

A Framework for Classifying Uncertainties in AI-Driven Newsrooms

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Abstract

This study examines how generative artificial intelligence (GAI) is adopted and integrated into the newsroom of a major Brazilian media organization—Globo. While AI deployment in journalism has expanded globally, the experiences lived by journalists in contexts that are not Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic remain underexplored. Combining in-depth interviews, internal documents, organizational presentations, public materials, and direct observation within a qualitative case study, this study analyzes how GAI is reshaping newsroom practices, routines, and professional identities. It introduces a framework for classifying uncertainties in AI-driven newsrooms, a type II theory, which is designed to describe, classify, and organize the main forms of uncertainty faced by journalists when interacting with GAI systems, and then structure these uncertainties into three analytical levels—macro (ecosystem), meso (organization), and micro (identity)—while pairing each level with its associated coping strategies. Given its single-case basis, the framework is presented as a possible framework whose analytical categories require further empirical application before broader validation.

Keywords

artificial intelligence; generative artificial intelligence; Global South; journalism; newsroom; non-WEIRD contexts; uncertainty

1. Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) and algorithmic systems have influenced journalism across the globe, enabling the automation of content production, the algorithmic curation of content, and supporting reporting practices in newsrooms (Thurman et al., 2019). Recent advancements in AI have expanded traditional, data-centric functions such as classification and prediction into the realm of generative AI (GAI). By utilizing deep

generative models, GAI applications process basic user prompts to synthesize original and realistic outputs across multiple formats, including text, images, and software code, serving a wide variety of domains (Banh & Strobel, 2023). To ensure competitive success, news organizations utilize these tools in at least one of the main stages of the news ecosystem: newsgathering, production, and distribution (Ioscote et al., 2024). Despite this increasing influence, the implications for journalists' work routines, professional identity, and practice remain understudied across diverse media systems.

The scientific literature examining these developments exhibits a concentration of academic production: Research on AI in journalism primarily focuses on North America (Ioscote et al., 2024). This article will refer to the dominant context of this study as WEIRD (Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic). The acronym WEIRD was introduced by Henrich et al. (2010) to critique the tendency of the behavioral sciences to base broad claims about human psychology on samples drawn entirely from such societies. We apply the label to the geographic concentration of research on AI in journalism documented by recent systematic reviews (e.g., Ioscote et al., 2024).

Empirical research on AI adoption in non-WEIRD newsrooms remains underdeveloped. In Africa, isolated and non-institutionalized initiatives have been documented. The majority of AI tools used in African newsrooms were developed either in the Global North or China, incorporating values that may perpetuate external biases at the local level (Kothari & Cruikshank, 2022). Furthermore, the appropriation of AI tools in this region is accompanied by persistent pessimism and fears, and formal AI policies are generally absent (Umejei et al., 2025). In South Asia, most Bangladeshi media organizations do not employ institutional strategies for adapting to AI tools. Consequently, adoption is predominantly based on individual initiative (Rifat & Noman, 2026); Nepali journalists use AI informally and face linguistic limitations (Pandey & Ghimire, 2026). Across all contexts, AI adoption has been characterized as fragmented, individualized, and weakly institutionalized.

There is a gap in the literature regarding how large, resource-rich media organizations in non-WEIRD settings approach AI adoption. Empirical studies investigating the integration of AI in non-WEIRD environments, such as Brazil's newsrooms, remain scarce. This gap highlights the relevance of the present case study. One common feature of AI adoption among these contexts is the proliferation of uncertainty. Current studies highlight tensions related to autonomy, verification, trust, and the absence of formal guidelines (Cools & Diakopoulos, 2026; Pandey & Ghimire, 2026; Umejei et al., 2025). Adoption often occurs through individual attempts lacking formal organizational policies (Munoriyarwa et al., 2023; Rifat & Noman, 2026). Even in resource-rich environments, journalists report ongoing concerns about the status of AI-generated content and its effects on professional identity and institutional credibility (Baptista et al., 2026; Thurman et al., 2025). Together, these dynamics indicate that AI adoption is a process of technological integration that involves multiple overlapping uncertainties that have yet to be sufficiently theorized. Therefore, the objective of this study is to investigate how adopting GAI generates and structures uncertainty within a large non-WEIRD newsroom. The study is guided by one central question:

RQ: How does the adoption of GAI in a non-WEIRD newsroom generate and structure uncertainty?

To answer the above question, the study investigates GAI adoption in Globo's newsroom, the largest media corporation in Latin America. Globo is not alone in being a major outlet adopting GAI; other outlets, both digital-native and legacy, use GAI in Brazil. Globo operates globally through broadcast television, digital

news platforms, streaming services, and print, and reaches hundreds of millions of individuals. Although Globo is a regional incumbent dominating its market, it depends upon foundation models developed by major technology companies whose training data include language assumptions and design principles primarily reflective of Global North contexts. This dual positioning (locally dominant yet globally dependent) makes Globo an extremely relevant example for exploring how non-WEIRD media organizations engage with AI technologies.

