

## INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM IN ARAB NATIONS TRANSITIONING FROM A WATCHDOG FUNCTION TO SETTLING PERSONAL SCORES

**ElKhamssa RAMDANE**

Faculty of human sciences and social  
University of Mohamed Khider- Biskra, Algeria

ORCID ID: [0009-0006-7549-6997](https://orcid.org/0009-0006-7549-6997)

[elkhamssa.ramdane@univ-biskra.dz](mailto:elkhamssa.ramdane@univ-biskra.dz)

&

**Abderrahmane SALHI**

Faculty of human sciences and social  
University of Kasdi Merbeh- Ouargla, Algeria

ORCID iD : [0009-0001-3776-7606](https://orcid.org/0009-0001-3776-7606)

[salhiabderahmen@gmail.com](mailto:salhiabderahmen@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** This study delineates the trajectory of investigative journalism within Arab states, illustrating its confrontations with numerous impediments that have skewed it from its foundational principles observed in Western contexts since its inception. These obstacles have led to a deviation from its core mandate of in-depth factual investigation, exacerbated by a climate of restricted freedom where journalists face numerous constraints preventing effective corruption exposure and governmental oversight. This research aims to dissect the state of investigative journalism in the Arab world, elucidating the causes of its lag and deviation from fundamental duties and ethical standards. It becomes evident upon examining investigative journalism in the Arab nations that it has strayed from its primary objectives, occasionally morphing into a mechanism for personal gain and extortion. This misalignment fundamentally stems from a lack of understanding among investigative journalists of their critical and strategic role in influencing state policies in the Arab world. A scenario where freedom lacks accountability results in disorder, exploitation, and leveraging public distress for personal gains.

**Keywords:** Investigation, Investigative Journalism, Exposing Corruption, Watchdog Function, Investigative Journalist.

### LE JOURNALISME D'INVESTIGATION DANS LES PAYS ARABES DE LA FONCTION DE SURVEILLANCE A LA REGLEMENTATION DE COMPTES PERSONNELS

**Résumé :** Cette étude dépeint l'évolution du journalisme d'investigation dans les pays arabes, mettant en lumière ses défis face à de multiples obstacles qui l'ont écarté de ses principes originels, tels qu'ils sont perçus dans les contextes occidentaux depuis sa genèse. Ces obstacles ont entraîné un écart par rapport à sa mission essentielle d'enquête factuelle approfondie, dans un environnement où la liberté d'expression est entravée, confrontant les

journalistes à de nombreuses restrictions qui limitent leur capacité à révéler la corruption et à assurer un contrôle gouvernemental efficace. Cette recherche entend analyser l'état actuel du journalisme d'investigation dans le monde arabe, en clarifiant les raisons de son retard et de sa divergence par rapport aux obligations fondamentales et aux standards éthiques. Il apparaît clairement, à travers l'examen du journalisme d'investigation dans les nations arabes, que celui-ci s'est détourné de ses buts premiers, devenant parfois un outil au service d'intérêts personnels et de l'extorsion. Ce décalage provient essentiellement d'une méconnaissance, de la part des journalistes d'investigation, de leur rôle crucial et stratégique dans l'influence des politiques étatiques dans le monde arabe. Un contexte où la liberté sans responsabilité aboutit au chaos, à l'exploitation, et à la manipulation de la détresse publique à des fins personnelles.

**Mots-clés :** Enquête, Journalism d'investigation, Dévoilement de la corruption, Fonction de surveillance, Journaliste investigateur.

## Introduction

The advent of audio-visual communication mediums has significantly eclipsed the readership of print journalism, a trend further accelerated by the digital revolution and the rise of new media platforms, notable for their distinctive attributes. Empirical evidence and polls have underscored the diminished role of newspapers as the primary information source, compelling the print media industry to innovate and refocus on analytical and supervisory roles. This strategic pivot aims to enrich journalistic content with depth and insight, offering nuanced interpretations of events and issues by probing into phenomena and uncovering underlying narratives, thereby providing comprehensive coverage of occurrences. This recalibration towards an analytical and interpretative approach has distinctively positioned print journalism, attracting a broader audience keen on understanding the complexities and obscured facets of pressing matters. Despite the global presence of investigative journalism, its emergence in the Arab landscape was belated and initially limited, attributed to multifaceted barriers detailed herein. Notably, the Arab Spring marked a pivotal moment, catalyzing political upheaval that mirrored across various sectors, including the media. This period heralded a clamor for enhanced freedom and a profound engagement with critical, complex issues, epitomizing the essence of investigative journalism. However, the integrity of this journalistic principle has been compromised by certain media outlets' predisposition towards serving specific narratives and interests, thus deviating from the quintessential objective of truth revelation and instead, manipulating public perception to align with their vested interests. This paper ventures into a critical exploration of investigative journalism's current landscape in the Arab sphere, its directional trends against the backdrop of prevailing challenges, and showcases exemplary Arab endeavors in this domain. The paper will cover the following themes: A Conceptual Framework for Investigative Journalism; the Genesis and Evolution of Investigative Journalism;

