

Public Trust in AI: Attitudes, Governance, and Education in Greece & Cyprus

Empirical findings from an N=710 cross-sectional survey.

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Technical Performance Cannot Force Public Acceptance



AI Capabilities

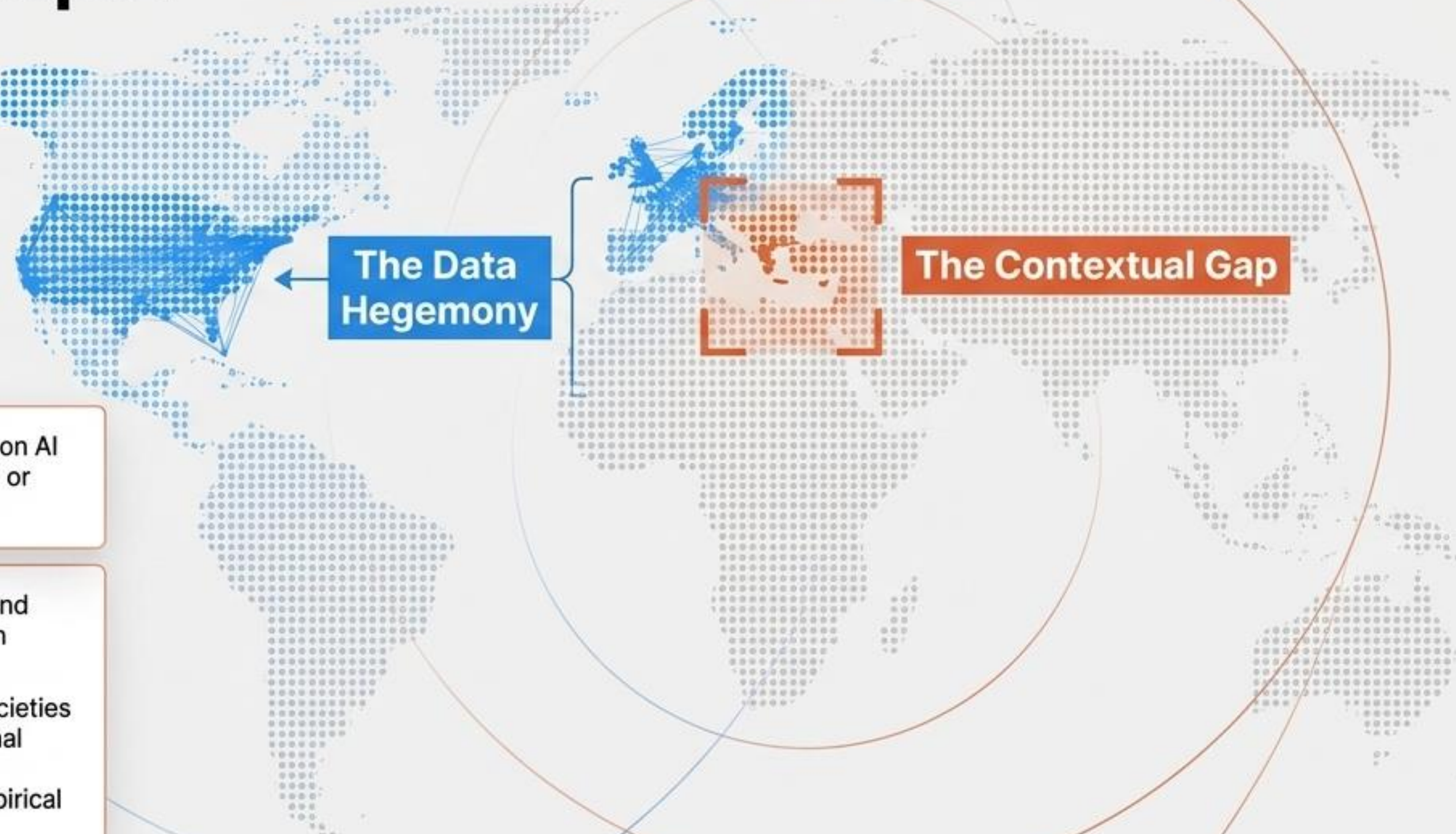
AI capabilities are skyrocketing, but societal uptake is stalling. Even systems that appear technically effective face severe resistance when citizens perceive them as opaque, weakly governed, or misaligned with human values.



Societal Uptake


Trust is not a secondary communication issue; it is a core condition for democratic legitimacy and sustainable deployment.


The Southern European European Blindspot




The Data Hegemony

The Contextual Gap

 The vast majority of empirical data on AI trust originates from the US, China, or Western Europe.

 Cultural norms, institutional trust, and labor market conditions in Southern Europe differ fundamentally.

 Specifically, Southern European societies exhibit a greater reliance on personal networks and lower trust in formal institutions, requiring a distinct empirical lens.

Mapping Public Perceptions in Greece & Cyprus

The Sample



N=710 total respondents.

Primary analysis based on 618 residents of Greece and Cyprus.

The Demographics



Balanced gender distribution: 51% F / 49% M.

Predominantly aged 26–55 (65%).

