

Review Article¹

"The Muckrakers" Fact-Checking Journalism

An Analytical Study of the "Reporters" Program on France 24 channel

Noureddine, Soltani

Academic Rank: Dr.

Affiliation: Department of Media and communication sciences, Faculty of social science, Larbi Tebessi University, Tebessa / Country: Algeria

ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-3398-8136>E-mail: noureddine.soltani@univ-tebessa.dz

Abstract

Investigative journalism contributes to enriching the role of media in monitoring all kinds of corruption in societies and it relies on journalists called corruption whistleblowers (muckrakers). In our study we analyzed the content of twenty-six (26) episodes of "Reporters" program on France24 in order to identify the technical styles used in journalistic investigation, and methods of visual processing of events during the presentation of journalistic investigation, and methods of collecting and investigating facts, and the most important topics of interest to journalistic investigation, and knowing the various parties to the conflict. The study concluded that the investigative journalism requires the provision of significant financial and human resources and that's what France 24 provides with more than 200 offices around the world. And one of the most important technical styles used in editing investigative media material is the use of descriptive style at a rate of 61.54%. As for visual processing of investigative cases a range of diverse tools like CG, were used to prepare the names and the professional titles of prominent figures in the journalistic investigation in large proportions estimated at 39.73% , followed by the use of RAW video at 26.48%, and video and audio clips at 24.66%. The "Reporters" program relies heavily on live field photography by 50.35%, and the investigations conducted by France 24 rely on collecting information through exclusive photography, where we find it in first place by 36.08%. The investigative journalism is primarily concerned with political topics and through "reporters" program as

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they represent a third (¹3) of the shown episodes in "Reporters" program, in addition to that the two most important objectives of "reporters" program are "present the information that concerns the audience" and "expose corruption".

Keywords

Investigative Journalism; Investigative Reporting; The Muckrakers; Reporters Program; France 24 Channel.

1. Introduction

The media and communication media and its modern media are considered an indispensable necessity for societies, governments, and even individuals, regardless of their cultural backgrounds and ideological diversity. The media has turned into a vibrant voice of society that conveys its opinions and aspirations, publishes its mistakes and exposes its scandals, pursues corruption and corruptors, gives positive criticism, arouses public emotions towards the imbalance in society, alerts the concerned authorities to places of corruption, and seeks to investigate many crimes that have not been reported.

Today, the press bears great responsibilities toward society, including helping in the development and growth of society, confronting the manifestations that hinder such development, by reaching the full truth and conveying it to the public whether local or international, press plays a supervisory role on manifestations of corruption, illegal violations or even on positive features that exist within societies.

Perhaps the most important form of journalism that fulfills the previous role, and that possesses the characteristics making it a pioneer in this field, is investigative journalism, or the truth seeking journalism as it is called in Western countries.

A number of international media channels that have adopted the investigative journalistic approach were able to conduct video field investigations through which major scandals, serious violations, crimes, and corruption are revealed. Their aim has been to expose unethical and illegal practices, as it is considered one of the most important tools for ensuring criminal justice in favor of civilian victims, one of the most important means that contributes in prosecuting criminals and proving their involvement in these atrocities. Journalistic work, with the tools available to it, is the most capable and reliable entity to carry out this humanitarian mission, despite its danger it entails. In return, the journalistic movement has sacrificed a number of its members in fulfilling this mission. It must also be stressed that journalistic materials documenting crimes—in their visual, audio, written, and electronic forms—are among the tools approved by the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, which demonstrates the effectiveness of such documentation.

The media station (France 24) is one of the most important media channels that work on conducting field investigations on various issues and in different places around the world. Its media package includes a range of programs that address sensitive topics, such as the video news program, the Observers program, the Community program, the In Depth of the Event

program, the Forbidden Orbit program, and the Reporters program. From this perspective, this study seeks to answer the following question:

- What is the reality of investigative journalism in media outlets, through the Reporters program on France 24?

Through the previous main question, the analytical study addressed the following sub-questions:

- What are the most important basic skills that an investigative journalist relies on to deal with facts through the Reporters program on France 24?
- Has fact-checking journalism achieved its goals through the Reporters program on France 24?
- What are the most important investigative journalistic methods and formats used in the Reporters program on France 24?
- Is investigative journalism a distinct media model for observing facts, or is it a journalistic investigation to track down violations through the Reporters program on France 24?
- What are the sources of information that investigative journalism relies on to uncover facts and expose violations through the Reporters program on France 24?

2. Importance and objectives of the study:

The importance of this study lies in exploring investigative journalism and its role in removing the ambiguity from various thorny issues, which often involve violations against individuals, the law, or the natural environment. Investigative journalism plays a vital role in fostering effective democracy by holding powerful individuals and institutions accountable, exposing corruption and misconduct, and informing the public about significant issues. It acts as a watchdog that uncovers hidden truths and strengthens transparency, which is essential for a healthy society.

The importance of our study is linked to the medium of television, which seeks to address thorny issues. Moreover, there are few media studies that have focused on this mysterious aspect in society because of its distinctive features that are not found in other general topics, and access to information in investigative journalism is difficult to obtain.