investigative Journalism Ethics; the Status Quo of Arab Investigative Journalism and Contributing Delays; deviations from the Watchdog Function in Arab Investigative Journalism.

### **1. A Conceptual Framework for Investigative Journalism:**

Investigative journalism is often misconstrued in public discourse as synonymous with leaks—where individuals with authority, law enforcement personnel, or politicians disseminate information to serve specific agendas. Journalists may then publish these leaks without thorough verification or investigation. However, investigative journalism is not merely about broadcasting leaks. While investigations can originate from leaks, the quintessential aim of investigative journalism is to advance the public interest. Investigative journalists are tasked with conducting exhaustive research and verification of information, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the context and implications of leaks. Merely publishing leaked information results in skewed journalism, serving the leakers' purposes and potentially misleading the public. Hence, investigative journalists are required to diversify their sources and rigorously verify the authenticity of every piece of information acquired, regardless of the perceived reliability of the sources. David Caplan characterizes investigative journalism as a systematic and intuitive approach that necessitates deep exploration into the context of leaks and the journalist's independent research, employing scientific methods. This entails formulating hypotheses, testing their validity, and confirming the facts and details pertinent to these hypotheses, uncovering hidden secrets, and advocating for social justice and accountability. It also involves leveraging publicly available data and records (Al-Charafi, 2015: 13). Defined broadly, investigative journalism encompasses detailed journalistic works, including reports and investigations that utilize various scientific methodologies and adhere to professional standards. These efforts aim to uncover concealed truths or scrutinize complex issues, illuminating the obscure aspects thereof. This form of journalism aims to monitor the actions of officials or public bodies, thereby serving the societal interest (Abou Hamam, 2014: 13).

The objective of investigative journalism extends to revealing the intricacies and hidden aspects of diverse societal phenomena, encompassing their political, economic, or social underpinnings. Through the collection of data via surveys, analysis of available data, or criminal investigations, it seeks to elucidate these phenomena for the public and policymakers, irrespective of the truths unearthed and irrespective of whom they may benefit or oppose (Mahmoud, 2012: 13). According to UNESCO's guide on investigative journalism, this discipline includes exposing public issues that have been deliberately concealed by influential individuals or accidentally obscured by a disarray of facts and circumstances that cloud understanding. It necessitates the utilization of a variety of sources and documents, both confidential and public (Hunter & Harrison, 2011: 8). An investigative journalist goes beyond mere observation or second-hand reports, delving into detailed information, evidence, and undisclosed data to expose various infractions, deviations, and their substantiations. Benhaminson and Anderson describe it as journalism of concealed information, shedding light on data not readily available to the general public (Abd al Baki, 2013: 61). Its scope exceeds merely unmasking corruption and

criminality to include a profound investigation into facts, issues, and systemic operations, or the reconstruction of complex events. Therefore, the mission of investigative journalism is to expose the illicit practices of various individuals, officials, criminals, corporations, and influential states, ensuring they are held accountable for their activities. Through the revelation of corruption and misconduct, investigative journalism upholds the principle that no one is above the law, embodying a deep-seated democratic practice rooted in truth, freedom, and justice. Investigative journalism, as a genre, gravitates towards in-depth explanatory treatment, focusing on uncovering crimes and corruption within society. It prioritizes revealing corrupt and deviant behaviors, combating practices detrimental to the public interest, and solidifying the press's role as an authentic fourth estate (Haddad, 2002: 199). Investigative journalism, distinct in its approach and methodology, exhibits several defining traits:

