

## Online Supplement of

Wuergler, L., & Dubied, A. (2023). Performing investigative identities: How print journalists establish authority through their texts. *Studies in Communication Sciences (SComS)*, 23(2), 145–164. <https://doi.org/10.24434/j.scoms.2023.02.3488>

### 4.5 Coding distribution and superstructures

As mentioned in the main paper, the discursive strategies we observed at the micro-level of language can also shape the larger structure of investigative stories. This supplementary material aims to show how each discourse category can structure the whole narrative of an investigation.

The figure below (Figure 2) shows the distribution of each main node (y-axis) in each article (x-axis). The x-axis presents the articles chronologically according to their date of publication. The different colors represent the distribution of the sub-nodes in each category.

Figure 2: Code distribution across the articles

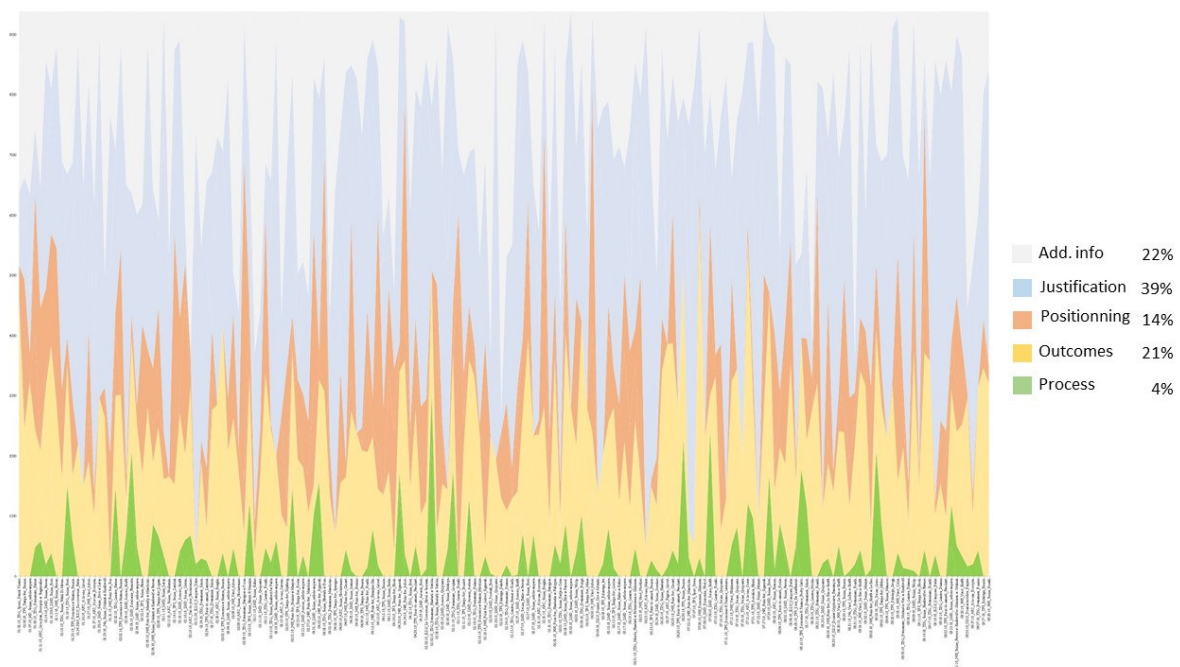
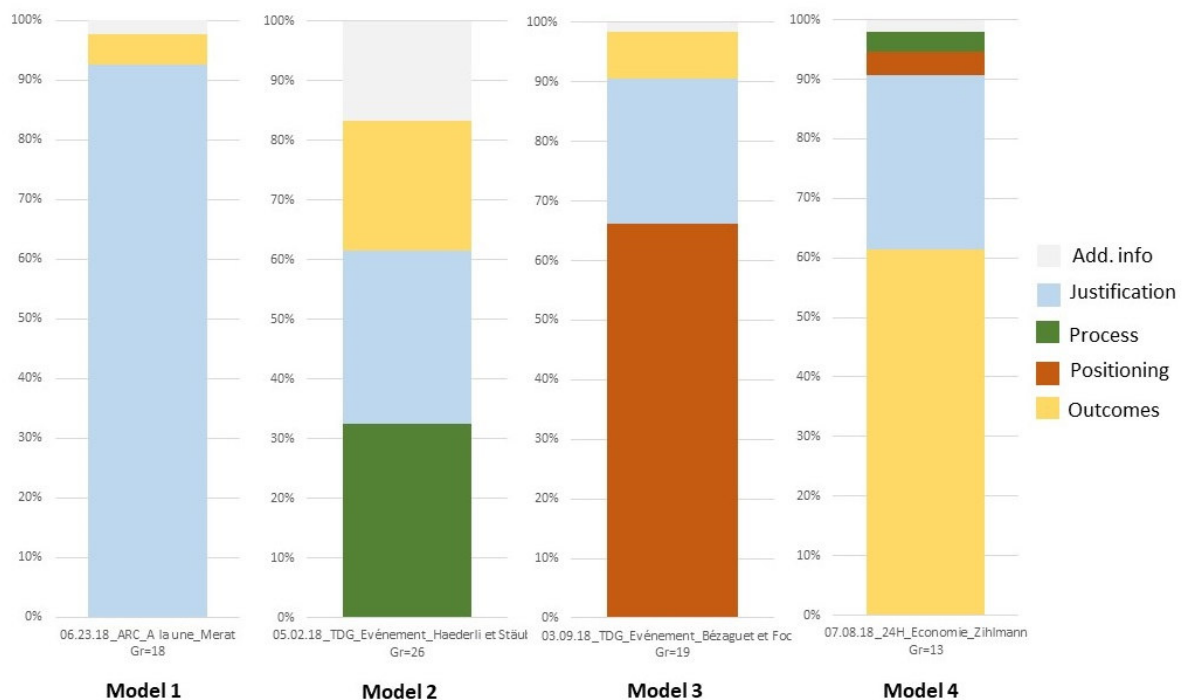