The main theoretical contribution of this study is proposing a framework for classifying uncertainties in AI-driven newsrooms. This type II theory describes, classifies, and organizes the forms of uncertainty journalists face when interacting with GAI systems. This contribution matters both analytically and practically as it addresses the geographic and conceptual gaps identified above by theorizing GAI adoption from a non-WEIRD perspective, incumbent largely absent from the literature, and it offers newsroom decision-makers a diagnostic tool for locating where uncertainty arises and which coping strategies stabilize it.

2. Literature Review

This section reviews the literature that grounds the study. Section 2.1 maps the expansion of research on AI and journalism and its geographic concentration in WEIRD contexts; Section 2.2 turns to the emerging Brazilian scholarship; and Section 2.3 moves from individual-level adoption models to ecosystemic and institutional perspectives.

2.1. *AI in Journalism and the WEIRD Bias*

Journalism scholars have increasingly focused on how AI is used in journalism; a systematic review of 699 articles published between 2014 and 2023 found a growth rate of roughly 2000% (Ioscote et al., 2024).

Researchers understand AI as present throughout the entire process of producing journalism (Ioscote et al., 2024; Thurman et al., 2019). While there is agreement that AI could augment human journalists, Thurman et al. (2019) see augmentation as occurring when humans remain in the loop. This is supported by the fact that human oversight of the use of AI is seen as necessary for maintaining public confidence in the reliability of journalism (Mehmood, 2025).

Nonetheless, the scholarship contains some unresolved tension: between technocratic views of AI as tool frames and more sociotechnological analyses of AI that question issues of power and control (Thurman et al., 2019); between the “hope and hype” that tend to surround each new technology and the reality check that tends to occur after underwhelming application results (Thurman et al., 2019, p. 987); and between the relative lack of attention to ethics and regulation (Ioscote et al., 2024) and the pervasive nature of regulatory concerns in post-GAI scholarship (Mehmood, 2025).

The field is clear regarding its own limitations. Brazil offers a useful opportunity to address two weaknesses at once: It is a major media market operating in a non-WEIRD society experiencing rapid GAI deployment, yet it has been relatively underrepresented in prior AI-focused research.

2.2. GAI and Journalism in Brazil

Brazilian scholars have started examining how AI technologies have been adopted by Brazilian news outlets: mapping AI initiatives systematically (Pinto & Barbosa, 2024); establishing an introductory framework of possibilities for understanding GAI as a new turning point in the technological development of journalism (Carneiro dos Santos & Figueiredo, 2024); and analyzing formal AI usage policies that were produced by individual newsrooms (Silva & Paulino, 2025).

As a whole, these perspectives suggest three key commonalities. First, all view AI as an assistance mechanism rather than as a replacement for human decision-making: Most journalistic AI initiatives in Brazil depend on human supervision or editing for content publication, which is predominantly distributed across websites and social media platforms (Pinto & Barbosa, 2024); human oversight is required because factual errors are incompatible with journalism itself (Carneiro dos Santos & Figueiredo, 2024); and all nine usage policies examined by Silva and Paulino (2025) treat GAI as a tool intended to help journalists with six of them explicitly stating that the technology does not replace human work and judgment. Second, they highlight asymmetrical relationships between journalism producers in different parts of the world: Brazilian news organizations rely upon infrastructure provided by big tech companies (Pinto & Barbosa, 2024; Silva & Paulino, 2025); moreover, most chatbots used by these journalism organizations belong to large multinational corporations based in the Global North and collect and re-use user-generated content submitted via those chatbots (Silva & Paulino, 2025). Finally, authors recognize a shortage of education/training for working journalists: Only three of the nine usage policies examined by Silva and Paulino (2025) indicate that their publishers plan to train their employees.

Brazilian scholarship also presents contradictions. In terms of adoption patterns, digital-native outlets lead the implementation of AI initiatives, utilizing predominantly low-cost methods and open-source codes, although widespread official adoption of GAI was not initially observed (Pinto & Barbosa, 2024). Focusing specifically on this segment, Malar and Saad (2025) analyzed the AI policies disclosed and used in five Brazilian digital-native outlets (Agência Pública, Agência Tatu, Aos Fatos, Núcleo Jornalismo, and Revista AzMina) and found a shared framing of GAI as an auxiliary tool rather than a substitute for journalists, while cautioning that these publicly stated positions may diverge from everyday newsroom practice. In contrast, across different types of media, Silva and Paulino (2025) found a general absence of formal governance structures in AI policies. Out of nine media organizations evaluated, only *Estadão* detailed the creation of a specific AI committee for governance, whereas other large outlets such as *Folha de S. Paulo* presented guidelines that did not constitute formal governance structures, suggesting that formal institutionalization and grassroots experimentation tend to follow separate organizational pathways.

Together, these developing literatures leave an important empirical gap: Their evidence comes from publicly available reports of initiative implementation, conceptual syntheses, and official policy statements. Pinto and Barbosa (2024) have explicitly called for research that would extend into newsrooms through surveys, interviews, and observations. The present study responds directly to this agenda, moving the Brazilian debate from mapped initiatives and published policies to the situated experiences of professionals inside Globo.