## ***2. The Nature of Investigative Work***

Investigative journalism is inherently demanding, marked by considerable challenges and risks for journalists and all associated parties. This field demands the courage to pry open closed doors and silenced voices. Investigative journalists encounter obstacles in accessing documents and conducting interviews with individuals linked to their investigations, who often are reluctant to engage with the media. (Abd al Baki, 2013: 134-135). Investigative journalism typically delves into grave issues, focusing on political events or societal trends. Following the selection of a topic, investigative journalists contact sources and experts to arrange interviews. They devote extensive time to research and verification of information, subsequently organizing and crafting the narrative in a manner that elucidates complex subjects for the audience. Before submission, stories undergo review to ensure precision and professionalism. Contrary to traditional reporting, which often relies on external sources for information, investigative journalism necessitates a proactive stance from journalists, urging them to independently seek out information. While many investigations may initiate from tips by whistleblowers, they demand an augmented level of effort and dedication to unearth truths and catalyze change. Traditional news reports events as they unfold, whereas investigative journalism strives to unearth and comprehensively elucidate the truth behind those events. It plays a pivotal role in illuminating corruption, injustice, and abuses, thereby energizing communities to seek reform and accountability (Charles, 2018). Investigative journalism demands a deep commitment to research and thorough interviews, differentiating it from conventional journalism. Journalists venturing into this domain must be prepared to invest substantial time and effort in producing stories of significant societal value. A journalist's inclination towards meticulous examination of subjects, coupled with a rigorous verification and analytical process, is crucial. An enthusiasm for investigative work and a profound understanding of the issues at hand mark the initial step toward impactful journalism.

Aspiring investigative journalists should prioritize comprehensive training, whether through academic programs, workshops, or fieldwork, which cultivates patience, experience, and adeptness in navigating various situations. This specialized field requires not just a knack for

detail and an analytical mind but also a dedication to serving the public interest, rendering it both challenging and rewarding. Investigative journalism, while resource-intensive, is deemed invaluable. Despite the high costs associated with investigative reporting, the late Gavin MacFadyen, former director of the Centre for Investigative Journalism in the UK, argued that the investment is justified by the genre's impact and credibility (Charles, 2018). In a 2007 address at the Taco Kuiper Award for Investigative Journalism in Johannesburg, MacFadyen emphasized the influential power of investigative journalism to generate public discourse, enhance sales and viewership, and build genuine credibility and a loyal audience base. When news profoundly affects individuals, it becomes a topic of conversation and sustained interest, reflecting a universal truth across countries and enhancing the culture of press consumption, encouraging editors and producers to adopt more sophisticated or assertive practices (Charles, 2018). Investigative journalism distinguishes itself from other journalistic forms by its unique appeal to diverse intellectual levels, owing to its deep exploration of events' underpinnings. It fulfills several societal and individual functions, characterized by (Harfouch, 2015: 79): origination from original investigations rather than authority leaks or influential figures; An aim to rectify errors and combat corruption; provision of explanations for intricate social phenomena; illumination of deviations, corruption, and misuse of power or influence; the journalistic profession satisfies essential societal needs and derives legitimacy from its societal contributions; it requires practiced specialists and dedicated institutions with specialized skills and capabilities in the investigative journalism field. James Aquin encapsulates the essence of investigative journalism as follows (Abd Al Baki, 2013: 84): informing the public about a variety of issues; enlightening the public on pertinent issues; covering underreported individuals or institutions; engaging in extensive and time-consuming research; enlightening the public towards fostering reform ideas. David Kaplan articulates the nuances of investigative journalism with the following distinctions:

**1-Distinguishing Investigative Journalism from Leaks:** Investigative journalism extends beyond the domain of information leaks, such as those by WikiLeaks or the Panama Papers. These leaks may initiate investigative endeavors but do not, on their own, constitute investigative journalism.

**2-Differentiating Investigative from Specialist Journalism:** Investigative journalism demands an in-depth exploration of phenomena, setting it apart from specialist journalism. While specialist journalism may occasionally adopt investigative techniques, the two differ significantly in approach and content.

**3-Differentiating Investigative from Critical Journalism:** Although investigative journalism can employ critical analysis and critical journalism may involve thorough investigation, they are distinct practices.

**4-Broad Scope of Investigative Journalism:** Limiting investigative journalism to the coverage of crime and corruption misses its broader potential. True investigative work utilizes specific methodologies and tools to explore a wide array of subjects (Al Jazeera Media Institute, 2020, 8-9).

**5-Writing in Investigative Journalism:** Crafting investigative journalism pieces requires adherence to particular rules and the mastery of specialized skills. This demands that investigative journalists continually innovate in their writing approaches while maintaining the core standards of professional journalism. (Abd Al Baki, 2013: 135).

