

The Metajournalistic Discourse and the Sociopolitical Construction of AI Risk in Chinese Journalism

Youyi Wei 

School of Journalism and Communication, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, China

Correspondence: Youyi Wei (youyiwei@link.cuhk.edu.hk)

Submitted: 20 March 2026 **Accepted:** 12 August 2026 **Published:** 8 October 2026

Issue: This article is part of the issue “AI Use in Marginalized Media Markets” edited by Bruce Mutsvairo (Utrecht University) and Mathias-Felipe de-Lima-Santos (University of New South Wales / Federal University of São Paulo), fully open access at <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.i503>

Abstract

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into journalism has improved production efficiency but raised concerns about its potential to compromise content quality and undermine journalists' professional capacity. These tensions are particularly pronounced in China, where AI deployment in journalism intersects with state-led advocacy and professional authority. Drawing on metajournalistic discourse and taking a sociopolitical perspective, I examine how journalistic discourse frames and responds to AI risks in structurally constrained contexts. I conducted a textual analysis of 102 articles published between 2022 and 2025 by Chinese journalists affiliated with institutional media. These articles narrate journalists' perceptions of, or working experiences with, AI. AI risks are discursively framed at three levels: content quality, mainstream values, and professional subjectivity. Journalistic discourse constructs an asymmetrical attribution of these risks, assigning responsibility primarily to opaque AI systems, technology companies, and individual journalists positioned as “risk filters,” while largely overlooking the responsibilities of media organizations and the state. Political intervention, institutional hierarchy, and professional commitments shape adaptive boundary work that aligns with state-led AI advocacy while establishing boundaries by limiting AI capability in journalistic work. This study provides an empirical account of how journalists negotiate AI risks and professional autonomy amid advanced AI development and state-sanctioned boundaries, extending Western-centric and Global South research.

Keywords

AI; AI risks; Chinese journalism; journalism; metajournalistic discourse; sociopolitical context

1. Introduction

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into journalism has raised concerns about risks such as the erosion of creativity, declining critical thinking, and increased misinformation (Thomson Reuters, 2025), thereby disrupting journalism as the fourth estate for safeguarding democracy (Dodds et al., 2026). Chinese media, operating in a country with the highest rates of AI deployment in the world (Statista, 2025), has cultivated a distinctive discourse about AI risks for journalism. A senior editor at Xinhua News Agency, China's national-level media, acknowledged that the greatest risk in the field of AI-generated content (AIGC) is the risk of falling behind, that is, the risk of standing still and ultimately being left behind by the tide of the times (Du, 2024). This perspective suggests that, for Chinese news media, the key concern is less the normative evaluation of AI risks than how to embed AI technologies in the media system.

The Chinese sociopolitical context provides a compelling case for understanding how AI roles are constructed in a state-led media system. On one hand, Chinese news media often mobilize support to endorse and legitimize their digital transformation (K. Fang & Repnikova, 2022), which is consistent with governmental expectations that frame AI technology in terms of economic competitiveness and a governance tool for shaping public opinion (Sebastião & Dias, 2025). On the other hand, maintaining journalistic authority and credibility requires addressing AI risks through normative frameworks, creating a tension between political advocacy for AI adoption and normative dimensions of AI in journalism (Kuai et al., 2022).

Existing research has provided valuable insights for understanding AI risks from its roles as an instrument that can produce biased and fake news (Oh & Jung, 2025), a communicator that blurs the boundaries between human journalists and AI agents and raises threats to professional authority (Lewis et al., 2019), and a socio-technical system that reinforces restrictions on journalistic autonomy and concentrates the power of AI technology companies (Kuai et al., 2022; Munoriyarwa & de-Lima-Santos, 2025). However, less attention has been paid to how journalistic actors discursively construct AI risks and how they respond to such risks under strong state-led advocacy for AI deployment.

To address this gap, this study adopts metajournalistic discourse as an analytical framework (Carlson, 2016). Metajournalistic discourse provides a public arena where journalists construct the meanings of AI risks, adopt professional roles for taking AI risks, and legitimize their response through balancing professional boundaries and state-led advocacy for technology development. Moreover, the sociopolitical perspective informs this study by explaining how political, institutional, and professional logics shape emergent AI risk framings and responses, contributing to understanding how journalistic discourse negotiates professional autonomy, media transformation, and political missions under a constrained environment. The findings show that the framing process produces a constrained form of professional authority shaped by political imperatives, the hierarchical media system, and the continuity of professional logics.

2. Literature Review

2.1. *From Opportunities to Risks: Perceived AI Roles in Journalism*

AI's rapid expansion into journalism, from back-end automation to content creation and news distribution, has drawn scholarly attention to its influence on journalistic practices, norms, and authority (Dodds et al., 2026).

Research on the perceived roles of AI in journalism has primarily adopted three perspectives: instrumental, human-machine communication, and sociopolitical.

First, AI, especially generative AI, has been commonly perceived as a transformative instrument that can improve the efficiency of content production by reducing human labor in standardized content generation and optimizing newsroom workflows (Carlson, 2015; Oh & Jung, 2025). Researchers have focused on the diverse functions and applications of AI in subfields including automated writing, transcription, copyediting, identifying stories, interpreting data, improving audience engagement, and growing revenue streams (Boyles, 2024). How AI operates in newsrooms remains largely determined by journalists' judgment and control (Holton & Belair-Gagnon, 2018). However, the potential risks of AI-generated misinformation, biased content, and copyright issues remain unclear (Oh & Jung, 2025), as embedding journalistic norms in an AI system is challenging (Shin et al., 2025). Compromising journalistic norms of accuracy, neutrality, and transparency would undermine the public's trust in journalism (Aitamurto & Boyles, 2025). Addressing these risks requires intermediaries who translate journalistic norms into technical practices, as well as stronger AI literacy among journalists (De Cooker et al., 2026).

Second, human-machine communication scholars conceptualize AI not only as a mediator (media channel) but also as a communicator (media source; Guzman & Lewis, 2020). This perspective questions whether norms developed for human communication should remain the standard for evaluating AIGC. Journalists interpret AI through value-based judgments of fairness, transparency, and accountability, alongside analytic evaluations of reliability, explainability, accuracy, and privacy (Shin et al., 2025). Human-machine communication proposes the ontological risks of blurring the boundaries between human journalists and AI agents. People construct meanings about themselves and machines through interaction (Guzman & Lewis, 2020). Through ongoing and adaptive interactions with AI, journalists embed their personal work habits, biases, and normative principles into the AI training process while also being shaped by AI's feedback and narrative styles (Guzman & Lewis, 2020; Lewis et al., 2019). These interactions challenge established understandings of who qualifies as a journalist and who is authorized to produce news.

