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To cite this article: Alexandros Minotakis (04 Sep 2025): Concerned, Unprepared and Burdened by the Past: Generative AI in Greek Newsrooms, Journalism Practice, DOI: [10.1080/17512786.2025.2553188](https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2025.2553188)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2025.2553188>



Published online: 04 Sep 2025.



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Concerned, Unprepared and Burdened by the Past: Generative AI in Greek Newsrooms

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ABSTRACT

Over the past five years, innovative AI systems, including applications based on Generative AI and Large Language Models (LLMs), have emerged. Text, image, video, and symbol manipulation are now within the capabilities of AI. Generative AI is already present in contemporary newsrooms where the deployment of AI is relevant, as LLMs excel at text manipulation. Unlike the traditional top-down approach to introducing new technologies, this deployment involves a complex, multifaceted, and under-researched procedure.

This paper draws from labour process theory, the social construction of technology (SCOT) paradigm, and literature on the quantitative shift in journalism and the introduction of algorithms into newswork, while situating the examination of Generative AI within the Greek media system.

This research investigates the integration of Generative AI in newsrooms through semi-structured interviews with journalists. The goal is to capture insights into their experiences, challenges, and perceptions regarding the introduction of Generative AI in newswork. Findings indicate that Greek journalists, drawing from their experiences with the existing labour process and the economic dynamics of newsrooms, have significant concerns regarding Generative AI while simultaneously being sceptical of news organisations' capabilities to integrate new technologies in a manner that respects journalists' status.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 3 July 2024
Accepted 21 August 2025

KEYWORDS

Generative AI; newsrooms; newswork; new technologies and journalism; Greek media system; labour process theory

Section 1: Introduction

As Generative AI occupies a dominant presence in the public sphere, its perception will play a crucial role in future development, as well as in regulation and digital policy. Consequently, interest has shifted towards journalistic attitudes on AI and how news organisations mediate between new technologies and the public. Research points to a multitude of approaches among journalists (Kim and Kim 2018), partly dependent on the framework of national media systems (Jamil 2021; Soto-Sanfiel et al. 2022). Evidently, further research, both quantitative and qualitative, is necessary to address this complex issue.

Furthermore, significant research has explored the quantitative shift of journalism (Coddington 2014; Montal and Reich 2016) including “robot journalism” (Caswell and

Dörr 2017; Lindén 2017; Kim and Kim 2018); these technologies serve as precursors to recent developments in the field of AI-driven journalism, particularly the emergence of Generative AI applications capable of producing text, images, and sound, even in multi-media formats, without adhering to predefined templates (Nishal and Diakopoulos 2023). Studies have examined journalists' perspectives regarding AI (Soto-Sanfiel et al. 2022) and the evolving relationship between Generative AI and newsroom production processes (Thomson and Thomas 2023; Cools and Diakopoulos 2024). However, as this field is still developing and rapidly evolving, further research is needed, and interest in this area is expected to grow in the near future. To what extent are Generative AI systems integrated into news production? Who is leading the initiative to integrate new technologies? What expectations and concerns are expressed by journalists within newsrooms? These issues are emerging and developing in an interconnected manner with the overall attitudes of newswriters towards AI.

This research aims to address these questions by providing initial findings from interviews with Greek journalists. Its key contribution lies in shifting the focus from editorial guidelines (Becker 2023) and editors' views on AI capabilities (Thomson and Thomas 2023) to the perceptions and experiences of rank-and-file journalists in their engagement with Generative AI (de-Lima Santos and Ceron 2022). Moreover, present study is situated within a labour-intensive media system with limited investment in new technologies, providing valuable insights that complement studies in high-resources newsrooms with early adopters of new technologies (Cools and Diakopoulos 2024; Diakopoulos et al. 2024).

This paper is structured as follows: Section 2 provides a brief outline of the Greek media system's general characteristics that serve as the background that shapes the labour process in Greek newsrooms. Section 3 presents a literature review on the relationship between technology, labour processes, and newswriting. Section 4 examines the quantitative shift in journalism over the past decade, presenting the role of data journalism, early forms of automated journalism, and the potential impact of Generative AI. Sections 5 and 6 present the methodology and findings of the current research, while Sections 7 and 8 discuss these findings and offer conclusions and suggestions for future research.

Section 2: Greek Media System

Regarding the Greek media system, three fundamental characteristics shape the introduction of technology into newsrooms and the position of journalists as newswriters:

- a) Unsustainable
- b) Politically polarised
- c) Labour-intensive production processes

The Greek media system has historically been economically unsustainable, heavily influenced by clientelist relationships and strong ties between political parties and media owners (Hairidakis 2014). These tendencies were exacerbated by the deregulation of the telecommunications sector in the late 1980s. In a context of "savage deregulation" (Hallin and Mancini 2004, 124–125), the lack of planning and a legal framework led to the quasi-legal broadcasting of TV stations for almost three decades. Following deregulation, the Greek media landscape has been marked by concentrated ownership (Leandros

2010), increased empowerment of media owners and management within news organisations (Hallin and Papathanassopoulos 2005), and stronger, opaque ties with political elites (Papathanassopoulos 1997). Although commercialisation proceeded rapidly, news organisations often operated at a loss (Hairetakis 2014), indicating that media owners viewed these investments as a means to other ends. Furthermore, within this context, the protection of journalistic labour has historically been low and weak (Hairetakis 2014).

After the 2008 financial crisis, Greek media entered a downward spiral. Professionals in the field described this as a “critical juncture” for Greek journalism, offering overlapping critiques that highlighted weak journalistic autonomy, a lack of legitimacy and economic sustainability, and an inability to adapt to the evolving digital media landscape (Siapera, Papadopoulou, and Archontakis 2014). Overcoming the crisis required a major restructuring of media ownership, which in many ways exacerbated existing issues within the Greek media system. Major news organisations were closed, and since 2015–2016, there has been significant ownership realignment, with new owners primarily from shipping and professional sports. This has led to an even more polarised media landscape (Papathanassopoulos et al. 2021), as the former media owners were replaced and new, more concentrated media environment was formed, characterised by media ownership rivalries. Evidently, these tendencies further undermine journalistic autonomy (Maragoudaki 2024).

Furthermore, these tendencies are interconnected. Greek media organisations are unsustainable and this further undermines journalistic autonomy and the emergence of a polarised media content, which also reflects the ties of media owners and the political elite (Kountouri and Nikolaidou 2019; Minotakis and Tastsoglou 2023). This “diaploki” (entanglement) shapes the Greek media system (Hairetakis 2014). Consequently, the production process is labour-intensive, relying on underpaid, precarious newswriters (Minotakis and Avramidis 2022), while investments in new technologies remain limited.

Section 3: Technology and the Journalistic Labour Process

Technology has profoundly influenced journalism and how journalists perceive their role. Journalists often adopt a deterministic view of technology, seeing it as a force that autonomously shapes news production and dissemination (Pavlik 2000; for a critique of technological determinism, see Örnebring 2010). However, understanding technology’s impact requires considering broader transformations guided by social and cultural contexts, organisational dynamics, and societal expectations.

