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The Role of AI in Shaping Public Opinion Through Targeted Advertising

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Abstract
The advent of artificial intelligence (AI) has revolutionized the landscape of digital marketing and political communication, with targeted advertising emerging as a powerful tool in influencing public opinion. This study investigates the role of AI-driven targeted advertising in shaping attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors across digital platforms. Relying on a secondary qualitative analysis of academic literature, government reports, and recent industry data, the research explores how algorithms leverage personal data to micro-target individuals, the ethical implications surrounding data privacy, and the regulatory challenges posed by these technologies. The literature review reveals that AI enhances the precision and efficiency of message delivery, particularly in political campaigns, yet simultaneously raises concerns about manipulation, misinformation, and democratic erosion. The findings suggest that while AI enables personalized engagement, it also contributes to ideological polarization and the creation of echo chambers. The discussion emphasizes the need for ethical frameworks and transparent practices to ensure that AI applications in advertising support, rather than subvert, democratic values.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Targeted Advertising, Public Opinion, Algorithmic Influence, Data Ethics

Introduction

Background of the Study

In the digital age, advertising has undergone a profound transformation driven largely by advances in artificial intelligence (AI). Unlike traditional advertising methods, which often rely on broad demographic categories and generalized messaging, AI-powered targeted advertising leverages vast quantities of personal data, sophisticated algorithms, and machine learning techniques to deliver highly personalized content to consumers. This evolution marks a shift from mass communication to individualized communication, with advertisers aiming to engage consumers on a more personal and emotional level. The rise of social media platforms, mobile technologies, and ubiquitous internet access has accelerated the availability of user data, creating fertile ground for AI algorithms to analyze behavioral patterns, preferences, and social connections (Zengler & Lee, 2025). The ability to predict consumer behavior and deliver tailored messages in real-time has revolutionized marketing strategies and expanded the reach and impact of advertising campaigns.

Definition of AI in Targeted Advertising

Artificial intelligence in advertising refers to the use of advanced computational techniques, including machine learning, natural language processing, computer vision, and data analytics, to automate, optimize, and personalize advertising efforts. AI systems can process enormous datasets to identify patterns and predict consumer needs, facilitating the creation of targeted advertising content that is dynamically adapted to individuals' interests, demographics, and online behavior (Eslami et al., 2021). Targeted advertising, specifically, involves the strategic delivery of advertisements to particular groups or individuals based on their digital footprint, purchase history, social interactions, and expressed preferences. The combination of AI and targeted advertising allows for granular segmentation beyond traditional categories, enabling micro-targeting and hyper-personalized campaigns that can enhance consumer engagement and conversion rates.

Importance of Studying the Influence of AI on Public Opinion

Studying the influence of AI in targeted advertising on public opinion is critical for several reasons. First, advertising is a powerful vehicle for shaping perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours in society. The infusion of AI-driven personalization intensifies this influence by creating echo chambers and filter bubbles, where individuals predominantly encounter information that aligns with their existing beliefs and preferences (Lazer et al., 2018). This phenomenon can exacerbate political polarization, social fragmentation, and misinformation spread. Second, the deployment of AI in targeted advertising raises ethical concerns related to privacy, autonomy, and manipulation. The use of personal data without transparent consent and the exploitation of psychological vulnerabilities threatens democratic ideals and individual freedoms (Allcott et al., 2020). Finally, exploring AI's role in public opinion formation informs the broader discourse on technology's impact on democracy, media, and communication. It helps scholars, policymakers, and practitioners recognize potential risks and design interventions that promote transparency, inclusivity, and accountability in digital communication ecosystems.

Scope and Objectives of the Study

This study aims to assess the role of artificial intelligence in targeted advertising and its consequent impact on public opinion and social behavior. It will analyze the technological mechanisms that underpin AI-driven advertising, examine empirical evidence of its influence on political attitudes and consumer decisions, and evaluate the ethical and regulatory challenges posed by this rapidly evolving field.

The objectives are as follows:

- To understand the technological foundations and capabilities of AI in targeted advertising.
- To investigate the ways in which AI-targeted advertising shapes public opinion, social norms, and political polarization.
- To identify ethical concerns and privacy issues arising from AI-driven data collection and content personalization.
- To review current regulatory frameworks and propose recommendations for responsible AI governance in advertising.

