

## Deconstructing the Hype: A Critical Literature Review on AI in Journalism

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**Citation:** Cervi, L., Catanzaro, M., Jiménez-Jacinto, J. F., & Tejedor, S. (2026). Deconstructing the hype: A critical literature review on AI in journalism. *Review of Communication Research*, 14, 32-53. <https://doi.org/10.52152/RCR.V14.3>

### ARTICLE INFO

Received: 13 Oct 2025

Accepted: 22 Jan 2026

### ABSTRACT

This article presents a systematic review of scholarly literature on artificial intelligence (AI) in Journalism published between 2020 and 2024. The objective of the study is to critically examine academic production from this period. Specifically, it aims to identify prevailing research trends, dominant analytical approaches, and persistent gaps in the field. This review responds to the need to systematize a prolific yet fragmented body of work. Such fragmentation reflects a lack of theoretical integration that hinders a consolidated understanding of the phenomenon. The review follows PRISMA guidelines to conduct a structured search across major academic databases (Web of Science and Scopus), applying well-defined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The analysis reveals a predominance of descriptive and exploratory studies. In contrast, empirical and longitudinal investigations remain limited. Notable gaps are also identified regarding the impact of AI on editorial transparency and audience trust. By providing a PRISMA-based mapping of the field and identifying key blind spots such as editorial transparency, audience trust, and the lack of longitudinal evidence—this review contributes to a more critical and systematic understanding of the impact of artificial intelligence on Journalism. The findings of this systematic review contribute to clarifying the current state of knowledge on the application of artificial intelligence in Journalism and offer guidance for future research agendas and critical reflection within both academic and professional communities. The findings contribute to clarifying the current state of knowledge on AI in Journalism and offer guidance for future research and critical reflection within academic and professional communities. These findings also provide practical guidance for policymakers and newsrooms facing ethical, organizational, and technological challenges.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence, Journalism, Systematic Review, Media Innovation, PRISMA.

## INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming the world, reshaping industries, economies, and everyday life. From automating routine tasks to enabling complex decision-making, AI is altering how people work, communicate, and access information. As machines increasingly mimic human cognition and judgment, societies are being forced to confront not only the opportunities AI offers. They must also address the profound challenges it poses to equity, labor, and democratic governance (Broussard, 2018).

AI has emerged as a particularly powerful force reshaping the field of Journalism. From algorithmically generated news to automated fact-checking tools, and from audience analytics to personalized content delivery, AI is now embedded across multiple layers of the journalistic workflow (Broussard et al., 2019; Ufarte-Ruiz et al. 2023).

As this transformation unfolds, a growing body of scholarly literature has sought to analyze the implications

of AI for journalistic norms, ethics, and practices (Carlson, 2018; Diakopoulos, 2019; Marconi & Siegman, 2017). In response to this growing interest, several literature reviews have sought to map the field. Sonni et al. (2024) and Calvo-Rubio and Ufarte Ruiz (2021) have sought to map the field, offering valuable syntheses of developments in automated Journalism, editorial decision-making, and the ethical implications of algorithmic tools.

While these contributions have advanced our understanding, a more critical, updated, and comprehensive review is still needed. First, the pace of technological innovation has accelerated dramatically with the mainstreaming of generative AI systems. These include GPT-based language models and multimodal tools capable of producing synthetic text, images, and audio, which render reviews quickly outdated. Second, existing syntheses often adopt a descriptive approach, focusing on cataloguing applications or summarizing empirical trends, rather than critically interrogating the assumptions, power dynamics, and normative frameworks underpinning the deployment of AI in Journalism. To address this gap, this review systematically examines peer-reviewed journal articles on AI and Journalism published between 2020 and 2024, drawing exclusively from studies written in English and indexed in Scopus and Web of Science. The review provides an overview of how AI has been studied, conceptualized, and approached within Journalism scholarship during this period. Specifically, it aims to (1) map the dominant discourses and trends in academic research on AI and Journalism; (2) highlight the limitations and silences within this corpus; and (3) propose an alternative, justice-centered framework for analyzing the role of AI in contemporary media. Specifically, it aims to map dominant discourses and research trends, highlight key limitations and silences within the literature, and propose an alternative, justice-centered framework for analyzing the role of AI in contemporary media. Through this approach, the review contributes to a more pluralistic, reflexive, and critically informed understanding of AI's impact on Journalism in the early 21st century.

Building on recent interventions in critical AI studies and in the political and eco-political economy of AI (Broussard, 2018; Brevini, 2024), recent scholarship has highlighted the need to examine AI in Journalism beyond surface-level functionality or normative ethics. Various strands of research have explored how AI interacts with the historical, social, and material conditions of Journalism. These studies raise questions about the actors, contexts, and institutional dynamics involved. Against this background, the present review systematically examines recent scholarship on AI and Journalism published between 2020 and 2024.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Philosophy

This study employed a systematic review aimed at analyzing and synthesizing existing literature on the relation between artificial intelligence and Journalism. The review process was conducted following the guidelines of the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) model, ensuring transparency and reproducibility of the study (Moher et al., 2009). This methodology was selected because it offered structured view of the current state of knowledge, identified emerging trends and research gaps, and laid a foundation for future studies. On the basis of this protocol, we identified and refined a corpus of studies that met the objectives of this review.

### Research Method

The review included a total of 203 works (articles, books, book chapters, and proceedings), all exclusively focused on the relationship between artificial intelligence and Journalism, published entirely in English between 2020 and 2024, and sourced from the Scopus and Web of Science databases.

The approach guiding this review focused on identifying research that analyzed how artificial intelligence was transforming Journalism. Based on these questions, initial analytical categories were defined to provide a systematic exploration framework for the collected material. To adequately cover the objectives set, exhaustive searches were conducted in key academic databases, Web of Science and Scopus.

### Search Strategy

The search strategy was designed by combining the following keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Journalism, Newsroom, Media, Newspaper. Search strings were specifically tailored for each database to optimize both sensitivity and precision in retrieving relevant studies.

## **Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

Rigorous inclusion and exclusion criteria were established to ensure that the review remained focused and feasible in scope. Only studies that (1) had been published between 2020 and 2024; (2) had a full-text version in English; (3) explicitly addressed the use of artificial intelligence in Journalism contexts; and (4) provided empirical evidence or relevant conceptual analysis were included. Studies superficially mentioning artificial intelligence or addressing digital technologies without a specific focus on AI and Journalism were excluded.