Figure 2 shows that the most frequent node is “justification,” which accounts for 39 % of the text coded. This is not surprising, since investigative journalism is a “dispassionately evidential” field (De Burgh, 2008, p. 20). Within a given discourse, justification allows the author to reinforce an assertion, provide evidence for it and offer a rhetorical support (White, 2000, pp.

5–6), and so plays an important role in legitimizing journalists’ knowledge claims. Whereas immediacy plays a greater role for other news genres in positioning journalists as authoritative news-tellers (Usher, 2018), careful justification is the key component of the investigative journalism narrative. As Ekström (2002, pp. 271–273) notes, the justification process of investigative journalism also implies that journalists choose and quote the “pieces” (evidence) that fit the story well – thus eliminating the ones that do not – in order to make the story coherent. The second most frequent node is “additional information” (22 %), followed by “outcomes” (21 %) and “positioning” (14 %), while “process” accounts for 4 % of the segments.

Finally, Figure 2 highlights the extent to which the proportion of each node varies from one article to another. To make this variation even more obvious, we have graphed the distribution of the categories for the four articles (Figure 3) that contain the highest percentage of each node.

Figure 3: Code distribution for four articles



The structures of the articles change according to which node is the most common. Each model in Figure 3 thus corresponds to four recurring superstructures (van Dijk, 1988) observable in the corpus: the justification structure, the process structure, the adversarial structure, and the outcomes structure. These four superstructures are detailed below with examples.

#### 4.5.1 Model 1: Justification structure

Articles containing mainly justification segments roughly follow an argumentative structure (Adam, 1992, pp. 103–126; Rocci, 2021; White, 2020, pp. 415–418): the story starts with either a question, a scoop, or an allegation, which is then fleshed out with evidence. The example in Table 4 starts with an implied allegation that the manager of a museum is a “supporter of a rigorous Islam”. The rest of the article mainly consists of evidence leading the journalist to believe that the allegation is true.

Table 4: “Justification” structure

Structure	Example
Allegation	X is “a supporter of a rigorous Islam”
Evidence 1	“According to him [an expert], the declarations of the (...) woman must be understood in the light of the spirit of the Muslim Brotherhood (...).”
Evidence 2	“Traces” of “affinities” with the Muslim brotherhood in the Swiss trade register.
Evidence 3	Previous “shocking” declarations of the Muslim woman published in several news outlets.
Evidence 4	The Museum was funded by money “coming from the [Arab] Gulf.”

This structure corresponds to what Mouriquand (2015, p. 80) calls the “almost compulsory” structure of investigative stories: conclusion first, then evidence. This structure emphasizes the “verification” stage of the news-gathering process by providing a long list of proof for a single fact.