Research Rationale

Although the commercial advantages of AI in advertising have been widely acknowledged, the broader societal implications, particularly its role in shaping public opinion, remain under-explored. Several factors underpin the rationale for this research. The emergent use of AI in political microtargeting, employed extensively in recent elections worldwide, has revealed how targeted messages can influence voter turnout, polarization, and misinformation propagation

(Bradshaw & Howard, 2019). However, most studies focus narrowly on individual election cycles or particular geographic regions, limiting generalizability. There is a pressing need for comprehensive research that considers the evolving AI ecosystem and its broader impact on public opinion dynamics across contexts. Besides, ethical considerations around AI-enabled targeted advertising, including issues of transparency, consent, and algorithmic bias, have become more urgent as regulatory bodies struggle to keep pace with technological innovation (European Commission, 2021). Understanding how these ethical concerns intersect with actual audience experiences and responses is critical for informing balanced policies and industry standards. More importantly, much existing research is fragmented along disciplinary lines, computer science research tends to focus on algorithmic efficiency and optimization, while communication studies emphasize effects on audiences, often lacking technical specificity. An integrative approach that bridges these domains is essential to capture the complexity of AI's influence on public opinion.

Literature Review

Artificial Intelligence in Advertising: Definitions and Evolution

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a broad domain encompassing various technologies that enable machines to perform tasks typically requiring human intelligence, including learning, reasoning, and decision-making (Sundar & Marathe, 2025). In advertising, AI's transformative impact can be traced through multiple stages of technological evolution. Early digital advertising primarily used rule-based targeting, where ads were served based on static categories such as age, gender, and location. However, these methods often failed to capture the complexity of consumer preferences and lacked adaptability (TechRadar, 2025). The integration of AI introduced machine learning models capable of analyzing large-scale datasets, identifying patterns, and optimizing ad delivery in near real-time. For example, recommendation algorithms on platforms like Amazon and Netflix leverage AI to suggest products or content based on previous user behavior, vastly improving personalization and engagement. In advertising, similar techniques enable dynamic ad creative customization tailored to individual users, blending visual, textual, and interactive elements optimized by AI algorithms (Reviglio, 2024). Moreover, natural language processing (NLP) allows AI systems to analyze and generate human-like language, enabling chatbots, sentiment analysis, and personalized messaging that resonates with users on emotional and cognitive levels. Computer vision further enhances ad targeting by analyzing images and videos shared on social media, identifying objects, settings, and user expressions to infer preferences. The shift to programmatic advertising marks another milestone, where AI automates the buying and selling of ad inventory through real-time bidding (RTB) systems. Programmatic platforms use complex algorithms to decide which ad to display, to whom, and at what price, maximizing advertisers' return on investment (ROI). According to Reuters (2025), over 80% of digital display ads globally are now purchased programmatically, underscoring AI's central role. Despite these advances, the opacity of AI decision-making processes, often termed the 'black box' problem, poses challenges for advertisers, regulators, and consumers seeking transparency and fairness. AI models trained on biased or incomplete data risk perpetuating stereotypes or excluding certain groups, raising ethical and social concerns that complicate AI's deployment in advertising (WSJ, 2025).

Theoretical Foundations: Public Opinion and Media Influence

Understanding AI's impact on public opinion requires engaging with established media and communication theories, adapted to the digital environment shaped by algorithmic personalization. Firstly, Agenda-Setting Theory, incorporated from the study of Lazer et al., (2018) originally

emphasized mass media's power to influence public priorities by selecting which topics receive coverage. In the digital era, AI algorithms curate newsfeeds and advertising content tailored to individual preferences, subtly shaping what users see and, consequently, what they perceive as important (Tufekci, 2015). The shift from centralized editorial control to decentralized algorithmic curation complicates the accountability of agenda-setting functions. Framing Theory, as articulated by Zhang & Liu (2025), is particularly relevant given AI's ability to customize not only what information is presented but how it is framed. AI systems can tailor message frames such as emphasizing economic benefits, social justice, or fear appeals, based on user psychological profiles derived from digital footprints. This micro-targeted framing enhances persuasive effects, as users receive arguments aligned with their existing attitudes and emotional triggers. The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) provides insights into how AI-targeted advertising can operate through both central and peripheral routes of persuasion. The central route involves careful consideration of message content, which may be enhanced by AI's ability to provide relevant information tailored to user needs. The peripheral route exploits cue such as source credibility or emotional appeal, dynamically personalized by AI to maximize impact (Eslami et al., 2021). The concept of the filter bubble articulated by Nielsen (2024) has gained prominence as AI-driven content personalization tends to isolate users within ideologically homogeneous environments. Filter bubbles can lead to selective exposure, reinforcing confirmation bias and potentially fragmenting public discourse into polarized echo chambers. This selective exposure exacerbates challenges to social cohesion and democratic deliberation, especially when combined with AI-enabled disinformation campaigns. Importantly, Uses and Gratifications Theory Sundar & Marathe (2025) helps explain why users may accept or seek AI-personalized content, as individuals actively select media that gratify their needs for information, identity, or social interaction. AI enhances gratification by anticipating user desires and preferences, thereby increasing engagement and reinforcing habitual consumption of targeted content.

