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The Politics Behind AI:
How Political Beliefs Drive Opinions on Artificial Intelligence in California

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The Politics Behind AI:

How Political Beliefs Drive Opinions on Artificial Intelligence in California

We live in an age where our seemingly irrational fears about technology may become true. With what our current technology is capable of, much of science fiction is no longer fiction. One of the strongest examples of this technology is Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI), which refers to any AI system that creates content, whether it is written, visual, or auditory (Google AI, 2023). While humans take hours, days, or even weeks to create content, Generative AI can make it in a single minute. But should AI have this much power? Or should we control it before it becomes too dangerous?

The issue of AI policy has divided opinions, with little consensus on when and where AI limitation policies should be in place. To understand what Generative AI policies we should have, we need to understand public opinion on specific uses of Generative AI, as well as the political factors of this conversation. Analyzing this issue through a political lens requires grouping individual opinions by political beliefs to determine how different political identities view and approach AI regulation. My research poses the question: What is the effect of an individual's political ideology and partisanship on their opinions toward the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in California? To answer this, I will create and send out a survey among California residents to learn their political ideology and political party, as well as their attitudes toward different uses of Generative AI. I will then compare this data to determine if and how political identities connect to individual AI perception.

Significance

AI policy is a pressing national issue, but Artificial Intelligence has additional relevance in California. AI is used across the country as ChatGPT and virtual assistants, such as Apple's Siri and Amazon's Alexa, gain popularity nationwide. However, California has a large concentration of jobs in technology, with three major tech hubs in the state (Chow & Goldschlag, 2023). This means more Californians interact with advanced technology, and thus have more exposure to AI. Understanding the concerns about AI in California is the first step to ensuring this technology is safe and beneficial throughout the state.

By discovering how these opinions differ by political stance and party, we can better plan how to pass AI policies in the government. The United States heavily relies on a two-party system, with Democrats and Republicans having vastly different views. The polarization of political issues has only increased over time among elected officials (Pew Research, 2014). Studying the possible polarization of AI policy will give us a more comprehensive understanding of how it will be perceived by elected officials who want to maximize support from their political party. Additionally, 70% of people who actively engage with politics have beliefs that align with those of their political party (Pew Research, 2014). If we can determine what beliefs about Generative AI can be generalized to Democrats and Republicans, we can predict who supports the proposed policies on it and which ones they support. This pattern also applies to the spectrum of political ideology, as there is also strong polarization between liberal and conservative individuals, much like Democrats and Republicans (Pew Research, 2014). With the knowledge of how opinions on Generative AI are separated by political beliefs, we can predict how to pass AI policy using political strategies, including knowing where to focus campaigns and understanding how elected officials may vote on proposed bills.

Not only are AI limitations important for the general public, due to AI's prevalence in society, but they are important for individuals who use or work with AI. Artists, writers, and other content creators will also rely heavily on this legislation because without it, potential customers can turn to AI-generated content. This decreases the amount of work content creators have themselves, thus decreasing their income. On the other side of this situation are those who consume AI-generated content, whether it is subjective art or informational content. AI currently defines the experience, information, and assistance they have in their daily lives. Additionally, the impact of Generative AI on jobs and business transactions affects labor markets, and thus the economy as a whole (Frank, et al., 2019).

Background

Existing data covers the general public opinion toward Artificial Intelligence both as a whole and in specific instances, reflecting the active discussion about the harms and benefits of AI. In general, 52% of Americans expressed more concern about AI being used in daily life, while only 10% expressed more excitement (Tyson and Kikuchi 2023). Opinions on AI in healthcare fluctuate depending on the specified use. 40% of Americans believe AI will help prevent healthcare providers from making mistakes, while 57% believe AI will worsen the relationships between healthcare providers and patients (Tyson, Pasquini, Spencer, & Funk 2023). A potential harm that 73% of adults agree on is that AI will leave more people unemployed (Northeastern University, 2018). Another common fear is that AI will reinforce discriminatory stereotypes. Many African Americans do not approve of AI facial recognition and expect it to increase racially-motivated actions among police officers (Lee, 2022). Additionally, people often assume AI makes decisions based on objective benefits rather than morality, so they

do not trust AI to make morally significant decisions (Bartels & Dietvorst, 2020). Experts in technology, business, policy, and other related areas share this opinion, agreeing that AI will not develop ethical principles by 2030 (Raine, et al., 2021). Overall, we can conclude that the public as a whole fears the impact of AI in various, but not all, circumstances. However, we do not know how these opinions differ between various populations. For this research, we can study the fears and hopes of political groups separately, allowing us to avoid generalizing the entire public and better understand individuals with different beliefs in California.

In the past two years, there have been a few developments in the policies toward AI, including proposed and implemented policies at the federal and state levels. Firstly, in May 2022, the National Artificial Intelligence Advisory Committee (NAIAC) began its three-year appointment to advise the President on AI and its impact. In May 2023, NAIAC released a comprehensive first-year report containing national goals and recommendations for AI regulation. One recommendation consisted of publicly and privately adopting the AI Risk Management Framework (AI RMF), a guide developed by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) that focuses on ensuring public trust and transparency in AI systems. California is already working on legislation inspired by the AI RMF (NAIAC, 2023). Governor Newsom created an executive order on Generative AI to ensure ethical, safe, and responsible use. It includes requirements for risk analysis reports, further state research, and legislative engagement (Executive Order No. 12, 2023).

In October 2022, the White House, under President Biden's administration, published The Blueprint for an AI Bill of Rights. This document proposes guidelines for the development and use of AI systems. Specifically, the document states that AI systems should not be dangerous or discriminatory toward users. Users should also know when and why AI systems are being

used. They should have authority over how an AI system uses their data as well as the ability to opt out of the system (The White House, 2022). Alondra Nelson, former deputy director and acting director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, worked heavily on the AI Bill of Rights. From her perspective, the Biden-Harris administration understands the potential of AI and wants to use policy to maximize its benefits (Klein, 2023). The White House further developed this objective with President Biden's executive order from October 2023. A statement from the White House Briefing Room describes the main points and implications of this executive order, much of which reflects the proposals from the NAIAC Year 1 Report and the AI Bill of Rights. For safety and security, AI developers will disclose risk information to the government, the NIST will develop safety testing standards, the Department of Commerce will set standards for identifying AI-generated content, and a National Security Memorandum will prevent the military from abusing AI. There will also be measures in place to prevent AI discrimination through training and assessments. The federal government will advance AI research and understanding by funding a Research Coordination Network, providing a National AI Research Resource, hiring more AI experts, and working with international partners (The White House, 2023). These new initiatives are a major step forward in AI regulation, but we do not yet know how they will be implemented.

Theory and Argument

I predict that political party and political ideology will drive individuals' opinions toward Generative AI because different political groups have different core beliefs and priorities for society, which shapes how they think AI fits into it. In this relationship, the independent

variables are partisanship and political ideology and the dependent variable is attitude toward common uses of Generative AI.

Many American individuals participate in the government to ensure the betterment of society, as they choose the representatives and policies they believe address current important issues. Thus, political beliefs often reflect what people want for their local county, state, or country. This translates into opinions on specific elements of society that are often viewed as problems, including the use of AI. As mentioned before, political and ideological parties most often indicate what political beliefs people have, because they identify with the party or label that best matches their values (Pew Research, 2014). This means an individual's political party and ideological stance should relate to their beliefs about the specific issue of AI.

However, the differences in opinions about AI may be due to other factors which are not directly connected to political beliefs. For example, people in industries who are more exposed to AI are less likely to view it as a threat (Kocharr, 2023). Additionally, those with higher education levels, specifically those with a college degree or more, view AI as a positive tool in several areas including healthcare, customer service, and assessing information (Tyson & Kikuchi, 2023). Characteristics such as these likely influence political beliefs. For example, 51% of Democrat voters in 2022 have at least a college degree, compared to 37% of Republican voters (Hartig, et al., 2023). Rather than opinions on AI being a result of political beliefs, both opinions on AI and political beliefs could be a result of education level and career type. Further research should be done to analyze the direction of the relationship between these variables.

