

### Journalists' Attitudes Toward the Role of Investigative Journalism in Uncovering Criminal Cases: A Case Study

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Received: April 15, 2024 ▪ Reviewed: May 10, 2024

▪ Accepted: May 26, 2024 ▪ Published: June 30, 2024

#### Abstract:

This study aims to identify the extent of Al-Bilad TV journalists' interest and attitudes toward investigative journalism and their role in confronting crime issues in Algeria by examining the importance of media as a social and organizational partner in promoting development and democracy. Employing a descriptive approach, this study examined journalists' attitudes through a sample of 40 journalists from Al-Bilad TV, selected via intentional sampling. Data collection methods included questionnaires and observations to ensure accuracy and objectivity, with the structured questionnaire providing a quantitative tool for systematically codifying responses and arranging questions. The study found that Al-Bilad TV journalists show significant interest in investigative journalism despite facing numerous obstacles, highlighting the crucial role of media in uncovering social issues and the necessity for better legal protection and institutional support for journalists. This study will be useful for media policymakers, journalism educators, and news organizations by providing insights into the practices and challenges of investigative journalism in Algeria and helping enhance journalism practices and policies in similar contexts. This research offers new insights into the specific attitudes and practices of journalists in an evolving media landscape and emphasizes the critical role of investigative journalism and advances current knowledge by providing a unique perspective on journalists' attitudes and engagement in this vital field.

**Keywords:** media, journalists' attitudes, investigative journalism, uncovering criminal cases.

通过南苏拉威西地区警察的良好治理，情境领导、承诺和能力对国家警察人员绩效的影响

## 摘要:

本研究旨在透過檢視媒體作為促進發展和民主的社會和組織夥伴的重要性，確定國家電視台記者對調查性新聞的興趣和態度程度，以及他們在應對阿爾及利亞犯罪問題中的作用。本研究以國家電視的40位記者作為樣本，透過描述性方法進行有意抽樣，檢視了記者的態度。資料收集方法包括問卷調查和觀察，以確保準確性和客觀性，結構化問卷為系統地整理答案和安排問題提供了定量工具。研究發現，儘管面臨重重障礙，國家電視記者對調查性新聞表現出濃厚的興趣，凸顯了媒體在揭露社會問題方面的關鍵作用，以及為記者提供更好的法律保護和機構支持的必要性。這項研究將有助於媒體政策制定者、新聞教育工作者和新聞機構了解阿爾及利亞調查性新聞的實踐和挑戰，並幫助加強類似背景下的新聞實踐和政策。這項研究為在不斷變化的媒體環境中記者的具體態度和實踐提供了新的見解，它強調了調查性新聞的關鍵作用，並透過提供關於記者在這一重要領域的態度和參與的獨特視角來推進當前的知識。

**关键词:** 媒體、記者的態度、新聞調查、揭露刑事案件。

## 1. Introduction

The press and the media play an important, efficient role in the lives of individuals and society and have played an essential role in feeding the public of readers, viewers, and listeners with information and data related to their lives in all fields. Journalism prepares news and presents it to the public after ensuring its credibility, validity, and accuracy (UNESCO Series on Journalism Education, p. 17). Since the emergence of modern journalism in societies, different theories and visions have emerged that discuss the roles and functions of journalism in society, not to mention its impact on the public.

Television investigative journalism has become an important and developed type of editorial journalism, where it delves into events and presents facts. It represents a new trend in media today, shedding light on various issues and matters. It has become one of the main interests of different journalists at the international level.

Investigative journalism is considered the most difficult type of journalism, and its importance stems from the fact that it embodies the concept of the fourth estate, which lies in monitoring society with its political, social, and economic institutions in revealing facts and various issues that affect society, clarifying their implications, and working to protect public interests by revealing places of shortcomings and defects in Various institutions (Saati, 2023, p. 2). This type of journalism is referred to as having high credibility compared to traditional journalism since investigative reports usually require more time and effort (Luck & Schultz, 2019) because it resorts to all possible methods to verify information as it represents one of the oversight tools in society in the hope of drawing the attention of the responsible parties to address it and achieve justice and transparency, and it aims to build democracy.

Like other professions, journalism faces threats that negatively affect journalists' performance related to the freedom of media and the press in their countries (Bisiki & Opoku, 2019, p. 68).

With the interest of Algerian journalists in this type of journalism, in preparing investigative reports, some problems and challenges faced them, which led to imbalances during journalists' performance of their investigative tasks and reaching tangible facts. Identifying the methods followed by investigative journalists when preparing investigations and trying to familiarize them with the various issues and problems affecting society and presenting them clearly to everyone searching for the truth and a vague vision, the most prominent of which are criminal issues in Algeria, which have become a danger to members of society. Therefore, we find that the circle of cooperation between the local community and journalists in this field has become necessary to uncover criminal cases to achieve transparency, justice, and equality.

Among the Algerian TV channels that deal with crime issues and work to uncover them is the private Algerian channel. Therefore, through this study, we will attempt to highlight journalists' attitudes toward the role of investigative journalism in uncovering crime issues in Algeria.

The media have become information facilities for contemporary societies because they depend entirely on modern digital technology. They are considered daily intellectual food in enlightening people's minds by informing them of events and knowledge, using media means and techniques, which have an effective role and influential power, as they contain purposeful messages directed at serving society. Journalism, which aims in its essence to speak for the citizen, derives its legitimacy from the society for which it was founded and whose contents were crystallized to serve it.

Investigative journalism has become an essential part of journalism in general, as it is unconventional journalism characterized by depth, accuracy, research, and investigation of topics and issues of special importance to people. David Label, president of the International Center for Journalists, defined journalism as follows: "It is merely a purely systematic and institutional behavior." It relies on research, scrutiny, and investigation to ensure objectivity, accuracy, and confirmation of the authenticity of the news and what it

may hide, based on the principle of transparency, combating corruption, and commitment to the role of the press as a guard dog (Abdel, 2010). Despite the chronological age of investigative journalism, it witnessed periods of revival, especially in the United States of America during the seventies of the 20th century due to the financial support that the press received in the early 1970s, as planning for this had begun irregularly in 1998, and now there is an independent fund funded by institutions and individuals.

Sixty investigative coverage projects have been funded in the United States to encourage and develop them. The base advantage of modern journalism is continuity and the ability to submit to the variables of reality and its requirements by following a gradual, systematic method to reveal what is hidden and taking the opinions of the different parties in the issue (Al-Hamam, 2014).