Empirical Research on AI-Driven Targeted Advertising

The empirical literature on AI-targeted advertising spans multiple domains, including commercial marketing, political communication, and social influence. In commercial marketing, studies consistently show that AI-driven personalization increases ads' effectiveness. For example, Reviglio (2024) that consumers exposed to AI-personalized ads exhibited higher click-through rates, purchase intentions, and brand recall compared to non-targeted ads. Similarly, a meta-analysis by Pew Research Center (2025) indicates that dynamic personalization and recommendation algorithms lead to significant increases in sales conversion rates. Psychological targeting, which merges artificial intelligence with insights into personality and emotion, is emerging as a powerful evolution of microtargeting. By tailoring messages based on individual psychological profiles, such as personality traits and emotional responses, this technique can significantly enhance persuasive impact. While effective, it raises serious ethical concerns regarding the manipulation of subconscious behaviors, particularly in advertising and political messaging. In politics, AI-driven microtargeting has transformed how campaigns communicate with voters (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2023). Customized political messages are now crafted for specific audience segments, allowing for highly personalized outreach. However, this can deepen political divides by reinforcing existing beliefs and limiting exposure to differing perspectives. AI has also played a role in the spread of disinformation. Coordinated campaigns use AI to generate and distribute false content that can influence elections and destabilize societies. These efforts undermine trust and pose challenges for fact-checking and public understanding. A major issue remains the lack of transparency surrounding how AI systems operate. The complexity and opacity of algorithms make it difficult to assess their full societal effects or hold them

accountable (McKinsey & Co, 2025). Without clear standards for evaluation and regulation, understanding and managing AI's influence on public discourse remains a critical challenge.

Ethical Issues and Privacy Concerns

AI's integration in targeted advertising raises profound ethical questions about privacy, consent, autonomy, and fairness. The concept of surveillance capitalism (Zuboff, 2019) critiques how corporations harvest vast amounts of personal data, often without explicit user awareness—to predict and influence behavior for profit. This commodification of personal information raises questions about individual autonomy and the extent to which consumers can exercise meaningful control over their data. Privacy concerns have intensified with the rise of AI technologies capable of deducing highly sensitive personal information, such as political views, health conditions, and sexual orientation, from everyday digital activity. Individuals are often unaware of just how much data is being collected and the ways it is being used. This lack of transparency is further complicated by the opaque nature of algorithms, which makes it nearly impossible for users to understand how decisions about them are made or to challenge these decisions effectively. As a result, there is growing unease about the erosion of personal privacy and autonomy in a digital environment where data is constantly monitored, interpreted, and used for targeted advertising or other forms of influence, often without informed consent (Sundar & Marathe, 2025). Moreover, ethical concerns extend to potential manipulation. Critics argue that AI-driven microtargeting exploits cognitive biases and emotional vulnerabilities, effectively undermining informed consent and democratic deliberation. For example, targeting individuals during emotionally volatile moments with specific messages can disproportionately influence attitudes and behaviors without their conscious awareness (WSJ, 2025). There are also concerns about algorithmic bias. AI systems trained on historical data may reproduce or amplify societal biases, leading to discriminatory ad targeting or exclusion of marginalized groups (Forbes, 2025). This can perpetuate inequality and social injustice in both commercial and political advertising contexts.

