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the Global Investigative Journalism Conference

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**Investigative Journalism
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I. Foreword

The Investigative Journalism Education Consortium is pleased to present this collection of research papers submitted for the academic track at the Global Investigative Journalism Conference 2019 in Hamburg.

The collection includes 25 papers, 17 of which were presented at the conference, and which were selected from a pool of nearly 70 submitted abstracts. You can find additional material for some of these presentations at the conference's Tipsheet Page at gijc2019.org/tipsheets

From teaching UK citizens investigative skills to Bangladesh's digital security act, the research papers that were accepted covered various challenges and trends in investigative and data journalism across the globe.

In data journalism studies, the authors looked at the latest developments in data and reporting such as big data, spatial data and mapping visualizations. When it came to teaching journalism, authors included cross-border journalism education, investigative training to citizens and the opportunities and challenges of running student-led newsrooms.

Many papers reflected the broad geographical representation at the conference and examined specific challenges to investigative reporting in regions as diverse as Bangladesh, Nigeria, Pakistan, Mexico and India.

Readers will find many tips and tools for professors, trainers, investigative reporters and data journalists as well as advice for creating sustainable newsrooms. This mirrors the overall approach of the Global Investigative Journalism Conferences, which provides a vibrant venue for journalists to come together to share skills and training and plan collaborative projects.

The Investigative Journalism Education Consortium is a site where journalism educators and trainers can share their curriculum, syllabi, teaching methods and knowledge throughout the year. You can find other research papers on the site at ijec.org/research. The Consortium would like to thank all the authors who submitted papers and abstracts, the Global Investigative Journalism Network, Interlink Academy, Netzwerk Recherche, and Amy Schmitz Weiss, Anton Harber and Bruce Shapiro who joined Consortium coordinator Brant Houston in reviewing the paper submissions.

By Jelter Meers, Associate Editor, Investigative Journalism Education Consortium

II. Data Journalism

How data journalism can help Indian investigative journalists regain lost ground

By Ashwin Ahmad

Abstract

This paper will look at the current state of investigative journalism in India, the pressure that media organisations and journalists are under, the rise of ‘fake news’ through social media and how data journalism is attempting to redress this balance.

The first area I will look at is the rise of websites who highlight and debunk fake news and photoshopped images of political leaders. I will then focus on how media organisations are slowly looking to data-driven firms to educate them on how to help push data-driven stories. Prominent among them is Syed Nazakat, an investigative journalist and founder of DataLEADS in India which helps investigative journalists use data to present important stories in an easy manner for the mobile Indian consumer.

By combatting fake images through highlighting them, introducing the Google News Initiative as DataLEADS has done in media newsrooms across the country, investigative Indian journalism can start to recover lost ground. This is essential in a country with a mushrooming number of channels. Government figures show there were 350 TV companies and 901 TV channels on March 31, 2019. (<https://mib.gov.in/te/satellite-tv-channels>)

This paper will finally contrast the ‘India story’ with models followed in the western world and see what one can learn from the other. On the Indian side, good data journalism is necessary given the growing number of smartphone users in the country who are more likely to respond to data-driven stories. This is where the developed world’s experience with data journalism is crucial. On the world’s side, understanding India’s challenges of providing information to people who do not speak the same language, who have little to no formal education, but have access to social media through smartphones will help develop better data journalism. Through such learnings, this paper submits, investigative stories across countries will be more easily shared thus empowering the investigative journalist.

The history of Indian journalism can be traced back to the 1700s where the first newspaper the *Hicky's Bengal Gazette* where a four-page newspaper was brought out in the country by an English gentleman by then name of James Hickey in 1760. (Otis A (2018) 'Hicky's Bengal Gazette; The Untold Story of India's First Newspaper.' Retrieved from <https://www.hindustantimes.com/books/excerpt-hicky-s-bengal-gazette-the-untold-story-of-india-s-first-newspaper-by-andrew-otis/story-vS9m7V0mrUIUjBCHwsWExL.html>). Ever since then the country has had a long and proud history of journalism which was dominated in the post-Independence era by print, followed by private news channels – both from India and abroad – since the 1990s and most recently with the advent of news portals since the 2000s. This paper will focus on Indian journalism since the 1990s and argue that the advent of economic liberalisation reforms that the country undertook in 1991, along with the changing role of news and news gathering, has had profound consequences for Indian journalism, especially Indian investigative journalism. It will then turn to the growing role that new media is playing in journalism in the country today and argue that data journalism – still a relatively nascent concept in the country – can play an important role in resolving the crises that Indian journalism is currently contending with.

Challenges to investigative journalism

There is no denying that Indian journalism is currently going through a period of crisis. In its annual report, the international organisation Reporters Without Borders ranked India 140 out of 180 nations in their World Press Freedom index when it came to press freedom. (2019) 'India: Attacked Online and Physically: Reporters Without Borders.' Retrieved from (<https://rsf.org/en/india>). Commenting on the scenario in the country for investigative journalists in the country today, the international body had this to say. 'Violence against journalists – including police violence, attacks by Maoist fighters and reprisals by criminal groups or corrupt politicians – is one of the most striking characteristics of the current state of press freedom in India.' (ibid). It added that most worryingly that those journalists who were most vulnerable to attack were those working in non-English media outlets in rural India. Given that the majority of India's concerns revolve around these areas, the bid to weaken the fourth estate here is a particularly worrying trend.

While many attribute the growing number of attacks on the fourth estate to the growing intolerance of the state, others feel that other more historical factors have undermined the role of investigative journalism. Josy Joseph one of India's best known investigative journalists, who is currently battling a Rs 1,000 crore (US \$141,200,000) defamation case (he had contended in his latest book *A Feast Of Vultures* that Goyal had taken money from the underworld to fund his airline – Jet Airways) levied upon him by Indian industrialist Naresh Goyal believes that the onset of the 1990s where economic liberalisation reforms in the country took off was when the fourth estate effectively began to censor itself.

In an interview with this author Joseph points out that prior to the 1990s the newspaper industry – there were few television channels then – relied on a mass readership base to gain revenue which meant that major newspapers and magazines competed with each other to provide breaking news. Joseph believes that the 1990s changed all that. (Ahmad A. personal communication July 8, 2019). 'The boom created by liberalisation ensured that advertising

rather than subscription became the most important revenue component of journalism. Who is invested in the advertiser? It is primarily the government of India... So today we have a scenario where India's largest English language newspaper (*Times of India*) declares that it is not a newspaper but an advertising company designed to connect consumers and brands together. This has resulted in a scenario where newspapers now have no incentive to produce good quality journalism.' (ibid.)

Rise of 'crusading' journalism?

While this may or may not be true there is no denying that Indian journalism has undergone drastic changes which started from the late 1990s when private TV channels began to enter the news business. Noted Indian defence journalist Nitin Gokhale who was on the frontline where the Kargil war took place between India and Pakistan in 1999 believes that a new kind of what he calls 'crusading journalism' began to emerge in this era. In an interview with this author, he said, 'Earlier we had a scenario where investigative journalism and journalists were given the space and time to develop sources and collect documents. This resulted in what was possibly 'India's Watergate'...the Antulay Papers Cement Scandal*. However, since the advent of television a number of journalists began to indulge in what I call in 'crusading journalism' where relying on India's weak libel and defamation laws they got away with sloppy investigative work while relied on more hectoring, more opinion and less fact.' (Ahmad A., personal communication July 11, 2019).

Gokhale said that this resulted in what became known as the rise of the 'sting', whereby a journalist takes a hidden camera and records supposedly guilty Indian officials who were part of a corrupt Indian system. 'The sting operation is in my view – pure entrapment. Take the *Tehelka* sting operations as a case in point. (In 2001, an Indian news magazine called *Tehelka* carried out a series on sting operations on Indian defence officials. *Tehelka* reporters who posed as middlemen showed through a hidden camera that defence officials and politicians were willing money to take in return for getting defence contracts passed). All these people proved that was some people were willing to take money because of something they said on camera. This is not to my mind, investigative journalism. If these people had been able to show with documents that government specifications had specifically been changed to suit one company over another that would have been a real investigative report. But that was not the case' (ibid).

*Known by journalists as 'India's Watergate' the series of investigative reports carried out by the *Indian Express* exposed then Maharashtra chief minister A.R. Antulay in 1982 of forcing Mumbai's builders to donate to causes supported by the government. In return, the builders received more cement than the quota that was supposed to be allocated to them by the government. Antulay was forced to resign after the media reports.

Concentration of media ownership

The rise of the sting operation in India found favour with India's television industry where the demand for instant news and dramatic visuals ensured that while the traditional investigative journalist did not die away his or her role was certainly under threat. This factor, along with a growing rise in the number of politicians and industrialists owning large parts of Indian news media, ensured that stories that went not just against the Indian state but against the interests of Indian industrialists were becoming more and more difficult to publish. A report by the investigative news magazine *Caravan* highlighted the problem when it stated, 'Filings with the registrar of companies in the ministry of corporate affairs have revealed that five Indian news media companies—*NDTV*, *News Nation*, *India TV*, *News24* and *Network18*—are either indebted to Mukesh Ambani (India's richest man) and the owner of Reliance Industries, or to Mahendra Nahata, an industrialist and associate of Ambani's, who is also on the board of Reliance's new telecom venture, Reliance Jio... The state of affairs also raises questions about monopolistic practices that may be in conflict with the competition laws of India.' (Kaushik K. (2016) 'The Big Five: The Media Companies That the Modi Government Must Scrutinise To Fulfill Its Promise Of Ending Crony Capitalism.' Retrieved from <https://caravanmagazine.in/vantage/the-big-five-the-media-companies-that-the-modi-government-must-scrutinise-to-fulfill-its-promise-of-ending-crony-capitalism>).

The concerns echoed by *Caravan* regarding the concentration and control of the media by the rich and powerful in India have also been echoed by studies carried out by international organisations. A joint study entitled 'Media Ownership Monitor' (MOM), a research project carried out in India by Reporters Without Borders (RSF) and the Delhi-based digital media company DataLEADS in 2019 found that 'fragmented media laws' and the 'concentration of media ownership' in the hands of the state had led to a scenario where senior politicians or relatives of politicians and leading industrialists controlled large sections of the media. (See Table 1). (Source: Ministry of Corporate Affairs and the Indian Parliament as cited in Reporters Without Borders & DataLEADS (2019) 'Media and Political Affiliation in India: Media Monitor India.' Retrieved from <http://india.mom-rsf.org/en/findings/politicalaffiliations/>).

This concentration of ownership in the media, especially in the field of radio, is alarming. Radio is especially important in India where high illiteracy and poverty levels ensure that it is often the only news medium of choice in the country. According to the 'Media Ownership Monitor' report, an estimated 99 per cent of India's population have access to radio and the government run *All India Radio* (AIR) owns most of the radio space. (Reporters Without Borders & DataLEADS (2019) 'Radio News Monopoly.' Retrieved from <http://india.mom-rsf.org/en/findings/radionewsmonopoly/>) 'AIR reaches 92 per cent of the country's area and 99.19 per cent of the total population. It broadcasts in 23 languages and 179 dialects making it one of the 'largest broadcasting organisations in the world...' (Reporters Without Borders & DataLEADS (2019) 'Radio News Monopoly – A Strong Tool under Strong Control – Radio Reaches Most Indians.' Retrieved from <http://india.mom-rsf.org/en/findings/radionewsmonopoly/>). What is a cause for concern here is that so far neither has the government allowed private FM stations to report news, in fact they can only take news

unedited from *AIR*, ensuring that so far there is no counter to the government's narrative in this space so far.

Rise of new media

Such challenges, accompanied by a shrinking of demand of traditional media outlets – in both print and television – has firmly put the focus on new media in India. Commenting on the rise in how websites and social media were shaping public opinion, a report by *Reuters* on access on the Indian digital news market said. 'While it took 15 years from 1995 to 2010 before 100 million Indians (8% of the population) had internet access, growth has greatly accelerated since, surpassing an estimated 500 million users by June 2018, more than 30% of the population, driven primarily by tremendous growth in mobile internet access.' (Aneez Z, Neyazi T.A., Kalogeropoulos A & Nielsen R.K. (2019) 'Digital India – The Move To Digital Media.' Retrieved from https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2019-03/India_DNR_FINAL.pdf).

There are two questions to be asked here – how do Indians consume their news and how big a part has social media played in the consumption of news? According to the report which conducted a survey of online news respondents across the country, India's consumption of online news has primarily been through the smartphone with 68 per cent of Indians preferring smartphone news access as opposed to just 17 per cent and 3 per cent of them respectively preferring to use desktops and tablets which makes India a much more mobile friendly market than other developing markets such as Brazil and Turkey (see Table 2). (Source: Aneez Z, Neyazi T.A., Kalogeropoulos A, and Nielsen R.K. (2019). 'Main Device Used For News Selected Markets' Retrieved from https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2019-03/India_DNR_FINAL.pdf)

The second question regarding the consumption of news is more interesting as the report found that more Indians were more likely to rely on other avenues to collect news than news sites. Just 18 per cent of them (Indians) went directly to news websites or apps as compared to 26 per cent of them in the US and 35 per cent in Brazil...Search (32 per cent) and various kinds of social media (24 per cent) were particularly important to gathering news (ibid. pp. 10-11) Coming to social media, a quarter of the respondents stated that it was their main source of online news with Facebook and WhatsApp proved to be the most common avenues of disseminating news with 52 per cent of respondents saying they get news from these modules (see Table 3). (Source: Aneez Z, Neyazi T.A., Kalogeropoulos A, and Nielsen R.K. (2019). 'Proportion That Say Each Is Their Main Gateway To News – India.' Retrieved from https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2019-03/India_DNR_FINAL.pdf).

These findings need to be coupled with the fact that there seems to be a low level of trust in the Indian media with just 36 per cent of them saying they 'trust the news in general' as compared to 45 per cent of them saying they 'trust the news they search' and 39 per cent of them trust the 'news they use' (ibid. pp. 17-18). This suggests that Indians could be veering away from traditional news mediums to news that they personally believe in which could be a particularly worrying trend as the internet boom in the country is currently being fuelled by rural India where income and literacy levels are often lower than in urban parts of India.

A recent study contends that ‘87 per cent of the total user base, or 493 million Indians, are defined as regular users, having accessed the internet in the last 30 days. Of this, 293 million active internet users reside in urban India, while there are 200 million active users in rural India.’ It also contends that ‘digital adoption’ in the country today is being propelled by rural India with 35 per cent growth in internet users over the past year, suggesting that current estimated users from here are likely to reach 291 million by end 2019. (Mathur N. (2019) ‘India’s Internet Base Crosses 500 Million Mark, Driven By Rural India.’ Retrieved from <https://www.livemint.com/industry/telecom/internet-users-exceed-500-million-rural-india-driving-growth-report-1552300847307.html>)

Bypassing the media – India and the US

The easy access to the internet, coupled with large scale illiteracy amongst much of the rural populace in the country, ensures an increasing dependence and belief in the content of forwards, posts and Tweets from social media platforms which portends worrying signs for India and Indian journalism. Though India does not have the same concerns that the western world does regarding issues of privacy (the Cambridge Analytica scandal is not likely to cause such a furore here) for the simple reason that such data regarding castes, communities, and sub-castes of each major state is common knowledge here; there are other common concerns that both Indian and western journalists have to address – the major ones being the increased prevalence of fake news and the wilful and increased bypassing of traditional media by the state.

In the US, President Donald Trump, through his constant tweeting of factually incorrect statements and verbal attacks against journalists, has done his best to undermine the interrogative role of the media. In India though the scenario is different, suggestions that Prime Minister Narendra Modi may be trying to do something similar may have some merit to them. In his first five-year term, the prime minister did not address any press conference – till date he has not – and on the last day of campaigning for the 2019 election when he did attend on May 17, all questions were fielded by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Amit Shah. The prime minister sat throughout the press conference and made a speech but he refused to answer any questions suggesting that he felt a lack of accountability to the media. (Joshi P. (2019) ‘Modi holds first press meet as PM; says his return to power is a given.’ Retrieved from <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/national/modi-holds-first-press-meet-as-pm-says-his-return-to-power-is-a-given/article27165836.ece>)

The other factor to note is that like Trump, the Indian ruling party known as the BJP also seems to be looking to create its own narrative by issuing statements that are not just factually incorrect but ridiculous. In 2014, *The Guardian* reported that Prime Minister Modi threw his weight behind Hindu nationalists who claim that ‘many discoveries in modern science and technology were known to the people of ancient India.’ (Rahman M. (2014) ‘Indian prime minister claims genetic science existed in ancient times.’ Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/oct/28/indian-prime-minister-genetic-science-existed-ancient-times>). Speaking to a gathering of doctors and medical professionals he said, ‘We all read about Karna in the Mahabharata (a Hindu epic). If we think a little more, we realise that the Mahabharata says Karna was not born from his mother’s womb. This means that

genetic science was present at that time. That is why Karna could be born outside his mother's womb' (ibid). Such statements, reiterated from time to time, suggests that the ruling party believes it can achieve the same level of political success as Trump's 'Mexican Wall' statements achieved for him.

Come to the issue of fake news and the situation becomes a little more problematic. Unlike President Trump's individual 'naming and shaming' of journalists as 'fake news', the ruling party's role has been more subtle. While Modi has not named any journalist, phrases like 'presstitute' to describe the media while he was campaigning to be prime minister for the 2014 election seems to indicate his feelings towards the press in India. (Gopalakrishnan R. (2018) 'Indian journalists say they are intimidated, ostracised if they criticise Modi and the BJP.' Retrieved from <https://in.reuters.com/article/india-politics-media-analysis/indian-journalists-say-they-are-intimidated-ostracised-if-they-criticise-modi-and-the-bjp-idINKBN1HY0AQ>).

To be fair, it is not just the prime minister or the BJP alone. In fact, the bad language and disparagement of the media by all political parties caused the Editors Guild, an association of editorial leaders in Indian media, to issue an unusually strong statement on January 3, 2019. 'We have seen our political class use this for some time now. In the recent past, top BJP leaders as well as those of AAP have used unambiguously abusive expressions such as 'presstitute', news-traders, 'bazaar' (saleable commodities) or 'dalals' (pimps) for journalists,' the Guild said. (2019) 'Editors Guild calls out Rahul Gandhi over Modi interview, says attacking journalists a favourite tactic.' Retrieved from <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/editors-guild-rahul-gandhi-smita-prakash-pliable-modi-interview-1423056-2019-01-03>). The statement came after then Congress president Rahul Gandhi had attacked a senior journalist Smita Prakash, who had just conducted an interview with the prime minister, as a 'pliable journalist' (ibid).

This hostility towards the domestic media is coupled with the resentment the ruling party feels towards the international media for its questioning of the Prime Minister's handling of the Balakot air strike. On February 26 this year, the Indian government claimed that it launched an air strike in Balakot in Pakistan hitting a training camp run by the Pakistani-based Kashmiri militant group – the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and killing several militants there. The attack, the government said, was in retaliation to a suicide attack the JeM had carried out against Indian security forces in Kashmir where 42 men had been killed. The government's version was contested by the international media who stated the air raids had 'struck a farmer's wheat field in a mostly uninhabited forest.' (Hashim A. (2019) 'At raid site, no casualties and a mysterious school.' Retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/02/indian-air-raid-site-casualties-mysterious-madrassa-190227183058957.html>).

Such reporting has not been appreciated by the government. In an interview with this author, Amit Malviya, the National Convenor of BJP's IT cell said. 'Social media has questioned the credibility of media houses and, on several occasions, the mainstream media has been caught out for their biases and misreporting. *The Economist* wrote about Rahul Gandhi – as a PM candidate – and Mr Modi won. The *Washington Post*, they write about things which are fed in by the Indian English language media. Since Mr Modi won in both 2014 and 2019, one clearly

knows that they are not reporting what they are seeing. They are reporting what they want you to see.’ (Ahmad A., personal communication, August 1, 2019).

The trolling threat

The ‘bypassing’ of the fourth estate is but one concern that Indian media has to deal with today. Another emerging trend is that of online threats to journalists especially through the medium of Twitter. The best known case internationally is that of Rana Ayyub. In May 2018, UN human rights experts called for the government of India to intervene and protect Ayyub as a hate campaign propelled by fringe right-wing groups on Twitter broke out against her shortly after her book *Gujarat Files: Anatomy Of a Cover Up* detailing her investigation into the Gujarat riots in 2002 was published. The experts cited a Tweet quoting her as saying that ‘she supported child molesters and rapists’ (Ayyub has stated that the Tweet was false) along with others that attacked her Muslim faith and stated that she ‘deserved to be gang-raped and murdered.’ (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (2018) ‘UN experts call on India to protect journalist Rana Ayyub from online hate campaign.’ Retrieved from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23126&LangID=E>) ‘We call on India to urgently take steps to protect Rana Ayyub and to ensure the threats against her are promptly and thoroughly investigated. The Government has an obligation to provide effective protection to those who receive death threats and to protect individuals from foreseeable threats to life or bodily integrity,’ the UN experts said (ibid).

Rana Ayyub’s case is not the only one. The murder of prominent journalist such as Gauri Lankesh, editor of the Kannada weekly *Gauri Lankesh Patrike* in Bengaluru (Bangalore) in 2017 and threats to Professor Audrey Truschke, assistant professor of South Asian history at Rutgers University in Newark, following the publication of her book on the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, has prompted accusations amongst some journalists and academics both in India and abroad that right wing groups are hijacking discourse, suppressing dissent and thus encouraging self-censorship.. Truschke certainly seems to think this is the case. In an interview with the Indian news portal *The Wire* she stated that she had censored her books for the Indian market.

‘...I have censored both of my books in Indian editions. In both of them, the Indian editions are slightly different than the worldwide editions. And I know a lot of academics who choose their research projects differently, we openly advise students to do this actually in the United States, right? There are certain topics that it is just not worth it to work on, because you won’t get a visa to come to India, if you have family here, there could be problems. You know, you have to make these decisions in the real world with your eyes wide open.’ (Sen J. (2018) ‘Interview | List of Things We Can Talk About Is Shrinking Every Day: Audrey Truschke.’ Retrieved from <https://thewire.in/history/audrey-truschke-indian-history-aurangzeb-interview>

While it is certainly true that there is no evidence to directly link the ruling party with these fringe right-wing elements, many are worried over what they see as the government’s *laissez faire* attitude towards such incidents. In Lankesh’s case, much was made of the fact that the

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's official Twitter account followed the Twitter accounts of people stating that she had to die. (Gettleman J (2017) 'India's Modi Criticized for Following Twitter Feed Tied to Nasty Post.' Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/08/world/asia/india-modi-twitter.html>). The government responded with a Tweet b Malviya from the BJP's official Twitter handle stating that such allegations were 'mischievous' and 'contorted.' (@BJP4India (Sept. 7, 2017) 'The controversy over PM following people on Twitter is mischievous and contorted: Shri @malviyamid, National Head - Information & Technology.' (Twitter Post) Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/BJP4India/status/905783829029306368>). Malviya added in an official statement issued by the government, which was attached in the Tweet that the 'PM following someone is not a character certificate of a person and is not in any way a guarantee of how a person would conduct himself' (ibid).

Speaking later about the threat about the threat of right-wing extremism, Malviya said frankly in an interview to this writer. 'Radical left wing groups don't just troll, they also kill people. What else are the Naxals? There are people on both sides on the fence both are equally vicious and perhaps the leftists are more vicious than the right. So it is not just a right wing phenomenon. Number two, we have a policy document of the behaviour that is expected of our cadres. There are a lot of people who may relate with us in terms of ideology but it is not as if they do or say anything after getting instructions from us...everyone has gone to a different school they express themselves differently. Perhaps they use stronger words.' (Ahmad A., personal communication, August 1, 2019).

A question of credibility

This rise of a state which is both 'hostile' and now also has the tools to 'bypass' much of the conventional media through social media platforms, has led to much soul searching in newsrooms both in India and in the west. Clearly, the rise of an autocratic government which feels it does not owe the public answers shows that good investigative journalism is now more important than ever. But in an age of social media what form should it take? How can it contend with Facebook and WhatsApp which have indirectly become news aggregators in India? How does it contend with accusations of bias and being called fake-driven news? Does journalism need to go beyond its traditional ambit of relating stories and become more 'clickable' and 'likeable'? Does its form – in a smartphone driven world – need to change to better engage readers?

There are no easy answers to these questions and indeed some veterans in the industry wonder if there are any answers at all. Allan Rusbridger, former editor-in-chief of the Guardian, aptly sums up the challenge when he writes in his book *Breaking News: The Remaking of Journalism and Why it Matters Now*, 'We are, for the first time in modern history, facing the prospect of how societies would exist without reliable news.' (Rusbridger A., 2018 as cited in Lepore J (2019) 'Does journalism have a future?' Retrieved from <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/01/28/does-journalism-have-a-future>)

Despite the challenges, there are some steps that Indian journalists and newsrooms can take to rebuild their reputation. One of them is to bring in digital knowledge and skills to improve content and that could involve teaming up with external partners. A good beginning for Indian news organisations in this regard could be a stronger partnership with mediums such as Facebook, WhatsApp and Google etc. Google has recently launched the ‘Google News Initiative’ in India which had training sessions in 30 cities ahead of the national elections. According to Irene Jay Liu, Google News Lab Lead, Asia-Pacific, ‘Google has trained more than 13,000 journalists in India, across over 200 newsrooms and in 40 cities...and it plans to target 10,000 journalists in 2019.’ (2019) ‘Google to host training sessions in 30 Indian cities on online verification, fact-checking.’ Retrieved from <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/internet/google-to-host-training-sessions-in-30-indian-cities-on-online-verification-fact-checking/articleshow/68101354.cms?from=mdr>) Such an endeavour could perhaps encourage Indian web journalists to not only understand the metrics by which Google operates but also discourage them from ‘clickbait journalism’ which many web portals and aggregators of even reputed organisations are resorting to at the moment.

The other thing the Indian media may need to pay closer attention to is fact checking. In this regard, a number of indigenised fact checking websites have emerged which could work in close partnership with newsrooms to ensure that error-free content is coming out at breaking news speed. This is where Indian newsrooms could look to understand, adopt and adapt some of the tools that the West is already using.

In an interview with this writer, Pratik Sinha, co-founder of Alt News, an online India-based fact checking news site explains the importance of such tools. ‘There are many techniques that newsrooms across the world are adopting to ensure factual news. For instance, if there is a video of a bomb blast somewhere in the world you can use Twitter to pinpoint its geo-location to see what people there are saying to verify its authenticity. Indian newsrooms should also become more aware of external fact-checking agencies. For instance, in the US journalists rely on websites such as politifact.com which show up Trump’s statement and tells you whether they are true or false.’ (Ahmad A., personal communication, August 2, 2019).

Could data journalism provide an answer?

But fact checking is just one side of the coin. Keeping in mind that the majority of the Indian audience is smartphone-driven, Indian web news organisations need to consider looking at what is slowly becoming an established field of journalism in the west – data journalism. Given the varying levels of literacy and the large number of languages in the country, data journalism showcasing issues of national relevance may be a useful intervention to restore the media’s credibility and provide stories in a manner that can be easily understood. For instance, a story where one can click on a picture of an Indian parliamentarian and then see his or her attendance in Parliament, the promises he or she has made, the questions he or she has raised in Parliament etc. can be a useful data story that will appeal to everyone across the country. It will also allow the Indian media to fulfil its basic function which is to cross-question through facts and make politicians accountable. More such stories like this may help ensure that politicians become more responsible in their statements and could also help combat the current trend of false news, media clips and images being circulated.

Such narratives will not solve all of the problems troubling Indian journalism today but as Sinha points out in an interview with this author the need to take action is imperative as he believes that false narratives have been multiplying throughout India especially in the run-up to and during the recent 2019 elections. ‘We noticed a number of trends in the run-up to and during the national elections. The first one was the rise of fake videos to promote jingoism. A clip of military jets flying at night and dropping what appears to be bombs was shared widely both by Indians and Pakistanis on social media as evidence of a military strike this year. The video in fact turned out to be a 2014 video demonstration by the Pakistani Air Force for Independence Day celebrations in Islamabad.’ (AFP (2019) ‘Is this footage of Indian and Pakistani fighter jets in Kashmir?’ Retrieved from <https://factcheck.afp.com/no-these-videos-do-not-show-indian-pakistani-warplanes-kashmir>). (Ahmad A., personal communication, August 2, 2019).

‘We also saw the rise of deliberately edited clips of politicians. For instance, a fake clip was circulated of Uttar Pradesh chief minister (Yogi Adityanath) laughing at the Pulwama attacks and on the other side, a clip was widely circulated of the former Congress president Rahul Gandhi where he is heard saying, ‘a mother in Uttar Pradesh gives birth every week and so gives birth to 52 children a year.’ The speech edited out Rahul’s fully reply which alleged corruption in the government’s National Health Mission scheme. Rahul’s full sentence says, ‘We found that government data which showed on paper that the same woman, a mother was giving birth to a child a week, and so gives birth to 52 children a year’ (ibid).

The road ahead

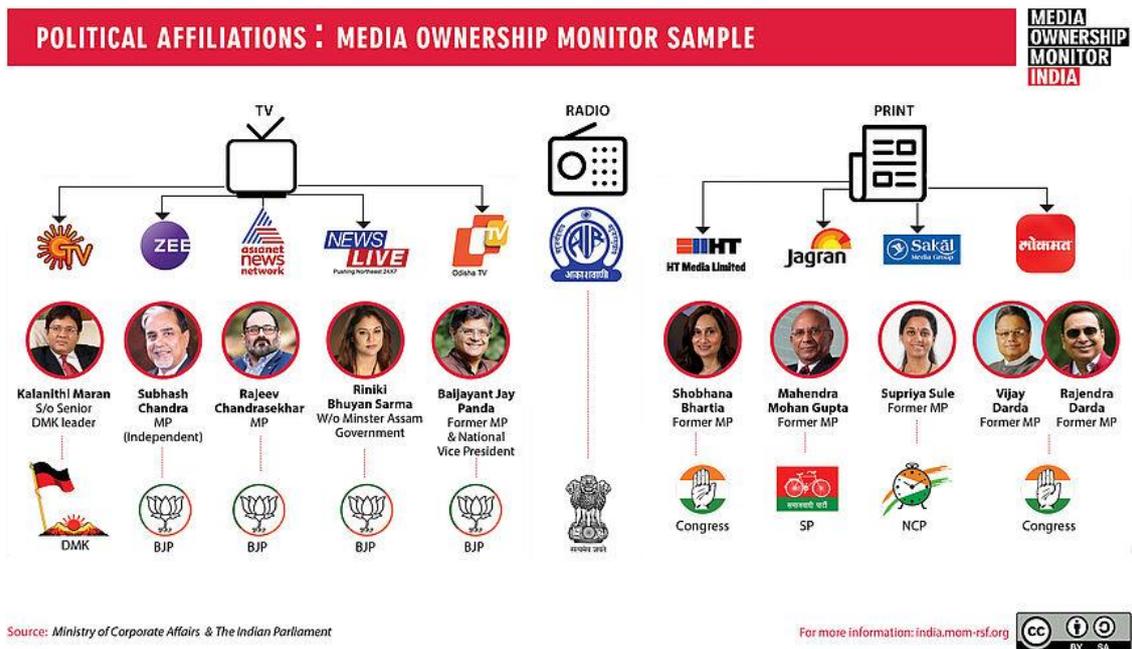
There is no denying that data journalism is the future and is more than likely to improve the quality of news of India’s newsrooms, but the question is one of implementation. However, India is in the first phase of the digital cycle and recent mass retrenchments in the media have so far caused many media owners to see digital news portals as either an add-on to the main product, which might be a television channel or a newspaper, or something that requires minimum investment. As a result, rather than looking at presenting a ‘different’ kind of news, Indian news portals are reproducing the tried and tested news format so far with little innovation. So far, what one is getting are news apps such as **editorji.com** which curates the news you want to see through asking you a series of questions or **asiavillanews.com** which caters to the multi-lingual non-English speaking millennial by offering news videos in English, Hindi and Tamil. In both cases, short, sharp videos are the focus here. There is little scope for analysis in this format.

While some may cite short, sharp videos and the cost factor as reasons for the lack of movement towards data journalism, the major reason in India is lack of awareness. As Josy Joseph, Nitin Gokhale and other investigative journalists have indicated there is now a hunger within India for good investigative stories but they and many others in India are neither aware about data journalism sites nor what a data journalist does. Once this awareness comes in through partnerships with western organisations the result will be more accurate, better journalism. For instance, western organisations could help provide satellite images which would be very useful in covering conflicts such as the Balakot air strike; crunching numbers in graphs to provide a comparison of India’s Union Budgets over the years; and showcasing the implications of

migration – a crucial issue for India – from one state to another. Indian journalists, right now, neither have the manpower or training for this. Such a partnership will also reduce the current dependence on the government for maps, images and videos every time a major news event should occur.

The other side that Indian journalists and journalism can also focus on more is the human side of the story, through data journalism. A case in point is the picture in this article in the *New York Times* article which aptly showcases the economic conditions of Hong Kong's protests (Stevenson A & Wu J (2019) 'Tiny Apartments and Punishing Work Hours: The Economic Roots of Hong Kong's Protests.' Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/07/22/world/asia/hong-kong-housing-inequality.html>). Such kind of 'photographic journalism' would be ideal for India's smartphone user, can only lead to newer ideas by which both journalism in India and the west could improve. One hopes though that such endeavours are made sooner rather than later as the threats to journalists and good investigative journalism in India are increasing by the day.

TABLE 1

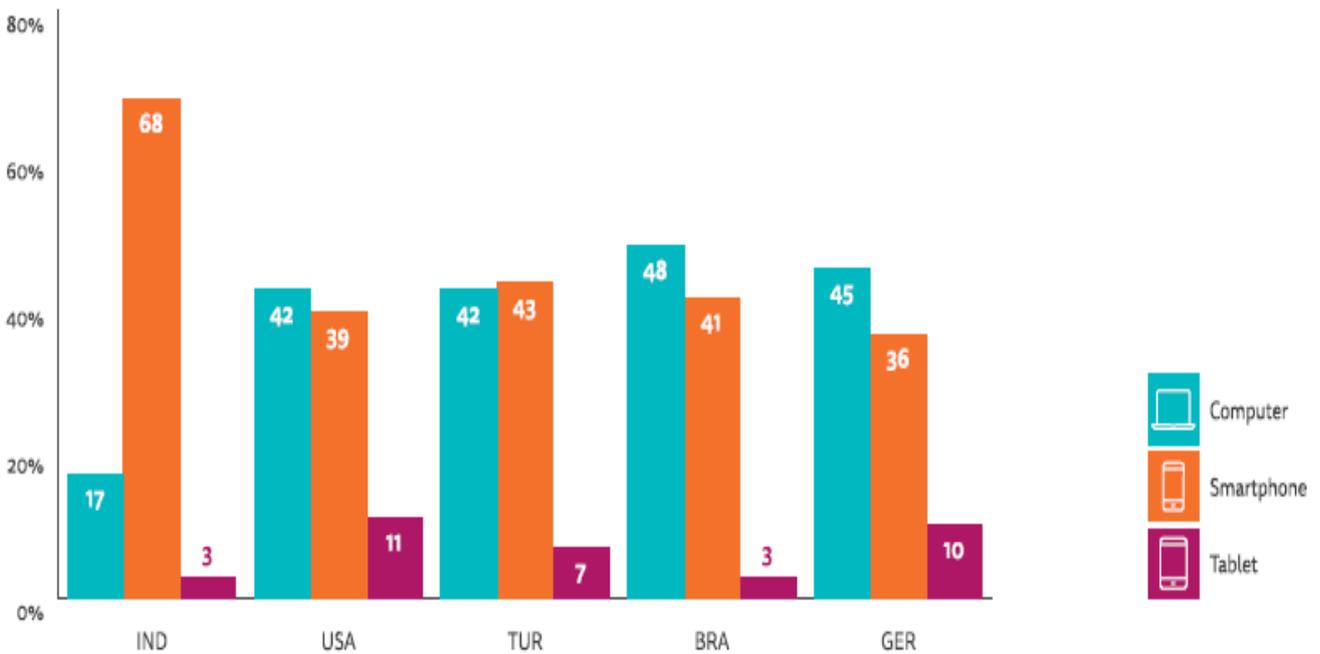


Note: Reprinted from ‘Political Affiliations: Media Ownership Monitor Sample’, by *Media Ownership Monitor India*, Retrieved from <http://india.mom-rsf.org/en/findings/politicalaffiliations/>. Copyright (2019). Reporters Without Borders and DataLEADS

*This is a publicly available document

TABLE 2

MAIN DEVICE USED FOR NEWS – SELECTED MARKETS

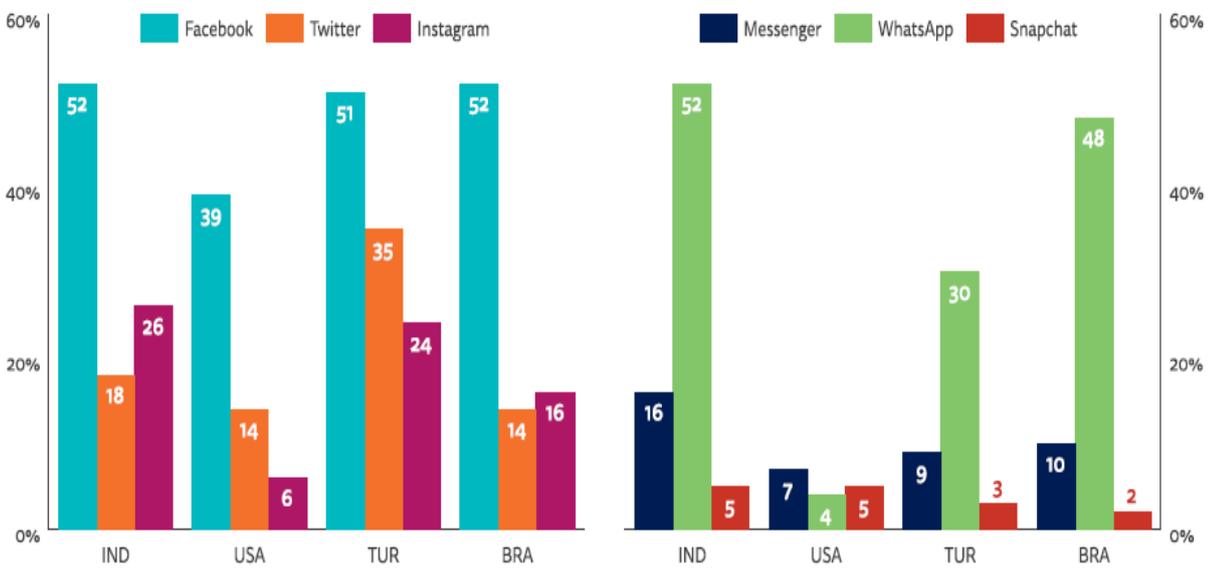


Note: Reprinted from ‘Main Device Used For News-Selected Markets – Digital News In India’, *Reuters Institute India Digital News Report*. Retrieved from https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2019-03/India_DNR_FINAL.pdf
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TABLE 3

PROPORTION THAT USED EACH SOCIAL NETWORK FOR NEWS IN THE LAST WEEK - SELECTED MARKETS



Note: Reprinted from ‘Distributed Discovery Dominated Platforms – Digital News In India’, *Reuters Institute India Digital News Report*. Retrieved from https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2019-03/India_DNR_FINAL.pdf
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(Table 1) Note: Reprinted from 'Political Affiliations: Media Ownership Monitor Sample', by *Media Ownership Monitor India*, Retrieved from <http://india.mom-rsf.org/en/findings/politicalaffiliations/>. Copyright (2019). Reporters Without Borders and DataLEADS

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(Table 3) Note: Reprinted from 'Distributed Discovery Dominated Platforms – Digital News In India', *Reuters Institute India Digital News Report*. Retrieved from https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2019-03/India_DNR_FINAL.pdf Copyright (2019) Reuters Institute and University of Oxford.

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Are “Data Journalism Trainings” Effective in Building Participatory Journalism? (An Example from Turkey)

Yunus ERDURAN / Timur DEMIRKIRAN

Introduction

The editorial independence of journalists has been weakening, and confidence in media has been deteriorating, around the world in recent years. Viewers and readers think that the media’s current structure keeps it from fulfilling the promise of objective—unbiased, truthful, and factual—coverage, representing a range of views. The increase of fake news has put mainstream media in jeopardy. Big technology companies have put enormous pressure on journalism by diverting advertising revenues to social media platforms. Those platforms are gradually becoming the primary sources of information and news flow as millions of citizens supply content to one another through their own accounts.

The crisis of professional journalism is even deeper in semi-democratic countries like Turkey, which suffer from new mechanisms of state surveillance, information regulation, and censorship, as well as threat of arrest—which encourages pervasive and insidious self-censorship. Today, in this environment, the most liberal, autonomous and creative forms of journalism are small-scale, independent, collaborative initiatives in the alternative/oppositional media habitat. Many professional journalists who were forced out of mainstream media organisations can nowadays work only as part of these new initiatives, where they build solidarity and cooperation with citizens and alternative media. These new platforms, which are still very small and unorganized in structure, aim to empower society and defend basic rights and liberties—such as free expression and access to information—that the country’s compliant mainstream media fail to safeguard.

As being one of them, dokuz8NEWS agency in Turkey is trying to build a network of people consisting of professional and citizen journalists, academicians, representatives of civil society to build a “bridge between the energy of citizen journalism and the experience of professional journalism” since 2014. That bridge could only be constructed through workshops and training sessions with the participation of different target groups to define the new ways of participatory journalism. Given the conditions of mainstream media in Turkey, we thought that one of the best options to protect the freedom of expression was to empower the civil society movements, starting from media literacy to the level of producing their own content with necessary technical tools. Those trainings and workshops were key to identify the new ways of collaboration between different social movements. One of the collaboration areas was data journalism training. Countries like Turkey lack of data journalism practices, due to the current media environment. This creates ‘information asymmetry’ in society emerging from overwhelmingly one-sided environment dominating the media. Citizens’ efforts to involve in diversified journalistic efforts including data journalism practices help generating a more pluralistic media atmosphere and have to be supported by necessary tools of trainings to increase their technical skills. Only by this means they can produce good examples of quality data journalism, to overcome censorship on mainstream media.

One of our quantitative researches conducted with 306 professional journalists in Turkey in 2018 also showed us that they were having difficulty to access training courses that would up-date their knowledge of journalistic practices. Research results signified that almost half the working journalists have never participated in a training session at the institution where they work. Lack of these institutional trainings slow down the developments in the field of journalism. Journalists are, in a sense, tied to conventional methods and tools in the absence of proper development tools (Erduran, Çoban&Ataman, 2018).

Therefore, our institution has decided to organize an extensive training programme on data journalism with the participation of professional journalists, local journalists and citizen journalists as well as representatives of civil society and academics, students that are willing to work in media sector. There are a lot of different sets of training curriculum of data journalism for professionals prepared by both academics and institutes of journalism with a variety of topics but we see less examples of those trainings prepared for non-professionals like regular citizens, students of other disciplines than journalism, NGOs, academicians and activists. That’s why we have

tried to focus on a specific set of information that will help participants to learn the basics of the area as well as practising some of the tools that will help them to analyse the big data sets and visualize them in a way that will increase the effect of their news content.

This paper aims to analyse the outcomes of the data journalism training sessions which specifically designed for citizens with diverse backgrounds in Turkey in order to understand whether the methodology of the trainings contribute to the overall skills of attendants to produce news prepared by using data analysis and different visualization tools. We also measured the effectiveness of the content and methodology of those training sessions through a hybrid methodology of

- a) quantitative results of the evaluation forms of attendants
- b) qualitative observations of the instructors and
- c) the analysis of the news that were produced by participants after training sessions.

