



Research Article

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Investigative and Interpretative Reporting in the Digital Age: Tools and Techniques

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ABSTRACT

Purpose/Research Significance: The research delves into the multifaceted tools and techniques employed in investigative journalism, particularly in the digital age, through a comprehensive analysis of the groundbreaking case study, "Number 12." Conducted by renowned Ghanaian investigative journalist Anas Aremeyaw Anas and his team. The investigation aimed to unmask corruption within the Ghana Football Association (GFA) and its broader impact on the national and international football community.

Study Design/Methodology/Approach: The study explores the sophisticated combination of investigative methodologies, including the discreet use of hidden cameras, concealed microphones, extensive research, legal expertise, disguises, and collaboration. The primary objective is to gain insights into the tools instrumental in collecting evidence, such as hidden cameras ingeniously concealed in everyday objects, clothing, or accessories. Additionally, the research investigates the role of concealed microphones in capturing crucial conversations related to bribery and corruption within the GFA. Anas's use of disguises for identity protection and infiltration is examined, highlighting the impact of such techniques on investigative success.

Findings: The findings underscore the significant impact of investigative journalism in combating corruption within the sports industry, by exposing widespread corruption within the Ghana Football Association (GFA), including instances of match-fixing and bribery.

Outcomes: The outcomes of the study highlight the power of investigative journalism in uncovering corruption, prompting institutional reforms, raising public awareness, and advocating for accountability within the sports industry.

INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly evolving landscape of journalism, the advent of the digital age has revolutionized the practice of investigative and interpretative reporting, introducing a myriad of tools and techniques that redefine the boundaries of uncovering truth. This research embarks on a journey to dissect the intricate nexus between investigative journalism and the digital realm, with a particular focus on the tools and techniques deployed by practitioners. Anchored in the paradigm-shifting case study, "Number 12," conducted by Anas Aremeyaw Anas and his team, this exploration seeks to unravel the

innovative methodologies that drive impactful storytelling in the era of digital journalism.

The profound impact of "Number 12" on the Ghanaian football scene serves as a compelling entry point to scrutinize the sophisticated combination of investigative tools. As journalism increasingly navigates the digital frontier, this research endeavors to dissect the intricacies of these tools and techniques, shedding light on their ethical implications, societal consequences, and their transformative potential for the field.

In this era where information is both a currency and a battleground, investigative and interpretative reporting

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stand as vanguards against corruption, injustice, and deceit. Yet, the tools that empower journalists to unveil hidden truths also raise questions about privacy, ethics, and the evolving nature of media responsibilities.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Connection between these journalistic ideals and the classic principles of the liberal press. It also highlights the relevance of these ideals in the context of contemporary South American politics, emphasizing their importance in addressing issues of accountability in democracies (Waisbord, 2000).

Investigative journalism has often been more celebrated than practiced, in part because wrongdoing may be difficult to uncover and documenting it can generate costly, lawsuits, alienate advertisers, and be expensive to produce (Greenwald and Bernt, 2000).

Malaysian journalists operate under legal restrictions, making the practice of investigative journalism more challenging. The Internal Security Act, for instance, prohibits reporting on military activities without permission, and violation of this rule can theoretically lead to imprisonment. Additionally, the "principle of national responsibility" suggests that the government can prevent coverage of anything it deems undesirable. In essence, the findings suggest that the legal framework in Malaysia poses significant obstacles to investigative journalism, limiting the freedom of the press and potentially impacting the public's access to information (Stapenhurst, 2000).

Despite common characteristics, investigative journalism in each Latin American country underwent a seesaw evolution. The evolution was influenced by domestic political developments, as well as editorial and industrial changes in the news media. Suggest a complex and multifaceted landscape for investigative journalism in Latin America, shaped by political, economic, and media-related factors. The acceptance and evolution of investigative journalism varied across countries due to unique contextual elements (Silvio, 2002).

The purpose of investigative journalism is to correct what is wrong by exposing it to public knowledge and indirectly pressure the authority to act on it. It could also bring up issue of significant public concern that reveals information not previously known and perhaps even hidden, to alert and educate the public (Aucoin, 2005).

The cost of investigation is identified as a significant factor contributing to the decline of investigative journalism. Investigative journalism often involves extended periods of research and reporting, leading to the necessity of paying the reporter's monthly income for months without the guarantee of a complete piece. Highlight the economic challenges faced by media organizations in supporting investigative journalism, with cost considerations acting as a deterrent and impacting the allocation of resources for such endeavors (Houston, 2006).