## **2. The Genesis and Evolution of Investigative Journalism:**

Investigative journalism has its roots entwined with the evolution of journalism and its societal standing, particularly marked by an investigative zeal into matters predominantly concerning corruption and various deviations. Its practitioners were initially heralded as crusaders against corruption. The movement gained a significant foothold in 1906, playing a pivotal role in uncovering corruption and instigating numerous reforms in the Western world (Abd al Ghafour, 2021/2022: 15). This era of prominence emerged in the wake of industrial expansion following the Civil War, leading to widespread monopolies and corruption, detrimentally impacting middle and lower socio-economic classes and necessitating journalistic campaigns to address these societal vices (Houcine, 2005: 11). A landmark in the institutionalization of this field was the formation of the Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE) in 1976, established as a collective investigative team in response to the assassination of an American journalist in Arizona. Noteworthy examples of investigative journalism include Seymour Hersh's revelations about the My Lai Massacre in Vietnam in 1969, the Abu Ghraib prison torture scandals, and insights into Israel's arsenal in 1991 (Abd al Baki, 2013: 10). The investigative reporting by Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein on the Watergate scandal, leading to the resignation of former U.S. President Richard Nixon in 1974, stands as a seminal moment in the annals of investigative journalism. This scandal significantly boosted the field's profile, encouraging an influx into its ranks and an expansion of its study in academia (Abd al Baki, 2013: 42). In the era preceding the digital revolution, investigative journalists relied predominantly on their individual capabilities and the scant resources provided by their organizations. The advent of information technology has enhanced collaborative efforts, enabling more effective access to official sources—critical in investigative journalism for navigating through the intricacies of media freedom laws, understanding the permissible scope of information, and grappling with the legal outcomes of investigative endeavors (Hassan, 2009: 8-9). The field has notably benefited from advancements in internet and web technologies, especially in storytelling techniques, employing suspense and integrating a diverse array of information types, links, audio and video files, and graphics (Abd al Baki, 2013: 49). Contemporary investigative journalists utilize software and databases for organizing and analyzing the extensive data they accumulate, facilitating the unraveling of complex issues and offering comprehensive investigative perspectives often eluded by other media forms (Hassan, 2009: 7). The competition among leading U.S. newspapers in the investigative journalism domain has led to the establishment of dedicated departments and teams, extending their scope to include critical national institutions (The White House, Congress and US State Department). This growing emphasis is a testament to the newspapers' vital role in probing societal corruption. Despite the demanding nature of investigative journalism in terms of effort, cost, and expertise,

it has captivated a significant audience segment, driven by a desire to explore the mysterious and break the monotony, with investigative sections enjoying a readership engagement of up to 90% among Americans (Al Badrani, 2015: 11).

### 3. Investigative Journalism Ethics:

The ethical dimension is critically important in all media practices, particularly in investigative journalism due to its depth in addressing issues and its significant influence on readers. As such, investigative journalism is guided by several foundational ethical principles:

**-Commitment to Objectivity:** Ensuring information is presented impartially and free from bias is imperative. Journalists must eschew infusing reports with personal opinions or distorting facts to benefit any side. The priority should be on exhaustive information gathering and its objective presentation, empowering readers to accurately assess situations and make informed decisions.

**-Accuracy and Verification:** Meticulous verification of information and data before publication is essential to uphold the news's integrity and trustworthiness.

**-Unbiased Coverage:** It is paramount that investigative journalism remains neutral, avoiding any bias that may compromise the fairness and objectivity of its coverage.

**-Distinction between Personal Opinions and Facts:** Investigative journalists must rigorously separate personal beliefs from verifiable facts, ensuring information is presented unbiasedly and objectively.

**-Contextualizing Individual Events:** Journalists should connect individual occurrences with broader societal or historical contexts. This involves understanding the interplay between events and their larger implications, aiding readers in comprehending the complexities and backgrounds of issues (Harfouch, 2015: 81).