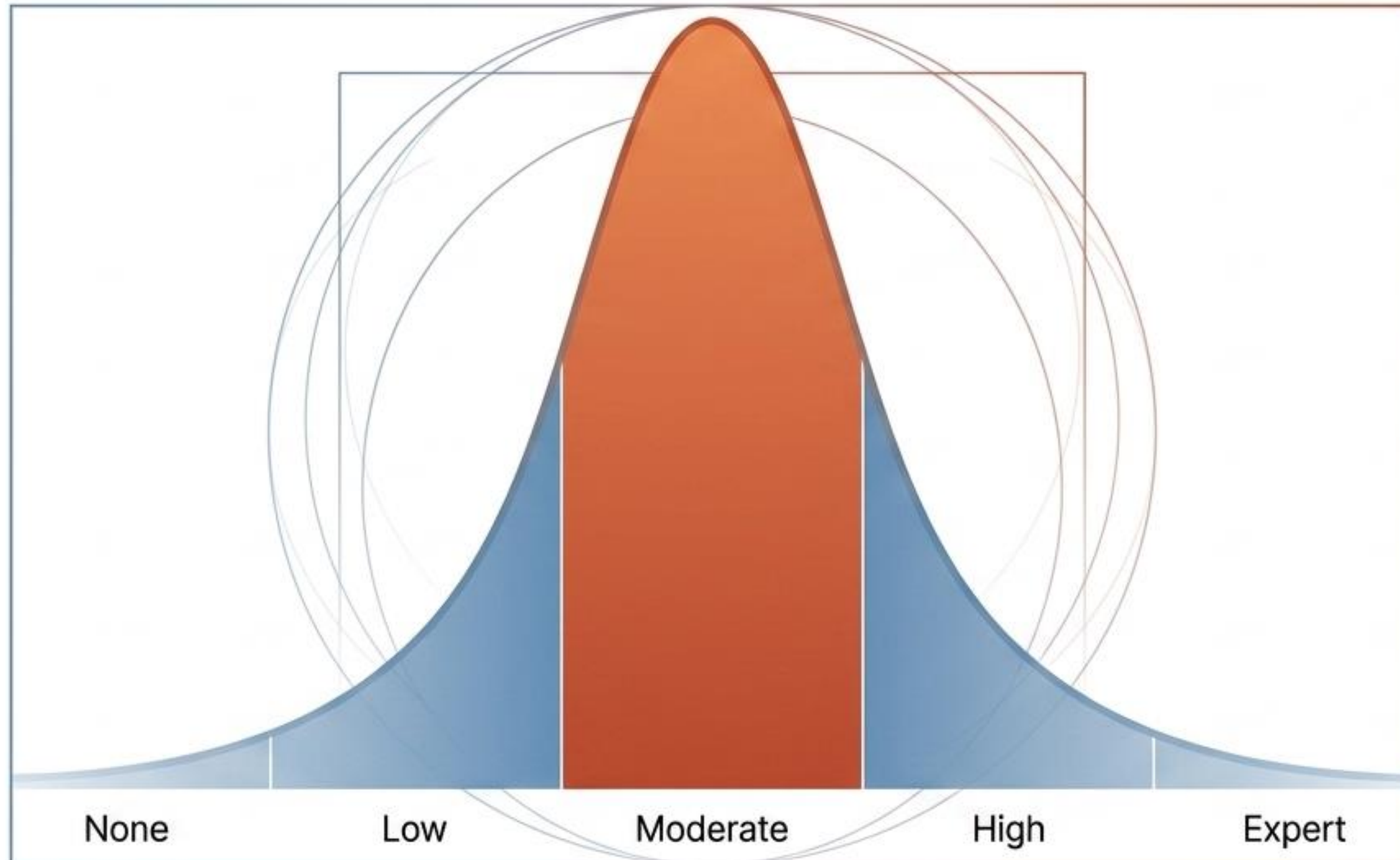
Highly educated with 77% holding at least a bachelor's degree.

The Instrument



Cross-sectional, bilingual (Greek/English) structured questionnaire capturing familiarity, perceived impact, domain-specific trust, and governance attitudes.