To establish a theoretical framework, insights from labour process theory and the social construction of technology are essential. Braverman (1998) identifies key trends in the capitalist labour process, such as task fragmentation, the separation of conception and execution, and the deskilling of workers. These trends reflect efforts to subordinate labour to capital through scientific management principles, initially applied to blue-collar workers and later extended to white-collar professions like journalism. Braverman argues that scientific management, first applied on factory floors, soon extended to offices, mechanising and standardising intellectual labour and proletarianising white-collar workers (1998, 242–243).

Braverman has been criticised for an overly simplistic view of a general trend toward deskilling. Scholars such as Attewell (1987) have pointed to countervailing tendencies of reskilling as new technologies are adopted in the workplace. Over the past three

decades, the “deskilling hypothesis” has come under scrutiny, paralleling a broader decline in interest in labour process theory. However, it’s important to note that Braverman (1998) defined skill not merely as ability, but as the unity of conception and execution—essential for keeping labour an active agent in production, rather than reducing it to an “inanimate objective factor” (118). Recent studies have renewed focus on long-term deskilling trends, particularly in manufacturing, linking them to automation and skill polarisation (Kunst 2019; Mueller 2021). Others have highlighted how deskilling intersects with worker vulnerabilities shaped by race and gender (Siar 2013). The extent to which this deskilling process affects journalists remains a point of scholarly debate (Larson 1980).

Labour process theory can be meaningfully combined with the SCOT (social construction of technology) paradigm, which treats technological artefacts as social constructs and open-ended processes that stabilise through the interaction of social groups. The social construction of technology, as articulated by Bijker (1995), highlights that technological development is not linear but shaped by the needs and interactions of various social groups. Technological artefacts acquire meaning through social interactions and are stabilised through ongoing negotiations among stakeholders. Identifying relevant actors within newsrooms—journalists, union representatives, editors, management, and media owners—is crucial for understanding how technology is integrated into news production and how user practices influence the adoption of new technologies.

Scholars view journalism as a form of labour (Örnebring 2010) and journalists as newsworkers (Hardt 1995), engaging in power struggles with management similar to other industries. The evolution of newspapers from individual enterprises to mass-produced products in the late nineteenth century led to a specialised division of labour, professionalisation of journalists, and standardisation of production processes (Schudson 1981). Commercial pressures further shaped news gathering, reinforcing ties between journalists and official sources (McBarnet 1979). This commercialisation has led to bureaucratic structures within news organisations, characterised by standardised procedures for news production (Tuchman 1980).

In their study of local TV stations, Bantz, McCorkle, and Baade (1980, 46) observed that television operates much like any other organisation marketing a product. They found that the routinisation of work, lack of flexibility, and minimal personal investment in the news product contribute to dissatisfaction within the “news factory” (Bantz, McCorkle, and Baade 1980, 59).

Regarding the proletarianisation of intellectual labour, Hardt speaks of “media workers,” viewing technology as a tool that shifts power dynamics in favour of owners and management and intensifies downward dynamics for journalists (Hardt 1995). Örnebring (2010, 68) highlights the polarisation within journalism, noting the increasing disparities in pay and public recognition between different tiers of journalists. Im (1997, 34) cautions that while economically aligned with the working class, journalists often hold political and ideological views associated with the professional middle class. This tension is compounded by the historical emergence of objectivity as a professional ideology, shaping journalists’ self-perception as impartial truth-seekers (Schudson 1981). Understanding journalists as labourers necessitates consideration of subjective experiences and ideological contexts that influence their struggle for autonomy within newsrooms.

While social construction of technology approaches have not been widely adopted in media studies, they offer promising insights into existing research on the introduction of technology in newsrooms. Avilés et al. (2004) compare British and Spanish newsrooms' experiences post-digitalisation, finding that initial acceptance of new technologies by journalists, editors, and managers gave way to disappointment as their expectations were not met. There was notable interpretative flexibility in how technological artefacts reflected the goals of relevant social groups such as managers and editors, who were focused on enhancing productivity. Marjoribanks (2000) examines two British newspapers in the 1980s, highlighting the role of social actors in shaping the meaning attributed to new technologies. The process involved negotiation and transformation, with consent often complemented by the threat of coercion, ultimately resulting in a new technological framework following the defeat of printers' unions.

Furthermore, the digitalisation of the newsroom in the past three decades has renewed interest in engaging with journalism as labour. Initial discussions on digitalisation were shaped by technical determinism and optimistic accounts that envisioned new opportunities for journalists: new tools for information collection and analysis, and the elimination of routine jobs (Pavlik 2000). However, the introduction of new technologies was shaped by the relations of forces within the newsroom. The long-term decline of unions in news organisations (Marjoribanks 2000), coupled with the particularly weak presence of unions among digital media (Deuze and Marjoribanks 2009), led to the empowerment of management. This also resulted in the intensification of precarious employment and a decrease in wages internationally (Cushion 2007). Furthermore, digitalisation has been characterised by a "discourse of speed" and a renewed demand for productivity, which is "taken to be synonymous with 'more news' or even preferably 'more news first'" (Örnebring 2010, 65). Therefore, journalists face an increased workload (Liu 2006), spend less time working away from their offices (Deuze 2008), and tend to spend less time producing original content (Paulussen 2012).

On the issue of skills, scholars have emphasised that deskilling is not a linear process but, within the context of digitalisation, may coexist with re-skilling or multiskilling, as newswriters acquire new technical competencies in multimedia production (Deuze and Steward 2011; Paulussen 2012). Unlike the strict task allocation of the pre-digital era (Tuchman 1980), a more fluid division of labour has emerged in digital newsrooms. Newswriters are now expected to develop both journalistic and technical skills (Örnebring 2010; Hayes and O'Sullivan 2023) and to understand various stages of news gathering and production (Deuze 2008; Deuze and Steward 2011). However, this shift appears to undermine core journalistic practices such as information gathering, fact-checking, and cultivating diverse sources (Avilés et al. 2004), contributing to a decline in editorial standards (Liu 2006) and a broader reduction in professional autonomy (Metykova and Waschková Císařová 2023). In their study of a Danish public broadcaster, Bro, Hansen, and Andersson (2015) identify a polarisation of skills, with some journalists experiencing deskilling—losing autonomy and editorial involvement—while others are reskilled or multi-skilled, particularly those in specialised roles. The majority of respondents in their survey reported a decrease in job satisfaction and professional pride, creating a sense that "the new production method reduces them to a component in an assembly line without major influence" (Bro, Hansen, and Andersson 2015, 10). This suggests that the "deskilling thesis" remains partly valid through the "technicalisation" of journalistic skills (Im 1997).