Third, the sociopolitical perspective conceptualizes AI as a sociotechnical system whose opportunities and risks must be evaluated within its social and political contexts (Airoidi, 2022). Divergent perceptions of AI reflect inequalities in human capital, funding, and technological development (Munoriyarwa & de-Lima-Santos, 2025). Journalists in lower-income countries tend to be skeptical of AI because of employment insecurity, unreliable data, and limited trust in regulation (Jamil, 2021). By contrast, rapidly developing countries associate AI with media modernization, innovative reporting, and greater information-processing efficiency (Soto-Sanfiel et al., 2022; Z. Wang et al., 2026).

Existing research shows that AI adoption can create opportunities to assist journalistic work but also threatens content quality, professional subjectivity, and professional boundaries while reinforcing sociopolitical deficiencies (Carlson, 2015; Jamil, 2021). Taking AI risks as its starting point, this study examines the reconstruction of journalistic boundaries and authority beyond utopian imaginaries. Unlike traditional risks confined to specific roles or situations, AI risks permeate the entire journalistic process and may persist over time. The next section conceptualizes these risks and examines their sociopolitical construction across contexts.

2.2. The Sociopolitical Context of AI Risks in Chinese Journalism

Risk is socially and culturally constructed because judgments of danger depend on particular values and beliefs rather than objective conditions alone (Lee, 2023). Journalistic risks have traditionally been categorized as physical, legal, and political. Physical risks include harassment and retaliation for exposing wrongdoing, while legal risks arise from practices such as using personal information and undercover reporting (Ananian-Welsh et al., 2021; Hollings et al., 2019). Political risks arise from violations of government interests, especially in authoritarian regimes (Repnikova, 2017). These risks are often associated with specific practices and roles, including war, investigative, and critical reporting (Frey, 2023; Lee, 2023). Accessible and low-cost AI tools diffuse risks across the entire journalistic process, including news gathering, production, editing, distribution, and commercialization (Thomson Reuters, 2025).

Perceptions of AI risks are therefore shaped by the political, institutional, and professional logics of media systems (C. Fang et al., 2023; Upmanyu & Gore Mehendale, 2026). China offers a compelling case for examining how AI risk discourse emerges from the interaction among state-led AI development, top-down institutional adoption, and professional authority (Sebastião & Dias, 2025).

Perceptions of AI in Chinese journalism are shaped by the coordination of technological development, media organizations, and state priorities (Z. Wang et al., 2026). Since 2017, AI has been positioned as essential to national development and global competitiveness, supporting a domestic ecosystem that includes DeepSeek, Qwen, Kimi, and Doubao (Kuai, 2026). The central question is therefore less whether journalism should adopt AI than how it can be incorporated into a managed process of media modernization (Z. Wang et al., 2026). Political accountability and the avoidance of sensitive content may also take precedence over professional norms such as objectivity and truthfulness (Kuai et al., 2025). Journalists consequently articulate AI risks within state-sanctioned boundaries shaped by their roles in public service and policy advocacy (Z. Wang et al., 2026).

China's AI development has been described as an authoritarian state model, in contrast to the market-driven US model and the democratic European model (Cao & Power, 2025). In China, the state retains substantial authority over AI development, deployment, and governance. Concerns consequently center on disruption to social stability and the erosion of journalistic autonomy (Z. Wang et al., 2026). AI-generated images and videos used for festivals, city promotion, and policy visualization illustrate how AI-assisted journalism serves state governance (Meng & Wang, 2025). Similar patterns appear in East Africa and weakened democracies, where AI infrastructure can support surveillance, political intervention, and propaganda, generating caution among journalists (Beacken et al., 2026; Gondwe, 2026; Lin, 2024; Wu, 2024).

Although Chinese journalism shares with US and European journalism similar utopian imaginaries of AI as efficient, inevitable, and strategically important for media transformation, its AI risk discourse remains distinct because of the influence of China's political, economic, and sociocultural contexts on perceptions of AI risks (Cao & Power, 2025). In the US, AI risks are embedded in journalism's cumulative commercial crisis, as platforms divert advertising revenue and audience attention while news organizations become increasingly dependent on technology companies (Cao & Power, 2025; Z. Wang et al., 2026). European discourse places greater emphasis on human dignity, structural fairness, and professional autonomy within comparatively developed regulatory institutions (Z. Wang et al., 2026). China and other developing countries, however, often prioritize economic competitiveness and technological developmentalism over ethical concerns (Kim, 2018; Sebastião & Dias, 2025).

Infrastructure, funding, and expertise also shape AI adoption across the Global South and BRICS countries (named for Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), which now includes six additional countries (Onebunne, 2026; Umejei et al., 2025). For example, Pakistani journalists express skepticism because of insecure employment and financial pressures, whereas Latin American journalists associate AI with newsroom modernization and innovative reporting (Jamil, 2021; Soto-Sanfiel et al., 2022). BRICS countries have been regarded as the leaders in emerging markets. They have generally incorporated AI into their modernization agendas, although unequal resources produce uneven adoption (Ahmad et al., 2023; Lelo, 2024; Munoriyarwa et al., 2023). Similar inequalities exist within China, where national media pursue highly regulated innovation, provincial and municipal outlets adopt AI instrumentally, and county media often engage in symbolic adoption (Xu et al., 2025).

China has held the largest share of the AI market among BRICS countries since 2020 (Statista, 2025). Following the launch of ChatGPT, Chinese technology companies rapidly developed competing models. By November 2025, 611 domestic generative AI services had been registered, and media organizations either developed their own algorithms or collaborated with technology companies (“611 kuan shengchengshi,” 2025; Zhu, 2025). This development has received strong political endorsement: Chinese President Xi Jinping called for integrating AI throughout news production and guiding algorithms through mainstream values to strengthen public opinion guidance (Xi, 2019).

However, technological infrastructure alone does not determine how AI risks are perceived; political institutions, media systems, and professional cultures also matter. Although research on AI-enabled journalism in China highlights the influence of the state and the hierarchical media system on perceptions of AI, less attention has been paid to how journalists negotiate AI risk discourse within state-sanctioned boundaries while safeguarding their professional authority.

2.3. Metajournalistic Discourse on AI Risks

Metajournalistic discourse refers to how journalists publicly define their professional identities, practices, norms, and boundaries while legitimizing journalism as a form of authoritative knowledge (Carlson, 2016). This framework is particularly relevant to AI, which challenges journalists' professional jurisdiction. Professions maintain authority by claiming exclusive knowledge and control over the application of that knowledge (Abbott, 1988). As generative AI increasingly participates in content production, fact-checking, and news distribution, it appears capable of performing journalistic tasks without possessing professional knowledge (Humayun, 2026). Automated fact-checking, for example, improves efficiency but raises a fundamental question: If machines become gatekeepers of truth, who retains the authority to produce credible knowledge (Johnson, 2024)?

AI risk discourse allows journalists to reconstruct this authority by defining which tasks machines can legitimately perform. By exposing AI hallucinations, misinformation, and ethical deficiencies, journalists distinguish machine-generated content from professional journalism and reaffirm the importance of human judgment, creativity, and empathy (Perreault et al., 2026). Copyright policies further institutionalize these boundaries by restricting AI to an auxiliary role while reserving fact-checking, professional judgment, and audience trust for human journalists (Boyles, 2024).