The key objectives of this study can be summarized as follows:

- To identify the most important basic skills that an investigative journalist relies on to deal with the facts and methods used in investigative journalism and the various technical templates used in editing a journalistic investigation
- To uncover the different objectives of journalistic investigations and the most important topics of interest to these investigations.

- To identify the sources on which investigative journalism relies, and the various actors involved in the topics under investigation.
- To know the persuasive methods those are relied on in journalistic investigations.

2. Defining study concepts:

2. 1. Investigative journalism:

Investigative journalism is considered a form of media that is concerned with uncovering facts and shedding light on the deviations and aspects of corruption present in society. In doing so, it reinforces the "liberal" role of the media, a conceptual notion that reflects the duality of the philosophy of freedom of expression (an individual perspective) and confronting authority (a general perspective).

In view of this leading role in society, investigative journalism has today become a profession with its own customs and rules. Most Western newspapers have even dedicated sections and appointed distinguished editors capable of researching, investigating, and uncovering certain issues occurring in society, especially aspects of deviation and corruption. As a result, these editors were called "diggers for corruption".

Although investigative journalism has great potential to link officials to specific crimes, it may also create a false impression among people that there is always misconduct. This makes it ethically necessary to publish reports about wrongdoing and to demonstrate the investigative journalist's commitment to professionalism and proficiency.

Here, ethical responsibility is of utmost importance. Publishing accusations in newspapers without solid evidence can cause devastating consequences for the reputation of individuals and institutions. In this context, "Wasword", Professor of Journalism at Rutgers University and the University of New Jersey in the United States, states:

"Most of the discussions that have taken place among media experts in recent years concerning the ethics of investigative journalism have focused on methodology, that is, on the approach through which wrongful conduct is properly uncovered. Is it considered legitimate to resort to deception when journalists aim to tell the truth? Can the use of a particular method be justified if working conditions and the difficulties of obtaining information require it? Is it permissible for journalists to use false identities in order to access information? ...etc." (Vinieu 2009, 11)

Benjaminson and Anderson describe investigative journalism as "hidden information journalism," meaning journalism that seeks to uncover information that is not available to all people. (Benjaminson and David 1990, 156) James Aucoin indicates that investigative journalism is a style characterized by a comprehensive perspective and strenuous effort toward issues that affect citizens' lives. (Aucoin 2005, 02) Meanwhile, Margaret Defleur believes that investigative journalism deals with everything that is of public interest and cannot be easily disclosed. (Defleur 1994, 18)

Leonard Downie and Robert Kaiser argued that investigative journalism plays an indispensable role in modern society, particularly since exposing corruption in government

can lead to changes in successive government policies. This, in turn, protects taxpayers' money from waste and mismanagement, and thus ending the service of officials who misuse public funds. Likewise, uncovering the unethical practices of businessmen can save consumers' money from being wasted. (Downie and Kaiser 2002, 04-05)

The Association of the Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE) in the United States, defines investigative journalism as reporting through individual initiative and as a result of the work done by the editor, which is of particular importance to readers, viewers or listeners. In many cases, investigative journalism deals with information that others try to keep hidden or confidential. According to the definition provided by the Association of Investigative Journalists and Editors in the United States, investigative reporting seeks to reveal facts or social conditions that are not widely known but are of significant public interest. This type of journalism requires the allocation of substantial resources by media organizations, with the aim of benefiting both the journalist and the institution, to the point of achieving a scoop. (Raphael 2007, 25)

In our research, investigative journalism is a process that emerges through a range of television programs. A case in point is the selected study sample: Reporters program on the France 24 media network, which addresses a range of ambiguous or unlawful issues occurring in different countries.

2. 2.The Muckrakers (Whistleblowers of corruption):

The muckrakers were early twentieth-century group of journalists who pioneered the exposure of social and economic injustices through investigative reporting and photojournalism, also called "scandal investigators". "Scandal-inducers" were investigative journalists, beginning in the 1890s to the 1920s in print journalism, highlighting the corruption of business leaders and government, as well as major social problems such as racism. Ida B. Wells wrote brilliantly about the horrors of lynching in the American South, her entire press office was freed, and she was forced to move to Chicago after her life was in danger. "Jacob Riis" photographed immigrant children living among the garbage dumps beneath the sidewalks of New York City. "Upton Sinclair" wrote The Jungle book, exposing the unsafe and unsanitary practices of the meatpacking industry, while "Ida Tarbell" investigated the monopolistic dominance of John D. Rockefeller's "Standard Oil", which destroyed many small businesses, including her father's. Their reports alarmed members of the public and lawmakers and in some cases, led to reforms and legislation which addressed the issues they were covering and in other cases the issues were exposed, though the wave of anger brought little difference.

The investigative method employed by scandal journalists included scrutinizing documents, conducting extensive interviews, and going undercover. Unlike the "yellow press," where some leading newspapers resorted to inflating stories with fiction rather than facts, and in many cases, scandalous journalists became activists, spending years talking around the country about their work and the need for reform.