In the post-2008 crisis context, earlier concerns have materialised and stabilised, shaping a media environment where working conditions have deteriorated (Cohen and de Peuter 2020). The economic imperatives of media owners have driven a combination of digitalisation and adaptation to social media formats and trends—often referred to as the “audience turn”—resulting in precarious employment, low wages, mass layoffs, and the transfer of economic instability onto journalists (Nelson and Cohen 2024). Within this landscape, editors act as managers implementing control strategies, deploying data analytics tools to enhance oversight, monitor newswriters, and maintain productivity despite staff reductions (Hayes and O’Sullivan 2023). As earlier studies anticipated (Liu 2006), the intensification of labour and increased workloads have become defining features of this new reality, affecting both core workers in news production (Nelson and Cohen 2024) and peripheral ones (Metykova and Waschková Císařová 2023).

Amid these challenges, young journalists are moving away from an individualistic culture of personal branding and “hustling,” instead engaging in new organisational efforts to build unions and foster solidarity within newsrooms (Cohen and de Peuter 2020).

Overall, the inclusion of labour process theory challenges deterministic narratives that attribute the crisis of journalism to technological change (Nelson and Cohen 2024). Technology is not neutral nor is it stamped with immanent characteristics but “originates with specific determinations of social relations in the workplace” (Im 1997, 38). Its meaning and specific function are stabilised through interactions between different social groups, reflecting their expectations as well as the balance of forces in the newsroom (Marjoribanks 2000).

Journalists’ perceptions of new technologies are therefore mediated by the pre-existing labour process—an aspect that remains largely underexplored in the current literature. At the same time, the specific technical characteristics of these technologies play an independent role in shaping journalists’ expectations. With this in mind, the following section turns to the broader context of the quantitative turn in journalism to examine how the distinct characteristics of Generative AI influence emerging perceptions within the field.

Section 4: Quantitative Turn, Partially Automated Journalism and Generative AI

The Initial Quantitative Turn

In the past decade, there has been a shift towards computational, data-driven journalism, which Coddington (2014) terms as “journalism’s quantitative turn,” identifying computer-assisted reporting (the convergence of social sciences with professional journalism), data journalism (narrative and visual representation of complex datasets), and computational journalism (a blend of professional journalism and open-source culture) as the main currents within this turn. Montal and Reich (2016, 829) offer a definition of automated journalism as “based on a new and exceptional use of algorithms, artificial intelligence (AI) software platforms, and natural language generation techniques”.

A new context has emerged, characterised by access to large datasets, new technical tools, and the “technicalisation” of journalistic skills that was already underway in the

initial stages of digital journalism (Liu 2006). Through this quantitative turn, a segment of journalists is developing skills that draw from computer science: the ability to operate algorithms that sort, analyse, and visualise stories arising from raw data (Fink and Anderson 2014).

More specifically, data journalism demands more time, tools, skills, and manpower (Fink and Anderson 2014; Dörr 2015). On the other hand, automated journalism also relies on data but in significantly smaller amounts and is already established across mainstream news organisations (Kim and Kim 2018), which collaborate with AI developers to proceed with the “codification of journalism knowledge”, resulting in a transformation where “specific forms of news work have been broken down into parts that can be automated” (Lindén 2017, 66). In this case, the labour process within newsrooms is partially automated, with journalists collaborating with algorithms or (more rarely) algorithms producing content with minimal human involvement beyond the initial programming and training (Montal and Reich 2016, 843); consequently, the term “robot journalism/journalists” has emerged (Kim and Kim 2018).

Simultaneously, new issues arise regarding transparency (of datasets and software deployed) and the issue of authorship, a term traditionally reserved for human creators (Montal and Reich 2016). Based on this new set of challenges, some scholars point to the emergence of a new theoretical paradigm focused on Human-Machine Communication (HMC). HMC theorists conceptualise machines as subjects and active communicators, not merely tools or interactive objects for journalists (Guzman and Lewis 2020). According to this approach, communication should not be understood as a uniquely human characteristic; artificial intelligence acts as a communicator (Jamil 2021).

Furthermore, automated journalism appears to be applied to specific types of news, such as weather, sports, traffic, and financial news. The Associated Press tested software for “robot journalism” in 2014 on financial news and, noting the increase in productivity, moved on to college sports games (Kim and Kim 2018). These types of news rely on data and follow highly standardised storytelling, making them amenable to algorithmic news production (Dörr 2015; Lindén 2017). As Caswell and Dörr note (2017, 92), “the proportion of news stories that are susceptible to automation using these techniques ... is still quite limited”; news stories that rely on context and analysis remain resistant to automation.

Based on this understanding, optimists view algorithmic journalism as a transformation that will free journalists from routine tasks (van Dalen 2012), leading to an upskilling of journalistic labour (Caswell and Dörr 2017). Others emphasise the potential to engage with the audience in new ways, leading to the emergence of a creative public (Coddington 2014). Lindén (2017) points to mixed results, arguing that upskilling, automation of routine tasks, and job losses coexist in news organisations where automated journalism has been established. Upskilling is expressed mainly in developing complementary computational skills that pertain both to a mode of thinking and to technical expertise regarding developing and deploying algorithms (Lindén 2017).

Limitations to the diffusion of algorithmic journalism relate to technological issues with NLG technology (Caswell and Dörr 2017), but social and economic factors play a crucial role in the widespread introduction of “automated journalism.” Existing criteria of “effectiveness,” expressed in metrics of pageviews, drive the selection of stories and raw data to be sorted and analysed (Fink and Anderson 2014). Furthermore, van Dalen (2012) notes that automation of news production proceeds because it serves cost-cutting strategies

and is facilitated by the low standards set by online content farms; similarly, Montal and Reich (2016) identify possibilities for further diffusion of robot journalism in a period when news organisations are under economic duress.

On the other hand, these same circumstances may constrain the adoption of data journalism. Editors and managers, accustomed to cost-effective mass content production aligned with the short lifespan of news on social media, show diminished interest in investigative data journalism, which requires time and offers uncertain outcomes in terms of generating new content (van Dalen 2012; Dörr 2015). Economic pressures and objectives heavily influence the integration of quantitative journalism across different platforms, making data journalism a luxury that only select news organisations can afford to prioritise (Fink and Anderson 2014).

Finally, regarding journalists' attitudes towards (partially) automated journalism, research by Kim and Kim (2018) reveals varied attitudes towards "robot journalism," ranging from elitist dismissal of algorithmic capabilities (Type 1) to concerns about the future of the journalistic profession (Type 2), to cautious optimism acknowledging potential risks while emphasising opportunities (Type 3).