However, research on metajournalistic discourse surrounding AI has focused primarily on Anglo-American contexts characterized by established professional norms and democratic institutions (e.g., Johnson, 2024; Perreault et al., 2026). This focus overlooks how sociopolitical conditions enable or constrain journalists' identification of and responses to AI risks. China therefore provides a critical case for examining how journalists negotiate tensions among political advocacy, digital transformation, and professional authority.

Based on the above analytical framework and research concerns, this study proposes the following research questions:

RQ1: How does Chinese journalistic discourse frame AI risks?

RQ2: How does Chinese journalistic discourse respond to these risks through boundary work and the legitimation process?

RQ3: How do political, institutional, and professional logics shape these framings and responses?

3. Methodology

Metajournalistic discourse provides an effective framework to examine how journalists construct professional identities, values, and practices amid media transformation (Carlson, 2016; Rooney & Creech, 2019). Accordingly, I collected Chinese state-owned media texts on journalists' experiences with AI and generative AI across outlets at different bureaucratic levels and with different editorial orientations. Following Fürsich (2009), I conducted a textual analysis of their narratives, the institutional, economic, and professional constraints shaping them, and their discursive silences.

3.1. Data Collection

I collected texts from three comprehensive news databases: the WiseSearch Database, Google News, and WeChat public accounts. A keyword search was conducted using combinations of the Chinese terms “journalism (新闻)” and “artificial intelligence (人工智能),” together with the English acronym “AI.” Given the transformative impact of ChatGPT in expanding public access to AI, the data retrieval period spans from November 1, 2022 (to include the launch of ChatGPT on November 30, 2022) to November 30, 2025, to capture a critical phase of rapid AI deployment in China and the concurrent construction of media narratives around AI adoption. To ensure the analysis focused on professional journalistic discourse, the search excluded articles produced by self-media (*zimeiti*; see K. Fang, 2022) and technology companies (such as the Tencent Research Institute).

The initial search retrieved 255 articles. Articles were retained if they met at least one of two inclusion criteria: (a) discussing the use of AI in journalistic workflows or (b) examining specific applications or outcomes of AI use by journalists or media organizations rather than by other sectors. The final sample comprised 102 articles authored by journalists from 56 media organizations (see Table S1 in the Supplementary Material). Each article was assigned a unique chronological identifier (N1–N102) for coding and analysis. Moreover, following previous research (Zhao, 1998), media outlets were further classified along two institutional dimensions: administrative level (national vs. local) and organizational orientation

(party-oriented vs. commercial-oriented), yielding four categories: national party-oriented media, national commercial-oriented media, local party-oriented media, and local commercial-oriented media (see Figure 1).

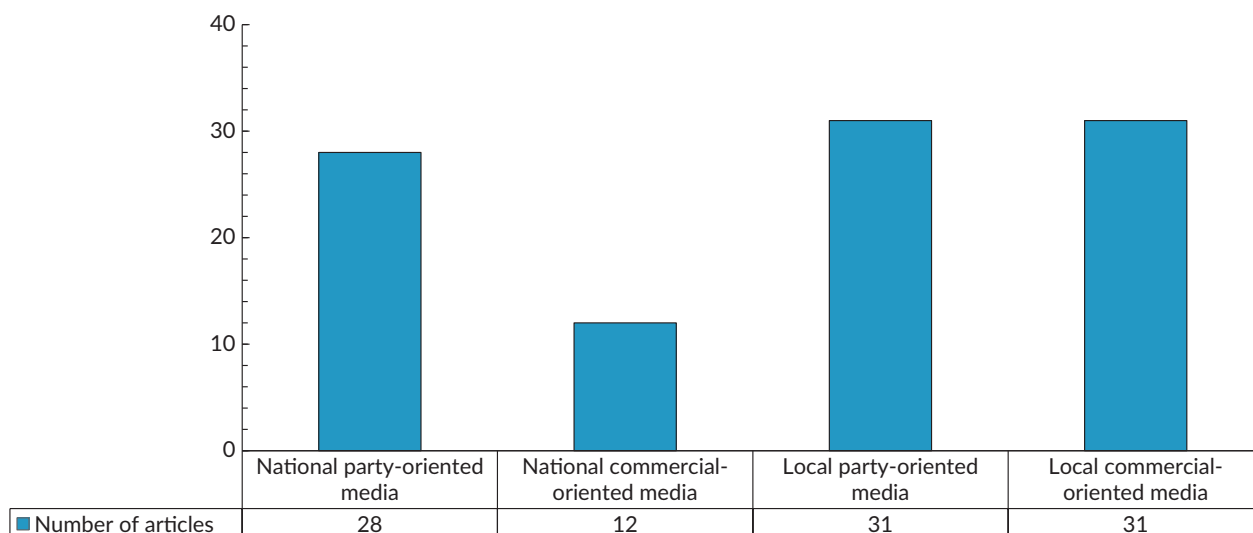


Figure 1. Number of articles by type of authors' affiliated media organizations.

3.2. Data Analysis

This study employs textual analysis to examine how narratives, arguments, and interpretations interact to construct the roles of AI in journalism and reshape journalistic identities, values, and legitimacy. As Fürsich (2009, p. 238) argues, “media texts present a distinctive discursive moment between encoding and decoding that justifies special scholarly engagement.” Through their narrative structures and ideological negotiations, media texts reflect mediated realities and reveal broader transformations within the journalistic field.

Specifically, the analysis followed Tracy's (2025) phronetic iterative approach, which involves continuous movement between empirical observations and theoretical interpretation throughout the research process. Statements concerning AI adoption and AI-related risks served as the unit of analysis. The analysis proceeded through three coding cycles using NVivo 11 software.

The first cycle involved open, iterative, and inductive coding. All 102 articles were read closely, and descriptive codes were assigned to recurrent expressions, concepts, and claims. Examples included “hallucination,” “loss of originality,” “ideological bias,” and “human supervision.” At this stage, the codes remained close to the language and immediate meanings of the texts.

The second cycle used focused and axial coding to compare, consolidate, and distinguish the primary codes. Categories were merged when they referred to the same underlying problem and separated when they differed in their object, level, or discursive function. This iterative process generated four overarching analytical themes: (a) the identification of AI risks, (b) the attribution of AI risks, (c) the boundary work in response to AI risks, and (d) the legitimization of AI risk-taking. These themes subsequently structured the presentation of the findings.

The third cycle involved theoretical and integrative coding to explain why these patterns of risk framing and response emerged. Guided by the RQs, the analysis identified three interrelated contextual logics: political, institutional, and professional. More specifically, political logic accounted for the selective attribution and legitimation of AI risks, institutional logic explained both the convergence and variation of AI discourse across different types of media organizations, and professional logic illuminated how journalists redefined professional authority by positioning themselves as indispensable supervisors of AI.