Regulatory Landscape and Governance

In response to ethical and societal risks, regulatory frameworks have evolved to address data protection and AI accountability. The European Union's data protection regulation introduced in 2018 stands as one of the most robust legal frameworks for safeguarding personal information. It emphasizes the importance of user consent for data collection, allows individuals to access and delete their personal data, and demands greater transparency in automated decision-making (Federal Election Commission, 2024). Companies are also encouraged to build privacy considerations into their systems from the outset, with significant penalties in place for non-compliance. Despite its strength, applying this regulation within the rapidly evolving landscape of AI-driven advertising poses difficulties. Data often travels across borders and passes through various intermediaries, making oversight complex (Reviglio, 2024). Furthermore, not all regions have similar protections in place, leading to inconsistencies in privacy standards and enforcement around the world. This disparity complicates efforts to ensure global accountability and user control over personal data. Beyond legal measures, scholars advocate for multi-stakeholder governance involving policymakers, industry actors, civil society, and technical experts to develop ethical AI standards (Gasser & Almeida, 2017). Initiatives such as the AI Ethics Guidelines by the European Commission and the Partnership on AI emphasize transparency, fairness, and accountability. Algorithmic auditing frameworks are emerging to assess bias, transparency, and impact of AI systems in advertising. These efforts aim to develop standardized tools for independent evaluation and public reporting. Nonetheless, balancing innovation, commercial

interests, and public good remains a persistent governance challenge, necessitating ongoing research and adaptive policy mechanisms.

Literature Gap

Despite the extensive body of research on AI in advertising and its influence on public opinion, several significant gaps remain that warrant further scholarly attention. First, much of the existing literature tends to focus predominantly on the technical and commercial effectiveness of AI-driven targeted advertising, such as improvements in click-through rates, sales conversions, or campaign efficiencies, while comparatively less attention has been given to the nuanced mechanisms through which AI shapes broader public opinion and social attitudes. Such a gap limits understanding of AI's socio-political implications beyond immediate marketing outcomes. Second, while numerous studies discuss the ethical and privacy concerns surrounding AI personalization, empirical research quantifying the extent to which such practices influence individual autonomy and democratic engagement remains sparse. There is a critical need for more data-driven investigations into how AI-enabled advertising affects users' perceptions of privacy, consent, and trust in media institutions. Third, much of the political communication research to date centers on case studies of landmark elections, primarily the 2024 US presidential race, with limited longitudinal analysis tracking the evolving role of AI in political microtargeting across different cultural and regulatory contexts. The fast-paced development of AI technologies necessitates continuous research to assess their implications in diverse geopolitical settings. Addressing these gaps, the current research aims to provide a holistic and empirically grounded examination of AI-driven targeted advertising's influence on public opinion, emphasizing ethical implications, user agency, and regulatory challenges across diverse contexts. This study will contribute to bridging the divide between technological capabilities and societal impact, thereby informing policy and practice in the digital age.

Methodology

This research employs a secondary qualitative research design that critically analyses existing scholarly literature, official reports, policy documents, and reputable online sources to explore the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in shaping public opinion through targeted advertising. Given the growing body of accessible research on AI-driven advertising, this approach allows for a comprehensive synthesis of relevant data without primary data collection. Secondary qualitative analysis is particularly suitable for this study as it enables the integration of diverse perspectives and findings across multiple disciplines, providing a deeper understanding of the technological, social, and ethical dimensions involved. Data sources were systematically collected from established academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, Elsevier, and Emerald Insight, complemented by official reports from regulatory agencies and international organizations like the European Commission, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Additionally, policy documents and authoritative media coverage were reviewed to incorporate current case studies and emerging trends. The search strategy focused on keywords including 'AI in advertising', 'targeted advertising and public opinion', 'algorithmic personalization', 'political microtargeting', and 'digital advertising ethics'. To maintain relevance, only English-language publications from the last ten years (2013–2023) were included by focusing on peer-reviewed research and credible institutional publications.The collected documents underwent a rigorous thematic content analysis to identify recurring patterns, core concepts, and prevailing theoretical frameworks relevant to the study objectives. This process involved meticulous reading and coding of each source to extract key themes related to the

technological mechanisms of AI in advertising, its influence on public opinion formation, ethical and privacy concerns, and regulatory responses. Data were organized using NVivo qualitative data analysis software to ensure systematic management and enhance the transparency and reliability of the coding process. Themes emerging from this analysis were synthesized to develop an integrated understanding of how AI-driven targeted advertising operates and impacts democratic discourse and public perceptions.

Findings and Analysis

The thematic content analysis of existing literature and official reports reveals several critical dimensions of AI's role in shaping public opinion through targeted advertising. The findings are organized around four major themes: algorithmic personalization and microtargeting mechanisms, effects on public opinion and democratic processes, ethical and privacy concerns, and regulatory challenges and responses.