The Baseline of Familiarity: Awareness Over Expertise

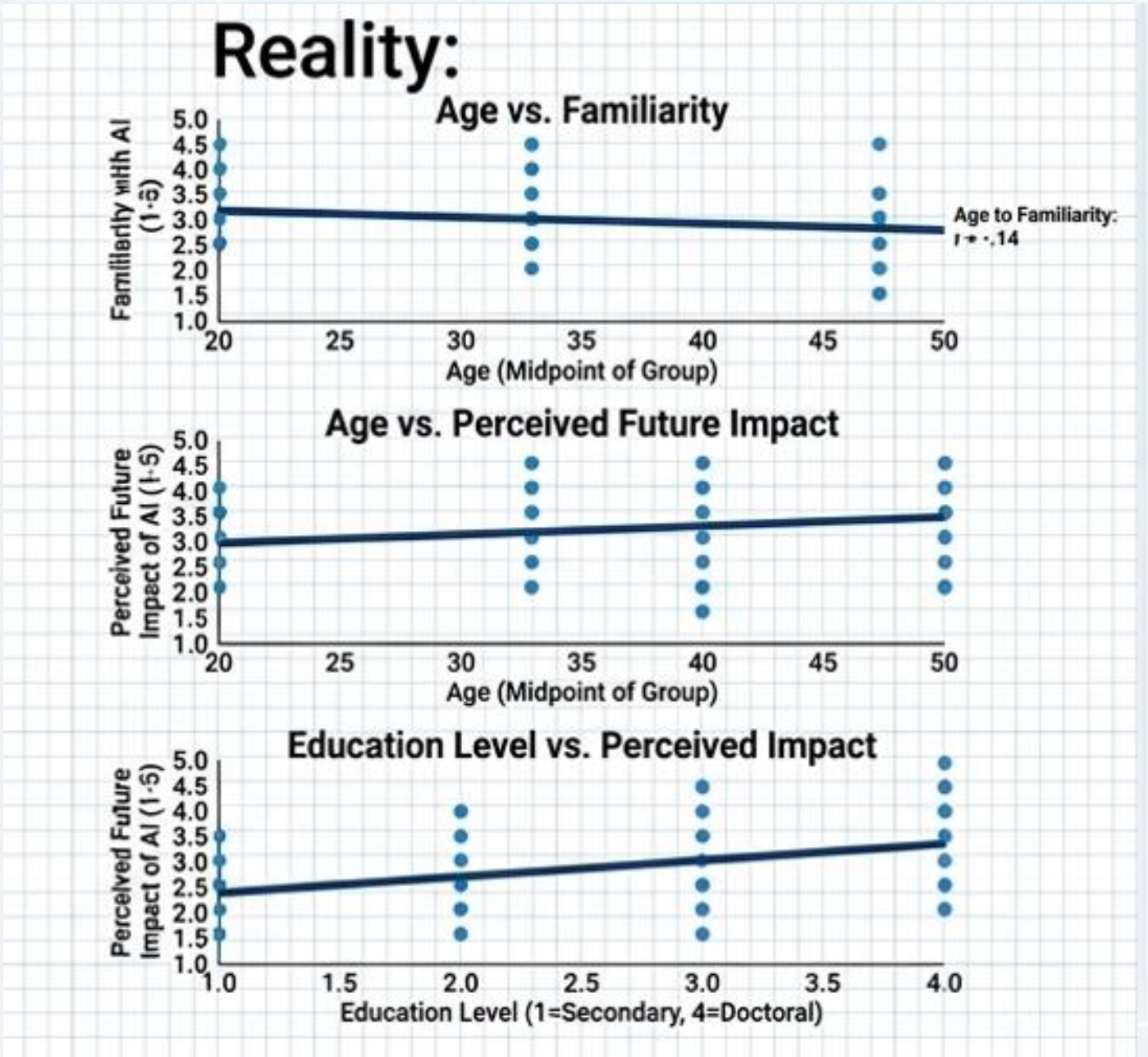
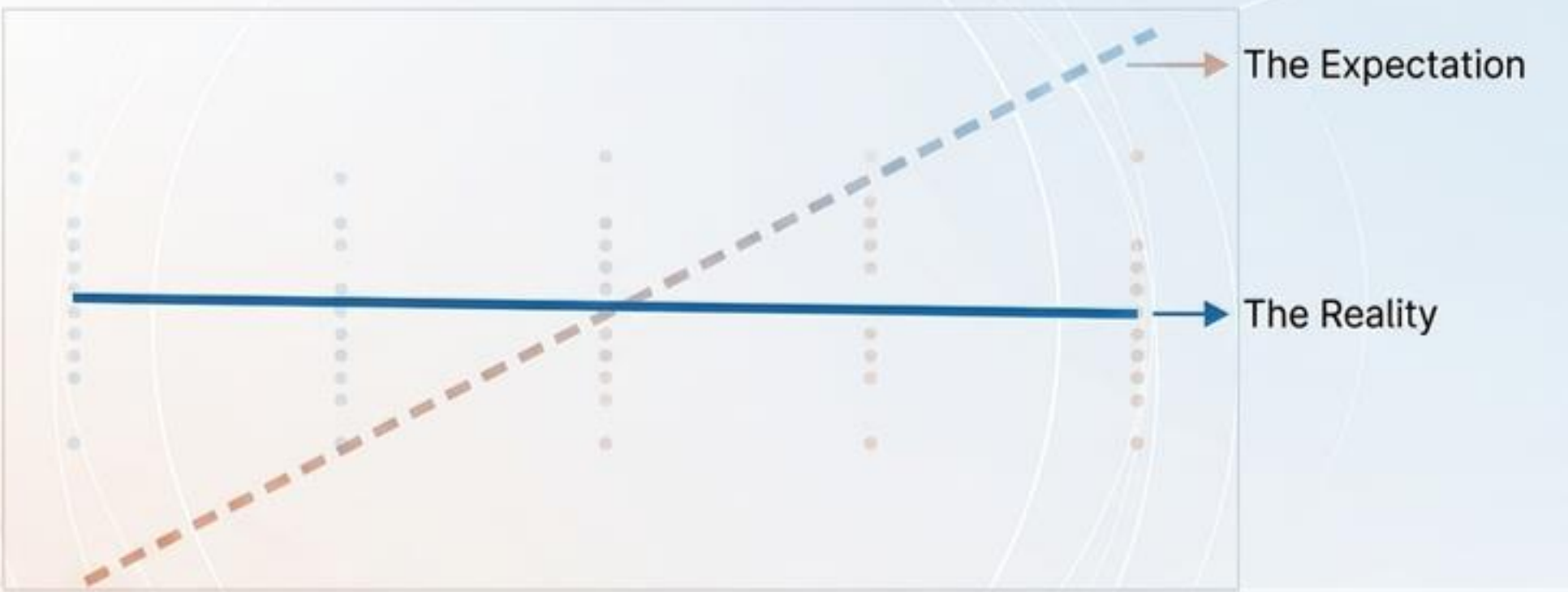


Self-reported familiarity clusters heavily in the Moderate category. Only a small minority identify as highly knowledgeable or expert users.



