

MEJO 141 Media Ethics Take-Home Exam

How Can Artificial Intelligence (AI) Improve News Coverage of Marginalized Groups for Social Change?

Section 1: Evaluation of Long-Form Industry Report

Complete Reference Citation

Gillespie, T. (2024). Generative AI and the politics of visibility. *Big Data & Society*, 11(2), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20539517241252131>

Article Length: ~ 6,450 words

Key Takeaways

Takeaway 1

Media visibility continues to be deeply connected to political and social equity, causing marginalized communities to be frequently underrepresented or stereotyped within mainstream journalism. Gillespie (2024) argues that generative AI could help disrupt these historical patterns by expanding the diversity and volume of localized reporting. Smaller news organizations can use AI tools to process not only interviews, but town hall transcripts, oral history, and community records that otherwise receive little journalistic attention. This results in the creation of opportunities for minority perspectives to become more integrated into everyday news coverage.

Takeaway 2

Many newsrooms are beginning to use generative AI to reduce what is seen as mundane and time consuming administrative reporting tasks such as data sorting, summarization, and the formatting public documents. Gillespie (2024) explains that this efficiency is particularly important for underfunded local news organizations serving marginalized communities. By

automating repetitive technical work, journalists can devote more attention to investigative reporting, accountability journalism that involves rigorous and extensive fact checking and deeper engagement with community issues.

Takeaway 3

Generative AI systems also provide multilingual communication capabilities that can improve access to important civic information. Gillespie (2024) highlights how AI can simplify complicated public health, legal, or financial information while simultaneously translating stories into multiple languages. This allows news organizations to better serve immigrant populations, lower-literacy audiences, and historically excluded communities that may otherwise struggle to access critical public information.

Takeaway 4

Despite these opportunities, the article strongly warns that generative AI systems often reproduce historical discrimination because they are trained on biased human-created datasets. Gillespie (2024) explains that without careful editorial oversight, AI systems can reinforce racial stereotypes, sexism, and cultural erasure. As a result, journalists must apply human judgment, transparency, and ethical review processes when integrating AI into reporting practices.

Takeaway 5

The report ultimately argues that AI should not simply be used to maximize newsroom efficiency or corporate profit. Instead, generative AI should function as a participatory media tool that amplifies underrepresented voices and strengthens democratic dialogue. Gillespie (2024) emphasizes that ethical AI implementation depends on prioritizing community experiences and intentionally incorporating marginalized perspectives into the reporting process.

Overall Evaluation of the Article

This article provides a strong and balanced analysis of how generative AI intersects with journalism, representation, and media ethics. One of the article's greatest strengths is that Gillespie does not portray AI as either entirely positive or entirely dangerous. Instead, the report carefully examines both the opportunities and ethical risks associated with automated media production. The article connects AI technology to larger conversations about the visibility, power, and representation in journalism. The article also closely aligns with core principles of the SPJ Code of Ethics, particularly the responsibilities to minimize harm and give voice to underrepresented communities. Overall, this report demonstrates that AI can improve news coverage of marginalized groups, but only when human oversight, ethical accountability, and intentional inclusivity remain central to newsroom decision-making.

Section 2: Analysis of Peer-Reviewed Literature

Complete Reference Citation

Capraro, V., et al. (2024). The impact of generative artificial intelligence on socioeconomic inequalities and policymaking. *PNAS Nexus*, 3(6), pgae191.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/pnasnexus/pgae191>

Key Takeaways

Takeaway 1

The authors argue that generative AI has the ability to both reduce and worsen existing socioeconomic inequalities. While AI tools can increase access to information and content creation, they can also accelerate misinformation and deepen existing structural inequities if implemented irresponsibly. This creates significant ethical concerns for journalism organizations attempting to report fairly on marginalized populations.

Takeaway 2

The study explains that AI systems can personalize information delivery in ways that make complex political, economic, or scientific information easier for audiences to understand. For underserved communities, this personalization could help reduce educational and informational barriers by presenting news in more accessible and culturally relevant formats.

Takeaway 3

Capraro et al. (2024) also argue that current government regulations in the United States and Europe have not adequately addressed how generative AI affects social inequality. Existing policies largely focus on copyright or privacy issues while failing to confront how algorithms prioritize engagement-driven content that may sideline nuanced reporting about vulnerable communities.

