

Social Cohesion and Development

Vol 20, No 1 (2025)

No 39, SPECIAL ISSUE: Media, Culture and Social Change

Κοινωνική Συνοχή και Ανάπτυξη
Εξαμηνιαία Επιστημονική Επιθεώρηση, Άνοιξη 2025, τόμος 20ός, τεύχος 1

39 Biannual Scientific Review, Spring 2025, volume 20, issue 1

SPECIAL ISSUE *Media, Culture and Social Change*
ΕΙΔΙΚΟ ΤΕΥΧΟΣ *Μέσα, Πολιτισμός και Κοινωνική Αλλαγή*

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Constructive journalism, networked journalism and AI-based journalism: A critical approach to reform trends in the news media field

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doi: [10.12681/scad.44792](https://doi.org/10.12681/scad.44792)

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To cite this article:

Karadimitriou, A. (2026). Constructive journalism, networked journalism and AI-based journalism: A critical approach to reform trends in the news media field. *Social Cohesion and Development*, 20(1), 95–108.
<https://doi.org/10.12681/scad.44792>

Constructive journalism, networked journalism and AI-based journalism: A critical approach to reform trends in the news media field

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Εποικοδομητική δημοσιογραφία, δικτυωμένη δημοσιογραφία και δημοσιογραφία βασισμένη στην τεχνητή νοημοσύνη: Κριτική προσέγγιση στις τάσεις μεταρρύθμισης του πεδίου των ειδησεογραφικών μέσων

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ABSTRACT

This chapter critically examines the evolving role of journalism in the twenty-first century, focusing on three reform “movements”: constructive journalism, networked journalism, and AI-driven journalism. It is argued that transforming journalism culture depends on gradual social change rather than solely on technology. The “movements” discussed play dynamic roles that enhance, rather than undermine, journalists’ professional identities, fostering new models for information dissemination and social change. These trends indicate a shift towards a «post-industrial» model of news production.

KEY WORDS: Constructive journalism, networked journalism, AI-driven journalism, post-industrial journalism model, journalism reform movements, journalism culture

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Το παρόν κεφάλαιο εξετάζει κριτικά τον μεταβαλλόμενο ρόλο της δημοσιογραφίας στον εικοστό πρώτο αιώνα, εστιάζοντας σε τρία «κινήματα» μεταρρύθμισης: την εποικοδομητική δημοσιογραφία, τη δικτυωμένη δημοσιογραφία και τη δημοσιογραφία καθοδηγούμενη από την τεχνητή νοημοσύνη. Υποστηρίζεται ότι ο μετασχηματισμός της δημοσιογραφικής κουλτούρας εξαρτάται πρωτίστως από σταδιακές κοινωνικές αλλαγές και όχι αποκλειστικά από την τεχνολογία. Τα «κινήματα» που αναλύονται διαδραματίζουν δυναμικούς ρόλους, οι οποίοι ενισχύουν -και δεν υπονομεύουν- τις επαγγελματικές ταυτότητες των δημοσιογράφων, προωθώντας νέα μοντέλα διάχυσης της πληροφορίας και κοινωνικής αλλαγής. Οι τάσεις αυτές υποδηλώνουν μια μετάβαση προς ένα «μεταβιομηχανικό» μοντέλο παραγωγής ειδήσεων.

ΛΕΞΕΙΣ-ΚΛΕΙΔΙΑ: εποικοδομητική δημοσιογραφία, δικτυωμένη δημοσιογραφία, δημοσιογραφία βασισμένη στην τεχνητή νοημοσύνη, μεταβιομηχανικό μοντέλο δημοσιογραφίας, κινήματα μεταρρύθμισης στη δημοσιογραφία, δημοσιογραφική κουλτούρα

1. Introduction

This chapter presents a theoretical analysis of journalism's evolving role in the twenty-first century. In particular, it provides a critical reflection from the perspective of three reform "movements" shaping the modern news industry: constructive journalism, networked journalism, and AI-driven journalism. The objective is to provide an insightful view of news production practices across these three innovative trends, which warrant examination as they persist and continue to develop despite the ongoing crisis affecting the journalism sector.