President Theodore Roosevelt coined the term "scandalous journalists" in 1906 to describe activist journalists who wrote stories in late 19th-century publications, and Roosevelt derived the term from John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Journey*, written in 1678. Roosevelt criticized journalists who he saw as overly focused on exposing corruption in business and government, ignoring positive news, and journalists of the time took the term as a compliment and adopted it as a badge of honor for exposing misconduct. (Tarbell 2012)

2. 3. France 24 channel:

It is an international news channel that provides news and information in several languages (French, Arabic, English and Spanish). It seeks to provide secular media coverage stemming from French culture, and targets a global audience. It covers approximately 383.3 million homes around the world, according to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs website. It is owned by the French state and is funded annually by approximately 80 million euros. It began broadcasting in December 2006. Today, the channel is broadcast via satellite, the Internet, cable networks and live broadcast via YouTube. It produces a wide range of programs such as: Video News Program, Observers Program, Society Program, In Depth of the Event Program, In the Orbit of the Forbidden Program, and Reporters Program...etc. (France 24 website s.d.)

3- Theoretical basis of the study (the regulatory approach to the media):

This approach believes that throughout the press has historically been distinguished from other media by its ability to exercise the function of a watchdog and critical by criticizing the existing policies and trends, and putting forward alternative visions that aim at reforming and developing the conditions of society, along with monitoring the performance of state bodies and institutions, and revealing the shortcomings and deviations in the performance of these institutions and those responsible for them.

The supervisory role is an extension of the concept of the Fourth Estate, meaning that the media functions as a guardian over all aspects of society, from inputs to outputs that take place in society, including the monitoring of influential social institutions in society, as many researchers see the role and the supervisory role played by the media, and the movement for change and reform. This role is considered a major tributary in the movement of change, modernization and democratic development. (Abdel-Baqi 2013, 93)

The theory of censorship journalism asserts that the press must criticize and evaluate the performance of governments and institutions to ensure that no one engages in corruption or abuses their position. A free press plays its democratic role by providing voters with reliable information, thereby encouraging public debate and since the primary role of the government is limited to protecting the freedom of citizens, a pattern of censorship will be needed to protect citizens from any deviations in the government's exercise of its fundamental duty. The central idea of censorship journalism theory is that the press must protect citizens from violations that may be committed by the government or other powerful individuals or institutions in society.

That Innovators Theories in the field of media point out that Censorship is among the functions that the press performs whether or not it does as it represents the elite in society, the time for the press to play the role of mediator between the people and the elite, and the roots of the theory of the supervisory role of the press extend to the theory of freedom of the press, which includes a number of basic assumptions, which are:

- The importance of individuals.
- Reliance on the power of reason and rational behavior in society, meaning that all actions taken by the authorities must be framed within the limits of sound logic.
- The concept of natural right.
- Freedom of religion and expression, of which the press has become a part. (Abdel-Baqi 2013, 95)

4- Type of study and its methodology

4-1- Type and fields of study:

This study falls within the descriptive studies that aim to describe the human phenomenon, explain it, and attempt to deconstruct and analyze it in order to reach conclusions using analytical methods, and thus reach accuracy in controlling the results and generalizing them to the phenomenon, in addition to extracting the latent meanings, complex relationships, and implicit ideas of the media content. This study relied on the survey method through the method of content analysis and monitoring the supervisory role of the media in addressing ambiguous issues in societies, where journalistic investigations are conducted through various programs, such as the "Reporters" program on France 24.

The study population consists of the total television segments presented within the program "Reporters" on France 24 channel, as the program has been broadcast since November 24, 2009, and the program is interested in investigating mysterious events, illegal cases, various suspicious activities, or even development issues, and this in different countries of the world, and the program presents "Rafiq Sahali", an Algerian journalist who has been working for France 24 since 2011.

A sample of twenty-six (26) episodes of the "Reporters" program on France 24 was adopted, over a period of seven (07) months, starting from January 13, 2025 until July 18, 2025, where a comprehensive survey of the intentional sample was conducted. So that the content analysis covers the various elements of analysis, categories and measurement elements.