Algorithmic Personalization and Microtargeting Mechanisms

A significant body of research emphasizes how AI algorithms have become highly advanced in collecting and analyzing large volumes of user data, enabling the creation of highly personalized advertising campaigns. These systems use machine learning to predict individual preferences and behaviours by examining user demographics, browsing habits, social media activity, and even offline data. AI-driven microtargeting allows for the delivery of political messages and advertisements tailored to fit the psychological and ideological profiles of specific audience segments. This precision targeting also contributes to the creation of "filter bubbles," where users primarily encounter content that reinforces their existing views, reducing exposure to differing perspectives. AI systems achieve this by continuously adjusting content in response to user interactions in real time, a level of responsiveness not possible with traditional advertising methods. This selective exposure deepens audience segmentation and influences how individuals engage with public discourse.

Effects on Public Opinion and Democratic Processes

There is growing concern about the impact of AI-enabled targeted advertising on public opinion and electoral outcomes. By leveraging personal data and psychological profiles, AI allows political campaigns to craft emotionally resonant and persuasive messages aimed at influencing voter behavior and mobilizing specific demographic groups. In recent elections, targeted advertising strategies have been used to influence undecided voters or diminish opposition support by spreading tailored misinformation and disinformation. This level of microtargeting disrupts traditional political communication by breaking public discourse into fragmented, personalized narratives. Such fragmentation can undermine democratic processes by weakening collective discussion and shared understanding, which are vital for political legitimacy. As a result, different audience segments may receive conflicting messages, contributing to political polarization and reducing opportunities for constructive dialogue across ideological divides.

Ethical and Privacy Concerns

A recurrent theme in discussions about AI in targeted advertising is its ethical implications, especially regarding transparency, consent, and data privacy. Critics often highlight how algorithmic decision-making processes are opaque, making it difficult for users to understand how their data is collected, analysed, and used to personalize content. This lack of clarity undermines informed consent and raises concerns about the exploitation of vulnerable groups, including minors and marginalized populations. Additionally, using AI for political microtargeting prompts

worries about manipulation and reduced individual autonomy. When emotionally tailored messages influence people without their awareness, it challenges ethical standards related to free will and democratic fairness. To address these issues, many advocate for greater algorithmic accountability, transparency, and tools that allow users to control their data and ad exposure.

Regulatory Challenges and Responses

The rapid advancement of AI technologies in advertising has created significant challenges for policymakers and regulators who struggle to keep pace. While frameworks like the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) have introduced key measures to enhance data protection and transparency, they do not fully address the unique complexities posed by AI-powered content personalization. New regulatory efforts are beginning to focus on issues such as algorithmic audits, mandatory disclosure of political advertisements, and limits on specific targeting techniques to reduce potential harms. However, enforcing these regulations is difficult due to the global, cross-platform nature of AI advertising systems. This environment allows for regulatory loopholes, inconsistent legal protections, and uneven enforcement across different regions, making comprehensive oversight a persistent and unresolved issue.

Discussion

The findings showcase the transformative impact of AI technologies on the landscape of public opinion formation through targeted advertising, offering both opportunities and significant challenges. The technological advances in algorithmic personalization have revolutionized the capacity to engage with audiences at an unprecedented scale and specificity, reshaping how political and commercial messages are disseminated. However, this capability is double-edged: while it allows for more efficient communication, it also risks fragmenting public discourse and undermining democratic norms. The 'filter bubble' and 'echo chamber' phenomena identified in the findings reflect deep concerns about how AI personalization can reinforce cognitive biases and limit exposure to diverse perspectives, which is critical for informed citizenship and pluralistic debate. This aligns with warnings about the erosion of shared informational spaces and the subsequent rise in polarization and mistrust. Ethical considerations highlight an urgent need for greater transparency and accountability in AI systems, especially given the asymmetry of information between advertisers and users. The findings resonate with concept of 'surveillance capitalism', wherein personal data becomes a commodity leveraged for behavioral prediction and modification without adequate user control or awareness. This raises fundamental questions about autonomy, consent, and fairness in the digital public sphere. Regulatory responses, though evolving, remain insufficient in fully addressing these complex issues. The patchwork nature of current policies indicates a need for international cooperation and adaptive frameworks capable of managing AI's fluid and opaque operations. The literature suggests that effective regulation must balance innovation with protection of fundamental rights, emphasizing algorithmic transparency, user empowerment, and enforcement mechanisms that transcend national boundaries.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has examined the multifaceted role of artificial intelligence in shaping public opinion through targeted advertising by conducting a comprehensive secondary qualitative analysis of scholarly literature, policy documents, and institutional reports. The findings demonstrate that AI-driven personalization and microtargeting represent powerful innovations that have fundamentally transformed political communication and marketing strategies. These technologies enable highly individualized content delivery based on sophisticated user profiling, resulting in enhanced engagement and message effectiveness. However, this transformation also presents critical