Project Scope

Since 2013 popular Gezi Park protests, citizen journalism platform dokuz8NEWS has been operating and starting from 2014 daily coverage has indulged in journalism activities focusing on human rights and rights-based journalism. At the recalibration of activities, more specified content for audiences has become a necessity. Dokuz8NEWS will be setting up a format expanding news network capacity within the framework of Data Journalism, focusing on four thematic target topics such as; '*rights-violations & judicial processes*', '*labour*', '*gender & children*', '*press freedom as part of free expression*'. Producing data-driven content related to these themes while conducting thematic trainings in those areas to build capacity for generating relevant data across Turkey was one of the objectives of this project. Output of the trainings was aimed to turn into capacity building practices through news-pieces via help of professional editorial process as well as establishing solid connections with NGOs working around specified themes in aforementioned areas.

- A total of 60 people has been participated in 3 training sessions focused on data journalism principles, both from dokuz8NEWS network, civil society representatives related to themes of the project (including academicians and students), and disemployed journalists from various regions of Turkey [who have lost their jobs due to media organisations being shut down with decree rulings, or being laid off as a consequence of conducting journalism with a critical professional approach]. 3-days of trainings sessions were designed as classroom trainings in cities Istanbul and Ankara in March, May and December 2018.
- An advisory board was set up consisting of journalists, technologists, academics, lawyers, human rights advocates, NGO representatives primarily involved in activities related to four main themes of this project, to meet twice annually and discuss dokuz8NEWS' approach to data journalism and process of publication while also serving as a bridge mechanism to connect newsroom to the civil society in Turkey. 2 Advisory Board meetings has been held in Istanbul with participation of 18 NGO representatives in February 2018 and 14 civil society representatives in January 2019.

Project Outcomes

- 120 data journalism articles have been prepared by a total of 28 people and 90 stories have been published in our website¹. 30 of them have also been translated into English.
- Special thematic coverage has been issued for a) March 8 - Women's Day marches, b) Labour Day on May 1 and c) June 24 Parliamentary & Presidential elections at dokuz8NEWS:
 - On March 8 International Women's Day, dokuz8NEWS has received input from 45 correspondents across the country and has become the platform that publishes news of Feminist Night March most thoroughly, visualising the information emerging from women's day events
 - On May 1 Labour Day, dokuz8NEWS newsroom has received input from 42 cities and a total of 60 correspondents, publishing a total of 105 original stories, 160 labour day news which

¹ Please refer to examples in References #2

were also supported by news cards, maps and visualisation, reaching 2.2 million organic viewers; a jump from 1.2 million on a daily basis in April 2018

- Election Justice Platform and dokuz8NEWS has co-produced the most comprehensive news coverage on voter registration mobility ahead of municipal elections in Turkey, which has created an impact on election agenda in terms of election safety measures from political parties. In cooperation with parliamentary sources, Turkish Parliament's statistics have been used for producing data news articles
- A weekly newsletter of data news articles has been sent to lists of 10.000 people in dokuz8NEWS communications networks during project. 1.500 of these receivers have read the articles on a regular basis and engaged with the content.
- Dokuz8NEWS also hired two data editors, focusing on collection and interpretation of data to produce content and also to coach the participants while they produce their own content.
- An infographic service was purchased for generating data journalism content, and the two editors were trained in this software/service for data-visualization presenting data sets, maps, graphics, news-cards, interactive comparable visuals. Data generated through the project has been stored in an online platform for future use for data mining activities and will serve as basis of data journalism activities in the future.

Preliminary Work for the Preparation of The Training Sessions

Data becomes “big data” when it comes to the complexity of relationships in the world combined with the increasing traces of our digital footprints. Inevitably, media professionals are subject to reading more numbers, trying to make complex correlations between different set of variables in order to understand the realities of the postmodern trends as well as the changing nature of new human behaviour. That understanding requires a new set of skills among journalists which basically covered under the area of “data journalism” in media literature and not that much easy to acquire for some of the journalists who were trained through the conventional methods of journalism. Trying to analyse numbers through formulas in data sheets is the new paradigm of the entrance level to data journalism that required the usage of specific software. Those programmes were eligible to statisticians and programmers earlier to make deeper analysis on different set of data and now became a gate for professional journalists who would like to derive their stories from big data sets. Development of technology also led to enhancement of more tools specifically prepared for media industry that helps analysing of data sets as well as visualising the findings in a simpler way. Usage of specific programmes were forcing the journalists to acquire at least the basic knowledge of the tools to produce their own content (or forcing them to collaboration with other people who are either journalists or technicians who are capable of using those tools). With the contribution of many other changes in the media industry, “data journalism” became an area where new set of skills were required for journalists to produce a distinctive content. So, for many journalists, “adaptation” to those new skill set created a real “challenge”.

The situation in Turkey was a bit different than the trends above since the habits of using data or analysing the big data sets were not among the common journalistic practices of investigative journalism, especially in the mainstream media. Investigative journalists were basically trying to analyse the cases with the documents that were reached or leaked to them and try to make the correlations between complexities through the reach of the witnesses (mainly secret ones). Supporting their findings with other set of information through desk research has become a common practice in the industry. One of the main issues of this approach was the unwillingness to use the formal data sets into the analysis for more comprehensive news files (main reasons were the lack of time and other sources to analyse the data). Therefore, we have been observing fewer journalistic examples including the elements of data journalism in those investigative news files.

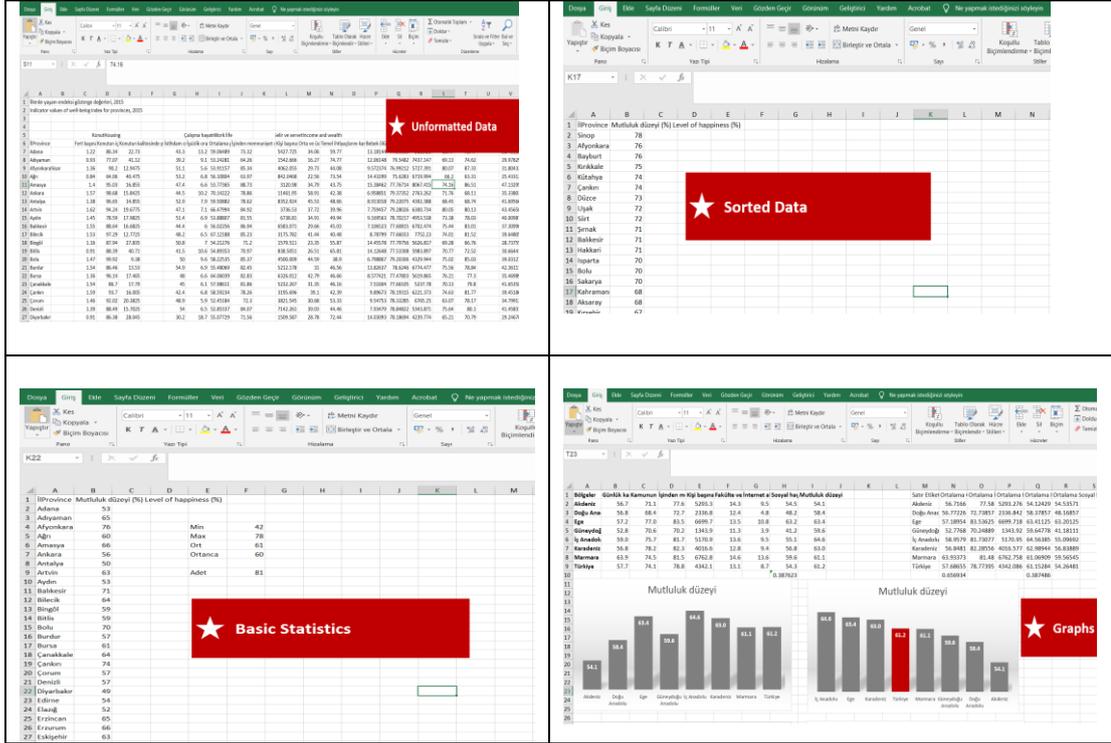
This was another reason for us to organize the training sessions in a way where the “basic introductory principles of data journalism” would be taught as an entrance level for journalists and non-professionals. We have tried to combine hybrid methodologies to prepare the content of the training sessions.

- **Link Theory to Real Cases:** We have made a desk research on different data journalism trainings, methods and contents before starting to prepare our own content. The basic principles of data journalism were given in the sessions in a theoretical way and more time was spent on practical good

examples of data journalism. We have decided to support the theoretical framework of the area with the practical examples of news centres. [Caelainn Barr](#), the Guardian's Data Projects editor has contributed to the training session with the work of Guardian. Another academic and data journalist at the University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands, [Dr. Efe Kerem Sözeri](#), has also put the whole context into real life examples by focusing on different data journalism practices in the world. Furthermore, open source training platform "[Learno.net](#)" was chosen as the reference website for the whole training sessions.

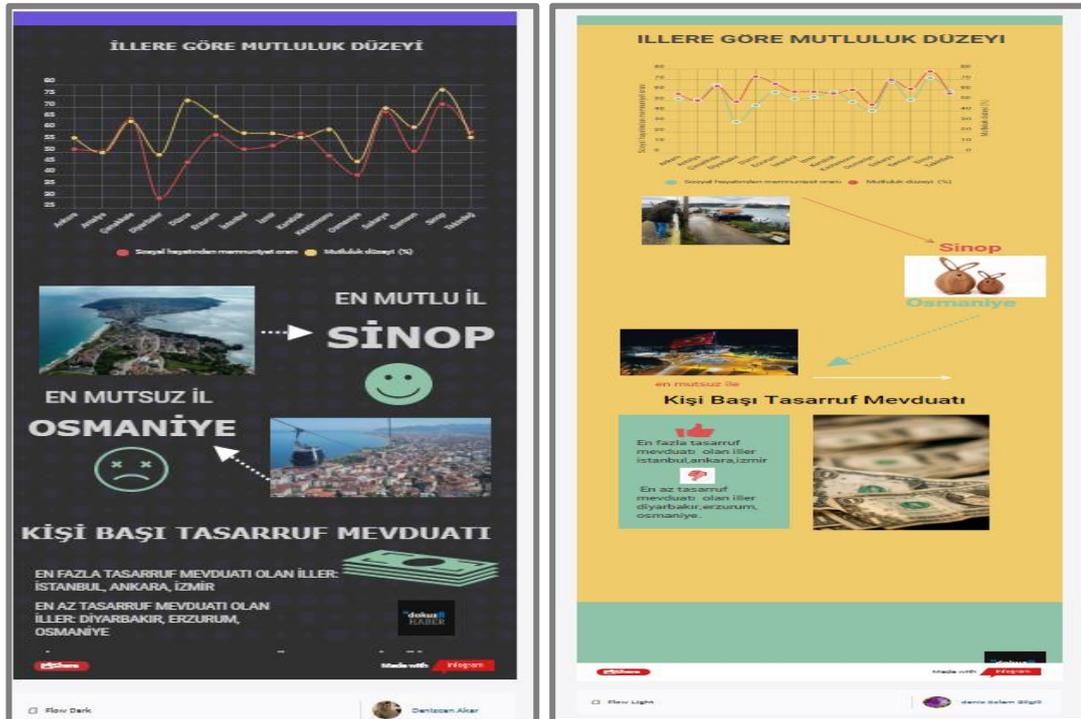
- **Knowing the Audience:** As stated earlier, the target group of the training sessions was mixed of a group of people from different backgrounds and disciplines. Therefore, we have decided to use pre-assessment questionnaires before the training sessions in order to identify their level of skills and usage of some programmes. We have asked many questions regarding their level of knowledge on data analysis (in Excel) and data visualization (in any tool), about the topics they wanted to cover in their news after the training sessions. Those results were very valuable to understand their "*distances*" towards data journalism and feedbacks were directly used in the content preparation by our instructors.
- **More Practice:** The participants were asked to bring their computers before the training sessions since 2 out of 3 days of the programme was focusing on a real case of producing a simple introductory data journalism content. That was a step-by-step collaborative mechanism where the instructors asked each one of the participants to repeat each step all together in Excel and data visualization programmes like Infogram and Canva (those programs were pre-selected before sessions based on a mini survey with participants asking their affinity with them).
- **Flow of The Trainings:** Storytelling is more effective way while working on the complex data sets. For that reason, we have included additional modules to programme where participants could understand the nuances of "*storytelling via data analysis*". So the flow of the training was finalised as follow:
 - Basic Principles of Data Journalism (theory with best practices)
 - Data Analysis in Excel (all data related principles on data sources, data acquisition, data types and reliability of data with fully practical exercises)
 - Data Visualization in Infogram & Canva (all visualization principles with fully practical exercises)
 - Building the Bridge through Storytelling > as a holistic approach to combine all different elements of the training into one piece of news that will attract the attention of the readers.
- **Continuous Sharing of Experience During Sessions:** Training flow was designed to allow participants practicing each step of the modules by themselves through the support of instructors. After each step of the action, the whole group has shared their feedbacks regarding the use of the tools and by doing so, people have started from the experiences of others. That flow has been followed until the end of training sessions to increase the participatory role of attendants and the overall learning from the group dynamic has been transferred into the training content.

Figure 1. Examples from Excel Analysis During Training Sessions



- **Overcome the Fears of Data Analysis & Visualization:** Many participants mentioned through pre-assessment forms that they were familiar to some of the data analysis & visualization tools but majority of them have not tried to make data analysis or preparing some charts through those programmes. At the beginning of the training sessions, many of them stated that they are “*afraid of playing with numbers and making graphs*” since they do not know enough about this area. That’s why we have emphasized the “simplicity of tools” that we have used during the training sessions and we have selected Microsoft Excel as the data analysis tool and Infogram&Canva as the data visualization programmes. After completing their analysis on Excel, participants transferred the raw data into the programmes to discover the possibilities of different charts to better visualize their stories that they wished to create.

Figure 2. Examples from News Created During Training Sessions by Infogram



- **Mentoring and Collaboration After Trainings:** Participants were expected to prepare their own news content after the completion of trainings in order to practice the skills that they acquired through the modules. We have organized “working groups” with the collaboration of instructors of the training sessions and 2 editors that were solely hired for this project. When training sessions have finished, each participant who would like to produce a data driven news file was supported with a group of people by using Telegram to discuss that particular topic (the data sources, the possible ways to analyse the data sets and the best ways to visualize the content). Editors and instructors were coaching&mentoring them through the preparation of their news that they were working on.

Measurement of the Effectiveness of Training Sessions

Media industry has been organizing many training sessions towards the professional journalists and to the new fresh-outs to increase the level of competencies to do data journalism. Many platforms (some of them are open-sourced) are already in place to convey those training sessions as e-learnings to many journalists around the world. Contents of those trainings vary from beginner to advanced levels considering the depth of knowledge and the target groups are mainly the professional journalists. Since many of those trainings are organized and delivered internally by some institutions, we do not have enough information about the measurement of the effectiveness of those programmes through academic papers. Quite a few of those sessions’ outcomes were publicly shared and we know less about the methodologies on how to evaluate the effectiveness of different styles on the outcomes of data journalism news. We, therefore, tried to analyse the outcomes of our training programmes by using a “hybrid methodology” of 3 different approaches:

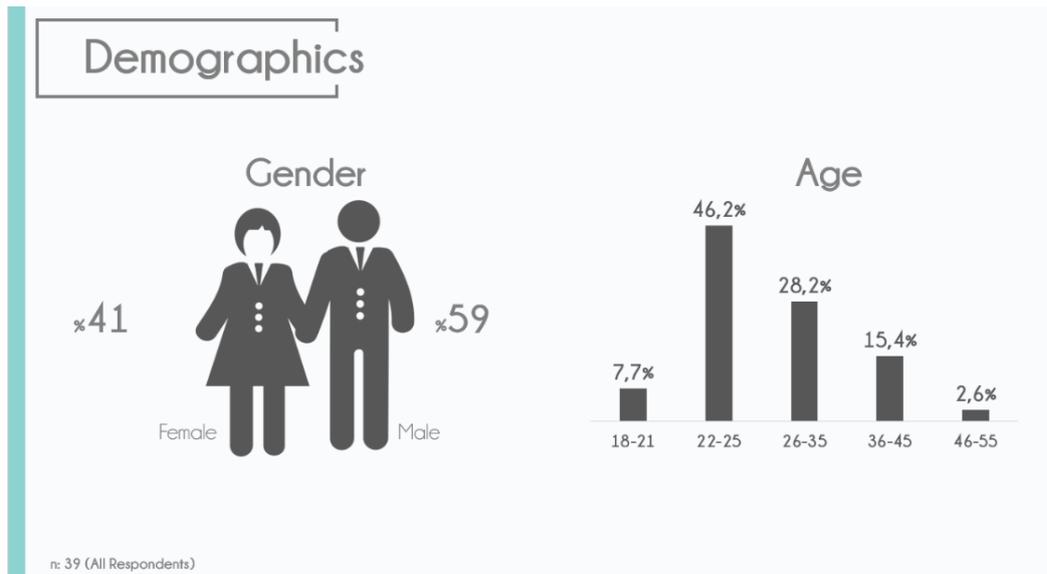
- We have done a “**quantitative survey with the participants**” which was conducted as a follow-up measurement of the training sessions to understand whether they have been continued to use the skills that they acquired through the trainings
- Additionally, we have combined the “**qualitative observations of the instructors**” which were collected during training sessions and during coaching sessions when the participants were producing their news
- Finally, we have also made an “**analysis of the news**” that were produced by the participants after they have completed the training sessions.

A - Measurement of the Effectiveness of Trainings by Participants

A questionnaire was designed for the measurement of the effectiveness of training session by CAPI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interview) methodology with 39 participants (out of total 60 participants) in July 2019. Participants of the training sessions were asked to evaluate the trainings in terms of its contribution to their professional development, its impact on their motivation towards data journalism projects, and its contribution to the competency levels of the attendants with the overall satisfaction levels from sessions.

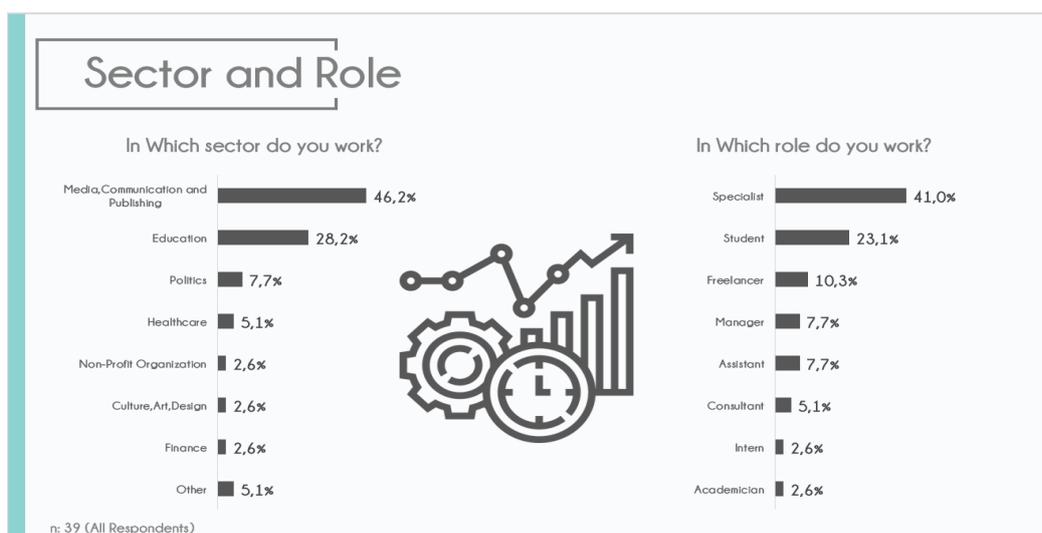
As mentioned earlier, participants of the training sessions were selected through an open call from many organizations including dokuz8NEWS network, professional, local and citizen journalists, representatives of NGO’s, academicians and students. It has been observed that, the majority of the participants is male (59%) and more than half of the community is under the age of 25 (54%). This shows the willingness of interest of younger generation towards data journalism trainings where they see a potential to increase their competencies.

Graph 1 : Demographic Information about Participants



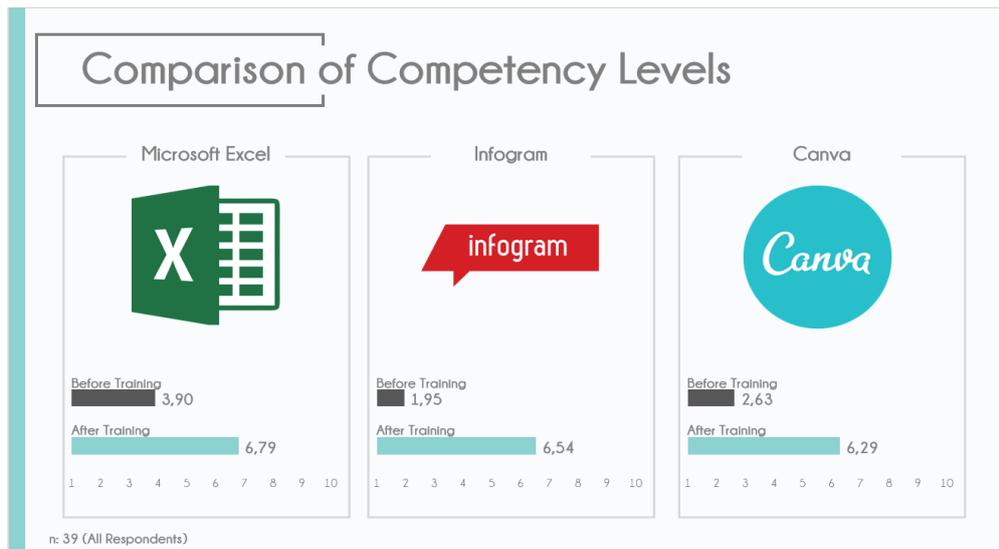
Almost half of the respondents who joined the training sessions are from media, communication and publishing industries (46%). Education is the secondly mentioned area with 28% of the participants. Politics and healthcare are the other industries that respondents were being employed. Participants mostly work as “specialist” role in their jobs (41%). Student participation in the trainings is also higher (23%). The third group is the freelancer journalists (10%). It is worthy to mention here that we have more people attending to the sessions as the professional journalists but their participation level to the survey is limited.

Graph 2 : Sector & Role of the Participants



Participants were trained on 3 specific programmes during the training sessions: Microsoft Excel for data analysis and Infogram & Canva as data visualization tools. A year after training sessions, we wondered whether their level of usage of those programmes have increased by the contribution of the trainings. In order to understand the progress, we asked them to compare their competency level before the sessions and after the sessions by using a 10-point scale measurement (1 meaning having less competent and 10 meaning having full competency). It was observed that higher progress has been made on Excel after the training sessions (6.8 out of 10) although the initial knowledge about the usage of this programme is relatively higher as compared to other tools. Infogram was the most liked data visualization tool in the sessions and that was also proven by the evaluations of the participants where they saw a considerably higher progress in the usage of that programme after acquiring the necessary knowledge in the sessions (6.5 out of 10).

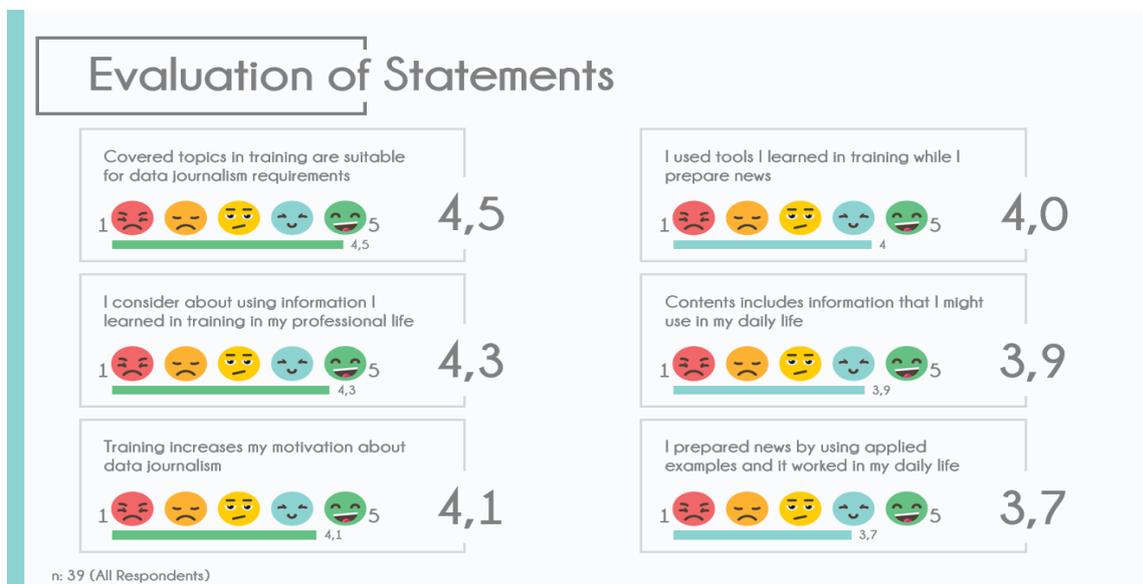
Graph 3 : Comparison of Competency Levels Before & After Training Sessions (Over 10-point Scale)



Respondents were asked to evaluate some statements regarding the content of the trainings over a 5-point scale where 1 means being “fully disagree” with the statement and 5 means being “fully agree”. Statements were to understand their evaluation concerning the suitability of the content to their professional requirements and contribution of the content to their motivation to use data journalism tools.

They agreed with a higher ratio (4.5 out of 5) with the statement that training content was fitting into their expectations and meets the requirements to practice data journalism news. They also agreed upon the usability of the information acquired in the sessions for their professional life (4.3 out of 5). We also see that training modules have increased their motivations towards data journalism (4.1 out of 5).

Graph 4 : Evaluation of Statements Regarding Training Content (Over 5-point Scale)



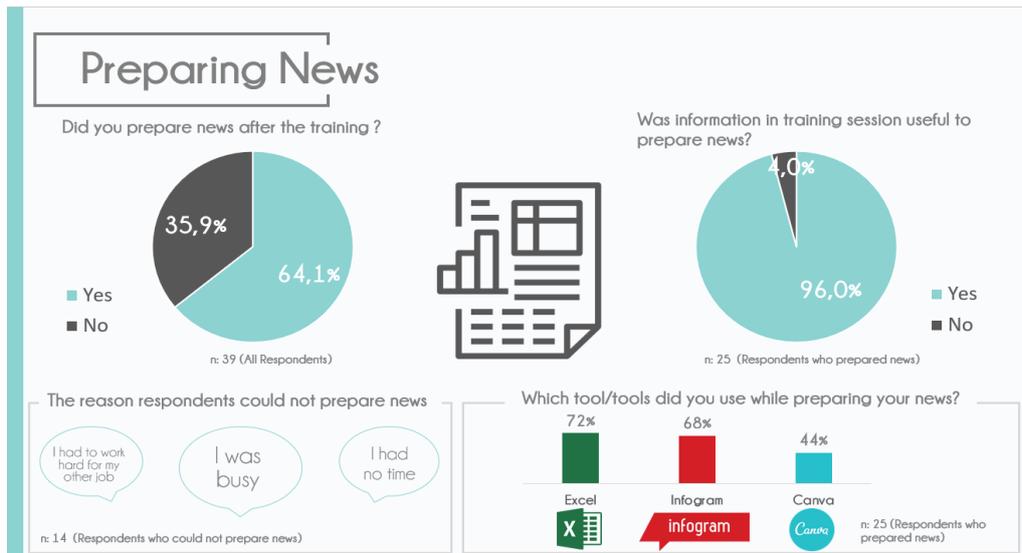
We have also asked respondents whether they have produced any news content after training sessions by using the information that they have acquired during the training sessions. Almost 2/3rd of the respondents have stated that they have produced a news after they have completed the sessions (64%). The rest of participants stated that they could not find enough time to produce a content. Almost all of the participants who have produced a news content after trainings agreed that the information they were given in the sessions was very

useful when they were creating their own data journalism news (96%). They also specified the utilization of Excel (72%) and Infogram (68%) as the main tools by producing their own stories.

When we look at the answers of respondents through their demographic profiles, we observe some differences concerning the content production and the usage of technical tools such as:

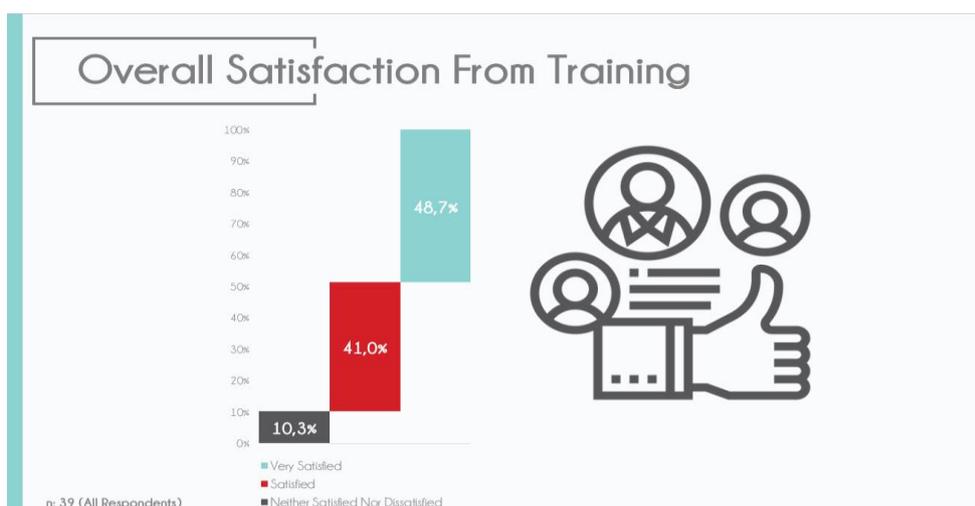
- More male respondents have stated that they have prepared news after sessions as compared to female respondents (70% vs. 56%)
- Usage of Excel among male respondents is higher (81%) as compared to female respondents (56%)
- Usage of Infogram among female respondents is higher (78%) as compared to male respondents (63%).

Graph 5 : Preparation of News After Training Sessions



And finally, respondents were asked to evaluate their overall satisfaction level from training content on a 5-point scale where 1 means “not satisfied at all” and 5 means “very satisfied”. Majority of participants were satisfied with the trainings (90%). It is very promising to see that the content is highly appreciated by the participants; no-one has mentioned about any dissatisfaction from the modules of the training.

Graph 6 : Overall Satisfaction Level from Training (Over 5-point Scale)



B – Qualitative Observations of the Instructors

The content of the training sessions was prepared and presented by 3 main instructors having expertise in data analysis and data visualization tools. Instructors were having different backgrounds which helped to enrich the content through different point of views like information technology, big data usage, statistics and modelling. Before, during and after the training sessions; 3 instructors were having feedback sessions regarding the evaluation of the progress of the sessions in order to customize the content fully with the requirements of the audience. Instructors have identified some critical learnings from the preparation phase as such:

- **Pre-assessment Before Trainings:** The initial discussion was to understand the level of people's affinity towards technical programmes. It was not easy to understand their levels by asking some questions before sessions since people were not aware of the knowledge level of themselves regarding the tools. This was observed during the sessions where people were stated as being more qualified of using the tools but could not be able to do some of the special calculations during the sessions. Therefore, in the upcoming sessions; the questions were detailed by asking the specific knowledge on programmes; for instance calculation of some formulas on Excel or preparing some charts on Infogram. It has been also underlined that for the other similar projects in the future, the preassessment of the skills of attendants has to be done on a "face to face interviews" by discussing more about their skill levels and adaptation of that level to average level of the audience in general. This might prevent the risk of having people in the same training with a different gap of skill sets (differentiation of beginners' vs advanced ones).
- **Participatory Process During the Trainings:** Training content was designed so that everyone was participating to the whole practical production of a news content through sessions. Many feedbacks regarding the practical teaching of the programmes (Excel, Infogram and Canva) were taken as notes and used for the next sessions. Participants were quite confident when they finish the 3 days of training as compared to their concerns before they join the sessions. Since everyone shared their thoughts about the content right after each session, those feedbacks helped others to build the feeling of confidence that "I can easily use those tools to produce a data journalism content".
- **Increase "Storytelling" Module with Data Sets:** Because of the technical constraints at the beginning, we were forced the design the sessions as 3 days by mainly focusing on the practical aspects of the data journalism tools. What we have realized during the trainings that, an additional module for "storytelling" is needed with more information especially for the non-journalists. Even for some of the journalists, a module specifically focusing on writing the stories through data sets would be needed for the upcoming projects.
- **Producing A Real News During Training Sessions:** We have prepared many case studies for the participants to work on during the sessions but the cases were prepared to convey the messages to the attendants easily, therefore they were not always including the daily or real cases (we have used some dummy data sets for simulations). We have also been told that working on a "real case" or a "daily happening story" could be more interesting by some of the participants. Working on a daily case could be more motivating for participants although preparation of the case covering a daily issue could be difficult for instructors.
- **Coaching & Mentoring During Trainings:** Instructors were coaching the participants during the training sessions on the content that was hard to grasp by the audience but that was not easy with a participation of 20 people in one session. In order to increase the efficiency of the sessions, we have argued that there could be 2-3 facilitators at the same time for building of technical skills (i.e. correlation analysis in Excel). That would give each participant enough time to fully digest the information given and reflect it properly in the final content.
- **Coaching & Mentoring After Trainings:** When the participants completed training sessions, we have built Telegram groups to work on their stories combined by editors, instructors and some other training participants if anyone is interested in that particular topic. This group has started discussing preliminary steps to build a story, then find necessary data sources to analyse and making the data analysis and visualization. Instructors were also giving feedback on the evolution of the story, but that coaching basically went online. We have felt that many people after training session required "face to face working sessions" to proceed on their own stories in order to consolidate what they have learned

through sessions. A close mentoring process would be defined also with the inclusion of professional journalists and some experts in those fields could help more to participants while producing their own content in a smoother way.

C – Analysis of The News

120 data journalism articles have been prepared through this project and 30 of them have been translated into English. We have selected 10 different news pieces which were published in our website to make an analysis on the “finished version” of the files. That analysis has shown some clues about the effect of training content on the final pieces of their stories:

- **Uneasiness to Use the Tools:** Participants were observed as “uneasy and somehow conservative” in using the technical tools while preparing their own content. They were mainly using the basic formulas regarding the data analysis in Excel or visualization in Infogram or Canva. They were preferring simple shapes, colours and charts that could be easily linked to their “**confidence level**” towards the competencies. They need to make more practice in order to gain expertise in the programmes so that their confidence will increase over time by the increase usage of tools. Being worked on many different pieces by using data sets will improve their skills and confidence towards the programmes that they use and this will result in more qualified outputs on their news files (deeper analysis of data with better visualization formats).
- **Need Improvement in Data Analysis :** Searching and finding data sources, sorting relevant ones and starting to dig into the data sets, having them in the relevant analysis platforms and then making extra analysis by playing data (averages, correlations etc..) require a “literacy” and that literacy needs to be improved through time by preparing many different news pieces on different topics. The initial examples of the participants are “simple” in terms of data usage and interpretation which we believe will be improving over time with the understanding of the capabilities of the tools.
- **Participatory Approach on News Making Process:** Participants generally preferred to work alone in their news projects. Analysis of their news have also shown that more participatory approach is needed while producing their stories with the help of experienced journalists, academicians, experts in the area of data journalism. That collaboration will improve the content by asking questions from different perspectives and will lead use of more data sets and visualization. An interdisciplinary approach to data journalism projects could be promoted among the audience concerning the upcoming similar projects.

Some Recommendations for Future Training Projects

Based on the findings of different analysis on the outcomes of our data journalism project, we can conclude that those trainings are effective in contributing to the different ways of participatory journalism especially thinking that data journalism practices are still immature in Turkey. Diverse backgrounds of the participants helped to share the different dimensions of a story within the training sessions. Involvement of the representatives of civil society, academia, journalism and information technology in the trainings helped us to build an “original introductory content for trainings” in the country. This project also prepared with the same manners of participatory journalism to be an example even in the training modules of our journalism practices. By thinking of its introductory level of current training modules, some recommendations could be made for the preparation of the content of further advanced levels regarding data journalism trainings:

- **Building Diverse Working Groups:** There is a need for more collaborative working groups around diversified topics in order to increase the usage of data in the news making process. The project by itself is a good example of this participatory approach but this has to be enriched further by the other alternative/oppositional media institutions to build diverse teams to investigate on the original stories of the country through data journalism.
- **Promoting Data Journalism:** Journalistic Institutions together with academy of media need to promote the credibility of data journalism in Turkey by creating more awareness of the area especially in the eyes of students, newcomers of the media industry and among the existing groups of journalists. Awareness through original journalistic examples will motivate more people to learn the necessary skills to practice data journalism content. That might also help attracting more talented people into the data journalism practices through interaction with data analysis and visualization tools.

- **Inclusion of Professional Investigative Journalists:** Usage of data analysis and visualization as a habit is rare among experienced professional investigative journalists in Turkey at the moment. Therefore, more “inclusion programmes” for experienced investigative journalists could be organized to elaborate on their current work through support of new data analysis tools. Current ways of investigative journalism could be enriched through the usage of the data journalism tools. This could also help creating public awareness on data journalism projects by the popularity of these professional journalists who could involve & promote these types of projects.

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Global Initiatives in Data Journalism in the Age of Big Data: Challenges and Opportunities

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Abstract: This study uses an original survey of a worldwide sample of respondents who work in various capacities in data journalism to begin to create a comparative analysis that explains data journalism practices in newsrooms across different media and political systems. It aims to (1) explore individual and organizational factors that contribute to the adaptation of data journalism practices and (2) explore means by which public policies on transparency and open-government impinge on data-driven news work. Data were collected from data journalists, reporters, editors, news managers, developers, designers, and other reporting personnel who engage with data individually and in teams within their news organizations. Respondents were recruited from global investigative reporting and data journalism conferences and listservs to seek broad representation. The study seeks to disentangle a variety of definitions and conceptualizations of data-driven journalism to provide clarity for scholars and practitioners about the realities of the practice around the world. Data presented in this paper and at GIJC demonstrate preliminary results of the first wave of this survey.

Respondents were asked about their professional roles and data-driven practices; how they acquire and use data; their attitudes about the impact of data-driven journalism on society; and their interactions with government and civil society organizations in acquiring, vetting, trusting, and using data in their work. Other questions examine how organizational dynamics impact the adoption of data-driven journalism techniques inside the newsroom; the unequal distribution of computational and data resources; and how right to information policies and related legislation that struggles with the transparency of open-government data

is related to the adoption and ethics of data-driven journalism. The results hope to provide a more nuanced and comparative portrait of how data-driven reporting practices are applied in a variety of newsroom and geographic settings.

Introduction

Data-driven journalism practices – which incorporate “algorithms, data, and knowledge from the social sciences to supplement the accountability function of journalism” (Hamilton & Turner, 2009, p.2) – open new opportunities for news organizations in a profession that is under constant political attack while facing shrinking workforce and financial struggles. In times of political and financial limitations, data-driven journalism serves three primary purposes: finding unique ways to tell appealing stories that attract wide audiences, build trust and credibility, and perform their watchdog role and inform their audiences about the important issues of the day while heavily relying on fact-based reporting. While the working tools might be similar, nevertheless, the practice and outcomes of computational journalism varies across countries. However, the increasing focus on data practices in journalism leaves a key problem of focus for research: scholars and practitioners have a limited understanding about the interaction between large-scale data collection, computational practices in journalism, and the production of public knowledge is one of the central methodological and philosophical challenges of our time (Manovich, 2011).

Taking a comparative approach, this study investigates the growth of data-driven journalism practices globally to understand opportunities and challenges that journalists face in adopting data journalism practices and to understand how these practices affect the shifting role of journalism in society. More specifically, this study aims to examine the following: what types of data-driven journalistic practices have been adopted in different parts of the world; how organizational dynamics affect the adoption of data-driven journalism techniques

inside the newsroom; and how the unequal distribution of computational and data resources around the world affects journalism's professional mission.

Previous research has been concerned primarily with understanding the dynamics of computational journalism practices and designing digital tools that can supplement the scope of traditional data-driven reporting practices (Anderson, 2013). Most early research in this field is exploratory and descriptive, offering snapshots of practices from single case studies of data journalism in established democracies and in large newsrooms such as *The Guardian* or *The New York Times*. This study contributes to the literature in two significant ways: (1) it explores the organizational factors and professional values that contribute to the adaptation of data-driven journalism practices in newsrooms across different media and political systems and (2) it explores means by which public policies on transparency and open-government data impinge on news work. This study relies on the sociology of news framework (Schudson, 2005) to study data journalism through four frames —political, economic, organizational, and cultural.

Literature Review

Most studies in computational journalism so far have taken an exploratory and descriptive approach to understand how these practices are evolving through newsrooms and have adopted a utilitarian approach with the aim of acquiring practical knowledge. Naturally, this line of work has produced a myriad of definitions that try to encapsulate this evolving field. More recent work in this area has produced some deeper and conceptually rich research that offers clarity in defining parameters of data journalism within the larger field of journalism studies. This line of research offers typologies of journalistic practices in the field of data (Borges-Rey, 2017; Coddington, 2015; Gynnild, 2014; Splendore, 2016).

Within these journalistic practices, Gynnild (2014) distinguishes between *the newsroom approach* in quantitative journalism that includes computer assisted reporting (CAR) and data journalism; *an entrepreneurial approach* focusing on web design,

programming and applications; and *the academic approach* which focuses on computational journalism. Coddington's typology outlines three forms of quantitative journalism, making a further distinction between CAR and data journalism, and computational journalism. Borges-Rey (2017) distinguishes two epistemological paradigms: the "newshound" paradigm – driven by journalistic norms and routines in dealing with data – and the "techie" paradigm, which switches between journalistic and computational approaches to data. He places CAR in the newshound spectrum and computational journalism in the techie spectrum, while data journalism according to him falls in-between. In this study, we are interested mostly in data-driven journalism practices "that take place within the structural frames of established news media institutions" and are based on journalistic traditions (Gynnild, 2014).

CAR has its roots in social science, as it adopts empirical and statistical methods to analyze data in order to extract information incorporated into news stories. It "includes techniques such as data searches on the web, spreadsheet and/or statistical analysis of various public records, and geographical and other information mapping." (Gynnild, 2014, p.718). CAR has been closely tied to investigative reporting practices in newsrooms.

Data journalism as we will use it is defined as "gathering, cleaning, organizing, analyzing, visualizing, and publishing data to support the creation of acts of journalism" with the aim of extracting knowledge from data in news stories in which data are treated as primary sources (Howard, 2014, pp. 4-5). As such, data journalism fundamentally deals with (1) the process – an epistemological and professional approach to gathering, analyzing, and presenting data; and (2) the product (Coddington, 2015). Unlike CAR, data journalism mostly deals with open data and mostly relies on freely accessible open-source tools (Gynnild, 2014), emphasizes visualization as a journalistic value and views readers as co-constructors of truths (Parasie and Dagiral 2013). Different from other forms of computational journalism practices, though, at the core of data journalism is the storytelling aspects of the data as the end result. Data journalism represents the convergence between CAR and computational

journalism, a hybrid form that encompasses reporting, statistical analysis, visualization and sometimes web design.

Coddington (2015) defines computational journalism “as a strand of technologically oriented journalism centered on the application of computing and computational thinking to the practices of information gathering, sense-making, and information presentation” (p.335). As such, computational journalism emphasizes the use of code and is based on abstraction and automation. This type of data-driven journalism practice includes automated processes in information gathering in databases and algorithmic processes in reporting and information distribution. Like CAR, it is based on computational processes, but it differs in “focusing on the processing capabilities of computing, particularly aggregating, automating, and abstracting information” (Coddington, 2015).

Internal Factors

Data-driven journalism practices are still to a large extent considered an area of specialization in the newsroom, while journalists who practice them typically possess high skills in data literacy, software and coding that help collect, analyze, and visualize big data to produce compelling news stories. Studies have shown that data journalism influences reporting processes and changes formats of news stories and presentation of stories to the audience (Carlson, 2014, Lowrey, 2002). Data-driven journalism incorporates practices that are largely invisible to the news consumer but creates questions that permeate the professional process of reporting with data, from collection to analysis to the creation of visualizations and other journalistic output (Bradshaw, 2014; Lewis & Westlund, 2015). This trend poses two questions that require further elaboration: (1) how do traditional journalism norms, routines, and ethics interact with this new form of journalism practice, and (2) what epistemological orientations in news production guide the use of data in generating stories.