#### 4.5.2 Model 2: Process structure

Articles containing a large proportion of “process” segments (Model 2 in Figure 3) typically recount the different stages of the reporter’s investigation process. In this structure (see Table 5), the journalist usually starts by describing a situation, notes the questions that arise from it, and then recounts the investigative process applied to get an answer to those questions. Most of the articles deal with inaccessible and obscure markets, for instance smuggled cannabis, private doctors’ incomes or drug dealing on the darknet.

Table 5: “Process” structure

Structure	Example
Contextualization	“Illegal markets on the Darknet have exploded in the last five years (...). Today, Dream Market lists 118,000 products: stolen credit cards, fake money, hacking software, fake Gucci sweaters, yellow ecstasy pills stamped with Mickey's face, and even an e-book entitled ‘The Secrets of Mental Superiority’ sold for 0.000307 bitcoin, the equivalent of 2 francs.”
Question	“The fact that hard drugs are just a click away raises a series of questions: How much are these sales sites used in Switzerland? Who is buying, who is selling? (...).”
Step 1 of research process	“To understand, we interviewed users, dealers, investigators, and scientists in Switzerland.”
Question	“At this point, one question remains: are these offers real?”
Step 2 of research process	“The answer is in three white envelopes on our desk. Our addresses were printed on self-adhesive labels. (...) Forty-eight hours earlier, we had put three substances from three different sellers in our virtual basket: a gram of cocaine for 90 francs, an LSD candy for 20 francs, and ten Xanax tablets.”
Step 3 of research process	“For the payment, we used bitcoins, a virtual currency that has become very easy to obtain anonymously. We chose a vending machine installed in a hotel in downtown Lausanne (...).”
Step 4 of research process	“For our test, we opted for the minimum quantities each time, then we entrusted the products received to the Western Switzerland University Center of Legal Medicine, which analyzed them and then destroyed them.”

In the process structure, the investigative process *makes* the story. The journalists describe how they obtained the answer to their questions while also giving precise details about the evidence collected (“our addresses were printed on self-adhesive labels”), thus emphasizing the field-work they carried out. Journalists present themselves (“we”) as actively attempting to provide information on an environment deemed to be closed. Finally, they emphasize their proximity to the hacking scene. This confirms that journalists highlight those methods they deem innovative in order to portray themselves as non-ordinary and especially inventive reporters (Bjerknes, 2020).

#### 4.5.3 Model 3: Adversarial structure

Articles containing a large proportion of “positioning” segments (model 3 in Fig.3) place the journalist’s point of view in opposition with someone else’s. In this structure, the journalist relays a proposition (standpoint) of a person and then immediately responds to it with a (proven)

counterargument. In an article concerning a trip to Abu Dhabi for instance, a politician asserts that the trip was “private”, while the journalist argues that it “has taken an official turn” (Table 6).

Table 6: “Adversarial” structure

Structure	Example
Introduction	X traveled in 2015 to Abu Dhabi with his wife, his children, his chief of staff, and a Geneva entrepreneur active.
X proposition	“For him, it was a ‘private’ trip, announced as such beforehand to the President of the Geneva Council of State.”
Evidence to the contrary 1	[However] On this occasion, the politician joined... the pleasant with the useful. According to our information, the Genevan exchanges with the crown prince (...) Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyane, nicknamed MBZ.
X answer	“I met him in the hotel lobby. (...) We had a five-minute conversation. (...)”, says X.”
Evidence to the contrary 2	“This accidental meeting surprises many, including a specialist in the Arab world: (...)”
Evidence to the contrary 3	X also met other officials. “The meeting has a public dimension: the government’s official news agency, WAM, reported it on its website on November 28, 2015, with a photo.”
X answer	“This trip was not the result of an official invitation and the unplanned visit to a video surveillance center, even reported by the local press agency, was not a purpose in itself conferring a diplomatic dimension to the trip”, replies X.
Evidence to the contrary 4	According to a specialist of Gulf monarchies, “it is difficult to initiate a discussion with senior political leaders without prior organization.”

In this adversarial structure, the confrontation between the journalist’s propositions and the alleged wrongdoer’s positions shapes the entire text; in fact, the struggle *makes* the story. The example shows how a discursive mechanism observable at the level of a macro-proposition can also shape the whole structure of the text in the same way and with the same effect (performing adversity).

#### 4.5.4 Model 4: Outcomes structure

The “outcomes” structure corresponds to Model 4, in which the “outcome” node prevails. It consists of a series of either specific allegations or scoops and evidence backing up each one. The article starts with a summary of the allegations/scoops and then lists each one followed by a testimony or other piece of evidence (see Table 7).