While this research measures both political ideology and partisanship as independent variables, my hypothesis combines the two because they often align. One group will be of Democrats and liberal individuals, and another group will be of Republicans and conservative

individuals. According to the Public Policy Institute of California, likely voters are 38% liberal, 32% moderate, and 30% conservative. For Democrat voters, 60% are liberal and only 10% are conservative, so the majority of the Democrats are liberal. The Republicans were the opposite with 72% being conservative and only 4% being liberal. (Baldassare et al., 2023). For my argument, I will be considering the majority of each party with these political ideologies.

My first hypothesis is that Democrats and liberal adults have more negative attitudes toward personalized uses of AI like creating art and replicating a specific person's voice. Driving a car and recognizing someone are both shaped by human thoughts, such as when to brake or whether the person looks familiar. 69% of Democrats believe there will not be enough regulation on autonomous vehicles while 59% of Republicans believe there will be too much (Raine, et al., 2022). Similar to their concerns about self-driving cars, Democrats are more likely to believe the regulations on facial recognition will be too light. On the other hand, Republicans fear these regulations will be too heavy (Funk & Raine, 2022). Additionally, Democrats are more likely than Republicans to support government aid for people who lose their jobs to AI, demonstrating they may not want AI to have human roles (Northeastern University, 2018). The desire for strong regulation of these uses of AI reflects an overall negative view among Democrats of people using AI for actions based on subjective thoughts.

My second hypothesis is that Republicans and conservative individuals see computational and objective uses of AI as more of a threat than personalized uses. Republican and conservative fears of AI may be due to them having reason to distrust new technology. For example, ChatGPT, which is meant to be an information source, provides far more liberal responses than conservative responses (Baum & Villasenor, 2023). As a result, people with conservative beliefs may find ChatGPT to be inaccurate and biased. This would lead them to distrust any seemingly

objective information from ChatGPT and similar AI, such as data analysis or reports. Similarly, 64% of Republicans, compared to 28% of Democrats, believe big technology companies support liberal views instead of conservative views (Smith, 2018). Republicans may expect bias from these companies to make their technology inaccurate and less trustworthy, including AI technology. Republicans also believe that the strength of the economy is rapidly decreasing, as 81% viewed the economy as strong in 2020, but only 10% viewed it as strong in March 2023. The percentage of Democrats who viewed the economy as strong has changed far less, from 39% to 28% (Pew Research Center, 2023). Bank of America, which has about 69 million customers, states on its website that Generative AI will boost the economy as companies use it to increase productivity in content creation (Bank of America, 2023). As Republicans see the common idea that Generative AI will improve the economy, they will be more likely to support using AI for creative content than Democrats. With this information, I hypothesize there will be greater approval from Democrats and liberal Californians toward using AI for objective information and calculations, while there will be greater approval from Republicans and conservative Californians toward using AI to replace personalized human actions.

Research Design and Data

I am testing my hypotheses with survey research at the individual level. Operationally, I predict that survey respondents who identify themselves as Republican, Republican-leaning, conservative, or very conservative will show higher levels of acceptance toward AI-generated art, realistic images and videos, creative writing pieces, and audio using voice replication. On the other hand, I predict that survey respondents who identify themselves as Democrat,

Democrat-leaning, liberal, or very liberal will show higher levels of acceptance toward data analysis, coding, and text-to-speech tools.

To collect data, I have created and sent out a survey to adult residents in California. I used Qualtrics to design the survey and distributed it through Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). The survey asked standard demographic questions, including questions on the independent variables. Participants indicated their political party, political ideology, and strength of both of these beliefs. The survey then provided nine different uses of Generative AI and asked participants to choose how acceptable they find each use. These responses, chosen from five levels of acceptance, measure the dependent variable of opinion on AI use. There were three visual uses, three text-based uses, and three auditory uses. Each type of AI use had a positive, negative, and neutral example. The survey concluded with a question of how much participants believe the California government should regulate the use of AI as a whole. Figure 1 displays the demographic questions, which address the independent variables of political ideology and partisanship. Figure 2 displays the survey questions that address the dependent variable, levels of acceptance toward Generative AI uses.

Figure 1. Demographic Questions

Thank you for taking part in our survey! This survey should take approximately 6-8 minutes of your time.
This survey will consist of some basic questions about you and your household and then move on to your opinions and attitudes on several different topics. You do not need to research any answers--please just give your opinion without looking anything up.
1. Are you currently living OUTSIDE of California? In another state or country? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
2. What county in California do you live in? <input type="checkbox"/> County Name: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> I don't live in California

3. What is your current age?

- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45- 54
- 55 +

4. What type of high school did you attend?

- Public school
- Charter school
- Private school (non-parochial)
- Private parochial school
- Home school
- I did not attend high school

5. Did you attend high school in California?

- Yes
- No

6. What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- Less than a high school degree
- High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED)
- Some college but no degree
- Associate degree or certificate
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Professional degree (JD, MD)
- Doctoral degree (Ph.D.)

7. Are you Hispanic, Latino, or Chicano--or none of these?

- Yes
- None of these

8. Choose one or more races that you consider yourself to be:

- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Some other race: _____

9. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Trans male/Trans man
- Trans female/Trans woman
- Different identity (please state): _____

10. Are you currently married, widowed, divorced, separated, or never married?

- Married
- Widowed
- Divorced
- Separated
- Never Married

11. How many people are currently living in your household?

12. Information about income is very important to understand. Please give your best guess--indicate the answer that includes your entire household income for last year (2022).

- Less than \$10,000
- \$10,000 - \$24,999
- \$25,000 - \$44,999
- \$45,000 - \$59,999
- \$60,000 - \$74,999
- \$75,000 - \$84,999
- \$85,000 - \$99,999
- \$100,000 - \$149,999
- \$150,000+

13. Which statement best describes your current employment status?

- Working (paid employee)
- Working (self-employed)
- Not working (temporary layoff from job)
- Not working (looking for work)
- Not working (retired)
- Not working (disabled)
- Not working (other): _____
- Prefer not to answer

14. Did you vote in the 2022 midterm congressional election?

- No
- I usually vote, but did not in 2022
- I am not sure
- Yes, I definitely voted

14B. What was the party of the candidate you voted for U.S. House of Representatives?

- Democratic party
- Republican party
- Other: _____
- Did not vote
- Do not recall

15. Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?

- Republican
- Democrat
- Independent
- Other: _____

15B. Would you call yourself a strong Republican or a not very strong Republican?

- Strong
- Not very strong

15C. Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or a not very strong Democrat?

- Strong
- Not very strong

15D. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic party?

- Republican
- Democratic
- Neither
- Not sure

16. Thinking about politics these days, how would you describe your own political viewpoint?

- Very liberal
- Liberal
- Somewhat liberal
- Middle of the road
- Somewhat conservative
- Conservative
- Very conservative
- Not sure

17. How interested are you in politics or public policy debates?

- Very interested
- Somewhat interested
- Not very interested
- Not interested at all

Figure 2. Survey Questions

In this section, you will be asked about potential uses of artificial intelligence (AI). For each question, choose to what extent you think the use of AI is acceptable or unacceptable.

1. Using AI to generate a drawing or design in a specific style.

Example: A painting of a modern building in the style of Van Gogh.

- Totally unacceptable
- Somewhat unacceptable
- Neutral
- Somewhat acceptable
- Totally acceptable

2. Using AI to generate a realistic image or video from a given description.

Example: An image of a well-known liberal Democratic celebrity supporting a conservative Republican candidate.