Takeaway: Citizens possess a general, pragmatic awareness of AI technologies, orienting themselves with cautious openness rather than uncritical acceptance.

The Demographic Myth



Age vs. Familiarity



$r = -0.14$ (Weak)

Education vs. Perceived Impact



$r = 0.09$ (Weak)

Core Insight



Demographics have exceptionally weak explanatory power. Ethical and social concerns remain highly salient across all age and education brackets. Increased exposure to AI does not automatically translate into trust.

The Reality of Conditional Trust

Trust in AI is not a generalized disposition; it is acutely domain-specific. Acceptance is significantly stronger when AI is perceived as supporting human judgment and drastically weaker when perceived as replacing it in high-stakes environments.

An infographic with a blue background. It features a central white square containing the text '43% Eager to work alongside AI and robots.' The square is surrounded by a series of concentric, overlapping white circles that create a ripple effect. At the bottom of the blue area, there is a white rounded rectangle containing the text '(The Co-Worker)'.

43%

Eager to work alongside
AI and robots.

(The Co-Worker)

An infographic with an orange background. It features a central white square containing the text '21% Trust AI systems and robots in healthcare.' The square is surrounded by a series of concentric, overlapping white circles that create a ripple effect. At the bottom of the orange area, there is a white rounded rectangle containing the text '(The High-Stakes Replacement)'.

21%

Trust AI systems and
robots in healthcare.

(The High-Stakes Replacement)

Mapping the Threshold of Public Scrutiny

Human Stakes / Moral Sensitivity

High Tech / High Moral Stakes

Technical Complexity (Low to High)

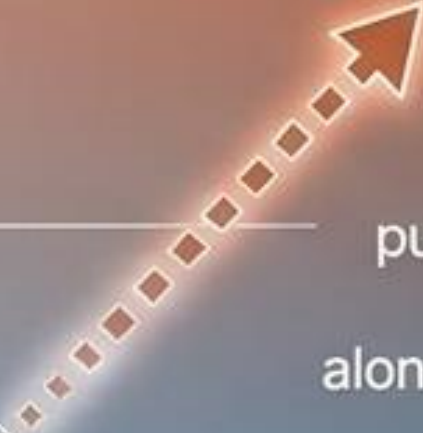


Working alongside AI/Robots (High Trust)

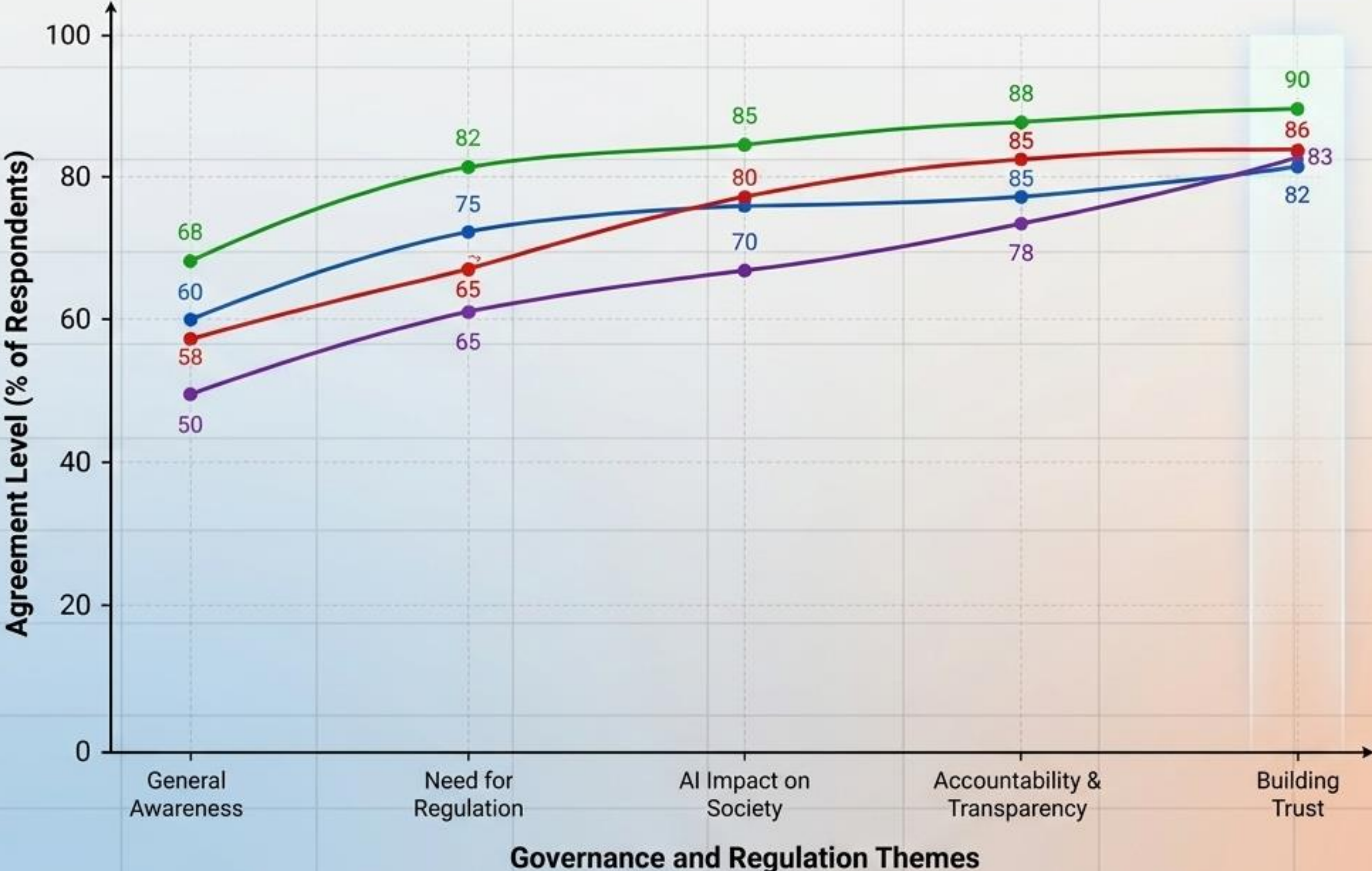


AI in Healthcare (Low Trust)