Table 7: “Outcome” structure

Structure	Example (allegation)	Example (revelation)
Summary	“The atmosphere at the OCE is catastrophic, according to numerous testimonies.”	SRC agents exchanged information with a wealthy Saudi about two Qataris accused of supporting terrorism.
Allegation 1 / revelation 1	Catastrophic atmosphere affects the approximately 12,000 people registered as unemployed. “Four years ago, we could give them between forty-five minutes and an hour of interview time. Today, it's anywhere from ten minutes to half an hour, at the most (...)”	The Swiss Federal Intelligence Service has examined “the Swiss connections of Islamists based in Qatar and accused of supporting Al-Qaeda”
Evidence 1	Testimony (officer)	“Well-informed” sources and “several interlocutors who had close ties to the department.”
Allegation / Revelation 2	The state no longer pays for trainings courses, replaced by standard coaching. “ (...) we keep people busy. The main interest of these coaching periods (...) is to get people out of the unemployment statistics.”	X “met several times with SRC agents during secret meetings”
Evidence 2	Testimonies (unemployed workers + officers)	“People close to the case”
Allegation / Revelation 3	Even though it is not stated so in the law, unemployed workers have to do 10 job searches per month. “Otherwise, beware of the legal department and its penalties that fall like a guillotine”.	Three people connected to Switzerland might be “supporters of terrorism”
Evidence 3	Testimonies (unemployed worker and officer)	List of alleged terrorism supporters, public register
Revelation/ Allegation 4	“Reception desks are under threat (...). ‘They are now asked to register directly through the JobIn platform’, says one recruiter. However, that often doesn't work...’”.	“The Muslim Brotherhood resurfaces in Ticino” [canton of Switzerland]
Evidence 4	Testimonies (Officers)	Companies register, phone numbers

This structure is typically observable in articles that relay the grievances of certain groups of people, or in “behind-the-scenes” stories, which focus on normally inaccessible bargaining procedures, negotiations or struggles, whether political or financial. They follow the traditional “hard news” structure, which “usually involves the recycling of information at different stages of the story, often adding more detail with each mention” (Bednarek & Caple, 2012, p. 98).

## References

- Adam, J.-M. (1992). *Les textes. Types et prototypes* [Textes, types, and prototypes]. Paris: Nathan.
- Bednarek, M., & Caple, H. (2012). *News Discourse*. London: Continuum.
- Bjerknes, F. (2020). Inventive Factfinders. *Journalism Practice*, 16(6), 1037–1056.
- De Burgh, H. (2008). *Investigative journalism* (2nd ed.). London, UK: Routledge.
- Ekström, M. (2002). Epistemologies of TV journalism. *Journalism*, 3(3), 259–282.
- Mouriquand, J. (2015). *L'écriture journalistique* [Journalistic writing] (5th ed.). Presses universitaires de France.
- Rocci, A. (2021). Diagramming counterarguments: At the interface between discourse structure and argumentation structure. In R. Boogaart, H. Jansen, & M. van Leeuwen (Eds.), *The language of argumentation* (Vol. 36, pp. 143–166). Cham, Switzerland: Springer.
- Usher, N. (2018). Breaking news production processes in US metropolitan newspapers. *Journalism*, 19(1), 21–36.
- van Dijk, T. A. van. (1988). *News as discourse*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- White, P. R. R. (2000). Media Objectivity and the Rhetoric of News Story Structure. In E. Ventola (Ed.), *Discourse and community* (pp. 379–397). Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.

## Reference list of newspapers articles cited

- Arboit, S. (2018, April 24). Le mélange des genres du municipal Girardin [Councillor Girardin's mix of genres.]. *24 Heures*, 3.
- Bailat, L., & Parvex, M. (2018, June 3). À Berne, le parti des Verts est le plus friand en lobbyistes [In Berne, the Green Party is the richest in lobbyists]. *Le Matin Dimanche*, 4.
- Bernet, C. (2018a, January 9). Le courant bleu des SIG n'est pas si pur qu'on le dit [The blue