2.3. From User Adoption to Ecosystemic and Institutional Tensions

The bulk of research on technology adoption agrees on the underlying logic: Perceptions of those using the technology govern its adoption. Davis (1989) posits that usage is based upon both perceived usefulness and ease of use according to his technology acceptance model. Venkatesh et al. (2003, 2012) expanded upon these antecedents through their unified theory of acceptance and use of technology and consumer extension. While expanding on the prior work, all theories rely on the same unit of analysis, namely, the individual decision-maker, and treat the process of adopting technology as something that can be predicted based upon each individual's subjective assessment of a specific artifact. This assumption works well for many applications of technology, but it fails to adequately explain GAI in newsrooms because the use of GAI in this context is subject to the rules and norms of the editorial staff, the availability of resources provided by the organization, and the infrastructure that supports GAI in the newsroom that users have little to no control over, and therefore fail to describe the supra-individual factors required for acceptance to occur.

Another area of research redefines the unit of analysis from the user to the system. Instead of focusing on how individual decisions result in desired outcomes, researchers examine how systems create desired outcomes through interdependence among multiple stakeholders (Iansiti & Levien, 2004); and further, to achieve value in a system, there needs to be alignment across multiple stakeholders regarding a shared value proposition (Adner, 2017). Rodrigues et al. (2021) synthesized the two lines of research, stating that widespread adoption is contingent upon concurrent acceptance by multiple stakeholder groups, not just end-user groups. In environments characterized by interdependencies, an individual's positive appraisal is required, but is insufficient for achieving widespread adoption.

Interdependence within an ecosystem also creates tensions for existing firms seeking to adapt to new technologies. There are differing views on why established firms struggle to adapt to changing technologies. Bower and Christensen (1995) argue that established firms struggle to adapt because they allocate resources to mainstream customers. Markides (2006) argues against the general applicability of this argument and states that disruption encompasses multiple concepts that require unique responses. Cozzolino et al. (2018) demonstrated that adaptation by an established firm in a news-media setting is feasible and requires a business model shift from a closed to an open platform. The differences in opinion ultimately relate to whether established firms can profit from technologies created by others, the fact that value creation occurs less often with creators than with owners of complementary assets under conditions where appropriation rights are limited (Teece, 1986), and that the business model represents the design of the value captured (Teece, 2010).

3. Methodology

This section details the research design and analytical strategy: the case and its delimitation (3.1); the data sources, sampling rationale, and temporal scope (3.2); and the two-cycle coding procedure together with the status of the macro-, meso-, and micro-levels as analytical levels of context (3.3).

3.1. Research Design

This study employs a qualitative case study design (Stake, 2010) to examine the integration of GAI within Globo's newsroom. To delimit the scope of analysis, Globo must be distinguished from Grupo Globo, the

broader conglomerate to which it belongs. The present study focuses exclusively on Globo, which since January 2020 has operated as a single, integrated company that consolidates TV Globo, Globosat, Globo.com, and corporate management, and since 2018 has pursued a transformation into a “mediatech” company, distributing content across open and pay television, the streaming service Globoplay, and digital products spanning journalism (G1), sport, and entertainment. Within this perimeter, the analysis focuses on Globo’s journalistic operations across television and digital news; accordingly, the interviewees included executives and managers from both domains, while the group’s publishing, radio, venture, and philanthropic units were excluded.

3.2. Data Collection

The empirical material was gathered using interviews, observations, and documentation to allow for triangulation among multiple types of evidence (Saldaña, 2016; Stake, 2010). This specific case study is a subset of a larger doctoral study by the first author.

In-depth interviews were intentionally chosen over semi-structured interviews as the latter fit into design contexts where respondents are counted or averaged when they respond repeatedly and uniformly (Stake, 2010).

Twenty-five in-depth interviews were completed with journalists, editors, executives, and managers who utilize AI-based practices in their work. The number of interviews was determined based on saturation. In addition to the journalists, non-journalists were included to reflect the nature of GAI adoption in mediatech companies as it transcends the boundaries of the newsroom. Limiting the samples to only journalists would have resulted in a narrow perspective on this system. AI literacy was not a factor in selection criteria. A detailed table for each participant is provided in the Supplemental Material 1 (S1).

Data collection took place over two separate time frames. The first phase (October 2024–June 2025) identified professionals in technology, corporate strategy, and law roles, outlining the structural (infrastructure), moral (ethics), and governmental (regulatory) underpinnings of implementing AI throughout the organization. The second phase (January–March 2026) focused solely on journalists in order to identify how GAI was being applied in practice on a day-to-day basis and how its use was impacting their professional identities. Because GAI develops much faster than most organizations can accommodate, these data represent a moment-in-time snapshot.

Participant interview data were compared with a body of secondary organizational data including internal documents and meeting transcripts (i.e., CEO town hall meetings, CTO technology keynotes, and AI program meetings) and institutional public communications, which are listed in the Supplemental Material 1 (S2). Using Stake’s (2010) method of cross-referencing data continuously, we were able to compare official pronouncements, perceived understandings of the organization, and everyday interactions with GAI tools. The interviews provided an understanding of the participants regarding GAI and the conflicts they identified, while the documents represented the institutional and strategic context surrounding the AI program development and the direct naturalistic observation facilitated the researcher’s familiarity with GAI in the newsroom.

