International Journal of Communication 16(2022), 4293–4315 1932–8036/20220005

"Let's Check it Seriously": Localizing Fact-Checking Practice in China

YUSI LIU
RUIMING ZHOU
Zhejiang University, China

This study explores emerging fact-checking service in China and how it operates in China's context. News articles from *Fact Check*, the first fact-checker in China, are analyzed in comparison with *PolitiFact* in the United States (N = 379). Results show that fact-checking in China, in its start-up phase, pursues a weakened form, concentrates on health issues, and avoids discussion of hardcore public issues such as political, economic, and other current affairs. Despite journalists and various specialists making efforts on fact-checking items, it exposes the inadequate, fragmented even distorted journalistic culture in China's fact-checking practice. Further studies can employ qualitative approaches to get insights into how fact-checking practitioners perceive this news genre in authoritarian China at a mesolevel.

Keywords: fact-checking, China, journalistic professionalism

Fact-checking has become an innovative news genre to revitalize the journalistic norm of facticity in the so-called "post-truth" age. Scholars argue that fact-checking would enhance the public's understanding of political behavior and affect their political evaluation (Gottfried, Hardy, Winneg, & Jamieson, 2013; Wintersieck, 2017). Previous studies mainly focus on the mechanisms and strategies to effectively reduce public misunderstanding, as well as conditions to improve their ability to discern "fake news" circulating on social media (Ciampaglia et al., 2015; Clayton et al., 2020; Young, Jamieson, Poulsen, & Goldring, 2018). There are also researchers who have examined the typology of political statement checking (Coddington, Molyneux, & Lawrence, 2014), evaluation of post-check responses from politicians (Shin & Thorson, 2017), and motivations for fact-checking (Graves, Nyhan, & Reifler, 2016). In general, fact-checking is considered an experimental tool in journalistic practice to maintain "the fourth estate" (Graves, 2016, p. 111).

Since FactCheck.org was launched in the United States in 2003, the fact-checking movement has proliferated globally (Amazeen, 2020). According to the report released by Duke Reporter's Lab, 378 active fact-checking projects have been identified in 105 countries—more than half of the nations in the world. With over half of fact-checkers operating in North America and Europe, organizations in South America and Africa each account for about 10% of the global fact-checking family (Stencel, Ryan, & Luther, 2022). As a

Yusi Liu: liuyusi@zju.edu.cn
Ruiming Zhou (corresponding author): zhouruiming@zju.edu.cn
Date submitted: 2021-07-29

transnational professional movement, fact-checking provides a new direction for journalists from different journalistic cultures as well as practitioners in other fields to consider whether and how professional journalism can go global. Although varying in missions, practices, and organizational forms, various fact-checking groups are united by their shared interest in promoting democratic discourse and accountable government. The mission of judging public truth requires these allegiances to promote their professional journalistic ideals, such as accuracy and impartiality. But these ideals may be understood and practiced in different journalistic cultures (Graves, 2018). In recent years, there has been a gradual increase in research on the global movement of fact-checking journalism (Feng, Tsang, & Lee, 2021; Haigh, Haigh, & Kozak, 2017; Khaldarova & Pantti, 2016; Martínez-Carrillo & Tamul, 2019), and some comparative studies have been conducted to examine the differences in fact-checking practices across countries (Graves, 2018; Humprecht, 2020). However, considering the global spread of fact-checking practices, little has been known about the fact-checking practices in non-English-speaking, non-western, and nondemocratic countries.

As for China's media, on the one hand, the state market consolidates its power by promoting a consumer culture that nurtures and satisfies social desires; on the other hand, the state market also promotes regulatory discourses through the media in a way that both constrains and promotes these discourses (Ma, 2000). China's unique model of a market-oriented design without a foundation in democracy, preference for dependency over legal authority, and strong authoritarian tradition have led to its categorization, along with Russia, the Middle East, and South America, as transformed and mixed societies that are outside the quadrants of freedom regulation and democracy authoritarianism (Curran & Park, 2000). Therefore, comparing the journalistic practice in China with its counterparts in the democratic world may provide a broader perspective to understanding journalistic innovation in an authoritarian regime.

This study locates at the intersection of a global journalistic movement and idiosyncratic media regimes. Through content analysis of news articles from fact-checking organizations in the United States and China, we aim to identify how a news genre originated in a democratic media system is localized in an authoritarian media environment. Specifically, this study mainly compares the claims selection and checking procedures of fact-checking projects in the two countries and provides a general description of the localization of fact-checking journalism in China.

Literature Review

Fact-checking is a news genre that uses an evidence-based approach to assess political claims. It usually consists of claims, evidence, and judgments. Generally, fact-checking practitioners provide evidence of facts; checked claims must be facts rather than opinions. Evidence is deployed to support or falsify claims and to help authors or third-party agencies make judgments about veracity (Coddington et al., 2014). If "information is the currency of democracy," misinformation challenges the quality of democratic self-governance (Kuklinski, Quirk, Jerit, Schwieder, & Rich, 2000, p. 791). Fact-checking is advocated by practitioners to tackle the problems caused by misinformation and thus can be understood as a democracy-building tool that emerges where democratic institutions are perceived to be weak or threatened. It should be noted that it is the professional motivations of journalism rather than the demands from the audience that function as the main driving forces to prompt political fact-checking (Graves et al., 2016), demonstrated

by the desires to deal with the decline of journalism, easy access to technology for the masses, and socio-political strife (Amazeen, 2020).

The global movement of fact-checking diversifies across different countries. For example, Humprecht (2019) found significant differences in source transparency of eight fact-checking organizations from four countries (United States, United Kingdom, Germany, and Austria). Her study indicated that the level of source transparency is related to the characteristics of the information environment and the type of fact-checking organization. At the state level, journalistic professionalism appears to drive the provision of source transparency. At the organizational level, independent fact-checking agencies are more likely to make their sources transparent so that users can understand and trace the process of correction. Interestingly, the low trust environment has no significant major impact on source transparency. Some differences emerge at the professional level. Scholars in Hong Kong have investigated how fact-checking is related to the dynamics of mobilization and counter-mobilization in the context of protest movements by examining the performance of two fact-checking agencies during the Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement. The results show that while fact-checking agencies exhibit a relative partisan bias, having a partisan stance does not necessarily erase concerns about professionalism and credibility (Feng et al., 2021). Scholars have also explored the perceived roles of fact-checkers, focusing on practitioners' widely divergent views on a range of value propositions such as the boundaries of activism and partisanship (Amazeen, 2019; Mena, 2019; Singer, 2018).

Graves (2018) has provided a framework for conducting a comparative study of fact-checking, which is helpful to gain a comprehensive understanding of the mission, goals, and specific practices of global fact-checking projects. This research adopts the two approaches advocated by Graves (2018): (a) doing comparative content analysis to highlight possible effects of institutional ties beyond journalism; (b) focusing on differences in the targets of fact-checking, to locate the media-political space occupied by fact-checkers. Clarifying the political-economic environment in which the practice settles is an important prerequisite to understanding fact-checking practice in China.

Formerly entrenched in a party-controlled media system, media in China has moved toward commercialization and conglomeration since the 1990s. The emergence of widely circulated newspapers such as *Southern Metropolis Daily* (Nanfang Dushibao), *Guangzhou Daily* (Guangzhou Ribao), and *The Beijing News* (Xin Jing Bao) marked the localizing practice of journalistic professionalism in the country (Pan & Lu, 2003). The growth of market-oriented media and decline of state intervention has allowed China's media system to evolve beyond a party mouthpiece (Hanitzsch, 2007). Empirical studies show that objective reporting has been competing with propaganda in journalism practice in China; overall, the country has experienced a paradigm shift from propaganda to journalism (Pan & Chan, 2003). The notion of a fourth estate has become crucial to practitioners, but scholars hold contrasting opinions about this phenomenon. Optimists believe that this is a peaceful evolution that bids farewell to the authoritarian media system (Huang, 1994). However, other scholars argue that freedom of expression is still limited in China, despite that mass media engages in competition for audience and advertising revenue and the political parallelism of China's media system starts to de-parallel (Shirk, 2011).