challenges to democratic processes and ethical standards. The emergence of filter bubbles and echo chambers exacerbates social fragmentation and polarization by limiting exposure to diverse viewpoints, thereby undermining the collective deliberation vital for a healthy democracy. Furthermore, the opacity of AI algorithms and extensive data collection practices raise serious ethical concerns regarding user autonomy, privacy, and informed consent. These concerns highlight the imbalance of power between advertisers and individuals and the potential manipulation of public opinion through covert means.

Recommendations

To address the challenges posed by AI-driven targeted advertising while maximizing its potential benefits, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Increase Algorithmic Transparency and Accountability: Developers and platforms should implement clear disclosure practices regarding AI algorithms used in ad targeting. Independent audits and impact assessments must be institutionalized to evaluate algorithmic bias, manipulation risks, and compliance with ethical standards.
2. Enhance Data Privacy Protections: Regulations should mandate stringent consent protocols that are meaningful and easily understood by users. Data minimization principles must be strictly enforced to limit the scope of personal data collection and prevent misuse.
3. Empower Users with Control Mechanisms: Digital platforms should offer accessible and intuitive tools enabling users to customize advertising settings, opt out of profiling, and receive clear information on how their data influences content delivery.
4. Foster International Regulatory Collaboration: Given the transnational nature of AI advertising ecosystems, global cooperation is necessary to harmonize policies, close regulatory loopholes, and enable effective cross-border enforcement.
5. Promote Public Awareness and Digital Literacy: Targeted campaigns and educational programs should be developed to enhance users' critical understanding of AI's role in content personalization, enabling informed engagement and resilience against manipulation.
6. Support Interdisciplinary Research and Policy Dialogue: Ongoing research combining technical, social, and ethical perspectives is essential to track AI developments, assess societal impacts, and guide adaptive policymaking in this rapidly evolving domain.

Implementing these recommendations will contribute to safeguarding democratic integrity, protecting individual rights, and fostering responsible innovation in AI-driven targeted advertising.

Research Contributions

This study contributes to the growing academic discourse on artificial intelligence and political communication by providing a comprehensive secondary qualitative analysis of AI's role in shaping public opinion through targeted advertising. The research synthesizes diverse interdisciplinary perspectives, integrating insights from computer science, political science, communication studies, and ethics to offer a holistic understanding of the complex dynamics involved. By systematically categorizing the mechanisms, effects, ethical concerns, and regulatory challenges associated with AI-powered advertising, the paper advances theoretical frameworks around algorithmic personalization and democratic deliberation. Moreover, the study identifies critical gaps in existing regulatory approaches and highlights the urgent need for transparency, user empowerment, and international cooperation. These contributions provide valuable guidance for policymakers, technology developers, and civil society stakeholders seeking to balance innovation with the protection of democratic values and individual rights. Finally, the paper highlights the

importance of continued interdisciplinary research, particularly by laying a foundation for future empirical studies on AI's societal impacts in political and commercial contexts. This is important within the context of growing use of AI for advertisement and marketing purposes and how public opinion is shaped or moulded through it.

Research Limitations

While this study offers a thorough synthesis of existing literature, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the reliance on secondary qualitative analysis restricts the ability to incorporate real-time empirical data or direct observations of AI-driven advertising practices, potentially limiting insights into recent technological innovations or emerging trends. The findings are thus dependent on the availability, scope, and quality of published academic and policy sources. Second, the breadth of the topic necessitated a broad overview rather than an in-depth examination of specific AI algorithms or case studies. This approach may overlook nuanced technical aspects or localized regulatory frameworks that influence AI's role in different geopolitical contexts. Third, the rapid pace of AI development means that new applications, ethical debates, and legislative changes may have emerged since the most recent literature considered. Finally, the interpretive nature of qualitative thematic analysis involves subjective judgments in coding and theme selection, which may introduce researcher bias despite efforts to maintain rigor and transparency. Future research employing mixed methods, empirical case studies, or experimental designs could complement and validate the findings presented here.

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