The crisis should not be seen merely as a financial recession that has worsened the challenges faced by the news media industry. Instead, it should be recognised as a structural dystopia stemming from a crisis of public trust in democratic institutions. For some academics, the journalism crisis has multiple interpretations, depending on the socio-political context in which news content is produced (e.g., the phenomenon of "networked commercialism" in the West versus "networked authoritarianism" affecting China, (Chan, 2018). Thus, any understanding of the social role of journalism innovations requires careful examination of the socio-political environment in which they develop.

In this context and based on the assumption that no single technology alone can transform journalism, this theoretical contribution focuses on the evolving culture that defines journalism in the 21st century, amid a media sector striving for sustainability and efficiency in an era dominated by platforms. We argue that the social change driven by the evolving media industry is gradual and therefore warrants critical examination.

Although journalism practices have advanced with the digital revolution, newsrooms' focus on negativity or conflict-driven content has raised significant concerns among scholars, who emphasise the increasing public rejection—particularly among young people—of news reporting (Dennis, 2024; Skovsgaard & Andersen, 2019). Quality remains a vital issue throughout all stages of media development. Even today, while AI technology is regarded as an essential tool for improving journalistic and organisational efficiency within media outlets, it cannot deliver a genuinely positive impact unless other conditions are also fulfilled, such as stable business models, editorial independence, strong ethical principles, and freedom from political interference (Opdahl et al., 2023, p.13). The expected goal is to redefine quality in journalism without the profession of news production and dissemination losing its social role.

2. Constructive Journalism

The origin of constructive journalism dates back to the late 1940s, when a New York-based initiative called the Good News Bulletin sought to challenge the one-sided focus of problem-oriented reporting. This was followed by American muckraking journalists dedicated to presenting solutions for social issues (Aitamurto & Varma, 2018, p. 700). However, both as a practice and a research field, it developed at the end of the first decade of the 21st century. Examples of this trend include initiatives proposing solutions-oriented approaches to reporting, such as the Constructive Journalism Project, the Constructive Journalism Network, the Solutions Journalism Network in the United States, and the Constructive Institute in Europe (Lough & McIntyre, 2021). Reform efforts in journalism, or alternative forms such as public, peace, or activist journalism, are recognised as the preparatory forces that paved the way for the emergence of constructive journalism.

The constructive journalism trend originates from the work of journalists Cathrine Gyldensted (2015) and Ulrik Haagerup (2017), who share features such as a focus on solutions, potential, context, and the promotion of democratic dialogue. Both supporters view it not as a subversive element but as a complement to traditional journalism. Their differences mainly revolve around the fact that the former approach is mostly inspired by positive psychology techniques applied to news work (McIntyre & Gyldensted, 2017, p. 23), whereas the latter relies more on cognitive heuristics and biases. According to Bro (2018, p. 516), one of the key distinctions is that Gyldensted appears to be focused on how this type of journalism can benefit citizens beyond newsrooms, while Haagerup concentrates on how constructive journalism should influence journalism itself.

Constructive journalism is regarded as rooted in an earlier form of journalism known as "civic journalism" (Rosen, 1999), which shares a key trait: the journalist's active role in shaping the story and interpreting the news and its impacts (McIntyre & Gyldensted, 2017, p. 22). This similarity does not prevent constructive journalism from developing its own distinct methods, and therefore more recent scholars view it as an "innovative shift" (McIntyre & Gyldensted, 2017, p. 20). Furthermore, solutions journalism (and its offshoot, problem-solving journalism), prospective journalism, peace journalism, and restorative narrative are considered branches of constructive journalism that employ techniques from positive psychology (McIntyre & Gyldensted, 2018).

Propositions and viewpoints on solution-oriented news stories have evolved in academic circles since the late 1990s. Meanwhile, US media organisations such as the Los Angeles Times, the New York Times, and ABC captured public attention by emphasising potential solutions to social issues in their reporting. However, it was not until 2010 that this trend gained significant momentum through various initiatives from both the media and academic sectors, such as The New York Times' Blog Series Fixes, which was featured in the Columbia Journalism Review (McIntyre, 2019). Existing research on solutions-oriented journalism or constructive journalism has recognised these practices with several beneficial effects: increased trust in media organisations (Thier, Abdenour, Walth, Dahmen 2019), reduced audience vulnerability to misinformation (van Antwerpen, Turnbull & Searston, 2022b), and the potential to decrease negative emotions (van Antwerpen et al., 2022a).