Coddington (2015) and Splendore (2016) offer the most comprehensive theoretical framework so far in understanding professional and epistemological implications of data-

driven journalism practices as they are engaged at the most important stages of newsmaking. They refer to the term epistemology to denote practices journalists employ to extract knowledge about the empirical world. Coddington offers four dimensions for classifying different forms of data-driven journalism practices along a continuum of different professional and epistemological orientations that include: professional expertise versus networked information, transparency versus opacity; big data versus sampling techniques; and active versus passive public. Splendore (2016) simplifies Coddington's original dimensions into a three-part comparative dimension that examines epistemological orientations in data access (manual vs. automated access to data), data processing (hypothesis based investigation vs. data-driven analysis), and editing of news produces by data (for broader public versus individual personalization).

External Factors

Recent data-driven journalism practices are closely related with the transparency initiatives around the world and the proliferation of open data and open-source tools to process the data (Gynnild 2014). For a long time, influential news organizations around the world have been at the forefront of the national and transnational transparency initiatives and access/freedom to information campaigns lobbying for FOI laws alongside civil society actors. Very few studies so far have analyzed data-driven journalism practices through the political lens, exploring comparative differences in political and bureaucratic structures and focusing on policy-level initiatives that either allow computational journalism to thrive, or retard its growth (Anderson, 2013). Research has shown that public data play an instrumental role in the development of data journalism. The abundance of noteworthy public databases is one of three factors encouraging the emergence and expansion of data journalism (Flew et al., 2012). Parasie and Dagiral (2013), in studying data journalism in Chicago, observe that most of these projects rely 'on data recorded, stored, and distributed by public authorities' (p. 53). They also emphasize the importance of quality granular (or raw) data for journalistic work.

Aitamurto and colleagues (2011) conclude from a broader study of data journalism that the greatest challenge is obtaining data and that, most of the time, data obtained are provided by government organizations. They consider access to information requests a significant means to acquire these data.

Yet, literature has ignored developments in the world of so-called “open-government initiatives,” the transparency and accessibility of government data, state-level initiatives that may ultimately influence the forms of data-driven journalism that news organizations adopt (Anderson, 2013). In general, work on internet-afforded public policy looks at one of two phenomena— either digitally enhanced citizen-participation (Noveck, 2009) or making government data easily accessible and searchable via digital archives. The availability of open data has grown significantly, with pressure being placed on all kinds of public organizations to release their raw data. But comparative studies also suggest alarming levels of non-compliance with transparency initiatives that vary within administration and between countries (Open Society Justice Initiative, 2006). Research also shows that journalists’ access to information and open data varies between countries (Lamble, 2004; Lidberg, 2009). Previous research in this area suggest that governments in emerging democracies use different mechanisms to make transparency laws ineffective in improving journalists’ access to information and render them into ammunition for political control (Camaj, 2016).

Methodology

An online survey was created and distributed to journalists in professional organizations focused at least in part on data and computer-assisted reporting practices, including GEN, GIJN and NICAR. Respondents were asked about their professional roles and data-driven practices; how they acquire and use data; their attitudes about the impact of data-driven journalism on society; and their interactions with government and civil society organizations in acquiring, vetting, trusting, and using data in their work. Other survey questions examine how organizational dynamics impact the adoption of data-driven

journalism techniques inside the newsroom; the unequal distribution of computational and data resources; and how right to information policies and related legislation that struggles with the transparency of open-government data is related to the adoption and ethics of data-driven journalism.

At this writing, the survey remains open. This working paper is based on preliminary descriptive analysis of the first wave of 61 completed responses. The complete survey questionnaire is available upon request.

Findings

Demographics and newsroom characteristics

Preliminary results from the survey include 61 respondents from 22 countries or territories, most from developed nations, with the United States alone representing 44%. But 21% are from countries in the global south, including Bangladesh, Ghana, El Salvador, Brazil, Mongolia, Guam, India, Pakistan, Vietnam, and Kenya. Viewed through an alternate prism, 67% of respondents are from countries in the upper quartile of the United Nations Human Development Index, a composite of metrics on health and lifespan, education, and standard of living; 17% were in the second quartile, 10% in the third quartile, and 7% in the lower quartile.

In terms of media type, more than two-thirds of respondents work in print (36%) or online media (28%), with 10% in broadcast and another 10% freelance. Notably, 41% of the respondents report working at nonprofit news organizations. Also, more than half (52.5%) indicate they work at national media organizations. Selected demographics are available in Table 1 below.

Data journalism is not always a full-time newsroom job, and these figures reflect that. While about half of respondents (49.2%) describe their current positions as data journalists or data reporters, 19.7% are general reporters and 14.8% are editors or news managers. Only 3.3 percent are developers or designers. Moreover, more than half of the respondents (55.9%)

report working in newsrooms with three or fewer people working on data journalism projects. Almost a fourth (23.7%) work in newsrooms with between three and 10 people assigned to data work, and 20.3% are in newsrooms with 10 or more such individuals. Individuals at two news organizations – one in the United States and one in the United Kingdom – report having 50 or more people assigned to working on data journalism efforts. Although most of the largest newsroom data infrastructures are reported by respondents from the U.S. and other western nations, there are large data teams reported in Turkey (one respondent reporting 12 and another 20 people working on data projects), and Bangladesh and Ghana (one respondent in each country reporting 10 data journalists in the newsroom).

Perceptions of professional roles and data journalism

In keeping with other surveys of journalists, respondents were asked about the importance of various news media functions, and they hold similar views about their role as journalists. Across the board, they strongly support the work of monitoring and scrutinizing political leaders, 80.3% characterizing that as extremely or very important and 78.7% voicing support for providing information people need to make political decisions. There is also strong support for providing news that attracts largest audience and providing audiences with the most information (72.1% extremely or very important on both questions), and somewhat lesser support for monitoring and scrutinizing businesses and being a detached observer (67.2% on both).

Like other journalists, data journalists in this survey are much less likely to support activist roles. Only about half believe it is extremely or very important to advocate for social change (51.0%) or motivate people to participate in political and civic activity (50.8%), and there is much less support for other roles, including influencing public opinion (39.4%), supporting national development (31.1%), setting the political agenda (26.2%), supporting government policies (11.5%), and conveying a positive image of political and business leaders (9.9%).

Respondents were provided with a variety of definitions of data journalism following the aforementioned theoretical frameworks. The journalists do not strongly favor one definition over another but give strong support to “journalism that combines the traditional journalistic approach with the use of digital tools” (mean of 4.23 on a scale of 1 to 5), “journalism that uses data to enrich news stories” (M=4.18), “journalism that gives meaning to large volumes of data” (M=4.10), and “applying computational tools and methods to make sense of data” (M=4.03). Respondents gave somewhat lower rankings to “journalism that observes the culture of transparency in the presentation of data” (M=3.59) and “applying computational tools and methods to help readers explore large data sets” (M=3.31).

Journalists in the survey strongly endorse the idea that data journalism provides audiences with relevant knowledge as citizens, but they are less supportive of notions of an audience actively involved in making meaning from data. Only about half of the respondents agree or strongly agree that the public is a productive and interactive part of the journalistic process, (50.8%, M=3.57) and that the public should be able to analyze and draw understanding from data themselves, (49.2%, M=3.34).

Sources and trust in data

Initial survey responses indicate that data journalists continue to rely heavily on official sources for the data they use in their work. An overwhelming majority, 93.5%, rank public institutions and authorities as important or very important (mean 4.52 on a scale of 1-5), with top sources being federal governments (M=4.11), and local governments (M=3.93). Ranking as less important are international government organizations (M=3.33), local NGOs (M=3.27), international NGOs (M=3.10), and businesses (M=2.98 for local and M=2.95 for international). Here too, responses point to a degree of skepticism about the value of audiences as sources (M=2.93); social media (M=3.21) and online crowdsourcing (M=2.92) also rank relatively low.

This hierarchy of perceived importance is reflected in actual practice, with respondents reporting they obtain data most often by downloading it from government websites (M=4.49 vs. M=4.00 from other online sources). Only 27.9% of respondents indicate using online platforms for crowdsourcing of data (M=2.79). Other notable results: barely half (50.9%) report always or often filing formal requests under public access laws to collect data (M=3.43), and only 39.4% do so with automatic data collection and storage (M=2.90).

Although data journalists report high levels of using public data, their levels of trust in that data are lower, with 72.1% of survey respondents saying they trust public institutions completely or somewhat (M=3.75), and the numbers dropping from there: federal governments (M=3.61); international NGOs (M=3.56); local businesses (M=2.69); audiences (M=2.67); online crowdsourcing (M=2.62); and social media (M=2.38).

Survey responses also reveal data journalists' frustration with the state of public data and barriers to using it. Only 44.2% indicated they are extremely or very satisfied with access to data (M=3.26). Respondents gave lower rankings to the amount of data available (M=3.11), the quality of data available (M=3.07); ease of data accessibility (M=2.70); and ease of data searchability (M=2.54). Among other major barriers, according to respondents, official data is not clean (M=3.33), not well organized (M=3.25), not in usable formats (M=3.03), and not reliable (M=2.85).

Use of data in journalistic practice

Finally, this survey probed how often and in what ways journalists use data in their work. It is clear from the initial results that higher-level data skills are still in sporadic use in newsrooms around the world. More than three-fourths of respondents (78.7%) reported using advanced spreadsheet skills every day or 2-3 times a week, but the corresponding figures are much lower for using programming languages (39.4%), GIS or network analysis (23.7%), and statistical analysis or machine learning (8.2%).

Journalists report using data most often to find new stories (M=4.26), but also to confirm or validate stories (M=4.10) and to illustrate existing stories (M=4.02). In terms of transparency, respondents demonstrate a high level of support for basic citing of data sources (M=4.75), but they are less apt to provide further explanation to their audiences: how they gathered the data (M=3.87), how they analyzed it (M=3.59); and providing access to the raw data (M=2.95) or to the code/algorithm used in gathering and processing data (M=2.26).

Regarding the continued development of data journalism practices in newsrooms, respondents identified a number of barriers to diffusion, most notably the lack of transparency in public institutions (78.6%), the lack of statistical knowledge (70.5%), the lack of digitally published records (65.6%), and newsroom organizational issues (65.6).

Discussion and Conclusion

This paper reports the initial findings from a cross-national survey designed to explore the types of data-driven journalism practices in global newsrooms, the organizational dynamics affecting the adoption of data journalism, the unequal distribution of computational and data resources, and external factors influencing the practice of data journalism. In particular, the aim of this research is to fill a void in existing research with comparative findings on data journalism. While the preliminary nature of the data does not permit conclusive generalizations, the distribution of responses includes 22 different countries with widely varying demographic characteristics. A preponderance of respondents in western newsrooms, and particularly in newsrooms with higher levels of reported data resources, might suggest a slow diffusion of data-driven journalistic practices to nations with lesser-resourced news media and policy environments. Further, the fact that spreadsheets are the tool most widely reported in the survey is evidence of the degree to which more cutting-edge practices such as programming and statistical analysis have yet to take hold.

Moreover, journalists of all stripes in this survey report major external barriers to their work in the form of insufficient data availability, lack of transparency in government, and lack of reliability in the data that is available. At the same time, data journalists themselves demonstrate varying levels of commitment to transparency in their own work, with strong support for traditional citing of sources but less support in practice for providing raw data to audiences or for disclosing how data is collected and analyzed.

In terms of data journalists' epistemological orientation, the preliminary evidence here suggests continued adherence to traditional professional role conceptions and journalistic practices. Across numerous survey items, respondents clearly revealed skepticism about an active audience role in data journalism. Such attitudes reflect a resilient allegiance to journalistic expertise in the face of networked practices such as crowdsourcing and use of social media. The lower levels of support for more robust transparency practices, mentioned previously, also reflect this orientation. Ultimately, the audience is not yet reflected in these results as an active co-creator of data journalism.

These conclusions, however, must be considered in the context of the small sample size (N=61). As noted, the results reported here are preliminary ones based on an initial wave of survey data, and more generalizable claims will be possible with further data collection.

Table 1. Demographics of Data Journalists (*N*=61)

Gender	
Male	59.0
Female	41.0
Birth year	
18-24	8.2
25-34	37.7
35-44	31.1
45-54	11.5
55-64	9.8
65 and older	1.6
Median age in years	35
Education	
High school	1.6
College degree	37.7
Graduate degree	60.6
Country of residence	
United States	44.3
Turkey	11.5
Germany	4.9
Other	39.3
Media type	
Broadcast	9.9
Print	36.0
News agency	3.3
Online only	27.9
Freelance	9.8
Other	13.1
Media reach	
National	52.5
Regional	18.0
Local	14.8
International	14.8
Role in newsroom	
Data journalist/reporter	49.2
General reporter	19.7
Editor/news manager	14.8
Developer/designer	3.3
Other	13.1

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Empirical study and developments towards an effective and efficient generation and use of thematic maps in media

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Abstract

This article aims at a better understanding of the design of a specific type of thematic maps, the so-called choropleth maps. These maps are used to represent quantitative values associated with an area reference. Since media maps demand for a very fast and intuitive visual perception of map content, a couple of design requirements have to be taken into account. In this contribution, three of them will be addressed: the intuitive ranking or association of color lightness with attribute values (so-called dark-is-more bias), the effect of neglecting small areas because those are visually less dominant compared to larger areas (area-size bias), and consideration of data classification during the comparison of spatial patterns (data-classification bias). An online study with 260 participants could confirm the underlying hypotheses. Based on these findings, a so far missing, simplified workflow for choropleth map design could be derived.

Keywords

Thematic map; choropleth map; data classification; map design; color schemes; usability

1 Introduction

Maps are an important way of presenting spatial information in both print and online media. Graphic elements and symbols are excellent means of communicating information in a compact manner. Not only data processing and analysis steps are performed by (data) journalists, but also the visualization of results. In this context Wallace (2016: 95) states that it is necessary “to provide editors and reporters with easy tools – outside of a traditional geospatial program like ArcGIS – for making simple maps.” However, he also notices that the “number of journalists capable of using new tools is greater than the number of those who know how to use them.” (Wallace, 2016: 152)

This article therefore aims at a better understanding of the design of a specific type of thematic maps, the so-called choropleth maps. *Choropleth maps* are used to represent quantitative values associated with an area reference (enumeration unit) – for example, for depicting population density values per counties. There are no generally accepted standards, workflows, or tools that provide consistently satisfactory effectiveness and efficiency in both creation and use of media choropleth maps. Also, empirical studies related to the use of choropleth maps in media – also considering special characteristics like short display time, use on different devices, or interaction with text elements – are missing so far.

Many applications, including using media maps, demand for a very fast and intuitive visual perception of map content. *Visual perception* is here understood as the organization, identification and interpretation of sensory information (Ward et al. 2015: 73). Accordingly, a couple of design requirements have to be taken into account in order to support these operations (section 2). In this article, three elementary design aspects for choropleth maps will be addressed – leading to the following research questions:

- Is there an intuitive ranking or association of color lightness with attribute values?
- How strong is the effect of neglecting small areas because those are visually less dominant compared to larger areas or are simply overseen?
- Is there a sufficient consideration of data classification during the comparison of spatial patterns?

For answering these questions, an on-line study with 260 participants was conducted together with the German news agency *dpa infographik* and the news website *SPIEGEL ONLINE* (section 3). Statistical testing was applied in order to verify the underlying hypotheses and to evaluate possible correlations with user groups. Taking these results into account, a general design workflow for choropleth maps has been developed (section 4), followed by most important conclusions (chapter 5).

2 Choropleth maps

2.1 Definition

Choropleth maps are used to visualize area-related, normalized data on a cardinal or ordinal scale with different colors or hatching (Slocum et al. 2009). In more detail:

- area-related: The areas under consideration are built not in a data-driven manner, but formed over pre-defined, usually administrative regions (enumeration units).

- normalized: Since the use of absolute values (e.g., population numbers) in combination with different area sizes leads to misinterpretations (i.e., smaller regions with intensive color values are underestimated), choropleth maps should represent normalized values (e.g., population densities).
- cardinal or ordinal scale: Choropleth maps basically represent numbers or at least ordered values (such as suitability classes) by a correspondingly arranged color scheme. The representation of data at nominal scale (e.g., land use classes) follows a different approach of coloring (intentionally without ranking).
- colors and hatching: The rule for the representation in choropleth maps is a sequential color (or hatching) scheme in which a perceptible order is generated with a constant hue via a linear change of the color brightness (possibly also the color saturation). In order to allow a higher number of distinguishable classes, more colors can be used (multi-hued), but still with continuous change of color brightness (for example, from light yellow to dark red). Challenges in the context of color design are discussed in section 2.2.

Main objective of choropleth maps is the visual communication of spatial distributions (Monmonier 1974; Mersey 1990) – this includes the detection of global or local extreme values, comparison of values of two or more regions, estimation of hot / cold spots, assessment of global or local homogeneity or heterogeneity, estimation of central tendency (according to mean value), estimation of global patterns (e.g. north-south divide), or comparison of patterns in two maps.

The representation of attribute data in choropleth maps can be done either unclassified or classified. The latter, more commonly used, has advantages in terms of overview and readability due to the limited number of classes and respective color values. For such a *data classification*, i.e., the transformation of original values into intervals, there are different methods - e.g. the division according to the same value intervals (equidistant), equally occupied groups (quantiles), the setting of class boundaries at gaps in the range of values (natural breaks or Jenks optimal) or the use of arithmetic, geometric or harmonic progression. Challenges in the context of data classification are also discussed in section 2.2.

2.2 Design challenges

2.2.1 Color scheme

A key design issue is the choice of a suitable color scheme. There are some rules and recommendations regarding the **distinctiveness of color** in the literature that mainly depend on the type of data to be displayed (e.g., Brewer 1994; Slocum et al. 2009). There are tools such as *ColorBrewer* (Harrower & Brewer 2003) that support map makers with corresponding pre-defined color schemes. In addition, there are other aspects such as aesthetics, color associations, color vision problems or intended use for choosing an appropriate scheme (Slocum et al. 2009). Brychtova & Coltekin (2015), based on eye tracking analysis, confirmed the hypothesis that large color differences increase the reading accuracy. For a good differentiability of six or more classes a distance of $\Delta E_{00} = 10$ or more was recommended (ΔE_{00} being the Euclidian color distance in the color space CIEDE 2000 of the International Commission of Illumination, CIE).

Closely related to the distinctiveness of colors, the **intuitive ranking of colors** is required for visual comparison purposes in choropleth maps. This is normally achieved by varying the intensity or saturation with one (or more) constant hues (single-hue, multi-hue). In textbooks (such as Robinson

et al. 1984), the assignment of light colors to small values and dark colors to high values was recommended (so-called *dark is-more bias*). However, there is little or outdated empirical work on this recommendation. For example, McGranaghan (1996) confirmed this bias by using monochrome displays only. Some studies also addressed the influence of background, contrast and opacity (e.g., McGranaghan 1989; Schloss et al. 2018), which may lead to a reduction of the dark-is-more bias. But again, studies could not reveal unique or transferable results.

Choropleth maps have the problem that larger regions receive a higher **visual weight** than smaller regions (so-called *area-size bias*). This overemphasis is mentioned in the literature (e.g., Dent 1999; Speckmann & Verbeck 2010), in most cases with identifying alternatives to avoid this effect. For example, equal-area cartograms as grid or hexagon tile maps, either as single- or multi-element approximations, can be applied (Slocum et al. 2009).

Because the intuitive dark-is-more and area-size biases are crucial for further interpretation tasks, they will be treated in the following empirical study (section 3).

2.2.2 Data classification

The topic of data classification is comprehensively treated in literature – here reference is made to the reviews by Cromley & Cromley (1996) or Coulsen (1987). It is well known that the choice of the data classification method has a significant influence on the class membership (Monmonier, 1991) – fig. 1 demonstrates the effect of two typical classification methods for one and the same data set. This influence continues on the visual perception, the interpretation and ultimately on the decision-making by the user.

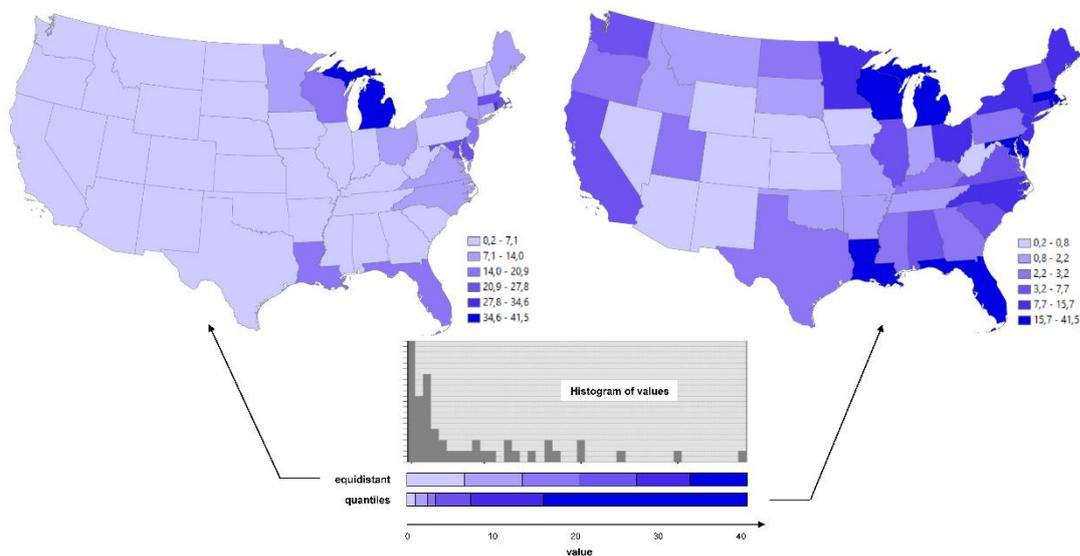


Fig. 1: One data set (Tiger US States boundary file, Proportion of water at total area, in %) – using two data classification methods: Left map (equidistant) suggests uniform behavior with very few outliers, while right map (quantiles) suggests more variety and higher values in general

The classification method includes a variety of parameters and decisions, such as the

- transformation rule (see above: equidistant, etc.),
- number of classes (also depending on visually separable classes),
- presentation of border classes (open vs. closed),
- treatment of outliers (omit, present in own class, merge with other values),
- allowance of no-value classes,
- change the order from big to small (with different, subjective color perception).

Since there is neither a default nor "the" correct method for this, the data classification step very often contributes to unintentional falsification or even intentional manipulation. Several empirical studies were also concerned with the comparison of classification methods for answering typical map use tasks (e.g., Goldsberry & Battersby 2009; Brewer & Pickle 2002). A couple of non-spatial measures (such as within-class homogeneity or between-class heterogeneity) were defined to describe the resulting statistical uncertainty due to the classification process (Jenks & Caspall 1971; Dent 1999; Schiewe 2018). On the other hand, the influence of different classification methods and results on the visual perception is hardly investigated. Hence, this aspect will be treated in this article (section 3).

Furthermore, the aforementioned, commonly used classification methods are data driven, i.e., the intervals are determined solely on the basis of the existing frequency distribution of the original values. The spatial context of the underlying data, which is important for many questions, is completely neglected in such a classification along the number line. Thus, information about spatial relationships or patterns (or desired statements of a map) can be lost. In practice, a manual-subjective selection of several options is used to handle this problem. The research project aChor therefore develops new task-oriented classification methods that can preserve specific spatial patterns (such as local extreme values, hot / cold spots, large value differences between neighbors, clusters) to an optimum degree (Chang & Schiewe, 2018).

3 Empirical study

In the following, an empirical study dealing with basic design elements is summarized. For more details on this study refer to Schiewe (2019).

3.1 Hypotheses

As mentioned before, the visual perception based on maps – and media maps in particular – needs special consideration of effectiveness and efficiency due to the short presentation duration. Hence, choropleth maps should be designed for an intuitive usage, which also includes as little usage of legends as possible. Therefore, in the following study maps were firstly shown without legends in order to test intuitiveness.

In this contribution, the focus will be on the following three design elements – together with the related research hypotheses:

- (1) Dark-is-more bias**, i.e. the intuitive association of color lightness with attribute values:

- (H1.1): *Even without a legend, the darkest color hue is associated with the largest data value (and lightest hue with smallest value).*
- (H1.2): *Providing a legend, the correct association of dark (light) color values to large (small) data values is further improved.*

(2) Area-size bias, i.e. the neglect of small areas in extreme value detection:

- (H2.1): *Without a legend very small areas with global extreme values are often missed.*
- (H2.2): *Providing a legend very small areas with global extreme values are still (but less frequently) missed.*

(3) Data-classification bias, i.e. the consideration of data classification along with the comparison of spatial patterns:

- (H3.1): *Without a legend, spatial patterns (here: central tendency, homogeneity) are primarily classified according to the related color intensities – without questioning the underlying data classification.*
- (H3.2): *Even with a legend, spatial patterns are primarily classified according to the related color intensities – without questioning the underlying data classification.*

3.2 Study design

The study was designed as a quantitative on-line study. It was advertised through the general communication channels of our project partners *dpa infografik* and *SPIEGEL ONLINE*. The survey was online for about eight weeks. The study was in German language only. In total, 260 participants took part.

After a short introduction into the survey, some questions related to user characteristics were asked. With respect to cartographic skills, the majority of participants grouped themselves in the class of school knowledge (52 %), followed by experts (43 %) and laymen (5 %). Most of the participants saw themselves in the role of a user (69 %), 7 % as a producer only and the remaining 24 % as producer and user. Nearly half of the participants used a desktop monitor as display device (49 %), followed by smartphones (37 %), tablets (12 %), and others (2 %). Further demographic characteristics were not queried.

For each hypothesis one or more maps in connection with single or multiple-choice questions were presented (concrete tasks are given in section 3.3). In total, 14 maps were used, all of them having the States of the United States of America as geographical reference. By purpose, map topics were not mentioned. The default data classification used six classes as typical setting. Color schemes were designed according to *Colorbrewer* schemes (Harrower & Brewer 2003). In order to avoid learning effects, all maps without legends were displayed firstly, followed by all maps with legends. After each block of hypotheses, the users were asked how safe they felt with their answers (single choice question, 5 classes).

The answers were counted – in total, but also in subgroups by taking the user and usage characteristics (cartographic skills, roles, display devices) into account. Because in all cases the type of answers were either at nominal or ordinal scale, χ^2 - or Fisher tests (depending on the number of entries in the contingency tables) were conducted in order to evaluate differences between tasks or groups. A level of significance of $\alpha = 5\%$ is assumed. In addition, the overall degree of certainty was calculated as weighted mean of the five options (with 1 = “very certain”, etc.).

3.3 Results and discussion

3.3.1 Dark-is-more bias

The task was to detect the enumeration unit showing the minimum (or maximum) value in a given map; firstly without, after that by using a legend (fig. 2).

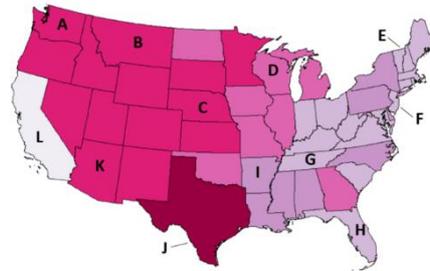


Fig. 2: Study task: Detection of maximum value without a given legend (correct answer: "J")

Fig. 3 shows the detection rates, also according to separate user skills. Without showing a legend, 92.7 % (identification of maximum value) resp. 85.4 % (minimum value) correct answers were given. Surprisingly, a significant difference between these tasks occurred with the group of experts ($p=0.006/\chi^2$), having the worst rate of 82.9 % for the second task. It seems that many persons in this group were just too fast – smallest values in the eastern part were detected, while the absolute minimum in the West was missed quite often. Another reason for this could be a too optimistic self-assessment of "experts". For all other combinations of groups and tasks, no significant differences could be observed. The overall grade of certainty was 1.92 (close to 2 = "certain"). All in all, (H1.1) can be verified based on the rate of correct answers of about 90 %.

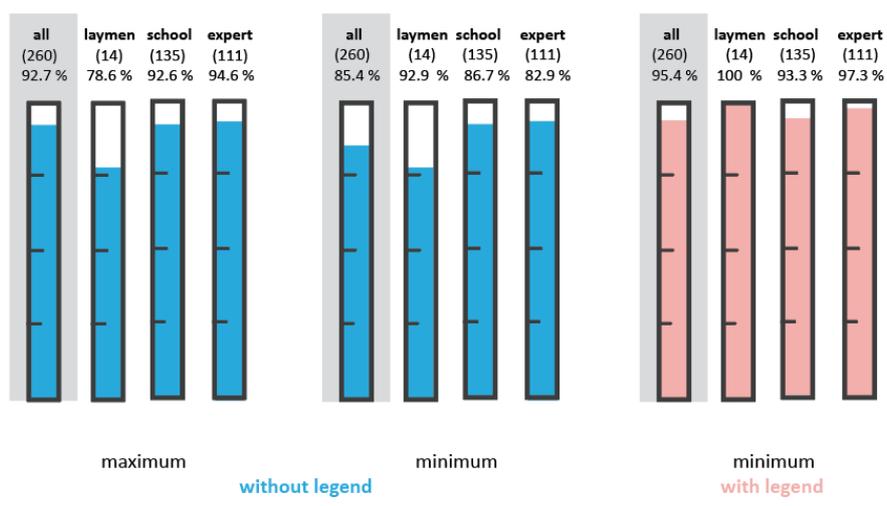


Fig. 3: Detection rates in the context of dark-is-more bias: differentiation between cartographic skills ("all", etc.), with number of participants in brackets; percentage value represents correct answers; further differentiation between tasks (maximum or minimum detection, without or with legend)

Introducing a legend improved the level of correctness for finding the minimum value to 95.4 % (a maximum detection was not performed anymore). Compared to the same scenario without legend (85.4 %) this corresponds to a significant difference ($p < 0.001/\chi^2$). Again, significant differences between groups could not be detected. The overall grade of certainty increased from 1.92 to 1.33. Even if a certain learning effect is taken into consideration, (H1.2) can be verified based on these results.

All in all, a high intuitive and successful interpretation of extreme values for more than 90 % of all cases could be observed based on the proposed dark-is-more bias. Surprisingly, maximum detection was significantly better than minimum detection – this effect might be due to the fact the maximum detection is performed more often; however, this should be further investigated. Despite this high success rates, a legend is still recommended for optimized interpretation, even if a determination of exact values is not required.

3.3.2 Area-size bias

The task was to detect the enumeration unit showing two minimum (or maximum) values in a given map - the correct units were characterized by very different area sizes; firstly without, after that by using a legend (fig. 4).

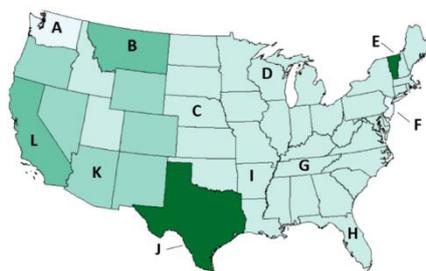


Fig. 4: Study task: Detection of minimum values without a given legend (correct answers: "A" and "F")

Without legends, correct answers for the detection of multiple extreme values were 66.5 % (for finding maximum values) and 55.8 % (for minimum values; fig. 5). In both cases the *large areas* with extreme values were well detected – with success rates of 91.5 % (maximum values) and 91.9 % (minimum) – this is well comparable to the rates observed before with the dark-is-more bias. On the other hand, the *small areas* had detection rates of only 71.5 % (maximum) and 60.0 % (minimum) – which in both cases is significantly different to the large areas ($p < 0.001/\chi^2$). Surprisingly, the overall certainty rate of users slightly improved from 1.92 (H1.1) to 1.89. With that, (H2.1) – the area-size bias – could be verified: Small areas were missed by approximately 30 % to 40 % of map users, which is definitely too much.

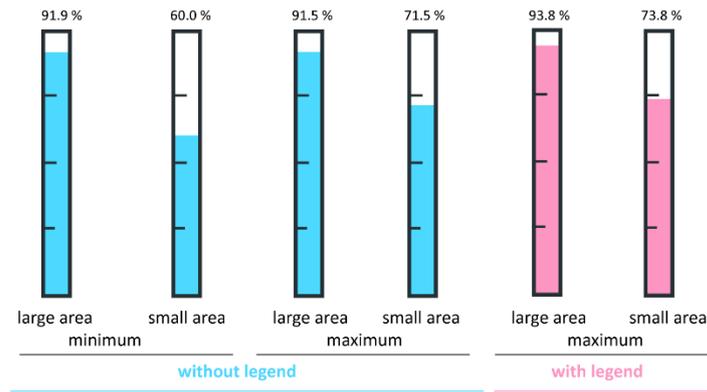


Fig. 5: Detection rates in the context of area-size bias: all users; percentage value represents correct answers; differentiation between detection of large and small areas within one example

Providing a legend led to an increase in the detection rate of extreme values within small areas (fig. 5). However, in all cases there was still a significant difference to large area detection ($p < 0.001/\chi^2$). At this point, a learning effect could be observed: Looking at the results in a chronological order of the experiments, an increase in the small area detection from 66.5 % to 81.9 % appeared. The overall level of subjective certainty increased from 1.89 (H2.1) to 1.46 (H2.2).

Summarizing these results, one can also verify (H2.2): There was an increase in the detection of small areas; however, this error around 15 % to 25 % was probably also due to a learning effect and was still clearly larger than the one for large areas (5 % to 10 %).

In order to overcome the area-size bias, a couple of alternatives to choropleth maps – namely, equal-area (Slocum et al., 2009), area-by-value (Dent 1999), or value-by-alpha cartograms (Roth et al., 2010) – have been proposed. However, from a theoretical point of view there is no “perfect” solution as localization is hampered, and topology or shape might be disturbed. As an example, fig. 6 demonstrates topology and shape distortion of the equal-area method. As a consequence, spatial patterns cannot be determined with necessary accuracy.

Much more comparative empirical research is needed to find (sub-)optimal solutions for avoiding the are-size bias. Independent variables will be, aside from alternative map types, different base map geometries (such as number of islands, number of polygons, or interval of areas sizes), and different class numbers. Dependent variables are the effectiveness and efficiency for typical tasks such as localization of spatial units and detection of spatial patterns.

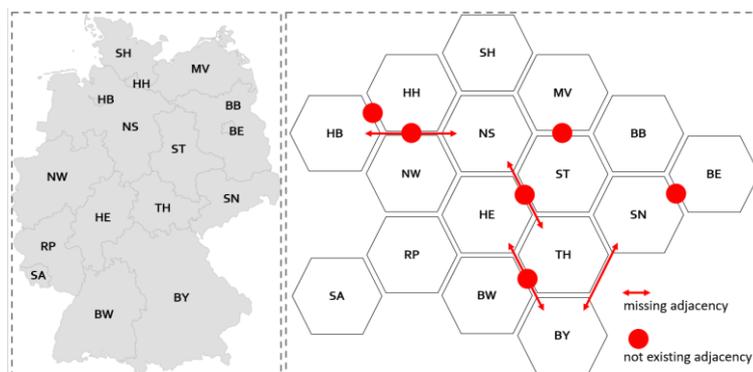


Fig. 6: Equal-area cartogram map of Germany (right) produces topological errors (red circles and arrows) and shape distortion (indicated by dashed overall outline, in comparison to “correct” shape, left)

3.3.3 Data-classification bias

The task was to compare spatial patterns (central tendency or homogeneity of data values) in two side-by-side maps (fig. 7).

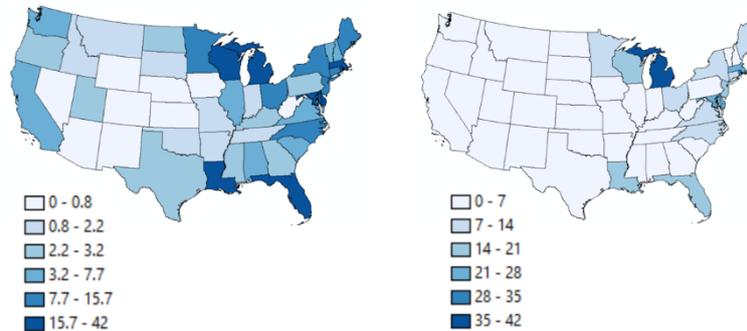


Fig. 7: Study task: Compare central tendency (global mean) with given legends (showing different class limits)

For comparing the central tendency (“identify map with larger values on average”) firstly no legends were given. Taking the theoretical case of different classifications into account, the correct answer should be “don’t know”. However, only 3.8 % took this choice. The majority (93.1 %) selected that map that showed an overall darker appearance (fig. 8). Also, for comparing the homogeneity (“identify map with more homogeneous values”) the strict correct answer should be “don’t know”. Only 6.2 % chose this option, while 65.8 % took the one according to the more homogeneous color impression. The overall certainty index of 2.22 (with only 8.9 % in the “not certain” or “very uncertain” group) confirms that pattern interpretation is a more challenging task compared to the ones before.

Hypothesis (H3.1) could be confirmed. The underlying, actual data classification is not questioned by about 95 % of the participants. If one neglects this aspect (and assumes identical class limits), the interpretation of central tendency based on the global distribution of related color intensities was performed mainly correct. However, error rates for homogeneity detection were significantly worse.



Fig. 8: Detection rates in the context of data-classification bias: all users; percentage value represents either strictly correct answers (“correct”) or answers based on lightness impression (“impression”); case (*) with 10 classes, all others with 6 classes

In the case of providing a legend, it has to be considered that – by purpose – different class limits were used for the left and right map. Consequently, a comparison of central tendency is nearly impossible. For the three examples (with 4, 6, and 10 classes) only 15.2 %, 8.9 %, and 16.7 % of the participants selected the strictly correct answer “don’t know”. The majority (43.6 %, 50.6 %, 47.9%) still relied on the dominant color lightness, neglecting the different class limits. A similar result was obtained for the homogeneity comparison (10 classes): Only 17.9 % voted for “don’t know”, while 46.7 % made their choice according to the perception of homogeneous lightness. Experts realized the problem of different class limits more often than the other groups. Obviously, these pattern interpretation tasks were the most difficult ones, including the additional (and eventually also confusing) effect of different class limits. Accordingly, the overall certainty level was only 2.79.

All in all, hypothesis (H3.2) could be verified. While there is a good intuition during the global interpretation based on lightness differences, this takes place without questioning the underlying data classification by more than 90 % of users (without legend) and 80 % (with legend). The data-classification bias is closely linked to an appropriate visualization, in particular, the distinctiveness of color intensities. As there are still problems for certain display devices, the number of classes should be kept as small as possible, in particular when (small) monitor displays are used.

4 Choropleth map design workflow

Based on basic textbook knowledge together with findings from this study concerning the three biases, a simplified workflow (fig. 9) for the practical design of choropleth maps can be developed that aims to overcome the so far missing guidelines.

A first decision is necessary regarding the **area-size bias**: Here the map author has to decide on the basis of data properties and domain knowledge, if such a bias can occur and is relevant for the interpretation. If this is the case, choropleth maps show significant perceptual disadvantages as the previous study has proven. But as mentioned before, much more comparative empirical research is needed to find (sub-)optimal solutions for avoiding the area-size bias by selecting from the different options such as equal-area, area-by-value, or value-by-alpha cartograms.

Also for the **treatment of outliers**, in addition to a pure statistical analysis, the domain expertise should influence the decision. For example, depending on the application, statistical outliers can be of great interest and therefore be grouped in a separate class. Alternatively, however, there are also impossible or not interesting extreme values which, for practical reasons, cannot occur at all and therefore have to be eliminated. It is also possible that extreme values can be grouped together with other large (small) values; however by marking them with additional symbols (such as flags) they can be still highlighted.

For the choice of the **class number** (and the associated **color scheme**) five classes were defined as threshold value. This value is certainly debatable, especially against the background of the variance and size of various output displays. In any case, especially for media maps due to the limited, viewing time the number of classes should be kept rather small. In general, a sequential color scheme (i.e., one or more hues, with increasing brightness) is to be considered in all cases, taking into account the dark-is-more bias.

The actual selection of a **data classification method** starts with the decision whether (and which) spatial patterns are of interest. Because conventional classification methods do not pay attention to spatial properties and do not guarantee their preservation, it is recommended to apply advanced methods that explicitly consider spatial context and show improved preservation rates – as developed in the *aChor* project (Chang & Schiewe 2018). On the other hand, if spatial patterns are not visible or not of importance, conventional classification methods can be applied based on the actual data distribution. However, it is recommended to compare different options in order to find a good compromise between preservation of data properties and legibility.

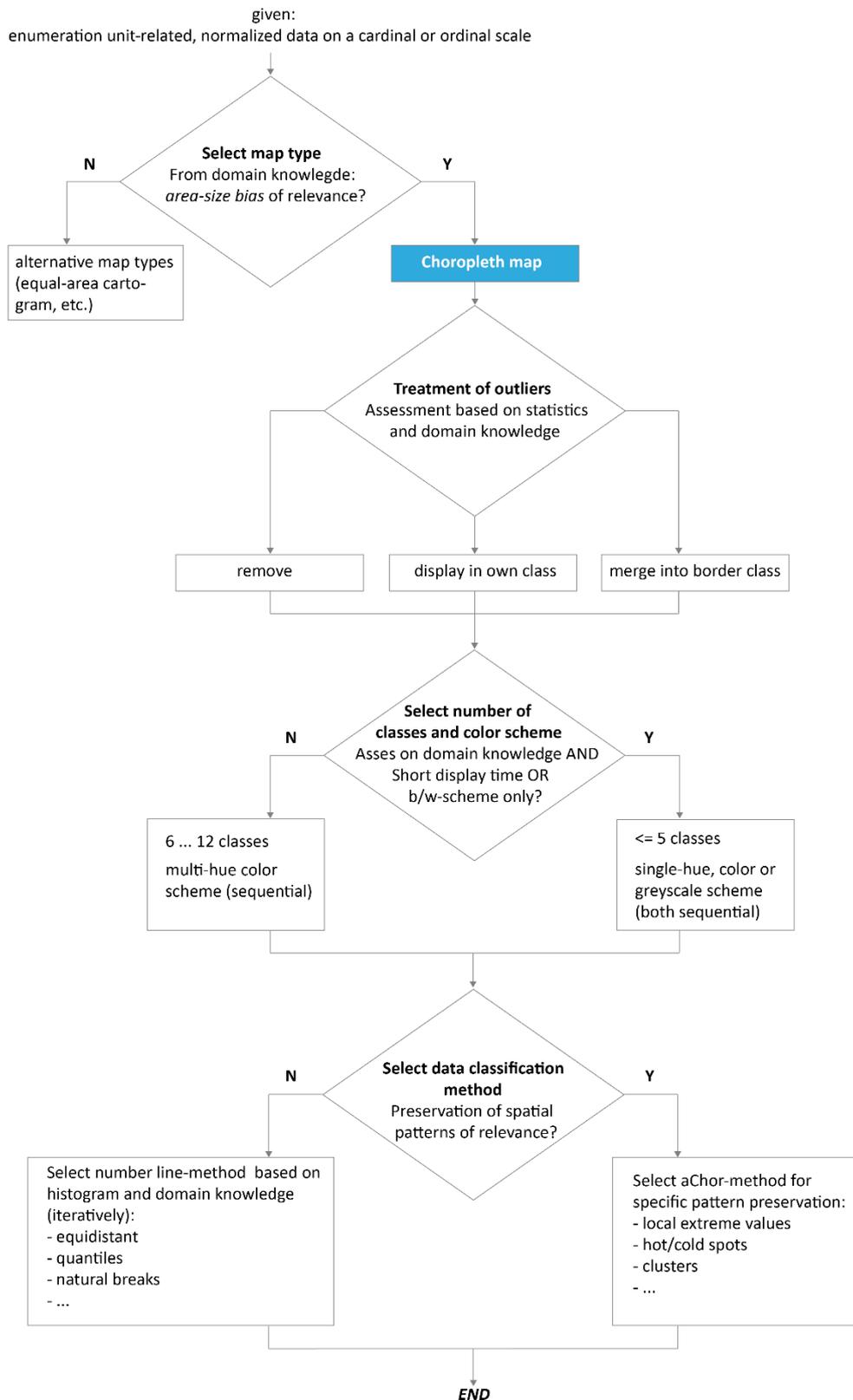


Fig. 9: Simplified workflow for choropleth map design

5 Conclusions

The use of media maps, and choropleth maps in particular, demand for a very fast and intuitive visual perception of map content. Accordingly, a couple of design requirements have to be taken into account. In this article, three elementary design aspects for choropleth maps – namely, the dark-is-more, area-size and data-classification biases – have been addressed through an empirical study. All in all, the central hypotheses could be verified. Interestingly, in nearly all tasks there were no significant differences for the groups with different cartographic skills. Of course, the within subjects-design of the survey together with no random task order facilitated some learning effects. However, the given sequence avoided confusion about the different tasks. Although some learning effects are assumed, this did not influence the overall trend of the results.

