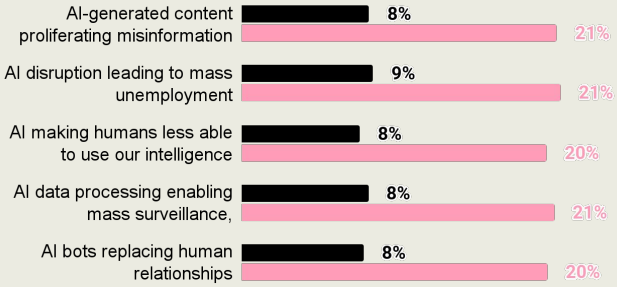
Stressed Strivers represent 21.6m people who are slightly less worried about AI risks than the full sample, despite a much higher perceived impact from AI on their jobs.

Currently, **1 in 4** remain unsure of the repercussions AI will have on societal issues indicating they're a swayable audience who haven't had enough information to decide how they feel about AI and the impacts on the future. This is important given the high perceived risk to their jobs.

While they are more likely to be comfortable with narrow uses of AI, they are also more likely to believe that AI will deepen economic divides and trigger destabilizing economic shifts - to which they will be most vulnerable to given their lower-income backgrounds.

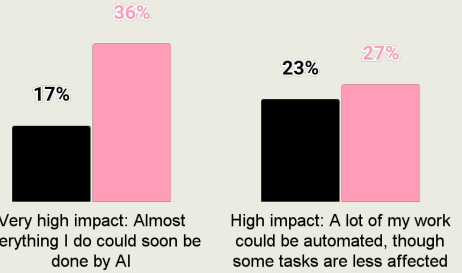
1 in 5 (20%)

Don't know how worried to feel about the following uses of AI



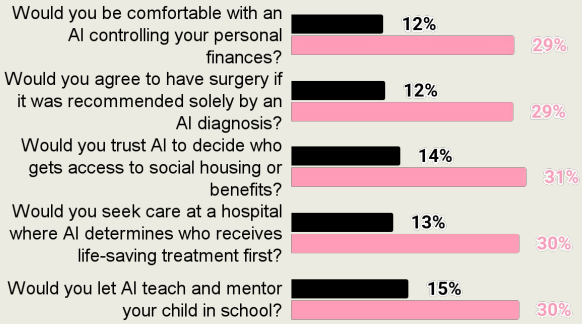
3 in 5 (62%)

Perceive their jobs as high risk to AI automation (vs 40% global avg)



Openness to AI

In day to day areas. *Please share your opinion for each of the following scenarios: (Yes responses only)*



Full sample vs. Stressed Strivers

Unique views

Using the following scale, where do you sit between the following two statements...	Full sample	Stressed Strivers
How will AI affect social inequality? 0 = AI will help level the playing field. 100 = AI will deepen economic divides.	60	69
How will AI affect the economy? 0 = AI adoption will gradually change the economy for the better in manageable ways. 100 = AI adoption will trigger rapid, destabilising economic shifts.	55	69

Stressed Strivers

Their views on AI

"Some things will get better due to technological advancements and improved healthcare, while others may get worse because of climate change, political instability, and economic inequality."

45-54, Male, USA,
White, Voted for Trump

"It's unknown how it will be used."

45-54, Female, Poland,
White, Voted for Nawrocki

"It's becoming more and more confusing."

25-34, Male, Germany,
White, Voted for The Social Democratic Party

"It could be better, or it could be worse."

35-44, Male, UK,
White, Voted for Reform UK

"We don't know if someone will do anything reckless."

65-74, Female, France,
White, Did not vote

Stressed Strivers

Their views on AI

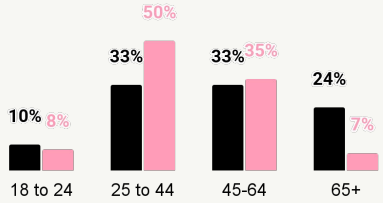
This segment consists of people who are more likely to be younger, lower-income, with young children, and tend to have lower levels of education.

They are often less involved in societal issues, perhaps because they are very busy juggling working life with raising young children, an undertaking likely to occupy much of their time and energy.

Their concerns are more immediate than those impacting wider society.

When an issue matters to them, however, they are much more likely than the full sample to take part in political actions like protesting, petitioning and canvassing.