As human stakes rise, public scrutiny intensifies. Technical performance alone is no longer sufficient.



The Empirical Evidence: Public Sentiment on AI Governance

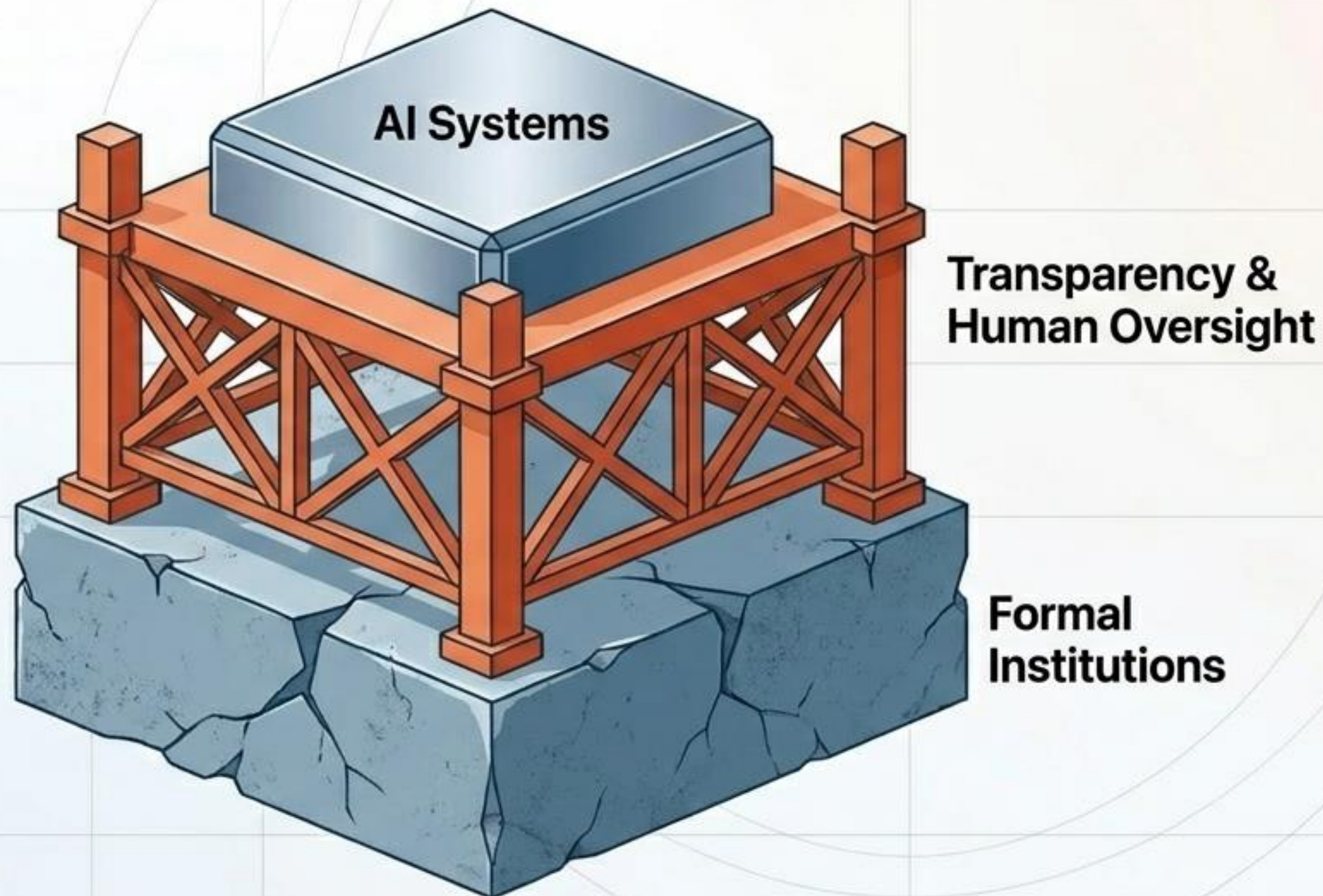


- 1. Strong support for regulation and oversight**
Support increases across all themes, peaking at building trust.
- 2. Citizens expect AI aligned with social welfare**
Consistent expectation that AI should prioritize the public good.
- 3. Accountability and transparency were central themes**
High importance placed on accountability and transparency, especially in later stages.
- 4. Regulation viewed as enabling trust**
Perception that effective regulation builds confidence in AI systems.

A Uniform Upward Trajectory: Regardless of the specific governance theme, public demand intensifies as maturity increases, universally peaking at the trust-building phase.