Table 01:Episodes Reporters program on France 24 Study sample

Nº	Episode title	Broadcast date	The Episode duration	country
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1	Major French banks and the "dirty" gas trade in the Peruvian Amazon	01/13/2025	16:11	Peru
2	UAE...for Gaza	01/17/2025	30:22	UAE
3	Philippines: Activists for Justice for AIDS Patients	01/24/2025	12:54	The Philippines
4	Ukraine: Call to arms	01/31/2025	12:49	Ukraine
5	Hong Kong: Repression in the Name of Law and Order	08/02/2025	39:23	China
6	Floods and climate change... the cycle of poverty continues in Sierra Leone	02/14/2025	13:12	Sierra Leone
7	Serbia: A haven for Russian exiles since the outbreak of the Ukraine war	02/21/2025	12:38	Ukraine
8	Bangladesh: More than half of women marry before the age of 18	02/28/2025	12:55	Bangladesh
9	Nigeria: Seeds of Hope	07/03/2025	36:18	Nigeria
10	Bas-Age House in Belgium: A Meeting of Life and Death Outside Hospital Walls	03/14/2025	13:22	Belgium
11	Honduras: Crimes Under Cover	03/27/2025	17:15	Honduras
12	Civilians in Sudan are trying to rebuild their lives after two years of war.	04/05/2025	31:17	Sudan
13	Spain: Data centers threaten the environment!	04/18/2025	12:48	Spain
14	Mexico: Is the path to immigration to the United States blocked?	04/25/2025	13:08	Mexico
15	"Eternal Pollutants"... Impossible Justice?	02/05/2025	12:36	Europe
16	Iran: The Voice of the Mullahs: How Conservatives Try to Influence Youth	09/05/2025	12:52	Iran
17	Italy: Women Confronting the Mafia	05/16/2025	26:14	Italy
18	Egypt faces the challenge of population growth	05/23/2025	12:46	Egypt
19	North Korea: Challenges of Immigration to South Korea	05/30/2025	12:33	Korea. Sh
20	Shattered Childhood: An Investigation into Sexual Assault in Religious Schools	06/06/2025	44:29	Pakistan
21	Investigation into the recruitment of Africans into the Russian army for the war against Ukraine	06/13/2025	12:52	Russia

2 2	Harvard University challenges Trump!	06/20/2025	11:39	America
2 3	Greenland... When the silence is broken	06/27/2025	36:03	Sweden
2 4	Is the Russian Church in Sweden a nest of spies?	04/07/2025	12:54	Sweden
2 5	Kenya: The spread of human organ trafficking	11/07/2025	12:51	Kenya
2 6	Trump, Chasing Immigrants	07/18/2025	12:55	America

Source: Prepared by the researcher

4-2- Study tool:

This study used the content analysis form as a study tool with the aim of analyzing what was identified from Episodes from the Reporters program on France 24, a quantitative and qualitative analysis that serves the study's objectives and answers the study's questions.

- Based on the study problem and its objectives, a set of Units of analysis The analysis categories were relied on to reach results on the subject of the study, and these categories and units are as follows:

4-2-1 - Units of analysis

- **Word unit:** The word is the smallest unit among the units used in content analysis, and it is a small part that the researcher uses to monitor the repetitions of the research vocabulary.
- **Personality unit:** Through which the characters addressed in the content to be analyzed are accurately described, and this is done by monitoring various traits and ideas, and accordingly, the prominent personalities (real/moral) in the program of reporters on France 24 channel are classified as the study sample based on careful observation, as well as based on a mental image of the apparent characters (parties to the conflict).
- **Unity of idea:** an idea has no boundaries other than those carried by its meaning. It may take the form of a phrase or sentence, extend across a paragraph, or even all the content may be a single idea. (Tammar 2007, 86) take the form of a phrase or sentence, extend across a paragraph, or even all the content may be a single idea.ⁱ Using the idea as a unit of analysis is useful in identifying trends and judgments within media content. (Abd al-

Hamid 1980, 140) Because the repetition of ideas indicates direction. An idea may be simple and directly observable, such as an individual's statement: "We must choose our words carefully when criticizing the government." This can be directly measured as evidence of restrictions on freedom of expression. we also find that must be searched, categorized, divided linguistically and restructured to reach the main idea, and in the subject of our study we are interested in the idea that the single topic revolves around (one word from each episode of the program Reporters on France 24 The subject of the analysis, and the single word under analysis includes more than one idea.

- **Unit of time:** It refers to the period of time that suggests the importance of the subject being presented, if it is presented for a long time, it means that the focus on it is important, and if it is short, it means the opposite. (Tammar 2007, 91) In our study, we observe the time-varying focus in the presentation of the actors, or the disparity between the different episodes in terms of the time it takes to show the episode.

4-2-2 - Operational definitions of analysis subcategories:

- Category of artistic methods used by the Reporters program on France 24 channel study sample:
 - **Objective presentation style:** Where the issue or problem is presented objectively, where the issue or problem is presented at the beginning of the investigation, with care taken to arouse the viewer's interest by posing many questions, then the subject's angles are presented in the text, along with providing statistics or documentary evidence. In the conclusion, the journalist's opinions, perceptions, and proposed solutions are presented.
 - **Descriptive style:** A quick description of the event is given at the beginning of the program episode, followed by a detailed explanation of the events in the middle of the program episode. The conclusion connects the scattered details of the event's image. This style is most suitable for presenting sporting or environmental events, or economic, social, and even political seminars.
 - **Narrative style:** The journalistic investigation is presented in the form of a story. It differs from the descriptive style in that the events are narrated chronologically, so that the investigation goes back to the first signs of the problem or event. This style is often adopted when investigating crimes or conflicts.

- Category: Nature of image processing during the investigation of the Reporters program on France 24 channel Study sample:

This category includes the use of:

- **CG (Character Generic):** to prepare the names and professional titles of prominent figures in the investigation it appears at the bottom of the screen, and contains the names of the speakers in the investigative report, the most important facts in the investigation, or even the names of the places where the journalist conducts the investigation.