## **Screening and Selection Process**

The selection of studies was performed in two phases. First, two researchers independently evaluated titles and abstracts to identify potentially relevant works. Subsequently, the full texts of pre-selected studies were reviewed, applying the defined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Discrepancies between reviewers were resolved through joint discussion and, if necessary, intervention by a third researcher. The complete selection process was summarized in a PRISMA-standard flow diagram (**Figure 1**).

## **Data Collection and data Synthesis**

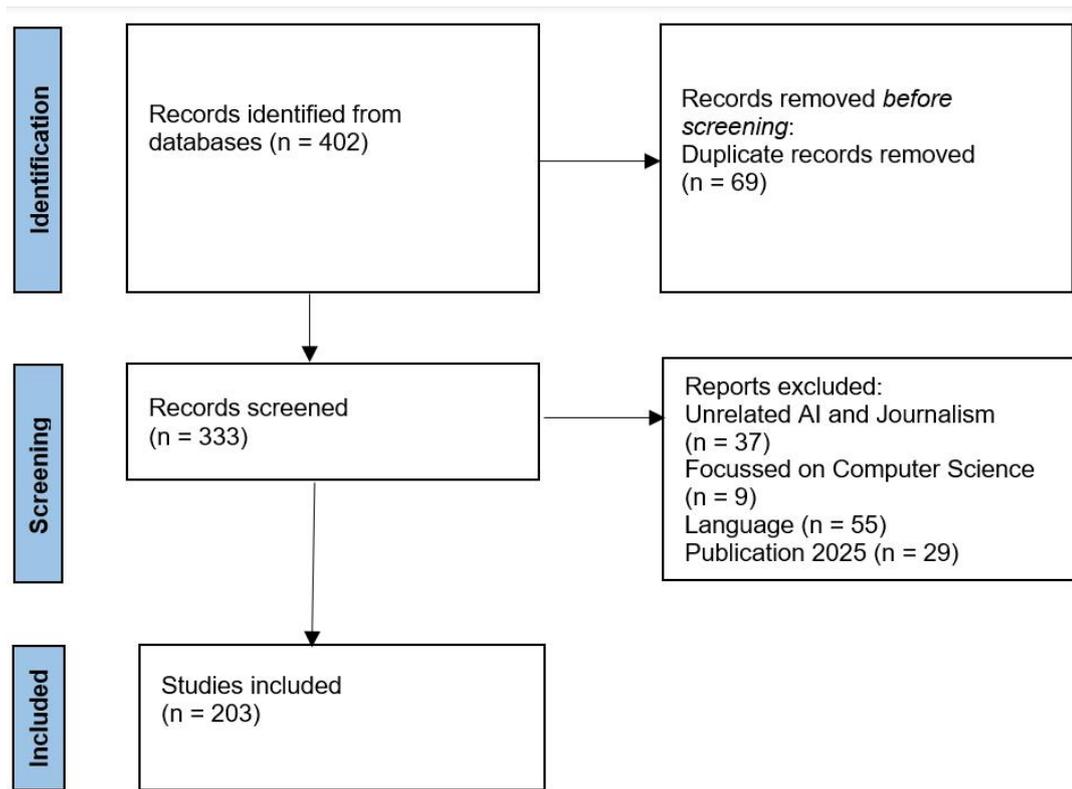
Data extraction was conducted using a previously designed form, gathering bibliographic information, methodological design, geographical scope, key findings, and reported implications. Because the included studies were heterogeneous in design and outcomes, we adopted a narrative approach to data synthesis. Results were organized around key approaches, such as temporal evolution, geographical distribution, type of literature, publication quartiles, methods employed, and the institutional affiliations and disciplines of researchers. Both points of convergence and existing divergences were highlighted for each of these axes.

## **PRISMA Flow Diagram**

Our literature search yielded 402 records. After removing duplicates ( $n = 69$ ), the remaining records were thoroughly evaluated based on the eligibility criteria. During this process, reports were excluded for the following reasons: lack of relevance to AI and Journalism ( $n = 37$ ), a primary focus on computer science ( $n = 9$ ), language restrictions ( $n = 55$ ), and publication year outside the established timeframe (publication in 2025;  $n = 29$ ). Ultimately, 203 studies were included in this work. Figure 1 outlined the stages of the search and study identification, performed in accordance with the PRISMA statement.

Potential methodological limitations, such as publication bias or reliance on studies written exclusively in English, were explicitly acknowledged in the discussion, alongside their possible implications for interpreting the results.

Through this systematic and meticulous procedure, a reliable and exhaustive synthesis of available knowledge on the impact of artificial intelligence in Journalism was generated. The findings of this review not only clearly outlined the current landscape but also provided promising directions for future research, offering useful tools for both media professionals and policymakers facing the challenges of a constantly evolving journalistic environment. Having established the methodological foundations and the scope of the reviewed corpus, we then turned to the main empirical patterns that emerge from the analysis.



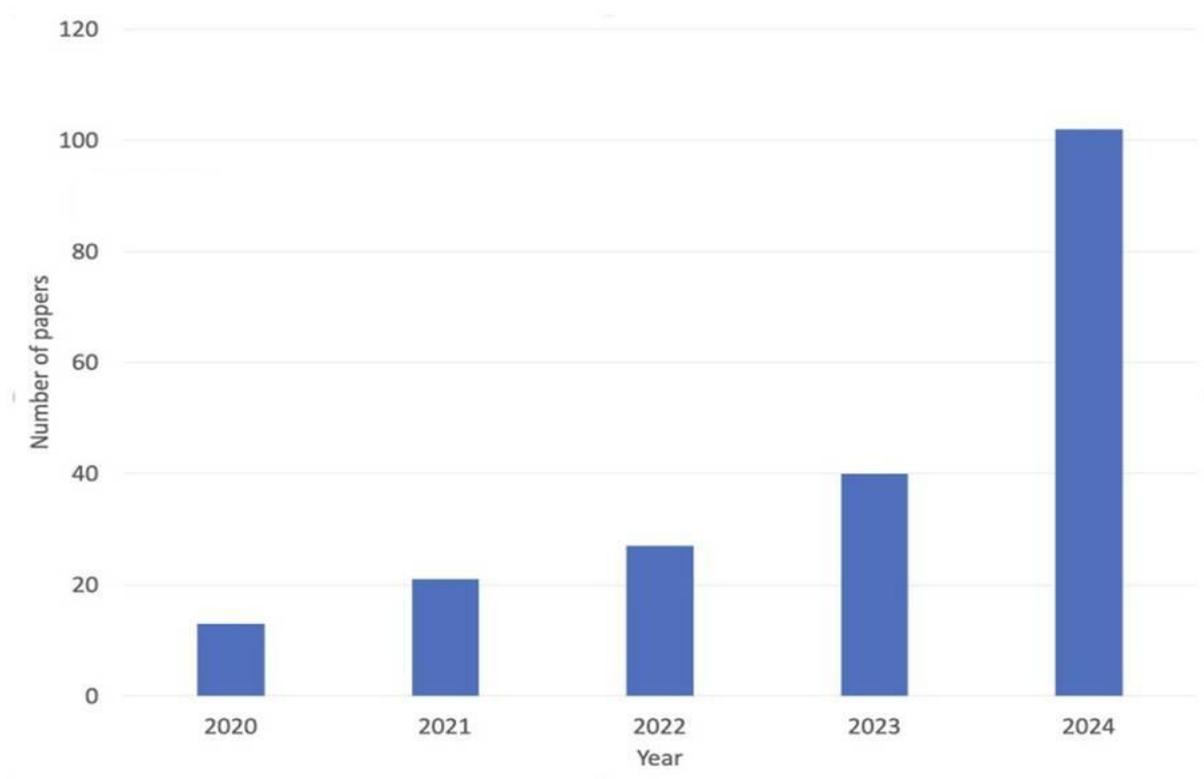
**Figure 1.** Data Collection Flowchart (PRISMA Statement)