Constructive journalism emphasises fostering active engagement with society rather than simply reporting the news. It involves solutions-focused framing and, by providing relevant information, encourages citizens to act in both their public and private lives. The critical role of journalists greatly influences how mediated reality is socially constructed. In other words, constructive journalism arose as a response to a crisis in journalism, aiming to counteract the negativity bias in news coverage by including narratives of hope and solutions (Bro, 2018). Responsibility remains a key aspect of constructive journalism, although supporters disagree on whether it pertains to the news itself or its broader impact.

Despite years of investigation and development, scholars still seek a more precise conceptualisation (Bro & Gyldensted, 2021). Under the umbrella term of constructive journalism, they include journalistic models or storytelling techniques that align with it. For example, development journalism refers to media professionals acting as catalysts for social transformation and advocates of government development objectives within society (Kalyango et al., 2017). Both models share principles such as promoting social progress and adopting forward-looking approaches (Fölscher-Kingwill & Wasserman, 2024, p. 5). Another example

is solutions journalism, which consists of reports offering practical solutions to social issues, emphasising evidence, perspectives, and constraints (McIntyre, Hopkinson & Dahmen, 2021).

Scholars summarise the core principles of constructive journalism, which include engaging with the public, adopting solution-oriented frames when reporting on societal issues, encouraging citizens to act, and highlighting the future possibilities behind the news. Due to these features, it is viewed as a countermovement that emphasises the need for a more public-focused approach to journalism (Hermans & Drok, 2018, p. 685). Research and academic discussion have identified two overlapping schools of thought concerning its principles. The first presents a framework of six principles proposed by McIntyre and Gyldensted (2018), while the second aligns with the Constructive Institute's approach, asserting that constructive journalism is a third pillar within the overall news cycle, complementing the roles of breaking news and investigative reporting (Fölscher-Kingwill & Wasserman, 2024, p. 8).

Constructive journalism aims to actively promote social change within its framework of interventionism, hope, and potential for transformation. Rooted in traditional journalistic practices and norms, it offers news coverage with a new focus, shifting the mission of news reporting from simply impartially exposing social issues to highlighting practical and effective solutions designed to foster social good and progress (Aitamurto & Varma, 2018, p. 708). It encompasses norms that differ significantly from the concepts of objectivity and accuracy, representing part of the widely recognised normative roles in journalism (monitorial, facilitative, collaborative, radical) and therefore should not be seen solely as a news genre (Aitamurto & Varma, 2018, pp. 696-698).

A study examining how solutions-focused journalism influences audiences highlights the potential of solution-based information to reduce readers' negative emotions and improve their positive views of the news content and the potential solutions offered by journalists. However, no effect is seen in boosting readers' confidence or their willingness to act (McIntyre, 2019, p. 29). The inclusion of "effective solutions" as a key part of news storytelling should not cause audiences to see the news articles as less connected to journalism's core functions (McIntyre, 2019, p. 30).

Constructive journalism is also argued to share features with service journalism and its softer forms of reporting, particularly in terms of audience engagement and the interpretation of journalism's role. Based on the assumption that service journalism offers an alternative perspective on constructive journalism, From and Kristensen (2018, p. 715) recognise that these types of journalism deliver positive approaches to lifeworld issues, provide guidance, and empower citizens. A study exploring editors' and journalists' perceptions of how constructive journalism is utilised in South Africa recognised its supportive role alongside watchdog journalism within the broader news cycle. Specifically, their perspective ranged from describing it as a beneficial way to strengthen watchdog journalism to considering it a welcome component of the overall news cycle (Fölscher-Kingwill & Wasserman, 2024, p. 11).

Furthermore, a study examining the impact of constructive journalism techniques on the audience's understanding, trust, and mood in Australia finds mixed effects. A decrease in understanding accompanied the increase in positive emotions and did not affect trust. In cases where self-reported interest in the articles was involved, constructive storytelling proved harmful to trust in the information; however, when it improved mood, it also brought benefits in terms of confidence (van Antwerpen, 2023, p. 2307).