- **Raw video (RAW):** it is an original and exclusive footage recorded at the moment of the incident, usually with a mobile phone or surveillance camera. Its quality is poor.
- **Video clip (video or audio only SB "Sound bite" - SC "Sound clip"):** Short video or audio excerpts from speeches by public figures or interviews included in the report, usually directly related to the events.
- **A quote from a film material :** Archival material that relates to the journalistic investigation.
- **Hiding the features of the speaking characters and changing the tone of voice.**
- Fact-finding mechanisms category within the Reporters program on France 24 channel the study sample:
 - Use secret recording.
 - Use interviews with active figures.
 - Relying on direct field photography.
 - Information Sources Category Within the Reporters program on France 24, the study sample:
 - Pre-recorded photos and videos of people or other media.
 - Exclusive footage from France 24.
 - Reports of international organizations and bodies.
 - Eyewitness statements.
 - Hidden sources with pseudonyms.
 - Experts and specialists.
 - Category of Topics in Reporters program on France 24. Study sample:

This category can be divided into political, economic, social, environmental, or religious topics.

Note: One episode may include more than one topic.

- Category of investigative journalism objectives in Reporters program on France 24. Study sample:
 - Displaying information of viewers interest.
 - Exposing corruption.
 - Entertainment and enjoyment.
 - Predict the future course of the topic.
 - Category of conflict's parties in Reporters program on France 24. Study sample:
 - Rights defenders (anti-corruption).

- Victims.
- Political figures.
- Local or international bodies.
 - Persuasive methods category in Reporters program on France 24. Study sample:
- Providing evidence and proof.
- Providing statistical data.
- Citing current events.

5-Statistical processing and discussion of the analysis' results:

5-1 -Category of artistic and aesthetic methods used by the Reporters program on France 24 Channel:

Table 02: Represents Artistic methods used by the Reporters program on France 24 Channel:

Number	Journalistic Techniques	Repetition	Rate
01	Objective Presentation Style	08	30.77%
02	Descriptive Style	16	61.54%
03	Narrative Style	02	7.69%
Total		26	100%

Source: Prepared by the researcher

From the results of the table above, it appears that the Reporters program relies heavily on the descriptive method, with a percentage of 61.54 %. The use of the objective presentation method came at a rate of 30.77%. As for the narrative style, its use is very small by 7.69%.

The widespread use of the **descriptive style** can be explained by the fact that journalistic investigation relies on the moderate pyramid style in presenting facts, and the illustrated

transmission of events gives the investigator a greater advantage in relying on description to convey the course of events.

For example, in **Episode N°. 20, dated June 6, 2025**, entitled “Shattered Childhood: An Investigation into Sexual Assault in Religious Schools”, the descriptive method was necessary to present a true picture of the phenomenon of child rape. Similarly, in **Episode N°. 08, dated February 28, 2025**, entitled “Bangladesh: More than half of women marry before the age of 18”, the descriptive style was used to convey the suffering experienced by women in Bangladesh.

As for the **objective presentation style**, it is clearly evident in economic and environmental investigations that require the presentation of data, statistics, and even documentary videos. For instance, in **Episode N°. 01, dated January 13, 2025**, entitled “Major French banks and the ‘dirty’ gas trade in the Peruvian Amazon”, a set of scientific data and reports was presented about the involvement of major companies such as the Spanish company Repsol and the French bank Crédit Agricole.

As for the **narrative style**, it appears to be used far less frequently in only two (02) episodes. For example, in **Episode N°. 07, dated February 21, 2025**, entitled “Serbia: A haven for Russian exiles since the outbreak of the Ukraine war”, which investigates how Russians began fleeing conscription, their suffering at the beginning of their arrival in Serbia, and the daily challenges they faced—all presented in the form of interviews with individuals recounting their stories. Likewise, in **Episode N°. 23, dated June 27, 2025**, entitled “Greenland... When the silence is broken”, which tells the stories of women in Greenland and how they were prevented from having children through the implantation of contraceptive coils. Many of these women were interviewed and their stories from the past were presented, which they considered a violation of their rights and personal freedoms.

5-2 -Category of the nature of image processing during the investigation of the Reporters program on France 24, Study sample:

Table 03: The nature of image processing during the investigation of the Reporters program on France 24, Study sample

Number	The nature of image processing during investigation	Repetition	rate
01	CG Names and Professional Titles of Characters in Investigation	87	39.73%
02	video RAW	58	26.48%
03	Video clip(photo or audio SC – SB)	54	24.66%
04	Film quote	9	4.11%
05	Blur characters' features and change voice tone	11	5.02%
Total		219	100%

Source: Prepared by the researcher

From the results of the table it is clear that the use of CG to prepare the names and professional titles of prominent figures in the journalistic investigation came with a large percentage estimated at 39.73%, followed by the use of raw video RAW with 26.48%. As for video and audio clips, they accounted for 24.66%, hiding characters' features or changing their voice tone by 5.02%. And quoting film material from the archive or other media is 4.11%.