As Tracy (2025) notes, conventional notions of reliability and generalizability originated in quantitative research and are not always appropriate criteria for evaluating interpretive qualitative inquiry. Instead, analytical consistency was strengthened through repeated reading, constant comparison across texts, iterative refinement of codes across three coding cycles, and recoding the corpus using the final coding structure.

Table 1 presents the final coding structure developed through these three coding cycles, including the level 1 main themes and level 2 sub-themes.

Table 1. Coding themes.

Level 1 Main Themes	Level 2 Sub-themes
Identified AI risks	Content quality risk Mainstream values risk Professional subjectivity risk
Asymmetrical AI risk attributions	To AI systems To technology companies
Boundary work in response to AI risks	Expansion of the journalistic role to risk filters Exclusion of AI roles from journalistic roles
Legitimization of AI risk-taking	Organizational survival imperative State-led advocacy for AI adoption
Political intervention	Integration of AI into political missions Mainstream values constraints
Institutional structure	Hierarchical demonstration effects Hierarchical differentiation
Professional commitments	Professional development

4. Findings

This section examines how Chinese journalistic discourse constructs the risks of AI-integrated journalism and responds through professional boundary work, media transformation, and alignment with state-led AI advocacy. This discourse reveals how journalism coexists with technological innovation and how structural conditions shape AI risk discourse and, in turn, journalistic authority.

4.1. Framing AI Risks in Journalism

RQ1 examines how Chinese journalistic discourse frames AI risks in public reporting. The findings reveal three categories of risk: content risks, mainstream value risks, and professional subjectivity risks. These risks suggest

that AI has moved beyond an instrumental role to become a collaborator that reshapes journalistic workflows and professional logics. The discourse also constructs an asymmetrical attribution of responsibility that largely obscures the roles of institutional actors in mitigating them.

4.1.1. Identified AI Risks

The first category comprises content quality risks associated with AI-assisted production, including AI hallucinations, deepfakes, homogenization, and weak originality. AI hallucination refers to the generation of plausible but factually incorrect information due to technical flaws such as overfitting, fabrication, and logical errors (Sun et al., 2024; Yao & Xi, 2026). An editor at a national party-oriented media wrote that falsehoods and logical flaws in AIGC are “more hidden and dangerous than technical bias” (N4). In practice, the editor noted that AI has generated quotes from non-existent experts and fabricated information (N4). Hallucinated news content may also re-enter subsequent production cycles as training material, allowing false information to circulate rapidly in iterative information flows (N53).

Journalists also criticized AIGC for producing homogenized content that lacks originality. Typical stylistic features such as “ornate wording masking empty substance, precise descriptions that eliminate the imaginative space created by narrative gaps, and excessive use of obscure characters” (N17) are seen as producing aesthetic fatigue. In addition, AIGC is often viewed as synthesizing existing information, raising concerns about potential plagiarism (N98). These discussions reflect ongoing engagement with core journalistic norms such as accuracy, truthfulness, and originality.

The second category concerns mainstream values risks. In China, mainstream values such as patriotism, dedication, integrity, and friendliness have been regarded as fostering social consensus and regulating public behavior (Zheng & Wang, 2023). These values have been incorporated into Chinese journalism, serving as normative principles such as political sensitivity, morality, and fairness (Gueorguiev et al., 2017). The journalistic discourse points out that AIGC may disrupt the mainstream values that Chinese journalism should safeguard and propagate to the public. Political sensitivity is regarded as a core professional competence that enables journalists to avoid reporting red lines and to respond to shifting political expectations (Gueorguiev et al., 2017). The deputy editor-in-chief of a national party-oriented media outlet noted that although DeepSeek can identify typographical errors in news drafts, it cannot recognize—or sometimes avoids identifying—politically sensitive mistakes (N33). Such concerns echo official statements that emphasize the need to guide algorithms with mainstream value orientations and strengthen the capacity for guiding public opinion (Xi, 2019).

The third category concerns professional subjectivity risks. Media discourse frames AI as undermining professional subjectivity, which refers to core competencies in journalistic practice, including on-site reporting, interviewing, information synthesis, fact-checking, and investigative reporting (N80). Journalists attribute the erosion of professional subjectivity to journalists gradually ceding these core abilities to AI under the lure of efficiency, thereby weakening professional expertise and fostering algorithmic dependence (N19). The erosion of professional subjectivity is also framed as a loss of creative pleasure in writing. Such narratives suggest that AI risks extend beyond professional abilities to the erosion of human creativity and reflective thinking (e.g., N95). As illustrated above, the subtle experience of empathizing with language, a key element of journalistic creativity, cannot easily be reproduced through algorithmic generation.

4.1.2. Asymmetrical AI Risk Attributions

Journalistic discourse primarily attributes concerns to technology companies and the black-box nature of AI systems. Copyright issues constitute an initial point of tension between AI companies and news organizations. In China, the lawsuit filed by *The New York Times* against OpenAI triggered discussions about potential threats to news copyright and the commercial value of original reporting. A journalist from a local party-oriented media outlet quoted a Chinese lawyer who said that “this lawsuit sets a precedent for the legal system: how to evaluate the value of news content used to train large language models and determine how AI should pay for the content it uses” (N79).

The black-box nature of AI technology is another commonly identified source of risk. Here, “black box” refers to the lack of explainability and traceability in AI outputs, which conflicts with journalism’s norm of accuracy (N23). Journalists criticize this characteristic by noting that “AI may make mistakes, but it does not take responsibility for them,” since AI systems can generate logically coherent yet inaccurate content (N23).

This pattern of attribution also involves the manipulative silence of texts (Huckin, 2002), which refers to the intentional concealment of information from audiences to the advantage of the writer. In the texts analyzed in this study, the discourse attributes AI risks mainly to technology companies and technical features, while rarely addressing issues of government regulation or media self-governance (e.g., N89, N23). Only one article in the sample, authored by a journalist from a local party-oriented media outlet, noted that “some media organizations present AI-generated content as original work” and that “to reduce labor costs, some media organizations allow AI to handle multiple stages of production while omitting human oversight” (N15). However, the author neither identified the organizations involved nor examined gaps in their institutional regulations.

4.2. Journalistic Response to AI Risks

RQ2 concerns how Chinese journalistic discourse responds to AI risks through negotiating professional boundaries, inevitable AI innovation, and political advocacy for media transformation. The study answers this question by explicating the discursive construction of AI-journalist boundaries and appropriating political discourse to legitimize AI risk-taking.

4.2.1. Boundary Work in Response to AI Risks

Boundary work refers to an ideological strategy through which professions monopolize authority and resources (Gieryn, 1983). This study identified two prominent strategies for constructing professional boundaries. First, Chinese media have constructed a new professional identity of “AI risk filter” to maintain the centered position of human professional judgement. Second, they discursively instrumentalize AI for media interests such as improving work efficiency while excluding AI from empathetic expression and uncovering underlying truth.