In much of the developing and democratizing world, investigative journalism contributions include fostering accountability and transparency, battling corruption, exposing organized crime, strengthening civil society, fuelling reform, and calling for justice (David, 2007).

Philippine really need investigative journalism to demonstrate and document the political and social realities that still define Philippine existence today, towards the historic end of arming the people with the consciousness that will mobilize them. He added that investigative journalism is also one form of writing that can repudiate the martial law legacy of secrecy that still haunts Philippine society (Remollino, 2007).

Successful detectives need the ability to imagine multiple potential explanations for investigative data and the knowledge to identify the opportunities for action such data affords (Barrett and Emma 2009).

Investigative journalism has a role to play in deliberative democracy through informing the public, thus opening up issues and topics for debate. Its power is noted through its ability to reach the masses and create public debate, thus becoming an essential tool in the process of deliberative democracy. As a general definition, deliberative democracy is seen 'as a form of government in which free and equal citizens (and their representatives), justify decisions in a process in which they give one another reasons that are mutually acceptable and generally accessible, with the aim of reaching conclusions that are binding in the present on all citizens but open to challenge in the future'. It is necessary to note that for investigative reporting to achieve a role in this process of deliberative democracy, it would need to do so at a public level (Gutmann and Thompson, 2004).

Deliberative democracy is achieved at a public level rather than an individual level (Thomas and Philip, 2005).

Attackers have the methods to violate the security. Then comes the role of forensic analyst who should have a thorough knowledge in investigation techniques for extracting hidden evidences. (Sindhu, Dr. Meshram, 2012).

Malaysian media practitioners adapt their information gathering methods and the topics they choose to investigate based on the constraints and characteristics of the local media environment. The absence of a Freedom of Information Act in Malaysia limits the access to public documents for media practitioners, making information and document leakage challenging. Due to difficulties in obtaining information, Malaysian media relies on authorities to supply them with the required information. As a developing nation, Malaysian media is described as more of a lapdog than a watchdog of the government, with a priority of supporting government policy. Due to sensitivities, media practitioners in Malaysia may prefer to focus on topics like consumerism, environment, and social issues rather than challenging political leaders. Despite the challenges, Malaysian media practitioners conceptualize investigative journalism as having numerous advantages,

benefiting the public, their organizations, and themselves. Paint a picture of how the practice of investigative journalism in Malaysia is shaped by a complex interplay of cultural, political, and practical factors that influence both the conceptualization and execution of investigative reporting. (Adibah, Khairie and Che Su, 2014).

In-depth and investigative journalism that goes beyond reporting the daily events is an essential element of liberal democracies (Voltmer, 2006: 2; Waisbord, 2000: 45) but rare in Sub-Saharan Africa (Mudhai, 2007; Steyn and De Beer, 2004: 45), and yet it exists – under difficult circumstances. In one of the major journalism support programmes in the region – the Science Journalism Cooperation Project (SjCOOP) – it was discovered that a considerable number of journalists aim to influence public policy through their reporting and do ‘achieve an impact’.¹ But how does this work in environments that are hardly supportive of this kind of journalism? So far, almost all media effects research has been conducted in Western countries (Schmitt-Beck, 2012: 231–245).

Journalists have accepted online news sourcing techniques into their daily news production process, but that they hesitate to use information retrieved from social media as direct and quoted sources in news reporting (Sophie and Sanne, 2015).

Understanding the ways in which technology has influenced crime detection, investigation, and prevention within law enforcement agencies (Dewald and Stacy, 2019).

Investigative reporting on private lives is deemed justifiable when it serves the broader public interest, such as exposing corruption, misuse of public funds, or other betrayals of public trust (Columbia, 2019).

Investigative reporting has always been a struggle for resources, time, funding, protection. In the West, with the media hard hit by shifting economics and technology, it has become far more difficult in recent years. Yet at the same time its practice has spread worldwide, and the digital revolution has given the field unprecedented tools, access, and opportunities for collaboration. New models have taken hold, from nonprofits and online start-ups to multimedia labs and university centers (Investigative Impact, 2020).

The selected journalists are informed regarding roles of new media tools in investigative journalism. They appreciate what these tools offer to investigative journalism, precisely in regard to helping in fact-finding, fact verification and in other news development processes (Chisom, 2020).

The investigative method can be conceptualized as a continuum of intertwining epistemic practices whose distribution and emphasis are context dependent. Within these contexts, some identity markers emerge as more contingent than others (Fredrik, 2020).

Journalists employ a collection of multiple, iterative, cyclic processes to identify journalistically "interesting" story ideas (Dilruba and Eric, 2021).