Generative AI and the Prospect of a New Quantitative Shift

In the past five years, significant advancements in artificial intelligence have brought new challenges and opportunities. Deep learning techniques have facilitated the emergence of Generative AI systems trained mostly unsupervised on large datasets, leading to a significant leap in Natural Language Processing (NLP) technology (Young et al. 2018). Moving beyond mere text generation, Generative AI now creates diverse media such as sound, images, and videos, marking a transformative shift in creative and media industries. Generative AI does not represent the fully autonomous content generation hypothesised by scholars (Montal and Reich 2016) or the "robot journalism 3.0" speculated by Kim and Kim (2018, 342) but it is classified under the broad category of computational journalism (Cools and Diakopoulos 2024). There is some ambiguity around the term Generative AI; as García-Peñalvo and Vázquez-Ingelmo (2023, 14) note:

the general public commonly uses the term "Generative AI" to refer to the creation of tangible content (such as images, text, code, models, audio, etc.) via AI-powered tools. However, the AI research community primarily discusses generative applications focusing on the models used, without explicitly categorizing their work under the term "Generative AI"

AI's importance for news organisations is significant but still not fully outlined. de-Lima Santos and Ceron (2022) identify seven subfields of AI applications within news organisations, noting that three—machine learning, computer vision, and planning, scheduling, optimisation—occupy prominent positions. They also observe (de-Lima Santos and Ceron 2022, 22) that Natural Language Processing (NLP) models are less frequently used, perhaps due to limitations in languages beyond English. However, following the boom in Generative AI over the past two years, NLP software and Generative AI is now more broadly utilised by newswriters. Research in 2023 among journalists in the broader network of Associated Press (employing AP-connected email lists, social media, and Slack groups), indicated that a large majority of respondents was knowledgeable about Generative AI and they or their organisation had already deployed Generative AI

in the newsroom (Diakopoulos et al. 2024). Qualitative research on early adopters in newsrooms across Denmark and the Netherlands highlights the diverse use of Generative AI throughout the journalistic value chain, particularly in news gathering, production, and distribution. While interviewees were sceptical of its capabilities in news verification, they reported a wide range of applications, including topic trend analysis, automated translation and transcription, and the personalisation of news content (Cools and Diakopoulos 2024).

Simultaneously, as the pitfalls of Generative AI regarding fake news, hallucinations and copyright infringement are becoming apparent, newsrooms are adapting to address these issues. The publication of one of the first media guidelines for the use of Generative AI in the newsroom (New York Times 2024.) highlights an emergent issue that will engage academics, journalists, and the public in the coming years.

Furthermore, existing research into journalistic perceptions of AI has produced mixed results, pointing to the importance of broader social factors. Research among Pakistani journalists indicates concerns about job loss and a decline in journalists' status (Jamil 2021). In contrast, research with Latin American journalists across six countries shows they tend to view AI more as an opportunity than a threat (Soto-Sanfiel et al. 2022). A common thread in both studies focusing on media systems in the Global South is concern over the economic and institutional inability of the news media industry to effectively adapt to new technologies (Jamil 2021; Soto-Sanfiel et al. 2022); a concern that due to lack of funds and expertise, news industries will "miss the train."

Regarding the status of journalists and news organisations, Generative AI introduces new threats and challenges. For instance, in data journalism or automated journalism, algorithms were trained on datasets that were either publicly available or provided by news organisations themselves (Fink and Anderson 2014; Kim and Kim 2018). Additionally, journalists and editors, in collaboration with software developers, customised writing styles by training algorithms on preselected phrases (Lindén 2017). However, this is not the case with Large Language Models (LLMs) that underpin Generative AI systems like ChatGPT. Generative AI is trained on vast amounts of text, which is coded, labelled, and categorised in various ways (Young et al. 2018). This includes media content, raising legal concerns. A legal battle has erupted between OpenAI and news organisations over whether training an LLM on publicly available news constitutes "fair use" of content (Lanquist and Ray 2024). Diakopoulos (2024) notes that Generative AI seems to rely on popular articles from prestigious news organisations and advocates for a compromise that would allow innovation while giving news media the option to "withdraw their content from AI training sets." Since personal style is a significant part of journalistic labour and differentiates it from other forms of labour, Generative AI, which mimics style and form, poses a threat to journalists' self-understanding.

Regarding journalists' and editors' perspectives on Generative AI, current research suggests a preference for its deployment as a supplementary tool rather than a substitute for core journalistic tasks. It is valued for its capability to assist in gathering news (such as summarising information from unstructured datasets) and for aiding in the copy-editing process but not as a replacement for identifying newsworthy events (Nishal and Diakopoulos 2023). In a similar vein, editors tend to favour AI-Generated content as a complement to opinion pieces rather than for news reporting (Thomson and Thomas 2023), reflecting a reluctance to involve Generative AI with tasks that are considered central

for the journalistic profession and its status. In their research, Cools and Diakopoulos (2024) highlight the coexistence of both expectations and concerns. While journalists are wary of potential losses in autonomy and editorial independence, as well as the risk of a generalised application of Generative AI that overlooks the specific context of news items, they also anticipate and welcome increased efficiency, the automation of routine tasks, and the potential for highly flexible, personalised news content built around AI-generated formats.

At the same time, broader adoption of Generative AI in journalism has been shown to be shaped by economic imperatives within newsrooms (Thomson and Thomas 2023). Access to resources emerges as a critical determinant in the adoption and integration of AI technologies, generating disparities across organisational contexts and directly influencing journalists' capacity and willingness to engage with such tools. This resource-driven disparity is particularly acute in local journalism, where organisations often lack the technological infrastructure, funding, personnel, and skills needed to initiate and sustain AI projects. Innovation support is typically directed not toward the smallest local newsrooms, but toward larger organisations that already possess the capabilities to implement such initiatives (Eder and Sjøvaag 2025). Similarly, evidence from the German newspaper industry underscores the importance of resource availability in shaping AI integration: Grimme and Zabel (2024) demonstrate that effective collaboration between newswriters and AI systems hinges on the capacity for knowledge creation within newsrooms, with organisational readiness emerging as a key driver of successful human–machine interaction. In a different context, Trang et al. (2024) identify a path-dependent relationship with technology in Vietnamese newsrooms, where pre-existing organisational structures, journalistic norms, newsroom hierarchies, and resource constraints shape the trajectory of technological adoption. Their findings also stress the need for ethical guidelines to prevent the manifestation of AI's most harmful effects. These studies indicate the risk of a widening gap between resource-rich and resource-constrained news organisations; more particularly, concerns pertaining to the Vietnamese media system (Trang et al. 2024) seem to echo limitations of the Greek media environment outlined in section 2.

Overall, the spread of Generative AI raises questions about potential transformations in news production, the expectations and concerns of journalists, and the threat it poses to aspects of journalistic labour that distinguish it from other forms of intellectual labour. As a technology, the simplicity of delivering prompts, allows for a greater dissemination across newsrooms, therefore for a larger impact in comparison to previous forms of the quantitative turn (data and robot journalism).

However, existing research has primarily focused on the perspectives of editors (Thomson and Thomas 2023) or on journalists working within resource-rich newsrooms (Cools and Diakopoulos 2024), which are more likely to have the infrastructure and experience necessary to adapt to the quantitative turn. While the economic context of news production is acknowledged and access to resources (as a factor in adoption of AI) has been studied (Eder and Sjøvaag 2025), the labour process itself—and the perspective of journalists as newswriters (Hayes and O'Sullivan 2023)—remains largely absent from current discussions on the role of Generative AI in the newsroom. This is where the contribution of the present research lies: it is situated within a resource-constrained media environment and approaches journalists' perspectives on Generative AI through

the lens of the labour process. This framing also makes it possible to connect emerging concerns and expectations around AI with existing dynamics of antagonism and cooperation within the newsroom.