Facing the unfamiliar technical challenges posed by AI models, Chinese media have constructed a new professional role for journalists: risk filter. Individuals in this role are expected to exercise professional judgment regarding truthfulness, fairness, transparency, appropriate detail, emotional expression, and value

orientation (N9, N30, N54). An article in a local commercial-oriented media outlet (N9) noted on Journalist's Day in 2025 that "the places AI cannot reach are the true home of journalists." As risk filters, journalists are responsible not only for deciding what information enters the news production process (i.e., traditional gatekeepers; White, 1950), but also for mitigating AI risks before, during, and after AI generation.

Chinese journalists proposed several principles for acting as risk filters, including "source hygiene" (素材洁癖) and "traceability labels" (溯源标签; N20). These principles emphasize the pre-emptive mitigation of AI risks, such as hallucination and bias, by "feeding authoritative sources to AI" (N18), "requiring AI to provide traceable sources" (N20), and "strengthening fact-checking procedures" (N17). They also emphasize transparency by advocating the clear labeling of AIGC.

Regarding strategies of expansion and exclusion in boundary work, the discourse defines what AI can and cannot do through instrumentalization. Here, instrumentalization refers to discursively constructing AI as a tool for improving efficiency while denying its creativity and empathetic capacities. Aspects such as "improving efficiency" (N9), "liberating labor" (N73), and "saving labor costs" (N17) are among the most frequently mentioned advantages of employing AI in journalism. AI is portrayed as a "time accelerator"; for example, a national commercial-oriented media article reports that AI reduced video production from two hours to five minutes (N73). It is also associated with reducing data-analysis workloads, improving proofreading, integrating information, supporting large-scale video production, and enabling multilingual transformation.

In contrast, empathy and humanistic care are constructed as exclusively human capacities. AI is seen as unable to understand deeper meanings of news events or convey human warmth in storytelling (N6, N84). The strategic ritual of emotionality (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2013) thus distinguishes human journalists from AI agents. The discourse further stresses that AI lacks the insight and depth of journalistic thinking. AIGC is framed as an "information platter" (信息拼盘), suggesting that AI merely stitches data together rather than uncovering facts from complex phenomena (N54). Such discourse also raises the professional threshold, valuing journalists with domain expertise, reflective capacity, and independent judgment.

4.2.2. Legitimization of AI Risk-Taking

Legitimizing AI risk-taking constitutes an essential response in Chinese journalistic discourse. AI integration is framed not merely as a technological choice but as both a political mission and an opportunity for media survival. Organizational survival and state-led advocacy serve as the two primary discursive resources for this legitimization.

Chinese journalistic discourse constructs AI as a potential resource for expanding profitable media services, attracting audience attention, and enhancing news production, thereby creating new revenue streams. Under growing financial and technological pressures, failing to adopt AI is framed as more dangerous than the risks arising from its use. As a journalist from a local party-oriented media outlet states, "AI is not an opponent to be resisted by humans, but a walking stick that expands possibilities. When the wave of technology arrives, the real threat may not be machines replacing humans, but humans refusing to evolve" (N32). A local commercial-oriented media outlet reports developing an AI-enabled content production system to serve financial institutions. The system supports financial literacy, distributes financial information, and rapidly

converts these materials into video, with a production capacity of at least 500 videos per month (N23). In this example, AI is portrayed as a critical resource for extending journalistic capabilities beyond news production, serving broader social institutions, and generating new revenue streams.

In China's sociopolitical environment, taking AI-related risks is framed as a politically endorsed strategy for media's digital transformation and better undertaking media's political missions for state governance. AI adoption is positioned as a critical component of the "systematic reform" (系统性变革) of Chinese journalism. This reform extends the government-led strategy of media convergence, which emerged in response to digital disruption and aimed to strengthen the Party-state's presence in the online public sphere (Yin & Liu, 2014). By aligning AI adoption with this policy agenda, journalistic discourse constructs technological risk-taking as a politically endorsed strategy for media transformation.

4.3. Structural Contexts for Framing AI Risks

RQ3 examines how the framing of and responses to AI risks are sociopolitically constructed in China. The findings identify three interrelated logics: political, institutional, and professional. Together, these logics explain why certain AI risks become salient, why responsibility is asymmetrically attributed, and how media organizations legitimize AI-integrated journalism despite its recognized risks.

4.3.1. Political Intervention

In China, AI adoption in journalism is closely tied to media organizations' political missions, including communicating mainstream values and effectively guiding public opinion. First, public discourse incorporates AI adoption into media organizations' political missions. For example, a local party-oriented media outlet highlights the introduction of AI-powered service systems for government departments (N99). It presents Southcn.com's "Yuezheng Tongwen" (粤政通问) model as capable of analyzing government information and providing authoritative policy services. This narrative constructs AI-integrated journalism as an extension of state governance, legitimizing AI adoption by aligning media innovation with political missions and public-service objectives.

Journalistic discourse incorporates officially defined mainstream values into assessments of AI risks. It frames AI's inability to recognize politically sensitive terms and its potential deviation from mainstream values as significant risks. Politically compliant content thus becomes a central criterion for evaluating AI in journalism. AI risks are defined by technical performance, as well as by conformity to ideological requirements for maintaining political authority and social stability.

4.3.2. Institutional Structure

Institutional logic in communication research refers to narratives that reflect specific beliefs and rationales underlying organizational practices (C. Fang et al., 2023). It helps explain how Chinese media discursively rationalize their framing of AI risks and responses to AI adoption. This study identifies two mechanisms through which institutional logic operates in the Chinese media system: hierarchical demonstration and hierarchical differentiation.

The hierarchical demonstration effect refers to media organizations with higher administrative status serving as models for lower-tier outlets, thereby shaping mainstream discourse on AI adoption and its risks. For example, Xinhua News Agency and *Guangming Daily*, both national party-oriented media organizations, published research reports on media responsibilities in the AI era and introduced experiences of using AIGC to enhance news production (N19, N61). They play leading and exemplary roles in framing AI risks and provide models of AI adoption for national commercial-oriented and local media.

Hierarchical differentiation describes the institutional process through which media at different levels acquire unequal roles, resources, and capacities for AI adoption. Party-oriented media align more closely with political directives and are expected to fulfill propaganda functions (H. Wang et al., 2018). They frame AI risks strategically and position AI as central to journalism's future. Commercial-oriented media focus more on practical concerns, including job replacement, content quality, risk management, and revenue generation. Their greater caution may reflect weaker political and institutional support for AI-related risk-taking (Chan, 2003; Xu et al., 2025).

4.3.3. Professional Commitment

Professional logic explains why Chinese journalistic discourse emphasizes professional subjectivity and boundary work despite political and institutional constraints. Its central concern is the development of young journalists and the intergenerational reproduction of journalism. Professional development is framed as more than individual skill acquisition: reporting experience, editorial mentoring, verification, and exposure to complex situations transmit technical skills, tacit knowledge, ethical judgment, and news values across generations.