Like the countries of the world, Algeria has recorded a noticeable increase in the crime rate, as it has taken on serious dimensions that have exceeded the red lines with the spread of factors such as unemployment, violence, and the spread of the phenomenon of murder, all of these factors have contributed to the development of criminal behaviors in the individual, including aggression and deviance, which have affected Algerian society, as they are among the ugliest. The practices carried out by humans are considered assaults and violations of human rights, as crimes have become easy and quick to eliminate problems affecting individuals and society. This crime phenomenon has gained great attention from various media institutions in Algeria, where journalists have harnessed many capabilities to dismantle and uncover cases of different crimes.

With this discrepancy in the role of investigative journalism in analyzing and dismantling crime cases, we wanted, through our study, to know how the media handles crime cases handled by journalists and their practice of investigative work in private channels. We chose the Al-Bilad TV channel as a model because it is one of the media outlets with an important position among other television channels and enjoys a large viewership in Algerian society. It motivated us to ask the following primary question:

- What are the attitudes of journalists working at Al-Bilad TV toward the role of investigative journalism in uncovered criminal cases in Algeria?
- How is investigative journalism used to uncover crimes in Algeria?
- What jobs does an investigative journalist perform to uncover criminal cases in Algeria?
- What means and techniques have journalists used to investigate criminal issues in Algeria?
- What are the attitudes of Al-Bilad TV journalists toward the role of investigative journalism in uncovered criminal cases in Algeria?

This study is essential, as it is one of the academic studies in Algeria because it considers the various aspects necessary for the success of this type of

journalism within media institutions.

This topic is also characterized by novelty, modernity, and dynamism due to its importance in social and professional life and the role played by investigative journalism itself. It is one of the essential types of journalism that works to monitor the behavior of individuals to avoid the occurrence of crimes in their various forms and is a means of monitoring criminal cases in Algeria and working to serve the public interest in society according to different principles and mechanisms.

This study also presents different essential aspects for establishing a clear concept of investigative journalism and a systematic work method. The study also sheds light on the attempt by investigative journalists to uncover criminal cases in Algeria, which is concerned with portraying reality and revealing hidden for public benefit.

According to our estimation, the study is considered one of the essential studies in revealing the extent of awareness of Al-Bilad TV journalists in dealing with such issues and the role of this media institution in paying attention to this type of journalism in Algeria.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Crime – Terminological Definition

Scientists and researchers did not agree on a single definition of crime, as each defined it from the perspective of research and scientific specialization. For this reason, there are many definitions of crime, which, according to the legal definition, is a violation of the provisions of law. It is an act that the law criminalizes and is a criminal offense. It is also defined as a group of violations committed and pursued. An individual is not considered a criminal unless the court recognizes that it is a voluntary act that violates the law, committed without excuse, and is punished, i.e., damaging the others, having burglary tools, conspiracy cases, etc. (Milovanouic, 2006, p. 81). According to the religious definition, Islamic law defines crime as follows: "Performing forbidden acts that are punishable by punishment, as Al-Marudi defined them as legal prohibitions that God has forbidden by limiting or strengthening them" (Al-Marudi, 1966). The criminal is the one who commits something that is not recommended and persists in it and does not try to leave or accept to leave it. Operational definition: It is an illegal behavior or action that violates moral foundations and principles and leads to an imbalance (Zahra, 1985).

### 2.2. Investigative Journalism

*Press - terminological definition:* They are all available and acquired methods and means for collecting news, monitoring events, and processing them for presenting them to readers regarding all their preoccupations and interests.

It is a method of permanently and continuously recording facts through which it reflects the opinions

and perceptions of public opinion and works to direct it through reasonable and good ideas (Al-Sarraj, 2017).

### **2.3. Operational Definition**

They are newspapers and publications that are issued under one name and description, and they are usually connected to hidden and controversial facts that are presented as news to the public regarding their interests (Sprak, 1999, p. 6).

Specialists, researchers or investigative journalists, have worked hard to create definitions of investigative journalism, and each definition derives from the vision of its owner. Among these definitions are the following. David Kaplan, Executive Director of the Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN), defines investigative journalism as: "a structured, intuitive approach that requires deep diving and actual research done by the journalists" (Al-Falahi, 2017, p. 26).

Hidden information journalism aims to reveal information that is not available to all. Although there are a lot of definitions to investigative journalism, these definitions have the following points (Forbes, 2005, p. 6).

- 1- Regarding issues of public interest;
- 2- Proactive, which reveals hidden information;
- 3- A long-term process that requires planning, collecting, information, and verifying its credibility;
- 4- They depend on applying the new technology.

### **2.4. International Investigative Definition**

Journalist David Nabel defined it as: "a purely systematic and institutional behavior that relies on research, scrutiny, and investigation in order to ensure objectivity and ensure the authenticity of the news, based on the principle of transparency and fighting corruption" (Al-Falahi, 2017, p. 26).

### **2.5. Study Perspectives**

Definition of functional constructivism: Functional theory is known under several names, such as functional analysis theories, conservative theories, and other names (Al-Makkawi, 1998, p. 63). It also means that it is a continuous, organized, and integrated process that requires motivation, direction, and adaptation. And society is viewed as a group of related parts and subsystems (Al-Hashemi, 2009, pp. 34-35).

This theory derives its general intellectual origins from the opinions of a group of traditional and contemporary sociologists who appeared in particular capitalist Western societies, where they were interested in studying how societies maintain internal stability and convergence over time and explain social cohesion and stability. This is what is represented in the ideas, systems, and pioneers of sociologists. Westerners such as: Auguste Comte, Emile Durkaym, Herbert Spencer, and American sociologists such as Talcott Parsons and Robert Marton, whose views extended to the end of the 1970s and the twentieth century (Ati, 2004, p. 58).

### **2.6. Development of Functional Constructivism**

Talcott Parsons 1902-1979 is considered a prominent figure in the development of theory. The works of Emile Durkaym, Marx Weber, Merton and other European sociologists strongly influenced Parsons (Joud, 2019, p. 278).

Supporters of this theory believe that modifying these trends must be consistent with the nature of society, its reality, and its circumstances, whether economic, political, social, or other, so that it can fulfill its purpose and not produce adverse results and leading to the disintegration and collapse of society. It also focuses on the circumstances of the compatibility of the two trends with the nature of the development of society and the existing system in it, Cropper asserted. Some supporters tried to rely in their analysis of the functions of social trends by paying attention to analyzing each function separately, and this is what Talco Tobar Sons pointed out (AL-Desouki, 2004, p. 50).

Theoretical hypotheses: The constructivist-functional viewpoints are summarized in the following assumptions (Raddaf, 2009, pp. 41-43).