3. Networked Journalism

Since the late 2000s, networked journalism has been described as a new news creation process that is neither linear nor top-down; instead, it involves collaboration between professional journalists and the public. The public can participate in the journalism production process through various technology-driven methods, including crowdsourcing, interactivity, user-generated content, digital forums, blogging, microblogging, and social networks (Beckett, 2010, p. 1). The process of gathering, processing, and sharing news is managed by online technologies, with journalists engaging with digital users and extensively using social networking platforms. These forms of collaborative activity do not diminish the core functions of traditional journalism (Beckett & Mansell, 2008, p. 93) but rather enhance them with a “multiplicity of authored stories” (van Der Haak, Parks & Castells, 2012, p. 2927).

The innovative character and positive impact of this new form of journalism are reflected in Beckett’s definition, which emphasises the shift in perspective on how news flow is generated (based on a “stream of instant witnessing”) and includes the call for a higher-quality news environment: “It is a non-linear process, a multi-directional interaction. And journalism is no longer a self-contained manufacturing industry. It is now a service industry that creates and connects flows of information, analysis and commentary” (Beckett, 2010, p. 3).

It is regarded as a new form of journalism that supports “new forms of boundary crossing,” transforming journalists into “facilitators of online and offline news production” aimed at improving public debate (Beckett & Mansell, 2008, p. 92). This new media environment, shaped by blogs, websites, online social networks, and cyber communities, allows for the dissemination and interconnection of a broad range of viewpoints, values, and cultures with ambivalent effects on the audience’s perceptions of the world. In this context, the social impact of journalism is seen as a mixed blessing, recognising that “the new forms of news media support diaspora communities in many ways, enabling people to maintain ties with towns, countries, cultural, religious, and political groupings, but, at the same time, they seem to encourage increasingly fragmented communicative networks, giving rise to possibilities of misinterpretation regarding the values and desires of others” (Beckett & Mansell, 2008, p. 94).

Networked journalism, through live-blogging practices that utilised the hyper-textuality of the Web 2.0 era, provided more engaging storytelling and changed perceptions of news. The idea of news as merely storytelling shifted toward viewing it as techno-textual interactivity (Chouliaraki, 2010). Networked journalism has traditionally relied on digital and online technologies to gather, process, and share news, involving continuous communication and interaction with information, as well as collaboration between professional journalists and the general public. Beckett and Mansell (2008, pp. 93-94) highlighted a pattern of boundary crossing that allows a wide range of perspectives and cultures to be shared; however, it also promotes fragmentation within communicative networks.

Conversely, it enabled many ordinary citizens to connect, share, and report on real-life situations, helping the media industry develop a profile of collaborative news-making processes. This marks a considerable shift in the relationship between journalists and audience members, reducing the journalist’s role as gatekeeper. However, some drawbacks accompany the increased connectivity and interactivity associated with this form of journalism. Audience contributions, which may be of low quality, do not constantly improve the journalism discourse, which aims to serve an engaged community.

In authoritative social contexts, the features of connectivity and interactivity enabled by the digital revolution have created a crisis in journalism, leading to strict controls between news media and political power. It is what has been called “networked authoritarianism”, whose dynamics are driven by a state of hyper-concentration of political and media power (Chan, 2018, pp. 65-67). Despite reasonable doubts, networked journalism has highlighted new forms of news production, sparking critical debates about the value and usefulness of journalism to society and to the individual citizen.

The rise of internet use, combined with the expansion of digital technologies, has created a new professional role in the media sector: the networked journalist. These journalists’ stories originate from a variety of practices focused on networked information gathering and fact-checking. This new approach enables journalists to navigate more effectively within a globalised information ecosystem, thereby strengthening journalism’s role as a public good.