Many contextual conditions and characteristics of investigative journalism in the digital age emerged, providing insights into the complexities of the relationship between web-based platforms and newspapers (Hanneke 2021).

findings highlight a concerning incident where an investigative journalist, who was actively covering an event, alleges being shot by a police officer despite identifying as press and following instructions to run away from the scene. The incident raises issues of safety for journalists in volatile situations and suggests a need for further investigation into the circumstances surrounding the shooting (Nondumiso, 2021).

Investigative journalism represents the essence of news media organisations' fourth estate role, but unfortunately, it seems to be traditionally plagued by weaknesses. The major challenges impeding the performance of investigative journalism vary, but include clientelism (Yusha'u, 2009), lack of resources and autonomy, and various legal and political constraints (Waisbord, 2002). The mainstream news media in Argentina is indicative of this. The Argentinian media market exemplifies a series of common difficulties encountered in the watchdog role of journalism when it is practised in feeble political, economic, and business environments. The leading news media in Argentina is framed by low levels of journalistic autonomy and professionalisation within newsrooms as well as by internal news production mechanisms under the influence of pressures, derived from business interests and from government strategies on news management (Pinto, 2008). Another deterring example is Australia, where investigative journalism in the printed media sector (both prior to and during the global financial crisis) has been unable to adequately perform its role of scrutinising and revealing transgressions of the corporate and financial sector on behalf of the public. This weakness was attributed to the inability of the Australian press to challenge the commercial model of the market, based on advertising, in the context of a precarious economic environment (Carson, 2014). Overall, this imperfect kind of investigative journalism is what Stetka and Ornebring (2013) have called “pseudo-investigative journalism” (see also Gerli et al., 2018) as an existent practice in the media field, which is really concerned with generating profit for publishers and the interests that they represent

Investigative journalism has had a profound impact on revealing cases of corruption and fraud in Europe. In order to uncover fraud and corruption, investigative journalists may use a variety of sources from whistleblowers to data obtained via freedom of information. Some high profile cases include the Panama Papers and Paradise Papers. This section will outline examples of some high-profile cases in which investigative journalism has been central to the detection of fraud and corruption in Europe. One such case is from 2018 when the RISE Project from Romania and BIVOL Bulgaria teamed up to investigate the misuse



of EU funds in their respective countries⁵. The purpose of the investigations was to unravel a complex network of transnational criminal organizations and reveal how they gain access to public funds. The project uncovered a network of public officials, consultants and executives who took advantage of a lack of public oversight on projects that were funded by the EU⁶. During this investigation, journalists were detained and documents were destroyed as those responsible tried to hide their illicit activities⁷. Despite the best attempts of those involved, journalists continued to publish stories on these cases of fraud and corruption, contributing to the protection of the EU's and its citizens financial interests. In the 2018 edition of the European Commission's annual Cooperation and Verification Mechanism report on Bulgaria, they wrote "Serious risks of corruption in public procurement continue to be a concern in regard to Bulgaria. Recent revelations by investigative journalists concerning possible massive frauds targeting procurement in EU funded programmes are currently being investigated by law enforcement" (Adam, 2022).

Emphasize the crucial role of investigative journalism in promoting transparency, holding wrongdoers accountable, and contributing to the overall well-being of a democratic society like India (Arvind, 2022).

As technology continues to evolve, the future of investigative journalism holds both opportunities and uncertainties. New tools, such as artificial intelligence and blockchain, can aid in data analysis and verification. However, the sustainability of investigative journalism remains a concern as traditional media models face financial challenges. Investigative journalism remains a powerful force in uncovering truths and safeguarding democratic principles. Its role in holding the powerful accountable, promoting transparency, and exposing social injustices is more critical than ever. As citizens, we must support and value investigative journalism as it plays a crucial role in shaping a more informed and just society. Only through diligent reporting and an unwavering commitment to truth can we navigate the complexities of our world and strive for a better future. The internet and digital technologies have transformed the landscape of investigative journalism in both positive and negative ways. On one hand, digital tools facilitate data mining, research, and global collaboration among journalists. Crowdsourcing and open-source intelligence enable citizens to participate actively in investigations. On the other hand, the rise of online misinformation and disinformation poses challenges for investigative journalists. They must navigate through a sea of false narratives and distorted facts to find the truth (Grzegorz, 2023).

Investigative reporting faced challenges during military dictatorships, marked by arrests, murders, closure of media houses, and high-profile cases of government responses. Threats to investigative journalism persisted

under subsequent military administrations, including Babangida and Abacha, involving closure of media houses and violent incidents (M2023).