Society, institution, or group, whatever its purpose or size, consists of parts and units that differ from each other, and despite their differences, they are interconnected, supportive, and responsive to one another.

Society, group, or institution can be structurally and functionally analyzed into parts and primary elements, meaning that the institution consists of parts or elements, each of which has its basic functions. Society naturally tends toward a state of dynamic balance; therefore, if any disharmony occurs within society, certain forces will be activated to restore this balance. All repeated activities in society contribute to society's stability. All existing models play an important role in maintaining system stability. Then, the structural-functional theory that Parsons studied and developed is an approach to interpreting social and political phenomena by revealing the nature of their functions and their ability to achieve goals and ambitions.

### **2.7. Theoretical Projection of the Study**

We chose the constructivist-functional theory because it serves and suits the subject of our study so that we can, through it, know the attitudes of journalists toward the role and tasks of investigative journalism in uncovering criminal cases in Algeria and know the extent to which investigative journalism is employed in Algerian channels (Al-Bilad TV channel). By revealing various topics and criminal issues that affect society, this theory was employed through a questionnaire to reveal aspects that affect the parties to the topic.

### **2.8. The Approach Followed in the Study**

To study the issue of journalists' attitudes toward the role of investigative journalism in uncovering criminal cases in Algeria, we relied on the descriptive approach

because it is concerned with studying the present phenomena and events and often relies on the processes of predicting the future of the phenomena and events that it studies.

The descriptive approach carefully monitors and follows up on a specific phenomenon or event in a quantitative or qualitative manner over a specific period of time or several periods to identify the phenomenon or event in terms of content and obtain results and generalizations that help understand and develop reality (Alyan, 2004, p. 111).

It is also defined as arriving at logical explanations that have evidence that gives the researcher the ability to develop specific frameworks for the problem, and this is used to determine the results of the research (Habib, 2012, p. 84).

### **2.9. The Sample and the Research Community**

It is the first step in selecting the sample: It means all the elements or individuals who are covered by the study related to the problem represented by the role of investigative journalism in uncovering criminal cases and how journalists working in Algerian private channels, especially Al-Bilad TV, deal with such issues. The study population here is journalists. From Al-Bilad TV, a private Algerian channel, because the primary goal of our study is to uncover criminal issues in Algeria and to understand the role of investigative journalists in uncovering these issues and ways to address them.

### **2.10. The Sample**

In our study, we relied on intentional sampling: intentional or intentional sampling depends on choosing the sample intentionally and the researcher's need for a specific specialization to present the problem and address it (Mazahra, 2014, p.130).

In our study, we selected some journalists and correspondents from the Algerian Al-Bilad TV channel. This choice was due to the lack of investigative journalism practice by journalists working in the private audiovisual sector and because Al-Bilad TV is more widely watched and attracts audiences compared to other television channels because it deals with various types of journalism that attract viewers' attention.

There are also a limited number of terms that the researcher systematically deals with and through which he records the required primary data. This number must represent the research community in terms of its characteristics and attributes.

### **2.11. Data Collection Tools**

This step is considered the actual collection of data necessary in the research design, in which the researcher determines the tools or tools to collect data on the topic under study. It may include recording observations, conducting interviews, referring to documents, a questionnaire, etc. (Mazahra, 2014, pp. 95-107).

In line with the nature of our study, to determine

journalists' attitudes toward the role of investigative journalism in uncovering criminal issues in Algeria, we relied on questionnaires and observation tools to access information with accuracy, objectivity, and scientific credibility in collecting study data while conducting the research.

The questionnaire is one of the most common quantitative research tools used in fields related to politics and media. The questionnaire was distinguished from other measurement tools. The questionnaire provides conditions for codification in the words, for the arrangement of the questions, and for recording the answers (Lughod & Malika, 1959, p. 88). The questionnaire form for our study consisted of 28 closed and open questions in the form of an evaluation form distributed to a sample of Al-Bilad TV channel journalists about journalists' attitudes toward the role of investigative journalism in uncovering criminal cases in Algeria. From the above, our research form contains five axes. Each axis above contains several sub-questions.

### **2.12. Fields of Study**

*Time domain:* The time frame is determined by the period during which the study takes place, which extends from the beginning of thinking about the research problem until drawing general conclusions. This study was completed during the academic year 2023, starting from February until the month of May, when the scientific material was collected, and we identified the problems of the study and the methodological procedures followed. Then, adjusting the elements carefully and trying to understand all aspects of the study in a systematic and scientific way, all the way to translating, analyzing, and interpreting the questionnaire data, and then the general results of the study.

*Spatial domain:* We have chosen the city of Algiers, where the central headquarters of Al-Bilad TV is located, as well as the states in which the channel's reporters are located, as they are an integral part of the profession of investigative field journalism.

*Human domain:* The research population of our study is represented by a group of journalists and correspondents working for Al-Bilad Channel, which comprises 40 individuals, or subjects who were questioned out of 58 journalists and correspondents who represent the entire population of the study.

However, 18 respondents did not answer the questionnaire because some of them were on vacation.

The conceptual framework of the study is as follows. Investigative journalism is viewed as unconventional journalism, which is characterized by depth, accuracy, research, investigation and investigation of topics and issues of special importance to people because they are linked to basic aspects of their lives and require extraordinary efforts and different work mechanisms to uncover the truth and show it to people.

### **2.13. General Concepts about Investigative Journalism**

Specialists and researchers have worked hard to develop definitions of investigative journalism, and each of these definitions stems from the author's definition, which explains investigative journalism and its nature from his perspective.

David Kaplan, Executive Director of the Global Investigative Journalism Network, defines investigative journalism as: "an organized, intuitive approach that requires diving into depth and the actual research carried out by the journalist himself, in addition to journalistic coverage that deals with a scientific method of research based on developing a hypothesis and testing its validity." "And verify the facts surrounding this hypothesis and uncover hidden secrets" (Al-Falahi, 2017, p. 26).

International investigative journalist David Nabel defines investigative journalism as: "a purely systematic and institutional behavior that relies on research, scrutiny, and investigation in order to ensure objectivity and accuracy and to verify the authenticity of the news, whatever it may hide, based on the principle of transparency and fighting corruption" (Al-Falahi, 2017, p. 26).