Section 5: Methodology

Drawing on the existing literature on the Greek media system, and taking into account the technological developments that are reshaping the journalistic labour process (as discussed in Section 3), the following research questions were formulated.

RQ1: What is the attitude of newswriters in Greek media towards new technologies in the newsroom, with a particular focus on technologies relating to the quantitative turn?

RQ2: How do newswriters perceive the risks and opportunities associated with the introduction of AI (and Generative AI more specifically) in their workplace?

RQ3: How do newswriters' actual experiences with Generative AI reflect and respond to the existing labour processes and working conditions in newsrooms?

To address the research questions, semi-structured, in-depth interviews were chosen as the most suitable methodology. While these interviews are invaluable for both developing and testing theories, they do not offer the generalisability of quantitative research (della Porta 2014). In-depth interviews focus on the experiences, emotions, and interpretations of reality expressed by participants, making them particularly effective for gaining insights into complex social processes and behaviours (Iosifides 2019), such as the working conditions shaping news production in digital media. The flexibility of this method allowed the exploration of multiple topics, including the daily work routines of interviewees and the role of Generative AI within them. The interviews, conducted between March and August 2024, had an average duration of 40 minutes. To ensure confidentiality, participants' names were anonymised, and transcriptions were assigned numerical codes, which are used in the findings section to distinguish responses.

A convenience sampling approach was adopted, drawing on connections from previous research projects. Thirty (30) digital media journalists were initially contacted. However, the selection process also involved purposive sampling, as the study required participants with direct experience of both AI applications in the newsroom and the broader intersections of AI, journalism, and technology. Only journalists with hands-on experience of Generative AI in their newsroom practices were selected, rather than those with merely general opinions on the subject. Consequently, the majority of those contacted were excluded due to their limited or non-existent engagement with Generative AI. Ultimately, 12 interviews were conducted, achieving partial saturation, as indicated by recurring responses concerning the AI tools used and common concerns and expectations among interviewees.

The final sample comprised 12 Greek journalists (seven men, five women), with an average age of 34 (ranging from 28 to 56). Most had experience primarily in digital media, with only one participant having worked predominantly in print and radio. The majority were mid-career professionals, with an average of 10–12 years of experience across various media outlets. They were rank-and-file journalists, having progressed beyond the most routine tasks of news production—often limited to content aggregation

from external sources (Minotakis and Avramidis 2022)—to content creation, including news writing, opinion pieces, and investigative journalism. Only one interviewee had over 20 years of experience. Nine participants specialised in political reporting across different outlets (news websites, web radio and state news agency), while two focused on sports journalism, and one worked for an independent investigative news organisation. The following table presents an overview of the sample in terms of work experience, age, and type of media outlet [Table 1](#).

Evidently, the sample is predominantly composed of mid-career professionals specialising in political reporting. While some perspectives from more experienced journalists are included, the viewpoints of early-career journalists and trainees are absent.

The data collected were subjected to qualitative thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes within the transcripts. The small sample size facilitated manual coding and analysis of the transcriptions by one researcher.

Approval for this research has been provided by the Human Research Ethics Committee of University College Dublin; Research Ethics Reference Number is: HS-C-24-111-Minotakis-Siapera.

Section 6: Findings

Addressing RQ1—What is the attitude of newswriters in Greek media towards new technologies in the newsroom, with a particular focus on technologies relating to the quantitative turn.

RQ1 seeks to explore how Greek newswriters perceive and respond to the introduction of new technologies in the newsroom, with particular attention to the earlier stage of the quantitative turn represented by data journalism. It serves to establish links between workplace dynamics, new technologies and the (lack of) investment of news media organisation in the quantitative turn in journalism. More specifically RQ1, involved questions about digitalisation and its impact on newswork and newswriters' skills, access to new technologies, investments and journalistic training in data journalism and automated journalism.

Overall, interviewees highlighted technology's dominant role in reshaping newswork: intensifying the labour process, introducing new criteria for newsworthiness, and contributing to both reskilling and deskilling. They emphasised the audience's demand for

Table 1. Interviewee demographics.

Interviewee number	Age	Work Experience (in years)	Media outlet
1	34	8	General news website with an emphasis on political reporting
2	34	9	General news website with an emphasis on political reporting
3	60	20	General news website with an emphasis on political reporting
4	38	12	General news website with an emphasis on political reporting
5	30	6	Sports website
6	36	13	Freelancer for multiple websites focused on political reporting
7	58	33	General news radio with an emphasis on political reporting
8	32	10	State news agency
9	29	5	News organisation dedicated to investigative journalism
10	36	10	Sports website
11	44	15	General news website with an emphasis on political reporting
12	28	5	General news website with an emphasis on political reporting

rapid, continuously updated multimedia content, which has led to the development of a new skill set and a revised understanding of what it means to be a journalist. As Interviewee 1 summarised:

The journalist is far from just opening a Word document and writing ... the smartphone gives the journalist a Swiss army knife to do their job. I have started to learn various tools; recently, I learned to use audio recording programs, video editing programs, where I recently made a video.. I think the journalist, for better or worse, is being led to become a machine that handles the entire "life-cycle" of a news story.

The reskilling process is influenced by age differences and generational gaps. Journalists in their 30s expressed dissatisfaction with older, seasoned colleagues who struggle to adapt to new circumstances, while also expressing concern about the deskilling of the younger Gen Z generation. Interviewee 4 notes that

I see some young colleagues who are accustomed to the TikTok and social media way of quick journalism, and if you ask them to write a longer piece, containing both news and a preliminary analysis ... they struggle to do it

In highlighting the danger of deskilling that occurs alongside multiskilling and reskilling, Interviewee 1 noted that

I fear that we are producing more journalists who can handle new media rather than reporters who do the traditional work—making phone calls, asking questions, learning, documenting ... doing follow-ups, etc.

Furthermore, news media organisations are characterised by a contradiction: they aim to expand into multimedia production to attract more views on social media, yet they are not making the necessary investments. Interviewee 2 expressed his disappointment, stating that

No employer, at least I have never encountered one, provides you with this equipment or does so under very difficult terms.

In a similar vein, most of the interviewees noted that they have taken it upon themselves to reskill. One of them mentioned that he is paying for courses to learn video editing. When asked how this fits into his career as a journalist, Interviewee 6 said that

You need to produce multimedia content. This either means that you will manage to achieve complex work, thus requiring a relatively specialised division of skilled individuals (which we do not have the money, resources, etc. for), or you will do it yourself, alongside your journalism work, spending a bit more time and money

Consequently, interviewees recognise how new digital technologies, evolving audience demands, and limited capital investment by media owners intersect to shape both the journalistic skillset and the labour process itself. In response to increasing work intensification and the growing demand for multimedia content, journalists often take it upon themselves to invest in new equipment and develop their skills. However, these initiatives have a limited impact and cannot drive deeper transformations within newsrooms, such as those required for the adoption of data journalism. This raises the question of how Greek media have adapted to the quantitative shift.