*Note.* This graph shows the Information Flow Diagram, which outlines in detail how the search process was carried out (Moher et al., 2009).

## RESULTS

### Trends in Time and Space

From a quantitative perspective, the number of articles on AI and Journalism shows a sustained increase between 2020 - when about one article per month was published- to 2023 (about three articles per month). 2024 represents a turning point, with a sharp rise in the number of published articles (over 8 per month) and a 155% increase with respect to 2023, a rate of growth unparalleled in previous years. This pattern may signal early exponential growth as shown in **Figure 2**, but it requires confirmation with data from future years. Beyond these temporal trends, the corpus also reveals marked geographical imbalances in where AI and Journalism are being studied.



**Figure 2.** Number of Articles on AI and Journalism Published per Year Between 2020 and 2024

*Note.* Figure elaborated by the authors

Geographically speaking, our findings show that Europe dominates the publication on AI and Journalism, in terms of both authorship and scope of the papers.

In terms of authorship, as **Figure 3** shows, there is a high concentration of publications in the Global North, with little contribution from Africa and Latin America.



**Figure 3.** Number Of Articles on AI And Journalism Published Between 2020 and 2024 per World Regions

*Note.* Figure elaborated by the authors

Among the top-10 publishing countries six are European (Spain, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Norway, Germany, and Switzerland), and remarkably, Spain is the global leader in articles on AI and Journalism, with around one in every four articles published between 2020 and 2024 having at least one Spanish affiliation: 53 out of the total 203 (26%). The overall Spanish production of articles almost doubles the second country in the ranking - the United States of America, with 29 articles (14%) - and almost triples the third - China, with 18 articles (9%).

The Spanish leadership is not anecdotal: our data show that Spain has maintained a leading position throughout the studied period, with the only exception of 2022, in which the United States of America slightly surpassed Spain.

Europe dominates the academic publication on AI and Journalism not only in terms of affiliation, but also in terms of its geographical target. As illustrated by **Table 1**, of the total 203 articles, significant fractions have an international scope (23) or an undefined one (39), meaning that their scope is unstated in the paper. Among those with a defined and non-international scopes, 106 were centered in Europe (more than half of the total analyzed), well above the following regions in the ranking: Asia (without the Middle East) was the focus of 38 and USA & Canada of 26.

This confirms a previously detected trend (Soto-Sanfiel et al., 2022): between 2020 and 2024, research on IA and Journalism paid little attention to Global South regions, like the Middle East (20 articles), Latin America (17), and Sub-Saharan Africa (10).

In addition, Australia (which is part of the Global North, as this is a socio-economic construct and not a geographic one) stands out an outlier, because it is weak both in terms of authorship (4 articles between 2020 and 2024) and scope (1).

In summary, the number of papers on AI and Journalism have increased with a growing rate in time. Europe dominates this area of research, while the Global South is mostly excluded from it. These temporal and geographical dynamics are closely linked to the venues and formats in which this research is published, as the next section shows.

**Table 1.** Number of Articles on Ai And Journalism Published Between 2020 and 2024, according to the Geographical Scope of the Research

<b>Region</b>	<b>Number of Papers with Scope in that Region</b>
Europe	106
Undefined	39
Asia (without Middle East)	38
USA & Canada	26
International	23
Middle East	20
Latin America	17
Africa (without Middle East)	10
Australia	1

### Journals, Methods, and Authorship

The articles on AI and Journalism published between 2020 and 2024 are spread among 106 different journals, with a core of 28 of them having published more than one paper on the topic.

In **Table 2**, we show the top-15 journals. The ranking is led by “Digital Journalism” (19 papers) and “Journalism and Media” (18). Remarkably, the following two journals in the ranking are two Spanish journals: “Profesional de la Información” (11) and “Communication & Society - Spain” (8). This finding is likely to match with the leadership of Spain in the research on the topic.

**Table 2.** Top-15 Journals Publishing Papers on Ai and Journalism Between 2020 and 2024

Top-15 Journals	Number of papers	2023 Quartile
Digital Journalism	19	Q1
Journalism and Media	18	Q2
Profesional De La Información	11	Q1
Communication & Society-Spain	8	Q2
Journalism	8	Q1
Journalism Practice	5	Q1
Revista Latina De Comunicación Social	4	Q1
Studies In Media And Communication	4	Not identified
Frontiers in Communication	4	Q2
Analisi-Quaderns De Comunicació I Cultura	3	Q2
International Journal of Communication	3	Q2
Journalism and Mass Communication Educator	3	Not identified
Sustainability	3	Q3
Media Culture & Society	3	Q1
Ai Magazine	3	Q3

We classified the papers also according to the type of literature they belong to (Research, Theory, or Commentary) and assigned to each of them one or more codes representing the methods they use. 90% of the articles are research papers, well above theory and commentary (**Table 3**).

**Table 3.** Number And Percentage Of Papers Published on Ai and Journalism Between 2020 and 2024, according to their Type

Type of paper	Number of papers	Percentage
Research	182	89.66%
Theory	15	7.39%
Commentary	6	2.96%

Regarding methods (**Table 4**), the most frequent are surveys, interviews and content analysis, each of which is present in over 40 articles. The middle ranks are occupied by literature reviews (32), case studies (24), experiments (16), and theoretical elaborations (13). Other methods are more sporadic, including those involving participatory approaches (participant observation, ethnography, focus groups) and legal comparative analyses, among others. Interestingly, there is one instance of application of AI as a tool for semi-automated content analysis.