When a media system functions as a tool for party-run public relations, it does not fully follow the logic of the market (Lee, He, & Huang, 2006), because it is always subordinate to the China Communist Party (CCP), the only ruling party in China, so the configuration of marketization and conglomeration is better regarded as a strategy to use media operation and coerced under the state apparatus (Zhao, 2000). As absolute loyalty to the CCP must be safeguarded, China's media system has experienced only bounded innovation in which journalists rely on improvisation and guerrilla tactics rather than organizational routines to expand the boundaries of journalistic discourse (Pan, 2010; Tong, 2007). In short, media regime reorientation toward the market cannot be theorized as a process of democratization (Blumell, Qiu, & Peaslee, 2016). According to the elite continuity theory, these attempts by the members of the former bureaucratic ruling class are to reorganize themselves and become owners of private capital (Sparks, 2008).

Fact-checking practices in China may reflect the fragmentations of global news culture. This discontinuity is focused on fact-checking process in four ways (Lawrence & Schafer, 2012). First, the subject of claims refers to the general news field to which the initial statement belongs (Coddington et al., 2014). Second, the source of claims focuses on whether fact-checking indicates a verifiable source of information and whether it is true. This contributes to an assessment of the completeness and standardization of fact-checking and leads to avoidance of words such as "hearsay" for proof of substitution when a checker claims to have evidence but cannot provide it. Third, the verifiability of the subject of fact-checking lies in whether the claim contains facts that can be checked. If it cannot be determined whether the information presented is fact or opinion, both the fact-checker and the public will have no verified basis against which to check (Merpert, Furman, Anauati, Zommer, & Taylor, 2018). Distinguishing between fact and opinion remains a significant challenge, even for well-educated adults (Kuhn, 2010). When media and information are proliferating simultaneously, the media literacy skill of critically evaluating sources and the quality of their information is unevenly distributed across all classes of society (Maksl, Ashley, & Craft, 2015), which may pose a threat to active and responsible civic engagement. Fourth, fact-checking sources of claims can be classified into different types of questions, depending on the extent to which the creator of the information has the intention to deceive others (Kruger, 2017). This is because problematic information includes, at a minimum, misinformation and disinformation. The term disinformation, especially when a government agency deliberately releases information to confuse the public, is different from misinformation caused by unintentional human error. A creator of disinformation had the intention of deceiving others in the first place (Frank, 2015). Accordingly, this study raises the following questions:

RQ1: What are the components of professional performance of fact-checking in China?

RQ1a: How does fact-checking in China differ from that in the United States in terms of choice of subjects?

RQ1b: How does fact-checking in China differ from that in the United States in terms of sources?

RQ1c: How does fact-checking in China differ from that in the United States in terms of verifiability of claims?

RQ1d: How does fact-checking in China differ from that in the United States in terms of types of questions?

In a media environment that is saturated with information, journalism must decide which facts are true and reliable, sorting out what is credible and accurate amidst growing debate from all sides (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2010). Fact-checking takes place under the norms of objectivity that are demanded by journalistic professionalism and it reflects the epistemology of journalistic culture, an inquiry into the nature of knowledge, the nature of accredited evidence, and the criteria of validity that allows one to distinguish false from true and possible from actual (Anderson & Baym, 2004). Traditionally, objectivity has been defined as the separation of fact from opinion. Journalists report only the facts (Schudson, 2001), a premise of positivism's strict dichotomy between objectivity and subjectivity (Wien, 2005). In practice, the norm itself is perceived as neutral and balanced and encourages journalists to remain neutral while reporting the news (Chalaby, 1996), which provides a degree of protection from criticism and serves as a strategic ritual (Tuchman, 1978). Journalists often succeed in maintaining neutrality and adhere to a "he said/she said" style of reporting that is committed to quoting both sides of a dispute and letting the reader decide the truth, a tradition known as professional objectivity (Tuchman, 1978). Objectivity, the dominant defining viewpoint of American journalistic professionalism has carried over into the practice of fact-checking (Lawrence & Schafer, 2012).

However, in the pursuit of professional objectivity, journalists are often hesitant to judge the truth (Jamieson & Waldman, 2003). If left unchecked, such formulaic reporting would render the truth in everyday news unrecognizable, as claims in public discourse can be justified as news, regardless of their veracity (Ettema & Glasser, 1998). This ritualized objectivity, which some scholars refer to as procedural objectivity (Lawrence & Schafer, 2012), makes journalists and the public more susceptible to the influence of powerful sources on scientific and technical information, such as opponents of public health and environmental regulations (Michaels & Monforton, 2005). The balancing of procedural objectivity against the claims and counterclaims of political competitors may not only obscure the issue but may also frustrate political accountability, undermine public understanding, and reduce citizens' confidence in their ability to distinguish between truth and fiction (Pingree, 2011).

With the recent development of computer-assisted reporting and data-driven journalism, there have been calls for scientific objectivity as an integral part of professional norms, which has even been advocated as a method of validating the core elements of journalism. To break the inherent stalemate of professional objectivity, hypotheses should be tested on the basis of the scientific method and conclusions should be drawn and announced based on the weight of evidence (Streckfuss, 1990). Practitioners have advocated for three elements of the scientific method that are currently missing from the fact-checking process—claim, evidence, and judgment—to be included as key components in practical procedures and rules (Coddington et al., 2014). This is why, as part of the critical facts, it is particularly important to determine whether fact-checking uses valid evidence to refute or support claims. Moreover, fact-checkers should make their judgments public and work to improve the accuracy of the representation of various types of public discourse through methodological transparency and reproducibility, that is, the pursuit of scientific objectivity (Graves, 2016). If simply reporting claims and counterclaims and leaving readers to make their own judgments could be seen as a key feature of ritualized or procedural objectivity of fact-checking, then scientific objectivity places a further requirement on fact-checking, namely the realization of substantial objectivity. That is, fact-checking journalism should go beyond faithful reflections of the key political players' claims and make further judgments about the accuracy of those claims according to the needs of the audience or user. Since the judgment of the author may be the

continuity of balancing strategy, the substantive objectivity of giving third-party evidence is more in line with the goal of scientific objectivity. According to Lawrence and Schafer (2012), Table 1 shows the difference between the source of the claim, the judgment of the author, and the judgment of the third party among four levels of substantive degree of objectivity.

Table 1. The Substantive Degree of Objectivity.

The Substantive Degree of Objectivity	Claim Sources	Author's Judgment	Third Party's Judgment
Not Objective	×	×	×
Procedural/Professional Objectivity	√	×	×
Less Direct Substantive/Scientific Objectivity	√	√	×
Substantive/Scientific Objectivity	√	√	√

Note. Adapted from Lawrence and Schafer (2012).

Based on the above theoretical resources, we propose the following research questions:

RQ2: How is fact-checking specifically practiced in China?

RQ2a: How does fact-checking in China differ from that in the United States in terms of principles of objective reporting?

RQ2b: How does fact-checking in China differ from that in the United States in terms of types of evidence?

RQ2c: How does fact-checking in China differ from that in the United States in terms of subjects of judgment?

RQ2d: How does fact-checking in China differ from that in the United States in terms of the use of claim evidence?

RQ2e: How does fact-checking in China differ from that in the United States in terms of data evidence?