Premature reliance on AI may disrupt this process. Claims that “only highly skilled journalists can use AI effectively” (N33) and that “AI may hinder journalists’ professional growth” (N54) stress the need to cultivate professional competence before adopting AI. This concern is particularly salient in China, where the departure of senior journalists for the internet industry has widened generational gaps amid financial pressure and tightening political control (H. Wang, 2021). AI therefore intensifies concerns about professional inheritance and reinforces the importance of protecting journalistic judgment, creativity, and distinctive knowledge.

5. Concluding Discussion

Focusing on journalists’ public discussions of AI adoption in China, this study draws on the frameworks of metajournalistic discourse and sociopolitical perspectives to analyze how Chinese journalistic discourse frames the forms and attributions of AI risk and how these frames are negotiated in relation to professional norms, political advocacy, and media digital transformation. The textual analysis shows that AI risks are constructed at three levels: content risks, mainstream value risks, and professional subjectivity risks. These risks are primarily attributed to external indicators, including the black-box nature of AI systems and irresponsible technology companies. In response, Chinese journalists discursively expand their professional identity from news producers to risk filters who regulate what AI can and cannot do in journalistic practice. They also appropriate state-led policy discourse as part of journalism’s political and social mission. Strong political intervention, institutional hierarchies, and inherited professional logics jointly shape how AI risks are framed and legitimized in Chinese journalism.

In the context of global research on AI adoption and its risks in journalism, this study identifies shared professional interpretations of AI risks across Chinese and Anglo-American journalism. Concerns about AI hallucination, misinformation, content homogenization, and the erosion of originality echo those expressed in US and European journalism (Cao & Power, 2025). However, Chinese journalistic discourse attributes these risks primarily to technology companies and the “black-box” nature of AI systems, while largely overlooking the responsibilities of the state and media organizations. This asymmetry reflects Chinese media’s role in serving Party-state authority and maintaining social stability (Repnikova, 2017), as well as Chinese media outlets’ limited performance of the watchdog role in reporting AI development (Kuai, 2026).

Chinese journalism is less constrained by dependence on foreign AI technologies, a major barrier in many Global South countries (Onebunne, 2026; Umejei et al., 2025). Chinese media can collaborate with domestic technology companies or develop their own AI systems. Nevertheless, China’s advanced AI deployment shares the technological developmentalism and solutionism found in other BRICS countries (Lelo, 2024). This logic of technological competition permeates journalistic discourse, normalizing AI risks as inevitable and positioning media as contributors to China’s global technological competitiveness. However, insufficient reflection on governance is evident in the asymmetrical attribution of AI risks.

Despite constraints on public expression, this framing constitutes adaptive boundary work. Journalistic discourse aligns AI adoption with technological modernization and public-opinion governance while confining AI to an instrumental and subordinate role. It neither foregrounds AI-enabled surveillance of critical voices (Gondwe, 2026) nor expresses journalists’ fear of unforeseen risks (Z. Wang et al., 2026). This combination of political alignment and professional differentiation preserves journalists’ authority over verification, interpretation, and ethical judgment without challenging the institutional imperative to adopt AI.

China’s sociopolitical context shapes these negotiations. Consistent with Hollings et al. (2019), the current findings show that financial pressures and newsroom digitalization encourage risk-taking by making AI attractive for improving efficiency. This study extends their framework from individual judgments to collective discourse on technological, normative, and legitimacy risks. State-led advocacy further incorporates AI adoption into media organizations’ political missions and legitimizes experimentation under limited regulation. Administrative hierarchy also shapes this discourse: National party-oriented media construct the dominant narrative of AI adoption as risky but inevitable. In contrast, commercial-oriented media discuss practical risks and their management more flexibly.

Positioning journalists as risk filters extends their authority to supervise, verify, and correct AIGC. Boundary work reinforces this authority by presenting professional judgment, political sensitivity, empathy, and social interpretation as irreplaceable. However, this authority remains constrained: Under top-down advocacy, journalists assume greater responsibility for mitigating AI risks without gaining equivalent autonomy over AI adoption. In the long term, asymmetrical risk attribution, hierarchical control over discourse, and political alignment may weaken journalistic agency, authority, and public trust.

5.1. Implications

Theoretically, this study provides a sociopolitical analysis of how and why Chinese journalistic discourse publicly frames and responds to AI risks under political constraints. It extends research on Chinese

AI-integrated journalism beyond descriptions of risks, opportunities, and political influence by identifying the contextual mechanisms through which journalists negotiate professional boundaries and political advocacy for AI development. The asymmetrical attribution of AI risks directs attention toward technology companies and opaque AI systems while overlooking the responsibilities of institutional actors, including the state and media organizations. This pattern reveals how journalistic discourse aligns with national development plans while rendering institutional critique and caution seemingly inappropriate.

Practically, public journalistic discourse on WeChat public accounts, Weibo, and news apps has become an important means of reconstructing journalistic authority and retaining audience trust in China. Future discourse should move beyond listing potential AI risks and proposing abstract responses by explaining the concrete procedures through which AIGC is verified, corrected, and held accountable. More balanced risk attribution should acknowledge the responsibilities of media organizations, technology companies, and regulatory institutions rather than locating responsibility primarily in technical features. Publicly addressing these institutional responsibilities would demonstrate journalism's willingness to scrutinize the conditions of its own technological transformation.

5.2. Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. First, it relies exclusively on published articles and does not include journalist interviews, newsroom observations, or internal editorial documents. The findings therefore capture the public construction of AI risks in metajournalistic discourse rather than journalists' personal perceptions or actual newsroom practices. Future research could combine textual analysis with interviews, ethnographic observations, and editorial documents to examine whether and how journalists enact the "risk filter" role and negotiate AI risks in daily practice.

Second, while the Chinese media environment provides a compelling case for examining how a strong state role shapes journalistic perceptions of and responses to AI risks, the findings may not be directly generalizable to other media systems. Comparative research could therefore explore how AI risk perceptions and shifting professional identities emerge across different contexts, helping to clarify the interaction between media systems and various technological development ideologies in shaping journalistic interpretations of AI risks.

Acknowledgments

The author sincerely appreciates the journal's editorial team and the anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments. The author is also grateful to Prof. Kecheng Fang for his insightful comments during the development of this manuscript. The author also thanks the 6th Lisbon Winter School for the Study of Communication for providing valuable feedback and opportunities for discussion.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

Data Availability

All articles analyzed in this study are publicly available. Full bibliographic information for the articles is provided in the supplementary material.

LLMs Disclosure

The author used generative artificial intelligence (ChatGPT 5.2) to translate original Chinese sentences in the samples into English and to assist with proofreading. All AI-assisted content was carefully reviewed and revised by the author to ensure accuracy in wording and paraphrasing. A native English speaker proofread the final manuscript.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the author (unedited).