**Table 4.** Number of Papers Published on Ai and Journalism, according to the Methodology they Use and the Year of Publication.

Method	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
Survey	2	3	9	6	24	44
Interviews	2	5	4	10	22	43
Content Analysis	1	4	5	8	24	42
Literature Review	2	5	3	9	13	32
Case study	3	3	3	4	11	24
Experiment	2		4	3	7	16
Theory			2	2	9	13
Qualitative Analysis				2	2	

Method	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
Quantitative Analysis					2	2
Participant observation		2				2
Legal comparative analysis	1			1		2
Ethnography				1	1	2
Focus Group					1	1
AI-driven content analysis					1	1
Projects Review					1	1

In terms of authorship, all but one paper has at least one author from communication studies, far above Computer Science (19 papers) as shown in [Table 5](#). This suggests that research on AI and Journalism is largely confined to media studies, with limited interdisciplinarity.

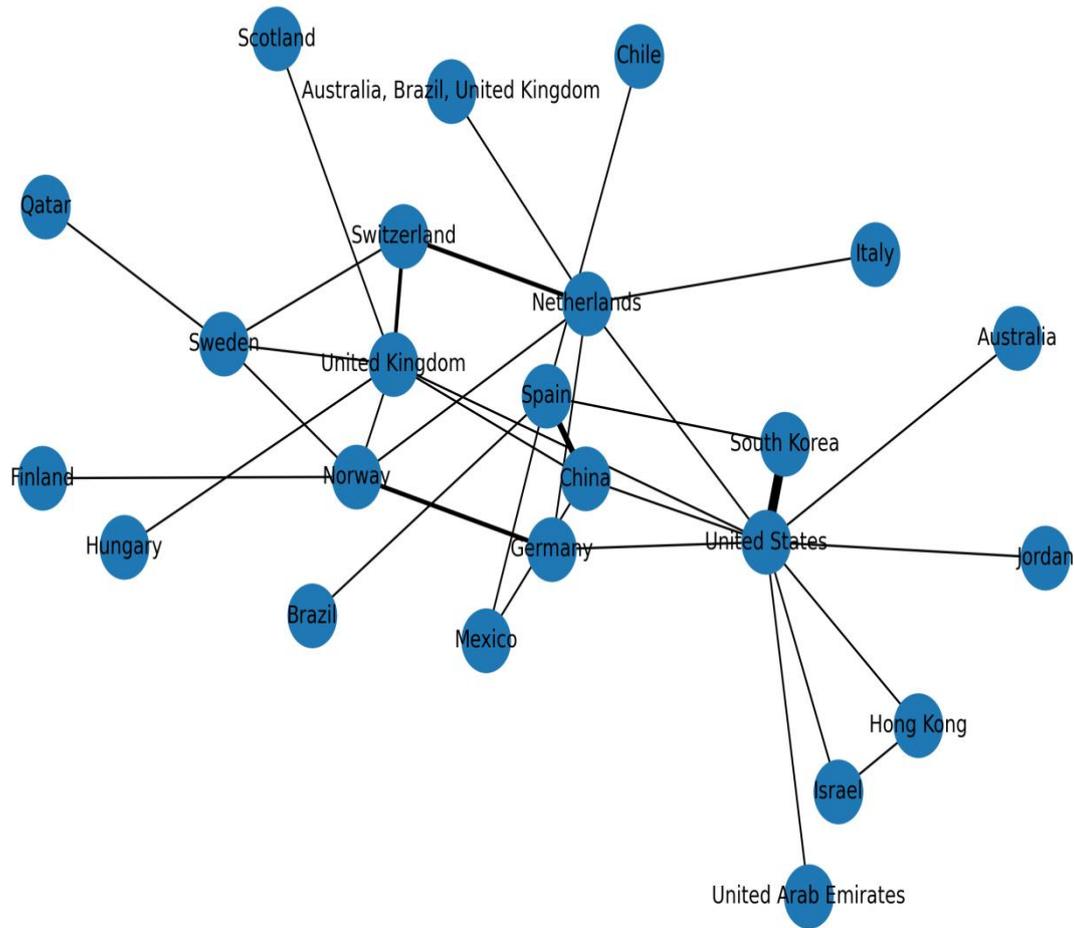
Among the authors' affiliations, we traced a small set of 4 private media organizations: the BBC, Bloomberg, the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, and the communication agency Formicablu. The partnership of researchers and media organizations can be seen as a positive signal, however, one could argue that a more intense collaboration would benefit both parties in such a disruptive topic.

**Table 5.** Ranking of Research Areas of the Institution of Authors Signing Papers on Ai and Journalism Between 2020 And 2024

Research Area	Number of Papers
Communication	202
Not specified	36
Computer Science	19
Social Sciences	14
Economics	12
Language	9

Research Area	Number of Papers
Humanities	8
Communication (private sector)	4
Technology	3
Law	3
Education	3
Engineering	2
Political Sciences	2
Medicine	1
Physics	1
International Relations	1
Psychology	1

As for the most productive authors in the field, once again Spanish leadership is confirmed with Universidad Santiago de Compostela ranking first, followed by University of Beira Interior in Portugal and by Colin Porlezza at the Università della Svizzera Italiana in Switzerland and University of London in the United Kingdom as shown in **Table 6**. Moreover, **Figure 4** shows the cross-country collaboration network derived from the reviewed studies. In summary, research on AI and Journalism is published mostly in high quartiles journals and in the format of research papers (as opposed to theory or commentary). The most used methods are surveys, interviews, and content analysis. The research seems to be overwhelmingly confined to the communications studies: there is little interdisciplinarity and limited involvement of media companies as research partners.