Although no major surprises occurred, the study now delivered a so far missing empirical evidence for key aspects in the context of visual perception of spatial distributions in choropleth maps.

A couple of detailed empirical studies are still needed in order to further optimize the respective design. For example,

- to evaluate the perception of multi-hue color schemes in contrast to single-hue schemes,
- to assess the impact of different class numbers on successfully detecting extreme values and/or spatial patterns,
- to evaluate the impact of monitor size on successfully detecting extreme values and/or spatial patterns, or
- to find parameters for selecting most effective and efficient alternatives to choropleth maps in the case of a relevant area-size bias.

Based on these findings, a so far missing, simplified design workflow for choropleth maps was proposed. It covers the relevant design aspects; however, at some points, more detailed rules and recommendations are necessary. Besides the aforementioned selection of alternatives to choropleth maps due to the area-size biases, less general statements in the course of treating outliers, selecting class numbers and selecting classification methods are needed for a faster and more objective usage of such a workflow.

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III. Teaching and Training

Taking stock of crossborder journalism education in times of cross-border collaboration

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Abstract

In an interconnected world, it is a crucial competence for journalists to be capable of collaborating with colleagues in other countries. Yet journalism studies and education are generally still firmly rooted within national curricula.

Crossborder collaborations such as Panama Papers, Football Leaks or CumExFiles provide powerful testimony of what is possible. Broadcast organizations and news publishers consider such projects as a competitive advantage in the race to provide unique content.

In this presentation, we gather case studies about crossborder journalism education initiatives, exemplifying an emerging motivation for – and process of – newswork (greatly facilitated by new technologies), connecting place with placelessness in contemporary journalism.

We define crossborder collaborative journalism along the criteria of Reese where “the producers, users and subjects need not, and often do not, share a common national orientation” (2007), and Alfter’s (2019) four criteria of 1) journalists from different countries 2) collaborating on a topic or case, 3) sharing their findings and 4) publishing to each their audience.

We propose a theoretical and practical framework for teaching cross-border competences, based on three concrete cases (Gothenburg, NEWSREEL, European Media Cloud Campus).

On this panel, scholars, journalism educators and practitioners specialised in crossborder collaborative journalism gather to discuss best practices.

Introduction

The context in which journalism is carried out is changing at fast pace, severely affecting the journalist's experiences. This includes increasingly precarious relations between journalists and publishers, increasing use of digital technologies in journalistic research, analysis and publication, and it includes the challenge for journalists to exercise the profession in an interconnected world. It is thus a crucial competence that journalists be capable of (online and offline) collaboration with journalists in other countries (or indeed in other professions and disciplines), yet journalism studies and education are generally firmly rooted within national curricula, just as much as publication strategies of news organizations tend to be oriented toward national (and local) interests. However, this is slowly changing, as crossborder projects are gaining momentum in journalism, various schools and educators begin to collaborate, and news media from different parts of the world join forces to tackle key boundary-crossing issues (such as the international flow of capital, climate change, and the refugee crisis).

The focus of this essay

The focus of this essay is cross-border collaborative journalism, and whether and how it can be integrated into journalism education. Large scale cross-border collaborations such as Panama Papers, Football Leaks or CumExFiles provide powerful examples of what journalism is possible, as do numerous less prominent smaller scale publications. Broadcast organisations and publishers are beginning to consider cross-border journalism competences an asset and a competitive advantage. Academia is picking up on questions, such as cross-border journalism's function as a global fourth estate, and on cross-border journalism's role for and practice regarding intercultural communication.

In this essay, we gather and analyze three case studies about cross-border journalism education initiatives from different parts of Europe, in different settings, with different approaches and thus addressing different aspects of such pedagogical efforts. These aspects include practical issues such as tech set-up, as well as personal issues such as motivation. The perspective of this essay is to distil these aspects from existing case studies for further thought on how to adjust journalism education to the recent developments in the profession toward more international, collaborative, and crossborder newswork.

Disclaimer on approach

The authors of this essay bring among themselves journalism practice, journalism education and academic research thus combining the participant observer position with academic analysis.

A closer look at the background

In an increasingly interconnected world, journalists, media and journalism scholars look and work across borders to fulfil their purpose. These developments sped up along with the

digital capabilities and other developments of the late 20th century and the first decades of the 21st. Observations of societal context cited are primarily the rise of what Jan van Dijk (1993) and Manuel Castells (1996) call ‘networked societies’ within which people – due to the on-going digitalization of media – increasingly lead a ‘networked life’ (Turkle, 2011: 157). A network structure of society is contrasted with a center–periphery and hierarchical mass society, or one that largely conforms to the traditional bureaucratic model of organization of the modern nation-state in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It exhibits numerous overlapping circles of communication that can have both a vertical and a horizontal range – contributing to an increasing degree of complexity and unpredictability of information and communication processes. Such networks can serve to exclude as well as connect, and makes it increasingly difficult for citizens and journalists alike to ‘connect the dots’ and find meaning or consensus about the key issues of the day. James Rosenau’s concept of ‘fraggementation’ (1997, 2008) calls into question the various problems of fragmentation and integration in networked societies.

In this context an internationally oriented and digitally savvy ‘networked journalism’ (Beckett and Mansell, 2008) emerges as a promising way to re-organize (and make relevant) newswork. Media scholars including Stephen D. Reese and Peter Berglez address the question such a ‘global journalism’ (see for example Reese, 2007, 2008 and Berglez 2008, 2013) since the late 1990s. Reese defines global journalism as a practice “that is not necessarily gigantic but carried out in such a way that the producers, users, and subjects need not, and often do not, share a common national orientation” (2007, p. 40). Rather than considering a networked journalism as the work of a single ‘superreporter’ who has a global view, or that of a dedicated newsroom incorporating global voices through a dense network of correspondents and stringers, we define crossborder collaborative journalism along the criteria set out by Reese, as a way for reporters (and others) to work together from different countries, taking advantage of digital affordances, while still making their collaborative work uniquely relevant to their ‘home’ audiences. In doing so, we use Alfter’s (2019) four criteria of crossborder journalism, consisting of:

- 1) journalists from different countries;
- 2) collaborating on a topic or case;
- 3) sharing their findings; and
- 4) publishing to each their audience.

Cross-border collaboration is emerging in journalism, particularly in investigative journalism circles, with the founding of the International Consortium of Investigative Journalism in 1997 as a significant date while not excluding other, earlier less formalized collaborations (Alfter, 2019). The early global investigative journalism conferences in Copenhagen in 2001 and 2003 are further indicators of emerging new journalism networks manifesting themselves on national, continental and global levels in recent years.

By the late 2010s major cross-border collaborative research projects such as the Panama Papers or Implant Files by the ICIJ, Football Leaks or Malta Files by the European Investigative Collaborations network as well as numerous other, smaller projects and publications have proven the power of a collaborative approach. Publishers and broadcast organizations are entering the field to develop unique editorial material and begin considering it a competitive advantage.

Following the developments among practitioners, journalism studies as a field is beginning to follow and analyse the collaborative journalism efforts (Alfter, 2019, pp. 173-183), with interesting new aspects surfacing, such as different cultures of journalism and roles of journalists within them (Meyer, 2019; Hanitzsch, 2019), including critical aspects of intercultural communication (Grzeszyk, 2019). Also the wider implications in societies of cross-border collaborations – large or small – are studied, be that a study of reactions to and impact of cross-border publications (see for example Heft, 2019; Heft, Pfetsch & Alfter, 2017), or be that the study the function of journalism in its fourth estate role in a global context (Gearing & Berglez, 2019).

The emerging practice of cross-border collaborative journalism thus appears to have reached a stage where it is crucial for journalism educators to include cross-border collaborative journalism as a mindset and method (Grzeszyk & Alfter, 2018) and consider it a competence to master and develop. The development aspect is an important one and addresses the changing professional context of journalism – as journalism is both globalizing as it is becoming increasingly precarious (Deuze & Witschge, 2018). Cross-border collaborative journalism is a new development in the profession of journalism, initially it must be considered as journalist-driven in a time, where the relation between journalists and media is changing significantly in Western Europe and the US – where cross-border collaborations are prevalent in the early years. “We find ourselves in a wonderful quagmire: journalism remains the same yet the conditions under which it is practiced have not only changed considerably, they are in permanent flux” (Deuze, 2019, p. 2). Journalism educators thus should prepare students for and stimulate their curiosity into the potential of journalism to (applying Deuze’s words) “further the imagination, creativity, and (paraphrasing Hans-Georg Gadamer) fusion of horizons, and [to perform] a variety of functions (beyond informing citizens) that are necessary for society to thrive” (Deuze, 2019, p. 2). This changing, precarious and altogether challenging media context indicated by Deuze is an essential touchstone for the work with students entering this field as newcomers. It is our contention that crossborder collaboration both addresses the unique challenge of reporting in an interconnected world, and confronts the precarity of journalists by offering new ways of finding material, gathering news, and opening up new markets for newswork.

In the following we will address the question of journalism as a profession and how to teach it, before taking a closer look at a number of actual cases, where cross-border collaborative education has been addressed.

How to develop a profession and how to teach a profession

The overall purpose of this paper is to develop a practice-oriented education of journalists that integrates crossborder collaborative journalism. In terms of education, a key question for us is how we can we develop practice-oriented journalism education systematically simulating a close-to-reality crossborder collaborative work environment, guiding students to develop a cross-border and collaborative mindset, acquire competences and gain first experiences. By practice we mean journalism practice in the classic sense of 'praxis' (as described for example by Meyer, 2012, p. 157), and as a central part of the professional identity of journalists (Hanitzsch 2007; Wiik, 2010).

The establishment of a vocational education has been a crucial tool in the professionalization process of journalism. In fact, journalism education has often been regarded as an antidote to other problems, such as commercialisation, politicised journalism and war propaganda. Journalism schools were established in the progressive era after World War II, and followed the time spirit of independence, criticism and radicalism (Gardeström 2011). Thus, journalism education conveys a multifaceted package of knowledge, ideals and skills. At the core of this we find professional values such as public interest, ethical codes, objectivity and autonomy (Anikina 2015; Wiik 2010, 2014). These values are closely tied to the methods of journalism, and for journalism schools there is a need to revise the curricula so that the core values are being protected and maintained with changing practice. Hovden, Nygren and Zilliakus-Tikkanen (2016: p 16-17) mention a number of contemporary challenges that journalism educations need to acknowledge, pointing to the 'participatory turn' bringing changing relations among journalistic professionals as well as in relation to amateurs. Further, they mention the changing cognitive framework among professionals for understanding journalism, meaning the increasing use of metaphors of teamwork, dialogue, conversation. These transformations emphasise the need for a fresh look at journalism training and how to prepare the students for teamwork, collaborations and a new participation oriented mind-set.

Today, having a journalism degree is usually a rule, both in Sweden and internationally (Pettersson, 2006). The gradual movement of journalism programs from vocational schools to universities around the world (Deuze, 2006) has meant that the notion of journalism as an intellectual activity, requiring special theoretical and practical training, is now commonplace. However, discussions often remain about the emphasis of the programs on practice and theory. A certain antagonism between academic and professional staff of the programs is a widespread phenomenon. Questions about whether journalism is a craft or an intellectual activity are continuously revisited, preventing programs to truly innovate and evolve. What we wish to acknowledge is that the specific areas of digital and data

journalism, as well as cross-border journalism seem to be moving away from this debate. These genres are inherently boundary-crossing ventures, often employing scientific methods, bypassing many disagreements so often found in other journalistic contexts. That said, in the emerging areas of data journalism, cross-border and collaborative journalism most journalism schools and programs still lack enough staff, experience and competence to design coursework and curricula.

In the tradition of human practice in the classic sense and of the development of the journalistic profession as such, we have to acknowledge the need for a certain ‘trial and error’ approach – not least in times of swift changes in the profession of journalism and the media industry as drafted above. A notion of ‘trial and error’ (considered a motto by European journalism educators for a series of conferences – see Harnischmacher, 2019) thus has to be included as a general approach. Providing the wisest approach possible, working closely with the students to guide them, while at the same time observing the process, outcome and evaluation to then make a status, evaluate and adapt. Some of these concepts can also be found in popular notions of ‘design thinking’ and running classes or course sequences as hackathons, sprint sessions, or other approaches taken from the world of startup culture. All of these approaches emphasize iteration, trial and error, constant reflection, and a distinct push to get something done. While solidly grounded in theory (as outlined in this paper), we would advocate such an approach to crossborder collaboration in journalism as it makes an inherently complex concept ‘real’ and practical to the participating students and educators.

The crossborder perspective

Comparative research has exploded within journalism studies, and a wide network of journalism scholars is working to show similarities and differences between and across journalistic cultures. This body of research in part contradicts a global definition of professional journalism as findings show differing occupational ideologies (Hanitzsch et al., 2010; Splichal & Sparks, 1994; Wu & Weaver, 1998) often even within the same country. One of the more comprehensive comparative studies of media in different countries is Hallin and Mancini’s (2004) analysis of media systems in the United States and Europe. According to Hallin and Mancini, there are three indicators regarding the professionalism of national media systems: (a) the degree of autonomy (absence of state, political, and economic restrictions), (b) the existence of professional norms (formal and informal norms that govern journalistic practice), and (c) public service orientation (i.e., to what extent journalists see themselves as acting in public interest). Research comparing media systems and media and journalism’s societal context is increasingly supplemented by research into the profession, including a conceptualisation of the field within three subgroups of professionalism, professional identity, and journalistic roles. On the latter, for example, providing a catalogue of journalistic roles to describe and thus embrace the various and sometimes apparently contradictory perceptions of these roles (Hanitzsch & Örnebring, 2019, p. 114-117), and at the same time emphasising the relation to societal context, that

the notions of professionalism, professional identity, journalistic roles have to be determined in relation to any given society, it is “a question that each society has to answer in its own terms” (Hanitzsch & Örnebring, 2019, p. 118). These considerations are particularly important for cross-border journalism teams and utterly useful for the education in the field, as it provides the relevant academic literature. The awareness of such differences is important for journalism education, so journalism education and journalism practice within a country do not drift apart (read for example Zagidullina, M. 2015)

Summarising, academic analysis of cross-border journalism is emerging alongside the development of comparative journalism studies providing rich material for cross-border collaborative journalism contextualisation and indeed education.

In the following, we present three early examples of cross-border approaches to education in the field of media and journalism. All of them have European focus, which offers useful material: a diversity of languages, journalism traditions and indeed education traditions is present, while at the same time working with students who have common topics to address, all of which in a distinct (and bounded) international context. This paper does not claim a universal validity, yet the diversity mentioned and the comparative case method followed give an insight into structures and processes that may be applicable elsewhere where crossborder journalism education is planned and implemented.

European networks on journalism education

From the outset, it is important to recognize that knowledge sharing and cooperation in European journalism education is not new. Two networks are worth mentioning. The European Journalism Training Association (EJTA) offers an infrastructure for journalism educators and trainers, it “was established in Brussels in 1990. It groups about 70 journalism centers, schools and universities from about 30 countries across Europe. They work together to improve journalism education in Europe, enabling members to collaborate on exchanges and teaching and research projects, and meet regularly to exchange ideas and information” (EJTA “Introduction”, 2019).

Over the years various cooperations have been carried out by EJTA, for example a mapping journalism education in the field of “integrated journalism” (or “multi-media journalism”) in the Integrated Journalism in Europe Project 2013-2015 (Integrated Journalism Results, 2015). Though the focus was on “integrated journalism”, the project provided a European overview in a thorough mapping effort including a literature review, recommendations based upon interviews with media scholars and journalism practitioners in five countries and a database of journalism schools in Europe. Recommendations acknowledge the swift developments of media and journalism contexts, the uncertainties related to these developments, and the European aspects are of relevance, in conclusion it is suggested to further student exchange programmes, inclusion of not only classic media but also new journalism actors and the introduction of entrepreneurial competences (Guyot, Aubert & Zaguy, 2014, p. 16-18).

On the academic level ECREA, the European Communication Research and Education Association, since 2014 has had a working group on Journalism and Communication Education. The group organises annual conferences and shares comparative research into European media education systems, ethics, media competence training, innovative approaches to journalism and media education programs, quality management of professional media education and media education didactics (ECREA, 2019-1, ECREA, 2019-2).

In conclusion, European networking infrastructure is made available for journalism educators by EJTA and for scholars researching journalism education by ECREA with likely overlaps.

This paper does not look at such networks acting on the meta level. Instead, we take an overview over three journalism education projects addressing cross-border collaborative aspects in educational practice. One of the projects is concluded, the other two are still ongoing at the time of publication.

The three cases of journalism education focusing on cross-border collaborative journalism

The three projects presented here are

- *NEWSREEL*, which has the purpose to find and develop new skills for the next generation of journalists, runs from 2017 to 2020 and involves university partners from Hungary, Germany, Portugal and Romania (NEWSREEL, 2019);
- the *European Media Cloud Campus* establishing a shared learning environment between a number of communication educations and ran from 2015-2017 with university partners from Germany, Norway, Turkey, Danmark and the Netherlands (Rinsdorf et al. 2016);
- the *Investigative Journalism Master* programme for data, investigative and cross-border journalism at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, started in 2016, the first master programme in Europe explicitly including cross-border collaborative journalism in its curriculum (Gothenburg Master, 2019).

While being very different in their approaches, these cases share the cross-border mindset addressing different aspects and all potentially shedding light on our initial question: how to develop a practice oriented journalism education in the field. We will address them one by one, summarize their key-features and findings and contextualise them with the purpose of presenting a practical and theoretical framework for crossborder collaborative journalism education.

The NEWSREEL project

The NEWSREEL project involves journalism schools at universities in four countries: the Erich Brost Institute for International Journalism at the Technical University Dortmund, Germany, the University of Pécs, Institute for Communication and Media Studies in Hungary, the

ISCTE-University Institute of Lisbon in Portugal and the University of Bucharest, Faculty of Journalism and Communication Studies in Romania. The purpose of the project is to “improve the skills of a new generation of European journalists” in order to strengthen a “common European democratic public sphere”. The project includes an overview over the context and curricula, the aim of developing e-learning materials and (before the conclusion in 2020) to allow students to carry out a collaborative journalism project.

In 2018 the team of scholars set out to map five aspects of journalism deemed important for the next generation as well as the national journalism curricula:

National context, Data journalism, Collaborative journalism, Innovative business models, Ethical challenges, (Bettels-Schwabbauer et al., 2018, p. ii)

The accompanying research started out with a number of qualitative interviews with journalism educators and journalism professionals in the four partner countries to get an overview over journalism curricula and professional needs, proceeds to addressing each of the fields and developing training material. The project will (after the presentation of this paper), proceed to implement the material in practice in a collaborative journalism project, with students from the universities involved (Bettels-Schwabbauer et al., 2018, p. 6-7).

Country profiles for each of the five aspects are presented, looking into the prevalence of, discourse and literature on each of them in each of the countries. The results show a rather diverse field, however with some shared treats such as growth in data journalism in newsrooms but also a growing schism between classic media and journalists employed with them on one side and freelancers and alternative media projects on the other.

The report then proceeds to interviews with journalism educators focusing on the competences for future journalists, selected curricula and innovation in journalism education and the media (Bettels-Schwabbauer et al., 2018, p. 39ff). Findings show journalism educations generally value classic journalistic competences along with observing and integrating emerging new trends if deemed relevant – which all institutions interviewed were actually doing in several emerging fields such as data journalism. However at the time “none of the educational institutions, we analysed, teaches courses on collaborative journalism, but most put emphasise on teaching their students how to work in teams” (Bettels-Schwabbauer et al., 2018, p. 91).

The context of the journalism education was different in the four countries, for example, whether journalism was considered an independent discipline, or integrated into a more general media and communication programme. Further “reason for the differences in implementing innovation in journalism education could be the status quo of the media in the respective countries, which again becomes especially clear when looking at data journalism. While, for example, promising developments in the media as well as in journalism education can be observed in Germany, newsrooms and universities in Romania and Hungary are not only struggling with a lack of time and resources, but also with economic and political constraints (Bettels-Schwabbauer et al., 2018, p. 91-92). Yet another

obstacle observed by a Romanian journalism lecturer was the distance between the curricula and the newsroom reality, students would face. On the example of journalism ethics, “students told us that when they were hired, people in the media advised them to forget all the rubbish that they learned in school, to forget ethics. They have to do what needs to be done. So they are torn apart between what they learned to do in school and what the boss asks them to do, regardless of ethical concerns” (Bettels-Schwabbauer et al., 2018, p. 49).

Zooming in on the German part of the research, the analysis of the German interviews shows that “all institutions in the sample teach aspects of collaborative journalism, even though these are not labelled as such”, that “the ideal preliminary step to collaborative journalism is to teach students how to work in teams”, and that “some faculties also use the format of lectures to introduce and discuss collaborative cross-border projects” (Bettels-Schwabbauer et al., 2018-2, p. 2).

For the conclusion of the NEWSREEL project, an actual cross-border collaboration is envisaged, where students learn about cross-border collaborative journalism and conclude by carrying out journalistic research into a topic and preparing a journalistic publication in teams of students from the four countries (Bettels-Schwabbauer, Leihs, 2019).

Summarising, the NEWSREEL project addresses cross-border collaborative journalism among, and equal to, other emerging new methodological aspects of journalism. While cross-border journalism is not equally prevalent in all countries’ journalism education/curricula, education in teams is. In some countries, cross-border collaborative journalism is mentioned in lectures. The NEWSREEL project as such plans to develop material and test a practice oriented collaborative journalism project with students from the four countries. The NEWSREEL project thus is interesting when it comes to understanding journalism education in its national context of journalism and media in the partner countries, when it comes to editorial content, and to journalism educations’ syllabus and curricula.

The European Media Cloud Campus project

The European media Cloud Campus project involved five universities from the same number of countries, and participants were “primarily students in journalism, media and the creative industries” (Rinsdorf et al., 2019, p 243). The universities involved were the Stuttgart Media University, Germany, the Istanbul Bilgi University, Turkey, the Danish School of Media and Journalism, Denmark, the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands and the Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (now Oslomet), Norway. This three year project concluded in 2017 wanted to offer students from the partner countries the opportunity to learn together and collaboratively use tools to do so. They experimented with collaborative digital story telling in a virtual campus using “innovative digital media products, experimenting with new ways of digital storytelling and enhancing [students’] skills in digital content production” (Rinsdorf et al., 2016, p.246). To ease remote

cooperation, the ECMCC included classic project management tools, for example the use of editorial dashboards to visualise key performance indicators and editorial workflows in order to ease remote collaboration with only rare physical meetings, adding management skills to the list of competences taught (ibid, p. 247).

The digital storytelling education in remote teams was contextualised and linked to current news media research such as the Reuters Institute's annual Digital News Report (ibid, p. 247), and aspects of privacy & ethics, security and intellectual property rights were addressed thoroughly (ibid p. 248, 251-254). Interesting in the context of this present paper is the inclusion of intercultural communication (ibid p. 248), indispensable in crossborder collaborative journalism.

The EMCC project was motivated to answer the challenges of the "rapid changes in the global media economy" and "especially how digitization affects the business models". The team sees an "increasing influence of communities is one of the most important aspects of this development" which can lead to "community-driven companies" and a change of hierarchies. "Therefore, network-based communication strategies are needed instead of top-down information along hierarchical structures. Digital and mobile media could be helpful to implement network-based communication strategies", applying a wide range of digital tools which leads to a need of "media and communication professionals, who use these tools appropriately." (Rinsberger et al., 2016, p. 245). The scope of the EMCC thus is digital communication more generally and not limited to journalism as the NEWSREEL project, "obviously, technology is the core field of our strategic partnership" (Rinsberger et al., 2016, p. 247).

The EMCC is interesting in that it strongly focused on didactical theory choosing a constructivist approach. 1-week workshops were hosted by partners according to specialisation "based on the pedagogical concept of blended learning where students play a proactive and key role. Teachers are primarily coaches and mentors" (Rinsdorf et al., 2016, p. 243, 245). The didactical approach is based upon the assumption that knowledge is stored and shared in networks and that students take decisions to learn navigate these networks, (Rinsdorf et al., 2016, p. 245).

In an evaluating conference paper, the initiators emphasise the didactical approach to be paramount. "Regarding cross-border projects in journalism training at university level: In comparison to technology and management, an appropriate didactical approach is much more important for the design of a transnational learning environment. Pedagogical approaches in the tradition of connectivism seem to be most likely to lead to a working didactical framework. This is because they take into consideration different learning styles and skill levels in a group of learners. They also perceive the diversity of professional and cultural backgrounds within a group of learners as a valuable source for achieving learning goals." (Rinsdorf, Leighton & Vaagan, 2018).

Summing up, the European Media Cloud Campus Project addresses multiple challenges at once: To teach digital story telling in a changing media environment and to teach remote cooperation using digital tools and including the necessary coordination skills. The focus is not solely on journalism but more widely on communication. It has a strong focus on the didactics in a networked setting, and allows for experimentation in developing new ways of working.

Gothenburg University – Master in investigative journalism

In the autumn of 2016 the first class of the new Master of Investigative Journalism (MIJ) at Gothenburg University started. The practice oriented, English language master course in its syllabus explicitly focuses on the trio of investigative journalism, data journalism and crossborder collaborative journalism. With this explicit focus likely a first of its kind in Europe.

The program is a strategic effort by the university to match the educational needs of skilled, academically trained journalists who can meet the challenges facing today's global society. In this quest, the MIJ utilizes the high-ranking academic competence found at the journalism department (JMG) and the Faculty of Social Sciences; the QoG Institute, V-Dem, School of Global Studies and others. The valuable resources of this internal network contribute to an understanding of the conditions surrounding journalism globally, and provide prospective journalists with a deeper insight into social structures and power. Thus, the MIJ is based on JMG's traditions of strong research on journalistic profession and organization, as well as journalism as a democratic institution. In addition to this research, the large databases available at JMG and the Department of Political Science (for example QoG, V-dem and Worlds of Journalisms) are integrated and pedagogically associated with the program to put journalism in a democratic perspective and train the students in statistical analysis. Furthermore, the global outlook is central as well as an international comparative perspective (press freedom, freedom of information, etc.).

It is an important goal of the program to be relevant to a changing news business through the optimization of knowledge and skills that are useful in this turbulent market: data-driven journalism, project management, entrepreneurship, cross-collaborations - but also the manifestation of basic journalistic values in the form of investigative journalism. This means skills in monitoring global and transnational institutions, companies, politics, organizations and subjects (corruption, the war on terrorism, development aid, climate change, etc.). Doing this, the courses blend theory and practice and shed light on current themes with a focus on both knowledge and skills. A stated educational goal is to strive away from the division between academic and professional elements that so often characterize vocational preparation programs. This is achieved by emphasizing the problematizing and

methodological aspects of journalism, as well as highlighting the possibilities of applied scientific perspectives and research.

Another explicit goal of the program is to utilize the students' own resources and strive away from knowledge transfer based on one way communication and pre-designed knowledge packages. The pace of development characterizing media and journalism at the moment requires something else, namely space for creativity, innovation and courage to try new thought models. Therefore, a red thread through all courses is the so-called "sandbox" or a creative lab: This means space in the schedule where students, teachers, and sometimes guest lecturers, work together to find new ways in terms of research methods, perspectives and digital software. The model for this is called co-learning and represents a teaching philosophy where the student's competences are emphasized and where the teacher-student relationship is based on trust, mutual learning and exchange of knowledge. The learning environment is therefore characterized by shared power and individualized learning in a community-based context.

At the time of writing, the MIJ has just closed its third year and the number of applicants is constantly increasing. The class size has varied between 18-26 students and more than 16 nationalities have been represented. The unique educational collaboration between scholars and experienced European crossborder journalists has proved to be successful. Despite being newcomers in the journalistic field, the students are doing crossborder projects, travelling abroad digging into matters ranging from South African rhino farming to sand grabbing in West Sahara and Moldovan political corruption, to mention some examples. They practice on site investigations as well as data base and social media research, and, indeed, more traditional journalistic methods. They have managed to get published in internationally renowned news outlets, such as Financial Times, the Guardian and Vice. The high publication rate is largely due to the efforts of the teaching team, helping and connecting students, and (as far as possible) adapting the forms for learning and examinations to individual student projects.

Summing up, the Gothenburg Master in Investigative Journalism has an integrative approach, integrating academic and practice oriented education through an emphasis on the problematizing and methodological aspects of journalism, and by integrating journalistic analysis with the teaching of analysis in the larger faculty of social sciences. The curriculum includes skills that are assumed necessary in the current turbulent media situation including basic journalistic values as well as – for example – new competences such as project management. The didactical method is co-learning to use students' own resources and in a constant interaction with the teachers.

Shared starting point, three different paths

Together, the three projects provide interesting material to further develop the education of cross-border collaborative journalism. They all observe developments in societies, the media industry and technology that journalism educators have to consider. All three of them follow a didactical approach of actively involving students in the learning process rather than one-way sharing of information including a level of practice orientation. From there, the three projects provide experiences with different aspects of crossborder journalism education including indeed the matters of consideration in this paper: Digitalisation and digital media, collaboration across national and cultural borders, didactics in networked context and so forth. In the following we will contextualise the three cases in the setting of the overall challenges to journalism educators of these years.

Three dimensions in crossborder journalism education

The need for advanced crossborder journalism has never been greater. Globalization has put human civilization under extraordinary pressure, leading to threats in form of environmental destruction, international crime syndicates, terrorism, and political corruption, to name a few. Decisions are made far away from the grass roots and in increasingly closed environments. Journalists, the watchdogs of democracy, can no longer focus solely on national affairs but must cover ever-larger geographical areas. Yet the *possibilities* for advanced crossborder journalism are excellent. Digital potential for information gathering and for publishing offer great opportunities for journalists. In addition, online interaction often leads to improved and more relevant journalism, as the audience has generally taken a more active role.

Taken together, this development places new demands on understanding, with an international perspective, how the conditions for journalism differ; for example, regarding freedom of information and regulations, publishing opportunities, risk assessments and degrees of corruption. In addition, from a professional perspective, developed and refined journalistic methods, techniques and transnational collaborations are required. The industry's development clearly points to a division between widely distributed, inexpensive and fast news coverage on the one side and in-depth and narrative journalism on the other.

Given this, there is a need for journalism educators to develop and refine our teaching methods. Universities are bureaucratic and slow moving entities, but as our cases here have shown, there is much we can do within this environment. With our societies and media in the “wonderful quagmire” of (Deuze 2019) where the conditions, under which journalism is practiced is “in permanent flux” any such education may not become a static solution labelled “the best” or gain a “one-size-fits all”-ambition. With the background in the ever more connected context of journalism, we believe, that it is well worth testing and further

developing networked cross-border journalism education between journalism courses with similar aims in different countries.

Ambitions for such an education network should – based upon the experiences cited above – include journalism practice as well as theoretical analysis to surmount the schism between theory and practice as observed in other journalism educations. In the protected setting of the university and with the guidance of their teachers. It appears to offer a way of preparing students of journalism to practice their profession in the context of networked societies applying networking tools and routines, and to learn deal with the challenges of the fragmentation of international relations in this setting. To academia, this means an opportunity to problematize and broaden the perspectives on the conditions of journalism not only in terms of research, but also within the framework of our education. Crossborder journalism education is thus yet another step in the quest to produce well-educated journalists who can safeguard democratic rights, expose corruption and abuse of power, and who manage to link different parts of the world or different groups within the same society, as this is becoming increasingly complex to understand.

As our cases have shown, the theoretical corpus analysing not only society but also networked, global, cross-border collaborative journalism is reaching levels to provide the students with material to stimulate their reflection about their own work and for analysis to constantly improve such a networked journalism education.

The cases, as well as the literature review of this area, also show that the scholarly understanding of it leaves room for development. A number of theoretical concepts and themes are currently figuring in this context and the meaning of these in relation to education needs to be disentangled. Predominantly, we distinguish three dimensions: networked journalism in networked societies; the crossborder concept; and the national/culture issue.

1) The network society, as explained by Castells, van Dijk and others (see above), and the notion of networked journalism as described by Beckett and Mansell (see above) are central in understanding the path forward for journalism education. Although most degrees today acknowledge the relevance of networking skills, the networking within the professional collective is mostly left out the curricula. Moving away from journalism as a lonely trade, the crossborder genre calls for increasing focus on collaboration and project management. The collaborative features may be necessary to conduct an investigation, but it may also bring support to the individual journalist. To journalism education this means adding lectures and workshops where collaborations are not only being done (because they already are to some extent) but also enlightened by discussion and literature. This means a particular respect has to be paid to didactics in a networked set-up as well as consideration of national curricular and didactical context.

2) There is reason to look deeper into the concept of ‘crossborder’. Do we mean national borders, cultural borders or perhaps even professional boundaries? Are collaborative

processes similar, regardless the border? While practice oriented crossborder journalism has multiple and currently ever freshly published cases to be inspired by, the academic conceptualisation is still emerging and could mean travelling abroad, working with colleagues in other countries or working with international data and other material. Content wise, it could touch upon what Berglez or Rees address under the headline of 'global journalism'. Impact wise the study of reactions to collaborative journalism is only emerging with effect observations (Heft, Heft et al. see above) as well as the argument for a "global fourth estate" by Gearing and Berglez (see above). We argue that journalism educators need to develop a consciousness about these distinctions, to be able to create awareness and skills among students in manoeuvring these overlapping dimensions in practice.

3) Conceptualizing crossborder journalism, the question of nationality and culture appears. This not only involves the general national culture but also the view on journalism, professionalism and the role of journalists in society, as described by Meyer, Grzeszyk or Hanitzsch above; and as faced in various aspects in the cases studied in this paper. Thomas Hanitzsch (2010), for example, is among those scholars lamenting this orientation of the nation, pointing out how the vast body of literature still is dominated by descriptive comparisons of national journalism systems and the people involved'. The national may not be a satisfactory unit of analysis, because nations are not culturally self-contained and homogeneous. Empirically the concept of culture opens up more theoretically satisfying articulations for journalism studies and education research than the idea of the nation, suggesting challenges and opportunities regarding 'intercultural' rather than 'international' communication.

In the curricula of crossborder journalism education, focus on intercultural understanding and communication would therefore be a valuable asset. Exactly the flexibility to adjust to cultures, professional, societal and media contexts is emphasised in the projects studied here and could become the very strength of a cross-border collaborative journalism education model. Students will need to navigate between cultures when practicing crossborder journalism, this field thus offers another opportunity of integrating practice and theory oriented work.

Looking ahead

It is encouraging to see how crossborder collaborative journalism is not only developing swiftly and strongly in journalism with major projects from Panama Papers to CumExFiles, and it is equally encouraging to see similar developments in journalism education: with curiosity to cross professional and national borders, with the playfulness (and the efforts) of experimentation. A short literature review of the field and a closer look at three early crossborder journalism education projects in Europe, appears to address three dimensions:

- networked journalism in networked societies;
- the crossborder concept; and
- the notion of nation and culture including journalism culture and role.

An important feature is the integration of professional practice and academic analysis, thus surmounting previous schisms between the two – at least when it comes to teaching crossborder collaborative journalism.

Taking these early experiences forward could inspire to the development of networked journalism courses, where students from journalism courses in different countries practice crossborder collaborative journalism within the protecting walls of the universities and journalism schools while carefully considering what they do and thus getting a deeper understanding.

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‘We became a community’: Lessons learned in training local citizens on investigative
journalism

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‘We became a community’: Lessons learned from training local citizens in investigative journalism

Abstract

[Star & Crescent](#) is a hyperlocal, not-for-profit, community news website that works with local Portsmouth UK residents, schools and colleges, activists, writers and community groups to tell stories that are missing from, or under-reported in, mainstream local media. In 2018, we partnered with the [Centre for Investigative Journalism](#) in the UK to deliver a *Reclaim the News* training course. This was delivered to 12 local residents on the basic skills and techniques of investigative journalism, including academics and experts on topics such as FOI requests, media law and ethics, and mobile journalism. This paper describes the delivery of the training, the experience of participants and trainers, the project’s challenges and successes, and the final outcomes. It outlines the overall training process and discusses three sessions of particular impact on participants: on media law and ethics, on Freedom of Information requests and on data journalism/power mapping. This paper includes feedback from participants themselves on the value of these sessions and yields important lessons for the development of media literacy in local communities and its relationship to broader issues of community cohesion and democratic participation. It covers a case study of two participants who requested anonymity throughout the course due to their employment, and of a participant from Venezuela who had only recently moved to the country. These case studies reveal the barriers facing some local residents who are keen to be more involved in local media but can be inhibited by different factors. Finally, the paper discusses the overall impact of the course, including the retention of participants in a variety of roles in the year following the course, the range and depth of the stories produced, and the reported impact on the participants themselves, including building a sense of ‘community’, developing skills and becoming ‘part’ of a community organisation.

Star & Crescent Community Media

Star & Crescent was founded in February 2015 by senior lecturer at the University of Portsmouth, Dr Tom Sykes, and me, then a freelance writer. We were concerned about the impact of the widely reported challenges facing the mainstream local news, which has variously been described as “an industry in crisis” (Siles and Bockzkowski, 2012: 1376); a profession that has descended into “McJournalism” (Franklin, 2005); and a sector caught in a “death spiral” ([Meyer and Zhang, 2002](#)). In Portsmouth, this broader crisis is illustrated by the continuing uncertainty about the fate of the local, mainstream print/digital newspaper *The News*: the newspaper’s former owner Johnston Press went into administration in November 2018 and despite being ‘saved’ shortly after by its sale to a U.S. hedge fund and renamed as JPI Media, the organisation was reported in July 2019 to already be “in talks about a sale of its assets” ([Hold the Front Page, 2019](#)). JPI Media recently implemented a limit on the number of online articles that can be read in a week, now restricting the majority of its daily content to subscribers only.

Star & Crescent (S&C) aimed to be part of the solution to the national crisis in local news, in particular in addressing the decline of reporting on local democracy which, in Portsmouth, often duplicates the official line of people in power over the voices of local activists, critics and communities (see [Sykes and Cheverton, 2016](#)). As a result, there are voices from the local political and social spectrum that are missing from the mainstream media, and the absence of those voices feeds social and political divisions that are becoming more familiar in our local communities and across the UK. Our continuing mission is for S&C to act as a platform for marginalised local voices and for stories and issues that are missing from the local media. We took the decision very early on not to use advertising as an income stream as we believe that this is a failing model that undermines editorial independence. Instead, we created S&C as a not-for-profit social enterprise, and we became a Community Interest

Company in December 2017. As such, S&C responds to urgent issues identified in wider academic research on community media/hyperlocals (Harte, Howells & Williams, 2018; [Cook, Geels, and Bakker, 2016](#); [Fenton, Metykova, Scholsberg and Freemon, 2010](#)), media literacy (Pike, 2013; [O'Neill, 2008](#)) and democratic engagement/civic participation (Liu, Chen, Ognyanova, Nah, & Ball-Rokeach, 2018; Chen, 2015).

The *Reclaim the News* training course

In early 2018, as part of a project with three other independent news organisations across the UK run by the Centre for Investigative Journalism and funded by the Joseph Rowntree Trust, we recruited twelve local residents to learn the basic skills of investigative journalism across ten training sessions. The training ran from April to July 2018 and covered a range of subjects including:

- the basics of news reporting
- using the Freedom of Information Act
- power-mapping (a visual tool for mapping political and social power structures)
- data journalism
- media law and ethics
- developing a news investigation
- video journalism and community media
- working with marginalised communities

The training was delivered by a combination of in-house delivery from the S&C team and expert speakers recommended to us by the Centre for Investigative Journalism. In a session on mapping power interests in Portsmouth, for instance, we were supported by two local democracy activists who provided insight into a dataset on council spending and the declared (and undeclared) interests of local councillors. Throughout the course we delivered one-to-one mentoring sessions to all participants, weekly 'drop-in' sessions, and group

meetings where the participants worked on their stories. We requested that each participant complete at least one story as a result of the training course and while some of the group – those with more experience in both writing and meeting deadlines - had no problem meeting this deadline, with several submitting more than one story, others struggled for a variety of reasons, which will be discussed briefly later in this paper.

The course participants

The course attracted 27 applications, from which we selected 12 participants. The age range of the final group was between 22 – 70 years. The course was female dominated, with 8 women and 4 men taking part. The overwhelming majority of both applicants and participants identified themselves as White, with one participant who identified as Hispanic, ‘half-Spanish, half-Venezuelan’ and was a recent migrant to Portsmouth. The proportion of participants who reported disabilities was high, with half of the group reporting ‘a disability, long term illness, or health condition’. In selecting participants, we aimed for a group with broad representation of the local community, for example, across age, disability, sex, ethnicity. We also wanted to create a diverse group in terms of participants’ existing community engagement and their relationship to the city, e.g. whether they were lifelong residents, here as students, or had moved here from another part of the UK or world, and individual levels of writing experience. We were also mindful while choosing applicants of the under-representation of certain demographics in mainstream journalism such as disability, ethnic minorities, low income backgrounds, females ([Spilsbury, 2017](#)) and state education ([Sutton Trust & Social Mobility Commission, 2019](#)).

Case Studies: Reasons to be Anonymous

Two participants requested from the outset of the course that they remain anonymous throughout and asked not to be identified in any of our promotion or reporting on the project, as well as at the point of publication. These cases yield an interesting insight into the unique barriers that can prevent people from taking part not only in training courses like *Reclaim the News*, but also in taking a broader role in local democracy, politics and community activism. Both cited their profession as the reason for the request, but for slightly different reasons. One participant worked alongside the criminal justice system in a sensitive field of criminal offending and worked under a pseudonym; they were concerned that if a photograph or any kind of identifying information appeared in the public realm, it would jeopardise their professional practice and potentially their personal safety. This participant did not want to report on their own professional area and was one of only a small number of participants who did not complete their story at the end of the course. While their professional role did not directly impact on their failing to complete their story, informal discussion with the participant following the end of the course revealed that the heavy pressure of their workload combined with the psychological impact of the field they worked in, had played a strong role in their inability to submit a final story. In developing future training programmes, we would seek to offset this potential barrier by offering the option to undertake investigations in small groups, so that participants could share workloads between them. The second participant to request anonymity throughout the course did so explicitly because they were concerned that participation could negatively affect their employment in the public sector. This participant wanted to examine the impact of austerity on the public sector, including the area in which they worked. Their area of interest did not fall under the legal definition of ‘whistle-blowing’ ([ACAS, n.d.](#)); instead the participant was keen to use their ‘insider’ knowledge to report on the local impact of national public sector funding cuts. However, the participant was deeply concerned and nervous that their employer would view their participation in the course

negatively, and that this would cause problems for them at work, or even jeopardise their job. The team worked hard throughout the course to make sure both participants remained completely anonymous. This entailed ensuring that their names were not included on the website when we reported on the course (see [Star & Crescent, 2018](#)) or shared information about it on social media, as well as making sure that the final story published by one of the participants was anonymous.