It is clear from the interpretation of the results of the analytical study of Table (03) that the use of CG to prepare the names and professional titles of prominent figures in the journalistic investigation has a major role in clarifying the names and job titles of the guests, or identifying the places, organizations, and bodies related to the investigation, for RAW video, it appears in the filming carried out by some citizens or human rights activists or even the recordings of fixed cameras, and these raw videos give journalistic investigations more credibility, and confirm the importance of the censorship provided by the media and social media, with regard to the use of Video clip (photo or audio only , SB "Sound bite"- SC "Sound clip")It is a way of displaying Speech by a public figure or interview within a video report In order to confirm the source of the information and its accuracy, and to quote a film material that is usually from the channel's archive and is related to videos that serve the investigation and is linked to the artistic narrative style in presenting events, as the present and future are usually linked to previous events that must be remembered during the completion of the journalistic investigation, and the program did not rely much on hiding the features and tone of the characters, and this is to avoid ambiguity, as the journalistic investigation has as its primary goal is to remove ambiguity and to reveal facts, and the cases of hidden characters represented by eleven (11) cases in twenty-six (26) episodes as it is to protect the characters who gave the journalistic investigators valuable information.

5-3 –The Category of Fact-finding and Fact-gathering mechanisms in the Reporters program on France 24, study sample:

Table 04:Fact-finding and fact-gathering mechanisms In the Reporters program on France 24, the study sample

Number	Fact-finding and fact-gathering mechanisms	Repetition	rate
01	Use secret recording	17	12.06%
02	Using interviews with active figures	53	37.59%
03	Relying on direct field photography	71	50.35%
Total		141	100%

Source: Prepared by the researcher

From the table above, we note that journalistic investigations in Reporters program on France 24 channel rely heavily on direct field photography to gather information and facts by 50.35% i.e. around half (1/2) of the mechanisms adopted in collecting information, and the use of personal interviews with active figures comes at a rate of 37.59%While the use of secret recording came in at 12.06% which is usually done by hiding the cameras, especially in places where filming is dangerous.

It is clear from the interpretation of the results of Table (04) that the program of Reporters on France 24 channel is adopted as the easiest and most appropriate method for the nature of journalistic work and its ethics, especially during the conduct of journalistic investigations, as this method allows the reality to be conveyed as it is, and gives the journalistic investigation great credibility. Moreover, the use of the interview method has been permanent and is used in every episode of the program, as it allows individuals to provide information about the phenomenon under investigation and to give their testimonies or their suffering, such as the interview of victims in the first episode on January 13, 2025, entitled: "Major French banks and the "dirty" gas trade in the Peruvian Amazon" In which an interview was shown with environmental defenders, a former employee of the gas exploration company, and even victims of pollution. As for secret recording, it is used only in places where it is difficult to film, such as what happened in episode No. (24) entitled: Is the Russian Church in Sweden a den of spies? On July 4, 2025, a secret video was filmed without the knowledge of the church official.

5-4 -Category of information sources in the Reporters program on France 24 Channel. Study sample:

Table 05: Information sources In the Reporters program on France 24 Channel, the study sample

Num	Information sources	Repetition	rate
01	Pre-recorded photos and videos	53	20.78%
02	Exclusive footage from France 24	92	36.08%
03	Reports For organizations and bodies International	05	1.96%
04	Eyewitness statements	67	26.27%
05	Hidden sources with pseudonyms	11	4.31%
06	Experts and specialists	27	10.59%
Total		255	100%

Source: Prepared by the researcher

From the table above, we note that France 24's exclusive filming came in first place with a percentage of 36.08%. Then come the special scenes and eyewitness statements at 26.27%. and in third place we find the previously recorded videos with a percentage of 20.78%. Which is taken from the archive or is filmed by fixed cameras or ordinary people via their phones, while the information provided by experts and specialists in the field of investigation, which comes through conducting interviews with them, came at a rate of 10.59% While hidden sources with pseudonyms were relied upon at a small rate, estimated at 4.31%. The same applies to reports from international organizations and bodies, which came at a rate of 1.96%.

It is clear from the results of the previous table that the media channel France 24, through its Reporters program, seeks to produce its own raw media material, thus giving the channel

more credibility and avoiding the suspicion of falling into the problem of false news. The channel also has 200 offices distributed around the world, and thus it can freely access news sources in a timely manner, which allows it to obtain exclusive news. As for relying on statements from eyewitnesses, experts, and specialists, this is considered mandatory in any journalistic investigation in order to cover all aspects of the subject being investigated.

5-5 –Category of Approved Topics in the Reporters Program on France 24 Channel, the study sample:

Table 06: Approved Topics in the Reporters program on France 24 Channel, the study sample:

Num	Approved Topics In The Reporters Program	Repetition	Rate
01	Political	19	33.93%
02	Social	16	28.57%
03	Economic	11	19.64%
04	Environmental	06	10.71%
05	Religious	04	7.14%
Total		56	100%

Source: Prepared by the researcher

From the table above, we observe that about one third (1/3) of the episodes of the Reporters program on France 24 (the study sample) deal with political topics, representing 33.93%. Social issues come in second place with 28.57%. As for economic topics, they were addressed in eleven (11) episodes, i.e., 19.64%. We note that topics related to environmental pollution accounted for 10.71%, while religious topics come in a low rate of 7.14%.