Methods

To clarify the fact-checking practices in China, this study compares a fact-checking organization in China with a fact-checking organization in the democratic media system of the United States. The method of content analysis is used to empirically test what the two media organizations consider worth checking and the process through which facts are checked in the article texts. We examine the performances of *PolitiFact* and *Fact Check* from two dimensions: the choices of claims and how they operate. Conclusions about the dynamics of authoritarian media system change are synthesized based on these results.

Case Selection

In this study, the fact-checking organizations used for analysis are *Fact Check* (Tengxun Jiaozhen) from China and *PolitiFact* from the United States. *Fact Check* is a digital fact-checker founded in 2016 by Tencent News, a privately owned online media outlet. Tencent News launched its fact-checking service first in China, including articles about viral rumors, health and nutrition, public affairs, and international politics. The posts appear on QQ.com, a commercial Web portal owned by Tencent Holdings, as well as on WeChat, which is known for social messaging services and other popular online offerings. No fact-checker was established by state-owned media until 2021. It is worth noting that privately owned online media outlets like Tencent News are only permitted to provide bounded news services online. According to the rules by the Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC), private online media holds permission only to re-edit and recirculate news pieces made by state-owned media. If privately owned media covers their stories and publishes news all by themselves, they may be refined or licenses of their online news service may be suspended or withdrawn by the CAC or its provincial branches. Nonetheless, it is the only fact-checker in mainland China identified by Duke Reporters' Lab, demonstrating its recognized professional feature and performance, such as the primary mission of news and information, produced by news media organizations and conducting nonpartisan research and reporting (Adair & Stencel, 2016). *PolitiFact* was founded in 2007 by the Florida-based *St. Petersburg Times* (formerly the *Tampa Bay Times*). It climbed to the heights of professional achievement in 2009, winning a Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting for its fact-checking of the 2008 presidential campaign. In 2018, *PolitiFact* became self-sustaining because of the journalism nonprofit Poynter Institute taking over its administrative duties. These two news organizations were chosen primarily because of their social structural location, which provides a useful perspective on power relations in media regimes that maximize disparities, and their broad social influence or professional performance in their home countries. The researchers conducted this study in early 2019. *Fact Check* has been operating routinely since late 2016. Considering the comparability of the findings, the sample of this study covers articles published by the two fact-checking organizations from 2017 to 2018.

Sampling

The unit of analysis for this study was each fact-checking article in the sample. The researchers determined the sampling rate of both fact-checking organizations to be 10% and conducted a systematic sampling of all articles published by *PolitiFact* and *Fact Check* during 2017–2018 to constitute a random sample. 379 fact-checking articles from the two organizations (268 in *PolitiFact*, 111 in *Fact Check*) were selected for analysis.

Coding Scheme

Ten percent of the articles were randomly selected as a training sample to be independently coded by two coders. The coding rule was adjusted if the intercoder agreement fails to or did not meet the standard (Krippendorff's $\alpha < .75$). The final category construction, coding scheme, and reliability of each variable were as follows.

Topics of the Checked Claims

The topics of the checked claims were coded into one of the following categories (Coddington et al., 2014): (1) economy, (2) social security, (3) health, (4) immigration or race, (5) environment, (6) gender, (7) speeches/trends of politicians, (8) energy, (9) public security, (10) personal or property safety, (11) science and technology, (12) education, and (13) other (Cohen's kappa = .906; Krippendorff's α = .907).

Sources of the Claims

Constructed by the researchers with good reliability (Cohen's kappa = .865; Krippendorff's α = .866), this variable mainly examined whether the claim belonged to verifiable sources. The claims with verifiable sources were coded as "with source" (e.g., "*Philly Rep. Sims*: Martina White Wants to Deport all Immigrants"; Dent, 2017); those with undetectable or wrong sources as "without source" (e.g., "Recently, an article on traffic regulations circulated *on the Internet*: "These four kinds of vehicles will be strictly investigated from September 1, and 5000 will be fined if their driver's license is revoked"; Liu, 2018).

Checkability of the Claims

Referring to the classification standard of the fact-checking organization (Merpert et al., 2018), the checkable facts should include the first three of the following eight categories of claims: (1) historical data (e.g., "it rained yesterday"), (2) statistics and comparisons (e.g., "it rained more in Beijing than in New York"), (3) legality (e.g., "I can have a driver's license as I am over 18 years old"), (4) opinions (e.g., "White radish cannot be eaten with acidic fruit"), (5) future projections, (6) the personal life of public figures and (7) other. Two coders achieved a high level of reliability (Cohen's kappa = 1.000; Krippendorff's α = 1.000) based on their ability to distinguish checkable claims (Barnwal, Ghelani, Krishna, Basu, & Ghosh, 2019; Farinha & Carvalho, 2018; Merpert et al., 2018) and the manifest coding of the variable.

Problematic Types of the Claims

Based on the typology of problematic information (Kruger, 2017), the problematic claims were divided into eight categories (Cohen's kappa = .968; Krippendorff's α = .968): (1) satire or parody (no intention to cause harm but has potential to fool), (2) misleading content (misleading use of information to frame an issue or individual), (3) imposter content (when genuine sources are impersonated), (4) fabricated content (new content is 100% false, designed to deceive and do harm), (5) false connection (when headlines, visuals or captions do not support the content), (6) false context (when genuine content is shared with false contextual information), (7) manipulated content (when genuine information or imagery is manipulated to deceive), and (8) other (including the claims verified as "true").

Counterclaim Evidence

This variable examined whether the fact-checking process has provided valid evidence to support or deny the claim and to help the author or a third party make a true or false claim judgment (Coddington

et al., 2014). If there was any such evidence, we further examined if it contained numbers or statistics—hard data. We also examined whether it included an official position or quote from an expert or an official document as statement evidence. The discussion above generates four categories of counterclaim evidence: (1) no evidence, (2) only data evidence, (3) only statement evidence, and (4) both data and statement evidence (Cohen's kappa = .870; Krippendorff's α = .872).

The Objectivity of Fact-Checking

The objectivity includes the degree of substantive objectivity and the type of objectivity of fact-checking. The former depended on whether the author (a decisive data source is consulted but no expert is interviewed, e.g., "Johnson said global poverty fell from 37 percent to under 10 percent since 1990. His numbers are quite close to those of the World Bank. We rate this claim Mostly True"; Cohen's kappa = 1.000; Krippendorff's α = 1.000) and the third party (quoting nonpartisan neutral sources, e.g., "An economist familiar with the assumptions behind the data told us that there's enough uncertainty in the figures that it's fair to say that Johnson has it right"; Cohen's kappa = 1.000; Krippendorff's α = 1.000) had made any judgment on the accuracy of claims with clear sources (see Sources of the Claim, above). Substantive degree of objectivity was coded as one of the following (see Table 1): (1) not objective (lack of claim sources and both the author's or third party's judgment), (2) procedural/professional objectivity (with claim sources but without the author's or third party's judgment), (3) less direct substantive/scientific objectivity (with claim sources and the author's judgment, but without the third party's) and (4) substantive/scientific objectivity (with claim sources and both the author's and the third party's judgment). Since one of the practical ways of substantive objectivity is to cite nonpartisan neutral sources for verification (Lawrence & Schafer, 2012), the situation where only the authors make a judgment without a third party is regarded as indirect substantive objectivity. The latter (type of objectivity) depended on whether the evidence (see Counterclaim Evidence, above) and the judgment of accuracy of the claim (degree of substantial objectivity) were provided in the process of fact-checking. The types of objectivity in the sample can be condensed as follows: (1) disregarded objectivity—"believe me" (no evidence but judgment), (2) professional objectivity—"stenography" (no evidence or judgment), (3) scientific objectivity—"you be the judge" (no judgment but evidence) and (4) scientific objectivity—"full fact check" (both evidence and judgment; Coddington et al., 2014).