3.3. Data Analysis

Qualitative coding shares some foundational similarities with content analysis, but is methodologically quite different. Content analysis usually relies on frequencies and predefined categories, whereas qualitative coding is a heuristic, organic process that allows researchers to formulate emergent theoretical categories (Saldaña, 2016). Analysis was organized into two coding cycles: open coding and pattern coding, which were executed across five analytical stages. Atlas.ti served as a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis (CAQDAS) tool.

The first stage was the first cycle. The interview transcripts were coded using five methods: in vivo, process, values, emotion, and attribution coding. Saldaña (2016) explicitly endorses this strategy when a single method alone cannot fully capture the multidimensionality of data. This cycle resulted in 87 codes, each recorded in a codebook that served as a shared standard for the research team.

The second stage was recoding and recategorization. Coding is cyclical (Saldaña, 2016), so the initial codebook underwent systematic revision when cluster assignments were re-examined, relabeled, and reorganized.

Stage three was the second cycle. The 87 first-cycle codes were consolidated into 14 pattern codes/clusters that pulled the material into more streamlined units of analysis (Saldaña, 2016). Candidate clusters were tested against the full set of coded excerpts.

Stage 4 consisted of theming. Four themes were abstracted from the 14 clusters following the progression outlined by Saldaña (2016): factual uncertainty (T1), identity uncertainty (T2), organizational uncertainty (T3), and uncertainty about content rights and value (T4). Within each theme, pattern codes were differentiated according to whether they capture sources of uncertainty or strategies for dealing with them, yielding uncertainties and coping strategies reported in Section 4. These uncertainties were classified at macro-, meso-, or micro-levels based on where participants placed them (Chandler & Vargo, 2011).

Stage 5 focused on the framework development and memo writing. Throughout all stages, memos supported movement from descriptive patterns to the conceptual level. Codes were generated directly from data rather than from a predetermined start list derived from literature. Literature engagement was undertaken after coding to refine and situate emerging categories.

Coding was performed manually by the lead author following Saldaña's recommendation to shop-talk with a colleague or mentor throughout. Decisions about coding and evolving the codebook were reviewed and challenged by co-authors who acted as auditors of the analysis. Supplemental Material 2 synthesizes the progression from interview extracts into codes, themes, and levels of context.

4. Results and Discussion

The findings will be discussed based on the categories identified from the data collection, refined through an iterative dialogue with the literature. At the micro-level, respondents' uncertainty concerns the individual. At the meso-level, the organization is the source of uncertainty. At the macro-level, the overall ecosystem is.

4.1. Uncertainty as a Central Organizing Feature of GAI Adoption

Uncertainty has long been recognized as a central construct in understanding decision-making under conditions of incomplete knowledge. Knight (1921) established the foundational distinction between risk and uncertainty, defining the latter as situations in which outcomes cannot be assigned calculable probabilities. This distinction is particularly salient in the context of GAI in newsrooms where key dimensions such as the behavior of large language models, evolving copyright regimes, and the long-term competitive implications of algorithmic content production remain fundamentally indeterminate.

Building on this foundation, subsequent research has conceptualized how actors navigate such conditions. Rogers (1983) frames the adoption of innovation as an uncertainty-reduction process in which individuals actively seek information, experiment, and rely on social interactions to make sense of emerging technologies. However, this process is unevenly distributed, particularly in non-WEIRD contexts where limited communication channels and weaker institutional infrastructures constrain the ability to reduce uncertainty.

At the organizational level, Milliken (1987) refines the concept by distinguishing between state uncertainty (unpredictability of the environment), effect uncertainty (difficulty in assessing organizational impact), and response uncertainty (ambiguity regarding the consequences of strategic choices). These dimensions are deeply intertwined in the case of GAI where environmental shifts, organizational implications, and strategic responses evolve simultaneously.

Importantly, uncertainty does not imply paralysis. Beckert (2013) argues that individuals and organizations act under uncertainty by constructing shared “fictional expectations” about possible futures, which enable decision-making in the absence of complete information. Taken together, these perspectives suggest that uncertainty is not merely a constraint, but a generative condition shaping how actors interpret, negotiate, and respond to technological change.

This study builds on these theoretical foundations to examine and organize uncertainties empirically within a leading non-WEIRD newsroom.

4.2. Macro-Level (Ecosystem)

At the macro-level, two uncertainties emerged from the data, together with two coping strategies through which practitioners manage them. The first uncertainty is factual. The biggest problem with using AI in journalism is the potential to generate false information, whether through completely fabricated data or misattributed quotes or information. Participants provided several examples of how GAI produced false information, including creating fictional family relationships among actual people and inventing scenarios in Brazil’s popular classic soap operas. The second uncertainty concerns historical adaptation. Interview participants stated that AI is part of a long history of technology adoption that has challenged journalists to adapt to changes in their reporting environments. According to Dodds et al. (2026), each “turn” historically caused tension but ultimately led to agreement and adaptation, and each turn became the norm for future developments.