It is clear from the results of the previous table that there is diversity in the topics that the Reporters program on France 24 channel (the study sample) was interested in .Political topics dominated the investigative journalistic scenes, as politics was addressed in nineteen (19) episodes, for example, the Russian-Ukrainian war, the suffering of the people of Gaza, the normalization of relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, or the political interventions of European countries in Africa and South America, through their companies in order to seize the wealth of these countries, or to address the problem of immigration from Mexico to America or between North and South Korea, or the organ trade in Kenya and its relationship to political corruption. Political problems are also the main reason for the emergence of other economic, environmental, social, cultural and religious problems. Social topics came in second place and are related to poverty or deprivation of rights, especially for

immigrants, or the suffering of AIDS patients in the Philippines, or the suffering of women in Bangladesh.

5-6 -Category of investigative journalistic objectives in the Reporters program on France 24, study sample:

Table 07: Objectives of investigative journalism In the Reporters program on France 24, the study sample

Number	Objectives Of Investigative Journalism in The Reporters Program	Repetition	Rate
01	Display Information Of viewers interest	26	48.15%
02	Exposing Corruption	22	40.74%
03	Entertainment And Enjoyment	03	5.56%
04	Predict The Future Course Of The Topic	03	5.56%
Total		54	100%

Source: Prepared by the researcher

From the table above, we note that the first goal of the program of the Reporters on France 24, the study sample, is to present the information that the viewers are interested in, as we noticed this in all episodes of the study sample. As for exposing corruption, it came in twenty-two (22) episodes, while the goal of entertainment and enjoyment or the goal of predicting what events will lead to in the future was mentioned in only three (03) episodes.

From the results of the previous table, we note that the two most important goals of the Reporters program on France 24 , the study sample, are to display information that is of interests to viewers at a rate of 48.15% and to expose corruption by 40.74%. Because the primary goal of the media is to provide information to the viewer or listener, while investigative journalism's primary goal is to reveal the areas of corruption, which is what we see through the Reporters program on France 24 ,the study sample. Corruption is usually political, economic, social, etc. Investigative journalism, through searching for and analyzing information and exposing areas of corruption, plays a quasi-judicial role in society. It thus demonstrates the power of the fourth authority in monitoring suspicious behavior in societies.

5-7-Category of the conflict's parties in the Reporters program on France 24, Study sample:

Table 08: The Conflict's Parties in the Reporters program on France 24, the study sample

Number	Conflict's Parties In The Reporters Program	Repetition	Rate
01	The Defenders Of Rights (Anti-Corruption)	64	33.33%
02	The Victims	92	47.92%
03	Political Figures	17	8.85%
04	Local Or International Bodies	19	9.90%
Total		192	100%

Source: Prepared by the researcher

From the table above we notice that the Reporters program on France 24, the study sample, focused too much on victims by 47.92%. As for human rights defenders, they represent that about one third (1/3) of The frequency of the conflict's parties category by 33.33%. As for local and international bodies, it is 9.90%. Of the total views of the conflict's parties, the political figures appeared in Reporters program on France 24 channel, the study sample, with the percentage of 8.85%.

The previous table illustrates the program's strong focus on **victims of illegal or unethical practices**. We find in the first episode of the study sample that attention was given to the statements of the **indigenous people in the Peruvian forests** and their suffering from pollution. In the second episode, the focus was on **the victims of the Gaza war**, particularly patients and their families. In the third episode, emphasis was placed on the **suffering of AIDS patients**. In the fourth episode, the focus was on the **suffering of Ukrainian soldiers**, who were far from their families and a subject to unfair conscription, as well as the suffering of **children who were longing for their fathers**.

Across all episodes of the program, the focus was primary on victims, since the aim of investigative journalism is usually to expose corruption, and there are no better than the victims to access information about violations that occur in society.

The Reporters program on France 24 (study sample) also focused on the **human rights defenders** who support victims and the public interest. These are often eyewitnesses, doctors, members of human rights associations, unions, or work in the field under investigation and they have exclusive and comprehensive information that enables them to cover multiple dimensions necessary for investigative journalism to be prepared for broadcast.

By contrast, the **presence of local and international organizations** in the program was limited. These bodies were usually represented by the **Red Crescent**, the **Red Cross**, or bodies affiliated with the **United Nations**, or by statements by human rights organizations and environmental defenders. The **appearance of political figures** in the program was very low. It is by showing them statements from previous videos and not being interviewed directly and exclusively because they refuse to do so (according to the journalists investigating the program), and because most corruption cases come from **unethical political practices**.

5-8 -Persuasive methods category in the Reporters program on France 24, study sample:

Table 09: persuasive methods In the Reporters program on France 24, the study sample

Number	persuasive methods	repetition	rate
01	Providing evidence and proof	92	54.44%
02	Providing statistical data	14	8.28%
03	Citing current events	63	37.28%
Total		169	100%

Source: Prepared by the researcher

From the previous table we notice that Reporters program on France 24 channel ,study sample, relied heavily on the method of collecting and presenting evidence and proof, with a percentage of 54.44%.The second persuasive method is citing current events, with 37.28%.And providing statistical data by 8.28%.

