

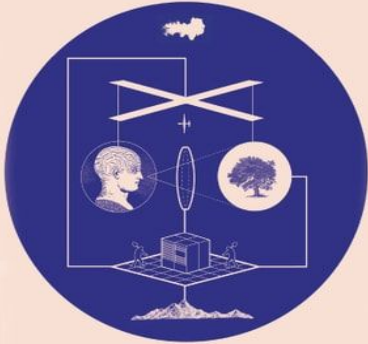
# **AI Countergovernance Futures**

Blair Attard-Frost (they/them)

University of Toronto

What is an **AI system**?

**KATE CRAWFORD**



**ATLAS OF AI**

Crawford, K. (2021). *Atlas of AI: Power, Politics, and the Planetary Costs of Artificial Intelligence*. Yale University Press.

“Each way of defining artificial intelligence is doing work, setting a frame for how it will be understood, measured, valued, and governed.”

## Socio-material context

### Value network

#### Sources of value

People, animals, plants, land, water, environments

Resource extraction

#### Software resources

Data, training data, test data, synthetic data, predictions, decisions, algorithms, ML models, model weights, code, compute, APIs, test environments, production environments, user interfaces . . .

#### Hardware resources

Energy, electrical equipment, minerals, fuel, transport & shipping equipment, chilled water, data centers, servers, local machines, IoT devices, processors, networking equipment . . .

#### Human resources

Knowledge, skills, workers, managers, developers, data workers, data subjects, users, researchers, communities, policymakers, regulators, investors, auditors . . .

#### Financial resources

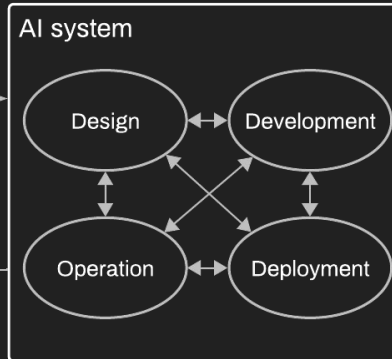
Capital, shares, revenues, loans, credit, salaries, wages . . .

#### Governance resources

Laws, policies, standards, plans, principles, frameworks, budgets, audit tools, assessment tools, documentation, oversight mechanisms . . .

Resource inputs

Resource outputs



System outcomes

#### Beneficial impacts

Process efficiencies, new insights, improvements to usability & accessibility, improvements to product & service quality, improvements to economic output, contributions to sustainable development . . .

#### Harmful impacts

Physical harm, psychological harm, economic loss, loss of agency, loss of freedoms, loss of privacy, loss of security, IP theft, identity theft, misrepresentation, systemic discrimination, reinforcement of structural inequities & power asymmetries, erosion of social trust, erosion of democratic institutions, labor exploitation, labor displacement, contributions to climate change, ecological degradation . . .

Resources, activities, and impacts aggregated from Attard-Frost, B. & Widder, D. G. (2023). The ethics of AI value chains. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2307.16787>

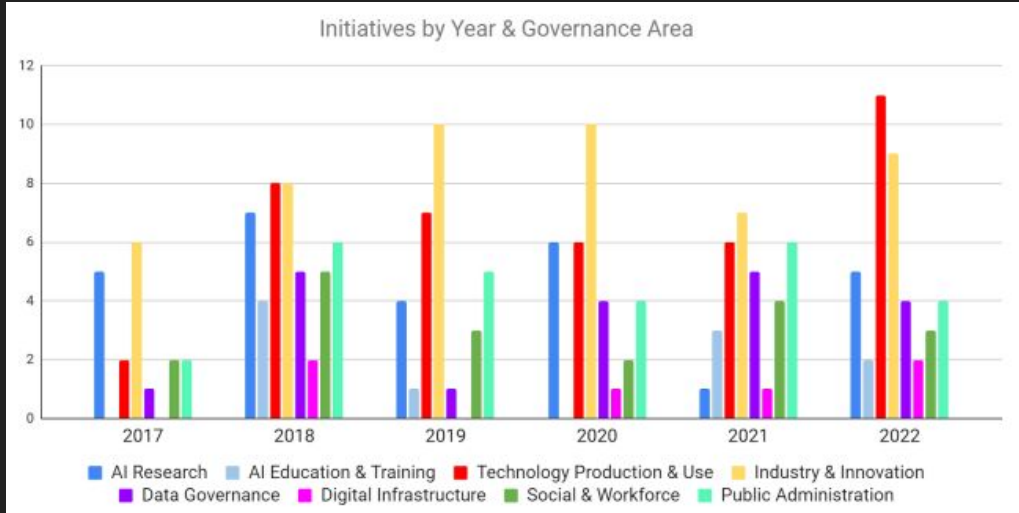
Diagram components are intended to illustrate significant practical & ethical concerns, not a comprehensive mapping