The desire for local residents to be anonymous when their work is published on *Star & Crescent* is familiar to the core team (see also [Star & Crescent, 2018b](#)), who work closely with local residents who wish to remain anonymous to ensure that they are protected. Anecdotally, many of the residents, activists and professionals we have worked with over the last four years have expressed similar concerns and decline to be quoted or named in articles, particularly those that work in the voluntary and public sector who often fear that criticising funding decisions, contracts or cuts from the local authority may prevent them from being awarded future contracts. This is consistent with research undertaken on the impact of austerity on voluntary sector campaigning (see [Aiken, 2014](#)) and on the overall independence of the sector. Sir Roger Singleton, OBE, former Chair of the Panel on the Independence of the Voluntary Sector notes “the chilling – indeed sometimes freezing – effect on the independent voice of the sector” (quoted in [Sloccock, 2017, p.7.](#)), and we have noted similar impacts on professionals working in Portsmouth, where contractual arrangements between the voluntary sector and local authorities have prohibited many local professionals from giving statements on the record. As Portsmouth is a unitary authority working on an island city with a population of less than 300,000 people, this problem is compounded for small, locally based services that are more easily identifiable, particularly if they are the sole provider of services in the area. More research in this field, including the experiences of news

organisations beyond the mainstream press, would no doubt yield further evidence on this issue.

Other barriers faced by community reporters

In addition to the particular barriers faced by our two anonymous participants, the rest of the group reported a variety of personal challenges they faced in training to become a community reporter. These included: a lack of self-confidence, particularly relating to writing skills, but also including interpersonal interaction, such as: interviewing; struggles with motivation and staying focussed away from the security of delivery sessions, mentoring sessions or group meetings; time pressures due to family, caring and other commitments; issues with mental health, and issues related to disability or long-term health conditions. As a team we aimed to work as flexibly with participants as possible and to focus on providing a supportive and motivating environment that helped the group to address these issues – both separately and together. We organised informal sessions between 4-8 hours long, where the participants could drop in as they wanted to and work alongside other participants and the team. This proved successful, with participants reporting that it was easier to ‘get things done’ when they were working alongside others. Moreover, having the team present meant they could access support and advice immediately if they experienced any issues. The team also undertook one-to-one, practical sessions to support participants with their investigations, including helping to word FOI requests, undertaking background research, and finding datasets.

Evaluation Methodology

At the end of each training session, each participant that attended was asked to complete an evaluation form comprising both qualitative and quantitative questions. All attending participants completed these forms, with the exception of one session, where two did not. This delivered a total of 93 evaluation forms across the ten sessions. At the end of the course, we distributed an electronic questionnaire asking participants to reflect on their experiences of the training. This was a short, qualitative questionnaire based on questions suggested by the Centre for Investigative Journalism as part of the project. Ten out of the twelve participants completed and returned these forms. This feedback was anonymous, as given the small size of the group, we decided not include questions that would have allowed us to identify participants. Testimony from a participant who was interviewed as part of a training session on video journalism was published during the training period ([Star & Crescent, 2018](#)). The findings presented in this paper are based on an evaluation report produced for the Centre of Investigative Journalism at the end of the *Reclaim the News* training.

Course impact

Participants identified three sessions in particular as having a high impact on them: training on media law and ethics, using the Freedom of Information Act, and a session on data journalism and power-mapping. As part of these sessions, participants undertook practical exercises, including examining case studies in media ethics and law (including on crime reporting, privacy and defamation, and copyright), learning about online mapping software [Kumu](#), and being given their own copy of the Centre for Investigative Journalism's guide to Freedom of Information requests (Montague and Amin, 2012). Participants reported

that these sessions enhanced their understanding and knowledge of each subject area and helped them to feel more empowered to use the investigative tools. For example:

[Learning] how to do FOI requests means we can dig up lots of info that public authorities don't want us to find...

I feel more confident in my use of FOIA and the process involved in making requests and fighting appeals.

Another highlighted that it was unlikely they would have learned about these subjects without the training:

FOI and Media Law and Ethics...are both subjects that I had no prior experience in [and] are very technical...impossible for me to grasp by just researching alone.

Participants reported that the impact of these sessions empowered them to make a change in their own communities, and in the city as a whole, as well as creating a sense of belonging to a broader movement for change:

...in being taught the skills of investigative journalism – how to ask questions, how to interrogate data, how to raise FOIs – in conducting interviews and finding the people in Portsmouth (and beyond) who are working to make a difference, there is a real sense of optimism, of the idea that change is possible. I have a sense of an increasing groundswell of people who are raising their voices, acting for change, working to help others, refusing to accept injustice, refusing to accept short-sighted policies which do nothing to better our world.

Another participant expressed a similar sense of optimism, albeit tempered with realism:

It's all so inspiring and will change Portsmouth slightly.

In addition to teaching the group the skills they needed to begin investigating local issues as community reporters, participants reported a range of other, broader impacts to taking part in the training, including how to tell stories that are missing or under-reported: “interviewing

people and focusing on the ‘small’ stories, not mainstream”. One participant who had previously worked in the mainstream media told the team in a video interview - undertaken and published as part of the course ([Star & Crescent, 2018](#)) - about other ways they felt the experience of community reporting was different from working in mainstream journalism:

The main thing I have got from this is a sense of collective, which is a bit weird because that isn't any of the more factual things that we've learnt, which include data journalism, power-mapping, Freedom of Information – which is all really, really useful, and better training than I ever had when I was involved in journalism previously. The really nice thing is feeling like we're part of a group and we're all here to help each other and it's not all competitive and 'I've got to get the story first', like traditional journalism can be.

Other participants also emphasised the experience of being part of a collective effort:

The most surprising and rewarding element of the course was how quickly we evolved from a one-way process of trainers and experts imparting knowledge to individual students into a collective web of everyone helping each other...We became a community. I think this will be really important in the long term and feels great to be a part of.

...the knowledge in that room was incredible. So was the sense of community and shared endeavour, of mutual encouragement and support.

Participants also talked about the power of telling their own stories and being involved in the local media landscape in a form that is different to the mainstream:

There is a sense of power and of 'reclaiming our voices' to both the course and Star & Crescent. There is so much bad news reported by the mainstream and it makes you feel powerless.

I've learned that journalism can happen every day...now I want to research about things that matter to me...

It's made me more aware of the need to share stories that other people don't know about...I feel equipped to find information about decisions that affect people

locally...The course has also had the effect of validating and supporting my efforts to bring stories, events and opinions overlooked by the more commercial, right-wing local media to people who might be interested in reading them.

One participant reported that the course had helped improve their communication:

This course has helped me to improve my social skills even more and helped me improve my communication skills in English...because I was afraid to speak in English in public. Now I feel more confident...

Reclaiming the News: the stories

Each participant was asked to submit one story at the end of the course. This could take the form of an investigation, a news report, satire, an opinion piece (substantiated with evidence), or a feature. Seven of the 12 participants submitted at least one story by the deadline which were published; two submitted stories which required further work, but did not complete them after the end of the project (one was completing her degree and the other was unable to complete her story due to work commitments); and three did not submit stories at all. Of these last three, two were dealing with health issues towards the end of the course and one entered full-time employment, which prevented them from completing their investigation.

The stories that were submitted and published on Star & Crescent at the end of the project were wide-ranging and included, to name a small selection:

- a feature on the Portsmouth attendees at the Tolpuddle March;
- a feature on the revolutionary heritage of walks and marches, reviewing Portsmouth's first ever colour walk (an informal gathering of creative people who walk in bright colours to inspire others and to be inspired)
- an investigation into the local authority's preparations for Brexit
- a news report on the local authority's failure to create an action plan for air quality

- a two-part interview with Friends Without Borders, Portsmouth, dispelling myths on asylum seekers
- a satirical piece on the government's voter ID pilot at the 2018 local elections
- an investigation into 'patient activation' in the NHS and its links to austerity
- the 'creeping privatisation' of the local NHS.

Long term impacts of the project

The project closed in August 2018, almost a year ago at the time of writing this paper. Nine of the twelve participants are still involved with Star and Crescent, with six of these regularly reporting or writing for the website. The remaining three continue to support us as volunteers: helping at events, supporting our marketing and promotion, and working with us to develop larger projects. Those who continue to write for us as community reporters submit a variety of articles, including reviews, news stories on under-reported issues or campaigns, interviews and their own investigations. We also continue to meet as a group.

One of the biggest impacts for Star & Crescent is discovering the broad impact training courses like this one can have on local residents and their ability to be involved in their local community and in local democracy. Building on our learning from *Reclaim the News*, in April 2019, S&C launched the *Young People's Voices* project pilot, working with a local school and a college to teach students the basic skills and techniques of community reporting. This project is funded by a local music festival, Victorious, and supported by the University of Portsmouth. It aims to provide young people with a platform to share their opinions, report on topics that affect them and advance standards of literacy. Local students worked with the Star & Crescent team to develop their stories, which were published throughout July 2019, and were entered into a competition to read their story on the Spoken Word stage at the Victorious Festival itself. Building on the pilot, we intend to develop

further projects in the same vein that work with marginalised groups, including asylum seekers and refugees, and survivors of domestic violence.

A second long-term impact for Star & Crescent came from the session on data journalism and power-mapping. One of the participants has been working with S&C and the University of Portsmouth to develop the learning from this session into a larger project involving local residents, campaigners and activists, journalists, and experts in visualising data. To this end, we recently undertook an impact study workshop with the Centre for Investigative Journalism, supported and funded by the University of Portsmouth. From here, we hope to bid for funding for a larger project in the near future.

Conclusions

S&C's participation in the Centre for Investigative Journalism's project to train community reporters delivered a range of learning outcomes for the future development of S&C as a community media website. In particular, it highlighted some core differences in the working practices of not-for-profit news providers who seek to work directly with local residents to enable them to report from within their local community, in contrast to the mainstream media's reporting about communities, from the outside. This presents an interesting opportunity for hyperlocal or independent community news organisations to forge a different, but complementary, role to mainstream news media, in supporting the development of democratic engagement, active citizenship and media literacy in the digital age.

Community reporters also offer a strong opportunity – again, complementing the mainstream media – for independent, hyperlocal news providers to work with local residents and community groups as equal partners, pushing back against the power differential that sits between local residents and the communities on which they report. Finally, S&C's experience

of the *Reclaim the News* training showcases the way in which hyperlocal, independent media can build a diverse community of writers and residents gathered around a shared aspiration: to tell missing and under-reported stories in a different way.

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Faculty-Led Student Reporting Laboratories: Challenges and Opportunities

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I. Introduction

Campus-based reporting laboratories are producing increasingly sophisticated journalistic work, compensating in part for downsized professional newsroom staffing. Responding to the challenge to reconceive their educational mission around the “teaching hospital” service model, more U.S. journalism schools are launching, or becoming partners in, sophisticated news-gathering operations whose mission includes in-depth, long-form reporting.

Operating a news outlet within the confines of an educational institution presents unique challenges, including maintaining continuity in a “newsroom” that turns over its “staff” at least once a year, as well as external and internal pressures that may discourage pursuing sensitive subjects. Because this model is relatively new, unanswered legal questions await clarification, including ownership of jointly produced work and legal liability for its consequences, as well as questions about the freedom of students and instructors to pursue their chosen projects while under university oversight.

As digital technologies have transformed news industries, they’ve also transformed journalism classrooms. As a result, educators like Boston University’s Michelle Johnson – whose students unexpectedly found themselves covering the biggest story in America, when lethal homemade bombs detonated along the route of the Boston Marathon in 2013 – increasingly find themselves leading reporting and production teams at work on news coverage for public audiences. (Culver, 2015). Yet little scholarly attention has been paid to the legal and ethical implications of this transformation from “professor” to “publisher.” (Culver).

This research seeks to explore how journalism educators who lead courses that publish publicly conceptualize their roles with regard to legal and ethical issues. It covers the issues that most commonly confront these instructors, as well as the strategies and tactics they employ in addressing such issues, and highlights concerns that educators may be overlooking.

II. Literature Review

A. The Transformation of Journalism Education

Traditionally, students seeking hands-on experience as journalists had two alternatives: Accept a summer internship at a professional news organizations, or work on the college newspaper. (Freedman & Poulson, 2015). Campus newspapers still very much exist – a few even operate as separately incorporated business entities with full autonomy from their host schools – but they no longer represent the exclusive (or perhaps even the primary) opportunity for students to obtain a published portfolio of work samples under professional-style working conditions. The advent of online publishing – *The New York Times* debuted its first web edition in January 1996 – eliminated cost and distribution barriers that once made it impracticable for journalism schools to operate their own “newspapers.” The ease and affordability of web publishing enabled instructors to publicly share student work that formerly – unless picked up by the campus newspaper – reached only the professor’s eyes.

The University of Missouri is credited with its “Missouri Method” of training young journalists by putting them to work in a full-fledged community newspaper, *The Missourian*, which for over a century has been edited by experienced professionals. (Louise, 2016). Northwestern University and Columbia University began their own student-staffed news services during the 1960s and ‘70s, furnishing reports to professional print and broadcast outlets in their respective markets. (Francisco *et al.*, 2012). One of the most sophisticated and enduringly successful operations, Capital News Service at the University of Maryland, has served since 1990 as the statehouse bureau for more than 40 professional media clients, with student reporters holding down full-time workday schedules in exchange for course credit. (Francisco *et al.*). As technology diminished the transactional friction of publishing, clinical news labs proliferated rapidly. Virginia Commonwealth University opened a news bureau to cover the nearby state Capitol in 1994, providing coverage to small news outlets throughout the state without a full-time statehouse presence. (Freedman & Poulson, 2015). Comparable news-service models followed during the 2000s at the City University of New York, Florida International University, Columbia College-Chicago, Youngstown State University and elsewhere. (Francisco, *et al.*) Founded in 2007, Arizona State University’s Cronkite News Service has more reporters covering state government than any other outlet, and is the only Arizona news organization with a presence in Washington, D.C. (Downie, 2011).

Clinical-style programs exist in many styles and permutations. Some universities simply provide hosting for separately incorporated nonprofit journalism outlets, which may benefit from the assistance of faculty and students but are otherwise independent business entities (examples include the Wisconsin Center for Investigative Reporting at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Iowa Center

for Public Affairs Journalism at the University of Iowa). Others have been structured as (or have evolved into) primarily extracurricular activities unmoored to a single course, including FIU's South Florida News Service and CUNY's NYCity News Service. (Francisco *et al.*)

The degree of university financial support varies with the structure; Schaffer (2013) found direct subsidies ranging from \$150,000 annually for a hyperlocal news site ("Neon Tommy") at the University of Southern California, to just a few thousand dollars elsewhere. Schaffer found that few news sites enjoy "full rides" from their institutions, and most supplement their university funding with philanthropic grants or subscriber revenue. Staffing at the sites also varies. Some rely primarily, or exclusively, on class-generated curricular work, others supplement curricular work with more advanced students working for pay, and others distribute primarily the work of in-residence professionals assisted by student researchers. (Freeman & Poulson).

Whether they are the product of students or of professionals-in-residence (or some combination), campus-based journalism laboratories regularly produce work rivaling that of traditional professional outlets. The New England Center for Investigative Reporting ("NECIR") at Boston University was recognized with a 2019 Edward R. Murrow Award for a radio series about massage parlors that serve as fronts for human trafficking. In collaboration with a Boston public radio station, NECIR reporters reopened the 30-year-old case of a convicted murderer, Darrell Jones, leading to a new trial and his exoneration. An investigation by the Schuster Institute for Investigative Journalism at Brandeis University led to the 2016 release of a convicted rapist who had spent three decades in prison, after a judge reexamining the case found the key physical evidence flawed. In a recent example of a student investigative reporting lab turning scrutiny on its own institution, a reporter from the University of Southern California's "Beacon Project" broke a story, published in partnership with BuzzFeed News, alleging that USC turned a blind eye toward decades' worth of reports from patients that a doctor at the student health center sexually molested them. (Urban, 2019).

The move toward more sophisticated content creation has been fueled, in large part, by the influx of talent with recent, high-level newsroom experience into the teaching ranks, as experienced journalists take buyouts or seek employment more financially stable than corporate newsrooms. (Freedman & Poulson). For instance, Arizona State's acclaimed News21 project has benefited from an all-star lineup of faculty advisers including Leonard Downie Jr., former executive editor of *The Washington Post*; Jacquee Petchel, former senior editor for investigations and enterprise at *The Houston Chronicle*; and Steve Doig, former research editor for *The Miami Herald*. At Northeastern University, *Boston Globe* Pulitzer Prize winner Walter Robinson of "Spotlight" fame started an investigative reporting course in 2007 that has produced a dozen front-page stories for the *Globe*. (Francisco *et al.*)

News labs benefit their host educational institutions in a variety of ways, including by offering students “experiential” learning opportunities, meeting objectives for “service learning,” and promoting community engagement that fosters the university’s relationship with its stakeholders as a “good neighbor.” (Schaffer). A collateral benefit of involving educators as co-creators with their students is that the instructors keep their skills sharp and current. (Freedman & Poulson).

The success of college journalism labs depends largely on willing professional partners, and recent changes in the news industry have diminished resistance to publishing student work. (Schaffer). News executives are increasingly amenable to collaboration and resource-sharing, even with perceived competitors, and increasingly receptive to offers of free or low-cost material to augment their diminished coverage capacity. (Schaffer). Francisco and his co-authors (2012) quote a former *Philadelphia Inquirer* editor – who left to run an investigative reporting lab at the University of California-Berkeley – saying that, during his newsroom career, collaborations were disfavored both for competitive reasons and because of perceived management challenges. Downie (2011) describes the News21 project as part of a larger nationwide phenomenon of for-profit legacy media acceding to collaborate with nonprofit, donor-supported local news sites “to publish and broadcast stories they can no longer afford to produce on their own.”

The move toward more experiential, public-facing journalism education is in no way unique to the United States. In Spain, the Pompeu Fabra University (UPF) in Barcelona operates an ambitious network of partnerships with both private and public media outlets, including the English-language Catalan News Agency (Agència Catalana de Notícies, or ACN), founded in 1999. (Tulloch & Manchon, 2018). Journalism schools in Denmark, France, Romania and Sweden have joined with UPF to form the Integrated Journalism in Europe (IJIE) consortium, with financial support from the European Commission, which describes itself as a “lifelong learning program.” (Tulloch & Manchon). Student-produced coverage is disseminated to CNA subscribers along a wire-service business model. Students compete for slots in the program by producing stories under simulated conditions. Those chosen to work for CNA generate an average of 300 published articles a year, and the program reports high levels of satisfaction both from student participants and from subscribers. This represents just one of dozens of professional-student collaborative models that have arisen during the digital generation, facilitated by the ease of online distribution and given urgency by the decline in professional newspaper employment.

While a minority of U.S. clinical programs overtly describe their focus as “investigative,” the authors identified investigative journalism as an area worthy of special attention, because investigative reporting amplifies both the legal needs and the legal risks associated with news production. Journalists working on investigative projects are likely to encounter a need to obtain records from recalcitrant

government agencies through freedom-of-information laws. Investigative stories require careful vetting, because they may point an accusatory finger at litigious institutions and individuals. Educational institutions – and their in-house counsel – may be especially sensitive to pressure from influential targets of journalists’ scrutiny. For all of these reasons, the legal climate for laboratory-based investigative reporting is a subject that merits study and consideration.

B. Legal and Ethical Concerns

Ample legal reference resources exist for journalists working in traditional newsroom settings, but few address the additional overlay of complexities that exist within the institutional setting. Students and educators in campus news labs face all of the same legal issues as professionals (enforcing the right of access to records and meetings, defending against claims of libel), but additionally face challenges unique to the educational setting. Some of these include: Who is legally liable for injury caused by a student journalist’s negligence? To what extent is the instructor answerable to university administrators and at risk of reprisal for noncompliance (for instance, if ordered to abandon a politically sensitive story, or divulge confidential news sources)?

During 2012, Prof. Geanne Rosenberg Belton of the City University of New York-Baruch College undertook the most ambitious attempt to date to create legal protocols for college journalism educators supervising news labs. (Belton). Belton convened a task force of 19 lawyers and journalism educators from across the United States to identify the recurring legal issues arising in the learning-lab setting, and to recommend some “best practices” for consideration; the results are available online at <https://jschoollegal.wordpress.com/task-force-suggestions/>. Among many issues that the J-School Legal task force flagged for focus were:

- Protocols to protect the physical safety of students reporting in the field, with attention to the unique legal exposure that non-U.S. citizen students may face if arrested.
- Access to legal counsel with media-law expertise that may not exist in-house within university counsel’s offices.
- Familiarity with protective statutes, including state reporter’s privilege laws and federal immunity protections (*i.e.*, the Communications Decency Act, 47 U.S.C. § 230, and Digital Millennium Copyright Act, 17 U.S.C. §§ 512 *et seq.*) as well as the limits of those protections.
- Liability defense, including making sure that students remain available to participate in the defense of any legal claims that may arise after graduation.

Building from this baseline of knowledge, researchers contacted U.S. journalism educators to address five research questions:

1. How do these educators conceptualize their role as leaders of projects?
2. How do they frame legal and ethical questions and concerns and their influence within them?
3. What legal principles and doctrines affect educators in their role as publishers?
4. What ethical issues most commonly arise when educators serve as publishers?
5. What guidance and resources can best help educators when they serve as publishers?

III. Research Methods

This research employed in-depth interviews with 10 educators who lead a variety of efforts to publish student work publicly. Content published includes text, images, audio, video, and social media. Interview subjects were drawn from a purposive sample designed to identify educators in a variety of program sizes and approaches – from sole journalism courses in a liberal arts college setting to capstone courses in large university journalism schools and colleges. Interview transcripts were coded and categorized to examine themes related to legal issues and ethical issues.

IV. Conceptualizing Publishing Structures and Educator Roles

The interviewees' experiences covered a wide range of approaches to clinical journalism education. Interviews revealed the following typology for publishing student work developed in a classroom setting:

- Publish on a news site run by a journalism program.
- Publish special projects on a platform run by a journalism program.
- Publish on local news organizations' site (both optional and required).
- Publish with a fully independent student news organization.
- Publish with a student news organization that is financially supported by the journalism program, but editorially independent.

Subjects discussed how they conceptualized their roles in leading these publishing efforts and whether their work classified them as “publishers.” The term “publisher” was defined liberally in interviews, involving any journalistic work made available to the public, rather than the narrow conception of legacy print publishers. It included, for instance, a nightly newscast or student podcast.

Most respondents said they do not consider themselves publishers. One of the primary reasons mentioned was fiscal issues. The interviewees saw publishers as ultimately responsible for the financial viability of a publication, but because they were operating within a larger institution and with free student labor, they were not similarly responsible. For instance, one interviewee said: “No, I do not (consider

myself a publisher), and I don't have to because I have the infrastructure of a university behind me to handle all of the existential questions about whether or not this news outlet would exist."

Those who did see themselves as publishers universally defined the concept in terms of their power or right to decide what student work was or was not released publicly. They each reported using that power carefully and trying to "stay out of students' way." One instructor commented about the importance of avoiding "micro-managing" matters of style and taste, to give students a sense of a professional workplace experience.

Others who worked with local media organizations to publish student work identified those organizations as the publishers and ultimate "deciders" when it came to student work. Asked how they would define themselves if they were not publishers, respondents provided a variety of conceptions: Editor, executive producer, coach, facilitator, news director, and middleman. Every respondent who avoided the publisher title instead used some form of the term "gatekeeper."

It is noteworthy that educators largely avoid describing or thinking of themselves as publishers, even though as a practical matter, their roles entail exercising at least some of the traditional authority and responsibility of a publisher. By eschewing the mantle of "publisher," educators may avoid facing up to some of the legal and ethical issues associated with publishing.

A lone respondent defined the job in terms of a novel "hybrid" that exists only in clinical journalism education, not in professional publishing:

We don't try to exert editorial control, but we do provide what an editor would, which is you sit next to them and you work through that script or you would through a difficult caption or whatever. But at the same time, we're casting large structural, institutional things like Stylebooks, like how to make a good digital product, and we're building into them that way and we're providing the infrastructure that they can, then, publish. So, I think it's strange in-between.

V. Legal and Ethical Concerns

A. Considerations common to all student collaborations

1. Ownership of Intellectual Property

The U.S. Copyright Act begins (17 U.S.C. § 201) with the default understanding that the "author" of a piece of original, creative work owns the work. Ownership confers a bundle of rights (17 U.S.C. § 106) that include the right to

control how the work is distributed, reproduced or exhibited. The Copyright Act contemplates (17 U.S.C. § 201(d)) only two ways in which a creator can surrender ownership: Through a signed agreement, or by way of a “work made for hire” employment relationship.

“Work made for hire” is generally interpreted to mean a salaried employment relationship; token financial compensation is not enough to cause the creator to surrender ownership rights. In an illustrative case, a federal district court decided that ownership of an article submitted to the Harvard Law School student newspaper belonged to the author and not the publication. (*Quinto v. Legal Times of Wash., Inc.*, 1981). The court was influenced by factors including: Whether the writer was paid, where the story idea came from, whether the writer was free to accept other assignments from other employers or was obligated exclusively to the Harvard newspaper, whether he kept regular working hours, and whether the work took place on the putative employer’s premises.

There is no indication that U.S. courts have been asked to determine whether academic credit in a laboratory setting would qualify as the type of compensation Congress envisioned to create a “work made for hire” relationship, but in the absence of payment flowing to the student, that seems unlikely. Moreover, universities may be uninterested in claiming student journalists as “employees,” for fear of the accompanying obligations and liabilities. In an analogous context – the Fair Labor Standards Act, which dictates federal wage-and-hour requirements – the law is clear that a student is not a statutory “employee” of the educational institution when working in a capacity, such as a journalism trainee, in which the primary benefit from the relationship accrues to the trainee. (Dodge, 2006). An educational institution is unlikely to risk jeopardizing that exempt status by classifying student journalists as “employees” so as to claim ownership of their work.

When interviewed about their practices, U.S. journalism educators did not indicate much concern for issues of ownership; rather, they saw “copyright” as a matter of clarifying their students’ ability to use material found from external sources. One educator was the exception, stating:

Our policy is that work that is created within classes, the copyright is held by the students who create it. We don’t force them to sign over copyright, we don’t take any legal ownership stake in any of the work that they produce. So, if a student produces something and we say we want to publish it and they say no, it’s a copyright issue at that point in time, they can refuse to have something published, and we don’t challenge them.

Establishing clear understandings about the ownership of content can avoid conflict in the event either that the student author experiences belated remorse about past writings and demands that they be “unpublished” (Conner, 2016) or that the

student's work becomes economically valuable. An example of the latter occurred in 2012 at the University of Colorado-Boulder, when confusion arose over the ownership of a "viral" photo of a bear being tranquilized by game wardens that a student newspaper photographer shot while on his own time outside of assigned newsroom duties. (Anas, 2012). Ultimately, it was determined that the photo – and the sale proceeds – belonged to the student and not the newspaper.

The nonprofit Student Press Law Center promulgates a "model" copyright agreement available online at <https://splc.org/2014/08/splc-model-copyright-agreement/>, under which rights are allocated among the educational publication and the student creator. The publication receives an irrevocable license to display the content indefinitely, but the student retains residual ownership rights, so that the student may freely display the work on a personal website, enter it in contests, and even re-sell it to external media outlets (after a brief contractual period of exclusivity) without needing the institution's permission.

2. Structuring Professional Partnerships

If student work will be disseminated in partnership with an established professional news organization, or sold to external clients, those media entities may insist on formalizing the terms of the relationship using their own contract language. Relationships with professional partners raise multiple issues both of law and of structure/process, among them:

- What role, if any, will external partner(s) have in "assigning" work to the students, and how will the flow of assignments be managed and prioritized, especially in a setup involving more than one partner outlet?
- Who will assume legal liability in the event of a legal claim arising out of the students' coverage, including the question of whose insurance may apply? (If the university is an agency of state government, it may be legally prohibited from guaranteeing public money to indemnify a private business entity.)
- Relatedly, how will decisions be made (and disagreements resolved) as to whether and to what extent a story is incorrect and merits a correction or even a full retraction?

These issues have legal as well as professional and practical dimensions. For instance, some state libel statutes enable publishers to minimize financial exposure by promptly and prominently retracting erroneous stories. (Martin, 1993). Thus, the decision to retract goes beyond just the reputation of the journalist or the publication, and often involves an element of litigation strategy. Because the interests of the participants may not align – the professional news organization may be getting legal advice to immediately retract a story that the student writer stands behind as accurate – the participants in a multi-party publishing arrangement would be prudent

to contemplate, and perhaps memorialize, a decision-making process before the need arises.

3. Privacy Issues

Newsgathering implicates a bundle of privacy issue – both real and at times imagined ones – and the overlay of the educational setting can add an additional layer of complexity, because of the special sensitivity toward protecting student privacy under U.S. law. While their understanding of the metes-and-bounds of privacy law was not always precise, interviewees were attuned to their dual roles working with newsgatherers with an interest in maximizing access and disclosure, versus their role as educators in working with privacy-sensitive students: “I have a legal [duty] not to expose my students who do not wish to be exposed. So I’m very conscious about that. If I have students who do not want to be outward-facing, there’s always an alternative to make sure that work is not disseminated in public.”

Illustrating the privacy issues that all journalists, students and professionals, must anticipate and be prepared to navigate, one faculty interviewee recounted the experience of students working on a relatively benign story about free and reduced-cost school lunches. After completing and posting the story, the journalists were contacted by the school principal demanding that photos and videos be taken down from the web because of privacy concerns. It did not occur to the journalists, because they were not experienced education reporters, that schools sometimes promise parents that their children will not be photographed, and to take precautions such as obtaining waivers or obscuring faces.

A legal issue yet-unexplored by the courts is whether news outlets on the campuses of state universities are subject to freedom-of-information laws to the same extent as their host universities are. State open-records statutes entitle requesters to inspect and copy many of the records of public universities, including employee correspondence when official state business is being transacted. Although certain categories of records are exempt from disclosure laws and may be withheld – including student academic records, as well as (under many state laws) preliminary draft documents – at least some subset of documents relating to the operation of student news labs may be publicly accessible.

The Texas attorney general’s office confronted this question in a 2001 advisory ruling, Tex. A.G. Op. No. OR2001-2594, involving records requested from the student newspaper at the University of Texas-Tyler. The Attorney General concluded that editors of *The Patriot* did not have to honor a freedom-of-information request for material compiled in the course of an investigation, because the newsroom operated independently from the university so that its records did not represent the records of a “governmental body.” While favorable to the UT-Tyler journalists, the analysis portends risk for news operations that, unlike *The Patriot*,

are actively overseen by university faculty in the course of their state employment. Assuming records maintained by instructors pertaining to the operation of student news labs meet the threshold definition of “governmental” records, the question would then become whether a reporter’s privilege law (discussed in more detail *infra*) might override the open-records law and protect the confidentiality of some or all newsroom records, such as records of interviews with confidential sources. (The question of whether to argue for privilege or exemption raises issues of both ethical judgment and legal strategy as well, as journalists generally are the beneficiaries when public-records statutes are interpreted broadly.)

While the safety of confidential news sources is an issue of real and serious concern, educators must also be prepared to deal with the fanciful issues that risk-averse institutions and their lawyers might imagine. Chief among these is the federal student privacy statute, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”). FERPA is a narrow privacy statute that college attorneys widely misapply (Penrose, 2011-12), but if properly understood, it should present no impediment to effective laboratory journalism.

For FERPA confidentiality to apply, the disclosure must compromise the contents of centrally maintained “education records.” (*Owasso Indep. School Dist. No. I-011 v. Falvo*, 2002). The Department of Education, which has sole enforcement authority over FERPA, has emphasized that there is a decisive difference between the release of “records” versus the release of “facts,” and that FERPA applies only to the former. (Rooker, 2006). In other words, FERPA penalizes only an educational institution that maintains a “policy or practice” of failing to secure centrally maintained records identifiably pertaining to a particular student. Because student reporters will not have been entrusted with access to any confidential school-maintained education records, whatever disclosures they make do not represent the release of FERPA-protected records. Indeed, the Department explicitly said as much in discarding a complaint from the aggrieved subject of a news article in which student journalists at the University of New Mexico published unflattering information about him. (Rooker, 2004). As long as the instructor refrains from breaching the confidentiality of FERPA records – for example, telling student reporters the names of football players who are failing his course – privacy laws should present no impediment to publishing journalistic work. But because FERPA is so poorly understood, instructors should be prepared for the need to educate stakeholders – including their own supervisors – about what it does and does not cover.

4. Considerations Intrinsic to the Educational Setting

In trying to build a professional news operation staffed largely by college students, the academic calendar presents formidable challenges. Particularly if students-generated coverage is being marketed to external clients in a “wire service” model, the program must be designed to maximize continuity and minimize

interruptions. A former editor from the City University of New York told Schaffer (2013) that semester breaks were “disastrous” for the organization’s publishing momentum. The inability to fully staff a news operation around-the-clock may argue in favor of a project-based model producing intermittent stories. In addition to breaks in the academic calendar, working with students presents significant practical and managerial issues. These include sustaining continuity in long-range projects with a staff built to turn over at least annually, as well as compensating students fairly for time and expenses they incur.

Finally, there may be “institutional culture” issues requiring institutional buy-in. For instance, in establishing their laboratory program in 2009, Youngstown State University faculty initially worried that faculty members who put traditional academic research aside to devote time to overseeing a newsroom might sacrifice professional advancement – a concern that turned out to be unfounded. (Francisco *et al.*). Similarly, it may be necessary to reassure the institution that student journalists are not engaged in federally regulated “human subject research,” which is broadly understood to encompass all manner of social-science survey research. Human subject research falls within the oversight of Institutional Review Boards (“IRB”), which can impose months of delay and enforce requirements irreconcilable with the practice of journalism (for example, reading standard-form warnings to survey participants about the health risks of being interviewed). Federal law was unclear on the subject until 2017, when the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services promulgated new regulations, 82 Fed. Reg. 7261, categorically removing the practice of journalism (or other types of oral-history research) from the purview of IRB regulation. Since the change is relatively recent and not well-publicized, instructors may need to educate their institution’s reviewers that, even if students are surveying interviewees, their newsgathering requires no IRB approval.

B. Special considerations relevant to investigative reporting

1. Press Freedom and Ability to Pursue Sensitive Topics

One of the trickiest legal – and diplomatic – issues for campus journalists and their faculty advisers to navigate is the relationship with the institution’s administrators. Under U.S. law, students attending public educational institutions are presumed to have significant First Amendment freedoms, although the scope of those freedoms is uncertain because of the scarcity of applicable U.S. Supreme Court rulings. In the handful of cases the Court has entertained, student speakers have fared well in confrontations with their institutions. For instance, in *Papish v. Board of Curators of University of Missouri*, 410 U.S. 667 (1973), the Supreme Court overturned disciplinary action against the editor of a student-produced “underground” magazine at the University of Missouri. The Court held that even grossly offensive speech is constitutionally protected when it addresses matters of public concern, and thus cannot be grounds for punishment at a public university.

However, producing news as part of graded coursework may diminish students' claim to freedom of expression. In a 2004 ruling, *Axson-Flynn v. Johnson*, a federal appeals court concluded that college students have no greater degree of constitutional protection than K-12 students when their speech takes place in the setting of a curricular exercise. In the *Axson-Flynn* case, the court determined that the Supreme Court's 1988 ruling in *Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier*, which divested high school journalists of First Amendment protection when working on school-assigned news stories, applied equally to a Colorado college student challenging the propriety of an instructor's assignment.

Hazelwood has been vigorously criticized by legal scholars, because the threshold the Supreme Court established for legitimizing school censorship – any justification “reasonably related to legitimate pedagogical concerns” will suffice – amounts to, in practice, a total abdication of judicial oversight. As Prof. Kozlowski (2012) has written:

[W]hen a court rules that *Hazelwood* controls a case, almost always the First Amendment claimant is about to lose because the ‘legitimate pedagogical concerns’ standard is applied so deferentially. *Hazelwood* has been stretched far from its factual moorings, and the ‘legitimate pedagogical concerns’ standard is often interpreted so loosely that courts have rendered it effectively meaningless.

If *Hazelwood* applies to work done by college journalists, then they have no meaningful legal recourse should college administrators attempt to alter or withhold their work on the grounds that it might associate the institution with a divisive position on a matter of controversy. (LoMonte, 2011).

Only twice have courts confronted whether the near-total institutional control recognized by the Supreme Court in *Hazelwood* applies in newsrooms beyond the K-12 context – and those courts came out with diverging views. A federal appeals court in Illinois determined that *Hazelwood* was the proper standard by which to gauge a college's decision to refuse to distribute a student newspaper (*Hosty v. Carter*, 2005), while a sister appeals court in Tennessee declined to apply *Hazelwood* to a First Amendment challenge brought by editors of a censored yearbook (*Kincaid v. Gibson*, 2001). Because of the uncertain legal conditions under which student journalism operates, a growing number of states are enacting statutes that fortify the unreliable federal level of protection, though as of 2019, laws are on the books in just 14 states, and not all of them extend beyond the K-12 educational level. (Karchmer, 2018).

Instructors, too, must consider their own safety in associating themselves with coverage of volatile subjects, particularly when taking a hands-on role in assigning and revising stories. When state employees are on the job performing assigned

duties, they receive essentially no free-speech protection, as the Supreme Court regards their speech as “government speech” belonging to the employer. (*Garcetti v. Ceballos*, 2006). A handful of federal courts have found the *Garcetti* standard inapplicable to college-level educators, because the doctrine of academic freedom gives them an extra measure of protection to explore unconventional ideas. (*Demers v. Austin*, 2014). But there is no established consensus, and the Supreme Court has yet to weigh in.

If it is contemplated that students in a journalism lab will be undertaking investigative reporting projects likely to provoke substantial controversy, all participants should go into the undertaking informed about the limitations of their legal rights.

As one interviewee said: “I don’t have any rights that are more important or supersede the rights of students, so that is an assumption that frames a lot of my work. I do feel like I do have the basic First Amendment rights that anyone publishing has and that I should expect those basic First Amendment rights.”

Recently, a former college newspaper editor from Virginia’s Liberty University, a conservative Christian academy founded by televangelist Jerry Falwell, took to the *Washington Post* op-ed pages to share his account of the climate of heavy-handed, image-motivated censorship he experienced. (Young, 2019). In the column, the former editor of *The Champion*, Will E. Young recounts escalating tensions with the office of President Jerry Falwell, Jr., which reviewed every article before publication and allowed any professor or administrator mentioned in an article to “edit” the piece. In Young’s account, the university eventually stripped students of all control over *The Champion*, putting college employees in charge of selecting and editing the stories, making it a house organ of Falwell’s administration – and even making the student journalists sign nondisclosure agreements so they would not publicly challenge editorial decisions. While Young’s experience is a thankfully extreme one, those working in private institutions should be mindful both that First Amendment protections will not apply, and that a free press may be regarded as an adversary rather than an educational and civic asset.

An interviewee from a conservative religious private school reported that students self-censor with no pressure from institution itself: “That is just part of the culture here, when it doesn’t have to be. And they’re afraid to question. They’ve never been given the freedom to question, to think critically, to move forward and challenge something. They don’t know how to do it respectfully, and so that’s part of our challenge really in this department, is to teach them how to do that.”

As part of a graduate research project at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, law student Lindsie Trego surveyed the editors of college newspapers at four-year public institutions across the country to gather their experiences with

institutional censorship pressure. (Trego, 2018). More than 60 percent of editors who took the survey reported experiencing at least one instance of direct or indirect censorship from campus authorities over the preceding year. The survey found that: 51.9 percent reported that administrators had pressured a newspaper staff member not to publish something; 23.3 percent had faced threats to their publication's funding because of editorial content; 7.4 percent reported that a newspaper staff member or faculty adviser was threatened with the loss of employment, and 7.2 percent reported that a staff member faced disciplinary action. If anything, the Trego findings understate the amount of institutional censorship, because her pool of survey recipients excluded those at private institutions or two-year public institutions, places that may be even more image-sensitive and where adherence to First Amendment principles may be scrutinized less vigilantly. These findings pertain to student-run news operations rather than to curricular news laboratories, which may be differently situated for two reasons: First, relatively few curricular laboratories report that they focus on campus news as student newspapers do, and second, respect for academic freedom may curb administrators' willingness to dictate how instructors teach, if journalism is created in a faculty-supervised curricular setting.

Several interviewees referenced their belief that academic freedom would protect journalism educators' autonomy to choose coverage topics and to assist students in preparing news up to the standards and expectations of the profession, even if that means publishing provocative work. One said: "Academic freedom to me means the freedom to teach and learn and to be challenged and to express one's ideas and views in a space of equal exchange where there's no threat of overt censorship or exploited power and balance between the individual and the institution." Another specifically defined academic freedom to include "that ability to do journalism focused on university activities." None of the interviewees mentioned concern for job security, suggesting a degree of confidence in academic freedom that may be misplaced.

Even if educational news labs do not focus on campus issues, they still may provoke controversy that result in blowback, particularly when covering political figures with influence over higher education.

At the University of Florida, a newly launched statehouse coverage project, "Fresh Take Florida," encountered controversy soon after its January 2018 launch, when student reporters ventured into the story of a white legislator criticized for having worn blackface while in college. To gauge whether the lawmaker, Rep. Anthony Sabatini, faced eroding political support as a result of the controversy, student journalists examined his campaign finance filings and called his largest donors to gauge their level of support. (Campione, 2019). When Sabatini learned what the reporters were doing, he called the faculty member responsible for reviewing the article and threatened to launch an investigation of partisanship in the reporting project – a call echoed by a right-wing blogger, who claimed that the

journalism lab had been “weaponized, with extreme bias” to target conservatives. (Campione).

Although no state investigation materialized and the Fresh Take program continues unharmed, not every university may be as supportive when facing pressure from political figures and the risk of adverse publicity. At Atlanta’s Emory University – a private institution where, unlike at Florida, First Amendment guarantees do not apply – the journalism program was dissolved and the director of its student-led investigative reporting news lab was let go (Diamond, 2012), shortly after a student-produced investigation into the finances of a high-ranking Republican legislator who, under a pseudonym, helped run a sports oddsmaking operation. (Michaels, 2012).

The experience of the Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism stands as an object lesson in both the vulnerability of reporting labs based at state universities, as well as their ability to withstand a political onslaught when well-supported by their institutions and the public. The Wisconsin Center is a nonprofit news organization founded in 2009 that, while housed within the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Wisconsin, maintains a separate corporate existence with its own philanthropic funding. During 2011, reporters with the Center published several articles spotlighting questionable practices in the Wisconsin legislature, including the refusal to make legislators’ correspondence with lobbyists public under the state open-records act. In what was widely seen as a retaliatory maneuver, state legislators inserted a rider into the 2013 state budget prohibiting the university from sharing office space with the Wisconsin Center and forbidding university employees from doing any work in support of the Center. (Ingeno, 2013). After widespread public outcry, Gov. Scott Walker ultimately vetoed the budget proviso and preserved the relationship, a reversal that the Center’s director attributed to the adverse national publicity and the inability of opponents to provide any plausible non-retaliatory explanation. (Craver, 2013).

No interview respondent reported experiencing direct attempts by administrators – within the journalism program or the institution overall – to thwart reporting efforts or interfere with an instructor’s course design or chosen reporting focus. One commented: “I can’t even come up with a narrative in where there was overreach or there was top-down kind of ‘This needs to happen.’ It is closest to in-house independence as you can get, for at least the framework that I work in.”

One educator whose students had previously done investigative journalism reporting about their own university has since declined to do that kind of work. The instructor reported no direct exertion of influence or pressure from the institution, but anticipated facing such adversity, and thus gave up on the idea of future projects. Another instructor, whose students have undertaken sensitive stories in the past,

said it has proven valuable to ascertain in advance whether a story will have supervisors' support:

One of the things that I do right up-front when I do these projects is that I make sure that I have, number one, that I have the cooperation of my chair and the cooperation of my dean. And they kind of know what I'm doing. I'm very up-front with what I'm doing and I ask for their support right off the bat so that if any legal issues arise that they'll have my back ... I have that discussion up-front, and if I don't get their support, then I don't do the project.

