

Critical Thinking Investigative Journalism

Comprehend the information chain and the objectives using critical thinking

Investigative Journalists have the same objectives as criminology, security and risk practitioners which is uncovering new crime or discover evolving copycat crime. The practitioners need to acquire specific skills and master the skills as they could handle life impacting and life and death situations. So too, investigative journalists work in hostile environments or situations that could easily attract physically harm or being murdered. There are more reasons of compatibility within the manuscript that this work is based upon.

Scenario: In every sector of society bad or wrong doings are taking place according to Professor Joseph [1]E. Stiglitz (2017) in his interview at the Global Shining Light Award Ceremony. He enlightened the audience on the ‘’big-picture’’ and suggests that in all sectors corruption and bad practise or other forms of crime are used and there is a role for investigative journalism, e.g., in health and hospitalization ([2]Esodomeni Report), [3]tobacco industry (Illegal Cigarettes), natural resources ([4]Guptas and the coal mines) and the economy([5]VSB Bank). In the interview Stiglitz mentioned that *to get the complete picture,* the journalist must interview the participants which is not necessary only the person being bribed but also the briber. Subsequently, for this work, the investigative journalist must be able to read the complete picture and the people involved.

[1] Global Shining Light Award Ceremony Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p4A5-ZmIxig&list=PLrCL-ZiCvKYsaVfEKdyaqszPdpH8U9PZ5

[2] Esodomeni Report https://www.news24.com/Columnists/Mpumelelo_Mkhabela/the-reasons-for-the-life-esidimeni-tragedy-hidden-in-mosenekes-report-20180323

[3] Illegal Cigarettes IOL news https://www.iol.co.za/dailynews/news/kwazulu-natal/illegal-cigarette-trade-costing-sa-billions-18282264

[4] Guptas and Coal Mining Moneyweb https://www.moneyweb.co.za/mineweb/the-ghosts-of-the-guptas-still-haunt-optimum-coal-mine/

[5] VSB Bank Corruption watch https://www.corruptionwatch.org.za/vbs-bank-scandal-revealed-in-explosive-report/

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We could consider a complicated and living story could be like a highly intelligent creature, as in,'' the octopus''. The octopus has a phenomenal brain and uses cognitive reasoning to achieve its objectives ([6]Emwiz media 2016). The brain may tell each tentacle how to move but each tentacle makes their own decisions on where any why to move. They rely on suckers which are part of their tentacles and responsible for sensing and providing information back to the tentacle and brain. The physiological make-up of the octopus (Deep Look 2017)[7] truly describes a model for state or market capture by a corrupt syndicate with its tentacles in a distinct sector or multiple sectors. Therefore, the journalist's and the practitioner's objectives are finding the crime by using and identifying a person-of-interest involved (sucker), then to determine if the person is working in concert with others (tentacles) voluntarily or under duress, to comprehend the impact on the region of interest and the big picture (the octopus)

[6] Emwiz media 2016 Youtube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_G6eH1KDl0s

[7] Youtube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XXMxihOh8ps

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Critical Thinking

The investigative journalist must be able to read the situation and the people involved

The investigative journalist must comprehend the narrative (big picture) by dissecting each part of the picture using certain skills to uncover loopholes, discover damming issues or the best approach to gather reliable and all-the-information. Subsequently, attention is paid to the region of interest, the people on the ground and/or a person-of-interest. *The objective is to find the crime, who is doing the crime, who is involved, how are they involved and why are they involved.*

Gathering information to comprehend the narrative

Using qualitative research. *The loophole in qualitative research*

Qualitative research is obtaining information by observation, in-depth interviewing and by focused workshop groups. The problem is that the above is all connected to gathering information from people and people do lie, hide or volunteer information for their own agenda. Furthermore, elaborating on the interview itself. The interview is only as good as the interviewer. To simply explain this, is that the observer or group workshop facilitator could have some bias towards the participants or subject matter and therefore only extract bits of information and not get the complete picture.
There are more reasons outlined in the main research manuscript outlining gob-smacking damming issues and loopholes in qualitative research.

Paying attention to; **t**he, informant (whistle-blower), the fixer (contact), the interviewee and the methods used to vet and validate authenticity. Critical thinking investigative journalists have a mind-set that each job-function is a picture within itself, and one must dissect the picture to fully understand all the implications. Journalists may be provided a lead to an award-winning story by an *informant* or seek out a *fixer* to set up a meeting with the person-of-interest. The term *fixer* is used by conflict – war correspondents who set up interviews with a specific spokesperson. But, how would the reporter know if it is an authentic and safe assignment to follow up on?

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The professional journalist must be able to detect if the source is lying, hiding something or why they are volunteering information. The important aspect is that the journalist must clarify *why* information is being volunteered as it may be to further the agenda of the informant or fixer's own agenda.

- There are instances when journalists could seek out a fixer or is approached by someone for various reasons and some of them may not be noble. Journalists may be led into a situation where they could be extorted, kidnapped, raped or murdered.
- Knowing what the source's agenda is, would save a lot of time, effort, and disappointment.

Critical Situational Interviewing

Critical situational interviewing is quite different to investigative interviewing, as Journalists may have seconds to determine the true situation when it comes *to a quick few second interview or for longevity of life* when following the information chain.

- There are times that within seconds the Investigative Journalist must be able to extract reliable information from people but also manage emotions to extract information or to get the interviewee to display their truth.
- An investigative reporter cannot afford to be misled into a horrible situation.

Critical situational interviewing and Investigative situational interviewing using critical thinking.

Journalists learn interviewing methods, however**,** in the changing security climate of the world today there are other issues that must be considered today which have not been necessary until now by using new sets of skills.

For example; when the investigative journalist is writing a story on polarized neighbourhoods, they must comprehend that they are dealing with international cultures that could misinterpret or be misunderstood because of their cultural behaviour, conduct and methods of communication. They may have been schooled in the west to read people but may get the story all wrong because, an ethic investigative journalist may comprehend or obtain the true story for many reasons. This has nothing to do by being knowledgeable in cultural diversity and there is a bit more to the concept spelt out in the main manuscript on which this article is based.

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Using critical situational interviewing techniques with the knowledge, awareness and understanding of cultural diversity will arm today's journalists with an exceptional edge.

For both – investigative journalists success depends on the level of situational awareness of the decision-maker on the ground and their reaction speed.

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