Unsurprisingly, Greek news organisations have not made any substantial investments in data journalism or automated journalism. Regarding the latter, the interviewees noted

that they had no knowledge of news organisations deploying automated content production of any kind. Only one interviewee, working for a major website with a significant online presence, reported that an algorithm has been deployed to handle social media and ensure a constant flow of new posts, averaging 15 news stories per hour on social networking sites like Facebook. This algorithm is trained on data to select time slots and types of content, but it does not produce news content.

Regarding data journalism, most of our interviewees have no relevant skills or training and are unaware of any media organisations using algorithms on large datasets. However, there are two notable exceptions. Firstly, Interviewee 9 has been trained abroad in data journalism and found some opportunities to apply her skills as a freelancer for both commercial and non-commercial, alternative news organisations specialising in investigative journalism. The second exception is sports journalism, where there has been a rise in the use of data, data visualisation techniques, and collaborations between news organisations and software developers. These developers provide algorithms trained on sports datasets that can analyse players' movements, tactics, and many other "unseen" aspects of a game. Nevertheless, even then, there seems to be scepticism, as Interviewee 5 noted that

A reader is more likely to prefer the opinion of a reporter who was at the stadium, knows the team, and follows it closely, rather than the statistical representation of its performance. Based on site analytics, and despite the investment in this collaboration, it hasn't yielded the expected results.

The quantitative shift coincided with the Greek debt crisis and a major restructuring of the media system (as discussed in Section 2), causing Greek media to "miss the train" of data journalism. As late adopters, they are only now beginning to realise the potential of large datasets. Unlike data journalism, which requires media investment in training datasets and templates for "robot journalists," Generative AI operates differently—developers store the training data, and access to AI tools is far more affordable. Consequently, the late or non-adoption of data journalism does not exclude Greek media from Generative AI, though it may delay its uptake. Interviewees were more acquainted with Generative AI tools than with the practices of data journalism—although many were still in the process of forming a clear view of how such technologies might affect journalistic work.

Addressing RQ2—How do newswriters perceive the risks and opportunities associated with the introduction of AI (and Generative AI more specifically) in their workplace?

RQ2 investigates the perceived risks and opportunities associated with the introduction of AI in the newsroom. Interviewee responses are analysed using Kim and Kim's (2018) typology, which outlines three potential responses of newswriters to automated journalism. The questions posed to participants addressed their general views on AI, as well as their conceptualisations of specific perceived threats and potential benefits.

Overall, regarding the future of journalism in relation to algorithms, all three types identified by Kim and Kim (2018) were present: a belief in the insurmountable superiority of human journalists (Type 1), fear of job losses and a decline in status (Type 2), and hope that any risks will ultimately be outweighed by the benefits (Type 3). In the present study, Types 1 and 2 were the most prominent, with concerns being predominant in the interviews. At times, Types 1 and 2 coexisted within the same individual, as Interviewee 8 who might initially express fears of unemployment only to later conclude that

In the parts of journalists' jobs that require emotion, automation will not outperform humans.

In a similar vein, Interviewee 7, familiar with automated news from non-Greek media, argued that

Usually, AI tends to be more dry and reads like a weather report, whereas a text written by a human author can include additional elements. Even if a person does a copy-paste, they can refine it ... In contrast, AI is still very bland.

One of the major themes highlighted by interviewees was the link between AI and fake news. Interviewee 2 expressed their scepticism, noting that Generative AI represents a threat for news organisations in toto:

My main concern revolves around fakeness. You could be overwhelmed by an ocean of fake images, sounds, videos—everything. With the possibility of being flooded by all this fabricated content, the very foundation of what constitutes news is shaken. I'm unsure who the new gatekeepers of information will be, or if they'll even have the time and ability to check this vast ocean of content.

In discussing similar concerns, Interviewee 9 noted that

You don't know to what extent artificial intelligence will provide the accuracy and reliability that a piece of news would have if you verified it yourself in the traditional way.

A second major theme was the perceived threat to journalistic status posed by AI's infringement on copyright and unique journalistic style. As Interviewee 7 noted

There are matters of reputation at stake. We journalists have our vanity in these things, in maintaining ownership of our personal style. For me at least, style is very important.

Furthermore, some interviewees were aware of the legal battle between New York Times and OpenAI, citing this as an example of AI threat to journalistic status. Interviewee 9 is highly critical of that possibility:

If tomorrow an AI takes a paragraph from someone else, one from me, and creates an article that looks very nice by cleverly stitching them together, this would be plagiarism. There is a very real threat to intellectual property rights.

Only Interviewee 6 reframed the issue in terms of unhindered access to information, stating that

Look, my spontaneous reaction is against copyright so ...

When asked whether this represents a threat for journalists Interviewee 6 argued that

It is a constant race because I think that what you do, someone will replace it, whether it's a robot or a program. The issue is whether you will manage to be constantly pioneering in various things, with the criterion of the greatest possible reach of our ideas.

This is a possible example of a Type-3 approach to Generative AI and automated journalism in general, influenced by the framework of the Greek media system, where the burden of reskilling and innovation rests upon individual newswriters themselves.

The issue of job displacement, while not as dominant as one might expect, nonetheless emerged as a significant theme of scepticism. For instance, Interviewee 9 voiced a

concern about AI “replacing newsrooms in general”. When asked to elaborate, they linked this fear to a broader anxiety about the further degradation of journalistic work.

In handling news flow, the work is very technical and mechanical. The only thing a journalist does is copy–paste, changing the text a bit, which ChatGPT can do for you. However, in this way, you will see similar news and a similar writing style.

Drawing on their decade of experience working in Greek media amid cutbacks and increased workloads, they predicted that further integration of Generative AI would lead to a reduction in original content and an even more standardised style of writing. Interviewee 4 outlined both “good” and “bad” scenarios, linking the latter to the mentality of news organisation owners in Greece.

Look, the scenario where AI replaces human labour is the bad one, and it is not unlikely given the culture of employers who will want to cut some jobs, and AI will help them with that ... The good scenario is that it frees up the journalist. Instead of asking someone to spend 8 hours on the news flow, you could tell them to step away a bit and work on something else. Make a couple of phone calls to do some reporting for a change.

On the other hand, it should be noted that even some of the more sceptical interviewees expressed cautious optimism about AI as a tool that can assist in data analysis or act as an aggregator of online debates. Interviewee 1 noted that

If there were advanced forms of AI that, based on big data or what is being written on sites, can provide newsrooms with information about something they haven’t noticed. For example, AI could provide an outline of a “twitter storm”, suggesting ideas for stories you might have missed ... You could also input data and statistics into the AI, such as quarterly figures from the national statistical authority, and it could provide you with results related to rent increases, for example.