Transnational investigative journalism has played a crucial role in exposing the modus operandi of corruption. Notable examples include collaborative efforts in analyzing and reporting on the Panama Papers, Luanda Leaks, Pandora Papers, etc. Emphasizes the need for coordinated, global measures to ensure that efforts against Illicit Financial Flows lead to a reduction in such flows, rather than the mere relocation of illicit wealth. Highlight the significant role of transnational investigative journalism in exposing and addressing corruption, the complexities involved in combating corruption across borders, and the need for coordinated international efforts (OECD, 2023).

Examining data policing informed using thick descriptive accounts of lived police work provides insights into police officers' judgments of what constitutes "reasonably objective" crime analysis (Andr, 2023).

OBJECTIVE

- To study the tools and techniques use by investigative reporters in the digital age.
- To know some of the tools that are being used for investigation in this digital era.
- To also find out the techniques use to get the information that will be investigated.

Data Analysis

A case study analysis was conducted on an investigative report titled "Number 12": Unmasking Corruption in Ghanaian Football, by Anas Aremeyaw Anas, a renowned Ghanaian investigative journalist, and his team Tiger Eye P. I. who embarked on a groundbreaking undercover investigation, aiming to expose corruption within the Ghana Football Association (GFA) and the broader football community in Ghana. The primary objective of the investigation was to shed light on corrupt practices, including match-fixing, bribery, and unethical conduct, that were eroding the integrity of football in Ghana. Anas and his team utilized hidden cameras and undercover tactics to capture high-ranking officials, including Ghana Football Association (GFA) President Kwesi Nyantakyi, who allegedly accepted bribes and engaged in corrupt activities. The investigation resulted in the resignation of key figures implicated in the documentary, notably Kwesi Nyantakyi. The fallout extended beyond the GFA, affecting the reputation of Ghanaian football on both national and international levels. In response to the revelations, the Ghanaian government temporarily dissolved the GFA, launched investigations into corruption allegations, and implemented reforms to address systemic issues within the football administration.

"Number 12" gained international recognition, drawing attention to the broader challenges football governing bodies face in tackling corruption worldwide.

The documentary sparked discussions on the need for greater accountability and transparency in sports organizations. While effective in exposing corruption, the use of hidden cameras and undercover methods in investigative journalism raised ethical questions. Critics questioned the balance between the public interest served by the investigation and the privacy rights of the individuals caught on camera. The documentary profoundly impacted Ghanaian football, prompting a reassessment of governance structures and ethical standards. The exposure of corruption led to significant reforms within the GFA and raised awareness about the importance of maintaining integrity in sports. The "Number 12" investigation stands as a landmark case in investigative journalism, demonstrating the power of media in uncovering corruption and catalyzing positive change. While ethical concerns persist, the documentary has undeniably contributed to the ongoing global conversation about the need for transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct within football organizations.

How the Hidden Camera Footage was Collected, Reviewed and Analyzed

Collection of Hidden Camera Footage

Anas Aremeyaw Anas and his team strategically placed hidden cameras in various locations where corrupt activities were suspected to occur, such as meeting rooms, offices, and other relevant environments within the Ghana Football Association (GFA) and the football community. The cameras were carefully concealed within everyday objects or worn by undercover operatives to discreetly capture audio and video recordings. Throughout the undercover operations, the cameras continuously recorded interactions and conversations, documenting instances of bribery, match-fixing, and other corrupt practices.

Review Process

After the undercover operations were completed, the investigative team securely stored and cataloged the recorded footage. Anas and his team meticulously reviewed the footage to identify key moments and interactions relevant to the investigation. This involved watching hours of footage to extract crucial evidence. The review process included multiple team members to ensure thoroughness and accuracy in identifying actionable evidence.

Analysis of Footage

Once the relevant footage was identified, a detailed analysis was conducted to extract actionable insights and evidence of corruption. Analysts and investigators examined the footage to identify individuals involved, document the nature of corrupt activities, and establish

the context of each interaction. Advanced analytical techniques have been employed to corroborate evidence, such as cross-referencing conversations with other sources of information and identifying patterns of behavior. The analysis also involved assessing the impact of the documented corruption on the integrity of football in Ghana and the broader implications for governance and accountability within the Ghana Football Association.

Impact Assessment Done after the Investigation, including How the Effectiveness of the Investigation was Evaluated

Some aspects of impact assessment involve monitoring public reactions to the documentary's release. This includes analyzing media coverage, social media discussions, and public sentiments regarding the revelations of corruption within the Ghana Football Association. Another aspect is tracking the legal and institutional responses to the investigation. This involves monitoring any investigations or legal proceedings initiated as a result of the evidence uncovered in the documentary. Additionally, assessing the implementation of reforms within the Ghana Football Association and the broader football community provides insights into the institutional response to the revelations of corruption. Engaging with stakeholders, including government officials, sports administrators, and civil society organizations, was also essential in evaluating the impact of the investigation and conducting interviews or surveys with stakeholders to gather feedback on the effectiveness of the investigation and the perceived impact on governance, transparency, and accountability within Ghanaian football.