The Southern European Context Effect

The Institutional Trust Scaffold



- **Core Insight**
In Southern European cultures, there is historically lower trust in formal institutions and higher reliance on professional authority and personal networks.
- **Takeaway**
When the institutional foundation is weak, the technology above it becomes unstable. Public trust cannot be assumed; it must be actively reinforced through visible human oversight and auditable accountability.

The Mandate for Governance

66%

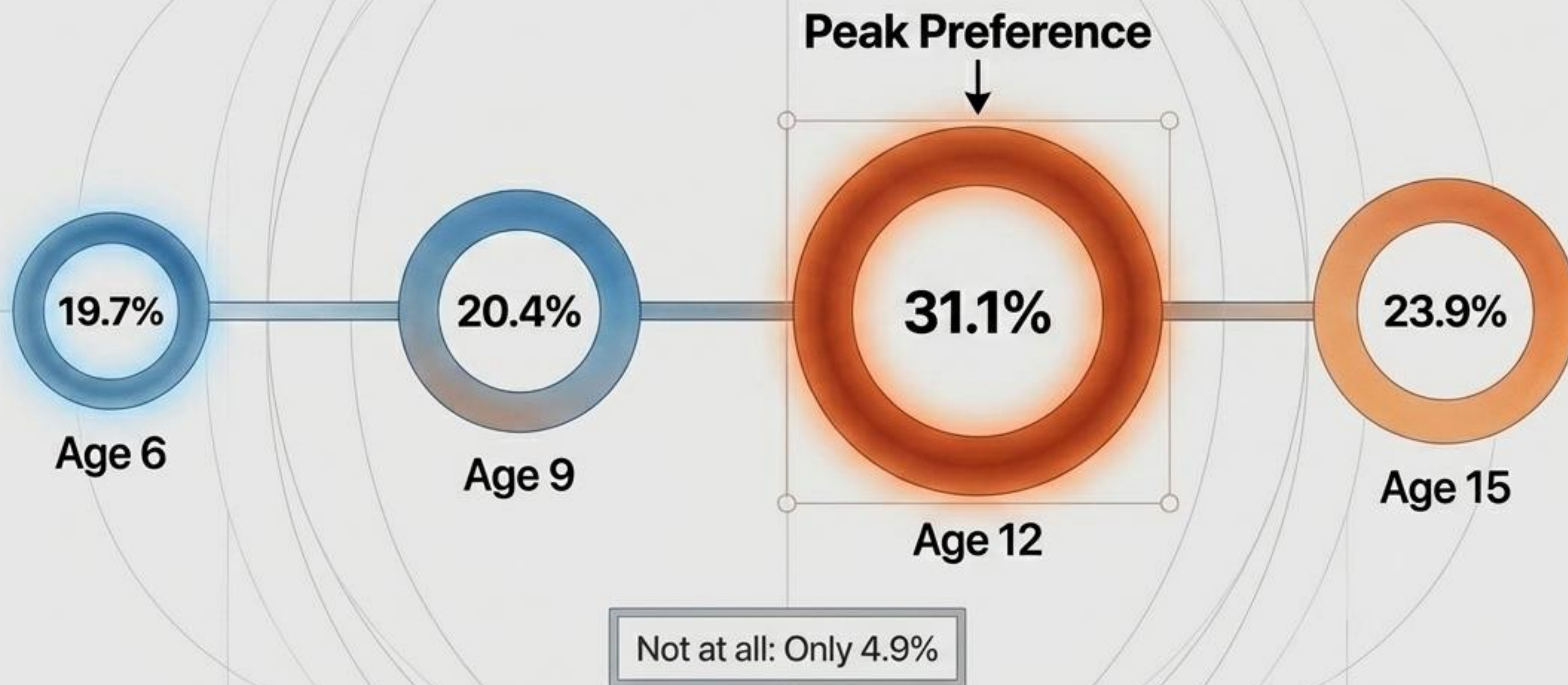
of respondents demand that the welfare state and the economy be the absolute priority when legislating AI technologies.

AI governance is not viewed by the public as merely a technical issue, but as a profound social and political responsibility.

There is a clear mandate for legislation that prioritizes social stability and institutional accountability over unchecked innovation.