At the same time, the excess of information production and dissemination facilitated by internet technology has elevated the role of journalists. They are now called upon to engage in new professional practices beyond storytelling, including critical analysis, data visualisation and mapping, and the conceptualisation and creation of interactive graphics. As van Der Haak, Parks and Castells (2012, p. 2930) stated, “the more we live in a context of abundant information that is meaningless until treated and conveyed, the more journalists are essential as intermediaries between data, information, knowledge, and social practice” This new role assigned to journalists reflects a re-evaluation of journalism culture, in which the digital realm offers affordances that support greater independence for media professionals from the constraints of the pre-digital era. Over the last few years, another component of networked journalism, reflecting its potential to effectively cover social problems, is the emergence of news flashpoints. These are perceived as an essential factor in shaping discourse in the networked journalism landscape, as they offer stories with diverse interpretations (Waisbord & Russell, 2020, p. 380).

Overall, the social mission of newsrooms —informing the public, ensuring accountability, and encouraging deliberation —is strengthened through what Beckett describes as “networked journalism” and Bruns refers to as “gate-watching/curation.” These concepts emphasise the role of journalists in facilitating communication among professionals, experts, and the public by gathering, verifying, and disseminating valuable information from diverse networks, rather than simply serving as gatekeepers (Beckett, 2010). In this context, Benkler’s (2006) analysis shows that networks can increase engagement and oversight of authority; however, this potential is only realised when institutions adopt practices that make network contributions transparent and accountable, such as clear sourcing and structured corrections. Therefore, while networks have the capacity to boost civic participation, newsrooms must turn this potential into outputs that serve the public interest.

4. Adopting AI technologies in Journalism

The role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in journalism is multifaceted and goes beyond simple automation, as it enables the creative transformation of traditional news production and distribution. Its new capabilities include the potential to deliver personalised user experiences

and provide audiences with more detailed, data-driven storytelling. This also enhances editorial assistance and copy editing, revolutionises content creation and story development, and supports the identification of misinformation and the execution of investigative journalism. The shift towards AI technology in journalism has not occurred in isolation. Past advancements in audience analytics, recommendation systems, and digitalisation are believed to have laid the groundwork for this significant phase in journalism practices, which “demands reflection and adaptation” (Dodds, Zamith & Lewis, 2025, p. 4).

The different reasons why news organisations adopt AI technology all centre on the hope that this innovation will lead to greater efficiency and reveal opportunities previously thought impossible (Simon, 2024, p. 13). These expected results also bring new difficulties, such as the need for media professionals to maintain ethical standards and to reduce bias through careful human oversight (Kevin-Alerechi et al., 2025, p. 2).

The increasing importance of AI-driven tools in journalism is mainly reflected in their use during the distribution phase of news content, such as news recommendation systems, personalisation algorithms, chatbots, and others; however, scholars express concern that AI technology companies introduce new values to the news media sector—such as shareability, sensitivity to audience needs, scalability, or effectiveness—that may not always align with core journalistic principles (Helberger, 2024, p. 4).

In this regard, incorporating AI technology in news practices has raised several challenges, among which scholars prioritise the news industry’s enfeeblement due to news publishers’ growing dependence on technology companies. It is argued that AI reformulates the news industry and the information ecosystem by further rationalising news work in alignment with the incentives and context of news organisations’ operations (Simon, 2024, pp. 5-6). The value of new technology, which is characterised by “rationality, efficiency and speed”, lies in “providing greater efficiency and effectiveness in some contexts” by refining a wide range of journalism tasks or by replacing news making procedures traditionally related to human initiative (Simon, 2024, p. 20).

The question of whether AI can improve the efficiency of journalism tasks cannot be definitively answered, as experts and practitioners hold varying views, ranging from optimistic to pessimistic assessments (such as freeing news workers from time-consuming and demanding procedures versus imposing new requirements). This ambivalence creates difficulties in determining whether AI can help increase quality or quantity (Simon, 2024, p. 19).

AI has revolutionised how news is gathered, reported, and consumed through the increasing use of new technology in journalism. It involves practices such as automated news storytelling, translating and converting speech to text, enhancing data mining and analysis, personalising content to suit the audience’s preferences, conducting fact-checking and verification processes, and boosting subscription rates. This extensive use of AI is accompanied by several risks that must be carefully managed. These include algorithmic bias resulting in biased news content, the potential for poor data quality, privacy and security vulnerabilities due to large data volumes, and limited transparency and ethical concerns in the deployment of AI technology (Banafi, 2024, p. 3957).