These principles are reaffirmed in the Reuters Handbook for Journalists, highlighting the critical role of ethics in investigative journalism. The handbook notes that while it may not be challenging to fabricate information, sources, or plagiarize the work of others, such unethical practices invariably lead to discreditation (Abou Youcef et al., 2006: 74). The International Federation of Journalists' charter emphasizes the importance of journalists relying on ethical methods in their reportage, disclosing their journalistic identity, and avoiding the falsification of facts or resorting to coercion to obtain information or statements (Abou Youcef et al., 2006: 74-75). Additionally, ethical considerations extend to issues like corruption, including the acceptance of bribes by journalists, their omission of certain reports, or payments made for information. Field studies reveal that these unethical behaviors are widespread across many nations, especially in certain countries in Southeast Europe, Latin America, and the developing world.

### 4. The Status Quo of Arab Investigative Journalism and Contributing Delays

Investigative journalists within the Arab region encounter significantly more obstacles and risks compared to their counterparts in other journalistic domains. This heightened



challenge stems from the investigative nature of their work, which seeks to unearth the intricacies and secrets behind various issues. Such obstacles severely limit investigative journalists' ability to access essential information, at times leading to threats, violence, or even direct attempts on their lives. A critical factor contributing to these challenges is the developmental lag in democracy, particularly noticeable in the Arab world. Here, journalists face considerable restrictions on freedom of expression and hurdles in accessing information sources. These conditions mirror the overarching political and economic frameworks of these countries, resulting in stringent legal constraints and governmental oversight over the media. Consequently, these impediments make it exceedingly difficult for journalists to pursue and produce in-depth investigative reports. Moreover, there exists a discernible deficit in a journalistic culture that champions in-depth investigation and scrutiny of complex issues. More often than not, superficial reporting and the rush for breaking news eclipse the pursuit of thorough investigative work. Therefore, the conducive political, legal, and cultural milieu necessary for the flourishing of investigative journalism has been notably absent in the Arab countries. This absence has led to a delayed emergence and development of investigative journalism within the region, barring a few attempts that hardly meet the fundamental standards and characteristics of genuine investigative journalism (Abd al Baki, 2013: 49-50). Investigative journalism in Arab countries has not evolved as a result of a cumulative socio-political, economic, and cultural progression reflective of the unique Arab context and experiences. Instead, it emerged more as an imitation of Western practices, lacking a deep-seated understanding or acknowledgment of the need to expose various public interest issues. Some view it as an embodiment of rebellion against regimes and their policies. Despite this, it's undeniable that there have been noteworthy investigative efforts within the Arab press. One such instance is the exposé by journalist Ihsan Abdel Koudous in 1949 regarding the provision of defective weaponry to the Egyptian army in the 1948 conflict with Israel (Mahmoud, 2012: 20). The Arab Spring heralded calls for a new era marked by freedom of expression, leading to a growing public awareness of the importance of reliable and ethical media. This shift prompted the introduction of access to information laws in countries like Jordan, Tunisia, and Yemen, making the development of investigative journalism imperative to meet the democratic aspirations of these nations. ARIJ (Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism), a regional organization, has provided critical support for nurturing investigative journalism in North Africa and the Middle East, training a generation of Arab journalists in evidence-based reporting and fact-checking (Zbis, 2017). The pivotal role of investigative journalism in enlightening the masses has often been met with resistance and opposition from those involved in or benefiting from corruption. In non-democratic states, investigative journalism faces numerous hurdles, ranging from systemic obstructions to direct intimidation and threats against journalists (Zbis, 2017). Efforts to form associations supporting investigative journalism in countries like Morocco, Tunisia, and Yemen, despite their intentions, have not significantly impacted the profession. These initiatives often remained idealistic, lacking practical solutions and failing to consider the surrounding political, economic, cultural, and social contexts.



Journalist Imad Mekki has highlighted the stark differences between the Arab and Western journalistic environments, noting the dominance of personal connections over factual accuracy in the Arab media culture. Moreover, information published in English often carries greater significance than that in Arabic, attributed to the global visibility of the English language versus Arabic's association with rumors and scandal and settling personal scores. Most Arab media outlets, funded by government or a mix of public and private partnership, struggle with the financial demands of investigative journalism. Culturally, the West has shown a greater openness to investigative journalism, characterized by transparency and accountability, whereas the Arab world often resists criticism and accountability, with journalists facing threats and harassment with minimal protection or support (Mekki, 2020: 11). Researcher Alam Eddine Mahmoud has identified several factors inhibiting the development of investigative journalism in the Arab world. These include:

**1-Media and Publishing Legislation:** In the Arab world, the prevailing media and publishing laws fall short of providing necessary protection for journalistic works that probe into corruption, often entangled with the misconduct of the elite.