- Totally unacceptable
- Somewhat unacceptable
- Neutral
- Somewhat acceptable
- Totally acceptable

3. Using AI to generate an animation or artistic video.

Example: An animated video lecture for students who are visual learners.

- Totally unacceptable
- Somewhat unacceptable
- Neutral
- Somewhat acceptable
- Totally acceptable

4. Using AI to examine data and write an analysis report.

Example: A scientist uses AI to perform calculations to save time.

- Totally unacceptable
- Somewhat unacceptable
- Neutral
- Somewhat acceptable
- Totally acceptable

5. Using AI to help write code for a video game.

Example: A programmer uses AI to create a character for their video game

- Totally unacceptable
- Somewhat unacceptable
- Neutral
- Somewhat acceptable

Totally acceptable

6. Using AI to write creative stories for scripts or books.

Example: A producer uses AI instead of human writers to write the script for their television show.

- Totally unacceptable
- Somewhat unacceptable
- Neutral
- Somewhat acceptable
- Totally acceptable

7. Using AI to generate a song in a specific singer's voice.

Example: Audio of Kanye West singing Taylor Swift's songs.

- Totally unacceptable
- Somewhat unacceptable
- Neutral
- Somewhat acceptable
- Totally acceptable

8. Using AI to replicate a specific person's voice.

Example: An opposing party creates audio of the President criticizing the leader of another country.

- Totally unacceptable
- Somewhat unacceptable
- Neutral
- Somewhat acceptable
- Totally acceptable

9. Using AI to read out a script or piece of text.

Example: A voice assistant that reads out information for someone with visual impairment.

- Totally unacceptable
- Somewhat unacceptable
- Neutral
- Somewhat acceptable
- Totally acceptable

10. In your opinion, to what extent should artificial intelligence as a whole be regulated by the state government in California?

- Not at all regulated
- Slightly regulated
- Somewhat regulated
- Moderately regulated
- Extremely regulated

To analyze the independent variables, I considered demographic questions 15 and 16 from Figure 1. For partisanship, I divided the participants into those who responded as Republicans and those who responded as Democrats. Out of the Independent respondents, I looked at question 15D. I added those who lean Republican to the existing Republican group and those who lean Democrat to the existing Democrat group. This left only 10 Independents and 2 others, compared to 74 Republicans and 125 Democrats, so I did not focus on Independents and others in my analysis. The categories for political ideology are directly from question 16, with the following numbers of respondents: 37 very liberal, 50 liberal, 30 somewhat liberal, 19 middle of the road, 17 somewhat conservative, 27 conservative, 30 very conservative, and 1 not sure. Similar to partisanship, I did not include the one response of not sure in my analysis.

For my dependent variable, which I analyzed through the categories of the independent variables, I looked individually at survey questions 1 through 9. The data consistently leans toward higher acceptance, with the highest number of responses for “somewhat acceptable.” This is visible in Figure 3 through Figure 16. The data that conformed the least to this pattern was from questions 8 and 9, as seen in Figure 17 through Figure 20. Question 8 was significantly more varied in its responses, while question 9 had more responses of “totally acceptable.” Patterns with partisanship and political ideology differ throughout the various survey questions, as their corresponding figures demonstrate.