According to UNESCO: Investigative journalism means uncovering matters that are intentionally or unintentionally hidden by people in a position of authority due to their disappearance behind a large amount of facts and circumstances, analyzing all relevant facts, and presenting them to the public. In general, it can be said that investigative journalism is the mainstay of freedom and democracy in societies, especially in the face of widespread misinformation and often false propaganda. It plays a crucial role in accountability and allows citizens to obtain more accurate and credible information. It has the ability to conduct serious and systematic research and contributes to informing the public about what is taking place in the public domain, and it requires the preparation of reports based on scientific evidence (Jayathilaaka, 2011, p. 1). It is critical and in-depth journalism that does not merely pass on news that is already present but creates news that would not have been present without journalists' intervention. It has three interrelated types:

1. Revealing scandals, tracing infringements of laws.
2. Assessing government, company and other organizations policies or actions.
3. Describe social, economic, political, and cultural trends to track changes in societies.

### **2.14. Emergence of Investigative Journalism**

Journalism satisfies one of the oldest yearnings of humans, the need to know. With the evolution of time, this need to know became even more important, and this was accompanied by increasing people's awareness (Jayathilaaka, 2011, p. 8).

Investigative journalism emerged at the beginning of

the development and role of journalism in society and its tendency to focus on and investigate specific issues occurring in society, especially aspects of deviance and corruption. Therefore, a new type of press coverage, called investigative journalism or corruption diggers, appeared. This name was given to a group of journalists who led press campaigns against corruption, especially in 1901, after the Civil War and the spread of injustice and monopolies. Investigative journalism spread throughout the United States during the 1970s for various reasons, including the financial support that the press received in the early 1970s.

In 1976, the Union of Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE) was established as a non-profit journalistic group. This was done by a group of investigative editors, and by the end of 1976, the group formed a press team led by the famous Newsday editor, Robert Green, to conduct investigative coverage of the crimes that led to the assassination of Allston, editor of the Arizona Republic newspaper, who was investigating organized crime activity in his state of Arizona, where it was developed (Al-Zahra, 2021, p. 132).

After investigative journalism achieved success and played a major role during previous years in the United States, it did not maintain that success because it was exposed to several factors, the most prominent of which are the following:

- A wave of pessimism spread about the journalistic situation in the United States.
- Expansion of media focus to some large companies. Despite these factors, they did not affect the number of investigative reports, including revealing hidden matters to the public related to a person in a position of authority (Al-Hamam, 2014, p. 22).

Those who follow investigative journalism historically realize the extent of its prowess in many situations, as it has greatly contributed to spreading awareness and exposing lies, as is the case in exposing the Pentagon Papers. The publication of the Pentagon Papers by the New York Times and The Washington post exposed government lies and changed public perception of the Vietnam War (Galvao, 2023, p. 1).

### **2.15. Investigative Journalism Steps and Qualifiers**

Journalism represents the fourth estate, which completes the legislative, judicial, and executive estates and plays a vital role in preparing aware citizens who are able to hold their governments accountable through voting and participation (Waisbord, 2002, p. 378). It is spontaneous that the quality of democracy in a society is measured by the ability to balance with other authorities, defend the public interest, and promote debate in the public sphere (Baggi, 2011, p. 10) here appears the importance of journalism freedom, its independence, and the ability to go through specific details and provide investigative reports that are naturally not concerned with chasing influential people or celebrities and tracking their personal news unless there is a public interest in preparing these reports , as

happened in the Philippines and China. For example, in China, a mayor who used public funds to buy apartments for 29 mistresses was exposed by an investigative journalist. The journalist did so because there was a clear public interest in reporting on the lives of officials.

Investigative reporting is recognized by numerous attributes, they include (Jayathilaaka, 2011, pp. 9-10):

1. Proactiveness
2. Reveals wrongdoing
3. Accountability by fixing responsibility for wrongdoing
4. Results-oriented
5. Different sources
6. Using documents to prove the truth

The investigative journalist must possess specific qualities. The most important of these qualities is the ability to think critically, collect disparate facts and analyze them to identify wrongdoings, choose correct arguments and answers, and study them accurately. He must be able to withstand difficulties and must be characterized by courage, wisdom, honesty, and integrity. In addition, he must not expect financial or personal gains in return for what he does.

Investigative reports differ from regular news because they primarily depend on investigation, verifying results, and drawing conclusions, which often requires fieldwork and conducting interviews in a planned thought provoking, and ethical manner. This requires clarity of objectives, intact logistic information, maintenance of safety protocols (Nazakat, 2016, p. 4), and the ability to present reports in a dramatic but not exaggerated manner.

Figure 1 summarizes the investigative search steps.



Figure 1. Investigative journalism steps

### 2.16. Researcher Source

From the previous form, it can be said that the first steps of investigative journalism depend on determining the entry point for the preparation of the report, namely the identification of the ideas to be researched and investigated based on their impact on the public interest, and thus research collection, analysis, and depth of information, validation, accuracy, and coherent organization and narrative in the form of influential and effective results in the public as the last step in the publication of the report or investigative article, which may often require cooperation with co-workers to ensure accuracy objectivity and legal matters.

### 2.17. Investigative Journalism in the Arab World (Farwaneh, 2018, pp. 65-66)

Investigative journalists face many challenges that may hinder their ability to complete investigations. These challenges vary according to society and the democracy in which they are enjoyed, and the most prominent challenges are as follows:

- *The need for money and dedication:* journalistic investigations require preparation processes that may take long periods of time and require spending on them, whether on transportation, press tools, or other work stages. The press institution may apologize for managing these costs and may even apologize for this task. Call for rationalization of expenses.

- *Weak professional capabilities of a journalist:* This means that he/she does not have sufficient social intelligence to face different situations, his/her inability to reach all components of investigative work to peace, or the poverty of his/her linguistic dictionary despite the fact that investigative work requires an enormous linguistic and cognitive repertoire, and all of this directly affects the investigative workflow.

- *Arming with technological tools:* An investigative journalist must be armed with expensive technical tools (digital camera, mobile phone, laptop...) and also needs support and training that enables him to travel in order to investigate and extract certain facts, even though the Arab press does not you believe in the funder's idea, but only in the funded subject.

- *Exercising pressure on the editor journalist:* This consists of an attempt to contain the journalist and encourage him to move forward with the implementation of the matter through various means of enticement and intimidation. Lawsuits are also filed for slander against him or for filing reports against him to more than one party, and his press institution itself may exert pressure on him. For incomprehensible and clear reasons, this happens when officials learn of a journalist's intention to treat him that does not satisfy or cause trouble. He rushes to fabricate criminal crimes against a journalist, and government and even private agencies detain him, and the police take him over.

- *Misrepresenting the facts and difficulties of photography:* This is specific to the editorial board. It may inform you that your topic is about to be published, so you should prepare for that. Finally, there are surprising changes in its titles, introduction, and even the way it is addressed. This is what changes the content of the topic upside down, and the topic loses its importance to you despite what you have changed. From effort trouble from the outside environment: people are subjected to belittlement of the importance of the topic, mockery of it, or the spreading of lies in the work environment around them, and some claim that the completed idea is theirs, that it was stolen from you, and that the credit goes to them for the achievement that you achieved because they consider them to be yours the first to raise it (Farwaneh, 2018, p. 66).