One of the practitioners at Globo cited social media as an example of how journalists began using earlier technologies. He stated, “I think the first key change for us was to start using social media as a research tool. The tool itself has always been very useful. The tools keep changing.”

The first coping strategy at this level is the verification workflow. Globo journalists report using GAI to enhance workflow efficiency while retaining control over editorial decisions. Translation and transcription tools provide substantial time savings, and GAI is used for brainstorming and summarization, but is never used as a means to verify final products.

According to one practitioner, journalists are employing GAI under the assumption of “trust but verify,” aligning with the hybrid model identified by Thäsler-Kordonouri and Koliska (2025) where human oversight remains paramount while computational tools are employed to minimize risks. Practitioners also state that AI systems need to be explicitly instructed to admit their own mistakes since AI rarely identifies its own errors (Ercanbrack et al., 2025).

Additionally, participants connected hallucination risk to the reliability of user input and the degree of specificity of prompts received from users, which is consistent with research demonstrating that successful human-machine collaboration requires high levels of prompt specificity (Thäsler-Kordonouri & Koliska, 2025) and that journalists recognize that models produce responses based on a lack of factually-based input (Rønning Pedersen et al., 2026). Journalists prefer using closed system tools versus open web models. NotebookLM is preferable for sensitive interviews due to its ability to process pre-verified and uploaded transcripts. Proprietary databases provide “much greater confidence” in terms of accuracy, which can be improved by employing various prompting strategies, such as providing expert personas (“you’re an endocrinologist working on a television show”) for specific subjects.

The second coping strategy is the framing of AI as support. Journalists overwhelmingly view GAI as a support mechanism for producing content, a “brainstorming partner,” similar to Munoriyarwa and de-Lima-Santos (2025), and AI as an assistant producer, not a final arbiter of factuality. As one interviewer said:

I put the article’s text in and say something like, “summarize this story in one sentence.” The way it summarizes isn’t what I’ll actually use for the headline, but it gives me a spark of inspiration about what might be interesting to highlight next.

Journalists reported using AI for transcription and summarizing extensive texts to gain initial editorial direction, embracing it as a partner for repetitive tasks (Dodds et al., 2026; Matsiola & Pilitsidou, 2025). This support role is mediated by awareness of factual uncertainty. A summary may inspire, but is rejected as the final published headline with suggested angles being independently verified before incorporation.

4.3. Meso-Level (Organization)

At the meso-level, the organization itself becomes the source of uncertainty, and four uncertainties were identified alongside two coping strategies. The third uncertainty is inequality within the newsroom. As noted earlier, GAI is creating an environment of uncertainty within the newsroom itself, as evidenced by the internal inequalities described as being a “space of disconnect”: “I would describe it today as a Tower of Babel because I believe that a very large portion of people are afraid; almost everyone is afraid of AI.”

That fear is largely driven by a digital skills gap, which creates vulnerability and disrupts the collaborative nature of journalistic work:

Some people have difficulty with Word, with the Office suite. So AI for these people is just another layer of fear....Someone will feel lost, or scared, or insecure. I think this greatly increases the level of insecurity in newsrooms. If the producer doesn't know about AI, the editor doesn't know about AI, the reporter doesn't know about AI, that story won't be able to flow in a certain way.

Of approximately 1,400 employees who report to the company, only a few dozen use AI regularly. Therefore, there is an urgent need for education to foster comprehensive literacy to avoid the concentration of technological inequality.

The fourth uncertainty is the ambivalence of AI integration. There is both excitement and trepidation among journalists about incorporating AI into their workflows. They view AI as both an inevitability and something beneficial, but also potentially dangerous. These opposing views of AI are exemplified through fear and caution (necessity): "Almost a necessary evil, right?...We'd just watch from afar, suspicious. But, hey, I need to. But I'm not going to trust it too much." Another interviewee resorted to a metaphor: "It's like a dog arriving in an unfamiliar place. Or a child. Wary. I wonder if these people are nice?"

Although many journalists interviewed were fearful of what changes may occur due to AI adoption, they also recognized AI's potential for positive transformation. Unfortunately, they perceive the majority of risks associated with adopting AI far outweighing its benefits:

Speaking for my colleagues in journalism, I think people see it much more as a risk, as a threat, than as an opportunity. There's a lot to adjust, but I think it's a great opportunity for us, I really do.

One of the primary factors driving journalists' fears is job insecurity: "Maybe in two years I won't have this job I have now, but oh well, it happens, doesn't it?" This dichotomy between each journalist's optimistic outlook on AI and the collective anxiety toward its use mirrors current international attitudes toward AI implementation (Matsiola & Pilitsidou, 2025).

The fifth uncertainty concerns the value of the archive. Both the organization's proprietary archives are viewed as a valuable competitive advantage and as resources susceptible to exploitation. Journalists acknowledge their organization's archival repository as an unmatched source of competitive advantages and, at the same time, as a repository rich in factual information and documentation spanning nearly six decades and vulnerable to hallucinations:

Just think about Globo's archive. If I'm generating things based on my own records, on my own knowledge, the higher the chances are that this AI won't hallucinate. And I could probably even sell that....Who knows Brazil better than Globo? Globo's journalism, my God....We've been out on the streets reporting every single day for 60 years. It's all preserved. In footage, in audio, in photos. And I think that holds tremendous value.