2. Defamation

Stories that uncover wrongdoing by identifiable people, businesses or organizations present a heightened concern for defamation claims, whether well-founded or unfounded. A successful claim of defamation, under U.S. common law, requires proof of a false statement of fact, made with some degree of negligence or greater fault, that causes reputational injury to identifiable people or entities. Investigative reporting, by its nature, calls attention to harms caused by malfeasance or nonperformance, which is why professional news organizations engage counsel to review investigative stories pre-publication.

Lawsuits against student journalists are mercifully uncommon, and suits naming their instructors or educational institutions are rarer still. U.S. defamation law is purposefully publisher-friendly and forgiving of innocent mistakes, making a lawsuit challenging to win. Nonetheless, when one happens, the consequences can be profound.

In 2015, a Chicago man, Alstory Simon, sued Northwestern University and the former director of its (since-disbanded) investigative journalism lab, the Medill Innocence Project, alleging that the Project's investigators framed him for murder in an attempt to validate their theory that an innocent man was wrongfully convicted. (Esposito, 2018). The lawsuit alleged that a professor and private investigator working for the Innocence Project concocted evidence that freed convicted killer Anthony Porter from death row, but led to the conviction of Simon, who spent 15 years in prison for murder before he, too, was exonerated and released. The university spent three years defending against the lawsuit, which demanded \$40 million in compensation, before settling it for an undisclosed sum in 2018. (Meisner, 2018). The case is an outlier in many respects – the wrongs alleged in the lawsuit were attributed not to students but to experienced professionals who were accused of working in cahoots with criminal defense counsel – but the case stands as a reminder of the legal exposure associated with high-stakes journalism.

In the small handful of cases that have made it as far as a publicly available judicial decision, public universities have successfully avoided liability for material published by student journalists working for college newspapers. A decisive fact in each case has been that the colleges lack the authority to control the students' editorial decisions. Because (*Hazelwood* notwithstanding) the First Amendment is widely understood to circumscribe a public university's authority to tell students what they cannot publish, courts have refused to hold the institutions liable for student journalistic work, following the foundational common-law premise that there can be no liability for something that one is powerless to control.

One instructive case, *Lewis v. St. Cloud State University*, occurred in 2003 at Minnesota's St. Cloud State University, part of the state university system. A faculty member claimed that he was defamed in news articles covering his age-discrimination lawsuit against the university, which appeared in the biweekly student-run newspaper, *The University Chronicle*. The defamation suit named St. Cloud State as "publisher" of the newspaper, seeking to hold the university responsible on the basis that the university provided financial support and office space for the *Chronicle*, selected each year's editor, allowed the paper to use university logos, and otherwise associated itself with the editorial process. Two state appellate courts, however, rejected the claim, relying on a university-system policy that prohibited administrators from controlling the content of the newspaper. Siding with St. Cloud State, a unanimous Minnesota Supreme Court cited "the firmly established policy of giving students on college campus as many first amendment rights protections as the community at large."

The court in the *Lewis* case cited the Louisiana Court of Appeals' similar resolution of a libel case against a public university in the 1983 case of *Milliner v. Turner*. There, two faculty members sued Southern University for libel after one was called a "racist" and another a "proven fool," in articles published by student editors of *The Observer*. In a unanimous opinion, the appellate court wrote: "[T]he First Amendment of the United States Constitution would bar [the university] from exercising anything but advisory control over the paper, therefore, exempting the university from any liability or responsibility."

At a private institution that is not governed by the First Amendment, there is no constitutional barrier to an institution stepping in and overruling the decisions of student editors. However, the outcome in the *Lewis* case suggests that even an institutional policy of non-involvement may suffice to insulate against liability for what students publish, so long as the policy is faithfully followed. That was the result when a former employee sued Princeton University alleging he was libeled by coverage of his departure in the *Daily Princetonian* newspaper, which implicated him in the misuse of university equipment. In *Gallo v. Princeton University*, a New Jersey appellate court declined to hold the university responsible for the work of student reporters in the editorially independent *Princetonian*: "[T]he alleged defamatory

statements that appeared in the independent University publications are not attributable to Princeton and its administrators.”

Helpful as they are, these legal precedents involve news operations with a degree of autonomy from their host universities. If university employees actively engage in assigning, editing or even co-authoring editorial content – and have the ultimate decision as to what does and does not get published, all of which was the case with the Medill Innocence Project – it will be far more difficult for the institution to disclaim liability.

If student writing is published in tandem with a professional partner, the apportionment of legal responsibility will be a threshold issue that should be anticipated contractually. One instructor interviewed about handling sensitive topics specifically mentioned that working with a professional news outlet afforded the added benefit of access to experienced media counsel for pre-publication libel review: “One of the things about the [article] is that it was heavily lawyered before we published it.”

One of the main takeaways from Prof. Rosenberg Belton’s 2012 study was that journalism faculty members hesitated to broach conversations about liability with university administrators and counsel, for fear that risk-averse attorneys might seek to curb news reporting or insist on involvement in it. While perhaps understandable, this hesitation makes it difficult to gauge to what extent the university “has the backs” of student journalists and journalism educators (for instance, whether university insurance coverage will apply to legal claims, and whether the university will provide defense counsel in the event that a student, rather than an employee, is the defendant in a liability suit). The philosophy of “better to ask forgiveness than permission” may apply when sneaking a cookie, but it is a risky approach to structuring a news operation.

3. Confidentiality

Whether to rely on an unnamed source as the basis for an article is a professional judgment with which even the most acclaimed news organizations regularly struggle. “The biggest ethical issue we encounter,” one instructor commented, “is helping students understand when there is a valid need for either anonymity or quasi-anonymity among sources versus just granting a source anonymity because they ask for it, and try to negotiate that.” As a threshold matter before promising to grant anonymity, journalists must determine whether they can effectively maintain confidentiality. In the educational setting, the ability to keep secrets is not always a sure thing.

The reporter’s privilege enables journalists to make effective assurances of confidentiality to their sources. Where the privilege applies, a journalist may safely

defy an otherwise-lawful demand to surrender evidence or answer questions under oath in connection with a legal proceeding. Without a legally effective privilege, a journalist may face the choice of exposing confidential information, including the identities of sources, or incurring contempt sanctions that can include fines and imprisonment.

Every state except Wyoming has recognized a privilege either by way of a legislatively enacted statute, a judicially created common-law privilege, or a combination of the two. (Papandrea, 2006). Privilege may be narrow (applying only to information identifying confidential sources) or broad (covering all unpublished news-gathering material, such as photos on a memory card or recordings of interviews). (Papandrea). There is no universally recognized privilege in federal legal proceedings – Congress has resisted enacting one for decades, and the Supreme Court has hesitated to conclude that one exists (*Branzburg v. Hayes*, 1972) – but some federal judges have inferred the existence of a limited privilege rooted in the First Amendment or in common law, including courts in the Second and Third Circuits. (*United States v. Cuthbertson*, 1980; *Blum v. Schlegel*, 1993).

Only two states (Maryland and West Virginia) explicitly mention student journalists within the scope of their privilege statutes. (Peters *et al.*, 2016-17) In the overwhelming majority of states, privilege statutes are “functional” in nature, meaning that their coverage extends to anyone regularly engaged in gathering and distributing news for public consumption. Several states, however, condition eligibility for the privilege on earning gain from “professional” journalistic work, including Florida, New York and Texas (the latter of which requires proof of “substantial financial gain”). (Peters). Even in those states with narrow statutes, it should not be conceded that unpaid students and their sources are ineligible for the protection of the privilege, because a judicially recognized privilege might also come into play, supplementing the statutorily created right.

On occasion, students have had success asserting the reporter’s privilege even when working in nontraditional settings. A court in Illinois recognized that student researchers working for the Medill Innocence Project – a journalism course focused on re-investigating questionable murder convictions – could qualify for the reporter’s privilege, although ultimately in that 2011 case, the privilege had been waived. (Meisner, 2011).

As a practical matter, the greater confidentiality risk may come from demands made by an instructor’s supervisors, rather than by police or prosecutors. State privilege statutes come into play only when a demand for information is made in connection with a legal proceeding, such as a police investigation or a civil lawsuit. If the demand for disclosure comes from a dean, vice president or provost rather than from a police officer or a judge, the privilege almost certainly is not broad enough to enable a faculty member to safely refuse without consequence (and it certainly will

not apply when the demand comes from a *non*-governmental authority, such as an administrator at a private university). Because an instructor may be faced with the choice of violating the confidentiality of the newsgathering process or incurring employment sanctions, the safest course may be ignorance – insulating the instructor from knowing the identities of confidential sources, and keeping any identifying documents off university computer drives or other places of storage accessible to campus authorities

4. Access to Information

Every state has a freedom-of-information statute, often called an open-records or public-records act, entitling members of the public to inspect documents created or maintained by government agencies in the course of official business. Similarly, every state has an open-meetings statute that requires public bodies involved in governmental policymaking to open their meetings to the public after providing adequate advance notice. Most journalism programs train students to be aware of their statutorily protected access rights – and some go further and involve students in filing requests for records – but enforcing those rights when impediments arise is especially challenging in the educational setting.

Journalists at traditional news organizations are not-infrequently forced to sue, or at least threaten suit, to obtain access when dealing with recalcitrant government agencies. Whether journalists working in a student reporting lab have the capacity to wage legal battles for access is an unsettled question. In one illustrative case, a student news lab at Virginia's Washington and Lee University was forced to appear in court to argue for access to a plea agreement in a high-profile criminal case, which the trial judge had ordered sealed. (Keierleber, 2014). The news site's faculty adviser, department chair Brian Richardson, was named as the party seeking access to the sealed document and represented in court by volunteer counsel obtained through the nonprofit Student Press Law Center. Not every university may be so open-minded about its faculty members involving themselves in legal controversies – particularly if the controversy involves information withheld by a sister governmental agency, which was not the case at Washington and Lee. Further, the question of "who is the requester" presents issues of legal significance, as courts may not recognize a journalism class as being a legal entity with the "personhood" to be a party to a court case.

Students not-infrequently report that their requests are taken less seriously because of the impression that their work is not "real," or that the right of access is the province of credentialed professionals only. One instructor reported: "We've had a couple instances where our students were kicked out of public meetings and the local paper stepped in and made a statement on our students' behalf because they had every right to be in that meeting."

Journalists' access issues go beyond documents and data. Not infrequently, newsgatherers come into conflict with law enforcement when trying to shoot photographs or record video in public places, particularly in heavily policed scenes of crime or civil unrest. While the law is increasingly protective of journalists' First Amendment right to record the activities of police doing official business in public (*Fields v. City of Philadelphia*, 2017; *Glik v. Cunniffe*, 2011), there is no recognized over-arching First Amendment right to be in places where news is happening. (One educator interviewee reported that overzealous students, misinformed about the limits of their rights, insisted on trespassing into private property in pursuit of news.)

Where the right of access is uncertain, or where the law is not on the journalists' side, educators can help students learn the diplomatic skills to negotiate for greater access than they might be legally entitled to. Said one instructor at a private institution: "There's a difference between censoring and self-censoring. And our students self-censor because they anticipate that they will be turned down, especially here on campus, when it comes to interviews and records requests. I help them navigate what they are allowed to access, and I'm allowed to access on their behalf."

C. Ethical considerations

Law speaks in terms of "musts" while ethics speaks in terms of "shoulds," and at times, what journalists are legally permitted to do may be disfavored as a matter of best ethical and professional practices. Perhaps the best illustration is publishing, without consent, the names of sex-crime victims gleaned from police reports, a decision that the Supreme Court has declared to be constitutionally protected (*Florida Star v. B.J.F.*, 1989) even though it contravenes the ethical standards universally observed across the mainstream U.S. media. Teaching about the right to gather and publish brings with it the accompanying duty to also teach sound professional judgment (for instance, to avoid publishing a gratuitously violent photograph of no great public importance, while defending the right to take the photograph in the first place).

When interview exchanges focused on ethical concerns, respondents universally mentioned codes of ethics as their guiding principles, including those crafted by the Society of Professional Journalists, the Radio Television Digital News Association, the National Press Photographers Association, and the Online News Association. Such principles as seeking and reporting truth, minimizing harm, and remaining independent and accountable were repeatedly mentioned.

1. Minimizing Harm

One element of teaching truthfulness is emphasizing the importance of verification and fact-checking. One instructor reported being told by a colleague of a

student story that turned out to contain serious undetected errors: “Whether you’re a practicing reporter, editor, you’re always paranoid, and you’re double-checking. You want to make sure you’re getting it right. I think when you’re doing this type of stuff with students, that type of intensity is ratcheting it up even more.” Another aspect of truthfulness that is increasingly challenging to teach in the era of Photoshop and Instagram-filtered images is the importance of maintaining the authenticity of news photos. The NPPA Code of Ethics instructs: “Do not manipulate images or add or alter sound in any way that can mislead viewers or misrepresent subjects.” Students who have not studied photojournalism may not have internalized these principles.

A concern common to the campus setting is miscommunication about whether student-produced work will be publicly accessible. Multiple instructors gave accounts of misunderstandings in which interview subjects assumed that student work prepared “just for class” would not end up online. One educator stated: “I want to make sure that when the student asks for the interview, they made it 100 percent clear that this was going to be published not for a class, but this has the potential to be published in a broader context. They didn’t get the interview with the sense that it was just going to be an assignment.”

Another educator framed ethical obligations in terms of “integrity” and said representation was the most important element, especially when harm can arise from misrepresenting someone. “Well, I think, first and foremost, ‘integrity’ as it relates to how subjects are represented. So I think that there are issues that relate to things like immigration or minors or mental health where someone that’s the subject of a story may not be cognizant of the potential jeopardy they could place themselves in by doing an interview. And so I think as a publisher, we have a responsibility to make sure that we’re looking out for minors, looking out for certain populations.”

“Minimizing harm” is one of the foundational tenets of the SPJ Code of Ethics. The SPJ explains that ethical journalism means balancing “the public’s need for information against potential harm or discomfort,” and that journalists should apply “heightened sensitivity when dealing with juveniles, victims of sex crimes, and sources or subjects who are inexperienced or unable to give consent.” One instructor commented: “I think the biggest ethical issue we come across is what do we do when it comes to sourcing when we’re dealing with vulnerable people. By vulnerable folks, I mean anyone who’s experiencing homelessness, anyone who is experiencing an identity transition, anyone who is perhaps an undocumented person, anyone for whom having their identity out there puts them at risk.”

2. Issues of Equity and Representation

Educators identified a specific set of ethical concerns arising from their responsibilities to students that adds a layer to the obligations traditional news

supervisors face. They often identified these as entangled with journalistic ethics, but they are a separate set of concerns. All respondents identified at least one issue involving their relationships with students that they framed in terms of ethics. These included (1) ensuring that students beyond the “alpha students” who are always the first to volunteer have access to opportunities, and (2) making training and travel opportunities affordable for students of modest financial means.

Multiple respondents said they felt an obligation to help students understand the power of framing and representations in society, particularly when it came to matters of gender, race, class, sexual orientation, religion, and physical or intellectual abilities. One discussed a difficult situation that arose with a story on race within a community. A source for the story made a negative, race-based comment that sent the story viral. The educator reported feeling the need to defend the reporting while also helping the student reporter build the courage to do the same. Another educator whose students did work on poverty in predominantly white rural areas said they felt consistent pressure to help students question their own biases and break through stereotypes. This was important, they said, for good journalism but more important for the students to grow as people.

3. Issues of Student Welfare

Educators felt obligations to students when their work met with negative reactions, especially given the reach, immediacy and anonymity of social media that emboldens critics to vent hostility toward all journalists, even the youngest: “From time to time, we’ll get our ‘fake news’ type of chatter on our social feeds, but nothing specifically directed at the quality of the content as much as just general dislike of what we’re doing and who we are.”

While ensuring the journalistic integrity of articles is paramount for any editor or publisher, the educators saw an added dimension when dealing with inexperienced students who may be defined in the eyes of prospective employers by a single misjudgment. One interviewee remarked: “I think we also have a responsibility to the students to make sure that the work that we are putting out into the public is work that they can be proud of, that it’s not going to be damaging to their careers. They’re young, they don’t necessarily know what’s right and what’s wrong when it comes to some journalistic pieces. And so I think I have a responsibility to protect them and to be able to pull them aside and say, ‘Hey, this is not ready to go. This is not going to look good for you, this is not going to look good for the college. Let’s hold this until it’s ready.’”

Concern for the welfare of students enters into, and at times complicates, judgments that professional publishers make routinely. Professional news outlets, for instance, will not remove articles from their websites just because the authors regret what they wrote. But educators are inclined to be less rigid, recognizing a dual

obligation to their students as well as to the publication and its audience. One instructor acceded to an author's "takedown" request after a student, who had written about misbehavior by a powerful person in the community, reported harassment and threats from the person's supporters that continued even post-graduation.

4. Integrity of the Curriculum and Student Learning

Educators working in the clinical setting must consider all of the same journalistic issues as editors/publishers in more orthodox newsrooms, but must also balance the curricular needs of students. At times, the imperatives of operating a deadline-sensitive news operation and producing content for external clients may come into tension with pedagogical objectives. One educator said: "That's really what a lot of my time is spent on administratively is thinking about editorial direction and instructional needs, and try to bridge that gap between what our curricular demands are and what our audience demands are." Similarly, another commented: "I think my responsibilities are... torn between a public and the instructional needs of the student. I think I'm responsible for publishing accurate, timely information that serves an underserved community... but I'm also responsible for making sure that student's interaction with this publication is an instructional interaction first and foremost." In a similar vein, a third instructor explained: "I also feel like there's a responsibility to put those instructional needs above the publishing needs of the website, and, what I mean by that is that instead of pushing a deadline if there's actually value in slowing down a story so that a student better understands the craft or reporting skills, that's the need that ultimately gets served."

The imperative to provide students with a beneficial educational experience must be contemplated when entering into agreements with professional partners. Issues such as editorial control, scheduling and expectations should be anticipated by way of up-front agreement with external clients, to minimize conflict and enable instructors to design workflow around the needs of each stakeholder.

VI. Conclusion

The erosion of established media business models makes the shift toward laboratory-based investigative journalism both inevitable and necessary, in two respects. First, while journalism graduates will face increased competition for scarce newsroom jobs, media outlets are recognizing investigative reporting as a draw for audiences that makes good business sense; students with mastery of investigative skills and a portfolio of investigative work samples will be more marketable candidates. Media columnist Jason Abbruzzese attributes the resurgence in no small part to the 2016 election of President Donald Trump, whose stated intention to remake Washington – and seemingly inexhaustible reservoir of business scandals – gave national news organizations renewed impetus to replenish their depleted I-teams. (Abbruzzese, 2017). Second, the diminished capacity of local and regional

news outlets to devote resources to long-range projects opens up opportunities for campus news labs to step up as their communities' primary watchdogs. As Arizona State's Leonard Downie Jr. observed, recounting a nationwide food-safety investigation coordinated by ASU's News21, almost no professional news organization in America could have devoted the staffing – 27 reporters and six editors – needed to complete the year-long multimedia project, which ran in *The Washington Post* and on MSNBC. (Downie, 2011).

For the educational objectives of the university, laboratory journalism offers advantages beyond those of traditional internship placements. Instructor supervision promotes accountability to the institution's learning objectives. Moreover, learning labs open up participation opportunities to students who cannot meet the demands of professional internship placements (relocating to a new city, delaying progress toward degree completion).

Educators involved in structuring learning-lab programs should anticipate and, to the extent possible, adopt preventive policies around the types of legal issues realistically likely to arise based on the type of reporting in which students are engaged. Recurring issues common to all types of publishing operations include ownership of content, and supervisory authority over – and legal responsibility for – the actions of student reporters.

As the work product and working environment on college campuses increasingly resembles that of traditional news operations, the journalists working in those clinical settings will need legal resources equal to the professional-level risks they are being asked to take. As one educator observed: "It's a larger question about our responsibilities as educators. We ask students to assume a certain amount of risk when they do this work as student journalists, but then one thing we keep coming up against is, what resources do we actually have at our disposal to support them when they get in trouble? The reality is we don't have the same resources that even a poorly staffed news organization would have to support them." Similarly, educators had difficulty identifying external sources of expertise on which they would rely when facing challenging ethical judgment calls. Every respondent first identified trusted colleagues, mentors, or friends in other journalism programs as their go-to consultants in these matters. The next most-common answer was an administrator in the journalism program, followed by industry contacts. No respondent identified someone outside academia or journalism as a person they would consult, reflecting the often-critiqued closed nature of journalism ethics.

Because clinical journalism labs will increasingly represent an indispensable part of both the educational experience and of the informational infrastructure of their communities, the health of those programs is a matter of larger public importance. Greater legal resources should be devoted to both the threshold structural decisions in creating clinical programs, as well as to meeting the ongoing daily legal needs of

instructors and students as judgment calls arise. A significant element of fortifying the infrastructure supporting campus journalism is continuing-education training for instructors in evolving legal issues, a need that several survey participants identified as unmet. The widespread public accessibility of student work raises the legal stakes for making sure that the work is legally defensible, and that students go into the field well-prepared to make critical legal and ethical judgments.

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IV. Regional Studies

Journalism in Pakistan: A Risky Profession

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Abstract

The purpose of research is analyzing the problems of journalists during investigative reporting. The survey research design has been applied by using the random sampling technique. The sample size of the research was 150 journalists in Pakistan. Journalists are not satisfied from their jobs due to security issues and threats and also lack of facilities, job security and insurance, long working hours and low salaries. Journalists have to do self censorship due to political pressure, religious bigotry, feudal system and military involvement. This study also highlights the problems of journalists in Pakistan and recommends corrective strategies for improving the working practices.

Key Words: investigative journalism; professional hindrances, Risky profession, Journalists in Pakistan, pressures

Introduction

International media monitors reports that Pakistan ranked second in dangerous countries for journalists. This report considered Pakistan is the dead place for journalist because journalists kidnapped, threaten, tortured and beaten to death, various bodies of journalist found with drilled spots by extremist and unknown elements, Mukarrum Khan an investigative journalist Murdered in 2012 his dead body found after few days, killers are still unidentified (Ricchiardi S. , 2012). The job of journalist linked with number of security and different challenges, professional journalist working in different organization in Pakistan also faced different challenges and problems which effects their family and job. Australian Broadcasting commission has urged media organization around the world to understand that journalist pass through the psychological stresses while during reporting conflicts, media organizations should guarantee their support (as cited in Saul, 2009a). According to a report by CPJ 52 journalist killed in Pakistan from 1992 to 2016, 42 war correspondent, 28 journalist murdered from 1992 to 2013, 46% journalist lost their live in warzone (Alam, 2016).

Journalist in Pakistan having lot of social issues, some time they threaten by political groups, forces, religious groups. Journalist working in Pakistan having not-handsome pays and not well equipped, organizations do not support them well even most of them are working on commission basis. Social problems create difficulties in professional work like reporting, coverage and journalist face hurdle during reporting. Pakistan's face three periods of military rule, judiciary, press and institutions all faced trouble. Media face Censorship and suppressed by military dictators through different ordinance, sanctions, draconian laws, banned on media shutdown media houses and publications. Religious leader promulgated blasphemy laws that curbed freedom of expression, intelligence services manipulated media and journalist and civil bureaucracy control media through administration (Duffy, 2016). The Era of General Zia was considered most dark era of press in Pakistan. No one allowed writing against his policies and attitude. He imposed meaningless restrictions, introduced new censorship laws, newspapers were checked by Military persons and imposed their ideology. It was not only the Media it was also a dark phase for journalist (Haider & Ahmed, 2017).

Ethnic groups, religious extremist, feudalists, nationalists, political groups and military involvement are challenges for the journalists in Pakistan that directly affect journalist and their life. Several journalists kidnapped during reporting and murdered by unknown or terrorist groups. Also, journalists

in rural areas is working under threats, abducted by powerful group, their vehicles were broken and they were tortured (Abbas, 2007). Tariq Kamal associated with a regional newspaper in Pakistan suddenly murdered by unknown, he was working on a story related to feudal leaders. Committee to protect journalist stated if a journalist working in rural areas of Pakistan and cover scam, corruption cases of political or feudal identity he targeted by feudal leader or criminal groups (Salman, 2011). Female journalists are Less than 5% in journalism in Pakistan. They face various issues and hurdle in profession. Female journalist community faced Threat of gender-based violence, harassment issue, negative social attitude. A survey was held in 2017 indicate that among two of one woman faced gender-based violence. It's very difficult for females to work as journalist in Pakistan. Women also faced transport and maternity leave issues (Nusrat, 2018).

The international Federation of journalist reported about women journalist working in different media houses all over the world that only 38% women journalist are working in various media houses and press among 38% only few of them reached on high positions of editors, publishers etc. Even women are more active in profession and worked as a news presenter, readers in different organizations (Zehra, 2015). Journalists associated with different media houses also face salary issues, several organization do not pay salary on time even most of the journalists in rural areas are working without salary. Organizations couldn't provide medical and insurance. Journalist in Rural areas do not have proper salary package, 60% of journalist from rural areas never received salary. The ratio of educated journalist in rural areas of Pakistan is very low. Journalist in rural areas just 22%, those they have done their Master degree, rest of journalist in rural areas of Pakistan are not well educated, 29% of journalist owned matric (Riaz, 2015).

Many researchers have found that journalistic reporting is influenced by an array of factors like the socio-cultural and political contexts in which media operate. This study has been designed to identify the challenges and issues of journalists in Pakistan and how different problems influence media reporting of issues in the region and how demographic characteristics like education and gender associated with the issues and challenges, and identifying the internal and external factors that influenced journalists in Pakistan.

Literature Review

Media considered fourth pillar of state in a modern society, existence of free press and right to information is necessary for the development of democratic societies, professional journalist always consider voice of voice less, without freedom of press and expression press can't provide rightful function. Journalist is defined a method of inquiry, investigate and literary style that aims to provide a service to the public by the dissemination and analysis of news. Job of journalist is totally different and these some training is not sufficient for journalist. Journalists don't know how to work in conflict zones and produce good content. Journalist in Rural areas do not have proper salary package, 60% of journalist from rural areas never received salary (Memon, 2013).

Journalists working under insecure conditions are subject to the influence that comes from several potential forces. Journalist became easy targets of violent attacks, assassination, threats, harassment including government and judicial by state authorities. Few of research also identified that journalist in developing countries facing different challenges, different organization also working on protection of journalist and issues related to journalist (Foster & Regina, 2008). During a research in Turkey about Journalists freedom the journalists agreed with the statement that the condition of freedom and security for the journalists is most important and if journalists abducted by state or group we consider worst place for journalism. Journalists attacked by unknowns and threats by any source it directly affects

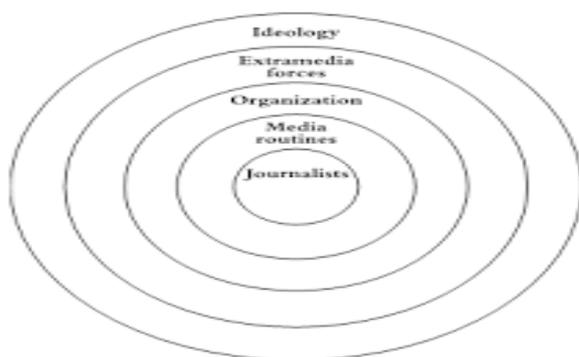
professional and social life of a journalist (Kanver, 2013). Drevo (2017) did a survey of 385 professional journalist and interview to establish demographic, Professional value and social characteristics, he stated in new order regime journalist feel challenges especially journalist belongs to kingdoms and rural areas, the journalist in developing countries where journalist have some freedom and professional independency with handsome salaries are happy with their job. Good salaries job satisfaction, security all effect professionalism and increasing level of journalism (Drevo, 2017).

A survey research in 2003 done by Stephen Wrottesley on problem facing by journalist, survey based on 100 journalist , research focused on journalist trainings , security , social issues , professional issues and skills . Stephen stated journalists are the future leader of newsroom, and they will control and take charge of news and content. If journalist have some professional and other deficiencies it should be addressed and try to solve soon. Low level of training, lack of skills, poor knowledge all are deficiencies which directly affect their professional life. Journalist in rural areas having problem like they have poor skills, contextual knowledge , weak reporting skills , lack of ethics all affect their level of professionalism (Wrottesley, 2003). The Journalists those they are fairly satisfied with their job in sense of security, facilities, duty are happy with their profession and they are fair with their job and profession. Job security, income and security are the major predictors of job satisfaction. A research conducted by Ileri Jackson he found that the journalist in different continents and countries those they have security, job satisfaction and good salary they are satisfied with their job and the regions where journalist in dangerous are in trouble even they can't perform their duty well (Ileri, 2015).

Journalist now a days are in danger due to multidimensionality in modern arm conflict and complexity, increase in demands from audiences and the increasing power of the media itself has resulted in the increase in number of threats and danger to them. Tumbler and Palmer (2004) stated that the increase in threats and insecurity of journalist increased rapidly after the second golf war which leads to dangerous situation for journalist's security. Attacks on journalist in different warzones and conflicts are considered attack on peace and stability of states (Palmer, 2004). Journalists are the easiest target even in martial laws. When martial law took place journalist and media organization in challenging position. Journalists were forced to quit their profession and it was always a tough time for journalists to face unseen conditions. Journalist in urban or rural areas disturbed due to new government, no media and no freedom of press. Political division among journalist also effect unity of journalist and their professional challenges. The division may be personal or organizational. Media houses and journalist are the crucial factor in democracy (Furman, 2017).

Theoretical Framework

The main purpose of this study was to dig the issues and problems of journalists in Pakistan. What kind of challenges journalist face in Pakistan and how it affects their professional, personal life. Thus, the study applied “Hierarchy of Influence theory”. The hierarchy of influence model examines different external and internal forces that influence journalist and their professional work. This model helps to understand individual level, professional and their routine level. The hierarchy of influence model is media sociology for the networked public sphere (Xu & Jin, 2017). Particularly this model helps to identify the different level of problems and issues that faced by journalist in media routine and also in their organization.



This model comprises on five level of influence. It starts from individual micro level to macro level (ideology), Media organization, social systems, and routine practice. This Model helped to understand individual level, professional and their media routine organization where they work and social system where they operate. Stephen D. Reese stated that Media analysis in the 20 century was about what news organization produced and journalists are the professional worker those they work for organization. The theory of influence concerned with individual characteristics of specific News workers, their routine of work, institutional issues and organizational level concern. This model also deals with the multiple forces that affect journalist, their jobs and professionalism. The Hierarchy model is still useful to measure the factors that effects in communication (Reese S. , 2010)

The organizational level of influence on production also effects journalist and professional journalism. Media organizations and owners selectively promote some aspects of professional work, policies by the media owners mostly for gain and strong business He also stated that at organizational level journalist work to satisfy organizations, media organization selectively promote some selected persons. Resse and shoemaker describe that government, interest group, profit; political organization effect the content at that level the extra media level of influence describes the control on media production and content from outside the media organization. Extra media level where influence comes from outside media organization. Different institutions also influence to a journalist in sense to produce a story for government, for PR, and advertiser. Pamela Shoemaker and Stephen D Reese stated the different internal and external forces that appears at various levels from individual to societal (micro to macro) always problematic for the journalist , these forces also threats to journalist and affect their profession. (Reese & Shoemaker, 2016)

The hierarchy of influence model is helpful to understand the different progressive and conservatizing actors that functioned at various levels and effected journalistic practices (Xu & Jin, 2017)The current study focused on the problem of journalist working in different Pakistan, different scholars recommended the hierarchy of influence model that introduced by Reese and Shoemaker 1996. The

Hierarchy of influence model helps to investigate the issues of journalist in Pakistan. The study focuses on individual, organizational and extra media levels.

RQ1. How and to what extent the journalists in Pakistan consider various factors influencing journalistic practices?

RQ2. How to what extent the professional, organizational and societal challenges are related with demographic factors that influence journalistic practices in Pakistan?

Research Methodology

The researcher used systematic random sampling of 150 journalists working with electronic, print, radio and associated with different media organizations. Journalist registered with different press clubs like Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, and Peshawar. Working with different media houses and print and electronic media was conducted to find out the issues and problems of journalist. The role of research methodology considered most important in the process of conducting of research study. This section covers the important issues of journalist face Pakistan. A census is an approach through which we can measure one or more than one characteristics of a group. Census provides detailed information on population element and different groups (Lavrakas, 2008).

The researcher used census approach to collect data through questionnaire. In this research study the research has been conducted through respondents like journalist of print and electronic media. The sample for the study was selected from the registered members of press club. The researcher remained targeted members of press club. The samples of research study are journalist belongs to four major provincial press clubs. Those they are working for the media, electronic, print, broadcast or those they are working as a reporter, anchor, columnist, editor, sub-editor, and bureau chief and freelance. In this study the researcher utilized the sampling techniques for processing the research data. The researcher also meets most of the journalist which are working as a freelance or permanent staff reporter and discussed the aims and objectives of study in details and then delivered questionnaire among them. Journalists in Pakistan face personal, Professional, organizational, societal and field related challenges. Life of journalists is not safe in Pakistan. They face several personal challenges like security, threats from political and religious parties as well as different groups. Lack of training and how to cover war zone is also a challenge for journalists. Organizations not paying their salary on time, long working hours, not well trained for newsroom and their job is not secure. These all are the challenges that journalists face in Pakistan.

Findings and Results

RQ1. How and to what extent the journalists in Pakistan consider various factors influencing journalistic practices?

Table 1: Journalist Demographic Characteristics

Theme	N (%)
Gender	
Male	89.3 %
Female	10.7%
Education	
Metric	10.0%
FA	21.3%
BA	41.3%
Masters	27.3%
Languages	
Urdu	20.0%
Sindhi	13.3%
Punjabi	30.7%
Pashto	22.7%
Hazara	13.3%
Total Sample: 150	

Journalist Faced Challenges in Pakistan

Challenges	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Total Journalist
Societal	94.7%	0%	5.3%	150
Professional	81.3%	8%	10.7%	
Organizational	82.0%	11.3%	6.7%	
Field Related	92.7%	0%	7.3%	

The table indicates that the numbers of male and female journalist are 134 (89.3%) and 16 (10%). The master degree holders are 27.3%, BA (41.3%), FA (21.3%) and Metric (10.0%) and they belongs to different regions and different languages like Urdu (20%), Sindhi (13.3%), Punjab (30.7%), Pashto (22.7%) and Hazara (13.3%). The table also indicates different problems of journalists in term of societal, organizational, professional and field related issues. The journalists of Pakistan agree that they are facing societal (94.7%), professional (81.3%), organizational (82.0%) field related (92.7%) challenges and 8% and 11.3% of journalist disagree that they are facing professional and organization challenges. The journalists are neutral that they are facing societal (5.3%), professional (10.7%), organizational (6.7%) and field related (7.3%) challenges.

RQ.2 How to what extent the professional, organizational and societal challenges are related with demographic factors that influence journalistic practices in Pakistan?

Table 2: Distribution of Organizational Pressures on Journalists in Terms of Experience, Nature of Organization and Job

Experience	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Total Journalist
1 to 5 years	16.0%	7.3%	10.0%	50
5 to 10 years	22.0%	8.0%	3.3%	50
10 to 15 years	19.3%	9.3%	4.7%	50
Nature of Organization (Media)				
Print	28.0%	7.3%	7.3%	64
Electronic	54.0%	0.0%	3.3%	86
Nature of Job				
Bureau Head	5.3%	0.0%	1.3%	10
Editor	6.0%	0.7%	2.0%	13
Reporter	78.7%	0.0%	6.0%	127

This table indicates that the journalists are categorized on the basis experience and takes 50 journalist from each category in which 57.3% agreed, 24.6% disagree and 18% are neutral that they are facing the these challenges. It's also categorized on the basis of type of media and nature of job. The 64 journalist belong to print media and 86 belong to electronic media. The journalist from print media agree (28 %) disagree (7.3%) and neutral (19.3%) and electronic media agree (54%) disagree (0%) and neutral (3.3%). The journalist journalists also dived on the basis of nature of job as bureau head, editor and reporter. The ratio of (agree, disagree, neutral) bureau had (5.3%, 0.0%, 1.3%), editor (6.0%, 0.7%, 2.0%) and reporter (78.7%, 0.0%, 6.0%).

Discussion:

The study has discovered that the journalist working in Pakistan has also issue of security and even they don't have life insurance package from their organization. The journalist working in the region was also facing several problems from different forces affecting their professional life. The journalist receives life threats from different forces as they reported professionally. A greater number of journalists working in the region stated that different government and public information offices were also not providing them information to for their investigative news report on different issues. It's appeared to be a kind of influences that these institutions (government and public information) violated the fundamental rights of the journalist to get access to information. Journalist face hurdles in access news and government officials for news or their views, in this study 75 percent of journalists strongly said that they face hurdles to access news or government officials. 123 journalists agreed that they face organizational issues like salary, insurance, job security, technology and equipment's, long working hours, lack of facilities. These all are the factors that directly affect the life and profession of journalists in Pakistan.

South Asian press society and Pakistan Press foundation claims that Journalists in Pakistan are under serious threats and Pakistan is the most unsafe place for newsroom in South Asia. Threats and killing of journalists by unknown is another big issue of journalists in Pakistan. Wali khan baber, Abdul razak baloch, aliSher and many other journalists killed by unknown during job. First they threaten by unknown call and then they gunned down or kidnapped. Due to lack of security journalists face threats and abductions. 142 journalists said that they are agreed that they face societal issues like security and threats from unknowns, high officials, and pressure groups. Which affect their family and social life? 139 Journalists are agreed that they face professional issues. The High political pressure considered a

disappointed factor for journalist and journalism, it directly effects journalist and his life, political pressure also create problem for journalist in the line of duty or during practices .Journalist in Pakistan also face serious threats various time, journalist survive in various issues by political groups like attack, kidnapping, journalist sacrifices their life for press freedom (Ricchiardi & Sherry, 2012) .

It is analyze that journalist are not free to do their job. Journalists work under the political identities; they face pressure groups, religious extremist, military intervention, Terror groups, and feudalists. High political influence also effect on profession or the field of journalism and it is consider highly disappointing effected factor for the journalist (Domingo & Vujnovic, 2008). Journalist worked under these circumstances and can't work easily in field even they are not free to print true story if they report against some power they will pressurized to journalist or head to remove that. Even they are not free in their professional life. Somewhere in local organizations journalists are the mouth piece of local politicians and pressure groups, they provide monthly advertisements, news as per their own choice and pay handsome amount to journalist or head of newspaper. Some journalists provide space to local politicians for publicity and published positive news always in the favor of them and got some money.

The journalists working in Pakistan are not secure. The government has to take step and make some strategies to secure journalist. Provide safe and secure environment for journalist in Pakistan. The government should make a mechanism where journalists can register complain; ensure security to journalists and their families. A monthly amount in sense of salary should provide to journalists by organizations and government should impose this law to every news and media organization. The government and journalist unions should establish institute for training, develop professional skills. Government and journalist associations should take solid step to increase female journalist in field and secure them. Media organizations must pay salary on time and government make a law for journalist salaries and working hours. Government must punish those they torture, kidnap and assassinate journalist without any discrimination. Government and organizations must take step to save them to mental and physical pressure.

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Arab Citizens' Perceptions of the Investigative Journalism

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Abstract

Investigative journalism has a significant history in the United States (Bebawi, 2016). However, investigative journalism in other parts of the world is often restricted, not by the marketplace but by government policies. Investigative journalism, which aims to provide the truth, can be classified as a 'democratizing' power where it aims to illustrate decisions and discourses that rarely come into the media. Consequently, the importance of investigative journalism stems from the primary role it plays. Investigative journalism in the Arab world is limited. Investigative journalism practice was carried out in the 1950s and 1960s by a few individual attempts. Yet, today, investigative journalism in the Arab World is often left to outside media outlets beyond the borders of the region. The purpose of this study was to study the perceptions of Arab citizens towards investigative journalism. Using a quantitative survey method, the researchers sought to determine how Arab citizens identify with investigative journalism, the relationship of investigative journalism with Arab citizens, and what Arab citizens believe the role of investigative journalism should be in the region. This data showed that the majority of respondents (75.13%) revealed that they prefer getting investigative news stories from sources outside their countries, and (70.73%) prefer getting investigative reports on social media sites, because it leads people to get news from different sources. Although most of the respondents (92.55%) agreed that investigative reports on social media sites contain less proficiency, Facebook (65.7%) is ranked as the most preferred source for getting investigative journalism, and YouTube (63.7%) is considered as the second preferred source of getting investigative reports. Data from this study shows the infrastructural challenge for media and development in the Arab region. The authors explore how the findings can best be used to help citizens in the region better understand the value of investigative journalism.

Introduction

Investigative journalism is a form of journalism practice that seeks to explore new and hidden issues and occurrences. Burgh (2008) defines investigative journalism as " a process whereby we 'discover the truth and identify lapses from it in whatever media may be available" (p. 114). Investigative journalism, which aims to provide the truth, can be classified as a 'democratizing' power where it aims to illustrate decisions and discourses that rarely come into the media. Consequently, the importance of investigative journalism stems from the primary role it plays. The importance of investigative journalism expands to include

political aspects or legal, social, cultural, and even mental and psychological approaches. Regarding the gap between Arab audiences and their media outlets, the relationship between Arab media outlets and Arab audiences seems to be a contentious relationship. Bebawi (2016) claims that Arab audiences do not trust state run media. At this point, the mistrust among many Arab people and their national media shows the urgent need to address investigative journalism in the region.

It is essential to identify the meaning of investigative journalism because the term itself is problematic, and a lot of journalists say that all journalism patterns are investigative (Hamdy, 2013). The concept of investigative journalism is multifaceted (Houston, 2010). Sandeep Singh (2014) supported the Dutch-Flemish Association for Investigative Journalism, (Vereniging Van Onderzoeks Journalisten-VVOJ) and found that investigative journalism is critical and thorough journalism, which means journalism not only shares news that already exists but gives prominence to news that would not be available without this journalistic intervention. This can be done not only by creating new facts but also through re-interpretation or correlation of facts already at hand. Investigative journalism could also be defined as finding significant news about someone who does not want the society to know his/her crime (Knight, 2000). Thereby, investigative journalism is a form of journalism where a journalist goes into the depth of issues that involves corporate wrongdoing, corruption, or crime (Singh, 2014).

A variety of media institutions and scholars have defined investigative journalism based on several perspectives. Regarding the global perspective, investigative journalism is a category of journalism that seeks to reveal sensitive and serious issues, and uncover the truth. (Hunter 2012; de Burgh 2008; Ettema and Glassers 1998; Aayeshah and Bebawi, 2015). Further, De Burgh (2008) classifies an investigative journalist as a man or woman whose job is to reach the truth in addition to identifying the lapses in it through any available source of media outlet. From the European perspective, the Dutch-Flemish Association for Investigative Journalism (VVOJ) defines investigative journalism as "critical and in-depth journalism." Regarding the Arabic perspective, Bebawi (2016) deals with the investigative journalism in the Arab world through her book "Investigative journalism in the Arab world: Issues and challenges" and writes "investigative journalism can be considered as a form of reporting that seeks to uncover a 'secret,' something which someone or some entity wishes to keep unknown to the public" (p. 2).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Arab World

The Arab World is divided into four regions. 1) The Arabian Peninsula Region, which contains the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Kingdom of Bahrain, Kuwait, Yemen, and Oman. 2) Fertile Crescent Region, which contains Syrian, Palestine, Jordan, Iraq, and Lebanon. 3) Eastern African region, which contains Comoros, Somalia, and Djibouti. 4) The North Africa region, which contains Egypt, Libya, Sudan, Morocco, Algeria, Mauritania, and Tunisia. The researcher considers the need to detail the diverse components of the area of this study's population and its general characteristics. Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt are

selected to represent three regions of the Arab world. Jordan will represent Fertile Crescent region, Saudi Arabia will represent the Arabian Peninsula region, and Egypt will represent the North Africa region. The Eastern African region will not be included because it is difficult to reach the participants there.