Next, the researchers conducted statistical analyses to examine the differences between fact-checking practices in *PolitiFact* and *Fact Check*.

Results

What is Worth Checking? Different Claims Chosen by PolitiFact and Fact Check

Figure 1 shows a statistically significant difference between the two organizations about the topics of fact-checking articles (χ^2 (12) = 241.64, p < .001). The distribution of claim topics chosen by *PolitiFact* is relatively balanced, with four topics having a proportion more than 10%: political speeches/political trend (n = 74, 27.6%), the economy (n = 34, 12.7%), immigration or race (n = 29, 10.8%) and public security (n = 28, 10.4%). Though with less proportions, *PolitiFact* also covers the topics of social security (n = 19, 7.1%), education (n = 15, 5.6%) and personal and property safety (n = 10, 3.7%), as well as a small

amount of discussion about health (*n* = 8, 3.0%), environment (*n* = 8, 3.0%), gender (*n* = 8, 3.0%), energy (*n* = 3, 1.1%), and science and technology (*n* = 3, 1.1%). On the contrary, the claim topics of *Fact Check* are dominated by health issues, accounting for 71.2% (*n* = 79) of its fact-checking articles, supplemented by less articles about science and technology (*n* = 6, 5.4%), public security (*n* = 5, 4.5%), personal and property safety (*n* = 5, 4.5%), the environment (*n* = 3, 2.7%), and education (*n* = 1, .9%). In the sample of this study, *Fact Check* did not publish a single article about political trends or economics.

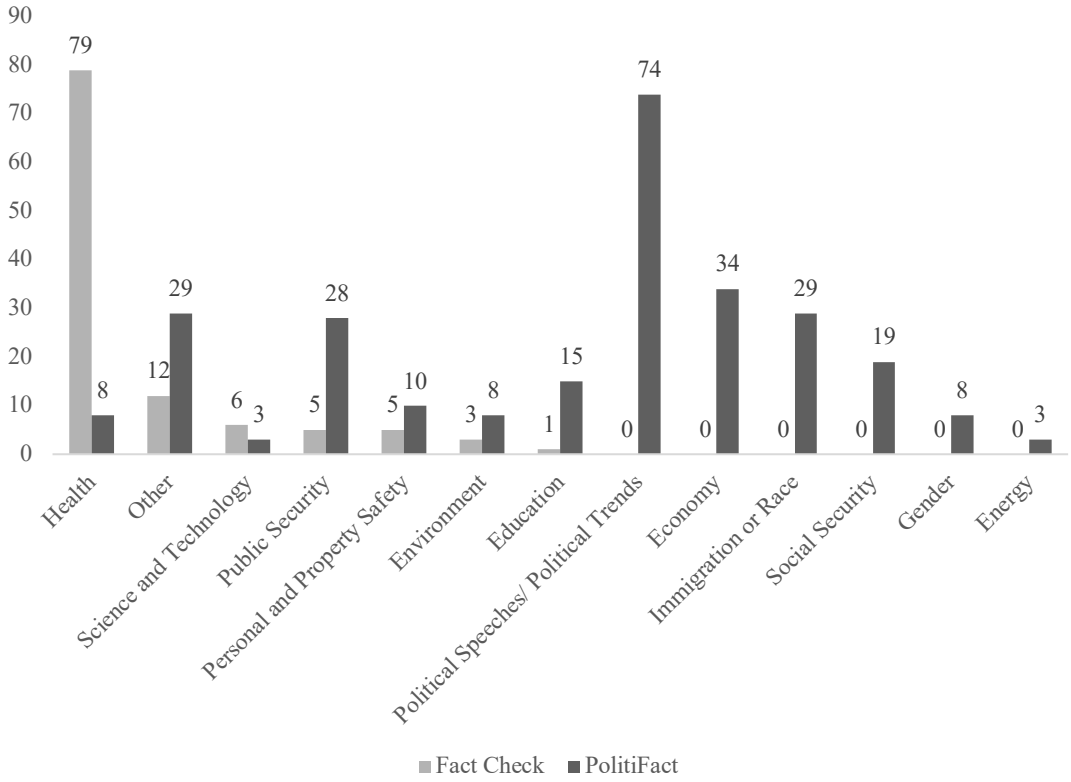

Figure 1. Topic distribution of articles by PolitiFact and Fact Check.

For the variable of sources of claim constructed by researchers, there is a significant difference between *Fact Check* and *PolitiFact* in the percentage of source labeling (χ^2 (1) = 327.98, p < .001). All checked claims from *PolitiFact* indicate clear and accurate information sources (*n* = 268, 100.0%), but only 9.9% (*n* = 11) of the claims from *Fact Check* articles are marked with information sources, with 90.1% (*n* = 100) have no clear information source. In each of these cases, the information source should, for accuracy, be replaced by the phrase "rumored online/reportedly."

There is also a significant difference in the proportion of claim checkability between *Fact Check* and *PolitiFact* (χ^2 (7) = 109.97, p < .001). Specifically (Figure 2), most of the claims checked by *PolitiFact* focus on statistics and comparisons (*n* = 115, 42.9%), followed by historical data (*n* = 103, 38.4%) and legality/qualification (*n* = 26, 9.7%). The three categories are all checkable claims, accounting for 91% of

the total subsample. On the contrary, although there are also 45.9% checkable claims on *Fact Check*, the highest proportion in this subsample is still uncheckable opinions (n = 34, 30.6%). The cumulative proportion of unverifiable claims (n = 60, 54.1%) is even higher than that of checkable claims.

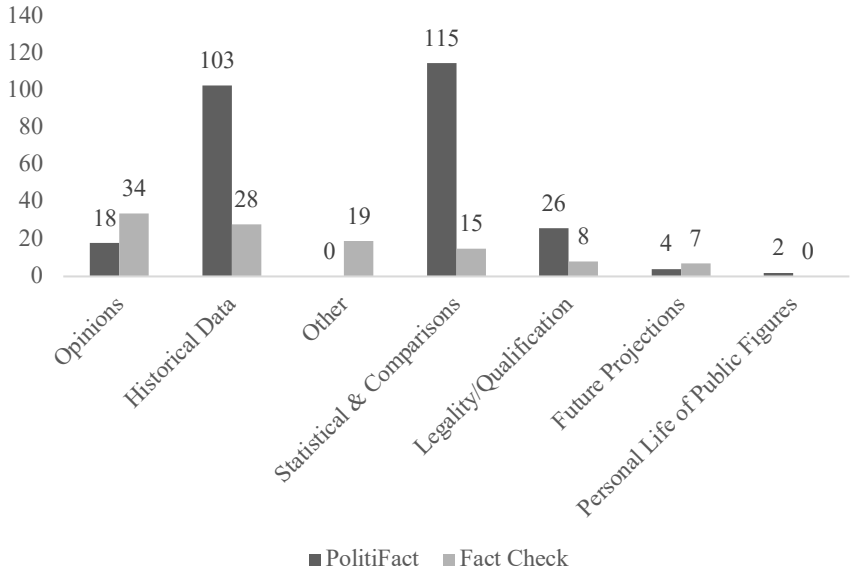

Figure 2. Claim types distribution in PolitiFact and Fact Check articles.

The investigated claims in this study are regarded as possible problematic information. The proportion of fact-checking organizations' claim choices is significantly different between the two cases (χ^2 (7) = 15.69, p < .05). In general, misleading content, false context, and fabricated content constitute the top three types of problematic information published by both *Fact Check* and *PolitiFact* (Figure 3). Among the remaining categories, *PolitiFact* examines falser context (19.4%), fabricated content (16.0%), and satirical and parody content (4.9%), but *Fact Check* pays more attention to misleading content (44.1%), manipulated content (7.2%), impostor content (2.7%), and false connection (0.9%).