**2-Lack of Editorial Policies:** A significant number of newspapers lack editorial frameworks that facilitate the organization and execution of investigative journalism by skilled and seasoned journalists.

**3-Reluctance of Regimes:** A common feature among many Arab regimes is their reluctance to engage with journalistic outputs that scrutinize corruption.

**4-Non-Responsiveness of Political Systems:** The political establishments in the Arab world often show a marked indifference to corruption issues highlighted by the media. Anti-corruption campaigns spearheaded by media outlets rarely lead to concrete outcomes and frequently end without substantive action or resolution (Mahmoud, 2000: 34).

##### **5. Deviations from the Watchdog Function in Arab Investigative Journalism**

The role of investigative journalism is pivotal in promoting democracy, transparency, and the oversight of authorities and institutions. As a potent force in shaping and directing public opinion, it serves to uncover malpractices and criminal activities. A strong conviction exists, particularly in Western contexts, about investigative journalism's unmatched capability to reveal connections between corruption and those in power. Exposing corruption, whether related to individuals or organizations, is deemed one of the media's most noble endeavors. Belsey argues that resorting to certain deceptions may be necessary when dealing with corruption concealed from the public eye, advocating that the ends might justify the means in such scenarios. However, Dr. Hassan Abou Hachiche contends that associating the success of investigative journalism with the breach of professional ethics misaligns with the foundational values of the discipline. He stresses the need to differentiate between morally questionable tactics and those that, although seemingly underhanded, are ethically grounded and serve a positive purpose (Harfouche Imane, 2015: 79). The Arab region, especially in the wake of the Arab Spring, has witnessed unstable economic, political, and security conditions, sparking a heightened public awareness and calls for reforms across various sectors. This includes a push for broader media

freedoms and the safeguarding of free speech. While some forays into investigative journalism have been made in Arab countries, they often lack the depth and defining features of authentic investigative work, amounting to mere imitations rather than genuine investigative journalism. Media legislation in Arab countries does not adequately protect journalists nor incentivize the deep investigation of critical and concealed issues. Moreover, such legal constraints can expose journalists to the risk of imprisonment, fostering an environment of fear that stifles the pursuit of investigative journalism. Thus, the Arab world is currently far from establishing a conducive environment for the flourishing and evolution of investigative journalism. Some journalists misuse the prestige associated with investigative journalism, leveraging acquired information for personal gain or to extort individuals or organizations. This misuse tarnishes the reputation of investigative journalism and distorts public perception, associating it with personal vendettas, extortion, privacy intrusions, and a departure from its principal aim of serving the public interest. The prolonged utilization of rumors and government propaganda in Arab media complicates distinguishing between authentic investigations and regime-spun rumors. Consequently, investigative journalism for some emerging journalists becomes a shortcut to fame without the requisite expertise and experience, diluting its objectives and content within the Arab context. Investigative reports become superficial, lacking in-depth analysis, with journalists opting for eye-catching headlines and topics without true investigative rigor based on scientific research methodologies. Choosing this field requires understanding that success and recognition come through a long journey of dedication and hardship, alongside an acceptance of the inherent risks and potential animosity from those averse to corruption exposure (Mekki, 2020: 11). Amidst some journalists' opportunism for swift fame with minimal effort, legal challenges that fail to protect investigative reporters or ensure legal accountability for the corrupt contribute to several factors impacting the recognition and proper positioning of investigative journalism in the Arab world. Still in its infancy, the field requires substantial effort for its advancement. In Arab countries, the lack of foundational principles of justice, transparency, and accountability — crucial pillars for professional investigative journalism aimed at societal betterment — is evident. Genuine investigative journalism avoids the pursuit of stardom or settling personal scores. Instead, it seeks to uncover and document societal issues, especially those of public concern, highlighting the responsible parties, whether intentionally involved or not, and advocating for justice, transparency, and accountability (El Ziyat, 2018).