These findings reflect the economics of GAI, where large language models require high-quality, verified data (Nam, 2024), as well as the emerging industry practice of media companies entering licensing agreements with AI companies. Nonetheless, monetization issues are intertwined with concerns surrounding ownership and fairness regarding compensation:

I think a major uncertainty is the copyright issue, right? And how you figure out not just how much you charge, but how much you pay for content....Who owns that generated content? How do I compensate for it? How do you protect your rights?

This concern reflects the legal debate over whether AI-generated content should be considered copyrightable (Kuai, 2024), further reinforcing Kuai's (2024) argument that existing copyright laws fail to address algorithmically created content and therefore favor larger corporations over individual authors/creators.

The sixth uncertainty relates to value creation. By far the greatest perceived value of AI is its ability to improve routine processes significantly: "We can do tasks that would take five hours now in 20 minutes, in 10 minutes." The speed at which GAI improves routine processes parallels findings made by Kuai (2024) and Trapova and Mezei (2022).

In addition to improving efficiency, GAI enables content formats that are especially relevant to data-intensive fields. One respondent demonstrated an example of shifting from mere process automation to creative new values: "What has interested me the most is the creation of new value, new forms of value. Things that will add more value; it's not just about efficiency. We started publishing videos with narrated lottery results."

Trapova and Mezei (2022) describe these technological capabilities as robojournalism. They state that robojournalism works best in fields that involve a lot of data, such as sports, weather, and finance, because these fields offer the greatest potential for algorithms to quickly convert large amounts of raw data into easily understood information products.

The first coping strategy at this level is the persistence of traditional practices. There appears to be a theoretical distinction between the cognitive recognition of AI's ability to improve efficiency and the practice of using time-tested approaches to acquire and verify information. One example of this reliance upon the customary routine was when one participant said, "I did it the old-fashioned way. I used Google, did searches, and then went to reliable websites." This also illustrates Matsiola and Pilitsidou's (2025) finding of a significant disparity in skill levels among practitioners. Journalists tend to have high proficiency in traditional journalism skills and recognize the concept of AI, yet they demonstrate relatively low levels of practical and technical skills for directly using AI. This lack of congruence creates uncertainty, leading many journalists to continue practicing traditional methods rather than trying something new.

Although the technology is perceived as a means of improving the speed at which news is produced, journalists' reluctance to use these tools, combined with their familiarity with traditional ways of doing things, hinders their ability to successfully integrate them into their daily workflow. Additionally, environmental and logistical constraints associated with producing daily news stories reinforce the use of traditional methods over newer technologies. The friction created by the operational limitations on how journalists gather and produce their news stories highlights a unique aspect of being human—i.e., the ability to be physically present in the field—an essential component of the journalistic process that AI cannot perform or assist with in real-time mobile reporting environments.

The second coping strategy is a change in mindset, which respondents described as a watershed moment: “GAI has completely changed everything, turned everyone upside down. I consider generative mechanics a watershed moment for everything. We don’t know exactly what the outcome will be.”

This perception of a “watershed moment” aligns with Sonni et al. (2024), who state that the shift toward a post-GAI era represents a historic transformational leap that has sparked a renewed debate over the unanticipated breadth and depth of GAI and its future implications for the media landscape.

Nevertheless, facilitating positive human-machine collaborations in a period of high uncertainty necessitates the development of institutional supports and cultural adaptations. To adapt to this technological revolution, respondents pointed to a need for organizational-level support from management: “It is very important, fundamental, for superiors to ensure that the necessary resources are provided so that their team can invest in attempts to innovate.”

In addition to obtaining managerial support, developing the mental safety needed to experiment in a GAI-related environment, respondents stated that it would be beneficial if institutions fostered an environment in which errors are tolerated: “It could be tolerance for error, not informational error, but the failure of an initiative.”

4.4. Micro-Level (Identity)

At the micro-level, uncertainty is experienced as a challenge to professional identity, encompassing two uncertainties and a single coping strategy. The seventh uncertainty concerns authorial identity. In reflecting on the nature of their profession, journalists examine whether and to what extent they create unique content rather than machine-generated output. Many participants highlighted the importance of credibility in journalism. They emphasized that human oversight remains foundational to this concept, supported by research, indicating that levels of public trust in AI-integrated journalism are contingent on the degree to which humans oversee its integration (Molla & Ahsan, 2025). Participants identified themselves as writers and asserted that their role should continue to involve authorship of the primary creative act of writing and reject the idea of delegating this act to language models, as delegating authorship could lead to the demise of the profession, citing that their work is an “art” or “craft” as opposed to assembly line production (Trapova & Mezei, 2022). Globo employees argued that AI cannot understand contextual nuances such as irony, and therefore established a boundary: AI is well-suited to perform mechanical tasks involving repetitive versions of articles, whereas creative reporting is uniquely the domain of humans, which is in agreement with Chen and He (2026). As interviewees stated:

The main risk, in my view, is delegating critical thinking to the tool. That cannot happen....There’s a very big difference between creating a story’s text and repurposing it, making a shorter version of that text for another distribution platform. Creating the story’s text is a creative activity.