Through AI-driven technology, journalism is believed to be undergoing “a retooling of news» (Simon, 2024), increasing the existing reliance of the news industry on the technology sector, especially the large platform companies that dominate the AI field. The role of big technology platform companies (e.g., Google, Amazon, Microsoft) in shaping the use of AI in

the news sector is reflected in publishers' dependence on these entities' AI infrastructure and applications primarily for business and distribution tasks. Based on this trend, scholars discuss the shift of modern societies from "technological determinism" to "corporational determinism," implying that the omnipotence of big tech giants is anything but a temporary phenomenon. This new concept has emerged to highlight digital media companies as significant contributors to socio-technical development in a landscape increasingly influenced by major technology firms. It reflects a core narrative of the Web era, emphasising the role of digital corporations in shaping technology and society over time (Natale, Bory & Balbi, 2019, p. 334).

Implementing AI-driven technologies in journalism is neither inherently positive nor negative; rather, it is a development prompted by the Fourth Industrial Revolution that presents both challenges and opportunities for the journalism sector. According to Papp (2024), the profession must protect itself by effectively balancing technological progress with the ethical use of AI, carefully regulating AI's role in the media industry, and ensuring sufficient AI literacy among news media professionals. A guiding principle for all these measures is argued to be the goal of making AI technology a helpful tool that enhances information quality and accessibility.

Creativity and originality in journalism may have been influenced and transformed by the rise and spread of the aforementioned trends in the media sector, but they still exist and remain essential, contributing to the core of journalism's role in shaping societal change, such as introducing new patterns in news production, distribution, and consumption.

The AI shift in journalism is seen as transformative, much like past innovations have affected the media sector; however, it remains uncertain what the depth and duration of this change will be. Even if AI in journalism is standardised, operating as the extension or accelerator of other trends in the media field, its impact on the discipline of news-making is expected to be indelible (Dodds, Zamith & Lewis, 2025, p. 4). The possibility of reconfiguring journalism in a significant manner makes scholars believe that AI is more than an ephemeral new technology that calls for contemplation and adjustment.

5. Conclusions

This theoretical contribution aims to demonstrate that we cannot fully understand the implications of journalism in 21st-century society without first considering how valued new journalism is by its recipients. The development of technology, combined with significant social trends, will always motivate journalism to adapt to change. However, the social dynamics of journalism will not flourish or remain transparent in any era if news production is not carried out in accordance with specific quality standards. In the platform-dominated era, understanding the social dynamics of journalism, which includes a broad range of practices, may require us to adopt, as Deuze and Witschge (2017) suggest, a perception of journalism ontology that goes beyond individuals and institutions.

The three innovative "movements" in journalism, analysed in this chapter, can be seen as "breaking points" for the media sector, even though their appearance varies over time. However, they share a common characteristic: the disruption of media professionals' roles, practices, and routines, which raises the question of how news-making and dissemination influence informed citizenship and political accountability. For years, conventional journalism has been a vital source of information that supports democracy. However, in the platform-driven era, new journalistic roles are necessary that go beyond merely reporting problems or conflicts in society. In a net-

worked society, creating an informed citizenry seems impossible unless news organisations restore public trust by rebuilding their reputation as credible and relevant institutions.

The reform initiatives discussed in this chapter are significant factors in changing journalists' social roles. By creating new roles for both digital users and media professionals—such as investigators, creators, reactors, remixers, and redistributors of news content—journalism has evolved beyond the outdated mission of the traditional media era. However, in the platform-dominated age, constructive journalism, networked journalism, and AI-driven journalism should assume roles that serve as a counterbalance to the “blurred boundaries between information and affect” that influences the media environment (Chadwick, 2013, p. 6).

The innovative journalism practices are a crucial aspect of the long-standing digital transformation experienced by news media organisations worldwide, with the latest development (AI journalism) being regarded as the “tip of the iceberg” in a series of digital multitasked processes undertaken by journalists who have assumed the role of “digital curators” (Pavlik, 2023, p. 92). This transformation requires exploring new sustainable business models within the media sector aimed at safeguarding, operational efficiency, core journalism values, and quality preservation.