Here remains the role of the government in supporting investigative journalism by facilitating the tasks of the investigative journalist and by contributing to issuing laws that help journalists obtain information because the development of society and its democracy is often linked to the government and the ruling authorities' support for journalism despite the use of techniques that keep pace with technology and modern developments provided by science and the communication revolution to identify various issues that affect public interest.

### **2.18. Algeria's Laws and Legislation Regulating Investigative Journalistic Work**

Algeria is one of the countries that have guaranteed the normal exercise of the right to expression and opinion as one of the axioms of the political, social, and cultural life of an individual and society, as stipulated in Article 50 of the Algerian Constitution of 2016: "Guaranteeing the right to disseminate information, ideas, images, and opinions." With all freedom and while respecting a nation's constants and its religious and moral values, journalism is therefore considered a higher form of freedom of opinion and expression because of its ease of spread and its wide effects on the masses.

The Algerian Organic Law of 2012 defining the principles and rules governing the exercise of the right to media and freedom of the press allows the establishment of investigative journalism, explaining this in its second chapter relating to media activity and relating to the issuance of periodic publications in accordance with what was stipulated in Article 06, which are issued at regular intervals, whether in the or the specialized media. What can be inferred from the text of this article is that investigative journalistic work is legally guaranteed.

It was further detailed in Article 08, through which I attempted to provide a definition of specialized journalism, which means every publication that deals with news related to special fields and is directed at groups of the public. According to this article, investigative journalistic work can be considered a special field directed at revealing various issues and confronting injustices. Legal Articles 127 and 128 also came to clarify the extent of the state's interest in journalism by supporting and promoting it because they stipulated that state subsidies should be granted to promote and freedom of expression, especially through dialog journalism. The press is specialized and determines standards and methods for granting such subsidies through regulation. Investigative journalism can be classified as a specialized type of journalism based mainly on freedom of expression and benefits from subsidies provided by the state.

What can be concluded from the previous articles is that there is a legal restriction regarding access to sources of information under general names such as national sovereignty and public security, which

constitutes a threat to investigative journalistic work according to Algerian legislation, as it represents the beginning of investigative journalistic practice entering legal mazes and an unfair environment. Aid given the absence of guarantees preserves the safety of Algerian journalists, even if they guarantee their right to access information.

An investigative journalist, for example, tends to go undercover or make secret recordings of the source, which is considered a misdemeanor punishable by law, and according to Article 303 bis 01 of the Algerian Penal Code, anyone who persists in insulting him will be punished by imprisonment from six months to three years and a fine of 5,000 DZD to 300,000 DZD. The inviolability of people's private lives, with whatever technology by capturing, recording, or transmitting secret calls without the permission or consent of their owners falls within the framework of violating the inviolability of citizens' private lives and is also incompatible with the ethics and morals of journalists. Even if the targeted person is a public person according to as stipulated in Article 93 of the Media Law of 2012, it is prohibited to violate people's private lives.

On the other hand, it agrees with the text of Article 85 of investigative journalism, which maintains the confidentiality of sources of information because it stipulates professional confidentiality for a journalist and the director is responsible for each media outlet in accordance with the applicable legislation and regulation, with special evidence and investigation.

What can be concluded is that these legislations were characterized by being general and broad in their treatment of the subject of investigative journalism, which was an appendix to newspapers and their types, not to mention journalistic practice, because the sensitivity of the subject made the Algerian legislator avoid delving into it in detail (Constitution of Algeria, 1989).

### **2.19. Difficulties and Challenges Facing Investigative Journalists and Their Work in Algerian Private Television Channels**

- Lack of complete and sufficient preparation: Algerian journalists suffer from an obsession with investigative journalism and believe in fast news journalism in light of their overwhelming desire for their names to appear on a daily basis. This culture needs to change.

- Lack of definition of the nature of the journalism profession: the absence of institutions that defend journalists' rights in their work, such as the Journalists Syndicate, for example.

- Lack of professional qualifications for journalists and absence of training courses.

- Lack of a specialized department for the art of journalistic investigation that has human and material capabilities.

- The absence of a clear media vision in Algerian media institutions negatively affected the emergence of

investigative journalism.

- Not adopting a system of material and moral incentives, as well as penalties, resulting in the absence of incentives, making the Algerian journalist more like a machine lacking creativity considering the constant routine.

- The dominance of news writing at the expense of the rest of the analytical arts; the most important of which is journalistic investigation. The Algerian press can be described as a news press that suffers from a significant deficiency in investigations and other arts.

- Reluctance of the responsible institutions and operating institutions to provide journalists with the information they need in investigations, as journalists suffer from a significant lack of sources of information that the responsible institutions seek to hide for various reasons.

- The absence of democracy and freedom of opinion and expression in a natural environment, despite Algeria having a publication law that grants the legal right to journalists to obtain information because the absence of democracy limits work opportunities for completing good investigative reports.

- Social censorship limits the publication or provision of information that weakens the investigative journalist and thus imposes a lack of continuity and excellence on them.

- Lack of facilities of academic teaching in theory and practice.

### ***2.20. Prospects and Future of Investigative Journalism in Algeria***

The new media contributed to the creation of media material. This helped develop journalists in general and in particular in investigative journalism and even involved citizens in completing many investigative investigations to access information directly or indirectly from a journalist's sources.

The Algerian journalist has become required to enter the world of technology and interact with it as it is an active and basic element in terms of using information sources to prepare his or her material, exchanging ideas and opinions by participating in forums and conferences, and those interested in this media and thus arriving at a new idea worthy of attention.

The development taking place in the world of audiovisual requires every journalist to be proficient in using advanced technology and computers and how to use them correctly to document everything that is published, to be archival material that students benefit from in their university theses or in their daily lives, and to work to activate the life of the investigative journalist with the new media. Linking the journalist to cooperation with regional or international networks, which in turn works to change the direction of journalistic work, and that many investigative stories require months of work and research, as David Kaplan says, journalists can now work on these investigative stories better.

## **3. Methodology**

To study the issue of journalists' attitudes toward attitudes towards the role of investigative journalism in uncovering criminal cases in Algeria, we relied on the descriptive approach because it is concerned with studying the present phenomena and events and often relies on the processes of predicting the future of the phenomena and events that it studies.