Assessing changes in behavior and practices within the Ghana Football Association and the football community is crucial in evaluating the long-term impact of the investigation. This involved tracking improvements in governance structures, measures taken to prevent corruption, and the enforcement of ethical standards within the sport. Evaluating the international recognition and influence of the investigation provides insights into its broader impact on the global conversation surrounding corruption in sports. Analyzing media coverage and reactions from international sports organizations, governments, and advocacy groups can help gauge the extent of the investigation's influence beyond Ghana's borders. Reflecting on the initial goals and objectives of the investigation is essential in assessing its overall effectiveness. Evaluating whether the investigation succeeded in exposing corruption, prompting reforms, and raising awareness about governance issues in Ghanaian football provides a comprehensive understanding of its impact. Lastly, conducting a lessons-learned exercise allows for the identification of strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement in future investigative efforts.



Challenges Faced During The Investigation And How They Were Overcome

Challenges

- **Secrecy and Concealment:** Maintaining the secrecy of the investigation posed a significant challenge. Anas and his team had to ensure that their identities remained hidden throughout the operation to avoid alerting the targets of their investigation.
- **Risk of Exposure:** There was a constant risk of exposure, particularly in environments where individuals involved in corruption may be vigilant against potential whistleblowers or investigative journalists. Any suspicion raised could jeopardize the entire operation and compromise the safety of the investigative team.
- **Ethical Dilemmas:** The use of hidden cameras and undercover methods raised ethical questions about privacy rights and the potential impact on the reputation of individuals caught on camera. Balancing the public interest served by the investigation with ethical considerations was a complex challenge.
- **Legal Implications:** Operating within the legal framework while conducting undercover investigations presented challenges. Anas and his team had to navigate potential legal risks associated with recording conversations without consent and defamation and privacy laws.

Overcoming Challenges

- **Operational Security Measures:** Anas and his team implemented stringent operational security measures to minimize the risk of exposure. This included maintaining strict confidentiality within the investigative team, using encrypted communication channels, and conducting thorough background checks on individuals involved in the operation.
- **Disguises and Concealment:** The use of disguises and concealed cameras enabled Anas and his team to blend into different environments and gather evidence discreetly. By carefully orchestrating their appearances and behaviors, they were able to avoid detection while capturing crucial footage.
- **Legal Consultation:** Legal experts played a crucial role in advising on the legality of investigative methods and potential risks. By seeking legal counsel, Anas and his team ensured that their actions complied with relevant laws and regulations, mitigating the risk of legal repercussions.
- **Ethical Considerations:** Anas and his team carefully weighed the ethical implications of their actions throughout the investigation. While prioritizing the public interest in exposing corruption, they took steps to minimize harm to individuals caught on camera and adhered to ethical guidelines for investigative journalism.

CONCLUSION

The “Number 12” investigation involved sophisticated investigative tools, techniques, research and analysis, secure communication, and collaboration to expose corruption within the Ghana Football Association. The careful orchestration of these tools and techniques played a pivotal role in the success and impact of the investigative journalism work led by Anas Aremeyaw Anas. Anas and his team employed hidden cameras to discreetly capture footage of individuals engaging in corrupt activities. These cameras may have been concealed in everyday objects, clothing, or accessories to ensure the subjects were unaware of being recorded. In addition to visual evidence, audio recordings played a crucial role. Concealed microphones were likely used to capture conversations and negotiations related to bribery and corruption within the Ghana Football Association. Anas is known for using disguises to protect his identity and move around undetected. This could involve the use of wigs, costumes, and accessories to blend into different environments and gain the trust of those being investigated. Some research and analysis tools used were conducting of extensive research to identify the key individuals involved in corrupt practices within the Ghana Football Association. This may include background checks, analyzing previous incidents, and gathering intelligence. Legal expertise played a crucial role in ensuring that the methods used adhered to ethical standards and legal requirements. This would include understanding privacy laws and potential legal implications. Collaboration with a diverse team of professionals, including researchers, technologists, and other journalists, was also used. Tools for impact assessment were employed to evaluate the effectiveness of the investigation. This includes monitoring public reactions, tracking legal and institutional responses, and gauging the impact on the targeted individuals and the football community.

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