- current of GIS is not as clean as it is said]. *La Tribune de Genève*, 3.
- Bernet, C. (2018b, February 2). Wilsdorf, plus qu'un mécène, une vraie machine à cash [Wilsdorf, more than a patron, a real cash machine]. *La Tribune de Genève*, 6-7.
- Bernet, C., & Roselli, S. (2018, May 25). Un député flaire la piste de l'immobilier à Abu Dhabi [A deputy smells Abu Dhabi real estate trail]. *La Tribune de Genève*, 4.
- Besson, S. (2021, April 13). La grogne monte au sein des services secrets [Growing discontent in the secret services]. *Le Temps*, 7.
- Boeglin, P. (2018, May 31). Ça barde au syndicat Unia [There's trouble at the Unia trade union]. *Arcinfo*, 27.
- Boss, C., & Jeannet, J. (2018, January 7). Les abus sexuels dénoncés au sein de l'Église touchent aussi les adultes [The sexual abuses reported within the Church also affect adults]. *Le Matin Dimanche*, 3.
- Burnier, P. (2018, April 9). Les germes inquiétants d'une justice à deux vitesses [The worrying beginnings of two-tier justice]. *24 Heures*, 3.
- Citroni, F. (2018, February 18). Pendant neuf ans, Pascal Broulis n'a pas payé d'impôt communal à Lausanne [For nine years, Pascal Broulis did not pay municipal taxes in Lausanne]. *Le Matin Dimanche*, 5.
- Dana, D. (2018, February 21). Héritage Halliday. Un "Dallas à la française" [Halliday legacy. A "French Dallas"]. *L'Illustré*, 26-31.
- Giroud, F., & Signorell, M. (2018, May 19). Y a-t-il des conflits d'intérêts à la Loterie Romande? [Are there any conflicts of interest at the Loterie Romande?], *24 heures*, 2-3.
- Grosjean, A. (2018, May 11). Dettes et soupçons de vol au parc des Bastions [Debts and suspected theft at the Parc des Bastions]. *La Tribune de Genève*, 3.
- Haederli, A., & Boss, C. (2018, April 1). Près de 300 établissements médico-sociaux ont réduit leur personnel soignant qualifié [Nearly 300 nursing homes have reduced their qualified nursing staff]. *Le Matin Dimanche*, 2-3.

- Haederli, A., Brönnimann, C., & Zihlmann, O. (2018, June 21). Des avocats jonglent encore avec des sociétés offshore [Lawyers still juggle with offshore companies]. *La Tribune de Genève*, 20.
- Haederli, A., & Philippin, Y. (2021, June 1). Renault, Peugeot et Citroën ont fait gonfler la facture [Renault, Peugeot, and Citroën have inflated the bill]. *24 Heures*, 3.
- Jeannet, J. (2018, April 8). Des avatars d'Uber ont exploité une centaine de chauffeurs [Uber avatars exploited a hundred drivers]. *Le Matin Dimanche*, 2–3.
- Knellwolf, T., Odehnal, B., & Plattner, T. (2018, September 23). Le contre-espionnage suisse se focalise sur les Russes [Swiss counter-espionage focuses on Russians]. *Le Matin Dimanche*, 2.
- Krafft, C. (2018, February 18). Le mari de Nadia Karmous réseaute avec zèle en Suisse romande [Nadia Karmous' husband zealously cultivates a network in French-speaking Switzerland]. *Le Matin Dimanche*, 16.
- Krafft, C., & Le Bec, E. (2018, August 31). QoQa s'est lancée deux fois dans les ventes de billets pour l'apesanteur [QoQa has twice started selling tickets for zero gravity]. *24 Heures*, 5.
- Odehnal, B., Knellwolf, T., & Parvex, M. (2018, February 8). À Londres, Abramovitch est déclaré résident suisse [Abramovich declared Swiss resident in London]. *24 Heures*, 17.
- Parvex, M. (2018, January 15). Comment des médicaments périmés ont été vendus aux hôpitaux suisses [How expired drugs were sold to Swiss hospitals]. *Le Matin Dimanche*, 15.
- Parvex, M., Knellwolf, T., & Zihlmann, O. (2018, February 4). Le propriétaire du FC Chelsea voulait s'installer à Verbier [FC Chelsea owner wanted to move to Verbier]. *Le Matin Dimanche*, 2–3.
- Parvex, M., Knellwolf, T., Zihlmann, O., & Odehnal, B. (2018, September 25). Abramovich

est “un danger pour la sécurité publique” [Abramovich is “a danger to public safety”, police say], selon la police. *24 Heures*, 16.

Roselli, S. (2018, September 17). Instruction ouverte contre Tariq Ramadan [Investigation against Tariq Ramadan opened]. *La Tribune de Genève*, 3.