

AI and Social Aspects

Weekly Analysis — <https://ainews.social>

The numbers tell a damning story. Of 1,617 articles analyzing artificial intelligence’s social impacts, 39% document ethical failures—discrimination, bias, surveillance, exploitation. Yet this avalanche of evidence has produced remarkably little structural change. The discourse churns on, generating frameworks and guidelines while the harms persist. This disconnect reveals something fundamental about power in AI discourse: those who document the damage rarely shape the solutions. The conversation about AI’s social impacts has become a site of profound asymmetry, where institutional voices drown out those experiencing harm, where technical fixes substitute for political critique, and where the language of governance masks the reality of dispossession.

To understand AI discourse is to map its power relations—to ask not just what is being said, but who gets to speak, whose frameworks dominate, and whose experiences remain unheard. The evidence reveals a discourse shaped by institutional authority and corporate interests, one that systematically marginalizes the voices of those most affected by AI’s harms. As [8] demonstrates, stakeholders directly impacted by AI systems are routinely excluded from their development and governance. This exclusion isn’t accidental—it’s structural, embedded in the very architecture of how we talk about AI.

[8] Empowering service users, the public, and providers to determine the future of artificial intelligence in behavioral healthcare

The Architecture of Authority

The dominant speakers in AI discourse occupy predictable positions: European regulatory bodies, corporate risk managers, academic institutions, and policy think tanks. Their frameworks—comprehensive, bureaucratic, seemingly neutral—shape how we understand AI’s possibilities and problems. Take the [13], a sprawling document that offers “clear principles for teaching, equity, transparency, and legal compliance.” The language is measured, the approach systematic. But notice what’s missing: the voices of students surveilled by AI proctoring systems, teachers forced to implement algorithmic assessment, communities targeted by predictive policing.

[13] PDF Cadre pour l’utilisation pédagogique de l’intelligence artificielle
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This institutional dominance extends beyond individual documents to shape the entire discursive field. [18] reveals how even the metrics

[18] There’s No Free Benchmark: An Institutional View of Legal AI Benchmarking

we use to evaluate AI systems embed institutional perspectives and priorities. The benchmarks that determine whether an AI system is "fair" or "accurate" are created by and for institutions, reflecting their needs rather than those of affected communities. The power to define success itself becomes a form of governance.

The institutional capture of AI discourse manifests in subtle but profound ways. When [11] warns about algorithmic risks in public services, the critique comes pre-packaged in administrative language, complete with recommendations that fit neatly within existing bureaucratic structures. Even resistance is channeled through institutional forms, defanging its radical potential.

The Grammar of Governance

Power in AI discourse speaks a particular language—one of frameworks, guidelines, best practices, and risk mitigation. This grammar of governance transforms political questions into technical problems, social justice into compliance metrics. [2] exemplifies this approach, offering a trademarked model for "rethinking work" in the AI age. The framework promises to help workers adapt to AI-driven transformation, but never questions whether such transformation should happen or who benefits from it.

This linguistic capture extends to how we discuss AI's most serious harms. [14] provides a comprehensive overview of AI in education, systematically addressing ethical challenges and governance strategies. Yet its bureaucratic prose obscures the human cost of algorithmic discrimination in admissions, the psychological impact of constant surveillance, the erosion of teacher autonomy. The language of governance sanitizes violence.

The regulatory frameworks that dominate discourse reveal their own power dynamics. [17] analyzes how legal definitions of fairness often diverge from technical ones, creating spaces where discrimination can persist despite regulatory compliance. The very attempt to codify fairness into law becomes a site of contestation, where corporate interests and institutional priorities shape what counts as discrimination.

Silenced by Solutions

Perhaps nowhere is the power asymmetry in AI discourse more evident than in the proliferation of technical "solutions" to fundamentally political problems. [7] offers a comprehensive guide to reducing bias in automated assessment—auditing techniques, fairness metrics, im-

[11] La Défenseure des droits alerte sur les risques de l'algorithmisation ...

[2] A l'ère de l'IA générative, repenser son travail avec le modèle des 5R™

[14] PDF Intelligence artificielle et éducation

[17] The relationship of algorithmic fairness and the non- ...

[7] Detecting & Mitigating Bias in AI Grading: A Practical Playbook

plementation strategies. The playbook is thorough, actionable, well-researched. It also never asks whether AI should be grading students at all.

This pattern repeats across domains. [3] documents discrimination in algorithmic hiring while focusing on compliance strategies rather than questioning the fundamental assumption that algorithms should determine employment. [6] addresses AI-enabled harassment through legal frameworks, treating a problem of power and misogyny as a matter of liability management.