## Conclusion

In the Arab world, several factors collectively hinder the full emergence of investigative journalism. Among these are publishing laws that not only fail to safeguard journalists delving into corruption but also seemingly protect those embroiled in it, particularly influential individuals within the political and business spheres. Moreover, media institutions grapple with a plethora of challenges, from scant funding and constraints on freedom of expression to inadequate training, political instability, and a discernible lack of resolve to confront or delve into corruption. The absence of foundational democratic principles, transparency, and

accountability fosters a climate of reticence among journalists to engage with topics of sensitivity and significance, fearing potential backlash and legal pursuit. Amidst perspectives oscillating between optimism and pessimism regarding the future of investigative journalism in the region, it is clear that the current iteration of investigative journalism in Arab countries somewhat misses the mark. The prevalent practice often diverges from the core aims of investigative journalism, focusing instead on boosting readership or settling personal scores through sensationalism and appeal to readers' emotions. The present state of investigative journalism, marred by ethical breaches and dominated by personal and biased interests, is reflective of a transitory phase tied to the current socio-political and media landscape in the Arab world. This milieu, characterized by turbulence and a nascent understanding of the field, coupled with the novelty of investigative journalism, is poised for evolution. Given the relative freedom and openness that the media sector in many Arab countries has begun to experience, largely due to recent socio-political and cultural shifts, it is plausible to anticipate a positive transformation in the investigative journalism landscape in the foreseeable future.

## References

- Abdel-Baqi, A. (2013). *Investigative journalism: theoretical frameworks and applied models*, Cairo, Dar Al-Ulum for Publishing and Distribution.
- Abdul Ghafour, A.H. (2021/2022), *Investigative Journalism Lectures*, Department of Mass Communication, Anbar University, p. 03, site: <https://www.uoanbar.edu.iq/ArtCollege/catalog/>. 01/11/2023, 20:33.
- Abu Hamam, A. (2014). *The Scientific Method in Investigative Journalism*, Jordan, Dar Osama for Publishing and Distribution
- Abu Youssef, E.& al. (2006). *Handbook of Investigative Journalism for Development*, Egypt, Friedrich Ebert.
- Al-Badrani, F.M. (2015). *Investigative journalism is a new approach to exposing corruption and achieving social values*, *Journal of Social Sciences*, Laghouat University, Volume 9, Issue4.
- Al-Hassan, A. M. (2012). *Investigative journalism: the profession of troubles and dangers*, Amman, Zahran Publishing and Distribution House.
- Al-Sharafi, M.S. (2015). *The reality of investigative journalism in Palestinian newspapers - a comparative analytical and field study -*, Master's thesis (unpublished), Department of Journalism, Faculty of Arts, University of Gaza, site: <file:///C:/Users/sms/Downloads>, visit: 07/22/2023, 21:32.
- [Charles .M.](https://medium.com/@headlineexplorer/investigative-journalism-i-an-introduction-8c5faf085030) (2018). *Investigative Journalism I: An Introduction*, site: (<https://medium.com/@headlineexplorer/investigative-journalism-i-an-introduction-8c5faf085030>, 12/10/2023, 11:11).
- Haddad, N. (2002). *The Art of Classroom Writing, Features, Skills, Forms, Issues*, Jordan, Dar Al-Kindi.
- Hafez, A. Hussein (2005). *Interactive media communication technology in the age of digital information cyberspace*, Cairo, Arab House for Publishing and Distribution.

- Harfouche, I. (2015). Arab Investigative Journalism: The Reality of the Algerian Investigative Journalist and Professional Ethics, *Journal of Human Sciences Oum El Bouaghi - Algeria*, Volume 2, Issue 4.
- Hassan, A.D. (2009). The role of investigative journalism in combating financial and administrative corruption and reducing organized crime, Baghdad, Independent Journalism School.
- Hunter, M.L. & al. (2011). What Is Investigative Journalism?, [an investigative journalism handbook](#) published by UNESCO, site:(<https://gijn.org/about-us/investigative-journalism-defining-the-craft/>, 02/05/2023, 22:00)
- Al Jazeera Media Institute. (2020). Investigative Journalism Guide, site: <http://institute.aljazeera.net/>, 29/08/2023, 19:33.
- Mekki, I. (2020), Journalist and Teacher of Investigative Journalism, University of Berkeley, In the book: investigative journalism handbook, Qatar, Al Jazeera Media Institute, p 11. Site: [https://institute.aljazeera.net/sites/default/files/2020/Investigative%20Journalism%20Handbook\\_0.pdf](https://institute.aljazeera.net/sites/default/files/2020/Investigative%20Journalism%20Handbook_0.pdf), (15/09/2023, 20 :00)
- Mahmoud, A. (2000). Journalism in the Information Age: Basics and Innovations, Cairo, Al-Ahram Press.
- Zebis, H. (2017). Investigative journalism associations thrive in light of the Arab revolutions, website: <http://ajo-ar.org>, visit: 10/27/2023, at 10:00.