The descriptive approach carefully monitors and follows up on a specific phenomenon or event in a quantitative or qualitative manner over a specific period or several periods to identify the phenomenon or event in terms of content and content and reach results and generalizations that help in understanding and developing reality (Alyan, 2004, p. 111).

It is also defined as arriving at logical explanations with evidence that gives the researcher the ability to develop specific frameworks for the problem, and this is used to determine the results of the research (Habib, 2012, p. 84).

### ***3.1. The Sample and Research Community***

It is the first step in selecting the sample: It means all the elements or individuals who are covered by the study related to the problem represented by the role of investigative journalism in uncovering criminal cases and how journalists working in Algerian private channels, especially Al-Bilad TV, deal with such issues. The study population is journalists. Al-Bilad TV is a private Algerian channel; the primary goal of this study is to uncover criminal issues in Algeria and to understand the role of investigative journalists in uncovering these issues and ways to address them.

In this study, we relied on intentional sampling, which normally depends on intentionally choosing the sample and the researcher's need for a specific specialization to present the problem and address it (Mazahra, 2014, p. 130). We selected some journalists and correspondents from the Algerian Al-Bilad TV channel. This choice was due to the lack of investigative journalism practice by journalists working in the private audiovisual sector and because Al-Bilad TV is more widely watched and attracts audiences compared to other television channels because it deals with various types of journalism that make it a station for the viewers' attention.

The selection of Al-Bilad TV journalists as the research subjects was based on the following criteria:

1. The respondent must be a journalist working for one of the Algerian media outlets.
2. The journalist must belong to a television media organization that is widely watched in Algeria.
3. The journalist must belong to a media organization that publishes investigative reports.
4. Journalists belong to a media organization to facilitate data collection.

Al-Bilad TV meets these criteria due to its significant viewership and its role in addressing social issues in Algeria. Al-Bilad TV is one of the few channels that incorporate investigative journalism into

their reporting, making it a suitable subject for this study. The findings of this research can inform media policymakers, journalism educators, and news organizations about the challenges they face and potential strategies to enhance investigative journalism practices, thereby contributing to more effective crime reporting and greater public awareness. It is also a limited number of terms that the researcher systematically deals with and through which he records the required primary data. This number is required to represent the research community in terms of its characteristics and attributes.

### 3.2. Data Collection

This step is considered the actual collection of data necessary in the research design, in which the researcher determines the tools to collect data on the topic under study. It may include recording observations, conducting interviews, referring to documents, a questionnaire, etc. (Mazahra, 2014, pp. 95-107).

In line with the nature of our study, to determine journalists' attitudes toward the role of investigative journalism in uncovering criminal issues in Algeria, we relied on questionnaires and observation tools to access information with accuracy, objectivity, and scientific credibility in collecting study data while conducting the research.

The questionnaire is one of the most common quantitative research tools used in fields related to politics and media. The questionnaire was distinguished from other measurement tools. The questionnaire provides conditions for codification in the words, for the arrangement of the questions, and for recording the answers (Lughod & Malika, 1959, p. 88).

The questionnaire for our study consisted of a set of 28 closed and open questions in the form of an evaluation from distributed to a simple set of Al-Bilad T.V channel journalists, about journalists' attitudes toward the role of investigative journalism in uncovering criminal cases in Algeria.

From the above, our research form contains five axes. Each axis above contains several sub-questions.

### 3.3. Fields of Study

#### 3.3.1. Time Domain

The time frame is determined by the period during which the study takes, which extends from the beginning of thinking about the research problem until drawing general conclusions.

This study was completed during the academic year 2023, starting from February until the month of May, when the scientific material was collected, and we identified the problems of the study and the methodological procedures followed. Then, adjusting the elements carefully and trying to understand all aspects of the study in a systematic and scientific way, all the way to translating, analyzing, and interpreting

the questionnaire data, and then the general results of the study.

#### 3.3.2. Human Domain

The research population of our study is represented by a group of journalists and correspondents working for Al-Bilad Channel, comprising 40 individuals or subjects who were questioned out of the 58 journalists and correspondents who represented the entire population of the study.

However, 18 respondents did not answer the questionnaire because some of them were on vacation. The following subsections deal with the practical study.

#### 3.4. The First Axis: Personal Data

Figure 2 shows the answers of the research sample for the first axis:

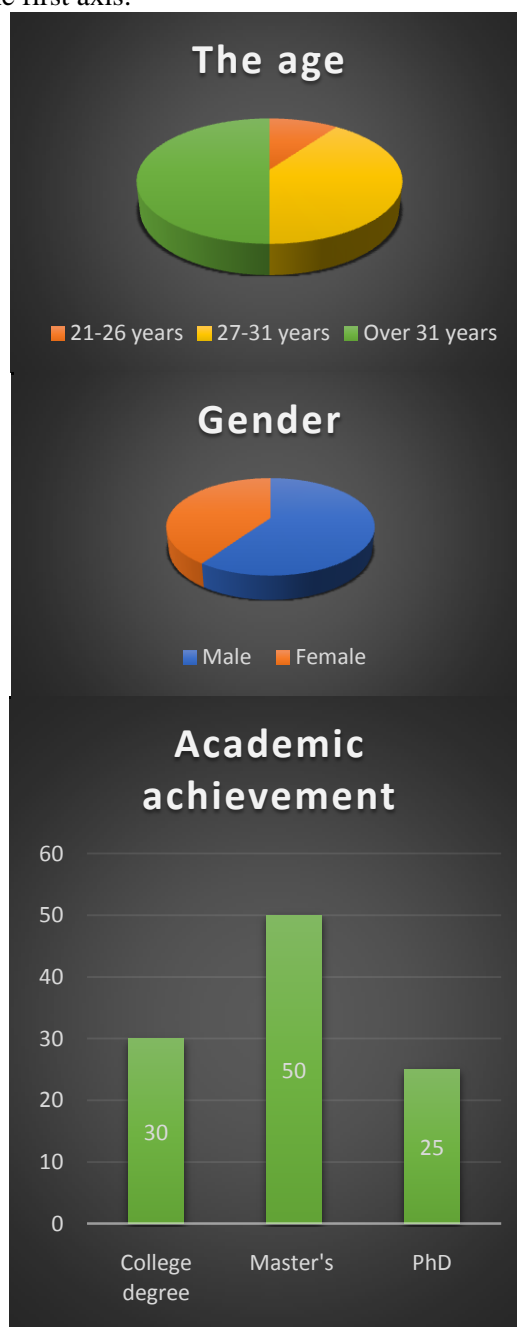




Figure 2. The answers of the research sample for the first axis (The authors)

It is clear from the previous graphs that the percentage of males is high, and the high percentage of journalists. It is also noted that the Al-Bilad Channel is interested in appointing holders of advanced degrees, especially master's degrees.