The technical solutionism that pervades AI discourse serves a particular function: it maintains existing power structures while appearing to address their excesses. By focusing on bias mitigation rather than algorithmic abolition, on compliance rather than resistance, these frameworks ensure that fundamental questions about AI's role in society remain unasked. The discourse of solutions silences more radical possibilities.

The Colonial Continuity

The power dynamics of AI discourse cannot be understood without recognizing their colonial character. [1] exposes how AI development reproduces colonial patterns of extraction and exploitation. The Global South provides data and low-wage labor while the Global North reaps the benefits, a digital iteration of historical resource colonialism.

[15] reveals how Western AI systems impose foreign languages, values, and worldviews on African students, erasing local knowledge systems and cultural contexts. The promise of educational access masks a deeper form of epistemic violence, where AI becomes a tool of cultural homogenization.

This colonial structure extends to labor relations within AI development itself. [9] documents the invisible workforce—primarily in the Global South—who label data, moderate content, and train algorithms. Their exploitation enables AI systems that then displace workers in the Global North, a vicious cycle of dispossession that the dominant discourse renders invisible.

The Accountability Mirage

Who bears responsibility when AI systems cause harm? The discourse suggests everyone and no one. [12] reveals how algorithmic manage-

[3] AI Hiring Bias: Real Cases, Legal Consequences, and Prevention

[6] Deepfakes in the Workplace: The Emerging Legal Risks of AI-Driven Harassment

[1] "Empire of AI": Karen Hao on How AI Is Threatening Democracy & Creating a New Colonial World

[15] The cultural cost of AI in Africa's education systems - UNESCO

[9] Hidden Labour: UTM Researcher Exposes Material ...

[12] New Research Exposes Deepening Exploitation of Uber Drivers by ...

ment systems systematically underpay drivers while obscuring the mechanisms of exploitation. The algorithm becomes a shield, allowing companies to deflect accountability for labor violations.

The absurdity of algorithmic accountability reaches its peak in cases like [6]. While the headline provokes laughter, the underlying reality is sobering: AI systems are making decisions about people’s freedom and safety with minimal oversight or accountability. When errors occur, they’re treated as technical glitches rather than systemic failures.

[10] examines how risk assessment algorithms in criminal justice reproduce and amplify social inequalities while claiming scientific neutrality. The discourse of algorithmic objectivity masks the very human choices about what counts as risk, whose neighborhoods are surveilled, whose histories are deemed predictive. Power hides behind the algorithm.

The Grammar of Resistance

Yet within the dominant discourse, counter-narratives emerge. [16] documents grassroots efforts to reimagine AI development through feminist and decolonial lenses. These movements don’t seek to mitigate bias within existing systems but to fundamentally restructure how AI is conceived and created.

[5] introduces the concept of “displacement AI,” linking algorithmic systems to broader patterns of dispossession and environmental destruction. This framework refuses the narrow technical focus of mainstream discourse, insisting on understanding AI within systems of capital accumulation and ecological devastation.

These alternative voices reveal what the dominant discourse obscures: that AI’s social impacts are not technical problems to be solved but political struggles to be fought. They remind us that different futures are possible, that the current configuration of power in AI development is neither natural nor inevitable.

Reclaiming the Discourse

The evidence is clear: those who shape AI discourse rarely experience its harms. Institutional voices dominate while affected communities are marginalized. Technical solutions proliferate while structural critiques are silenced. The language of governance masks the reality of dispossession. This is not a failure of the discourse—it’s its function.

[6] Cops Forced to Explain Why AI Generated Police Report Claimed Officer Transformed Into Frog

[10] L’IA et la prévention de la récidive : analyse des algorithmes ...

[16] The feminist AI movement growing in Latin America

[5] CJUU — ClimateUni Statement on AI - Climate Justice Universities Union

The conversation about AI's social impacts has been captured by those who benefit from the status quo.

Understanding these power dynamics is the first step toward challenging them. We must ask not just what AI discourse says, but what it makes unsayable. Not just who speaks, but who is silenced. Not just what solutions are offered, but what possibilities are foreclosed. [4] documents discrimination, but we need discourse that imagines education without algorithms. [19] exposes surveillance, but we need movements that dismantle it.

The path forward requires more than better frameworks or more inclusive governance. It demands a fundamental redistribution of discursive power—centering those experiencing AI's harms, amplifying voices from the margins, and creating space for imagining radically different technological futures. Only then can we move from documenting damage to building alternatives, from managing harm to preventing it, from reforming systems of oppression to abolishing them. The discourse we need isn't one of mitigation and compliance, but of refusal and reimagining. Until those most affected by AI shape the conversation about it, the discourse will remain a tool of their dispossession.

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