Figure 3. Responses to Survey Question 1 by Partisanship

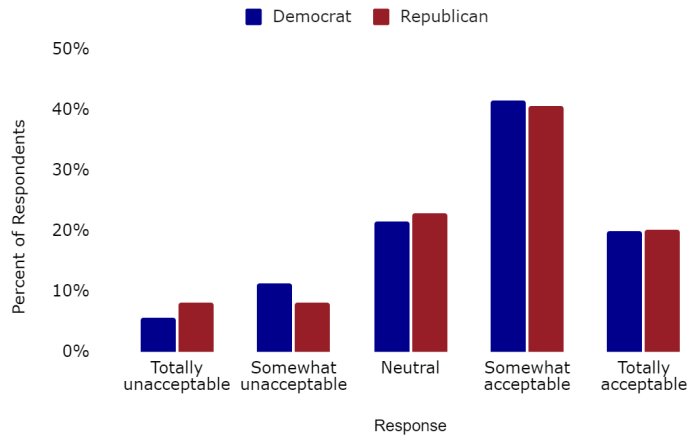


Figure 4. Responses to Survey Question 1 by Political Ideology

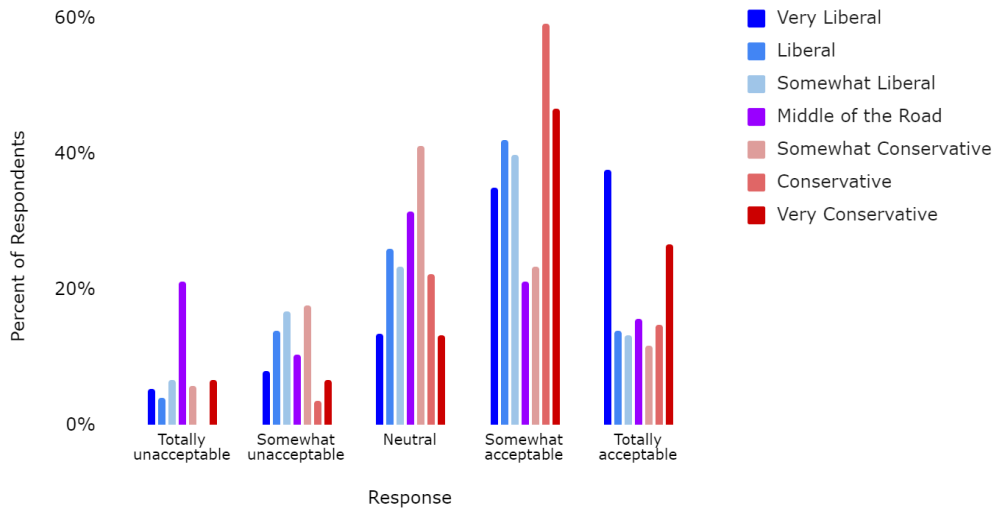


Figure 5. Responses to Survey Question 2 by Partisanship

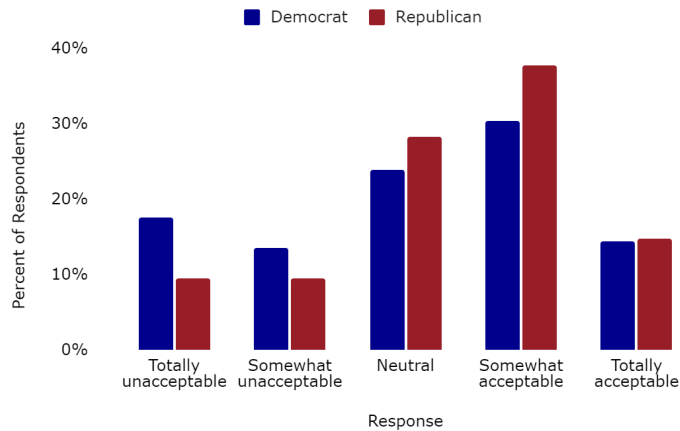


Figure 6. Responses to Survey Question 2 by Political Ideology

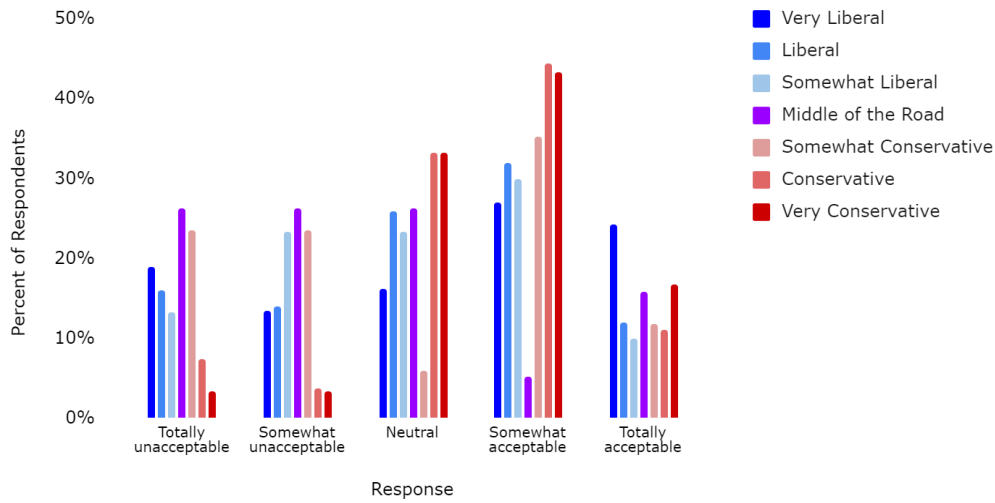


Figure 7. Responses to Survey Question 3 by Partisanship

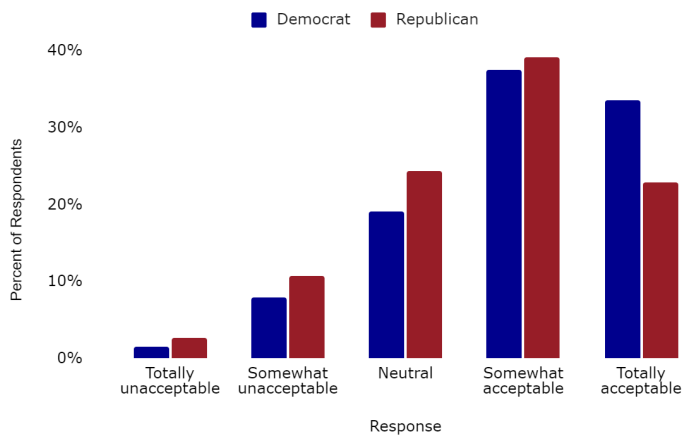


Figure 8. Responses to Survey Question 3 by Political Ideology

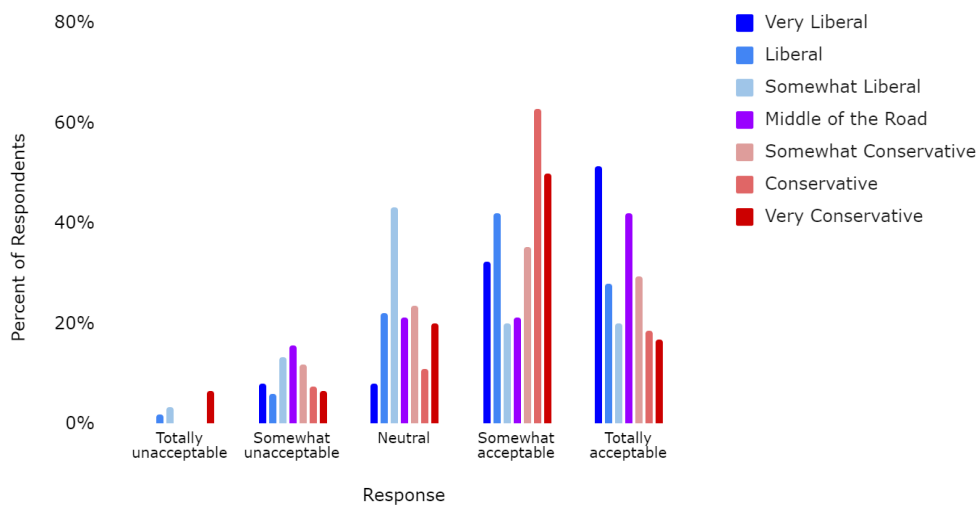


Figure 9. Responses to Survey Question 4 by Partisanship

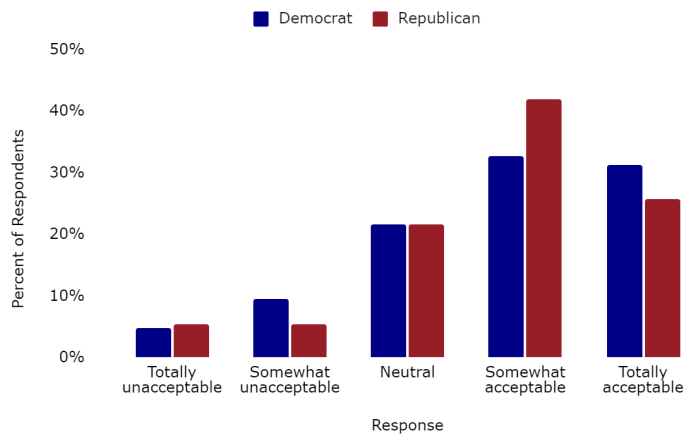


Figure 10. Responses to Survey Question 4 by Political Ideology

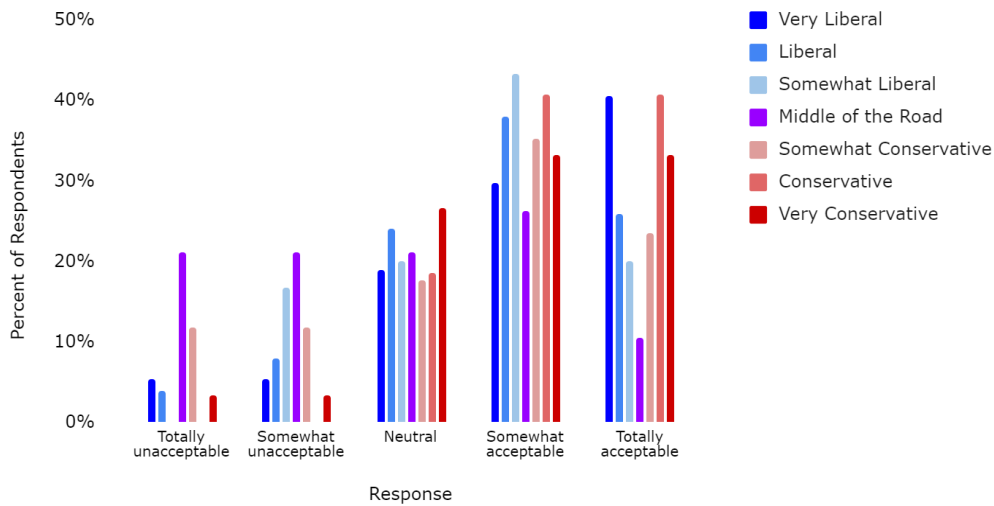


Figure 11. Responses to Question 5 by Partisanship

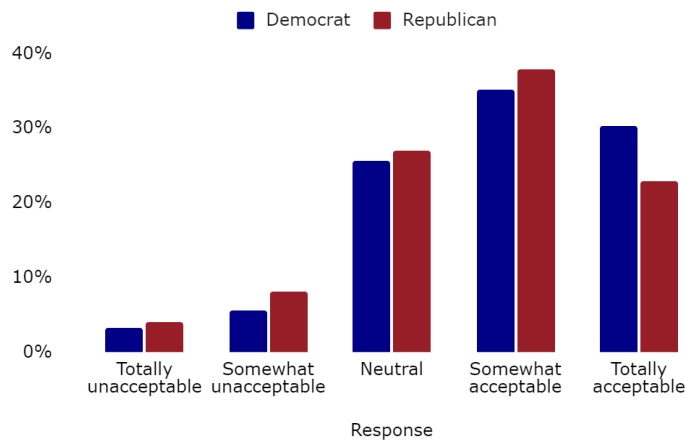


Figure 12. Responses to Question 5 by Political Ideology

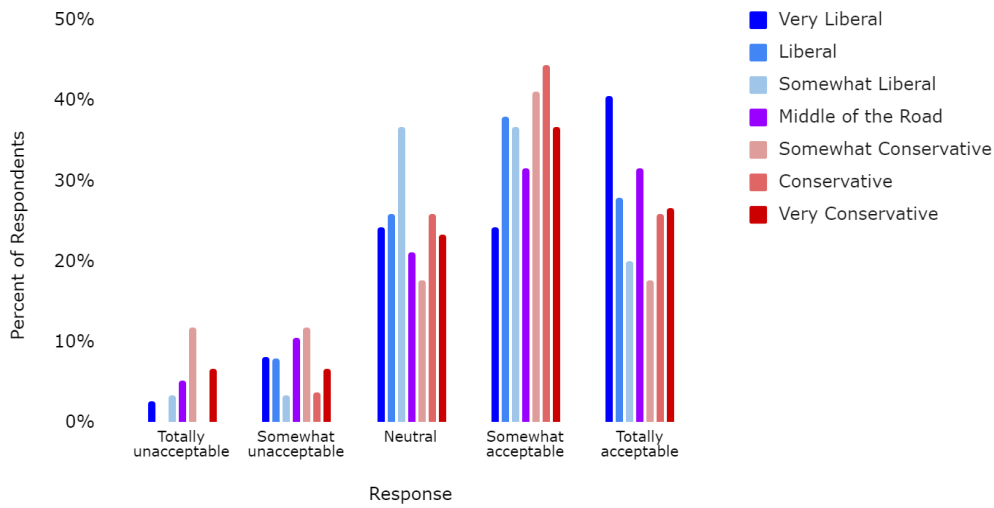


Figure 13. Responses to Question 6 by Partisanship

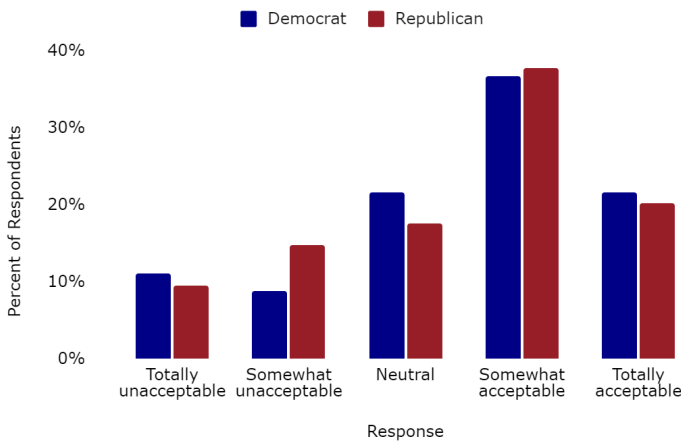