The eighth uncertainty concerns vocal identity. Data collected from Globo illustrates an important editorial decision-making issue when considering using AI to digitally reproduce the voice of a prominent Brazilian journalist who had passed away. This example illustrates many of the complexities associated with emerging technologies that offer new avenues for developing narratives in the news industry, but raise additional

concerns about media manipulation and authenticity. The thought experiment of reproducing a deceased journalist's voice via AI raises questions concerning the limits of truthful journalistic representation and the right to disseminate information utilizing artificial means. Ultimately, Globo decided not to produce the AI-generated voice of the deceased journalist, grounding the decision in the profession's essential principles. Specifically: "We discussed it and came to the conclusion that journalism, at least for us, is synonymous with truth. So, we weren't going to falsify her voice."

Globo staff equated journalism with truth, thus establishing an ethical barrier to protect their profession's authority. According to Amigo and Porlezza (2025), journalistic authority is socially constructed through the human stamp that exists between journalists and their audiences. Globo's refusal to "falsify" the journalist's voice exemplifies a deliberate rejection of the artificial simulation of human identity.

The coping strategy at this level is cognitive extension. Staff members at Globo described a process of technological incorporation wherein AI operates as an "extended memory" and an "extension of the mind." Globo employees compared AI technology to a biological tympanic membrane that senses and transmits external stimuli for the human brain. Staff members articulated that AI serves as a cognitive prosthetic, enabling rapid "shallow" access to vast amounts of knowledge:

We used to compare the telephone at the time, which was the pinnacle of technology, to an eardrum. Because the eardrum has this function of sensing what is on the outside, translating it, and bringing it into our brain. And the cell phone is kind of an extension of the eardrum....It's really cool, because it gives you shallow but linear access, let's say, to everything. There you are, with this access to everything, right? That's pretty much what this extended memory is.

I think we are very much in a phase of understanding what it can be, how we'll be able to integrate this as an extension of ourselves, as an extension of our minds.

As Matsiola and Pilitsidou (2025) have stated, today's newsrooms are hybrid socio-technical systems in which human journalists interact with non-human algorithmic agents (AI algorithms) to produce news collaboratively.

Practically speaking, Globo employees applied these ideas in accordance with Thäsler-Kordonouri and Koliska's (2025) hybrid scenario model for integrating AI into professional workflows. Herein, Globo utilized AI-based solutions to improve efficiency without diminishing employee control over workflow operations.

4.5. A Framework for Classifying Uncertainties in AI-Driven Newsrooms

In addition to being an important practical contribution, this research's primary theoretical contribution is the development of a framework for classifying uncertainties in AI-driven newsrooms. The framework serves as a type II theory or "theory for explaining" (Gregor, 2006, p. 624). It illustrates how and why phenomena occur in their natural environments rather than providing predictive statements about those occurrences. The authors describe the framework as a possible provisional framework instead of a validated one. The framework's categories were developed based on the experiences of a single legacy incumbent. The authors believe that the categories will apply to larger, more resource-rich organizations and will need additional experience in medium-sized and digital-native news organizations in Brazil and other parts of the Global South before they can be generalized.

Together, these findings demonstrate that uncertainty flows across multiple levels. Macro-level uncertainty, such as technological uncertainty or regulatory ambiguity, creates organizational tension at the meso-level. Those same organizational tensions produce internalized identity issues at the micro-level. While journalists' identity-related issues at the micro-level lead to responses to uncertainty (i.e., defending their authorial boundaries), those responses then become part of organizational practices. They establish and stabilize organizational routines. They limit the degree to which the organization may integrate AI into its operations.

This framework has identified three interconnected levels at which uncertainty is experienced—macro (ecosystem), meso (organization), and micro (identity)—and is managed through boundary-setting activities, in which journalists identify which functions can be transferred to AI and which cannot. At the macro-level, the ecosystem provides factual uncertainty and necessitates continuous adjustment. These adjustments are made possible by a verification workflow that supports a “trust but verify” approach. The ecosystem limits the extent to which AI can function independently by restricting its autonomy. At the meso-level, organizational factors create uncertainty about skill gaps, ambiguities regarding AI use, and whether to use archives versus new forms of content. Organizational stability is achieved when existing practices continue alongside leaders who permit experimentation and tolerate failure. At the micro-level, uncertainty challenges professional identity, specifically authorship and the use of synthetic voice, and journalists respond using cognitive extension to define AI as a tool that extends memory, yet preserves editorial judgment (see Figure 1).