The vision of networked journalism that fosters a global dialogue respecting humanity (Beckett & Mansell, 2008, p. 99) may have seemed utopian; however, this form of journalism has been vital in establishing a new foundation for achieving the ideal of informed citizens. The previous expectations regarding networked journalism as a facilitator of public debate need to be further developed in today's post-truth society, alongside the spread of constructive journalism and the integration of artificial intelligence into journalistic practices. Furthermore, the earlier view of networked journalism as a liberating force from “strict corporate control” with positive effects on society through meaningful interpretation of information (van Der Haak, Parks & Castells, 2012, p. 2935) may have faced several challenges, but, on the other hand, it has familiarised the public with the need for sense-making, contextualisation, and explanation provided by more comprehensive journalistic storytelling compared to the past.

The argument that a single technology, such as AI, cannot act as the catalyst in shaping the news (Simon, 2024, p. 38) remains valid, especially in an era dominated by platforms where enthusiasm for improving journalism workflows through AI coexists with concerns about potential risks. This is illustrated by systematic reviews showing that journalists mainly view AI as a transformative tool for increasing efficiency in tasks such as transcription, tagging, translation, searching, and personalisation; however, they are divided over its implications for costs, job security, and core values.

In this context, news media organisations must prioritise adopting AI-driven technologies by investing in digital initiatives that support journalism's social mission: AI/data methods enabling “algorithmic accountability reporting” that extends the watchdog role to platforms (Diakopoulos, 2014), greater exposure to public-interest news content thoughtfully curated through nudging the recommendation algorithms, not the users (Yu, Haroon, Menchen-Trevino & Wojcieszak, 2024), universality and pluralism served by news recommenders (Helberger, 2019), as well as public-value approaches to personalisation that route essential civic information to communities while preserving pluralism (Vrijenhoek et al., 2021). Hence, AI can bolster journalism's social mission when it is deliberately guided by values such as watchdogging, diversity of exposure, and access—alongside transparency, editorial control, and public-value metrics, which must remain non-negotiable. Without these elements, there is a risk of eroding trust, diversity, and capabilities, especially in less affluent news organisations.

The disruptive forms of journalism discussed in this chapter may no longer be new; however, they continue to develop in response to trends driven by the proliferation of new media platforms of all kinds. The social change underlying this development is closely connected to new forms of boundary crossing that have emerged within the so-called platform-dominated society. Digital platforms and spaces designed for public debate have prospered as a result of these forms of journalism; however, this type of social change is challenged by the increasing credibility crisis affecting the media and political institutions. The trends in journalism's evolution can be viewed as socially beneficial if media professionals focus on practices that enhance operational effectiveness, improve journalism quality, and disseminate more relevant content to digital users. They certainly offer transformative potential for the media sector, shaping the ongoing evolution of the communication industry; however, in practice, media professionals must consider a wide range of challenges.

Considering the many practices that now make up journalism and based on Deuze and Witschge's (2017) argument that today's journalism is reconfigured as a post-industrial, entrepreneurial, and unconventional way of working, we propose a re-conception of the social role of journalism that extends beyond the set of values, principles, ideals, and practices that characterise this profession. Journalism is not only an adopter and reflector of social changes related to the media and communication field, but also a creator of them.

Constructive journalism, networked journalism, and AI-driven journalism represent new roles for journalists that do not necessarily threaten the quality of their professional identity but establish new models of information provision, fostering an inherent social change in how the information society fulfils its role. This trend is exemplified by the networked nature of news work and the shift of the media field towards the so-called "post-industrial" model of news-making (Anderson, Bell & Shirky, 2012).

In conclusion, all three trends can create a network of conditions that allow journalism to regain its diminished social mission. While networked journalism has assisted media professionals in becoming "moderators of conversations" between themselves and their audiences (Jarvis, 2007), AI in journalism introduces a new kind of moderation between media professionals and robots, amid a growing trend of constructive journalism that aims to remind us that journalism can reinvent its comparative advantage in any era, as long as it remains attentive to the continuous changes within the communication landscape.

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