Analyzing the politics of the Arab world, it is clear that democracy in the Arab world encounters two peculiar hurdles. First, Arabs fear that Islamic parties might be in charge by taking power. However, suppressing Arabs can turn into a worse situation. For instance, in Egypt, the military coup failed to support the Muslim Brotherhood. As a result, this leads to a dysfunctional and more oppressive state (EL Samie, 2016). In essence, this region preferred a stable democracy whose ruling was 51 percent.

Media in the Arab world

The first form of media in the Arab world was oral and print. Principally, the history of Arab media can be divided into three phases. According to Lahlali (2011), these three phases include the colonial phase, the post-colonial phase, and the 1990s phase. Initially, the media during the colonial era was designed to foster and promote colonial propaganda messages. The post-colonial phase lasted until the end of the 1980s. From the 1980s, there was an emergence of the new media technologies. After independence, the Arab governments took over the control of media.

Mass media are spread across eighteen of the Arab countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Palestinian, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. Consequently, the first Arab newspaper that was published in the Arabic language was journal al-Iraq in Baghdad in 1816 followed by two more newspapers published in Cairo 1920s, Algeria 1847, Beirut 1858,

Tunisia 1861, Damascus 1865, Libya 1866, Sana' 1879, Casablanca 1889, Khartoum 1899, Mecca 1908, in addition to the first Arabic daily newspaper that was published in Beirut 1837 (Rugh, 2004).

Historically, Arab audiences received their news from their newspapers, which were controlled by governments. According to Rugh (2004), Arab media outlets play its primary role as sources of news and media as a political tool to mobilize the masses and propagate the official line (Rugh, 2004). Rugh (2004) adds that " Arab governments played a fundamental role in the making of the media message: Ministries of information provided the editors with guidance on political programming instructing editors to ignore sensitive issues rather than to exploit certain themes for their propaganda value" (p. 184). This is a significant source of the role of Arab media outlets to be a mouthpiece of the state. Consequently, Arab audiences did not make a trusting relationship with their formal media, which is considered as "state media", and slowly became known as a skeptical audience (Bebawi, 2016).

Since the establishment of the media outfit, this channel has embarked on revolutionizing the Arab media and broadcasting as a whole. Foreign media outlets that use the Arabic language were owned by Western ownership. Miles (2005) reveals "although these stations were extremely popular and offered a higher standard of news than anything produced domestically, they were Western and so still subject to some suspicion" (p. 25). These foreign media outlets witnessed "presence within the Arab public sphere, such as the BBC Arabic News Service, Radio Monte Carlo, and Voice of America – the last of which was particularly seen as a propaganda tool of the US" (Bebawi, 2016, p. 8). However, global news channels, such as CNN, were only available for a few Arab, audience who were able to have access to them (Bebawi, 2016). Bebawi (2016) also reveals that CNN was the only foreign channel that broadcast its materials from within Iraq, thus considered as the first modern-day news channel that covered the war.

Investigative journalism in the Arab world

Investigative journalism in the Arab world is an old media approach. Investigative journalism practice was carried out in the 1950s and 1960s by a few individual attempts. Bebawi (2016) reports that " few reporters, such as Mohammad Hassanein Heikal, an Egyptian journalist who took the position of editor-in-chief of the Cairo-based newspaper Al-Ahram, and who focused on developing investigative reporting at the paper by taking on graduates and training them in investigative journalism" (p. 9). In 1949, an investigation was shared by the Egyptian journalist, Ihsan Abdul Qudous, about the scandal of the Egyptian army supply with corrupted weapons within its confrontation with the Israeli entity in

Palestine in 1948. Some of the reasons for the reorganization of the Egyptians Free Officers and the implications of the change in Egypt in 1952 were enumerated (Sabbagh, 2016). A few months after the launch of Aljazeera in 1996, the chairman of Aljazeera, Sheikh Hamad Bin Thamer Al Thani, decided to give Yousry Fouda, an Egyptian journalist who worked with the channel, the opportunity to produce a sample of an episode with zero budget and within the area where Yosri Fouda was living in London. Yosri Fouda quickly began producing an investigative episode about the hot- button topic and center of attention at that time: anthrax. After showing the experimental episode on Aljazeera, it became the first seed to the conceptualization of visual investigative journalism in the Arab world. The experimental episode's success was incredible. It was repeated on Aljazeera's screen several times a day and won as the best investigation at the Cairo Festival of Radio and Television Production in 1998 (Hunter, Hanson, Sabbagh, Sengers, Sullivan, & Fouda, 2011). However, these individual efforts were not sustained. In 2005, a training course was done in the field of business administration in Amman, Jordan. Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (ARIJ) worked to promote the culture of investigative journalism in the newsrooms and media colleges through well-prepared programs to build the capabilities of media professionals and improve their skills.

Difficulties and challenges of the investigative journalism field

Rana Sabbagh (personal communication, April 23, 2017), who works as the executive director of Arab Reporters For Investigative Journalism (ARIJ), stated that the lack of information is the biggest challenge and difficulty of the investigative journalism in the Arab world. She reported that the chief editor is the first enemy of the investigative journalist. Furthermore, there is no money in the media institutions in the Arab world to spend on investigative journalism (Ranna Sabbagh, personal communication, April 23, 2017).

Yousri Fouda (2017), who has gained prominence in investigative journalism through his program "top secret" that was broadcast every three months on Aljazeera channel, stated that there are many difficulties and challenges that might happen to any investigative reporter. He revealed that the dangers can happen in places of war, and there are dangers of physical harm, mental and psychological risks, and legal risks. Further, misjudgment of the level of risks that happens among the young generation of Arab journalists. Measuring the level of risks is an essential matter. Yousri Fouda (2017) revealed the hardest situation that he ever faced throughout his career was his meeting with members of Al-Qaeda. It is considered as the biggest danger because "I was guided to an area that I do not know, and blindfolded. Suddenly, I found myself holding information cost \$ 50 million. This information does not

exist in the world's largest intelligence agencies" (Yousri Fouda, personal communication, April 26, 2017).

Mark Lee Hunter (2017), who has written the book "Story-based inquiry: A manual for investigative journalists" that was translated into 13 different languages and taught in many Arabic universities, claimed that no politician likes to be persuaded by the media and that is very uncomfortable. He added that he does not know of any media industry that has ever been able to function as nothing but adversary for a long time. Mark Lee Hunter (2017) also said that the Arab world is a revolutionary world. That is going to be very hard for investigative journalists to make their work. He concluded by claiming that many journalists are staying in the jail and people would see this in places like Egypt (Mark Lee Hunter, personal communication, April 26, 2017).

Methodology

This paper will deeply discuss Arab citizens' perception about investigative journalism in the Arab world by determining how Arab citizens identify with investigative journalism, the relationship of investigative journalism with Arab citizens, and what Arab citizens believe the role of investigative journalism should be in the region. As previously mentioned, the Arab region is divided into four main regions. The researchers find themselves forced to direct their survey to only three regions of the Arab world except for the Eastern African region because it is difficult to reach the participants there. Regarding the other regions of the Arab world, the researchers select a country to represent each region. Saudi Arabia is selected to represent the Arabian Peninsula region, Jordan is to represent the Fertile Crescent region, and Egypt will represent the North Africa region.

This research conducts an online survey and distribute it among Arabs who currently live and stay in the Arab regions of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Egypt. Arab citizens who aged more than 18 years were asked to contribute to this study. The "Snowball" sampling method is used to target survey participants. Snowball sampling technique is selected at this study because it is a recruitment technique that researchers can use in order to build an appropriate sample when they have difficulty to locate the candidates of the study because of distance (Cramer & Howitt, 2004). Participants had been clearly told about the purpose of the study and that their participation was optional. All data collected had been analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 22.0).

To address the research question “how Arab citizens identify with investigative journalism”, 17-item semantic differential scale of 1 to 4, where 1 means “Strongly Disagree” and 4 means “strongly Agree”, designed to evaluate Arab citizens’ perceptions of the investigative journalism. This study partially adopted the scales that Jacobson (1969) has used to measure mass media believability as cited in Sabigan (2007).

To address the research question “the relationship of investigative journalism with Arab citizens”, the authors divided this section into three main aspects which are region, gender, and level of education. The variable gender was measured against the Likert statements that address behavior and perceptions. Based on the data, the majority of participants were males. However, females respondents are represented significantly six times to males. A smaller number of women across the three selected regions have responded but not equal from each region. The variable region of origin will be correlated with Likert statement focused on knowledge of investigative journalism in the Arab world. The variable education will be correlated with variables associated with perceptions and behaviors toward investigative journalism in the Arab world. To address the research question “what Arab citizens believe the role of investigative journalism should be in the region,” four Likert statements were used to address this point.

Data analysis

Data was measured using frequencies, percentages, chi-square, t-test, and ANOVA. The test of significance is set at $p < .05$.

FINDINGS

Using a quantitative survey method, the researchers sought to determine how Arab citizens identify with investigative journalism, the relationship of investigative journalism with Arab citizens, and what Arab citizens believe the role of investigative journalism should be in the region.

Participants

Four hundred and six participants clicked on the link of this study’s survey when they received the link through social media websites asking them for participation. There were 406 participants who did not complete the survey. Therefore, readers should know that the

number of participants varied based on the number who responded to each question separately.

Demographics

The demographic questions showed that males participated in the survey more than females. A significant number of participants (79.01%, 306) were males, while females made up 20.93% (81 participants) ($X^2=130.81$, $df=1$, $p=.001$). Regarding the participants' level of education, respondents who hold a bachelor degree were the majority of participants (48.45% by 188 participants). 158 of the participants (40.72%) have completed a master's degree, and 42 participants (10.82%) have completed a high school. Regarding the age groups of participants, it is not surprised that the majority of participants are aged between (26-32) 34.70% (135), followed by participants who are in the range of 18-25 years old 29.05% (113).

Based on the Arabic regions of the participants, a great number of the participants (262/66.33%) were living in The Arabian Peninsula Region, followed by Fertile Crescent Region (104/26.33%) ($X^2=214.881$, $df=2$, $p=.001$). However, 7.34% or 29 participants live in The North Africa region, while 11 participants out of the 406 participants skipped this question.

Research question one asked “how do Arab citizens perceive investigative journalism.” Most respondents indicated that they disagreed with the claim that Arab media outlets have a good reputation and play its role worthily. Moreover, the majority of respondents agreed that Arab media outlets framed its investigations and describe the concept of the investigation in a very simple way. Meanwhile, most respondents showed strongly level of agreement that investigative journalism is something very important. At the same point, respondents also agreed that the importance of investigative journalism comes from its role in illustrating issues that typically addressed. Furthermore, most respondents also agreed that investigative reports can create change in the government policies and investigative reporters risk their lives to reveal corruption in government. Consequently, most respondents are agreed to admire investigative journalists for their hard work (See Table 1).

Research question two asked “what is the relationship of gender, region, and level of education with people's perceptions and behaviors toward investigative journalism.” A one

way ANOVA was used to examine this question. A significant difference was found ($t(378) = 1.28, p < .05$) for the Likert statement that indicates investigative journalism covers the scandals and reviews policies. The mean of females ($m = 2.82, sdf = .75$) was significantly higher than the mean of males ($m = 2.69, sdf = .86$). Thus, females believe that investigative journalism covers the scandals and reviews policies.

A significant difference was found ($t(380) = .42, p < .05$) for the Likert statement that indicates participants are willing to pay in order to download an investigative report. The mean of males ($m = 2.07, sdf = .83$) was significantly higher than the mean of females ($m = 2.03, sdf = .73$). Thus, males are willing to pay in order to download an investigative report.

Research question two asked “what is the relationship of people's region of origin with knowledge of investigative journalism.” The results show significant differences that were found among the three different categories of participants’ regions (The Arabian Peninsula Region, Fertile Crescent Region, and the North Africa region).

A significant difference was found among the Fertile Crescent and the Arabian Peninsula regions ($F(2, 382) = 4.61, p.01$) for the Likert statement that indicates investigative journalism provides vital information about issues that rarely come to media.

A significant difference was found among the North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula regions ($F(2, 381) = 8.95, p.00$) for the Likert statement that indicates participants admire investigative journalist for the work they do. This analysis revealed that The North Africa region ($m = 3.60, sd = .56$) higher than the Arabian Peninsula Region ($m = 3.22, sd = .66$).

A significant difference was found among the Arabian Peninsula and the Fertile Crescent regions ($F(2, 381) = 16.10, p.00$) for the Likert statement that indicates Al Jazeera Channel as a source of investigative reports, participants have consumed investigative reports from Al Jazeera channel. This analysis revealed that the Arabian Peninsula Region ($m = 2.07, sd = 1.07$) lower than Fertile Crescent Region ($m = 2.77, sd = .99$).

Based on the ANOVA test, a significant difference was found among the graduate and Bachelors’ students ($F(2, 382) = 6.81, p.001$) for the Likert statement that indicates investigative journalism is a process whereby we ‘discover the truth and identify lapses from it in whatever media may be available. Tukey’s HSD was used to determine the nature of differences between the three categories of level of education (High school, Bachelor, and

Graduate). This analysis revealed that Graduate students scored higher ($m= 3.17$, $sd= .66$) than Bachelors' students ($m=2.93$, $sd= .63$).

A significant difference was found among the graduate and High school students ($F(2, 380) = 3.10$, $p. .04$) for the Likert statement that indicates investigative journalism detects failures of officials. This analysis revealed that Graduate students scored lower ($m= 3.03$, $sd= .70$) than High school students ($m= 3.33$, $sd= .57$). Bachelors' students were not significantly different ($m=3.10$, $sd= .68$).

A significant difference was found among the Bachelors' students and High school students ($F(2, 380) = 4.41$, $p. .01$) for the Likert statement that indicates Arab media outlets play a primary role in broadcasting investigative reports that uncover corruption.

Regarding what Arab citizens believe the role of investigative journalism should be in the region, findings of this study were supported to be agreed that Arab citizens are not satisfied with the role those Arab media outlets play in revealing serious and hard issues, and investigative journalism does not assist them to uncover corruption. Based on the data, most respondents indicated that they disagreed that Arab media outlets play a primary role in broadcasting investigative reports that uncover corruption. However, most respondents agreed that Corruption can be uncovered with investigative reporting, and they are not satisfied with how media outlets report on serious and hard issues (See Table 2).

DISCUSSION

Despite the importance of investigative journalism in the Arab world, there is a lack of studies that examine the receivers' perceptions of investigative journalism. This paper attempted to examine the perceptions of Arab citizens towards investigative journalism. The researchers conducted a quantitative method survey through a survey monkey website to collect data. The link of the survey was clicked by 406 participants from three identified regions in the Arab world. A total of 13 respondents did not complete the survey. Once the researchers distributed the survey, the link went viral within hours. It was surprising to find some people claiming that they are afraid of participation because investigative journalism is a controversial topic in these three regions. On the other hand, some participants interacted positively with the link by sharing through social media platforms. Some of them asked to be updated with the results of this research.

According to the data from research question one, a negative relationship between the Arab citizens and the Arab media outlets is expected. It is reached when the researchers asked the respondents whether Arab media outlets have a good reputation. Most respondents indicated their disagreement with the Likert statement that indicates Arab media outlets have a good reputation and play its role worthily. Almost three-quarters of the participants (76%) provided their disagreement towards the reputation of the Arab media outlets. This finding supported what has been found by Bebawi (2016) in her book “*Investigative journalism in the Arab world: issues and challenges.*” She found that Arab audiences did not make a trusting relationship with their formal media outlets.

Despite the lack of investigative journalism in the Arab world, it is surprising to find a strong level of agreement among the participants when they were asked whether investigative journalism is something very important. (353) out of (395) participants answered this question and provided their support of the importance of investigative journalism. At the same point, respondents also agreed that the importance of investigative journalism comes from its role in illustrating issues that are typically addressed. Furthermore, this study also found that most respondents agreed that investigative reports can make change in the government policies, and investigative reporters risk their lives to reveal corruption in government. Consequently, most respondents showed their admiration towards investigative journalists for their hard work. This thought supported what has been found by Eltantawy (2015) when he mentions that Arab journalists were pressured not to publish a particular investigation, because some issues are considered as red flags that shouldn't be investigated.

The data gathered revealed that most respondents disagreed that Arab media outlets play a primary role in broadcasting investigative reports that uncover corruption. However, most respondents agreed that corruption can be uncovered with investigative reporting, and they are not satisfied with how media outlets report on serious and hard issues. It supported what has been mentioned by Eltantawy (2015) when he found that investigative journalism uncovers corruption, but Arab investigative journalists are not able to deal with some issues that are considered as red lines.

Conclusion

The aim of this study is to examine the perceptions of Arab citizens towards investigative journalism. Using an online survey monkey, the researcher seeks to determine

how Arab citizens identify with investigative journalism, the relationship of investigative journalism with Arab citizens' genders, regions, and education, and what Arab citizens believe the role of investigative journalism should be in the region. Detailing the framing theory will help to address perceptions of Arab citizens in terms of investigative journalism. A quantitative survey method was utilized for data collection.

To sum up, Arab citizens have the knowledge that allow them to define investigative journalism as a process whereby they discover the truth and identify lapses from it in whatever media may be available. Furthermore, Arab citizens consider investigative journalism as a form of media that cover stories about serious issues, politics, and corruption. This finding also aligns with what has been found by Singh (2014). Most respondents indicated that Arab media outlets have a good reputation and play its role worthily. Almost three-quarters of the participants (76%) provided their disagreement towards the reputation of the Arab media outlets. Moreover, most respondents have confirmed that investigative reports can make a change in the government policies, and they appreciate the hard work. The results of this study found that most participants do not like to consume investigative reports from Al Jazeera channel. It could be due to the current Qatar-Gulf crisis.

FUTURE STUDIES

This study's methodology and findings brought multiple suggestions for future studies. This study is going to be considered as the first seed of examining the Arab citizens' perceptions of investigative journalism. However, it attempted to clarify whether Arab citizens have an idea of investigative journalism. One of the most significant issues that this study reached was finding that a smaller number of women responded but not necessarily as expected, and a less than equal number from each region. This implication guides us to the need for examining the perceptions of women towards investigative reports.

Another important issue that further studies should consider is the current crisis of the Qatar-Gulf. It is understood that the data of this study was negatively affected by participants from the Arabian Peninsula region regarding the current Qatar-Gulf crisis. Various studies revealed that Al Jazeera channel is considered as the first seed of new media in the Arab world, and it broadcasted investigative journalism. Thusly, the researcher expected that Arab citizens might reflect some interest in Al Jazeera channel. The researcher thinks that the results of this point might be slightly different if the Qatar- Gulf crisis did not occur.

Appendix

Table 1 Arab citizen's Perceptions on investigative journalism by Frequency, Percentage and Chi- Square					
Likert Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Chi Square
Arab media outlets have a good reputation.	106/26.9	197/50***	82/20.8%	9/2.3%	($\chi^2 = 183.157$)
Arab media outlets play its role worthily.	131/33.2%	209/53%***	53/13.5%	1/3%	($\chi^2 = 252.213$)
Investigative journalism is the most influential media platform in the Arab world.	62/15.8%	183/46.7%***	126/32.1%	21/5.4%	($\chi^2 = 155.449$)

Investigative journalism is the most shared media method in the Arab world.	74/18.9%	218/55.8%***	88/22.5%	11/2.8%	($\chi^2 = 231.660$)
Arab media outlets framed its investigations.	29/7.5%	125/32.4%	206/53.4%***	26/6.7%	($\chi^2 = 231.389$)
Arab media outlets describe the concept of the investigation in a very simple way.	51/13.1%	159/40.9%	169/43.6%***	9/2.3%	($\chi^2 = 194.722$)
Investigative journalism is something very important.	7/1.8%	31/7.9%	169/43.2%	184/47.1%***	($\chi^2 = 257.870$)
The importance of investigative journalism comes	9/2.3%	21/5.4%	221/56.5%***	140/35.8%	($\chi^2 = 314.504$)

from its role in illustrating issues that typically addressed.					
Investigative journalism helps Arab citizens to understand what is happening around them.	16/4.1%	43/11.3%	222/56.9% ***	109/27.9%	($\chi^2 = 258.923$)
Investigative journalism provides vital information about issues that rarely come to media.	14/3.6%	43/11.1%	211/54.4% ***	120/30.9%	($\chi^2 = 240.515$)
Investigative journalism means the voice of justice and minorities.	20/5.2%	84/21.8%	209/54.1% ***	73/18.9%	($\chi^2 = 199.140$)
I admire investigative journalist for the work they do.	6/1.6%	23/5.9%	199/51.4% ***	159/41.1%	($\chi^2 = 289.455$)

Table 2					
Arab citizen's Satisfaction about the role of Arab media outlets in investigative reports by Frequency, Percentage and Chi-Square.					
Arab media outlets play a primary role in broadcasting investigative reports that uncover corruption.	67/17.5%	164/42.8% ***	32/8.4%	20/5.2%	($\chi^2 = 130.932$)
I wish media outlets would write about serious issues regarding society.	8/2.1%	16/4.2%	188/49.1% ***	171/44.6%	($\chi^2 = 294.859$)
Corruption can be uncovered with investigative reporting.	10/2.6%	19/5%	219/57.6% ***	132/34.7%	($\chi^2 = 313.116$)
I am not satisfied with how media outlets report on serious and hard issues.	15/3.9%	41/10.8%	209/54.9% ***	116/30.4%	($\chi^2 = 238.874$)
N does not always add up to the total number of respondents as some respondents did not answer some items. P=.001***					

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Professional and administrative pressures affecting the performance of investigative journalists in Palestine

The implementation of the researchers:

Dr. Hassan Yousef Douhan

Mohammed Nafez Ferwana

The Global Investigative Journalism Conference, scheduled for this September 26-29-2019 in Hamburg, Germany.

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Research Summary :

The purpose of the study is to identify the types, forms and nature of professional and administrative pressures affecting the performance of Palestinian investigative journalists, and to describe the extent to which they are reflected and their impact on their performance in the preparation of investigative investigations, within the framework of the theory of the gatekeeper in the press work.

The study is a descriptive study, and in his study, the researcher used the investigative newspaper tool for Palestinian investigative journalists. The research sample was 63 samples distributed between 25-5-2019 and 25-6-2019.

The results of the study showed that Palestinian investigative journalists were subjected to high professional and administrative pressure in the preparation of investigative investigations, particularly among women journalists, and the effects of pressures on professional performance were moderate.

The study revealed that Palestinian investigative journalists were exposed to a high degree of abuse which affected their performance during the preparation of investigative investigations, including prosecution, security and others.

The results revealed that Palestinian investigative journalists suffered from the lack of media institutions to provide them with the tools necessary for their work during the preparation of investigative investigations .

The results also showed that a number of Palestinian media institutions refused to publish the results of the investigative investigations prepared by journalists working for them or journalists working freely.

Introduction

The investigative investigations of the business press more powerful and influential in public opinion, Characterized by journalists working in this area vacation packages are not available from their counterparts from journalists, especially that the practitioners of this work are making a great effort to search and investigation of information and facts on issues of interest to the public, the role of the investigative journalist comes in breaking taboo and submit it to public opinion supported by the evidence and documents that prove the validity of his hypothesis, in order to reach the desired goal to expose the facts.

Despite the importance of the investigative investigations in achieving democracy and assist in the detection of corruption, But there are some media institutions, administrative and professional pressures on investigative journalists, especially when it comes to the existence of common interests with one of the parties, which impedes the work of the implementation of the investigation with all the freedom of the press.

The emergence of institutions such as the media network of the Arab investigative press "Areej" and the Coalition for Integrity and Accountability with safety, which in turn trained a number of journalists and media men, led to the growth of this kind of press art and the opening of investigative sections within Palestinian press institutions.

In Palestine was the achievement of nearly 200 achieved during the past ten years, These investigations dealt with the thorny issues and the task of all focused on the situation of education and health, social security and agricultural sectors and revealed patterns of administrative and financial corruption and regulatory framework and the lack of oversight

and accountability, and contributed to the improvement of the performance of those institutions.

Investigative journalists in Palestine have difficulty in obtaining information, lack of an environment for investigative investigations production, and lack of a budget to cover investigative completion.

The investigative press has become an important part of the press work so that Palestinian media institutions belonging to the two parties of division (Fatah, Hamas) are the ones who publish the investigations that condemn their followers, an important development and an understanding of the role of investigative investigations.

A number of previous studies on administrative and professional pressures showed that (Shourbji 2018) faced reporters on an average (59.11%), especially external pressures, followed by personal and social pressures, while (Hamoudi 2018) revealed that the two media workers in the Iraqi News Channel are influenced by the ongoing political environment changes in Iraq by (36%), while the study (Shalt 2018) showed that the physical yield of the most important professional pressures is 75%.

In the area of the investigative press (Froana 2018), Palestinian investigative journalists were keen to keep private sources secret by (87.60%), while they justified recording and secret photography of the difficulties of obtaining information by (74.40%), and were very much supported by investigative journalist's denial of access to information by (72.80%).

A study (Hassan 2017) showed that the large percentage of journalists trained in the investigative press were trained in local institutions (64.9%), while 21.3% were trained in Arab institutions, and the 2016 Gearing study showed that the use of technologies in the investigative press was expanding its work beyond the local borders.

Limitations of the study: Through the investigative work of researchers in the New Life newspaper, the two researchers were exposed to a range of professional and administrative pressures, while they noticed in one way or another such pressures in a number of Palestinian media institutions.

Based on the above, the problem of the study is to identify the extent to which professional and managerial pressures affect the performance of Palestinian investigative journalists and their impact on the reality of the investigative press, the sources of those pressures, their impact on the professional performance of investigative investigations, their main constraints, and the ways to remedy them.

The importance of the study is particularly important because it is linked to the problem of "professional and administrative pressures affecting the performance of Palestinian investigative journalists and their impact on the reality of the investigative press". The importance of the study is illustrated by: The possibility of developing the professional performance of Palestinian journalists in the preparation of investigative investigations, and of contributing to identifying ways to address professional and managerial pressures.

The purpose of the study is to identify the types, forms and nature of professional and administrative pressures affecting the performance of Palestinian investigative journalists, and to describe the extent to which they are reflected and influence the performance of Palestinian investigative journalists in the preparation of investigative investigations and the interpretation of their features, within the framework of the theory of the gate guard in journalism.

The study questions: The study is based on a major question: What are the professional and administrative pressures affecting the performance of Palestinian investigative journalists?

1. What types and forms of occupational and administrative stress affect Palestinian investigative journalists during the preparation of investigative investigations?

2. What levels of professional and administrative pressures affect Palestinian investigative journalists and their implications for their performance in preparing investigative investigations?
3. What practices affect the performance of investigative journalists during the preparation of investigative investigations?
4. How well have Palestinian media institutions provided tools for investigative journalists during the preparation of investigative investigations?
5. Is there any correlation between the professional and administrative pressures of investigative journalists and the extent to which they have affected the preparation of investigative investigations?
6. Are there significant statistical differences at an indicative level (0.05α) between the impact of professional and administrative pressures on journalists during investigation preparation based on different demographic factors (age, educational level, marital status, place of residence, job title, type, interest in investigations)?
7. What are the proposals of Palestinian investigations journalists to avoid professional and administrative pressures during the preparation of investigative investigations?

Gatekeeper Theory:

The study was based on the Gatekeeper Theory, which is considered to be an actor in the labor system, "and is committed to the set of policies that are designed by the proprietors or their agents, and in accordance with their objectives of establishing such institutions" (Abdel Hamid 2010, 177).

McKawi, Hassan 2009, 78-84) identified a number of factors that affect the Gatekeeper Theory, the standards, values and traditions of society, subjective criteria, professional standards, and public standards.

This study benefits from the Gatekeeper Theory by recognizing the characteristics, uniqueness of the communicator and the factors influencing it, how it is addressed.

The type and approach of the study and the study tools: This study belongs to the descriptive studies, the study is based on the investigative methodology.

- **Investigative Journal tool:** The researcher designed a resolution on professional and administrative pressures affecting the performance of Palestinian investigative journalists, which is one of 46 paragraphs covering four dimensions: Professional pressures, practices affecting journalists during the preparation of the investigative report, administrative pressures, and tools for journalists, and designed another measure of how pressure on the professional performance of Palestinian journalists is reflected.

- **The interview tool:** The two researchers used the interview tool for the purpose of the results, which aims at reaching quantitative, numerical or descriptive estimates of the various phenomena associated with the study (Abd al-Hamid 2010, 93).

Community the study : The Study Community consists of practicing journalists and investigative journalists in Palestinian media institutions, with statistical journalists (Froanà 2018, 38,39) approximately (125) journalists, distributors (55) registered in the Palestinian investigative journalists network, (45) working in coalition-supported investigations for The Coalition for Accountability and Integrity (AMAN), as well as approximately (25) Arab and international journalists working for the media.

Sample Study: The sample of the study consists of (63) male and female journalists who have prepared investigative investigations, and the use of the short Intentional sample.

Truth and Stability Procedures:

Content validation: The investigation sheet has been carefully reviewed to make sure that it is included in the answer to the study's questions and objectives.

Virtual authenticity of content: In this step, the researchers presented the investigation's resolution to a group of professionals and arbitrators*, and the necessary modifications they indicated were made.

Stability Test: In order to achieve the stability of the investigative form, a scientific research specialist has conducted a pre-test of the form on a sample of 5% (5) research papers from the study sample♦.

Study Tool: Researchers have designed a resolution on professional and administrative pressures affecting the performance of Palestinian investigative journalists, with a measure of (46) four-dimensional, covering: Professional pressures: 19 paragraphs, practices affecting journalists during investigation preparation: 11 paragraphs, administrative pressures: 9 paragraphs, Tools for journalists during investigative reports preparation: 7 paragraphs. The researchers also designed another measure on how the pressure on the professional performance of Palestinian investigative journalists reflected, consisting of 14 paragraphs. The Likert scale was used to answer the scale items, Since the scale has received high degrees of honesty and stability, the accuracy factors for the measurement of professional and administrative pressures (0.71 - 0.88) have ranged from the correlation coefficients for the reflection of pressures on professional performance (0.28 - 0.74), which indicates that the scale has a high degree of sincerity. The stability factors were verified in the Alpha Crunch method, the Alpha Crunch parameter for the professional and managerial pressures was 0.94, and the Alpha Crunch parameter for the measurement of the effects of pressure on professional performance was 0.74, which is sufficient evidence that the scale has a high and high stability factor.

Statistical methods:

The researchers used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS v25.0) to answer study questions, where descriptive statistics were used including average, standard deviation, karate, percentage and relative weight, Alpha cards and Pearson Link laboratories were used to verify truth and stability parameters, and statistical tests were used (two independent tests, one-way testing for differences).

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Khalil Mekdad, Director of Sastic Consulting & Development, Master of Applied Statistics ..♦

Results and Interpretation of the Study

This section outlines the systematic actions and steps taken in the field investigation to measure professional and administrative pressures affecting the performance of Palestinian investigative journalists and their impact on the reality of the investigative press.

The total sample of the study was 64 samples distributed to Palestinian investigative journalists in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, and was distributed electronically between 25-5-2019 and 25-6-2019, a single resolution was excluded for non-conformity of specifications, for correct measurable forms 63. Males constituted 51.7%, females constituted 48.3%, the vast majority married 78.6%, and the vast majority were 69.4% aged 25-35, the majority had a bachelor's degree were 75.8%, while 24.2% had higher education, 30.2% of sample individuals work as journalists, 38.1% work as editors, 7.9% work as editorial secretary, 6.3% work as editor-in-chief, 9.5% are other names, and for years of experience 26.2% of sample individuals have less experience than 5 years, 29.5% have less experience than 10 years, 21.3% have less experience than 15 years, and 13.1% have less experience than 20 years, and finally 9.8% have more experience than 20 years, The Gaza Strip constituted 52.6% of the journalists in the sample, while the West Bank journalist constituted 47.4%, the percentage of journalists was among the medium concern, 35.6% of the journalists in the sample produced one investigation, 18.6% two investigations, 23.7% three investigations, and 22.0% more than three investigations.

Professional and administrative pressures and their impact on the professional performance of Palestinian investigative journalists:

In order to determine the level of professional and administrative pressure and its impact on the performance of Palestinian investigative journalists in the preparation of investigative investigations, the researcher has calculated averages, standard deviations and relative weight, as shown in the following table

Table (1) shows the level of professional and administrative pressure and its impact on the professional performance of investigative journalists

Dimension	N	total degree	Mean	Std. D	relative weight	Order
Professional pressures	19	57	40.7	8.4	71.4	4
Practices	11	33	27.3	5.7	82.9	2
Administrative pressures	9	27	21.3	4.5	79.0	3
Tools	7	21	18.0	3.7	85.7	1
Total degree	46	138	107.4	18.2	77.8	-
Impact of pressures on performance	13	39	23.6	5.6	60.6	-

The results shown in the previous table show that the mean for estimating professional and administrative pressures was 107.4 degrees, a standard deviation of 18.2 degrees, and the relative weight (77.8%) was very high, indicating that Palestinian investigative journalists were subjected to professional and administrative pressures when preparing their investigative investigations. Since the measure has four dimensions, it has emerged that the lack of tools ranked first and in relative balance (85.7%), followed by relative weight practices (82.9%), and administrative stress of relative weight (79.0%), and last rank professional pressure of 71.4%. The effects of pressures on professional performance are reflected in the mean of 23.6 degrees, a standard deviation of 5.6 degrees and a relative balance (60.6%), which indicates that the reflection of pressures on the professional performance of Palestinian investigative journalists is moderate in the preparation of investigative investigations. The results agree with the results of Al-Shorgi 2018 study in terms of pressures and levels, as it showed that the degree of pressures facing correspondents came at a rate of (59.11%).

Professional stresses affecting Palestinian investigative journalists

Professional stresses affecting Palestinian investigative journalists:

The findings in Appendix 3 show that Palestinian investigative journalists are facing high-degree professional pressure and relative weight (71.4%) during the preparation of investigative investigations.

The paragraph, which states that "take my personal opinion away during the preparation of the investigative report", was of primary importance (74.6%), indicating that Palestinian investigative journalists' professional commitment to their work, despite complaints of lack of cooperation from official and private bodies in providing documents and documents for the investigation by 86.6%, lack of the right to information law 86.2%, and lack of cooperation between officials with interviews 85.7%, and 83.6% follow what does it say "misleading the investigative reporting".

Regarding the relationship with the Media Foundation, Palestinian investigative journalists agree that the Media Foundation publishes news consistent with editorial policy by 87.3%, so investigative journalists work to adapt to the editorial policy of the Foundation during the preparation of the investigation by 83.1%, and investigative journalists complain that the editorial policy of the Foundation does not allow direct criticism of the political system during the preparation of the investigation by 74.3%, while 59.8% indicates that the editorial policy approved the statement which says " Editorial policy obliges me to select specific sources during the preparation of the investigative report."

With regard to forms of pressure related to newspaper ownership, 72.5% of investigative journalists agreed to the paragraph that the location of the institution in which they operated affects the content of the investigative report, while 66.1% approved the paragraph "The ownership of the institution affected my professional performance during the preparation of the investigative report", which confirms the effect on the performance of investigative journalists in the place and ownership of the media institution due to the state of Palestinian division.

As regards training, the lack of specialized training courses in investigative investigations work by 66.1% was one of the pressures on Palestinian investigative journalists, as confirmed by the results of the study (Hassan 2017), that 64.9% of journalists received training in local institutions, while 21.3% were trained in Arab institutions.

While support for the following paragraphs on editorial methods declined: "Request for reliance on minimalistic, accusatory, cynical and investigative techniques to serve political parties 61.4%, not giving the investigative parties the same space to respond 60.3%, and request to rely on sensationalism, exaggeration and exaggeration of portions of facts and events to serve the editorial policy of the institution 58.2%, and "using disparagement and questioning techniques to serve personal and party interests" 52.4%, which confirms a fairly liberal professional presence.

Practices affecting Palestinian investigative journalists:

Table (2) shows the relative weight, arithmetic averages, and standard deviations from practices affecting Palestinian investigative journalists:

#	Practices affecting journalists	Disagree %	Neutral %	Agree %	Mean	Std. D	relative weight	Order
1	Prevention of travel and confiscation of equipment and detention	8.2%	23.0%	68.9%	2.5	0.8	84.1	4
2	Prosecution.	7.9%	23.8%	68.3%	2.6	0.6	86.8	2
3	Individual ownership violation (copy - paste)	17.7%	19.4%	62.9%	2.4	0.8	80.4	9
4	Security and family pursuit.	9.7%	21.0%	69.4%	2.6	0.7	85.2	3
5	Fear of financial, administrative and regulatory sanctions in institutions.	7.9%	31.7%	60.3%	2.5	0.6	84.1	5
6	Palestinian division and its consequences.	4.8%	15.9%	79.4%	2.7	0.5	91.5	1
7	The ruling authority practices a policy of intimidation and sabotage.	14.3%	20.6%	65.1%	2.5	0.7	83.6	6
8	The ruling authority deals with the mass media with imposing tough censorship on them.	14.3%	25.4%	60.3%	2.5	0.7	82.0	7
9	The practice of systematic policy of arresting and suppressing investigative journalists.	17.5%	25.4%	57.1%	2.4	0.8	79.9	10
10	Preventing the imaging and publication of an investigation that is contrary to their interests.	17.5%	23.8%	58.7%	2.4	0.8	80.4	8
11	The arrest and beating of my colleagues made me look back	28.6%	22.2%	49.2%	2.2	0.9	73.5	11
	Practices affecting journalists				2.5	0.7	82.9	-

The results shown in the previous table show the following:

Palestinian investigative journalists are highly exposed to many practices that affect their performance during the preparation of investigative investigations.

Paragraph (6), which states that "Palestinian division and its consequences" are of relative importance, was ranked (91.5%), and with the approval of (79.4%) of Palestinian investigative journalists, which is consistent with the findings of Hammoudi 2018, which showed that Iraq News Channel is affected by the changes in the political environment that continue in Iraq in general, affecting the performance of the two media workers, came by 36%.

They are followed by the prosecution with 86.8%, followed by security, family and factional prosecutions 85.2%, and are attributed by the director of the Coalition for Integrity and Transparency (ANCA) Wael Baalusha to the weakness of the legal counsel available to journalists, which sometimes exposes them to legal accountability (Baalsha 2019), followed by prevention of travel, confiscation of equipment and detention at 84.1%, and then fear of financial, administrative and organizational sanctions at 84.1% , paragraph (7) "The ruling authority exercises a policy of intimidation and sabotage", 83.6%, followed by paragraph (8), "The ruling authority deals with the media with the imposition of harsh censorship on it 82.0%, followed by a systematic policy of detaining and suppressing investigative journalists at the eighth rank by 80.4% , the violation of individual ownership (copies-paste) came in ninth with 80.4%, then prevented the filming and publication of an investigation that was contrary to their interests by 79.9%, while paragraph (11) states that "my colleagues

were arrested and beaten by a certain party, I went back on the preparation of the investigations" in the last place, at a relative weight (73.5%).

This is confirmed by the report of the Palestinian Center for Media Development and Freedoms (MADA), which monitored and documented during 2018 a total of 584 attacks against media freedoms in Palestine, of which 455 were perpetrated by Israeli occupation forces while a total of 129 attacks (<http://www.madacenter.org>), as well as reports of the Palestinian Press Syndicate (<http://www.pjs.ps/>) and the Doha Center for Media Freedom (<http://gc4mf.org/index.php>), have confirmed the existence of Information).

Administrative pressures affecting Palestinian investigative journalists:

Table (3) illustrates the relative proportions, arithmetic averages, standard deviations, and weights of administrative pressures affecting Palestinian investigative journalists

#	Administrative pressures	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Mean	Standard Deviation	Relative	Order
1	It is mandatory to keep working hours.	20.6%	30.2%	49.2%	2.3	0.8	76.2	7
2	Do not grant permissions to leave work.	31.7%	38.1%	30.2%	2.0	0.8	66.1	9
3	He asked for many assignments, despite my work, to investigate and mandate the follow-up of field news.	16.1%	33.9%	50.0%	2.3	0.8	76.7	6
4	The newspaper administration prefers its interest to spread truth and reveal corrupters.	12.7%	39.7%	47.6%	2.3	0.7	78.3	5
5	Time has been wasted on routine investigative work including internal approvals.	7.9%	30.2%	61.9%	2.5	0.6	84.7	3
6	Lack of understanding and appreciation of the importance of investigative investigation with the principal at work.	17.7%	38.7%	43.5%	2.2	0.8	74.1	8
7	Non-payment of overtime fees.	7.9%	27.0%	65.1%	2.6	0.6	85.7	2
8	No incentives.	11.3%	25.8%	62.9%	2.5	0.8	82.5	4
9	Not to provide an adequate salary for my work.	11.1%	19.0%	69.8%	2.6	0.7	86.2	1
	Administrative pressures				2.4	0.7	79.0	

The following table shows:

The mean of acceptance of the overall degree of third dimension (administrative pressures) was (2.4) degrees, a standard deviation of (0.7) degrees, and relative equilibrium (79.0%), which indicates that Palestinian investigative journalists are facing high administrative pressures during the preparation of investigative investigations.

Paragraph 9, which states that "failure to provide an adequate salary for my job" is of primary importance, is relatively weighted (86.2%), which is consistent with the results of a previous study (Shalt 2018) which showed that the most important professional pressure is the pressure resulting from the material return of the operator in contact (75.40%).

This is followed by the importance of not paying the overtime rate by 85.7%, and paragraph (5) came in the third position, which is "wasting time in the routine procedures of investigation work including internal approvals" by 84.7%, followed by a lack of incentives of 82.5%, then paragraph (4), the newspaper's administration's interests preference for publishing on the truth and exposing corrupters by 78.3% , This is followed by a request for many mandates despite my work in investigating and assigning me to follow-up field news

by 76.7%, and investigative journalists point out that they are required to observe working hours by 76.2%, and are insensitive to their superiors and lack of appreciation for the importance of investigative investigation by 74.1%, and paragraph (2) states that "the non-granting of permits to leave work is 66.1%.

The investigative expert, Walid Batrawi, attributes these findings to the "lack of material resources in the Palestinian press, because media institutions prefer to cover events and more, prefer not to be used by the journalist to investigative work, and because investigations affect badly on the institution" (Batrawi 2019).

Tools for Palestinian investigative journalists

Table (4) shows ratios, arithmetic averages, standard deviations, and relative weights the availability of tools for investigative journalists during the preparation of investigative investigations

#	Tools needed	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Mean	Std. D	relative	order
1	No camera provided.	15.9%	20.6%	63.5%	2.5	0.8	82.5	6
2	No high-tech recording tool is available.	14.3%	15.9%	69.8%	2.6	0.7	85.2	5
3	Failure to provide a full-time photographer to work underground in an investigation.	11.1%	12.7%	76.2%	2.7	0.7	88.4	2
4	Not providing convenient transportation for our work.	14.3%	12.7%	73.0%	2.6	0.7	86.2	3
5	Not to provide a travel allowance abroad or, if necessary, external communications.	4.8%	12.9%	82.3%	2.7	0.6	91.0	1
6	No hospitality allowance for the journalist to host the sources.	9.5%	23.8%	66.7%	2.6	0.7	85.7	4
7	Not to provide an adequate space to host sources within the premises.	14.3%	28.6%	57.1%	2.4	0.7	81.0	7
	No tools are available				2.6	0.7	85.7	-

The above table shows that the mean acceptance of the overall grade level for the fourth dimension (lack of tools) was (2.6) degrees, a standard deviation of (0.7) degrees, a degree, and a relative balance (85.7%), which indicates that Palestinian investigative journalists are suffering from a high level of lack of tools during investigative investigations preparation.