Interviewee 6 expressed a more hopeful view of AI, seeing it as a valuable tool integrated into news production to assist journalists with text editing

AI can tell if you are repeatedly using the same verb, for example, something very simple, or if you are mentioning a person multiple times without referencing others, things that AI can identify which a colleague might also notice and assist with

Echoing issues discussed in RQ1, interviewees were sceptical about the capacity of Greek newsrooms to effectively utilise AI tools. They identified several factors that could hinder this process, including insufficient investment, lack of expertise, disinterest, and a prevailing culture that prioritises clicks and breaking stories. Notably Interviewee 4 pointed to polarisation and ties to official institutions as additional obstacles:

I don’t know how this [AI] can be applied in Greece, given that journalism is very dependent on the political scene, for better or worse.

However, in contrast to what was observed with regard to data journalism in RQ1, interviewees already had hands-on experience with Generative AI. This can be attributed both to the technical accessibility of these systems and to the widespread hype and interest surrounding them. As a result, the inquiry moved beyond general perceptions of risks and opportunities to focus on concrete experiences of using AI tools in journalistic practice.

Addressing RQ3: How do newswriters' actual experiences with Generative AI reflect and respond to the existing labour processes and working conditions in newsrooms?

RQ3 examines the actual experiences of interviewees with Generative AI and how these experiences relate to current labour processes and working conditions. The questions focused on journalists' day-to-day interactions with Generative AI, their motivations for using such tools, their levels of satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with the outcomes, and their views on potential future applications of AI in the newsroom.

Almost all interviewees that have used Generative AI in their work, expressed dissatisfaction with its performance in original content creation and journalistic research. For example, interviewee 8 mentions that

Once I tried to ask a question like "find me professors who work on this topic in Greece," and it gave me some names. Some were accurate, and some were not relevant or fake, so I gave up at that point.

Some of the interviewees attributed Generative AI's limitations to assist them in creating original content to its limited proficiency in the Greek language. However, almost all acknowledged the usefulness of Generative AI for translations (from English to Greek and vice versa) and as a text-editing tool for original content in English. They cited ChatGPT and DeepL¹ as the most effective Generative AI applications for these tasks. Interviewee 4 noted:

I will definitely use them once a week, maybe twice. For example, right now, I have to prepare an interview in English, and I want to prepare the questions. To perfect it, I will ask questions on DeepL or ChatGPT. If I need to translate something afterward, I will do it, but I will also make some adjustments for a more natural flow in Greek.

This type of AI deployment in the newsroom has not been directly prompted by editors. However, in recent years, Greek media organisations have shown an interest in increasing their international news content without a corresponding increase in staff. Two of our interviewees reported having to manage a rise in workload due to this shift and were among the primary individuals to identify the benefits of AI tools.

When discussing Generative AI beyond mere text, most of our interviewees noted that they had no interaction with tools like DALL-E, Stable Diffusion, Midjourney, or Suno. Only Interviewee 6, who works part-time at a TV channel producing a weekly documentary series, recalled that

Now with the documentary, we used sketches, etc., with AI, incorporating references to ancient Greek tragedies, and the only way to depict it without seeming outdated was through AI art, resulting in compelling material.

Interviewee 5 worked for a website that uses AI-generated art to accompany its articles but was unaware of this, believing that it is a form of graphic design.

The examples presented here illustrate the *modus operandi* of Greek media: they seek to expand their engagement with international news and collaboration with foreign organisations, as well as enhance multimedia content production, without investing in new technologies or additional staff. To bridge this gap, rank-and-file journalists have taken the initiative to introduce Generative AI tools into newsrooms. However, this increases the risks associated with AI, particularly in a media landscape lacking clear guidelines on its use — all interviewees that used Generative AI pointed to this absence.

A blindspot of present research: (Dis)Interest of News Organisation on Matters of Technology and Ethical Guidelines

Throughout the interviews, and in response to various questions, interviewees frequently highlighted a broader trend: news organisations tend to underestimate or neglect technological developments as a news story. This issue was not accounted for in the original research design and is not covered by any of the research questions, making it a noteworthy blind spot.

In discussing technology as a news section, most interviewees felt that it is relatively insignificant and that media organisations do not demonstrate interest in it. Most mentioned that there is no specialised technology editor in their organisation. Interviewee 11 provided a straightforward answer on this matter:

In general, the themes of science, technology, and environment have the least appeal compared to any other research and category. From the moment a news organisation sees that something does not resonate with the audience, speaking from a business perspective, it stops being interested in it as well.

When Interviewee 4 was asked whether they would suggest a report on AI to their editors, their response was indicative of the prevailing logic in newsrooms:

I don't think they would go for it. To prepare a topic, you initially need to do research, which means that someone has to give you the resources to do it. They would tell you that today, instead of doing this or that important task, you have the day and tomorrow free to sit and read, etc. For a topic like AI that is complicated, it means you need to take some time and digest it. Well, there's no room for that in the Greek media.

It remains uncertain whether news organisations will sustain their current approach as AI continues to gain prominence in public discourse. Future research should examine this question further, particularly by exploring potential correlations between the editorial interest in technology as a news item and the existence of institutional guidelines for the journalistic use of AI.

Section 7: Discussion

Regarding RQ1, which concerns newswriters' attitudes towards new technologies in the newsroom –with a focus on data and automated journalism– interviewees were able to situate the impact of these technologies within the structural limitations of Greek media and the evolving expectations of audiences. As noted, a culture of aversion to long-term journalistic projects has undermined the development of data journalism in Greece, which demands considerable labour, time, and investment (Fink and Anderson 2014). In this context, interviewees discussed the lack of investment in quantitative journalism alongside the economic constraints faced by digital media and the new productivity targets imposed by editors-in-chief. The issue of access to resources has already been highlighted as a significant factor in the adoption of AI in newsrooms (Trang et al. 2024; Eder and Sjøvaag 2025); this was also reiterated by interviewees, that highlighted the economic limitations of Greek news organisations as a significant factor constraining engagement with the “quantitative turn” in journalism. While data journalism has not emerged as a priority for media organisations, digitalisation continues in various forms, often shifting the burden of reskilling onto individual newswriters, who

must also adapt to intensified productivity demands. This indicates that technological change in the newsroom does not proceed in a linear or uniform way but is always contextualised and mediated by the political economy of news organisations. This brings us to RQ2, which explores the fears and risks associated with AI in the newsroom,

Existing production dynamics within newsrooms play a crucial role in shaping how journalists conceptualise AI. Interviewees demonstrated an awareness of the complex interplay between deskilling, reskilling, and multiskilling, as journalists navigate the pressures of adapting to new tools. A general attitude of scepticism and apprehension towards Generative AI emerged, with concerns raised about the spread of fake news, the erosion of journalistic status, and the potential further degradation of journalistic work. Several interviewees highlighted the dual expectation for newswriters to cultivate both journalistic and technical competencies (Örnebring 2010; Hayes and O'Sullivan 2023), expressing unease that AI might further tilt the balance towards technical skills. These concerns are closely tied to the prevailing orientation of Greek news organisations, which tend to prioritise rewriting over original reporting or investigative journalism. A shift away from core journalistic practices—such as research-based work and the production of original content—is already evident in the accelerated work pace and the widespread adoption of “copy–paste” practices aimed at boosting output (Minotakis and Avramidis 2022). Within this context, fears that AI may further diminish the space for original content appear well founded.