**3.5. The Second Axis: Journalists' Use of the Method for Investigating Criminal Cases**

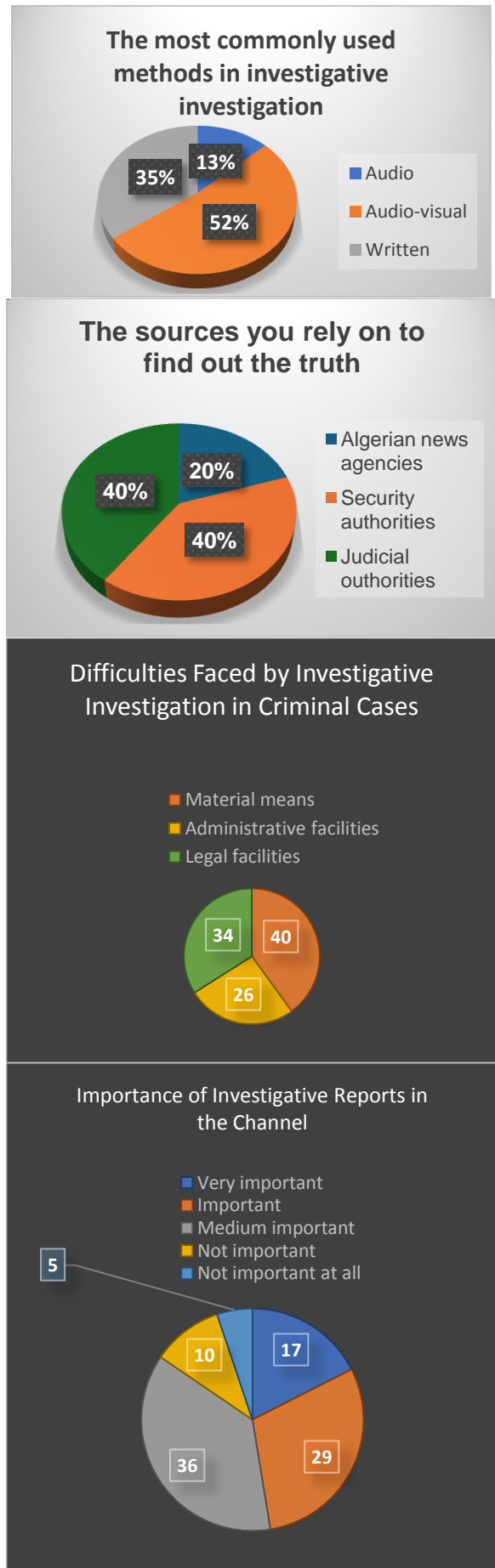
We revealed through the research sample's answers that the Al-Bilad channel's point of view about investigative journalism is positive based on revealing hidden matters and events to the public when the research sample was asked about the reasons that prevent journalists on Al-Bilad TV. From getting the opportunity to address investigative topics, it was revealed that they are related to state authority and editorial policy.

**3.6. The Third Axis: Journalists' Tasks Regarding Criminal Issues in Algeria**

The research sample in this topic answered that the treated issues on the Al-Bilad channel are national and local issues at a percentage about (80%). The Algerian journalist is able to cover issues in an investigative manner in a percentage of 40% with high ability about 30% to very high ability about 27%. When the research sample was asked about entities that support investigative journalism, it indicated that the greatest support is from independent media institutions.

**3.7. The Fourth Axis: Means and Techniques Used in Detecting Criminal Cases**

The following graphs in Figure 3 show the answers to the research questions on this axis.



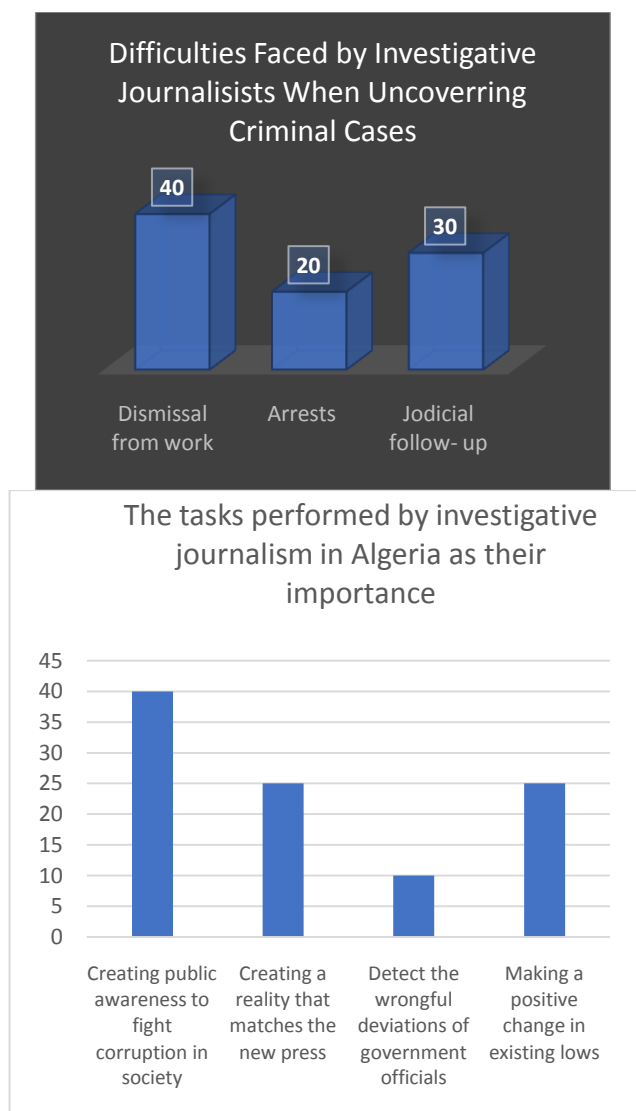


Figure 3. The answers to the research questions on the fourth axis (The authors)

### 3.8. The Fifth Axis

It contained journalists' opinions on the role of investigative journalism in investigating criminal issues. The study revealed that the sample members do not agree with government and private institutions facilitating journalistic tasks and those media institutions do not provide mechanisms and techniques for investigative journalistic work. However, the sample members agreed to manage the media organization in the investigative work plan.

## 4. Research Results

1. Investigative journalism contributes to safe communities and democracy
2. Investigative journalism has achieved significant global achievements
3. Investigative journalism in Arab countries and Algeria remains below the required level
4. Albilad channel's view of investigative journalism is positive and mainly based on uncovering hidden matters and events for the public.
5. The Al-Bilad Channel concentrates on social issues because they are important for citizens.