Takeaway 4

The article repeatedly emphasizes that generative AI systems inherit the racial, cultural, and gender biases embedded within their training data. Without strong editorial oversight, journalists risk reproducing harmful stereotypes or excluding minority perspectives from automated content generation. Ethical journalism therefore requires continuous auditing and monitoring of AI-generated outputs.

Takeaway 5

The researchers conclude that meaningful social change will require collaboration between policymakers, journalists, ethicists, and technology developers. The article stresses that AI systems should be guided by public interest goals rather than solely by corporate profit motives. Transparent and ethical implementation is necessary if AI is going to support democratic inclusion instead of reinforcing inequality.

Overall Evaluation of the Article

This peer-reviewed article is highly valuable because it combines media ethics, public policy, economics, and technology into one interdisciplinary analysis of generative AI. The study is particularly effective at demonstrating that AI is not neutral technology. Instead, the authors show how AI systems reflect the priorities, biases, and inequalities already present within society. I found the discussion of regulation especially important because it highlighted how technological innovation often develops faster than ethical safeguards or legal protections. The article also provides useful practical recommendations for ensuring that AI tools support inclusive journalism rather than harmful misinformation or exclusion. Overall, this source strongly supports the argument that AI can improve coverage of marginalized groups only when journalists actively prioritize ethical responsibility and public accountability.

Section 3: Analysis of Data-Driven Research

Complete Reference Citation

Hosseini, D. D. (2024). Generative AI: A problematic illustration of the intersections of racialized gender, race, ethnicity. Open Science Framework.

<https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/987ra>

Key Takeaways

Takeaway 1

Hosseini (2024) uses a mixed-method empirical approach to analyze how generative AI image systems represent marginalized identities. Through repeated prompt testing using AI-generated visual tools, the study found that AI systems frequently default to dominant Western stereotypes unless users intentionally intervene with highly specific prompts. This demonstrates how AI systems often fail to produce diverse representation naturally.

Takeaway 2

The research found that AI-generated visuals consistently reinforced racialized and gendered stereotypes, particularly when depicting working-class or minority individuals. These outputs often reflected biased assumptions regarding occupation, appearance, and social status. For journalism organizations using AI-generated visuals in news coverage, these patterns present serious ethical risks.

Takeaway 3

The study concludes that AI systems require active human oversight and bias-mitigation strategies if they are going to support fair representation in journalism. Hosseini (2024) argues that journalists must be trained to recognize algorithmic bias and carefully evaluate AI-generated content before publication. Human editorial judgment remains essential in protecting accurate and equitable representation.

Overall Evaluation of the Article

This research article is especially important because it moves beyond theoretical concerns and provides measurable evidence demonstrating how generative AI systems reproduce harmful stereotypes. Rather than discussing bias in abstract terms, Hosseini directly analyzes the outputs generated by AI systems and documents recurring patterns of racialized and gendered representation. The article effectively shows that AI integration into journalism cannot simply be viewed as a technical advancement. Instead, it represents an ongoing ethical challenge that requires continuous human accountability. I found this source particularly valuable because it clearly demonstrated how easily automated systems can reinforce social inequalities if journalists rely too heavily on AI without proper oversight or ethical reflection.

Section 4: Experiential Learning Reflection

This take-home exam was both challenging and valuable because it required independent research, critical thinking, and ethical analysis rather than memorization of lecture material. Instead of simply repeating classroom discussions, I had to actively evaluate scholarly research, long-form journalism, and empirical studies related to artificial intelligence and media ethics. The assignment also reinforced how quickly digital media technologies evolve and how important it is for journalists to continuously evaluate the ethical consequences of new communication tools.

One of the most interesting aspects of this assignment was recognizing how generative AI can simultaneously create opportunities for inclusion while also reinforcing existing inequalities. Before researching these sources, I mainly viewed AI as a tool that increased efficiency or automation within journalism. However, these articles demonstrated that AI also influences whose stories become visible, whose voices are prioritized, and how communities are represented within media systems.

This project also strengthened my understanding of the SPJ Code of Ethics and its relevance within emerging technologies. Concepts such as minimizing harm, seeking truth, and giving voice to marginalized groups became much more concrete while analyzing these studies. I realized that ethical journalism cannot simply rely on technological advancement alone. Human judgment, accountability, and cultural awareness remain necessary in order to ensure that AI contributes positively to democratic communication and social change.

Overall this assignment demonstrated that media ethics is constantly evolving alongside technology. Journalists and media professionals must remain adaptable, critically aware, and ethically responsible as AI becomes increasingly integrated into modern news production.

References

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