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Abstract

The practice of investigative journalism in China burgeoned in the early 1980s in the wake of the economic reforms and has been growing rapidly since the mid-1990s. Today, it is one of the most vibrant parts of Chinese media. As a thermometer for press freedom and a crucial site for examining the media–state relationship in China, investigative journalism has attracted a substantial amount of scholarly attention during the past three decades. This article critically reviews research, published both in mainland China and overseas, on the topic from 1978 to 2013. We first present a quantitative analysis outlining certain basic characteristics of the field of investigative journalism research based on a sample of 112 mainland publications and 14 overseas publications. We then present a qualitative review of existing knowledge about investigative journalism in China. Finally, we highlight some of the newest developments in the phenomenon and discuss several directions for future research.

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