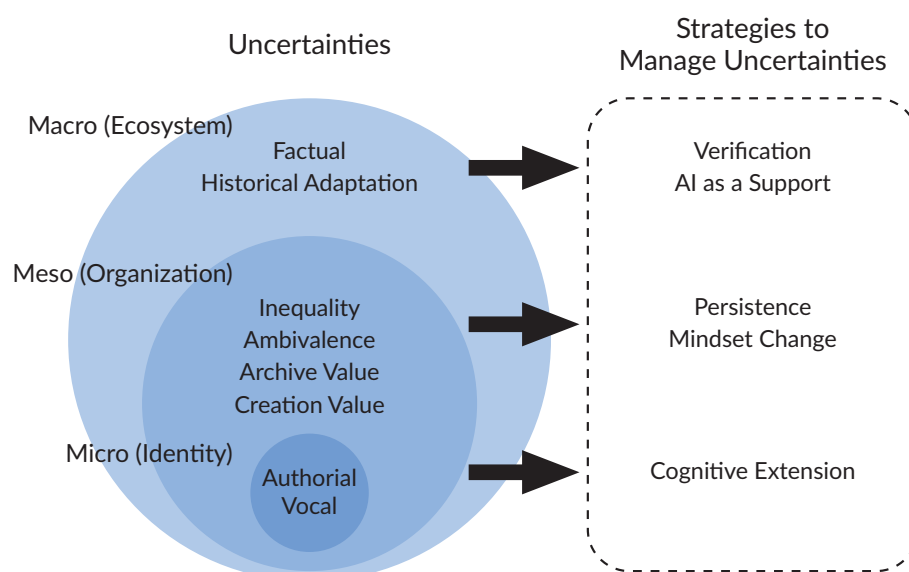


Figure 1. Framework for classifying uncertainties in AI-driven newsrooms.

Supplemental Material 1 (S3) formally represents the constitutive elements of the framework according to Gregor's (2006) categorization scheme for Type II theories, defining each theoretical element of the case.

5. Conclusion

The study enhances the existing body of knowledge on GAI adoption in journalism by demonstrating that uncertainty is a structural element of the evolution of the newsroom, and as such experienced across the

three analytical levels—ecosystem (macro), organization (meso), and identity (micro)—and thereby activating different but connected means of dealing with uncertainty. More than classifying, the framework for classifying uncertainty in AI-driven newsrooms portrays uncertainty as a relationally constructed and distributed phenomenon that comes into existence, flows through, and is dealt with in multiple ways across the different levels. Where media organizations work as customers of technology they have no control over, uncertainty will become a key organizational principle shaping both practice and professional identity.

To date, there is little qualitative evidence on GAI adoption in Globo, one of the largest media groups in Latin America. This case shows how GAI adoption occurs in a company that is highly dominant in its local market, but highly dependent on global supply chains—a situation that has been relatively unexplored in research on Global North incumbent companies and Global South resource-constrained media outlets. For non-WEIRD newsrooms, the framework functions as a diagnostic instrument for mapping each level onto organizational decisions: verification procedures and AI-supported journalistic practice at the macro-level; training, coordination, archive management, and licensing policy at the meso-level; and authorship conventions and transparency at the micro-level. The proprietary archive thus represents a strategic asset for Globo in Brazil.

Together, the results indicate that GAI adoption in journalism constitutes much more than a simple technical change, but rather a multi-level negotiation process concerning the limits of knowledge, authority, and human action in journalism under conditions of continuous uncertainty.

5.1. Limitations and Future Research

There are limitations to this study. One limitation is that the empirical base consists of a single case study of Globo, a large legacy media group. The specific business demands, conflicts, and corresponding strategies found within this business environment may not align with those of smaller or digital-native news organizations in Brazil and/or other parts of the Global South. The model proposed should therefore be seen as a fundamental, “possible” framework requiring further empirical examination and validation before its overall usefulness and validity are confirmed. Another limitation is that, while the sampling was designed to span hierarchically defined levels and AI-literacy-defined roles, it was biased towards executives, innovation managers, and technology and legal professionals, so some conclusions—especially regarding the macro-level—might reflect strategic viewpoints typical of large, resource-abundant organizations. A third limitation is that the data represent a time-specific snapshot. Thus, the composition of uncertainties depicted in this study may evolve as instruments and regulatory frameworks/guidelines emerge, thereby restricting the replicability of the specific pattern observed. From a qualitative methodology point of view, these limitations do not affect the significance of the findings theoretically. The naturalistic generalization (Stake, 2010, p. 198) criterion allows for small-scale “petite generalizations” that users and practitioners can transpose into analogous environmental conditions, rather than claims of statistical representativeness.

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Conflict of Interests

Author Luna Paladino holds a position in Strategy and Governance in Technology at Globo. The views, findings, and conclusions expressed in this article are solely those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of Globo.

Data Availability

Data supporting the findings of this study can be made available upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

LLMs Disclosure

Large language model tools, specifically Claude (Anthropic) and NotebookLM (Google), were used during the research and writing process to support literature review, note-taking, and translation tasks.

Supplementary Material

Supplemental Material 1 contains: S1 is the characteristics of participants; S2 is the inventory of secondary qualitative data; S3 is the theory for explaining (Type II) applied to the Globo case study. Supplementary Material 2 contains the coding structure (PDF). Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the author (unedited).

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