Age distribution



Ethnicity breakdown

30% are ethnic minorities

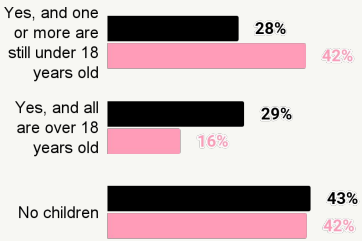
+2 pts vs. the full sample

Religious breakdown

77% identify with a religion

+7 pts vs. the full sample

Parenting status



Educational attainment

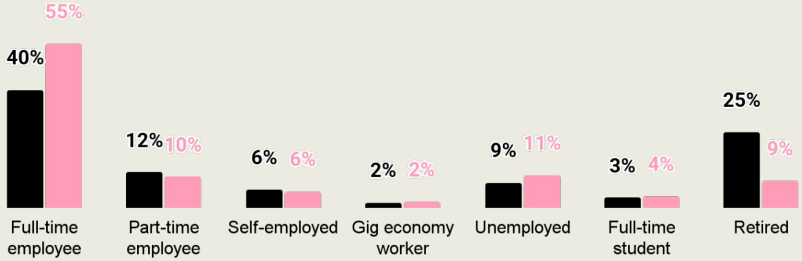
28% have a Bachelor's degree or higher

+3 pts vs. the full sample

Full sample vs. Stressed Strivers

Employment Status

Likely job roles: Administration support, Warehouse logistics, Accountant



Worldviews and beliefs:

Using the following scale, where do you sit between the following two statements...	Full sample	Stressed Strivers
What role should government play in society and the economy? 0 = I prefer lower taxes, smaller government, and less public spending. 100 = I prefer higher taxes, a larger role for government, and more spending in public services.	42	68
Should individual freedoms be limited in the name of security and protection? 0 = Protecting individual freedoms is paramount, even if it means accepting more risk, liberty must come first. 100 = Public liberties should be restricted if it helps keep society safe, security must come first.	47	69
To what extent do you personally engage in civic or political action around issues you care about? 0 = Even when an issue matters to me, I tend to focus on my own life and leave decisions to leaders and institutions. 100 = When an issue matters to me, I take part in civic actions like protesting, petitioning, or canvassing.	46	70

“If we don't have trust, we have nothing.”

Part Five

Appendix

Fieldwork for quantitative research

Data for all five countries were collected via online surveys through a panel aggregator, with demographic quotas in place.

Fieldwork took place from 16 June 2025 to 23 June 2025.

After collection, data for each country was weighted by the following variable: gender, age, region, education, ethnicity and past vote.

Whenever figures are given as full sample or the average of the five countries, each of the five were weighted equally.

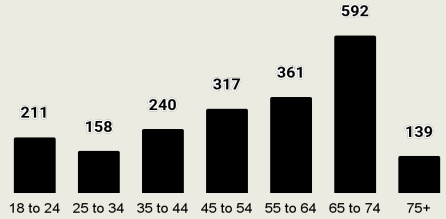
Due to weighting and rounding, percentages may not add up to 100%.

Sample composition: **France**

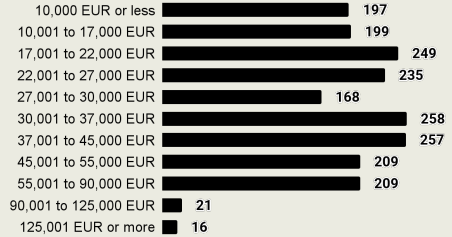
Sample size:

2,018

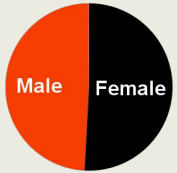
Age:



Household income (pre-tax)

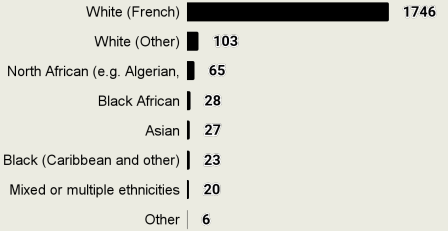


Gender:



Location:

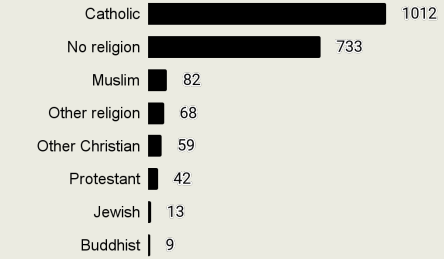
Ethnicity



Educational attainment:

*Bachelor's degree or equivalent and higher

Religion:

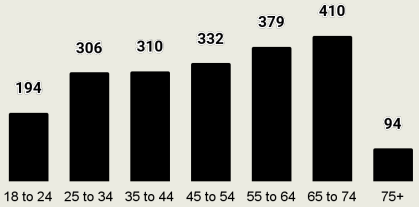


Sample composition: **Germany**

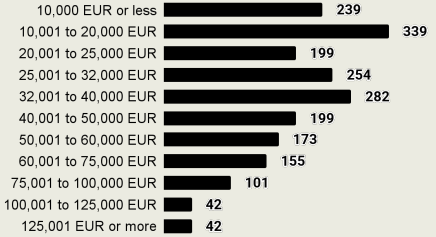
Sample size:

2,025

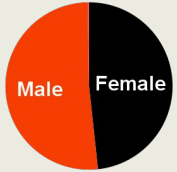
Age:



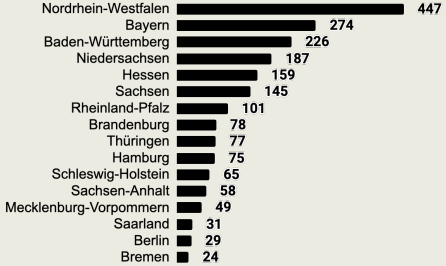
Household income (pre-tax)



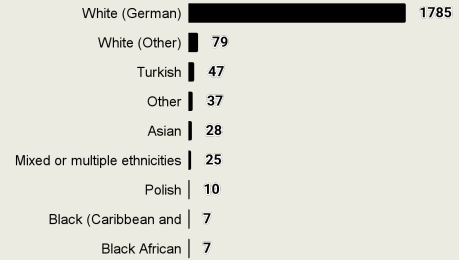
Gender:



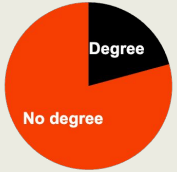
Location:



Ethnicity

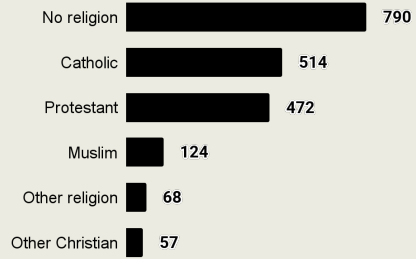


Educational attainment:



*Bachelor's degree or equivalent and higher

Religion:

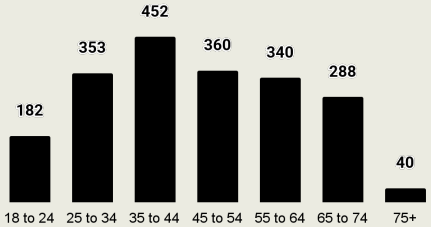


Sample composition: **Poland**

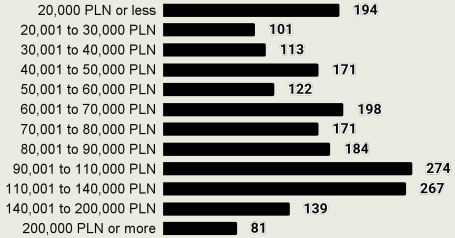
Sample size:

2,015

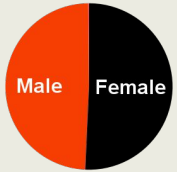
Age:



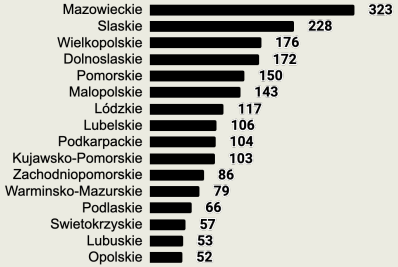
Household income (pre-tax)



Gender:

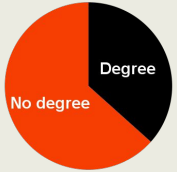


Location:



Ethnicity

Educational attainment:



*Bachelor's degree or equivalent and higher

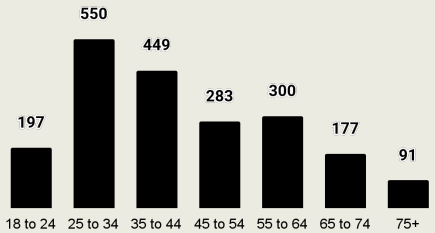
Religion:

Sample composition: **United Kingdom**

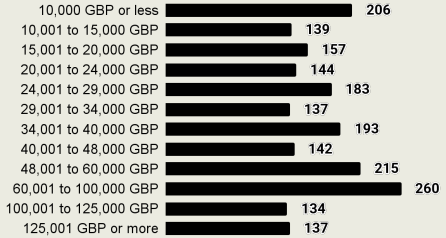
Sample size:

2,047

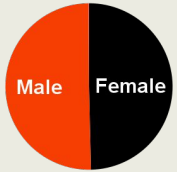
Age:



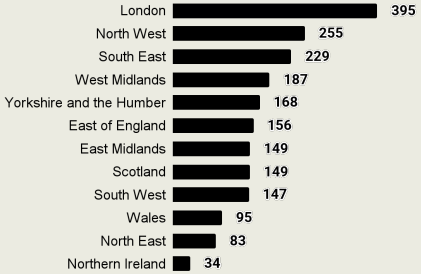
Household income (pre-tax)



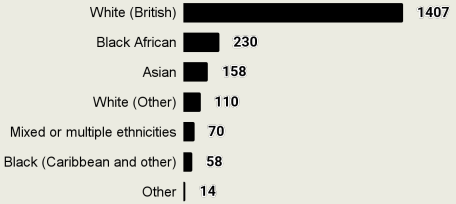
Gender:



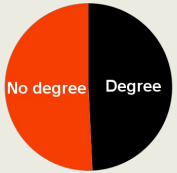
Location:



Ethnicity

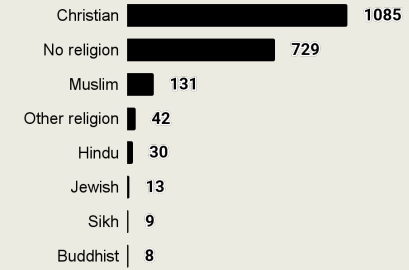


Educational attainment:



*Bachelor's degree or equivalent and higher

Religion:

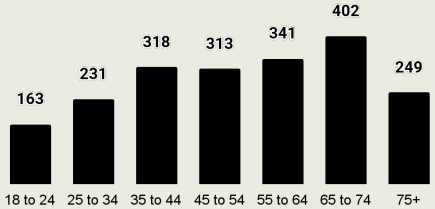


Sample composition: **United States of America**

Sample size:

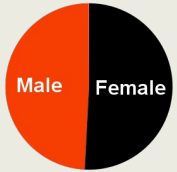
2,017

Age:

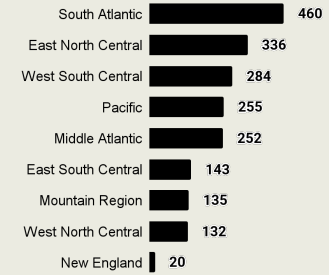


Household income (pre-tax)

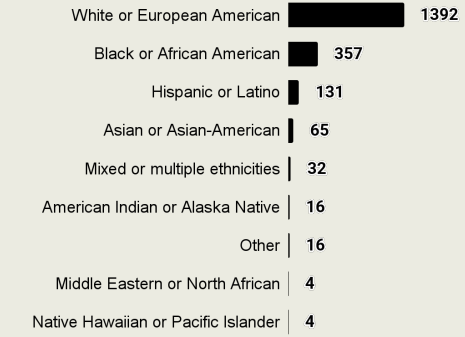
Gender:



Location:



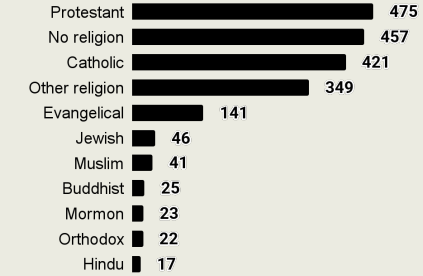
Ethnicity



Educational attainment:

*Bachelor's degree or equivalent and higher

Religion:



Income group definitions

Response options for income come from Global Web Index surveys.

Values refer to household income, before tax, and have been grouped based on the number of response options.

	France	Germany	Poland	UK	USA
Very Low	€17k or less	€20k or less	40k zł or less	£15k or less	$25k or less
Low	€17k to €27k	€20k to €32k	40k zł to 70k zł	£15k to £29k	$25k to $50k
Lower-Mid	€27k to €37k	€32k to €50k	70k zł to 90k zł	£29k to £40k	$50k to $70k
Upper-Mid	€37k to €55k	€50k to €75k	90k zł to 140k zł	£40k to £60k	$70k to $115k
High	€55k to €125k	€75k to €125k	140k zł to 200k zł	£60k to £125k	$115k to $200k
Very High	€125k or more	€125k or more	200k zł or more	£125k or more	$200k or more

SEISMIC FOUNDATION

Seismic is a global non-profit, dedicated to ensuring that the integration of AI into our societies is beneficial for everyone. We use the power of media to raise awareness, build understanding of AI, create urgency, and encourage action among key decision-makers and their constituents.

For more information on this report please contact us at info@seismic.org.