Newswriters' scepticism reflects not both concerns about new technologies and the automation of journalism (Kim and Kim 2018), but also a shared frustration with current labour conditions, a deep mistrust of editors-in-chief, and a lack of confidence in media organisations' ability to integrate new technologies in ways that uphold journalistic values and enhance the quality of their work.

Within the same context, some interviewees expressed hope for increased creativity if AI is specifically used for more monotonous tasks, such as content rewriting, allowing more time for human journalists to engage in research. In a similar vein, some of the interviewees were more willing to examine the opportunities of AI in the workplace, speculating about new capabilities for data analysis and improved text editing — a factor that is often overlooked in understaffed newsrooms. This coexistence of hopes and fears regarding automation is not surprising (Lindén 2017) and highlights the degree of interpretative flexibility (Bijker 1995) that still surrounds AI applications. The ongoing interaction and potential conflict between relevant social groups (journalists, editors-in-chief, media owners) will “stabilize the meaning” of AI within newsrooms by determining its role and functions.

Regarding RQ3 (How do newswriters' actual experiences with Generative AI reflect and respond to the existing labour processes and working conditions in newsrooms?), this polarisation between original content creation and menial tasks was also apparent. Interviewees were dissatisfied with original content produced by Generative AI but found it useful in standardised tasks (like translation or rewriting of content) and some of them were using it as a tool to adjust to productivity demands. In any case, the introduction of AI in Greek newsrooms seems to proceed in a “bottom-up” manner thus far, with newswriters taking the initiative to use Generative AI. Contrary to studies that indicate that document the role of editors in introduction of new technologies in newsrooms (Hayes and O'Sullivan 2023), the use of Generative AI in Greek newsrooms is not driven by editors but initiated by journalists themselves to manage increased workloads and meet

demands for translations and foreign language content, among others. This should not be interpreted as an expression of journalistic autonomy but as an indication of how editorial demands and economic imperatives shape the introduction of AI in newsrooms (Thomson and Thomas 2023) and are internalised by newswriters. However, AI applications remain confined to text-related tasks. Interviewees were generally unfamiliar with Generative AI beyond text and were skeptical about using tools like ChatGPT for original content creation.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that, so far, Greek news organisations have not issued any editorial or ethical guidelines to help newswriters navigate the risks and potential of Generative AI. As a result, editors-in-chief and media owners appear largely unaware of the extent to which AI is already being used within their newsrooms. If this situation persists, the Greek media system may experience a new wave of “savage deregulation” (Hallin and Mancini 2004) in the era of AI, as the technology proliferates without sufficient understanding of its broader implications and in the absence of any organisational strategy to address its shortcomings.

In summarising RQ2 and RQ3, it becomes clear that interviewees are significantly shaped by the prevailing labour conditions in Greek newsrooms, including limited resources and the absence of a coordinated effort to integrate AI in a responsible and constructive way. As a result, they tend to adopt a more pessimistic outlook on the future of AI in the workplace. Nevertheless, this scepticism has not prevented them from using Generative AI—primarily for text generation—to meet the same productivity demands they fear could be intensified by the systematic implementation of such technologies. These concerns appear to partially echo those voiced by journalists in the Global South (Jamil 2021; Soto-Sanfiel et al. 2022). While further research is needed to determine whether a shared structural origin underlies these parallels, some common features can already be identified: limited investment in technological infrastructure, an overreliance on labour-intensive production models, and the growing pressure on journalists to reskill and adopt new tools. Together, these conditions may help explain the justified scepticism many newswriters express toward Generative AI.

These findings also allow for a few brief observations on the relationship between access to resources and the labour process within newsrooms. Clearly, a lack of resources fosters a labour-intensive form of journalism, while also restricting access to emerging technologies (Grimme and Zabel 2024). However, this should be seen only as a point of departure; a more nuanced understanding of the labour process, its limitations, and the scope for journalistic autonomy is still required. It is through the specific nature of journalistic work that journalists form their concerns and hopes for AI. Despite lack of resources and a coordinated integration of AI, newswriters themselves develop a (thus far limited) use of Generative AI which reflects a tension between concerns for maintaining journalistic quality and a desire to move away from institutionalised practices of standardisation and rewriting, towards more original content creation—both of which stem from the conditions of established labour process. This represents one of the key findings and contributions of the present research.

Future research should also address an emergent theme that surfaced across interviews but was not anticipated by the original research questions: the apparent lack of interest by media organisations in covering technology as a news topic. Whether this editorial stance influences the adoption of new technologies within newsrooms, or shapes how AI is

represented and understood in the public sphere, remains an open question. Addressing this issue requires further investigation into both the internal dynamics of media organisations and the ways in which technology is represented in media content.

Finally, a key limitation of the present research is the absence of early-career journalists in the sample. This is significant, as this emerging generation may possess greater familiarity with new technologies while lacking a deeper understanding of the journalistic profession. Furthermore, it is clear that these are initial findings that require validation through further quantitative studies to determine whether these trends are prevalent among a larger segment of Greek journalists. Additional research is needed both in terms of agenda-setting and framing to identify emerging trends in media representations of AI, and in terms of the organisational restructuring of Greek media in the coming years to better understand the integration of new technologies. Within this process, the perspectives of editors-in-chief—being a significant relevant social group—need to be examined.

Section 8: Conclusion

Technology is neither developed nor deployed in isolation. Generative AI holds significant potential and risks, but these can only be fully understood within specific contexts. The national media landscape and established labour processes significantly shape journalists' expectations regarding the integration of Generative AI into this crucial sector of public life.

Greek media missed the initial wave of the quantitative turn and did not invest in data journalism or automated journalism. Instead, a labour-intensive, click-driven, and deskilling environment has developed, raising concerns that Generative AI may either not be introduced or be deployed in ways that exacerbate existing tendencies and shortcomings. The potential of Generative AI to contribute to investigative journalism and complement journalistic labour cannot be realised without a comprehensive transformation of the labour processes within newsrooms.

Furthermore, the absence of editorial guidelines (at the time of writing) appears to reflect a broader lack of awareness or concern on the part of editors and news organisations regarding the risks associated with the use of AI systems in contemporary newsrooms. Journalists, however, appear to be aware of these risks and express scepticism not only toward the technology itself, but also concerning its integration into newsrooms already characterised by an intensified work pace and a high degree of standardisation.

In any case, the burden falls upon journalists themselves to navigate future challenges with little to no institutional support, while trying to cope within a context of minimal protection and limited autonomy.

Note

1. It is worth noting that DeepL is not a Generative AI system per se but rather describes itself as an "AI-powered writing companion." What is significant, however, is that interviewees mentioned it alongside ChatGPT, indicating a perceived similarity in function or utility.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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