**Figure 4.** Cross-Country Collaboration Network Derived from the Reviewed Studies

*Note.* Figure elaborated by the authors

**Table 6.** Leading Authors in the Field of Artificial Intelligence and Journalism: Number of Publications and Affiliated Institutions

Author's Name	Number of papers	Institution	Department or Group (if specified)	Country
López-García, X.	7	Univ Santiago de Compostela	Fac Commun Sci	Spain
Canavilhas, J.	4	University of Beira Interior	Department of Communication, Philosophy and Politics	Portugal

Author's Name	Number of papers	Institution	Department or Group (if specified)	Country
Vaz-Alvarez, M.	4	Pompeu Fabra Univ	MEDIUM Res Grp	Spain
Gonçalves, A.	3	Universidade da Beira Interior		Portugal
Rubio, L.M.C.	3	Univ Castilla La Mancha		Spain
Porlezza, C.	3	Università della Svizzera italiana // University of London	Institute of Media and Journalism // Department of Journalism	Switzerland // United Kingdom
Simon, F.M..	3	Univ Oxford	Reuters Inst Study Journalism	United Kingdom
González-Arias, C.	3	Univ Santiago De Compostela	Dept Ciencias Comunicac	Spain
Lindén, C.G.	3	University of Bergen	Department of Information Science and Media Studies	Norway
Gutiérrez-Caneda, B.	3	Univ Santiago de Compostela	Dept Ciencias Comunicac	Spain
Nah, S.	3	Univ Florida		United States of America

### Thematic Analysis

#### AI in News Production and Automation

A substantial portion of the recent literature has centered on the supply side of AI integration, namely, what artificial intelligence can offer to Journalism. Within this domain, a dominant area of focus concerns the automation of routine newsroom tasks, such as transcribing interviews, translating content, searching archives, and generating standardized news reports. During the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular, the prevalence of structured data (e.g., infection rates, hospitalization numbers) facilitated the adoption of AI-generated reporting. For instance, de-Lima-Santos and Ceron (2021) examined how Brazilian news outlets utilized AI to automate

daily updates, thereby enhancing both scalability and efficiency. Similarly, Quinonez and Meij (2024) analyze the evolution of automation tasks in the Bloomberg newsroom that led to the creation of Bloomberg's News Innovation Lab and Aramburú Moncada et al. (2021) focusing on the application of AI in Spanish Television newsroom optimistically foresee that these tools will help journalists reducing time waste. Despite the promising applications of AI in streamlining production processes, much of the literature stresses the continued necessity of human oversight. Peña-Fernández et al. (2023), for instance, emphasize that AI is most effective when applied to tasks involving structured data, whereas investigative and analytical reporting continues to demand human editorial judgment and contextual discernment, concluding that “Without journalists, there is no Journalism” .

Although this body of research illustrates AI's value in enhancing newsroom efficiency, several critical limitations remain. First, most studies emphasize short-term gains while failing to consider long-term effects on editorial standards, narrative practices, labor dynamics, and institutional workflows. For example, few investigations address how prolonged AI use may influence journalistic style, narrative conventions, or hierarchical structures within news organizations. Second, the focus is predominantly on technologically advanced or well-resourced media institutions, thereby limiting the generalizability of findings to small, local, or resource-constrained newsrooms. This narrow empirical base raises concerns regarding the scalability and accessibility of AI solutions across the broader media ecosystem (Munoriyarwa, et al., 2023). Third, many assessments of AI-generated content rely on surface-level indicators such as readability, while neglecting to evaluate deeper epistemological and democratic criteria—such as Journalism's role in interrogating power, maintaining accountability, and sustaining investigative depth. Finally, the implications for professional identity, autonomy, and creativity remain underexplored. Limited research has addressed how hybrid human - machine environments affect journalists' sense of agency and meaning in their work.

A more recent sub-strand of literature has emerged in response to the rapid proliferation of generative AI technologies (a subset of AI that uses models to produce text, images, audio, video, code, and other data), particularly large language models such as GPT-3 and ChatGPT. Since 2023, scholarship on this topic has expanded considerably. Gutiérrez-Caneda, and colleagues (2023) experiment with 12 journalists of different ages and sectors with little or no previous contact with technological tools based on artificial intelligence, proving the usefulness of the tool to automate mechanical processes, rewrite texts, analyze data and even serve as a content idea creator. Wu (2024), on her side, uses in-depth interviews with journalists and editors to uncover how journalists are themselves using AI in their day-to-day work, and how they ensure their values of “good Journalism” are not compromised. Results show that journalists are already personally using AI in numerous tasks across all the stages of news production, namely in news gathering, news writing and presentation, news editing, and news promotion, using different strategies to maintain their practice of “good Journalism” .

Journalistic perceptions of generative AI, however, vary considerably. In a mixed-methods study, Cools and Diakopoulos (2024) found that while some journalists viewed these technologies as valuable editorial aids, others expressed concern about their potential to undermine authenticity and professional integrity. Similarly, Gutiérrez-Caneda et al. (2023) disclose that journalists perceive significant risks such as inaccuracy of AI as well as lack of ‘empathy’ .

Despite the rapid expansion of this subfield, scholarship on generative AI remains predominantly exploratory in nature, largely due to its recent emergence and the limited time available for longitudinal or systematic inquiry. Thus, most studies focus on short-term pilot projects and lack longitudinal or institutional depth. In addition, there is a dearth of comparative research that considers how the adoption of generative AI varies across media systems, cultural contexts, or regulatory environments. Furthermore, although ethical and epistemological concerns—such as attribution, originality, and accountability—are frequently discussed, these debates are often theoretical and lack empirical validation through newsroom ethnographies or audience studies. Existing scholarship also offers limited insight into how editorial guidelines for AI use are developed, operationalized, or enforced across different organizational settings. Finally, although studies such as Cools and Diakopoulos (2024) provide valuable insight into journalists' attitudes, little is known about how generative AI impacts the creative labor, professional identity, and meaning-making practices of journalists—particularly in under-resourced or non-English-speaking contexts. While these studies shed light on how AI transforms news production, the next subsection explores how algorithms are reshaping the distribution and personalization of news content.

#### Algorithmic Personalization in News Distribution

Acknowledging the growing adoption of machine learning algorithms by news organizations to curate personalized newsfeeds, a significant strand of recent scholarship has focused on the implications of algorithmic personalization.

Literature reveals that there is no harmony among media with regard to the operation and origin of these

systems. Fieiras-Ceide et al. (2023), for example, analyze the use of artificial intelligence in the recommendation systems implemented by 14 European public broadcasters in Germany (ARD and ZDF), Belgium (VRT and RTBF), Denmark (DR), Spain (RTVE), Finland (YLE), France (France TV), Great Britain (BBC), the Netherlands (NPO), Ireland (RTÉ), Italy (RAI), Sweden (SVT) and Switzerland (RTS), concluding that the adaptation vary between home-made developments, acquired from third parties, or collaborative solutions.

