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RESEARCH INSIGHTS

UNVEILING THE HIDDEN DYNAMICS: SYNTHESISING EVIDENCE OF THE UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Although the democratisation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) continues to accelerate, its implications for end users remain insufficiently explored. This paper investigates the unintended consequences of AI democratisation by focusing on the ‘invisibles’—individuals whose essential contributions are frequently overlooked. Drawing on the analysis of 40 qualitative studies, the findings reveal a complex interplay of economic, socio-cultural, and infrastructure factors shaping AI democratisation. Advancing the discourse beyond technological determinism and social shaping, the paper contributes to the field by introducing the Sociotechnical Invisibility Framework (SIF), which elucidates how AI creates unintended consequences by redistributing and reshaping visibility in the workplace, generating both opportunities (such as assistive tools) and challenges (such as job displacement). The paper provides managerial implications by demonstrating how organisational governance and structure, not technology alone, are critical determinants of workplace outcomes.



KEYWORDS

- Artificial intelligence
- Trust
- Invisible actors
- AI democratisation
- Inclusive AI

RESEARCH RELEVANCE

- AI adoption is characterised by acceleration that outpaces institutional readiness.
- Democratisation of AI can unintentionally reinforce existing social inequalities.
- AI systems are shaped by the priorities and biases of influential actors whose objectives may not reflect the lived realities of marginalised or invisible groups.
- Sociotechnical Invisibility Framework (SIF) explains how AI systems, despite claims of democratisation, often superficially expand access while simultaneously deepening invisibility.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Okpanum, I., Ogunniye, G., & Omeihe, K. (2026). Unveiling the Hidden Dynamics: Synthesising Evidence of the Unintended Consequences of Artificial Intelligence. *Strategic Business Research*, 2(1), Article 100111. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbr.2026.100111>

“AI democratisation does not eradicate invisibility; it reconfigures it, shifting from exclusion to extractive inclusion, and ultimately back to marginalisation. By theorising this dynamic process, the paper moves beyond binary judgements of AI as wholly beneficial or harmful, instead illuminating the persistent reproduction of unintended consequences across diverse settings.”

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