Figure 14. Responses to Question 6 by Political Ideology

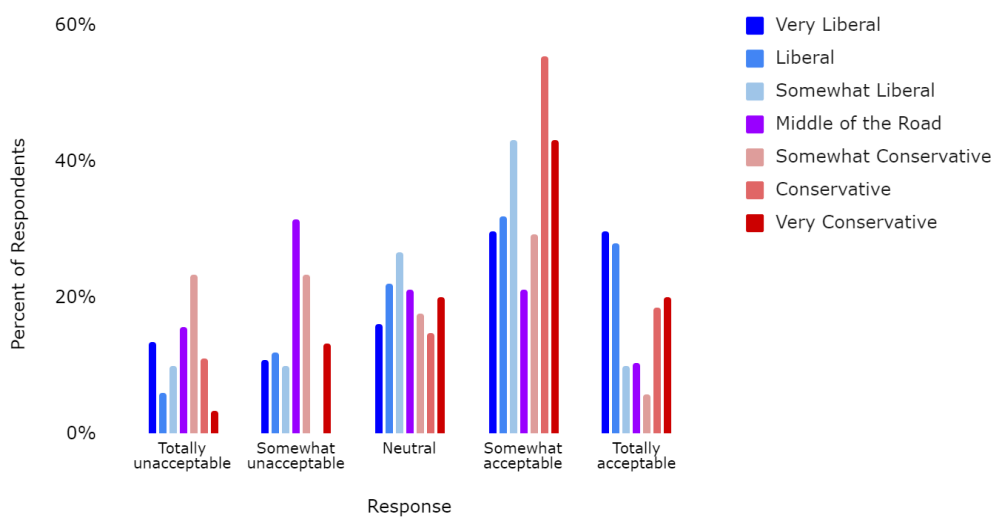


Figure 15. Responses to Question 7 by Partisanship

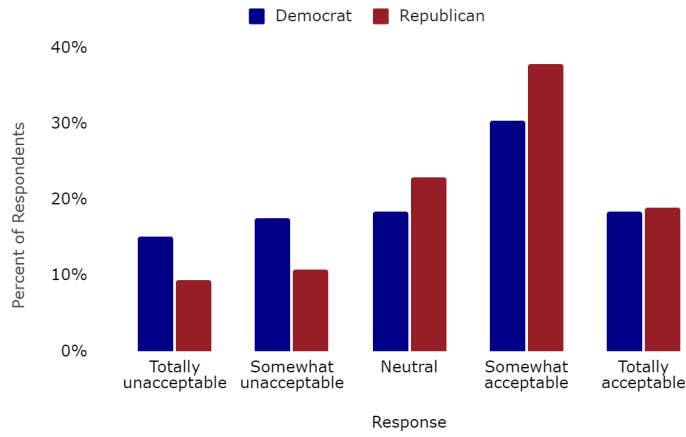


Figure 16. Responses to Question 7 by Political Ideology

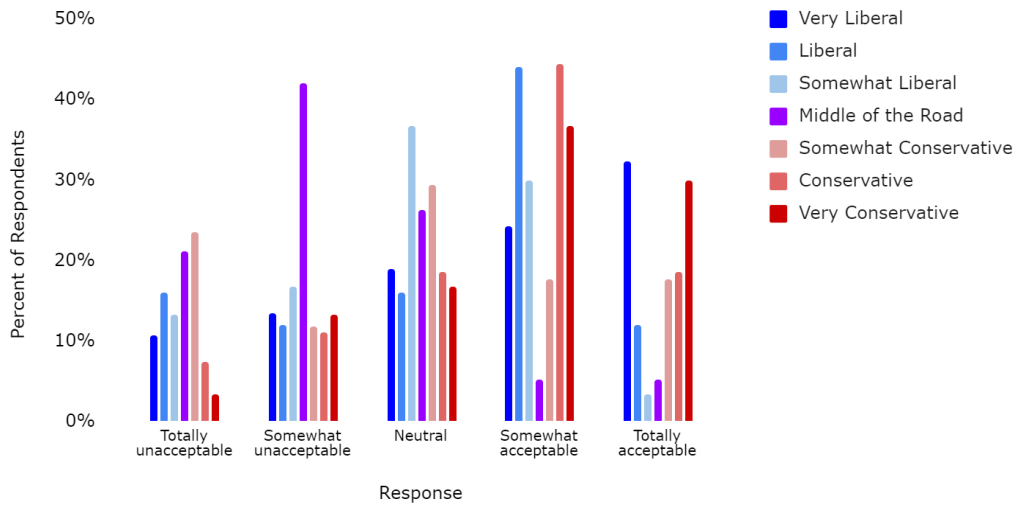


Figure 17. Responses to Question 8 by Partisanship

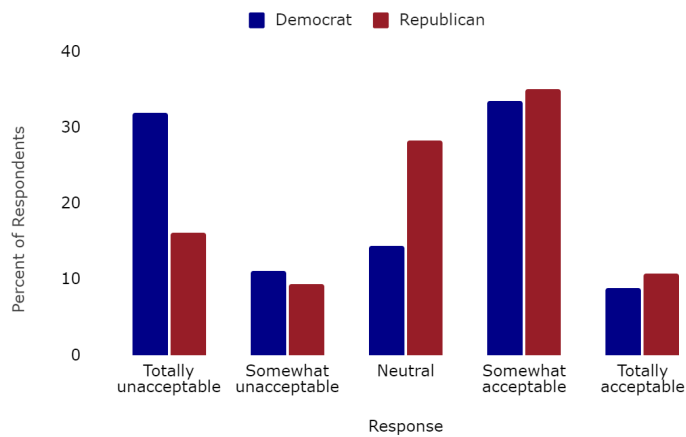


Figure 18. Responses to Question 8 by Political Ideology

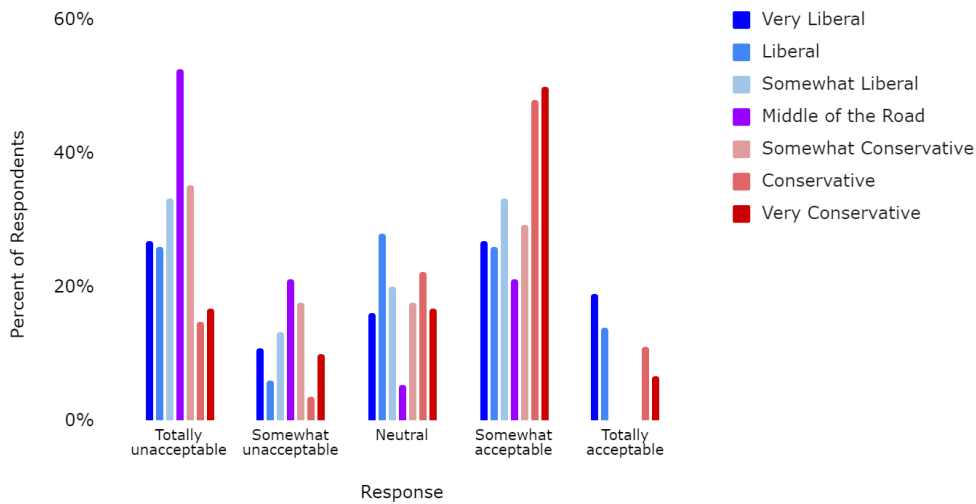


Figure 19. Responses to Question 9 by Partisanship

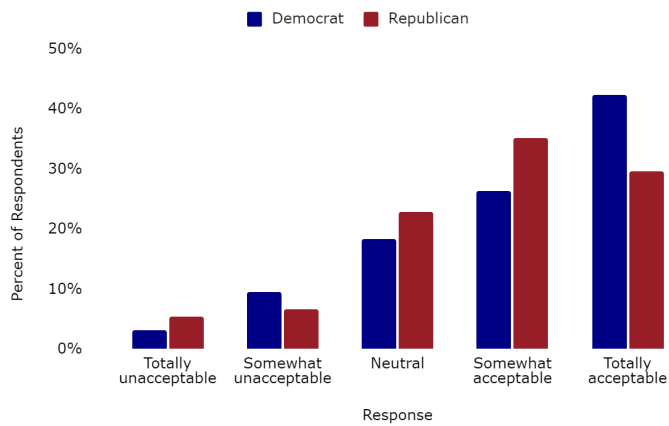
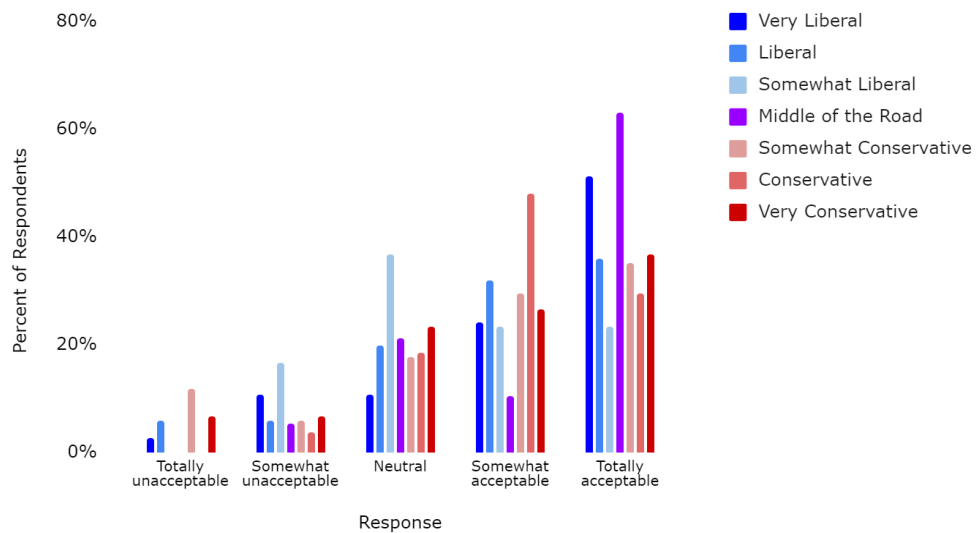


Figure 20. Responses to Question 9 by Political Ideology



Additionally, I averaged the nine survey questions for an overall idea of acceptance levels by partisanship and political ideology, as shown in Figure 21. Republican responses are more concentrated in the middle, between “neutral” and “somewhat acceptable,” while Democrat responses are more concentrated at the ends, including “totally unacceptable” and “totally acceptable.” For political ideology, displayed in Figure 22, conservative