6. Al-Bilad's journalists have not had the opportunity to tackle the investigative issues properly, although the circumstances in the channel are somehow acceptable, but the journalists have avoided this investigative work because of the absence of legal protection.

7. Weak cooperation in local society bins supporting investigative journalism

8. The investigative style is not followed when dealing with criminal issues in Algeria, but it is covered in the media in a superficial manner.

9. Audio-visual means are the most commonly used

10. Algerian journalists depend on judges and security agencies when investigating truths related to criminal matters.

11. When uncovering criminal issues, investigative work faces several difficulties, and the most important of these is legal difficulties.

12. The important threats which the journalist is exposed to when uncovering criminal issues are dismissal from office and judicial prosecution.

13. There are many pressures on investigative work, the most important of which are power and editorial policy.

14. The AlBilad TV channel does not have the financial or technical ability to conduct investigative work.

15. There is no cooperation between formal governmental institutions and investigative journalists, especially concerning criminal issues.

## 5. Recommendations

- 1- Provide legal protection for the investigative journalists.
- 2- Create a special section for investigative reports on the Al-Bilad TV channel.
- 3- Al-Bilad journalists must be subjected to specialized training courses in the style and methodology of investigative journalism.
- 4- Encourage Al-Bilad's journalists to embrace political, criminal, and other issues that affect members of Algerian society.
- 5- Spread awareness of the importance of investigative journalism in societies.
- 6- Provide the necessary facilities to complete the investigative journalist's work.
- 7- Cooperation with organizations working in investigative journalism.

Through our selection of a sample of journalists playing the role of investigative journalism in uncovering criminal cases in Algeria considering the data and information obtained, we reached a set of results:

1. Most of the journalists working at Al-Bilad TV are interested in investigative journalism, which is an important type in uncovering criminal cases.
2. Emphasizing that the basic concept that the majority of journalists accepted was that investigative journalism reveals hidden events and matters to the public.

3. Investigative journalists in Algeria avoid dealing with issues related to crime because they fear the lack of legal protection.

4. Journalists working for Al-Bilad TV believe that investigative work conditions are somewhat acceptable for private television channels focusing on addressing topics of a social nature, which is the highest percentage recorded. This is due to journalists' focus on addressing these topics that study the lives of citizens.

5. Al-Bilad TV journalists confirm that pressures affect the broadcast of investigative work, the most important of which are state authority and editorial policy.

6. Al-Bilad's interest in the largest group working in the Algerian media institution, including university-level journalists and correspondents who have graduated from a Master's in Media and Communication. The study revealed that the largest group working on Al Bilad TV is journalists.

7. Most journalists working on Al-Bilad channel do not often adopt investigative methods to address various criminal issues in Algeria; rather, they rely on superficial coverage.

8. The majority of journalists proposed the idea of establishing and developing a special section for investigative reports on the channel.

9. The majority of journalists (87%) agreed that Al-Bilad Channel does not have the financial capabilities, technologies, and modern means that would help them work in the field of investigative journalism.

11. Journalists largely depend on security and judicial authorities to adopt the truth from their sources at a rate of 70%. This does not negate journalists' reliance on news agencies and society for information that motivates them to develop this type of journalism.

12. Most respondents concluded that there are no channels of cooperation between governmental and official institutions and investigative journalists through facilities related to evidence related to topics and issues of crime in Algeria.

13. This study showed that it is necessary to subject Al Bilad TV journalists to training courses specialized in the style and methodology of investigative journalism to advance investigative journalism in Algerian institutions.

## 6. Conclusion

Investigative journalism is vital for promoting safe communities and supporting democracy by identifying significant issues. Although globally successful, it remains immature in Algeria. Al-Bilad TV values investigative journalism, focusing on social issues, but faces constraints like insufficient legal protections, weak community cooperation, and inadequate legal frameworks. Investigative measures are often superficial and rely on judicial and security authorities, reflecting a lack of independent capacity. Major obstacles include legal difficulties, threats of dismissal, and state pressure. In addition, Al-Bilad TV lacks the

financial and technical resources necessary for efficient investigative journalism and experiences minimal cooperation with government institutions.

The findings highlight significant implications for Algeria's media policy and practice. Al-Bilad TV's positive attitude toward investigative journalism indicates potential growth, provided legal and institutional barriers that will enhance journalism quality, transparency, and accountability. Reducing reliance on official sources and strengthening journalists' investigative capacity will improve report credibility and depth. Broadening the scope beyond social issues can also increase the impact of investigative journalism on diverse societal concerns.

To enhance investigative journalism at Al-Bilad TV and other media outlets in Algeria, we propose several recommendations. It is crucial to provide robust legal protection for journalists to mitigate risks and encourage engagement. Establishing a dedicated section for investigative reports, offering special training in methodologies and techniques, and promoting coverage of diverse issues, including political and criminal matters, will broaden the scope and relevance of investigative journalism. Raising awareness through collaboration between media organizations, educational institutions, and civil society, along with providing necessary facilities and resources, will further support journalists. Fostering cooperation between media organizations and investigative journalism groups and establishing partnerships with international organizations can enhance report quality and reach.

## 7. Limitations and Further Studies

Future studies should assess the effectiveness of these recommendations by exploring the impact of legal reforms, training programs, and resource allocation on investigative journalism in Algeria. Comparative studies with other countries can provide valuable insights into best practices and common challenges. Addressing these challenges through legal, institutional, and educational reforms can pave the way for more robust and effective investigative journalism, contributing to a more informed and democratic society, achieving justice, and enhancing community.

## Authors' Contributions

### *The First Author*

✓ *Research conceptualization:* developed the research hypothesis and theoretical framework.

✓ *Supervision:* supervised the overall project progress and execution.

### *The Second Author*

✓ *Data collection:* Experiments were conducted, and data were collected.

✓ *Data analysis:* Statistical analysis was conducted and the results.

✓ *Writing—original draft:* The initial manuscript

was drafted.

### **The Third Author**

✓ *Literature review:* The relevant literature was reviewed and summarized.

### **The Fourth Author**

✓ *Writing–review & editing:* The authors contributed to writing, reviewing, and editing the manuscript for important scientific content.

### **The Fifth Author**

✓ *Writing–review & editing:* The authors contributed to writing, reviewing, and editing the manuscript for important scientific content.

### **The Sixth Author**

✓ *Writing–review & editing:* The authors contributed to writing, reviewing, and editing the manuscript for important scientific content.

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