References

- 611 kuan shengchengshi rengong zhineng fuwu wancheng beian. (2025, November 12). *Xinhua News Agency*. <https://www.news.cn/info/20251112/0f071c67e25d47208bd7e8a219ed3bf8/c.html>
- Abbott, A. D. (1988). *The system of professions: An essay on the division of expert labor*. University of Chicago Press.
- Ahmad, N., Haque, S., & Ibahrine, M. (2023). The news ecosystem in the age of AI: Evidence from the UAE. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 67(3), 323–352. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08838151.2023.2173197>
- Airoidi, M. (2022). *Machine habitus: Toward a sociology of algorithms*. Polity Press.
- Aitamurto, T., & Boyles, J. L. (2025). Next generation journalistic norms: Journalism students' social imaginary of AI-infused journalism. *Journalism Practice*, 19(10), 2230–2248. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2025.2505950>
- Ananian-Welsh, R., Kendall, S., & Murray, R. (2021). Risk and uncertainty in public interest journalism: The impact of espionage law on press freedom. *Melbourne University Law Review*, 44(3), 764–811. <https://search.informit.org/doi/abs/10.3316/INFORMIT.113450494427498>
- Beacken, G. D., Trauthig, I. K., & Woolley, S. C. (2026). Generative AI, propaganda, and digital authoritarianism: Comparative insights from six democratically weakened countries. *Big Data & Society*, 13(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/20539517251410064>
- Boyles, J. L. (2024). A new(s) copyright balancing act: How American journalism institutions approached the early era of artificial intelligence and fair use. *Journalism Studies*, 25(15), 1893–1910. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2024.2403522>
- Cao, X., & Power, L. (2025). Controlled carefully: How consumer care legitimizes China's AI regulations. *Information, Communication & Society*, 28(15), 2740–2756. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2025.2474565>
- Carlson, M. (2015). The robotic reporter: Automated journalism and the redefinition of labor, compositional forms, and journalistic authority. *Digital Journalism*, 3(3), 416–431. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2014.976412>
- Carlson, M. (2016). Metajournalistic discourse and the meanings of journalism: Definitional control, boundary work, and legitimation. *Communication Theory*, 26(4), 349–368. <https://doi.org/10.1111/comt.12088>
- Chan, J. M. (2003). Administrative boundaries and media marketization: A comparative analysis of the newspaper, TV and internet markets in China. In C.-C. Lee (Ed.), *Chinese media, global contexts* (pp. 156–172). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203402290-14>
- De Cooker, J., Arets, D., Brugman, M., Wernaart, B., Van Vliet, M., & Van Leeuwen, T. (2026). Lost in translation? How structural, individual, and professional factors hinder AI adoption in investigative journalism. *Journalism Studies*, 27(4), 503–519. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2025.2595290>

- Dodds, T., Yeung, W. N., Mellado, C., & De Lima-Santos, M.-F. (2026). On controlled change: Generative AI's impact on professional authority in journalism. *Journalism Studies*, 27(7), 1051–1068. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2026.2616634>
- Du, Y. (2024, February 27). Zhuliu meiti ye ke chongdang AIGC xitong kaifa zhongyao jue. *Zhongguo Xinwen Chubao Guangdian Bao*. https://digital.gmw.cn/2024-02/27/content_37169758.htm
- Fang, C., Wilkenfeld, J. N., Navick, N., & Gibbs, J. L. (2023). “AI am here to represent you”: Understanding how institutional logics shape attitudes toward intelligent technologies in legal work. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 37(4), 941–970. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08933189231158282>
- Fang, K. (2022). What is Zimeiti? The commercial logic of content provision on China's social media platforms. *Chinese Journal of Communication*, 15(1), 75–94. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17544750.2021.2016877>
- Fang, K., & Repnikova, M. (2022). The state-preneurship model of digital journalism innovation: Cases from China. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 27(2), 497–517. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161221991779>
- Frey, E. (2023). Preparing for risks and building resilience. *Journalism Studies*, 24(7), 1008–1025. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2023.2173962>
- Fürsich, E. (2009). In defense of textual analysis: Restoring a challenged method for journalism and media studies. *Journalism Studies*, 10(2), 238–252. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616700802374050>
- Gieryn, T. F. (1983). Boundary-work and the demarcation of science from non-science: Strains and interests in professional ideologies of scientists. *American Sociological Review*, 48(6), 781–795. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2095325>
- Gondwe, G. (2026). Investigative journalism and AI-driven subterfuge in countries with limited press freedom in East Africa. *Journalism Practice*, 20(5), 1597–1616. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2025.2541254>
- Gueorguiev, D. D., Shao, L., & Crabtree, C. (2017). *Blurring the lines: Rethinking censorship under autocracy*. SSRN. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3075481>
- Guzman, A. L., & Lewis, S. C. (2020). Artificial intelligence and communication: A human-machine communication research agenda. *New Media & Society*, 22(1), 70–86. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444819858691>
- Hollings, J., Hanitzsch, T., & Balasubramanian, R. (2019). Risky choices? Modelling journalists' perceptions of aggressive newsgathering practices. *Journalism Studies*, 20(1), 22–39. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2017.1353431>
- Holton, A. E., & Belair-Gagnon, V. (2018). Strangers to the game? Interlopers, intralopers, and shifting news production. *Media and Communication*, 6(4), 70–78. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v6i4.1490>
- Huckin, T. (2002). Textual silence and the discourse of homelessness. *Discourse & Society*, 13(3), 347–372. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926502013003054>
- Humayun, M. F. (2026). Deprofessionalization of U.S. sports journalism? Exploring metajournalistic discourse through the case of *Sports Illustrated* and generative AI. *Journalism Studies*, 27(6), 849–868. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2025.2601235>
- Jamil, S. (2021). Artificial intelligence and journalistic practice: The crossroads of obstacles and opportunities for Pakistani journalists. *Journalism Practice*, 15(10), 1400–1422. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2020.1788412>
- Johnson, P. R. (2024). A case of claims and facts: Automated fact-checking and the future of journalism's authority. *Digital Journalism*, 12(10), 1461–1484. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2023.2174564>
- Kim, E. (2018). Sociotechnical imaginaries and the globalization of converging technology policy: Technological developmentalism in South Korea. *Science as Culture*, 27(2), 175–197. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09505431.2017.1354844>