responses were concentrated at “somewhat acceptable,” with more “totally acceptable” liberal responses. However, within both of these groups, stronger beliefs had stronger acceptance. Neutral political beliefs were evenly spread out among the different levels of acceptance.

Figure 21. Average Acceptance of AI by Partisanship

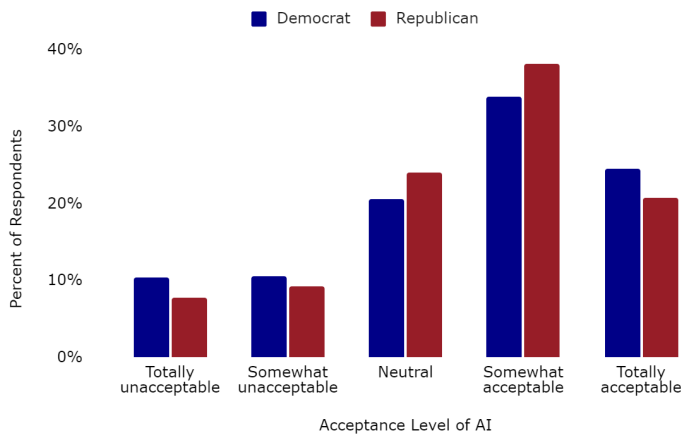
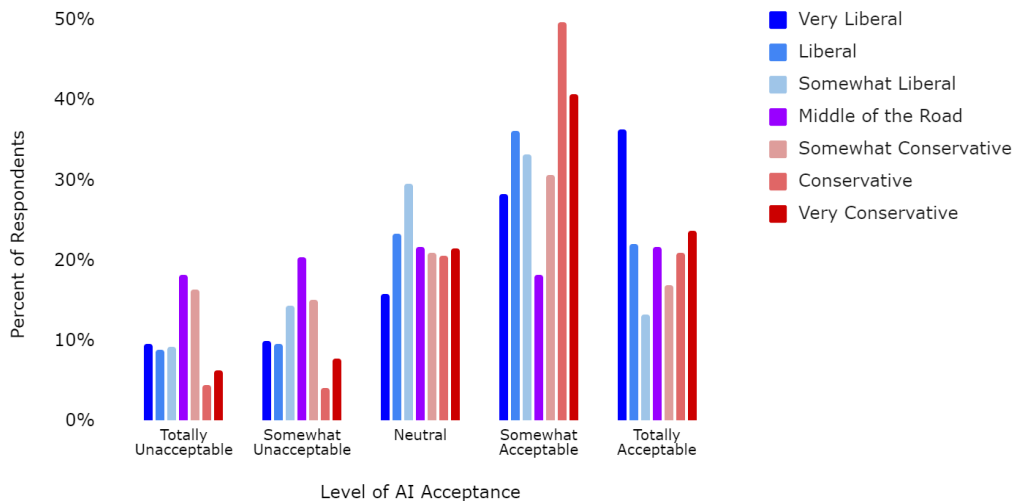


Figure 22. Average Acceptance of AI by Political Ideology



The data from question 10 had a similar right-lean, but this indicates a desire for stronger regulation of AI rather than stronger acceptance of AI. The distribution of Democrat responses was concentrated around higher amounts of regulation, with a majority choosing “moderate regulation.” Republicans, however, were more spread out across the different levels of regulation, including little to none. Figure 23 models this pattern. Figure 24 shows that while conservative responses overall were also more spread out, the very conservative respondents preferred higher regulation. Similarly, more liberal respondents indicated they want more regulation.