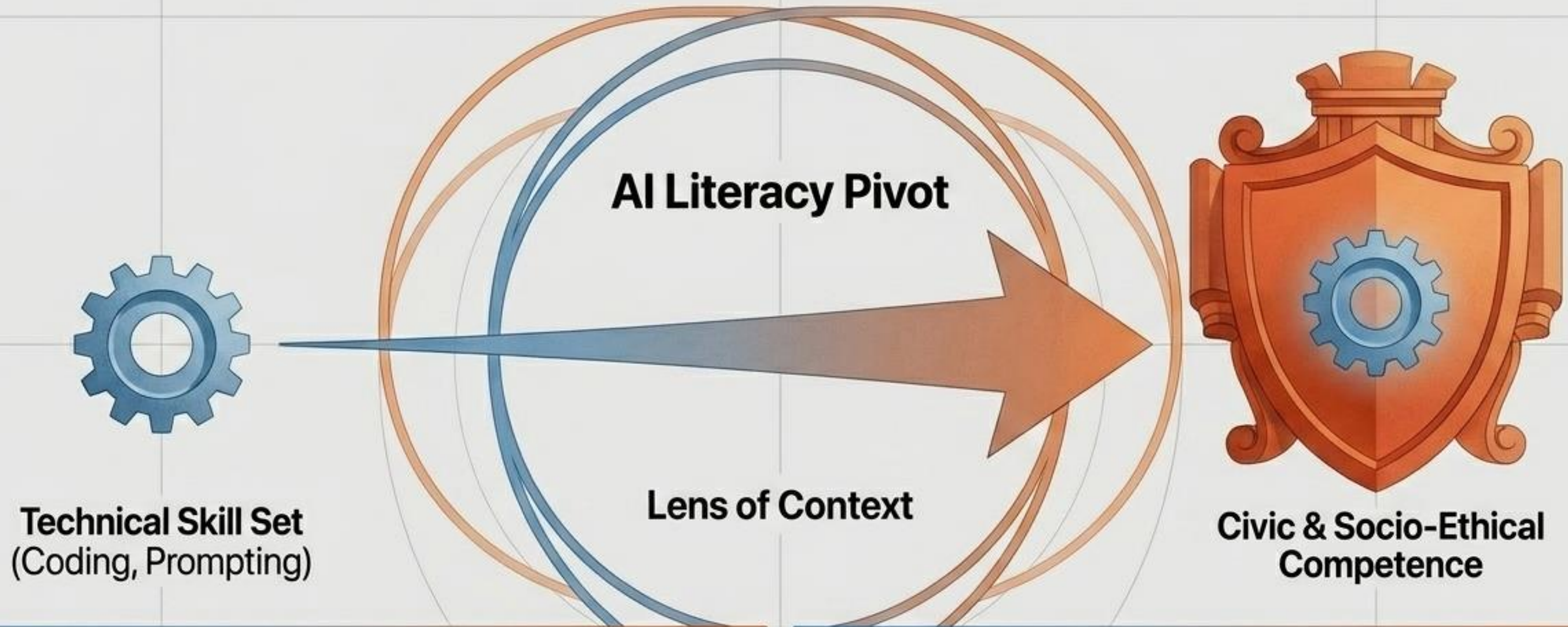
The Demand for AI Literacy

Developmental Timeline



There is near-universal consensus that AI literacy must be integrated into formal schooling. The debate is no longer IF, but WHEN, with a clear inflection point at the onset of secondary education.

Redefining AI Literacy as Citizenship

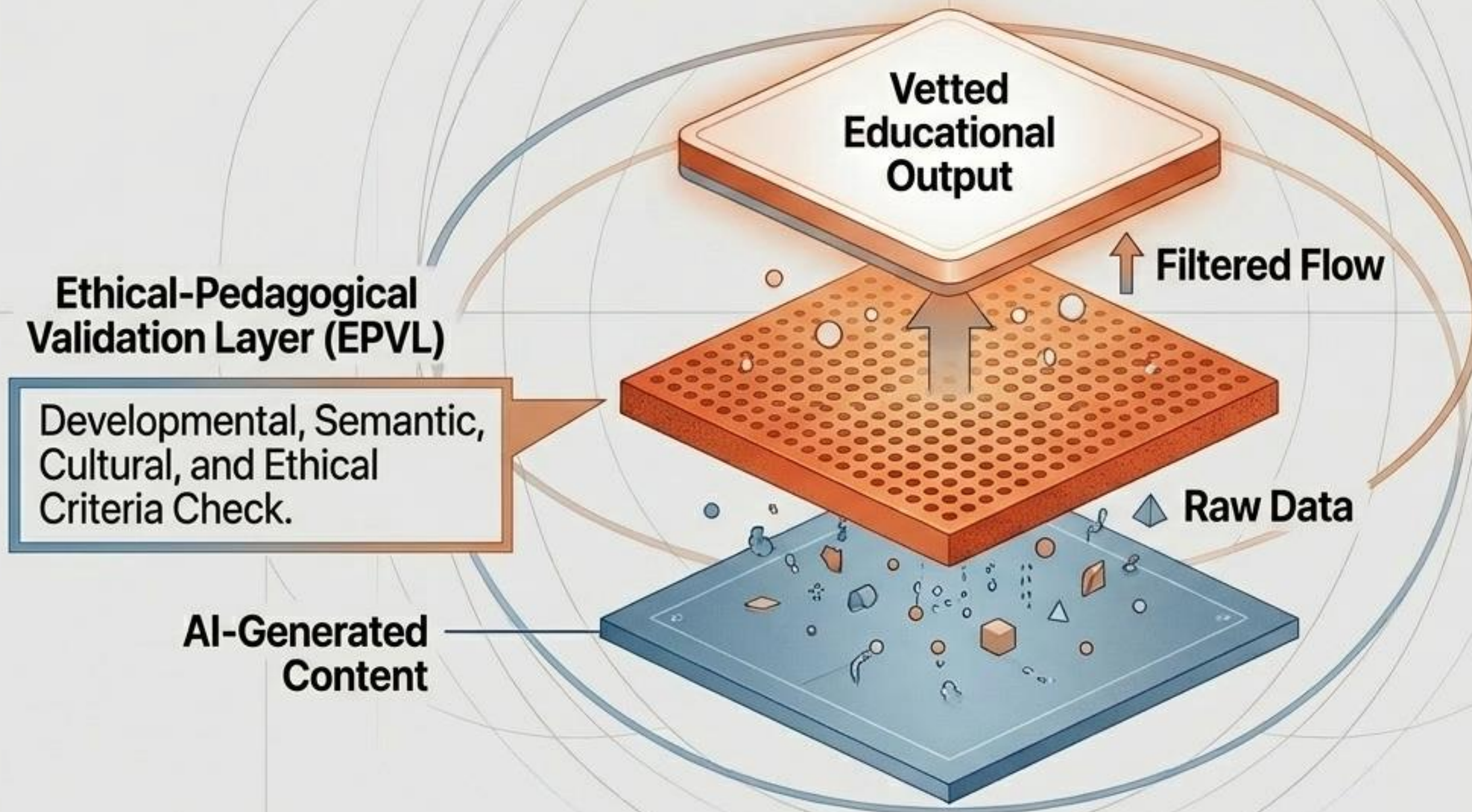


The public demand for AI education is not a demand for a nation of programmers. It is a demand for critical awareness.