Moreover, technical assessments of recommender systems frequently emphasize performance indicators—such as click-through rates, precision, or user engagement. While AI-driven personalization could yield potential benefits, such as a news stream tailored to the user’s interests and a stronger bond between media and their audiences, there is growing concern among scholars about the normative implications of such systems, particularly in relation to trust, pluralism, and epistemic diversity. While Lim and Zhang’s research (2022) demonstrates the usefulness of the integrative model of the technology acceptance model (TAM) and the perceived contingency model in predicting the users’ adoption of AI-driven personalization in digital news platforms, in a large-scale cross-national study, Blassnig et al. (2024) demonstrated that increased audience awareness of algorithmic filtering mechanisms was associated with reduced trust in news outlets, particularly when algorithmic decision-making was perceived as opaque or lacking editorial transparency. These algorithmic “blind spots” have direct implications for democratic accountability. When personalization systems obscure the criteria guiding content selection, they hinder audiences’ ability to evaluate editorial independence and pluralism. As a result, opaque filtering mechanisms may unintentionally weaken Journalism’s democratic role by limiting exposure to diverse viewpoints and reducing transparency in news distribution.

Despite these valuable contributions, notable gaps remain in the literature. First, while studies such as Blassnig et al. (2024) touch on the trust implications of algorithmic personalization, there is a dearth of longitudinal research examining how sustained exposure to algorithmically curated news influences audience perceptions of credibility, diversity, or democratic accountability over time. This absence of temporal data limits the field’s capacity to evaluate whether AI-driven curation ultimately supports or undermines Journalism’s normative role in democratic societies. Second, most empirical investigations have been conducted within the context of Western liberal democracies, leaving underexplored how personalization algorithms operate—and are received—in authoritarian regimes or hybrid media systems with distinct normative frameworks. Third, the existing literature has paid limited attention to the agency of journalists and editors in shaping, negotiating, or resisting algorithmic infrastructures. As a result, there remains a critical blind spot in understanding how editorial judgment interacts with automated personalization tools within day-to-day newsroom routines. If personalization technologies reshape how audiences receive news, AI integration within newsrooms simultaneously transforms how journalists work, collaborate, and define their professional roles.

#### AI Integration in Newsrooms and Evolving Roles

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into newsroom workflows has profoundly reshaped professional dynamics, prompting a growing body of scholarship dedicated to examining these transformations.

Noain-Sánchez’ (2022) conducted 15 in-depth interviews in two rounds, in 2019 and 2021, with a sample of journalists and other media professionals, academics, experts on the media industry, and providers of technology leading the work on AI. The interviewees agree that AI will enhance journalists’ capabilities by saving time, augmenting the efficiency of the news-making processes and, therefore, increasing mass media industry productivity. Similarly, Canavilhas, Ioscote, and Gonçalves’ (2024) results show a predominantly positive sentiment towards AI in Journalism, suggesting that the Brazilian and Portuguese media generally present AI as an opportunity for Journalism, often downplaying the associated risks and ethical challenges.

Interviewing journalists from China, Japan, Switzerland, and the UK. Pranteddu et al. (2024) provide a more nuanced picture, revealing that journalists across these four countries acknowledge the potential advantages of AI in Journalism, such as enhanced efficiency and improved data analysis, but their expectations regarding human-machine collaboration in news work vary according to cultural contexts.

Similarly, a survey conducted in China (Sun et al, 2024) reveals that AI mode and traditional mode should complement each other in future news production

Despite these valuable insights, existing research tends to focus on individual attitudes or organizational readiness in isolation, often neglecting how these factors are shaped by broader structural inequalities within the media industry, such as the precarity of journalistic labor or disparities in technological resources between large, well-funded outlets and smaller, under-resourced newsrooms. Thus, this stream of research lacks critical engagement with how AI adoption may reinforce or exacerbate existing hierarchies and power asymmetries

within newsrooms. For instance, the increasing influence of developers and data specialists may marginalize traditional editorial roles, thereby reshaping internal authority structures in ways that are not yet fully understood.

Methodologically-wise most studies employ cross-sectional or descriptive methodologies, limiting their ability to capture the longitudinal evolution of journalistic roles, responsibilities, and professional identities in response to sustained AI integration.

Finally - with rare exceptions (Upadhyay, 2024) - the literature rarely addresses the affective and emotional dimensions of AI integration—such as how automation influences journalists’ sense of professional worth, autonomy, or morale. These psychosocial factors are particularly important in light of Journalism’s normative commitments to truth-telling, public service, and ethical responsibility. A more holistic understanding of AI’s impact on Journalism therefore requires attention not only to technological affordances and institutional structures, but also to the lived experiences and emotional landscapes of media practitioners. These evolving professional dynamics inevitably raise ethical and normative questions, which are examined in greater depth in the next subsection.

### Ethical and Normative Challenges

A growing body of scholarly literature has engaged with the ethical implications of artificial intelligence in Journalism, addressing critical issues such as accountability, transparency, and algorithmic bias.

In his exploratory work, Porlezza (2023) analyzes whether and to what extent the use of AI technology in news media and Journalism is currently regulated and debated within the European Union and the Council of Europe unveiling that regulatory frameworks about AI rarely include media, but if they do, they associate them with issues such as disinformation, data, and AI literacy, as well as diversity, plurality, and social responsibility.

In response to these shortcomings, Shi and Sun (2024) advocate for the development of newsroom-level ethics policies that explicitly address the labeling of AI-generated content, safeguard editorial oversight, and promote responsible automation practices.

The European Union’s Artificial Intelligence Act (2023) has emerged as a central reference point in discussions about the regulation of “high-risk” AI applications in Journalism, including technologies such as deepfakes and algorithmic profiling. Scholars such as Noain-Sánchez (2022) have proposed concrete interventions, including mandatory AI ethics training for journalists and the institutionalization of algorithmic transparency standards, to foster accountability and public trust in AI-mediated news environments.

While the literature has successfully mapped the contours of the ethical discourse (Forja-Pena, et al., 2024)—particularly with respect to transparency, bias, and accountability—several critical gaps persist. First, the bulk of existing research is normative or prescriptive in orientation, offering theoretical reflections or policy recommendations without sufficient empirical investigation into how ethical guidelines are operationalized—or disregarded—in actual newsroom settings. Second, although there is growing advocacy for “ethics-by-design” approaches and regulatory interventions (e.g., Shi & Sun, 2024), few studies rigorously assess the real-world efficacy of such measures or provide actionable frameworks for their implementation. It is also important to note that most ethical and regulatory frameworks discussed in the literature reflect Eurocentric assumptions about transparency, accountability, and media governance. Such perspectives may not translate directly to media systems with different cultural, political, or institutional logics, particularly in the Global South. A more pluralistic approach is needed to avoid reproducing normative biases in the development of AI governance for Journalism. Third, ethical concerns are frequently framed as isolated technical or procedural challenges, rather than being situated within broader contexts of political economy, labor relations, or institutional power dynamics that shape the adoption and governance of AI technologies in Journalism.