Figure 23. Responses to Question 10 by Partisanship

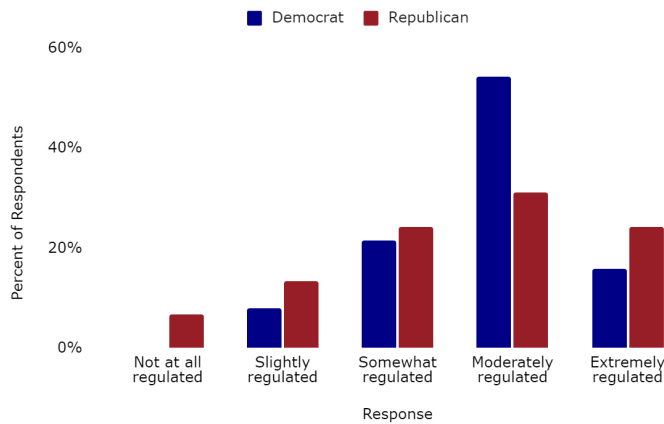
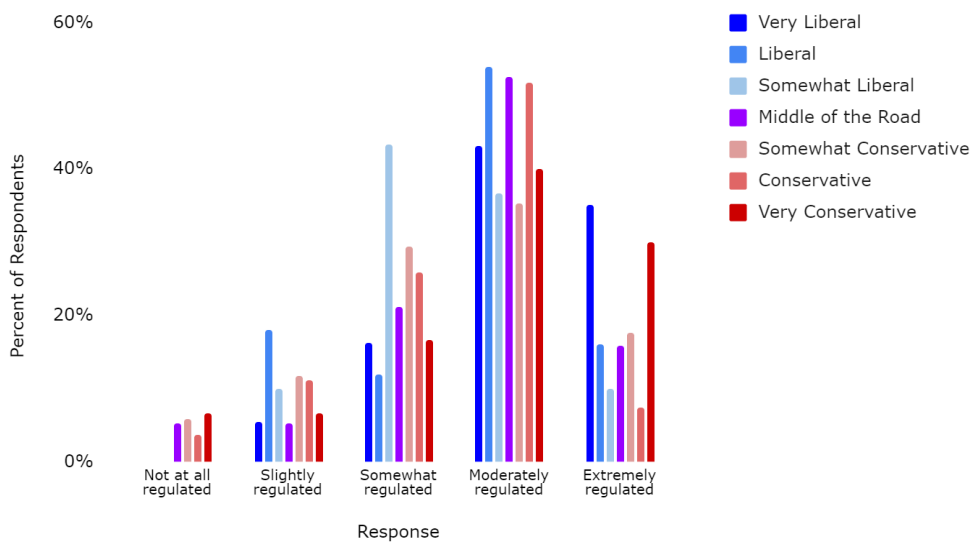


Figure 24. Responses to Question 10 by Political Ideology



I also averaged the number of “somewhat acceptable” and “totally acceptable” responses from the survey questions for each type of example: positive, negative, and neutral. Here, there was a steady decline in acceptance as the examples went from positive to negative tones. The only groups that did not follow this pattern were the very liberal and the very conservative respondents. Additionally, this decline was steeper for Democrats than Republicans. This relationship is presented in Figure 25 and Figure 26.

Figure 25. Average Acceptance of AI Uses by Tone of Example and Partisanship

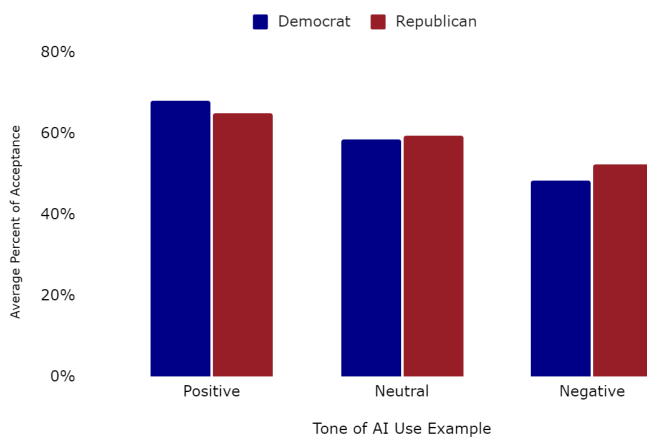
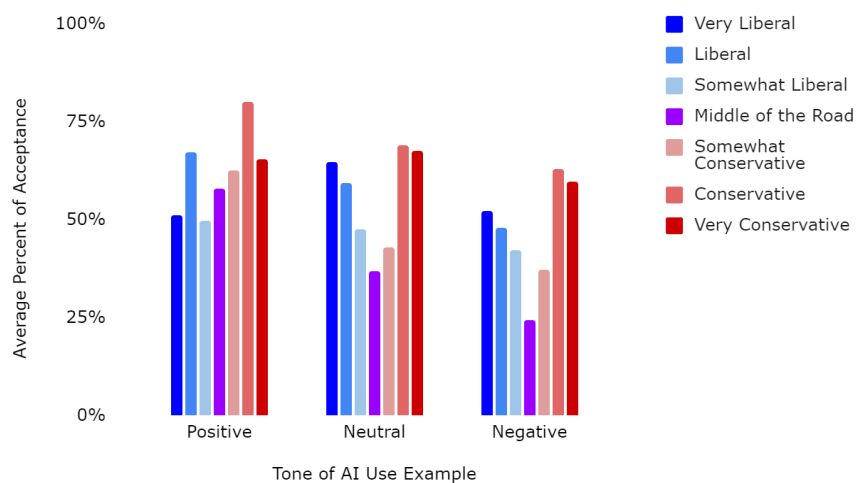


Figure 26. Average Acceptance of AI Uses by Tone of Example and Political Ideology



While reliability tends to be difficult to maintain using survey research, there are a few methods I have used to ensure my data collection is as accurate as possible. Firstly, I designed the survey to minimize satisficing, where respondents choose easy answers to the survey

questions to get through them quickly. This is often because survey questions require a lot of cognitive work that participants may not want to do. To reduce the amount of cognition required, I made the responses consistent throughout the survey questions. This way, respondents can focus on processing the questions, which are the given uses of AI. Even question 10 of the survey, which is a different format from the other questions, maintains a five-option scale to remain consistent with the rest of the survey. Additionally, this multiple-choice format with five options further simplifies the process of choosing a response. To improve accuracy, I also kept the survey as short as possible with only ten questions. This helps prevent respondents from becoming tired throughout the survey and satisficing as a result. Overall, I have aimed to make the survey as simple as possible for respondents.