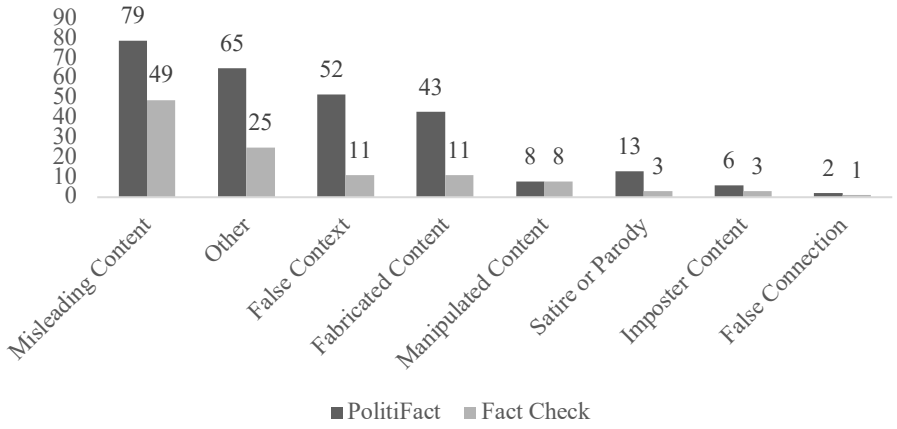

Figure 3. Distribution of claim problems in articles by PolitiFact and Fact Check.

How to Check Facts? Evidence Types and Objectivity Differences

The fact-checking practice embedded in different media systems is different not only in professional community boundaries and news value judgments, but also in news production routine manifested by fact-checking evidence types and objectivity ideals. The results show that there is a significant difference between the two organizations in terms of evidence types used (χ^2 (3) = 129.18, p < .001). Although statement evidence is more commonly used than data evidence by both organizations' fact-checkers (Figure 4), the proportion of articles with neither data nor statement evidence in *Fact Check* is 48.6%, and only 16.2% of the articles from this organization provide both types of evidence. For *PolitiFact*, 51.1% of the articles use both types of evidence, and only 3.0% provide no evidence.

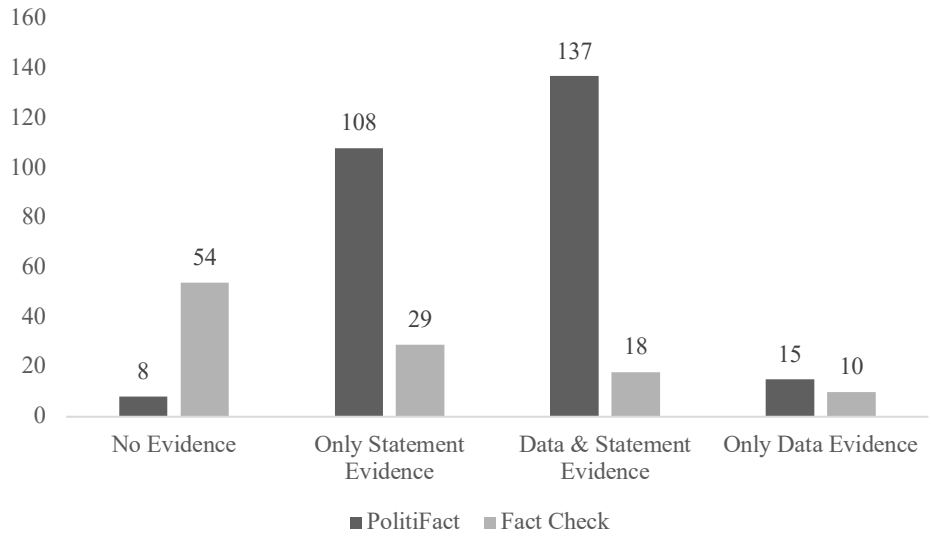

Figure 4. Type of evidence in PolitiFact and Fact Check articles.

From the perspective of objectivity (Figure 5), there is a significant difference between the two organizations about the sources of claims and the judgment of authors and third parties (χ^2 (6) = 106.06, p < .001). Without indicating any clear source, 14.4% of the articles from *Fact Check* are classified as "not objective." There are three articles classified as "procedural objectivity" (2.7%), as they do not make any judgment on the accuracy of the claims. In contrast, there are no *PolitiFact* articles falling in the two categories. *PolitiFact* has a higher proportion of articles that reach the standard of "substantive objectivity" (64.2%) than does *Fact Check* (13.5%). However, there is still a certain proportion of *PolitiFact* articles that fail to provide any third-party judgment, relying on judgments made by the author, and are categorized as "less direct substantive objectivity (35.8%)." The proportion of such articles in *PolitiFact* is much higher than in *Fact Check* (69.4%).

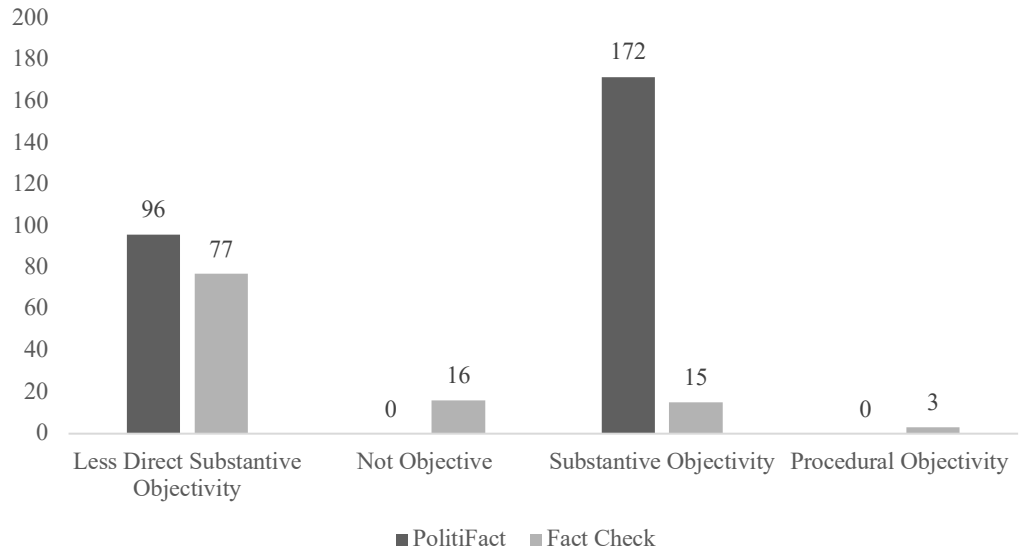

Figure 5. Objectivity level of PolitiFact and Fact Check articles.

Figure 6 shows the types of objectivity that the two organizations' fact-checkers adopt. The difference between them reached a high level of significance (χ^2 (3) = 160.32, p < .001). Specifically, the majority of articles from *PolitiFact* reach the standard of "scientific objectivity-full fact check" (n = 263, 98.1%), including both judgment and evidence. Only a few of *PolitiFact*'s articles (n = 5, 1.9%) adopt the "disregarded objectivity—believe me" type of argument that includes judgment but no evidence. Actually, journalists were not provided with decisive evidence to make their rulings. In these five "disregarded objectivity—believe me" cases, *PolitiFact* demonstrated its checking process, including relevant sources and background information, concluding its ruling based on the fallacy of this information itself. For example, on August 4, 2017, when debunking the fake news that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un was killed in a coordinated, nationwide strike by U.S. forces, Kim Jong Un's death had not been reported widely because this coordinated attack did not happen. *PolitiFact* pointed out the fallacy that the photo showing a North Korean city on fire was actually a British hospital burning. *PolitiFact* also figured out that the story originated from a website run by a self-described liberal troll that creates absurd news stories in an attempt to fool conservative readers (Gillin, 2017). Another example is on December 28, 2017, for the fake news article that Sasha Obama crashed her expensive new car into a lake; there were no credible news reports of the former president's daughter crashing her car. *PolitiFact* pointed this out and then noted no such lake was found outside Washington but there was one in Ohio. That was the point that *PolitiFact* reached in its ruling (Sherman, 2017). In contrast, there is a large proportion of articles from *Fact Check* grouped into "disregarded objectivity" (n = 44, 39.6%), and 15 articles without any evidence or judgment that are classified as "professional objectivity-stenography" (13.5%). Only 48 articles (43.2%) from *Fact Check* provide both evidence and judgment, and four articles (3.6%) use "scientific objectivity-you be the judge" arguments.