AI literacy must transition from being treated as a purely functional capability to being recognized as a fundamental requirement for inclusive participation in an AI-mediated democracy.

Engineering Trust: The EPVL Framework

Trust in AI-supported systems is shaped by pedagogical framing and educator agency.



Ethical-Pedagogical Validation Layer (EPVL)

Developmental, Semantic, Cultural, and Ethical Criteria Check.

AI-Generated Content

Veted Educational Output

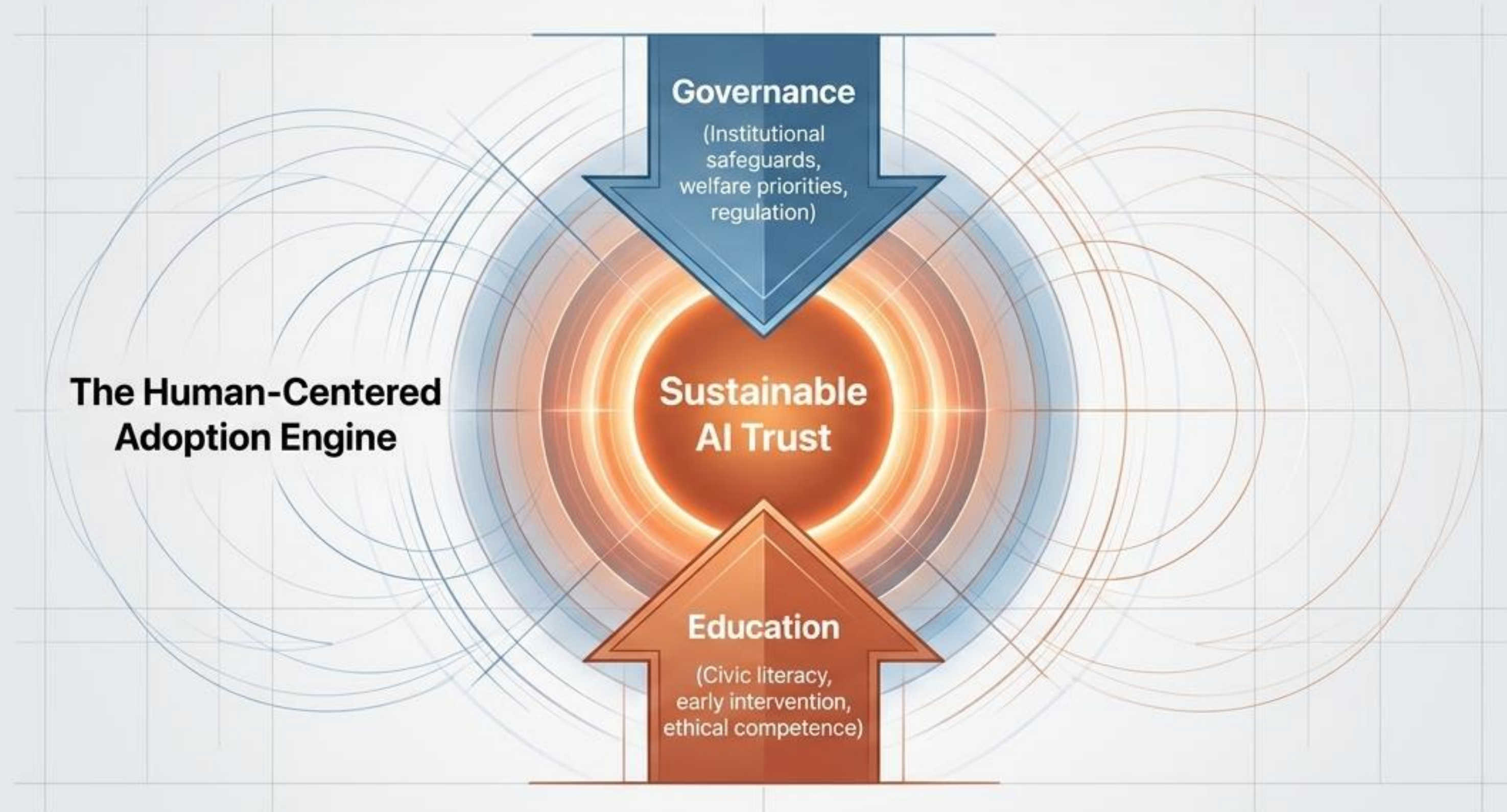
Filtered Flow

Raw Data

The EPVL introduces structured human oversight to review AI content,

operationalizing the principle that trust is strengthened when AI is embedded in transparent practices and clear responsibilities.

The Dual-Pillar Framework for AI Trust



Raw technical capabilities cannot generate trust on their own. Trust is an output generated only when top-down institutional accountability meets bottom-up civic empowerment.

**Trustworthy AI depends not only on
innovation but also on public
understanding, transparency and
human oversight**

Thank You!

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Questions & Discussion