**AI governance** is a practice intended to maximize benefits and minimize harms caused by AI systems.

AI governance is practiced across many scales and contexts, including:

- State-led AI governance
  - International AI governance
  - National AI governance
  - Subnational AI governance
    - Provincial/territorial AI governance
    - Regional AI governance
    - Municipal AI governance
- Industrial/sectoral AI governance
- Corporate AI governance
- Organizational AI governance
- Community-led AI governance
- Worker-led AI governance

# State-led AI governance often prioritizes industry needs



From Attard-Frost, B., Brandusescu, A., & Lyons, K. (2023). The governance of artificial intelligence in Canada: Findings and opportunities from a review of 84 AI governance initiatives. SSRN.

[https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=4414212](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4414212)

- Our study of 84 of Canada's federal and provincial AI governance initiatives find a strong prioritization of industrial development, innovation support, and technology production & adoption.
- These initiatives often assume that technological diffusion and economic gains will cascade down into broad-based benefit for all of society.
- There is no clear evidence indicating that widespread industry adoption of AI technologies will result in broad-based societal benefit.

# Who is included in AI governance? Who is excluded?

*Annual Review of Law and Social Science*

## AI and Global Governance: Modalities, Rationales, Tensions

Michael Veale,<sup>1</sup> Kira Matus,<sup>2</sup> and Robert Gorwa<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Laws, University College London, London, United Kingdom;  
email: m.veale@ucl.ac.uk



<sup>2</sup> Division of Public Policy, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong

<sup>3</sup> WZB Berlin Social Science Center, Berlin, Germany

### Abstract


Artificial intelligence (AI) is a salient but polarizing issue of recent times. Actors around the world are engaged in building a governance regime around it. What exactly the “it” is that is being governed, how, by who, and why—these are all less clear. In this review, we attempt to shine some light on those questions, considering literature on AI, the governance of computing, and regulation and governance more broadly. We take critical stock of the different modalities of the global governance of AI that have been emerging, such as ethical councils, industry governance, contracts and licensing, standards, international agreements, and domestic legislation with extraterritorial impact. Considering these, we examine selected rationales and tensions that underpin them, drawing attention to the interests and ideas driving these different modalities. As these regimes become clearer and more stable, we urge those engaging with or studying the global governance of AI to constantly ask the important question of all global governance regimes: Who benefits?

From Veale, M., Matus, K., & Gorwa, R. (2023). AI and global governance: Modalities, rationales, tensions. *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, 19, 255-275. <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/10.1146/annurev-lawsocsci-020223-040749>



Government Information Quarterly  
Volume 39, Issue 1, January 2022, 101652

## Public engagement and AI: A values analysis of national strategies

Christopher Wilson 

### 6. Conclusion

Analysis of 16 national strategies for AI finds little evidence that public engagement values and mechanisms are salient in the consolidation of AI governance regimes. While references to public engagement and participation in AI governance were present in most strategies, they were usually abstract and consistently overshadowed by other roles, values and policy concerns. This may represent “empty rhetoric in the formulation of goals and objectives, or the careless juxtaposition of divergent values” (Rose et al., 2015, p. 556) by public administrators in overly complex technology policy environments, or the perception that public engagement can only be achieved at costs to efficiency and economic benefits that AI is expected to deliver (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004). Either way, there is little evidence here that public administrators are engaging in “prior public debate” in order to counterbalance the ethical and societal risks posed by AI (de Sousa et al., 2019), at least at the national level.

From Wilson, C. (2022). Public engagement and AI: A values analysis of national strategies. *Government Information Quarterly*, 39, 101652.



State power & industry power often work closely to develop AI strategies, policies, and other governance mechanisms.

Impacted communities & workers are often pushed to the margins of AI governance.

**How can we build counterpower against AI governance if it does not serve our interests?**

Expand the periphery of “**AI**”

Expand the periphery of “**AI governance**”

Design systems & policies that support **collaboration & contestation**

Imagine futures for AI governance **outside of industry & the state**