It is clear from the previous results that the Reporters program on France 24 (study sample) relies heavily on collecting evidence and presenting realistic arguments in order to secure the exclusivity of the news. Presenting evidence in investigative journalism helps to build credibility and public trust in the results of the investigation, making audiences more receptive to the information provided by journalists. Evidence also contributes to reaching correct conclusions and avoiding any accusations of bias or fabrication. Furthermore, arguments and evidence reveal the hidden facts behind events and provide a complete and clear picture of the issue under investigation. An evidence-based journalistic investigation has a greater impact on public opinion and decision-makers, motivating them to take action based on the information presented.

In second place, the Reporters program on France 24, relied on filming current events, since investigative journalism focuses on the most important and influential events for the purpose of cause-and-effect analysis, and investigative journalism represents an important tool for countering misinformation and presenting the facts, particularly in light of the spread of fake news.

The Reporters program on France 24 (study sample) relied on **statistical data** to add credibility, since statistical data are reliable and illustrate the magnitude of the problem, and provide a more comprehensive picture of the event under investigation. We find in the Reporters program in the first episode (01), statements were presented regarding the **financial**

investments of French banks in Peru, while in the fifth episode (05), statistics were provided on the number of detainees in Hong Kong and the arrest warrants issued against several political and human rights activists. We observed the use of statistical data in many of the program's episodes.

6- Conclusion:

Investigative journalism is considered one of the most important tools of the fourth authority, which provides a role of oversight and exposing violations and corruption in societies. It also plays a vital role in addressing emerging events, a role that has grown in importance as audiences increasingly seek to uncover the hidden dimensions of events. The experience of France 24 is considered a pioneer and unique one in the field of investigative journalism. Through a set of investigative programs, it aims to uncover numerous issues around the world while presenting evidence and proof in order to reach the truth. Among its most notable programs is The Reporters program, which was taken as the sample for this study. By conducting a comprehensive survey of a sample of episodes broadcast over a period of seven (07) months, totaling twenty-six (26) episodes, the following results were obtained:

- Investigative journalism requires substantial financial and human resources to achieve a complete journalistic investigation. This has been made possible at France 24 through its worldwide network of more than two hundred (200) offices.
- France 24's strong interest in investigative journalism is evident in the allocation of several programs, including Reporters program, as well as the provision of an adequate time which reached the average length of an episode ranges between 12 and 44 minutes, and the program is aired on the satellite channel as well as across the network's various digital platforms. This reflects France 24's commitment to media ethics in truth-seeking and its desire to strengthen credibility in news reporting.
- Journalistic investigations in Reporters program rely on technical editing methods, most notably the descriptive approach (61.54%), followed by the objective presentation style (30.77%).
- The journalistic investigations in the Reporters program when processing events visually rely heavily on CG to present names and professional titles of prominent figures in the journalistic investigation, at a large percentage by 39.73%, followed by the use of RAW video by 26.48% and audio-visual clips by 24.66%.
- Fact-finding and verification in the Reporters program are largely based on live field filming by 50.35% which represents about half of the methods used in collecting information. This is followed by personal interviews with key figures 37.59%, while secret recording was used to a lesser extent by 12.06%.
- The investigations conducted by Reporters program rely on gathering information through exclusive filming where we find it in the first place with 36.08%, then the private scenes come the statements of eyewitnesses with 26.27%, and in the third place we find the previously recorded videos with 20.78% taken from the archives or photographed by

fixed cameras or ordinary people through their phones, while the information provided by experts and specialists in the field of investigation or sources hidden under pseudonyms and reports of international organizations and bodies is relied on at nightly rates.

- There is a variety of topics addressed in the journalistic investigation on "Reporters" program on France 24 so we find about one third ($\frac{1}{3}$) of the episodes presented in the program contains topics, while social issues came in second place with 28.57%. Economic topics accounted for 19.64%, while there was not much focus on topics relates to environmental pollution or religious topics.
- The two main goals of the Reporters program on France 24, as the study sample, are: the first objective is "presenting information that is of interest to viewers", and the second objective is "exposing corruption".
- A significant discrepancy in the focus on the conflict's parties is evident in Reporters program o France 24. It focused heavily on victims by 47.92%, while rights defenders **represented** about one third ($\frac{1}{3}$). Local and international organizations received limited attention with 9.90% of the total views of conflict's Parties, and political figures appearance were 8.85%.
- There is a variety in the use of persuasive techniques in the Reporters program on France 24. It relied primarily on the collection and presentation of evidence (54.44%), followed by references to current events by 37.28%. The use of statistical data with the rate of 8.28%.

Ethical Considerations

This research was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles of academic research and publication. The researcher ensured the integrity, transparency, and originality of the work throughout the research process. All sources used in this study were properly documented to avoid plagiarism. The study relied on publicly available data and institutional reports related to investigative journalism on various issues worldwide; therefore, it did not include human participants, personal data, or confidential information requiring ethical approval. The researcher adhered to international standards of research ethics and responsible scientific conduct.

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The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this research paper. They affirm that the research was conducted independently and that no financial or personal relationships influenced the study's findings or interpretation.

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