Lastly, the scholarly emphasis on Western regulatory models, particularly the EU AI Act, limits the geographical and cultural scope of the debate. Kuai et al. (2022) discuss how Chinese copyright law protects AI tech giants and disrupts Journalism. Forja-Peña et al. (2024) make a comparative analysis of the treatment of AI in codes of ethics, including a few from the Global South. And there are sporadic efforts to explore the ethics of AI in Journalism in Malaysia (Al-Zoubi et al., 2024), four Sub-Saharan African countries (see Gondwe, G., 2024). But, in general, there is insufficient attention to how ethical norms surrounding AI are being constructed, contested, or enforced in non-Western contexts or within authoritarian media systems, where normative assumptions about transparency and accountability may not align with liberal democratic ideals. Finally, there remains a paucity of audience-centered research. Few studies (see Lim et al., 2025) investigate how news consumers perceive the ethical dimensions of AI in Journalism, including their expectations around consent, algorithmic explainability, and trustworthiness. Addressing these gaps is essential to developing a

more comprehensive and context-sensitive understanding of ethical governance in the age of algorithmically augmented Journalism. Beyond these ethical and regulatory concerns, AI also plays an increasingly ambivalent role in the fight against misinformation, as explored in the next subsection.

#### Ai to Fight Disinformation

Recognizing that AI occupies a paradoxical position in the contemporary misinformation ecosystem - on one hand, it facilitates the creation of sophisticated false content (deepfakes, synthetic audio, and fabricated news articles) that challenges traditional verification mechanisms; on the other it offers powerful tools for combating misinformation, particularly through large-scale automated fact-checking and content verification systems- several studies have explored the supportive role of AI in journalistic verification.

Berrondo-Otermin and Sarasa-Cabezuelo (2023), reviewing a variety of tools conclude that machine learning provides a powerful tool for detecting and preventing the spread of fake news on social media. Vu et al. (2020), reporting on journalistic practices during the COVID-19 infodemic, noted that reporters valued AI-powered verification tools for their ability to process large volumes of information, while simultaneously emphasizing the continued necessity of human oversight and editorial judgment. Martín-García and Buitrago (2023) further argued that hybrid models—combining algorithmic filtering with human validation—hold the greatest promise for effective misinformation mitigation. However, they also cautioned that detection tools must continually adapt to evolving generative technologies, such as large language models and deepfake generators.

Despite these promising developments, the literature on AI and misinformation management reveals several critical limitations. First, most research emphasizes technical performance metrics—such as accuracy, precision, and processing speed—without adequately examining how these systems are integrated into real-world newsroom workflows or whether journalists are adequately trained to use them. Second, many studies conceptualize AI-based fact-checking as a politically neutral solution, failing to account for the cultural, ideological, and institutional contexts in which misinformation circulates. This is particularly problematic in polarized or authoritarian media environments, where both misinformation and verification efforts may be politically weaponized. Third, although hybrid verification models are often cited as best practice (e.g., Martín-García & Buitrago, 2023), there is a lack of empirical research directly comparing their effectiveness against purely manual or fully automated fact-checking approaches. Fourth, there is limited investigation into audience reception: very few studies assess whether readers perceive AI-assisted fact-checks as credible or authoritative, or how such perceptions influence trust in Journalism more broadly. Finally, the literature has struggled to keep pace with technological advancements. The rapid evolution of generative AI—including increasingly realistic text, image, and video synthesis—has outstripped the empirical evaluation of its impacts. As a result, current research often lags behind emerging threats, leaving unresolved questions about how media institutions can effectively respond to increasingly complex forms of disinformation in an AI-saturated media landscape. These challenges also have significant implications for how future journalists should be trained, a topic addressed in the following subsection.

#### Journalism Education and Artificial Intelligence

Although still limited in number, there is a growing body of scholarly literature addressing the intersection of Journalism education and artificial intelligence.

Peer-reviewed research indexed in Web of Science and Scopus highlights a global effort to update Journalism curricula, blending technical proficiency with ethical awareness. For example, Fernández-Barrero et al. (2024) explore the use of AI in teaching journalistic writing, highlighting its usefulness in simple informative texts, and its limitations (both ethical and technical) in more complex pieces.

Progress in this area remains uneven across regions and institutions, with critical gaps in infrastructure, faculty expertise, and pedagogical coherence.

A core theme is the integration of AI into Journalism curricula, though implementation varies. In Spain, Tejedor et al. (2024) found limited course offerings directly addressing AI or big data, revealing only seven standalone data Journalism courses in national Journalism degrees. Similarly, Babacan et al. (2025) reported that Turkish universities largely address AI conceptually, with little emphasis on applied skills like coding or automation. The literature also reveals a pedagogical tension between teaching AI as a set of tools versus fostering critical reflection. On one side, scholars advocate for technical training in machine learning, data visualization, and automated writing to align with industry needs (Wenger et al., 2024). On the other, authors like Porlezza and Schapals (2024) emphasize ethics, transparency, and accountability, warning that without critical scrutiny, students risk becoming uncritical adopters of opaque technologies. Many researchers, for

example Lopezosa et al. (2023), recommend hybrid models that combine technical training with critical AI literacy to prepare journalists for both practice and oversight.

Zhu et al. (2025) found that Journalism student's interest in having AI training is driven in China by its perceived usefulness and easiness (rather than other factors, like its perceived value). Faculty preparedness is a recurring concern. Wenger et al. (2024) identified lack of instructor expertise as a key barrier in U.S. Journalism programs, while Okela (2024) found that institutional support and infrastructure were decisive factors in Egypt. Where universities provided training, tools, and clear AI policies, faculty adoption of AI education improved markedly. Interdisciplinary collaboration, particularly with computer science departments, emerged as a successful strategy to bridge skill gaps. Taken together, these educational developments not only shape how future journalists will understand and use AI, but also provide a crucial link to the broader structural, ethical, and epistemological questions that frame our concluding assessment.

## CONCLUSION

Over the past five years, artificial intelligence (AI) has increasingly reshaped the field of Journalism, prompting an expanding body of scholarly inquiry. This review has synthesized peer-reviewed journal articles published in English and indexed in Web of Science and Scopus from 2020 to 2024 to identify prevailing themes and empirical trends. While the literature demonstrates growing academic engagement with AI in Journalism—from automated content production to personalization and verification—it also reveals notable gaps and opportunities for further inquiry.