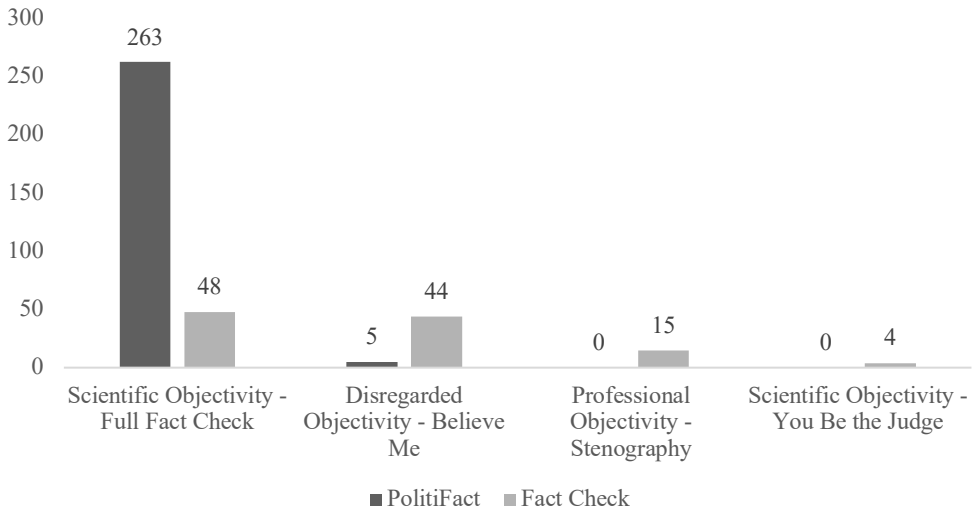

Figure 6. Types of objectivity, PolitiFact, and Fact Check articles.

Conclusion and Discussion

Based on the above analysis, this study finds significant differences in the practice of fact-checking in *PolitiFact* in the United States and *Fact Check* in China. First, there are significant differences between the two cases in the choice of claims. *PolitiFact* has a balanced distribution of themes, while *Fact Check* mainly focuses on health issues and does not involve statements about political or economic issues. Most of the verified claims in *PolitiFact* quote statistics, historical data, and legitimacy qualifications, and all of them indicate clear information sources. In *Fact Check*, the proportion of nonverifiable claims is higher than that of verifiable claims, with a high percentage of 90% indicating no clear information source. In addition, the problematic claims identified in *Fact Check* are relatively high in terms of subjective intent. Second, there are also significant differences in the ways fact-checking is operated in the two cases. In *PolitiFact*, more than half of the articles use both data-based and narrative evidence; in *Fact Check*, the proportion is less than 20%, and nearly half of the articles contain neither type of evidence. In *PolitiFact*, more than 60% of the articles give both third-party and author judgments of assertion accuracy, meeting the standard of substantive objectivity. In contrast, 70% of the articles in *Fact Check* are written with "indirect substantive objectivity," and nearly 40% of the articles make their judgments without providing sufficient evidence.

These findings provide an overview of the dynamics of fact-checking localization in China. In terms of professional performance, *Fact Check* pursues a weakened form of fact-checking. Fact-checking has been employed to clarify health-topic rumors, rather than to play the role of a watchdog. By enriching health information as checked and reliable social knowledge, fact-checking in China helps to improve public scientific literacy and, to some extent, improves public participation. Nonetheless, this kind of fact-checking avoids discussion about hardcore public issues such as political, economic, and other current affairs. When talking about the globalization of the fact-checking movement, Graves (2018) argues that there may be multiple ways of understanding and practicing the ideal of journalistic professionalism and adjudicating public truth. However,

Fact Check shows that this local journalistic innovation in China weakens or even avoids the pursuit of the truth about the public interest, although this project successfully normalizes journalistic activities in China's context. Differences in the choices of claims indicate different social roles of fact-checkers in China and the United States. *Fact Check* mainly focuses on providing references for everyday decision making and entertainment. It can hardly be concluded that this kind of so-called fact-checking is the goal of promoting democratic discourse, making an informed public and accountable government. The transformation of fact-checking into health-focused "rumor-clarifying," the avoidance of criticism and oversight of political power, and the superficial and procedural understanding of the principle of objective reporting show that fact-checking is discursively weakened and even distorted when localized in China.

In terms of the specific operation of fact-checking, *Fact Check* clearly exposes the inadequacy of professional journalism culture in practice. As researchers have argued, fact-checking is seen as a professional reform movement in the journalistic community (Amazeen, 2020). It is an activity for practitioners as well as multiple actors of training professional skills and rethinking professional culture in the journalistic field. *Fact Check* displays a collaborative scene, in which there are joint efforts of journalists and various specialists. However, the collaboration is not based on solid evidence, thus detaching journalistic culture from fact-checking. Moreover, disregarded objectivity—"Believe Me"—may create a new authority with solid ratings but loose evidence, which does not help to make citizens informed and bring awareness of checking the facticity of claims. *Fact Check* displays a fragmented even distorted journalistic culture in fact-checking practice.

With limited cases, the empirical analysis in this research is insufficient to fully explain the fact-checking localization in China. So far, *Fact Check* is the only project that has implemented fact-checking service for more than four years in China. Several emerging fact-checking projects have not yet developed a stable temporality of production. There is no other case available for a content analysis except *Fact Check*. Factors that shape *Fact Check* are likely to be multifaceted. Tencent is a private Internet firm that funded and supported *Fact Check*. Over the past two decades, the CAC keeps monitoring online news services. One of the goals of the CAC is to impose an asymmetric control that restricts private companies from conducting online news reporting. This vague control launches with patrolling and warning nonstate enterprises that they are not permitted to cover politics, economics, and other current affairs concerning public interest. Private companies are not allowed to employ journalists for news reporting, regardless of what type of Internet application (such as websites, instant messaging, or social networks) they involve. They are only authorized to distribute and curate news produced by state-owned media. By separating private enterprises from full journalistic activities, this kind of control ensures that the CCP can extend its monopoly over mass media to digital media. News services that break the rules may end up being interrupted or even terminated by the CAC. As an integral part of Tencent, *Fact Check* has to consider the legitimacy of its practice, which may constitute one of the reasons restricting *Fact Check* from involving in key public issues.

Media marketization and conglomeration in China are influenced by a "rating mentality" that values competition and individual opinions (Bourdieu, 1998; Hallin & Mancini, 2004), and the news culture mainly defends consumerism (Campbell, 2004). The role of the audience is not citizens who are concerned with social and political issues, but clients and consumers for whom the media provides help, advice, guidance, and information about the self and the management of daily life (Eide & Knight, 1999). Integration of these

functions with entertainment and relaxation encourages infotainment news and lifestyle journalism, accelerating the "materialization" of authoritarian media and news (Hanitzsch, 2007).