- Kuai, J. (2026). Navigating the AI hype: Chinese journalists' algorithmic imaginaries and role perceptions in reporting emerging technologies. *Digital Journalism*, 14(2), 360–379. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2025.2502851>
- Kuai, J., Ferrer-Conill, R., & Karlsson, M. (2022). AI ≥ journalism: How Chinese copyright law protects tech giants' AI innovations and disrupts the journalistic institution. *Digital Journalism*, 10(10), 1893–1912. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2022.2120032>
- Kuai, J., Wang, X., & Karlsson, M. (2025). Artificial intelligence technologies in journalism in China. In A. Sarisakaloğlu & M. Löffelholz (Eds.), *The handbook of artificial intelligence and journalism* (pp. 367–382). John Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781394250424.ch25>
- Lee, F. (2023). Beyond self-censorship: Hong Kong's journalistic risk culture under the national security law. *The China Journal*, 90(1), 129–153. <https://doi.org/10.1086/725536>
- Lelo, T. (2024). Fostering artificial intelligence to face misinformation: Discourses and practices of automated fact-checking in Brazil. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 101(2), 320–345. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10776990231207963>
- Lewis, S. C., Guzman, A. L., & Schmidt, T. R. (2019). Automation, journalism, and human-machine communication: Rethinking roles and relationships of humans and machines in news. *Digital Journalism*, 7(4), 409–427. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2019.1577147>
- Lin, B. (2024). Beyond authoritarianism and liberal democracy: Understanding China's artificial intelligence impact in Africa. *Information, Communication & Society*, 27(6), 1126–1141. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2023.2239322>
- Meng, J., & Wang, H. (2025). Dancing with AI: The impact of AI-generated images and videos on Chinese visual journalism. *Digital Journalism*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2025.2593999>
- Munoriyarwa, A., Chiumbu, S., & Motsathebe, G. (2023). Artificial intelligence practices in everyday news production: The case of South Africa's mainstream newsrooms. *Journalism Practice*, 17(7), 1374–1392. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2021.1984976>
- Munoriyarwa, A., & de-Lima-Santos, M.-F. (2025). Generative AI and the future of news: Examining AI's agency, power, and authority. *Journalism Practice*, 19(10), 2177–2188. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2025.2545448>
- Oh, S., & Jung, J. (2025). Harmonizing traditional journalistic values with emerging AI technologies: A systematic review of journalists' perception. *Media and Communication*, 13(6), Article 9495. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.9495>
- Onebunne, A. P. (2026). Journalists' perception of artificial intelligence: The case of Nigerian newsrooms. *Digital Journalism*, 14(5), 751–770. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2025.2577127>
- Perreault, G. P., Lewis, S. C., & Ely, M. (2026). ChatGPT, generative AI, and an epistemic opportunity for journalistic authority. *Digital Journalism*, 14(5), 850–870. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2025.2510967>
- Repnikova, M. (2017). *Media politics in China: Improvising power under authoritarianism*. Cambridge University Press.
- Rooney, S., & Creech, B. (2019). A digital baron for a digital age: Chris Hughes and neoliberalism's ascendancy in journalism. *Digital Journalism*, 7(6), 746–761. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2019.1604148>
- Sebastião, S. P., & Dias, D. F.-M. (2025). AI transparency: A conceptual, normative, and practical frame analysis. *Media and Communication*, 13(6), Article 9419. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.9419>
- Shin, D., Zhou, S., & Rasul, A. (2025). Towards responsible AI journalism: Mapping journalists' perceptions of AI ethics. *Journalism*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14648849251363045>

- Soto-Sanfiel, M. T., Ibiti, A., Machado, M., Marín Ochoa, B. E., Mendoza Michilot, M., Rosell Arce, C. G., & Angulo-Brunet, A. (2022). In search of the Global South: Assessing attitudes of Latin American journalists to artificial intelligence in journalism. *Journalism Studies*, 23(10), 1197–1224. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2022.2075786>
- Statista. (2025). *Artificial intelligence: In-depth market analysis*. <https://www.statista.com/study/50485/in-depth-report-artificialintelligence>
- Sun, Y., Sheng, D., Zhou, Z., & Wu, Y. (2024). AI hallucination: Towards a comprehensive classification of distorted information in artificial intelligence-generated content. *Humanities & Social Sciences Communications*, 11(1), Article 1278. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-03811-x>
- Thomson Reuters. (2025, January 27). *Potential long-term risks of the increasing use of artificial intelligence (AI) to journalism according to journalists worldwide as of November 2024* [Graph]. Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1623863/risks-of-ai-in-journalism-worldwide>
- Tracy, S. J. (2025). *Qualitative research methods: Collecting evidence, crafting analysis, communicating impact* (3rd ed.). John Wiley.
- Umejei, E., Ayisi, A., Phiri, M., & Tallam, E. (2025). Artificial intelligence and journalism in four African countries: Optimists, pessimists, and pragmatists. *Journalism Practice*, 19(10), 2249–2265. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2025.2489590>
- Upmanyu, K., & Gore Mehendale, S. (2026). Enthusiastic or averse, yet nonchalant: Mapping early-career journalists' engagement with Gen AI in Indian newsrooms. *Journalism Studies*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2026.2700615>
- Wahl-Jorgensen, K. (2013). The strategic ritual of emotionality: A case study of Pulitzer Prize-winning articles. *Journalism*, 14(1), 129–145. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884912448918>
- Wang, H. (2021). Generational change in Chinese journalism: Developing Mannheim's theory of generations for contemporary social conditions. *Journal of Communication*, 71(1), 104–128. <https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqaa040>
- Wang, H., Sparks, C., & Yu, H. (2018). Popular journalism in China: A study of *China Youth Daily*. *Journalism*, 19(9/10), 1203–1219. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884917691987>
- Wang, Z., Downey, J., & Zhuang, X. (2026). Shared utopias, distinct anxieties: Sociotechnical imaginaries of AI-in-journalism in American, French and Chinese newspapers (2019–2025). *Journalism*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14648849261466375>
- White, D. M. (1950). The “gatekeeper”: A case study in the selection of news. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 27(4), 383–390. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107769905002700403>
- Wu, S. (2024). Why context matters in code studies: Exploring ways to globalize/diversify understandings of algorithmic and AI use in journalism. *Digital Journalism*, 12(7), 1052–1058. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2024.2395477>
- Xi, J. (2019). Jiakuai tuidong meiti ronghe fazhan goujian quan meiti chuanbo geju. *Qiushi*, (6), 4–8.
- Xu, J., Qu, R., Zhou, S., & Ren, J. (2025). Generative artificial intelligence and the media digital divide: Comparison of four tiers of Chinese media. *Journalism Practice*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2025.2577708>
- Yao, X., & Xi, Y. (2026). Where risk travels: A dual-path model of media and governance in the perception of AI hallucination. *Policy and Internet*, 18(1), Article e70032. <https://doi.org/10.1002/poi3.70032>
- Yin, L., & Liu, X. (2014). A gesture of compliance: Media convergence in China. *Media, Culture & Society*, 36(5), 561–577. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443714532975>
- Zhao, Y. (1998). *Media, market, and democracy in China: Between the Party line and the bottom line*. University of Illinois Press.

- Zheng, L., & Wang, B. (2023, February 24). Yong shehuizhuyi hexin jiazhiguan zhuhun yuren. *Jiefangjun Bao*. http://www.81.cn/yw_208727/16203864.html
- Zhu, Z. (2025, February 18). Duijie DeepSeek, zhuliu meiti polang qianxing. *Zhongguo Xinwen Chubao Guangdian Bao*. https://epaper.chinaxwcb.com/epaper/2025-02/18/content_99855062.html

About the Author



Youyi Wei is a PhD candidate at the School of Journalism and Communication, The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Her research interests include journalism, media business models, and digital technology, with a particular focus on the adaptation and boundaries of journalism in the digital era.