A key observation is that a significant portion of the literature remains guided by a technological determinist perspective. Although scholars have explored AI's applications across the journalistic workflow, many studies still frame AI as an inevitable and inherently beneficial “promising innovation” (Túñez-López, et al. 2021) and Journalism as a domain for tool adoption, rather than critically interrogating the cultural, political, and epistemological implications of these technologies. Most literature tends to suffer from what Kuntsman and Rattle (2019) term “paradigmatic myopia”: a narrowed analytical perspective that prioritizes technical efficiency over structural critique. Efficiency, automation, and scalability dominate the discourse, while deeper concerns about labor, editorial autonomy, and democratic accountability receive comparatively less sustained attention. While some notable contributions highlight ethical and normative concerns—particularly around algorithmic bias and transparency (Simon, 2022) the field as a whole often frames AI as a linear progression rather than a complex, contested transformation that warrants multidimensional analysis. This underscores the need for critically engaged, interdisciplinary approaches that examine both what AI does in Journalism and what it means for Journalism as a public good and democratic institution.

A recurring theme in the literature concerns AI's impact on foundational journalistic principles such as truth, accountability, and editorial independence. Scholars have documented how AI facilitates the automation of tasks like transcription, summarization, and fact-checking (de-Lima-Santos & Ceron, 2021), thereby enabling new efficiencies in news production. Yet, these developments raise important ontological and epistemic questions about authorship, objectivity, and credibility—particularly as human editorial judgment is increasingly supplemented or reshaped by algorithmic inputs.

Ethical considerations are also prominent across the literature, particularly concerning issues of bias, transparency, and accountability. Mahony and Chen (2024). highlight the risks of algorithmic opacity, especially in systems trained on biased datasets. Forja-Peña et al. (2024) note that most European Journalism codes lack AI-specific ethical guidance. While promising frameworks have been proposed (e.g., Shi & Sun, 2024), many remain at a normative or aspirational level, with limited empirical evidence of implementation or impact. Moreover, the current discourse often isolates ethical concerns from broader structural issues such as labor relations, regulatory regimes, and the political economy of media production. Greater collaboration between Journalism scholars and computer science ethicists could enhance the rigor and applicability of ethical standards in this space.

A further limitation of the literature, which has already been noted (Soto-Sanfiel et al., 2022) is its geographic concentration. Much of the research has been conducted in Western Europe, and North America, which constrains the field's ability to capture the diverse ways in which AI is shaping Journalism globally. Emerging work from the Global South (Adjin-Tettey, et al, 2024; Almakaty, 2024; Gondwe, 2024) underscores the importance of attending to local contexts—including disparities in technological infrastructure, media freedom, and regulatory oversight. Expanding the geographic scope of research will be critical for developing a

more inclusive and globally representative understanding of AI in Journalism.

The literature also reveals methodological imbalances. Case studies, content analyses, and interview-based research are prevalent, while longitudinal and comparative studies remain scarce. As a result, the field lacks robust data on the long-term effects of AI integration on newsroom practices, professional identities, and audience relationships. Mixed-methods and cross-national approaches would better assess the varied consequences of AI adoption across media ecosystems. Additionally, few studies systematically compare different AI systems or explore how distinct organizational cultures mediate their use.

Moreover, audience perceptions represent another underdeveloped area. While considerable attention has been paid to journalists' experiences and attitudes, relatively little is known about how audiences engage with, trust, or evaluate AI-generated content. Preliminary work by Blassnig et al. (2024) suggests that personalization algorithms can erode trust, particularly in the absence of editorial transparency. However, more empirical studies are needed to understand how news consumers interpret AI-authored narratives, especially in relation to issues of credibility, bias, and authenticity.

Most importantly, environmental and political-economic aspects of AI in Journalism remain marginal – if not completely overlooked – in most of the literature. Few studies examine the infrastructural and ecological dimensions of AI—such as energy-intensive data centers, extractive supply chains, or platform dependency. In this regard, Benedetta Brevini's work (2021, 2024) is particularly influential. Brevini calls for an "eco-political economy" of AI in Journalism, which foregrounds the material, ecological, and labor-related consequences of AI infrastructures. Her analysis reveals how AI systems are embedded within global regimes of extraction, inequality, and environmental harm—elements that are often invisible in more techno-optimistic accounts. Expanding this line of inquiry is essential to ensuring a more just and sustainable media ecosystem.

Our analysis has gone beyond mapping the dominant trend in academic research on AI and Journalism: it has focussed also on the conceptual blind spots of these discourses. In response to these gaps and limitations, we propose an alternative framework for analyzing the role of AI in the media. Our proposal is articulated through the following research priorities:

1. Deepen theoretical engagement by drawing on critical media studies, Science and Technology Studies (STS) and political economy, in order to situate AI within broader power structures. This would address the lack of interdisciplinarity and the narrow perspective of the current discourse, framing it into much broader structural issues.

2. Historicize and contextualize AI integration taking into consideration that digital and economic processes are always situated/shaped by the geographic, political, and cultural contexts in which they unfold (Zook & Grote, 2025). In this realm, reflecting on how AI Journalism intersects with global systems of capital, resource exploitation, and ecological degradation should be central. This would help overcome the “paradigmatic myopia” of a large fraction of the current literature and connect with deeper concerns about labour, editorial autonomy, democratic accountability, and environment.

3. Address global inequities by prioritizing research in underrepresented regions and supporting collaborations with journalists and scholars outside of the Global North. This would compensate for the overwhelming geographic concentration of existing research.

4. Expand audience-centered research to investigate how users perceive, interpret, and respond to AI-generated Journalism across diverse socio-cultural contexts. Research along these lines would fill the knowledge gap on audience perceptions we found in our investigation.

5. Operationalize ethical frameworks by testing and implementing newsroom-level policies through audits, case studies, and comparative evaluations. This would help going beyond the dominant, purely prescriptive approaches, and venture into the evaluation of their actual impact. It would also help to tackle the lack of knowledge on long-term effects of AI integration on Journalism.

By broadening its empirical base and strengthening its conceptual underpinnings, future scholarship can help ensure that the adoption of AI technologies supports—not undermines—the democratic, ethical, and civic mission of Journalism

## FUNDING STATEMENT

This article is part of the project “Artificial intelligence to promote quality Journalism and Media Literacy: Technological advances and challenges in the era of disinformation” (Reference PID2023-149759OB-I00),

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funded under the 2023 call for “Knowledge Generation Projects” and actions to support the training of predoctoral research staff associated with these projects, within the State Programme to Foster Scientific and Technical Research and Its Transfer, under the State Plan for Scientific, Technical and Innovation Research 2021–2023 of the Government of Spain.

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