From a perspective of professional culture, there is seldom a consensus on the professional epistemology of journalism. In post-1949 China, journalistic activities have long played the role of the Party's mouthpiece (Cheek, 1997). Even after the market-oriented media reform in the mid-1990s, the roles of journalists are still in dispute and perceived as enlighteners and educators under the leadership of the Party, as providers of audience preferences and tastes, or as a civic community responsible for the public interest and democratic society building. With the digitization of journalism, solidarity in the journalistic community is more difficult to achieve in a time of liquid journalism (Lu & Zhou, 2016).

There is a limitation in this study that can be further addressed by future research. To avoid the disadvantages of "maximum similarity" design, the authors chose to compare fact-checking organizations from the two media regimes with the greatest differences. Although this comparative analysis is an exploratory attempt, it may fall into the category of "few cases, many variables" (Lijphart, 1971, p. 686). The embarrassment of many variables, and few cases is the inherent difficulty of examining only one case in each media regime. Attempts to ensure the representativeness of the samples and the validation of quantitative content analysis will risk in losing valid information about how the relationship between discourse and structure is produced. Therefore, observing the performance of multiple social forces in fact-checking practices can be a direction for such research. From late 2020 to 2021, two fact-checking projects focusing on international news have been launched. One is *China Fact Check* (Youju Hecha), a nonprofit project that includes a website and a social media account. It is founded by several former journalists from short-video start-ups and college journalism educators. Student volunteers from several renowned universities engage in this fact-checking service under the supervision of those former journalists. Another is *The Paper Fact Check* (Pengpai Mingcha), launched by the state-owned online media outlet *The Paper*. This Shanghai-based news organization grows from *Oriental Morning Post* (Dongfang Zaobao), which has a short but renowned professional history in the past two decades in the journalistic community in China. The international news desk is in charge of this fact-checking section. Both *China Fact Check* and *The Paper Fact Check* focus on international affairs, checking current foreign political claims. Both of them are more concerned with public issues than Tencent's *Fact Check*, which focuses more on health issues. In addition, the journalism departments of Nanjing University and the Renmin University of China have conducted a dozen fact-checking articles. Faculty and students in these two universities are both professionally oriented social actors experimenting with fact-checking through social media and have already gained social impact among journalists, journalism educators, and students. It is minimally immune to state interference and economic pressures and demonstrates a strong concern for public affairs and the practice of journalistic professionalism. Moreover, in addition to microlevel, future research can develop mesolevel research on online fact-checking organizations with qualitative approaches such as in-depth interviews, focus groups, and fieldwork, providing insights into how fact-checking practitioners perceive this news genre in authoritarian China. The follow-up study may explore whether fact-checking in China continues to present a weakened version and whether it is still based on a fragmented or even distorted culture of journalistic professionalism.

References

Adair, B., & Stencel, M. (2016, June 22). *How we identify fact-checkers*. Retrieved from https://reporterslab.org/how-we-identify-fact-checkers/

Amazeen, M. A. (2020). Journalistic interventions: The structural factors affecting the global emergence of fact-checking. *Journalism, 21*(1), 95–111. doi:10.1177/1464884917730217

Anderson, J. A., & Baym, G. (2004). Philosophies and philosophic issues in communication, 1995–2004. *Journal of Communication, 54*(4), 589–615. doi:10.1093/joc/54.4.589

Barnwal, D., Ghelani, S., Krishna, R., Basu, M., & Ghosh, S. (2019, January). Identifying fact-checkable microblogs during disasters: A classification-ranking approach. In *Proceedings of the 20th International Conference on Distributed Computing and Networking* (pp. 389–392). New York, NY: Association for Computing Machinery.

Blumell, L. E., Qiu, Y., & Peaslee, R. M. (2016). Pacifying the dragon? The role of expatriate media professionals in the gatekeeping process in China. *International Journal of Communication, 10*, 2402–2421.

Bourdieu, P. (1998). *On television and journalism*. London, UK: Pluto.

Campbell, V. (2004). *Information age journalism: Journalism in an international context*. London, UK: Arnold.

Chalaby, J. K. (1996). Journalism as an Anglo-American invention: A comparison of the development of French and Anglo-American journalism, 1830s–1920s. *European Journal of Communication, 11*(3), 303–326. doi:10.1177/0267323196011003002

Cheek, T. (1997). *Propaganda and culture in Mao's China: Deng Tuo and the intelligentsia*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Ciampaglia, G. L., Shiralkar, P., Rocha, L. M., Bollen, J., Menczer, F., & Flammini, A. (2015). Computational fact checking from knowledge networks. *PLoS One, 10*(6), e0128193. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0128193

Clayton, K., Blair, S., Busam, J. A., Forstner, S., Glance, J., Green, G., . . . Nyhan, B. (2020). Real solutions for fake news? Measuring the effectiveness of general warnings and fact-check tags in reducing belief in false stories on social media. *Political Behavior, 42*(4), 1073–1095. doi:10.1007/s11109-019-09533-0

Coddington, M., Molyneux, L., & Lawrence, R. G. (2014). Fact checking the campaign how political reporters use Twitter to set the record straight (or not). *International Journal of Press/Politics, 19*(4), 391–409. doi:10.1177/1940161214540942

Curran, J., & Park, M. J. (2000). Beyond globalization theory. In J. Curran & M. J. Park (Eds.), *De-westernizing media studies* (pp. 2–15). London, UK: Routledge.

Dent, M. (2017, April 5). *Philly Rep. Sims: Martina White wants to deport all immigrants; she never said that*. Retrieved from https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2017/apr/05/brian-sims/philly-rep-sims-martina-white-wants-deport-all-imm/

Eide, M., & Knight, G. (1999). Public-private service: Service journalism and the problems of everyday life. *European Journal of Communication, 14*(4), 525–547. doi:10.1177/0267323199014004004

Ettema, J. S., & Glasser, T. L. (1998). *Custodians of conscience*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Farinha, H., & Carvalho, J. P. (2018). Towards computational fact-checking: Is the information checkable? In *2018 IEEE International Conference on Fuzzy Systems (FUZZ-IEEE)* (pp. 1–7). Piscataway, NJ: IEEE.

Feng, M., Tsang, N. L. T., & Lee, F. L. F. (2021). Fact-checking as mobilization and counter-mobilization: The case of the anti-extradition bill movement in Hong Kong. *Journalism Studies, 22*(10), 1358–1375. doi:10.1080/1461670X.2021.1952474

Frank, R. (2015). Caveat lector: Fake news as folklore. *Journal of American Folklore, 128*(509), 315–332. doi:10.5406/jamerfolk.128.509.0315

Gillin, J. (2017, August 4). *Fake news site posts that North Korea's Kim Jong Un is dead for second time in a month*. Retrieved from https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2017/aug/04/blog-posting/fake-news-site-posts-north-koreas-kim-jong-un-dead/

Gottfried, J. A., Hardy, B. W., Winneg, K. M., & Jamieson, K. H. (2013). Did fact checking matter in the 2012 presidential campaign? *American Behavioral Scientist, 57*(11), 1558–1567. doi:10.1177/0002764213489012

Graves, L. (2016). *Deciding what's true: The fact-checking movement in American journalism*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Graves, L. (2018). Boundaries not drawn: Mapping the institutional roots of the global fact-checking movement. *Journalism Studies, 19*(5), 613–631. doi:10.1080/1461670X.2016.1196602

Graves, L., Nyhan, B., & Reifler, J. (2016). Understanding innovations in journalistic practice: A field experiment examining motivations for fact-checking. *Journal of Communication, 66*(1), 102–138. doi:10.1111/jcom.12198