With survey research, some unavoidable limitations must be considered. For example, despite making the survey easier for participants, using closed-ended questions with limited options comes with disadvantages. These questions leave room for acquiescence response bias, in which respondents tend to agree with the survey. I decreased this effect by asking for acceptance of objective information rather than agreement with opinionated statements, but it may still exist. Participants might indicate that the given AI uses are acceptable, despite not believing so. Additionally, only providing five response options forces respondents to choose an option that may not truly align with their answer to the question. If a participant finds a given AI use to be only slightly acceptable, they would have to choose between the “neutral” and “somewhat acceptable” options. However, as mentioned before, the five-response option is important for keeping the survey as simple as possible while still including the main levels of acceptance. Another limitation is that this research is a convenience sample. Ideally, I would randomly select participants from the population of adult California residents. Instead,

participants are those who take surveys to earn money or rewards. This creates a bias because the entire sample has the characteristics of paid survey respondents, such as personal motivation, consistent access to technology, and familiarity with surveys. These factors likely affect their responses, making them less representative of the population as a whole. However, due to the nature of surveys requiring voluntary participation, this is the most practical way to get as many respondents as possible.

Survey research has similar strengths and weaknesses with validity. Because I am studying individual opinions, survey questions are the strongest way to get this information. Asking participants how acceptable they find different AI uses directly measures their attitudes toward AI. However, there are difficulties with the independent variable of political ideology. Respondents choose from options that represent a scale of liberal and conservative views, but this is a fairly subjective concept. What one person considers very liberal may only be somewhat liberal to someone else. Because of these differences, asking participants to place themselves on a scale may not directly measure the concept of their political ideology. Ideally, I would use participants' beliefs on well-known polarized topics to determine how conservative or liberal they are. However, this adds significantly more time and effort to take the survey, which would decrease its reliability. While it lacks validity, the current method of self-identification to measure political ideology is the most practical for this research design.

Analyses

My findings were mixed between supporting and failing to support my hypotheses. As I predicted, there was higher Republican support for generating realistic images and replicating voices, which were measured through questions 2, 7, and 8 (Figures 5, 15, and 17). However,

while questions 2 and 8 were given negative examples, these examples may be more appealing to Republicans than Democrats. Both examples described false media, or AI-generated content that is meant to pass as real, that harms the Democratic party. This creates a confounding factor of party alignment. I expect both Democrats and Republicans to prioritize whether AI is used to benefit their party, so the data may reflect this instead of opinions on the actual use of AI. Similarly to the partisan data, conservative individuals mostly found these uses of AI to be somewhat acceptable, while liberal individuals had more varied responses (Figures 6, 16, and 18). Those with neutral political beliefs were more likely to find image generation and voice replication unacceptable. Conservative and Republican support is heavily aligned, while liberal and Democrat support is mostly aligned. Despite the expectation that support from neutral respondents would be in the middle of these two, they were significantly different in their beliefs.

There was higher support for analytic tools among Democrats as hypothesized. Democrats showed more acceptance toward data analysis, programming, and audio and video aids. These audio and visual uses, questions 3 and 9, had positive examples describing accessibility tools. The examples likely appealed more to Democrats because they have a greater priority of accessibility than Republicans. Here, there were several responses of “totally acceptable” by Democrats, as seen in Figures 7 and 19. This pattern matches the spread of responses by political ideology, as liberal respondents found these uses more acceptable. Neutral respondents also had a majority of “totally acceptable” responses, showing their beliefs aligned more with Democrats.

The data around creative content failed to support my hypothesis that there would be higher acceptance among Republicans. Instead, there were nearly equal levels of acceptance between both Republicans and Democrats. Both questions 1 and 6, which described artistic

images and writing, had high support from both parties (Figures 3 and 13). This is consistent with the data on political ideology from Figures 4 and 14. Both showed a higher acceptance among strong conservative and strong liberal individuals. There was lower acceptance among neutral respondents, again differing from the other categories. Overall, there is no evidence to support my prediction that AI-generated creative content is currently a politically polarized topic.

As shown in Figure 21, the average acceptance of Generative AI among Democrats is more varied with extreme responses on both the side of acceptance and unacceptance. With Republicans, responses were more consistent around partial acceptance. This distribution contrasts the responses for question 10, in which Republicans are more varied and more extreme in their desired amounts of government regulation on AI. On the other hand, Democrats are more consistent in desiring moderate regulation (Figure 23). A possible explanation for this contrast is that Democrats appear to have different views on different AI uses, causing their levels of acceptance to be more varied throughout the survey. This may also explain why many Democrats want partial regulation, as they only want some AI uses to be regulated, likely the ones they find unacceptable. The more acceptable AI uses would not need government regulation. The opposite would be true for Republicans. Because they have more consistent views on different AI uses, their views may be based on AI as a whole rather than the differences between individual uses. As a result of viewing multiple uses of AI together, Republicans are more likely to either want them all to be regulated or none of them to be regulated. This explains why more Republicans desire little to no regulation or extreme regulation of AI.

While Figure 22 shows a similar pattern of average acceptance by political ideology, with higher levels of acceptance among stronger liberals and stronger conservatives, there is more variation in the desired levels of regulation of AI by political ideology (Figure 24). Participants

with liberal, conservative, and neutral views all prefer moderate regulation. There is also strong support for extreme regulation among both very liberal and very conservative individuals. Thus, extreme political beliefs in either direction relate to wanting extreme regulation of AI, despite their generally higher acceptance of Generative AI.

As Figures 25 and 26 demonstrate, acceptance was related to the tone of the example given for most political parties and ideologies. However, for neutral and negative examples, acceptance was higher among those with stronger beliefs, conservative or liberal. Respondents with neutral beliefs showed a more steady decline in acceptance as the examples became more negative. For negative examples, acceptance was higher among Republicans, which may be a result of the Republican-favorable examples for AI-generated images and audio.

Policy Implications and Conclusions

California is a highly Democratic state, with 47% registered Democrat voters and 24% registered Republican voters (California Secretary of State, 2022). As a result, I predict there will be greater support for specific policies on individual AI uses, to establish different levels of regulation for each of them. In particular, people would want heavy regulation of false media, such as audio with voice replication and AI-generated realistic images. They would also prefer weaker regulation toward technical tools such as accessibility tools and analytical software. With ChatGPT, Californians may want to limit its abilities to create media but not its abilities to provide and analyze information.

I also suggest further public education on the topic of AI-generated creative content, such as artistic images and creative writing. Despite the common Democratic aim of protecting workers, there was no survey evidence of concern for artists losing their jobs. I believe bringing

public awareness to this issue will allow Californians, specifically Democrats and liberal individuals, to understand the implications of using AI-generated creative content. However, we must account for bias. We can expect promoting AI art through examples that highlight its positive aspects will increase support for it while displaying its harms to society will decrease support for it. To fully understand how Californians view AI-generated creative content, we should present examples that explain its use while maintaining a neutral tone. On the other hand, those who aim to make Californians have a particular attitude toward AI art would use positive or negative tones to their advantage. Overall, I believe increasing the discussion of creative uses of AI will impact people's opinions on them. If we conduct another survey in a few years, we may find different results and thus have a better understanding of how much these specific uses should be regulated.

Similarly, Republican-leaning opinions toward Generative AI can be promoted through campaigning. If the Republican party wants to gather support for heavily regulating an objective AI tool, they can find and advertise examples of this AI tool that appear negative to the majority of Californians. This method of campaigning is likely relevant to any discussion and regulation of AI, as the evidence suggests that tone is related to public opinion across different uses of Generative AI.

With this research, we can conclude that it is possible to approach part of the active AI debate as a politically polarized issue, using the patterns among the opinions of different political groups. Thus, we can use political strategies that are based on partisanship, such as campaigning to Republicans and Democrats differently. While further research is required to confidently determine the differences in opinion between those with different political beliefs, this research provides a strong starting point for understanding the ways in which AI is a polarized issue.

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