Haigh, M., Haigh, T., & Kozak, N. I. (2018). Stopping fake news: The work practices of peer-to-peer counter propaganda. *Journalism Studies, 19*(14), 2062–2087. doi:10.1080/1461670X.2017.1316681

Hallin, D. C., & Mancini, P. (2004). *Comparing media systems: Three models of media and politics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Hanitzsch, T. (2007). Deconstructing journalism culture: Toward a universal theory. *Communication Theory, 17*(4), 367–385. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2885.2007.00303.x

Huang, Y. (1994). Peaceful evolution: The case of television reform in post-Mao China. *Media, Culture & Society, 16*(2), 217–241. doi:10.1177/016344379401600203

Humprecht, E. (2019). Where 'fake news' flourishes: A comparison across four western democracies. *Information, Communication & Society, 22*(13), 1973–1988. doi:10.1080/1369118X.2018.1474241

Humprecht, E. (2020). How do they debunk "fake news"? A cross-national comparison of transparency in fact checks. *Digital Journalism, 8*(3), 310–327. doi:10.1080/21670811.2019.1691031

Jamieson, K. H., & Waldman, P. (2003). *The press effect: Politicians, journalists, and the stories that shape the political world*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Khaldarova, I., & Pantti, M. (2016). Fake news: The narrative battle over the Ukrainian conflict. *Journalism Practice, 10*(7), 891–901. doi:10.1080/17512786.2016.1163237

Kovach, B., & Rosenstiel, T. (2010). *Blur: How to know what's true in the age of information overload*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury.

Kruger, A. (2017). Ahead of the e-curve in fact checking and verification education: The University of Hong Kong's cyber news verification lab leads verification education in Asia. *Asia Pacific Media Educator, 27*(2), 264–281. doi:10.1177/1326365X17736579

Kuhn, D. (2010). What is scientific thinking and how does it develop? In U. Goswami (Ed.), *Blackwell handbook of childhood cognitive development* (pp. 497–523). Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons.

Kuklinski, J. H., Quirk, P. J., Jerit, J., Schwieder, D., & Rich, R. F. (2000). Misinformation and the currency of democratic citizenship. *Journal of Politics, 62*(3), 790–816. doi:10.1111/0022-3816.00033

Lawrence, R. G., & Schafer, M. L. (2012). Debunking Sarah Palin: Mainstream news coverage of 'death panels.' *Journalism, 13*(6), 766–782. doi:10.1177/1464884911431389

Lee, C. C., He, Z., & Huang, Y. (2006). 'Chinese Party Publicity Inc.' conglomerated: The case of the Shenzhen Press Group. *Media, Culture & Society, 28*(4), 581–602. doi:10.1177/0163443706065031

Lijphart, A. (1971). Comparative politics and the comparative method. *American Political Science Review, 65*(3), 682–693. doi:10.2307/1955513

Liu, L. (2018, August 23). *Four kinds of vehicles will be strictly checked? Misinformation on traffic policy*. Retrieved from https://vp.fact.qq.com/article?id=ccf9b1f0619a4723de101fd455a29184

Lu, Y., & Zhou, R. (2016). Liquid journalism and journalistic professionalism in the era of social media: A case study of an online outlet's coverage of the Oriental Star accident. *Communication and the Public, 1*(4), 471–485. doi:10.1177/2057047316682259

Ma, E. K. W. (2000). Rethinking media studies: The case of China. In J. Curran & M. J. Park (Eds.), *De-westernizing media studies* (pp. 17–28). London, UK: Routledge.

Maksl, A., Ashley, S., & Craft, S. (2015). Measuring news media literacy. *Journal of Media Literacy Education, 6*(3), 29–45. doi:10.23860/jmle-6-3-3

Martínez-Carrillo, N. I., & Tamul, D. J. (2019). (Re)constructing professional journalistic practice in Mexico: Verificado's marketing of legitimacy, collaboration, and pop culture in fact-checking the 2018 elections. *International Journal of Communication, 13*, 2596–2619.

Mena, P. (2019). Principles and boundaries of fact-checking: Journalists' perceptions. *Journalism Practice, 13*(6), 657–672. doi:10.1080/17512786.2018.1547655

Merpert, A., Furman, M., Anauati, M. V., Zommer, L., & Taylor, I. (2018). Is that even checkable? An experimental study in identifying checkable statements in political discourse. *Communication Research Reports, 35*(1), 48–57. doi:10.1080/08824096.2017.1366303

Michaels, D., & Monforton, C. (2005). Manufacturing uncertainty: Contested science and the protection of the public's health and environment. *American Journal of Public Health, 95*(S1), S39–S48. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2004.043059

Pan, Z. (2010). Articulation and re-articulation: Agendas for understanding media and communication in China. *International Journal of Communication, 4*, 517–530.

Pan, Z., & Chan, J. M. Shifting journalistic paradigms: How China's journalists assess "media exemplars." *Communication Research, 30*(6), 649–682. doi:10.1177/0093650203257843

Pan, Z., & Lu, Y. (2003). Localizing professionalism: Discursive practices in China's media reforms. In C. C. Lee (Ed.), *Chinese media, global contexts* (pp. 210–231). London, UK: Routledge.

Pingree, R. J. (2011). Effects of unresolved factual disputes in the news on epistemic political efficacy. *Journal of Communication, 61*(1), 22–47. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2010.01525.x

Schudson, M. (2001). The objectivity norm in American journalism. *Journalism,* 2(2), 149–170. doi:10.1177/146488490100200201

Sherman, A. (2017, December 28). *Fake news: Sasha Obama crashed Bugatti into a lake*. Retrieved from https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2017/dec/28/defense-usasite/fake-news-sasha-obama-crashed-bugatti-lake/

Shin, J., & Thorson, K. (2017). Partisan selective sharing: The biased diffusion of fact-checking messages on social media. *Journal of Communication, 67*(2), 233–255. doi:10.1111/jcom.12284

Shirk, S. L. (Ed.) (2011). *Changing media, changing China*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Singer, J. B. (2018). Fact-checkers as entrepreneurs: Scalability and sustainability for a new form of watchdog journalism. *Journalism Practice, 12*(8), 1070–1080. doi:10.1080/17512786.2018.1493946

Sparks, C. (2008). Media systems in transition: Poland, Russia, China. *Chinese Journal of Communication, 1*(1), 7–24. doi:10.1080/17544750701861871

Stencel, M., Ryan, E., & Luther, J. (2022, June 17). *Fact-checkers extend their global reach with 391 outlets, but growth has slowed*. Retrieved from https://reporterslab.org/fact-checkers-extend-their-global-reach-with-391-outlets-but-growth-has-slowed/

Streckfuss, R. (1990). Objectivity in journalism: A search and a reassessment. *Journalism Quarterly, 67*(4), 973–983. doi:10.1177/107769909006700453

Tong, J. (2007). Guerrilla tactics of investigative journalists in China. *Journalism, 8*(5), 530–535. doi:10.1177/1464884907081047

Tuchman, G. (1978). *Making news: A study in the construction of reality*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Wien, C. (2005). Defining objectivity within journalism: An overview. *Nordicom Review, 26*(2), 3–15. doi:10.1515/nor-2017-0255

Wintersieck, A. L. (2017). Debating the truth: The impact of fact-checking during electoral debates. *American Politics Research, 45*(2), 304–331. doi:10.1177/1532673X16686555

Young, D. G., Jamieson, K. H., Poulsen, S., & Goldring, A. (2018). Fact-checking effectiveness as a function of format and tone: Evaluating FactCheck.org and FlackCheck.org. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 95*(1), 49–75. doi:10.1177/1077699017710453

Zhao, Y. (2000). From commercialization to conglomeration: The transformation of the Chinese press within the orbit of the party state. *Journal of Communication, 50*(2), 3–26. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2000.tb02839.x