Palestinian investigative journalists disclosed that their media institutions were not provided with "foreign travel allowances if required" and ranked first in relative terms (91.0%), followed by a failure to provide a full-time photographer to work beside me in the report by 88.4% , In the third place was the lack of comfortable transport for our work by 86.2%, followed by the non-provision of hospitality allowance to the journalist to host the sources by 85.7%, while the non-provision of a high-tech recording tool ranked fifth by 85.2%, followed by the failure to provide a camera with 82.5%.

81% of Palestinian investigative journalists supported the failure to provide an appropriate place to host sources within the workplace from the administrative pressures exerted on them during the preparation of the investigative investigations.

These results are consistent with the results of a previous study (Shalt 2018), which showed that the communicator suffers from a 63% decrease in requirements for working in press institutions.

This agreement indicates that the availability of funding for the investigations results of these investigations are being responded to by some Palestinian media institutions, as was the case with the Aman Foundation which funded 85 investigations (Baalusha 2019).

Implications of professional and administrative pressures:

Table (5): Ratios, arithmetic averages, standard deviations, and relative weights of the implications of professional and administrative pressures

#	Sentence	Disagree %	Neutral %	Agree %	Mean	Std. D.	Relative ratio	Order
1	I do not care about the preparation of investigations	63.5%	14.3%	22.2%	1.6	0.8	52.9	8
2	The organization refused to publish the investigation despite its professional aspects	30.2%	34.9%	34.9%	1.4	1.2	46.6	12
3	I think of resigning from work.	52.4%	25.4%	22.2%	1.7	0.8	56.6	7
4	I think about moving to another business	35.5%	33.9%	30.6%	1.9	0.8	64.0	6
5	Work in a field that is not suitable for my specialization.	61.9%	22.2%	15.9%	1.5	0.8	51.3	9
6	I feel very happy with the editor-in-chief	30.6%	24.2%	45.2%	2.1	0.9	70.4	4
7	I feel an internal oversight of what I post.	21.3%	29.5%	49.2%	2.2	0.9	73.5	2
8	I feel the difficulty in the tasks assigned to me.	31.7%	38.1%	30.2%	2.0	0.8	66.1	5
9	I feel that the physical return during the investigation is insufficient.	12.7%	9.5%	77.8%	2.7	0.7	88.4	1
10	No one appreciates my work during the investigation.	27.0%	27.0%	46.0%	2.2	0.8	73.0	3
11	I do not think I would choose this job if I had the opportunity to choose again.	66.7%	12.7%	20.6%	1.5	0.8	51.3	10
12	I am not proud to belong to my press institution.	54.8%	35.5%	9.7%	1.5	0.7	50.8	11
13	I do not have a state of insistence on continuing my work.	73.0%	27.0%	0.0%	1.3	0.4	42.3	13
	Reflect pressures on professional performance				1.8	0.8	60.6	-

The above table shows that the mean acceptance of the overall grade of the second scale (reflection of pressures on professional performance) was (1.8), a standard deviation of (0.8) degrees, a relative equilibrium (60.6%), which indicates a reflection of professional and administrative pressures on the average performance of Palestinian investigative journalists, demonstrating that they have the will and will to continue their march toward the preparation of the investigative investigations.

The results show that paragraph 9, "I feel that material return during the investigation is insufficient," was of first importance, relative weight (88.4%), followed by the relative importance of the paragraph "I feel an internal oversight over what I publish" by 73.5%, while investigative journalists feel no appreciation for their work by agreeing with 73.0%, while their superiors feel 70.4%.

Palestinian investigative journalists have different feelings due to professional and administrative pressures including: They are unable to work at 66.1%, they are thinking of moving to another job at 64.0%, they are considering resigning from work at 56.6%, or they are not interested in preparing reports at 52.9%, while insisting on work has a large number of investigative journalists at 51.3%.

A number of investigative journalists express their pride in belonging to the press organization they work with at the rate of 50.8%, which reflects the state of party affiliation in Palestine because of the association of Palestinian media institutions with factions and governments.

The results show that a number of Palestinian media institutions refused to publish the results of the reports prepared by journalists working in them or journalists working freely by answering paragraph (2), which says "the institution refused to publish the investigation despite its professional aspects" at the rate of 46.6%.

This is confirmed by investigative journalist Mohamed Abu Shehma (Abu Shehma 2019), who did not publish an investigation into his newspaper Al-Resala, which was talking about tax evasion, and published it in his own blog.

The training officer in the network of Palestinian investigative journalists Fadi al-Hassani (Al-Hasani 2019) points out that there are many institutions that refuse to investigate for special reasons, and that the reasons are generally subject to the ideology of the media organization, and to the political system to which the institution is subject.

Palestinian investigative journalists rejected paragraph 13, which states that "I do not have a state of insistence on continuing my work to complete investigations", at a relative weight (42.3%), which is confirmed by 73.0% of Palestinian investigative journalists that they agree that they insist on continuing their work to carry out investigative investigations, and the results agree with what a previous study (Hassan 2017) found that most of the sample members have a positive attitude toward the report (92.5%).

For no existence "There is no statistically significant relationship at ($\alpha < 0.05$) between Professional & Administrative pressures and their reflection on the preparation of the investigative investigations among Palestinian the investigative journalists".

To figure that out, the researcher used (Pearson's Correlation Coefficient) to study the relationship between the degrees of Professional & Administrative pressures and their reflection on the preparation of investigation among Palestinian investigative journalists, as shown at the following Table:

Table (6) Shows person correlation coefficient between the degrees of Professional & Administrative pressures and their reflection on the preparation of investigation

Dimension	R	p-value
Professional pressures	0.51	0.001**
Practices	0.41	0.001**
Administrative pressures	0.60	0.001**
Tools	0.29	0.020*
Professional & Administrative pressures	0.57	0.001**

** P-value<0.01 * P-value<0.05 // P-value>0.05

From the previous table:

There is a statistical significant positive relationship (p-value<0.01) between Professional & Administrative pressures (Professional pressures, Practices, Administrative pressures, tools) and their reflection on the preparation of investigation among Palestinian investigative journalists. this indicates that every each increasing in Professional & Administrative pressures that will make the same increase in their reflection on the preparation of investigative investigations among Palestinian investigative journalists, and vice versa.

Socio-demographic variables:

But regarding socio-demographic variables : There are no statistical significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the degrees of "Professional & Administrative pressures" and " reflection on the preparation of The investigative investigations" due to socio-demographic variables (gender, Education leve, Job title, years of experience, Place of residence, interest, number of investigation, job place)

To figure out that, the researcher used two independent samples T-Test to figure out the differences between the degrees of Professional & Administrative pressures and “reflection on the preparation of investigation” among Palestinian investigative journalists:

The previous table showed that:

Whole measurement “Professional & Administrative pressures” there are a statistically significant differences ($P\text{-value} < 0.05$) between the means of (Professional & Administrative pressures, Professional pressures) among Palestinian investigative journalists due to gender (male, female), and the differences towards female journalists, which mean that the female journalists face Professional & Administrative pressures and Professional pressures more than male journalists.

Whole measurement “reflection on the preparation of investigation”: There are a statistically significant differences ($P\text{-value} < 0.05$) between the means of reflection on the preparation of investigation among Palestinian investigative journalists due to years of experience (less than 5 years, less than 10 years, less than 15 years, less than 20 years, more than 20 years). The test of LSD (Least Square Differences) was used to figure out the differences in between the categories of years of experience, the test show that the journalists with experience less than 10 years their opinion about the reflection on the preparation of investigation is more than the journalists with experience between 10- 20 years, and this difference are significant, and there are no statistically significant differences between other groups.

This is in line with the results of the Hassan 2017 investigation, "Trends of Palestinian Journalists Toward the Press," which found that young age groups have a stronger orientation in the investigative investigations at 66.6%.

Whole measurement “Professional & Administrative pressures” There are a statistically significant differences ($P\text{-value} < 0.05$) between the means Professional & Administrative pressures among Palestinian investigative journalists due to interest in investigation (Very interested, interested, Moderate interested). The test of LSD (Least Square Differences) was used to figure out the differences in between the categories of interest in investigation, the test show that the journalists who interested in investigation face Professional & Administrative pressures more than the journalists who very interested in investigative investigations, and this difference are significant, and there are no statistically significant differences between other groups.

Whole measurement “Professional & Administrative pressures” There are a statistically significant differences ($P\text{-value} < 0.05$) between the means Professional & Administrative pressures among Palestinian investigative journalists due to i investigative investigations number (One investigation, two investigation, three investigation, more). The test of LSD (Least Square Differences) was used to figure out the differences in between the categories of investigation number, the test show that the journalists who made one & three investigative investigations face Professional & Administrative pressures more than the journalists who made more than three investigative investigations, and this difference are significant, and there are no statistically significant differences between other groups.

The investigative journalism expert, Walid Batrawi, attributes this "because some media institutions believe in investigative investigations work have gone through and found that their fears are often not true, their belief in social responsibility, accountability and the professionalism of journalists who conduct these investigations (Batrawi 2019).

While there are no statistically significant differences between the means of other dimension due to **socio-demographic variables**.

Results discussions:

Following a review of the most important conclusion of the research, its interpretation and comparison with other studies on the same subject, some important conclusion of the field study are discussed here as follows:

1. The study shows that Palestinian investigative journalists are subjected to high professional and administrative pressure in the preparation of investigative investigations, particularly among women journalists, while the effects of pressure on professional performance have medium degree been felt.

In other words, Palestinian investigative journalists resist and confront pressures and continue to work in the preparation of investigative investigations.

2. The study reveals that Palestinian investigative journalists are exposed to a high degree of practice that affects their performance during the preparation of investigative investigations , including prosecution, security, family, factional, financial, administrative and regulatory sanctions, intimidation, arrest, violation of individual property (copy-paste) and others.

These practices were estimated during 2018 to be more than 500 violations against Palestinian journalists in general, whether by the Israeli occupation authorities or by the Palestinian security forces of the two parties of split (Fatah, Hamas) in the West Bank or Gaza Strip.

3. The results showed that Palestinian investigative journalists were facing high administrative pressure during the preparation of investigative investigations, in terms of not providing them with adequate pay, non-payment of overtime, "wasting time in routine investigative procedures, including internal approvals," and lack of incentives, among others.

This reflects the absence of an incubator media environment for investigative journalists.

4. The results revealed that Palestinian investigative journalists suffered from the lack of media institutions to provide their investigative work tools during the preparation of investigative investigations, either "external travel allowance or external communications, a full-time photographer, lack of transportation, lack of a recording tool, camera and so on.

Recommendations:

In the light of the outcome of the field study, and based on the knowledge of the two researchers, their follow-up and observations of the study problem, the research proposals, and the purpose of developing some appropriate solutions to address the problem, the two researchers reached the following recommendations:

1. Work to adopt a code of conduct for the protection of investigative journalists by the Press Syndicate and media institutions to ensure that they are provided with legal and professional protection during the preparation of an investigative investigations.
2. Urge Palestinian media institutions to provide investigative journalist work tools to prepare and provide incentives for the investigative investigations, and provide job and financial stability to journalists during the preparation of the investigative investigation.
3. Provide investigative journalists with communication technology tools during the preparation of an investigative investigations.
4. Specialized training courses for investigative journalists on how to overcome professional and managerial pressures during the preparation of the investigative investigations.
5. To keep the ideological orientations of Palestinian media institutions away from the work of investigative journalists during the preparation of the investigative investigation to ensure that professional results are achieved.
6. Work to protect journalists' intellectual property, whether for press, television or radio work.

7. The Press Syndicate has put in place executive regulations obliging media sites and media to the minimum wage by cooperating with the Ministry of Labor in order to stop the exploitation of journalists and their employment under the minimum wage, and to stop the dealings of these institutions in all trade and official institutions.

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5. Abu Shehma, Mohammed, Palestinian investigative journalist, electronic interview on 30-6-2019.

Appendices:

Appendix (1)

The distribution of sample members for demographic and population characteristics

Variable	Categorize	N	%
Gender	Male	31	51.7%
	Female	29	48.3%
	Total	60	100.0%
Marital status	Single	2	7.1%
	Married	22	78.6%
	Divorced	4	14.3%
	Total	28	100.0%
Age	18-25 years	6	16.7%
	25-35 years	25	69.4%
	35-45 years	5	13.9%
	Total	36	100.0%
academic qualification	Bachelor	47	75.8%
	postgraduate studies	15	24.2%

	Total	62	100.0%
Job title	A reporter and a press officer	19	30.2%
	News editor	24	38.1%
	Secretary edit	5	7.9%
	Editing Manager	5	7.9%
	Editor in Chief	4	6.3%
	Other	6	9.5%
	Total	63	100.0%
Years of experience	less than 5 years	16	26.2%
	less than 10 years	18	29.5%
	less than 15 years	13	21.3%
	less than 20 years	8	13.1%
	more than 20 years	6	9.8%
	Total	61	100.0%
Live	Gaza strip	30	52.6%
	West bank	27	47.4%
	Total	57	100.0%
Interest	Very interested	28	45.2%
	Interested	24	38.7%
	Moderate interested	10	16.1%
	Weak interested	0	0.0%
	Not interested	0	0.0%
	Total	62	100.0%
investigative investigation	One investigation	21	35.6%
	Two investigation	11	18.6%
	Three investigation	14	23.7%
	More	13	22.0%
	Total	59	100.0%
Organization	PNN	1	3.6%
	Atlas Sport	1	3.6%
	Al-Resalah	2	7.1%
	Al-Faranciyah	1	3.6%
	Al-Qalaa Media	1	3.6%
	AL-Najah	1	3.6%
	Al-watan voice	1	3.6%
	Ajyal Radio Network and others	1	3.6%
	Free journalist	10	35.7%
	Al Hayat Newspaper	5	17.9%
	Al-Rai newspaper	1	3.6%
	Emirates Science	1	3.6%
	Watan	1	3.6%
	Shams News Agency	1	3.6%
	Total	28	100.0%

Appendix (2) clarifies proposals that would overcome the sources of professional and administrative pressure on the preparation of investigative investigation from the point of view of Palestinian investigative journalists.

Suggestion	Yes	
	n	%
Provide investigative journalist work tools and give him full time to prepare and motivate the investigative investigation.	55	87.3%
Bequeathing and following the truth with a long breath.	40	63.5%
	50	79.4%
Provide a safe work environment and protect journalists during investigation preparation	54	85.7%
	49	77.8%
Provide journalists with communication technology tools during investigative investigation preparation	51	81%
	45	71.4%
Holding specialized training courses for journalists on how to overcome the professional and administrative pressures of journalists during the preparation of the investigative investigation	48	76.2%
	47	74.6%

Appendix (3) shows the relative proportions, arithmetic averages, standard deviations, and weights of what occupational stresses affect Palestinian investigative journalists during the preparation of investigative investigation

#	Sentence	Disagree %	Neutral %	Agree %	Mean	Std. D	relative weight	Order
1	Editorial policy does not allow criticism of the political system during the preparation of an investigative investigation.	12.7%	50.8%	36.5%	2.2	0.7	74.6	8
2	The Foundation publishes news that is consistent with the editorial policy of a journalist.	4.8%	28.6%	66.7%	2.6	0.6	87.3	2
3	Adapted to the editorial policy of the foundation during the preparation of the investigation.	4.8%	41.3%	54.0%	2.5	0.6	83.1	7
4	Editorial policy forces me to select specific sources.	44.4%	31.7%	23.8%	1.8	0.8	59.8	15
5	Keep away my personal opinion during investigation preparation.	9.5%	15.9%	74.6%	2.7	0.7	88.4	1
6	The location of your organization affects the content of your investigative investigation	22.6%	33.9%	43.5%	2.2	0.8	72.5	9
7	The ownership of the institution affected my professional performance during the preparation of the investigative investigation.	30.6%	37.1%	32.3%	2.0	0.8	66.1	11

8	Lack of specialized training courses in investigative investigation work.	36.5%	28.6%	34.9%	2.0	0.9	66.1	12
9	Asking for depending on the excitement, exaggeration and exaggeration of parts of facts and events in a way that serves the editorial policy of the institution.	46.0%	33.3%	20.6%	1.7	0.8	58.2	16
10	Asking to rely on techniques of minimization, accusation, sarcasm and exaggeration in the investigative investigation to serve political parties	41.3%	33.3%	25.4%	1.8	0.8	61.4	13
11	Use intimidation techniques to attract the public.	49.2%	27.0%	23.8%	1.7	0.8	58.2	17
12	Use of disparagement and questioning techniques to serve personal and party interests	52.4%	28.6%	17.5%	1.6	0.8	54.0	19
13	Not giving the investigating parties the same space to respond	46.0%	27.0%	27.0%	1.8	0.8	60.3	14
14	Lack of commitment to social responsibility toward society and colleagues.	47.6%	31.7%	20.6%	1.7	0.8	57.7	18
15	Lack of knowledge of the ethical standards of the profession of journalism and the absence of investigative self-regulatory instruments.	38.1%	22.2%	39.7%	2.0	0.9	67.2	10
16	Lack of the right to information law	6.7%	15.0%	78.3%	2.6	0.8	86.2	4
17	The lack of cooperation of official and private bodies in providing the necessary documents.	6.6%	18.0%	75.4%	2.6	0.8	86.8	3
18	Lack of cooperation by witnesses officials in conducting interviews	8.1%	22.6%	69.4%	2.6	0.7	85.7	5
19	Misleading sources of journalist during investigative investigation preparation	12.7%	23.8%	63.5%	2.5	0.7	83.6	6
The first dimension of "professional pressures"					2.1	0.8	71.4	-

Supplement No. (4) clarifies concepts of study

1. **Factors affecting:** A set of professional bases and rules within and outside the work environment that directly affect the professional performance of journalists, and relate to day-to-day work mechanisms such as those relating to journalists' self-characteristics such as gender, age, housing, experience, attitudes, reference groups, administrative and managerial factors related to the work environment (such as administrative regulations, training opportunities, promotion, and remuneration); The impact of the working relationship, as well as professional factors (editorial policy, media message, ownership of the medium, state policy) and the use of technology by journalists while preparing their own investigations, techniques and medicines (Shourbji 2018).
2. **Professional Performance:** The process by individuals within the profession, which includes the identification of an knowledge structure that defines the field of professional expertise, the increase of collective identity, the formulation of codes for professional conduct and the development of professional ethics within the organization (Wafi 2013).
3. **Palestinian investigative journalists:** They are practitioners of investigative work within Palestine, in various print, audio and video media and have published investigative investigation.

4. **Investigative press:** The President of the International Center for Journalists, David Nabel, defines the investigative press as "pure methodological and institutional behavior, which depends on research, scrutiny and investigation for objectivity and accuracy, and to make sure that the news is true and what it may conceal based on the principle of transparency and fighting corruption, and the investigative press is a means to hold officials accountable for their actions in the public interest" (Hamdani 2017)

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Doing investigative journalism in Nigeria: Challenges, impacts and strategies

Abstract

Modern investigative journalism in Nigeria has been around for nearly 40 years starting with its emergence and popularity in the 1980s and 1990s – the height of military rule. Presently, investigative journalism practice is faced with challenges and attacks from the government and public officials who feel threatened as a result of their involvement in illegal deals and corrupt practices. Despite the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act of 2011 which gives journalists the power to seek and access public documents for stories, journalists in Nigeria still face challenges accessing these documents to carry out investigations. Most times, journalists who embark on investigative reporting are trailed, targeted, arrested, kidnapped and even killed in worst cases for doing their job. In January 2019, the military raided the *Daily Trust* offices, and arrested the editor and reporter over a story that was published on Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria's northeast. Against this backdrop, this study examines the challenges facing the practice of investigative journalism in Nigeria. The study adopted the survey method and administered the questionnaire to 50 purposively selected journalists and editors who work across both print and online investigative platforms. The study found that consistent with an enduring legacy of government interference and highhandedness towards the press since the colonial times, investigative journalists in Nigeria still face challenges in doing their jobs such as government harassment, police brutality, ownership influence and lack of funds to do investigative reports. This paper recommends a better working environment, improved press freedom and protection of investigative journalists as well as the use of advanced use of tech devices and online tools that keeps the investigative journalist safe while delivering outcomes that hold power to account.

Key words: Investigative journalism, FOI Act, Boko Haram, Nigeria, press freedom

Introduction

Nigeria has an extensive and diverse media landscape which has been experiencing exponential growth in recent times. The medium and long term potential for growth and development in the media sector in the country remains strong and the shift to digital and rise in online content has resulted in changes. Kolawole and Umejei (2018, p. 24) noted that “the Nigerian media landscape is a changing climate. Once dominated by print, radio and television, it is experiencing a disruption by digital platforms.”

Investigative journalism in Nigeria is emerging likewise. Although the practice has been on since the 1980s and 1990s – two of the most important periods in the country’s political development as a result of military rule, current trends like the use of social media, data journalism, and online tools and change in the political landscape, have changed the practice of investigative journalism in Nigeria in recent years. Newsrooms and journalists have gone ahead to carryout investigative works that hold power to account.

Many definitions of investigative journalism from different perspectives have been given by media scholars and journalists but the underlining point remains that investigative journalism is a specialist form of journalism that aims to unearth, scrutinize, make known, educate, interpret and raise awareness and consciousness of the public to take action or demand for better governance from their leaders. Okon (2017, p. 34) corroborates this by stating that “the common characteristics running across most definitions are that investigative journalism is a non-profit, evidence-based, aggressive and adversarial journalistic practice”. He argues that this type of journalism is a special reporting that is more thorough than conventional news reporting, saddled with uncovering information not before gathered in order to inform the public of events that might affect their lives (Okon, 2017). Bromley (2005) asserts that investigative journalism is an integral part of the broader journalistic profession. There are multiple definitions available, due perhaps to the long-term alignment of the practice with a number of content forms – commercialized, sensationalized and populist forms.

The UNESCO’s Manual on investigative journalism (2011) view investigative journalism as “the unveiling of matters that are concealed either deliberately by someone in a position of power, or accidentally, behind a chaotic mass of facts and circumstances that obscure understanding - and the analysis and exposure of all relevant facts to the public. It requires using both secret and open sources and documents” (UNESCO, 2011, p. 1).

Globally, journalists are seen as watchdogs of society. Through their reports, they expose corruption, human rights abuses, advance good governance and hold power to account. In some societies, the constitution, as a legal document, empowers and confers authority on media houses and journalists to carry out their responsibilities as the Fourth Estate of the Realm (after the executive, legislature and the judiciary).

In Nigeria for instance, the constitution is clear on the role of the press. Chapter II section 39 subsection (1) of the 1999 constitution states that “Every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference.” Similarly, subsection 2 states that: “Without prejudice to the generality of subsection I of this section, every person shall be entitled to own, establish and operate any medium for the dissemination of information, ideas and opinions.”

The 1980s marked a major threshold on investigative journalism in Nigeria. In 1986, Dele Giwa, Nigeria’s foremost investigative journalist and founder of *Newswatch* magazine which exposed wrongdoings of the military government, was assassinated through a parcel bomb delivery. This single event marked a turning point for investigative journalism in Nigeria.

Media scholars like Anyadike (2013), Okon (2017), Dare (2009) and Asemah and Asogwa (2012), have argued that over the years, Nigerian (investigative) journalists have operated under threats at great personal risks and have been at the receiving end of oppressive governments especially during military regimes. This hasn’t changed much – frequent arrests, detention, harassment, threat to life and raids of media houses have been the case for investigative journalists presently practicing in the country.

In a 2019 report, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) said Nigeria’s World Press Freedom index dropped to 120th in the world. In its analysis of freedom of journalism in sub-Saharan Africa, RSF noted that the growing attacks on investigative journalists have affected the practice of journalism.

In 2016, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) published a report which listed Nigeria as one of the most dangerous places for journalists and media staff from 1990 – 2015. In the year under review, 25 journalists and media staff were killed in the country according to the IFJ.

It is in view of this that this paper seeks to assess the challenges of doing investigative journalism in Nigeria.

Research questions

1. What are the challenges facing the practice of investigative journalism in Nigeria?
2. How do these challenges impact on the journalistic practices of Nigerian journalists?
3. How can these challenges can be overcome for effective practice of investigative journalism?

Investigative journalism in Nigeria: A historical perspective

At independence in 1960, Nigeria had mostly regional government-owned media – Western Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation (WNBC), Eastern Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation (ENBC) and the Northern Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation (NNBC). These media were mainly appendages of the regional governments and did not provide a fertile ground for the growth of investigative journalism except for a few publications that were established by private individuals who could afford it. However, the situation was different during the pre-independence era where most of the publications were owned by either missionaries, elites or a few Nigerians who were educated abroad and returned to the country to start publishing houses, mainly newsletters, as a tool for fighting against colonialism.

Udeajah (2011) captured it thus:

The pre-colonial media like the *Iwe Irohin* (1859), *Anglo African* (1863), *Lagos Times* and *Gold Coast Advertiser* (1880) and the *Zikist* chain of newspapers had strong stance against colonial rule. They used their publications to agitate for independence. However, most publications that came after independence were owned by the government and this played a role in making them practice, more or less, he who pays the piper, dictates the tune kind of journalism.

With military takeover and the oil boom of the 1970s and early 1980s, more media outlets started springing up. For instance, it was as this period that *Newswatch* magazine – Nigeria's foremost investigative publication started in 1984 by Dele Giwa and co-founded by Dan Agbese, Yakubu Mohammed and Ray Ekpu. The first edition was distributed on January 28, 1985.

The publication changed the practice of investigative journalism in Nigeria from what it was at the early years of independence. *Newswatch* carried out ground-breaking investigation in Nigeria and exposed corruption among government officials during the military era despite threats to life. This bold approach of the magazine was not favourable and accepted by the military government of Gen Ibrahim Babangida who was the military head of state at that time and soon, clampdowns – arrests, proscription and intimidation of journalists and staff of the

magazine followed. In October 19, 1986, the attack on the magazine took a dramatic turn with the assassination of Dele Giwa by agents of the government through a parcel bomb delivered to his home. After the death of Giwa, the investigative spark of the magazine faded away even though it remained in circulation. This single event affected many young Nigerian investigative journalist as they fled on exile.

In 2001, former president Ibrahim Babangida refused to testify before the country's human rights commission about Giwa's death, despite calls from inside the country and from the international community and human rights groups. Since then, no one has been prosecuted for Giwa's death.

In the years that followed in the 1990s, other investigative publication – *Tell Magazine, Concord, Tempo, NEXT, TheNews, The Sunday magazine* among others sprang up in the country and followed in the steps of *Newswatch* by carrying out bold and courageous investigative reports that held the government and its officials to account. As expected, the hard stand of the publications provoked the military government and soon, most of the media houses were raided and proscribed while journalists were arrested and jailed.

The early 2000s upwards to present times, changed investigative journalism in Nigeria with the coming of investigative platforms like Premium Times, the International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR), TheCable, Sahara Reporters, Punch newspaper, Daily Trust, YNaija, Ripples Nigeria among others that adopted modern techniques and tools in carrying out investigation that change socio-political and economic discourse in the country.

Nigeria's present leading investigative journalism platforms

Premium Times Centre for Investigative Journalism (PTCIJ)

Founded in 2014 by Dapo Olorunyomi, one of Nigeria's most respected journalists, the PTCIJ has the mission to use technology and online tools in doing investigative journalism that will promote good governance, accountability and fundamental human rights in Nigeria and the West African region.

The PTCIJ is a not-for-profit and before its establishment, Premium Times – an online publication founded by Olorunyomi in 2011 has been in existence. Since inception, the PTCIJ and Premium Times have carried out award-winning ground-breaking investigations that have created impact and changed political discourse in the country.

International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR)

The International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR) is one of Nigeria’s leading online investigative news organisations. The ICIR is an independent, nonprofit news agency that seeks to promote transparency and accountability through robust and objective investigative reporting.

The mission of the ICIR is to promote good governance and entrench democratic values by reporting, exposing, and combating corruption. The Centre is envisioned to be a catalyst in encouraging and fostering a tradition of journalistic excellence through creative investigative reporting, online publishing and training programmes.

Sahara Reporters

Founded in 2006 by Omoyele Sowore, a foremost activist, Sahara Reporters is a leading advocacy journalism online news platform in Nigeria. According to the website, the platform was founded in the spirit of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, comprising ordinary people with an overriding commitment to seeking the truth and publishing it without fear or favour. The organization hopes to, with its reports, inform and empower citizens to act and speak out against corruption in the country.

Daily Trust

Daily Trust is one Nigeria’s leading newspaper focused on investigative journalism. The newspaper’s mission is to disseminate credible and trustworthy information for the good of all. According to its website, the paper has as its core values, editorial integrity, ethical conduct, professionalism, constant innovation, production excellence. Other core values are market considerations, national unity and African brotherhood, world peace and sustainable development.

TheCable

Cable Newspaper Ltd was established on November 29, 2011. TheCable.ng was launched on April 29, 2014 to drive the vision through online journalism. It aims to be the most respected online newspaper out of Africa. The online newspaper has carried out investigations that exposed wrongdoings on human rights, security lapses, anti-people economic policies and corruption in government.

Ripples Centre for Data and Investigative Journalism (RCDIJ)

Ripples Centre for Data and Investigative Journalism (RCDIJ) is an independent, not-for-profit media organisation that educates the public and holds power to account. RCDIJ finds the facts to expose wrongs and spark change, while telling the stories that matter. Before RCDIJ was Ripples Nigeria – an online news website founded in 2015 that carries out in-depth investigative reporting on all sectors in Nigeria.

The good, the bad and the ugly side of Nigeria’s investigative journalism

For the purpose of this paper, few case studies are highlighted on these three fronts.

The good: Case studies

Since the early years, investigative journalism in Nigeria has always produced results – exposing wrongdoings, holding public officials to account and shining light on gross human rights abuse, and this has made the media an adversary of the government. As a result of these people-oriented investigations, positive outcomes have been recorded toward Nigeria’s socio-political and economic development.

Investigative newsrooms in Nigeria have also deployed a wide range of technologies, data resources and online tools in carrying out investigation. Specifically, Premium Times, TheCable, the ICIR and Ripples Nigeria have deployed the use of these tools to do investigations that expose corruption and hold power to account. Premium Times for example, uses open data and civic technology tools for their investigations.

In 2018, Nigeria’s minister of finance, Kemi Adeosun resigned her position following investigation by Premium Times that she had forged her National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) certificates. The NYSC is a mandatory national service scheme for university graduates in

Nigeria and abroad. For instance, before anyone can hold office in Nigeria, the person must first provide the NYSC certificate or exemption certificate which excludes those who have passed 30 years. Government agents did everything they could to frustrate the investigation but the Premium Times team wouldn't budge. Premium Times' editor-in-chief, Mojeed Misikilu, during a training for Nigerian journalists in May organized by the PTCIJ, attributed this to consistency and persistency. In his words, Misikilu (2019) surmised:

We never got tired of reporting about it even when other media houses appeared to be tired and stopped following up with the reports. We kept on, bringing fresh angles to the scandal and timing it with a count down. The result of this was that she (Adeosun) couldn't bear the heat and pressure anymore and she had to resign and return back to the UK. That is the outcome consistency in reporting can do.

In 2016, the organization worked on the Panama Papers and its reporters joined close to 400 journalists around the world that were given access to the Panama papers' trove. The organization produced some of the hard-hitting stories detailing how Nigerian politicians used offshore accounts to hide millions of dollars away from the tax authorities. The organization published 30 stories on the Panama Papers. The organization together with few others in the continent received Pulitzer Award for Explanatory Reporting.

Last year, a two-part investigation funded by the ICIR and the MacArthur Foundation and published on multiple platforms including Ripples Nigeria, exposed the deplorable state of public libraries in Nigeria despite huge funds budgeted for their renovation, rehabilitation and procurement of different library equipment. Barely one month after the story was published, the state government announced plans to start renovating the libraries.

The bad: Case studies

From the pre-independence era to this modern age, the government has always seen the Nigerian media as adversaries and strange bedfellows to its policies and programmes (Ugwu, 2010; Dare, 2009 and Okon, 2017). In recent times, this practice continues to be the norm in the Nigerian context. In January 2017, police stormed the offices of Premium Times and arrested Dapo Olorunyomi, the publisher and Evelyn Okakwu, a judiciary reporter. The arrest came after the organization refused to retract news stories focusing on the Nigerian army and its operations. The army had complained that reports "exposed a deep hatred for the leadership of the army by the organization." However, the duo were released after hours of interrogation by the police.

The organization, after the episode, said the arrests would not deter them in discharging their duties and responsibilities in line with global best practice, social responsibility and patriotism even at the greatest risks.

In August 2018, the police arrested a reporter with Premium Times, Samuel Ogundipe who covers the security sector and asked him to disclose his source following a story involving the Inspector General of the police, the vice-president, Yemi Osibanjo and the invasion of Nigeria's National Assembly. The editor-in-chief, Musikilu Mojeed and Azeezat Adedigba, the education correspondent were also arrested and harassed by the police. Following wide protests, Ogundipe and his colleagues were released.

Some repressive laws have also limited the practice of investigative journalism in Nigeria and sadly, some of these laws are relics of colonial rule adopted and modified by subsequent governments. These include: the Official Secret Act, the Seditious Offence Ordinance, the Criminal Code Act, Contempt of Court among others. Asemah and Asogwa (2012) noted that those in power hate investigative reports since it exposes them; so they use these laws to create a hostile working environment for the journalist.

The ugly: Case studies

To get their reports to the public, Nigeria's investigative journalists have been faced with ugly situations in the field and off-the field both by state and non-state actors including terrorist group, Boko Haram. However, some of them have adopted desperate measures to survive while government agents have, on the other hand, taken desperate moves too to suppress journalists and their media houses in a bid to scuttle their successes.

A 2017 report by Freedom House described Nigeria's press freedom as "partially free." With a 9/16 freedom of expression and belief rating, the report said that "government officials also restrict press freedom by publicly criticizing, harassing, and arresting journalists, especially when they cover corruption scandals, human rights violations, or separatist and communal violence" (p. 380).

In 1973, Nigeria's media landscape witnessed a bizarre and ugly development. Minere Amakiri, a young correspondent for the now defunct Nigerian Observer in Rivers State, Nigeria's Niger Delta region, had his hair shaved with broken bottles on the orders of Alfred Diete-Spiff, the former military governor of the state. This incident was highly condemned and highlighted the characteristics of the repressive military regimes of Nigeria's post-colonial era.

Much hasn't changed ever since. In August 2019, three journalists covering #RevolutionNow – a nationwide protests for fundamental reforms that would engender economic growth, peace and security for citizens were harassed and arrested by the police. The journalists had come to report the non-violent protest when they were arrested in Calabar.

Another journalist with Sahara Reporters, Victor Ogungbero, was arrested by armed policemen at the protest scene but was released two days later. The police clamped down on protesters using live bullets and teargas canisters to disperse people who turned out in large numbers to protest the state of affairs in Nigeria.

The Freedom House report cited the case involving Nigerian freelance journalist, Ahmad Salkida. In August 2016, the military announced that Salkida, who had been reporting on the Boko Haram insurgency since 2006, was wanted for questioning and could be charged under a terrorism law if he did not provide information. On his return to Nigeria from his home in the United Arab Emirates, Salkida was detained and questioned without a lawyer before being released the following day.

Despite these arrests, attacks and threat to life, Nigerian investigative journalists and media houses have continue to carry out their responsibilities without fear or favour. This supports the social responsibility theory which stipulate that the media should be alive to its responsibilities by protecting the citizens and preventing government from becoming too powerful.

Theoretical framework

The watchdog theory of the press was adopted for this study. This theory asserts that the press should criticize and evaluate the government and other institutions to ensure they don't become corrupt or overstep their power (Lichtenberg, 1990). The basic idea is that media needs to oversee the performance of government and private officials and uncover all hidden matters which may affect the public negatively (Mwita, 2017). Glowaki (2003) corroborates this by opining that the main idea of watchdog theory of the press is that the press should protect citizens from the abuses of the government or other powerful people or institutions. This theory becomes important because as a watchdog, the media need to watch and monitor the activities of government so they don't abuse their powers or take decisions that will affect the general good of the public. Because the basic role of government is to protect liberty, a watchdog is needed to guard against deviations from that role (Lichtenberg, 1990). The watchdog theory is

similar to the social responsibility theory which empowers the media to undertake investigations that hold power accountable.

Methodology and description of sample

The study adopted the survey research method, using the questionnaire as the instrument of data collection. The population was made up of 50 Nigerian investigative journalists across six newsrooms – PTCIJ, ICIR, TheCable, Daily Trust, Sahara Reporters and Ripples Nigeria. The purposive sampling was used to select the media houses because they are known specifically, for investigative journalism in Nigeria. The five-point Likert Scale was used in designing the questionnaire while the accidental sampling technique was used for the distribution. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for the quantitative data coding and analysis. A total of 50 journalists and editors representing both print and online media served as respondents for this study. The questionnaire recorded a 100% response rate. Out of the 50 respondents, 30 were male while 20 were female. The age of respondents varied from 15 – 55 years. The respondents’ educational qualification varied and included journalists and editors who had bachelors and master’s degrees. Specifically, 40 respondents had their bachelor’s degrees while 10 had their master’s degrees. Also, their professional experience ranged from 2 – 20 years.

Table 1: Challenges facing investigative journalists in Nigeria

	Frequency	Percent
Government harassment	32	64
Police brutality	4	8
Ownership influence	2	4
Lack of funds	7	14
Death threats	5	10
Total	50	100

Table 2: How the challenges affect the way investigative journalists practice in Nigeria

	Frequency	Percent
I stop investigating	4	8
I'm scared to investigate	3	6
I hide my identity	25	50
I live in fear	18	36
Total	50	100

Table 3: How the challenges can be tackled

	Frequency	Percent
Free press	25	50
Stop harassing journalists	12	24
New laws	3	6
Better working conditions	10	20
Total	50	100

Findings

From the field study, respondents strongly agreed there are challenges involved in doing investigative journalism in Nigeria. Out of the 50 respondents, 78% of the respondents agreed that there are challenges facing journalists in Nigeria. They identified government harassment, police brutality through frequent arrests, ownership influence, lack of funds to do investigations and death threats as these challenges. This finding supports similar studies done by Asemah and Asogwa (2012), Anyadike (2013) and Freedom House (2017) who found out that Nigerian journalists face risks such as arrests and death threats while doing their job. Findings also shows that these challenges, to a great extent, affect the investigative journalists in the way they do their jobs. For instance, 84% of the respondents agreed that these challenges affect their works while 8 remained neutral. Scholars like Ugwu (2010), Ojomo (2008) and Asemah and Asogwa (2012) agree that these challenges act as constraints to the work of an investigative journalist.

However, despite these challenges, the respondents said that nothing would deter them from doing their jobs. For instance, of the sampled respondents, only 8% and 6% of the respondents said they would stop doing investigations while others said they would continue doing

investigative journalism but would hide their identity. This position of Nigerian journalists towards carrying out investigative journalism despite the consequences, supports the social responsibility theory which came as a result of the Hutchins Commission report of 1947 that urges the press to go beyond objective reporting to interpretative (investigative reporting). The watchdog theory also corroborates this by asking the press to hold government accountable (Lichtenberg, 1990).

The way forward for investigative journalism in Nigeria

Noted that there are challenges in doing investigative journalism in Nigeria, certain steps and actions need to be taken for Nigerian investigative journalists to perform effectively:

- Beyond paper works and documentation, there should be increased practical press freedom and protection for investigative journalists in Nigeria. A society where the media and journalist are under frequent state attacks cannot make progress. Thomas Jefferson, the 4th president of the United States captured it thus: “Were it left for me to choose between a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter.”
- Proper remuneration/funding – Lack of funds for investigation is one of the biggest challenges facing investigative journalists and newsrooms in Nigeria. When an investigative journalist is not motivated, he looks for other means to make ends meet. Media houses also need proper funding to carry out investigation. Many newsrooms in Nigeria are cash-strapped and this affects the quality of investigation they do if any.
- Ending ownership interference – Ownership influence in most cases, affect the way a journalist or media house operates. For example, in cases where the publisher interferes in the type of stories a reporter does and how he goes about it, it will most likely affect the outcome of the investigation.
- Compliance to FOI Act requests – Section 29 of the FOI Act mandates every public institution to submit its manual report on or before February 1 of each year to the Attorney General of the Federation (AGF) on all applications of FOI request they received. But unfortunately, only 73 out of 900 public institutions submitted the report in 2017, representing only 8.1 percent compliance. Should public institutions be compelled to grant these requests to journalists, it will help them in their investigation through the availability of data. Respondents in the study said an open data policy will help them in doing investigation.

- Better working environment. Investigative journalists in Nigeria operate in unfriendly environment. Some of the respondents said they live in fear while doing their jobs while others said they are scared to investigate because of the hostile working environment.
- Newsrooms in the country should adopt the use of technology and online tools that will deliver positive investigative outcomes while keeping the journalists safe from government's highhandedness.

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Discourse on the Changing Trends of Investigative Journalism in Nigerian Print Media.

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Abstract

Recently, the Nigerian media space is experiencing the introduction of non-profit investigative reporting outfits. These media outfits have been established to fill the gaps created by traditional media outfits in the coverage of news. The Premium Times Centre for Investigative Reporting, Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Reporting and International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR) are among the introduction in the new trend of non-profit investigative reporting outfits in Nigeria. Investigation has always been an integral part of information gathering and with the changing needs of post-modern audiences, what becomes news is slowly changing to include in-depth backgrounding of facts and hard evidence often pictorial as more emphasis is now laid on “seeing is believing”. Thus, investigative reporting includes asking the difficult questions, obtaining data that may be classified, visiting story sites and recording observations. This aspect of the journalism profession has been widely perceived as risky and very demanding. Essentially, a reporter’s core duty is to uncover the truth and report it without bias or fear. However, there are a number of challenges associated with reporting in general that have made the work of the reporter rather cumbersome. The current trends in new media technologies have also posed unique challenges and opportunities for the 21st century journalist. In this paper, the researcher explored the nature of investigative journalism in Nigeria, exploring what the practice has been in the past, the challenges to journalists’ safety and the current practice of investigative journalism, especially among print media journalists in Nigeria. To enrich this paper, in-depth interview and observation were adopted to determine the status of investigative reporting in Nigeria. Recorded perceptions from seasoned journalists were analyzed along crucial themes relating to the topic of discourse. The researcher found a number of factors militating against the Nigerian investigative reporters ranging from lack of technical know-how to lack of funding, organizational support and equipment. In conclusion, the researcher recommended an advanced media training for practicing reporters, collaboration among various media houses, and establishment of more non-profit investigative journalism outfits and a review of the gaps in the freedom of information act.

Key Words: Investigative reporting, print media, journalism, current challenges, new media, Nigeria.

Setting the Scene:

Currently, investigative reporters in Nigeria are still subject to various degrees of threats and different forms of harassment from both the government and private individuals. Recently, a popular Nigerian reporter and publisher of Sahara Reporters, an online news community in Nigeria, was unlawfully arrested by the Nigeria's Department of State Security while one of the reporters working for the news agency was assaulted with the tear gas while trying to cover an event. During the Nigerian gubernatorial and national assembly elections early this year in March, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) reported that scores of Nigerian journalists were arrested, denied access to information and assaulted in many different ways, (CPJ, 2019). On July 25th 2019, a young TV journalist, Mr. Precious Owolabi, was gunned down in cold blood on the job and as at the time of writing this paper, no one has been arrested in association with his death. In like manner, a number of Nigerian reporters have been killed in the line of duty most often in the process of investigating and reporting stories.

At this point, I recall my own story as a young budding journalist (2008-2011) and the many cases of harassments and intimidations. One particular incident comes to mind where I lost my first camera and was nearly beaten to a pulp. I had been pursuing a story on cultist killings in Nigerian campuses, which had been one of the major causes of death among University students in Nigeria. I was still in the developing stages of the story, but was already asking many questions from sources who pleaded anonymity. One evening, while returning home from fieldwork, I was kidnapped by a group of boys who wore black masks. They squeezed me into a tricycle and drove off to an unknown location where I was slapped about and mandated to drop the cultism story or risk not living to see it published. They snatched my camera and took my handbag, which contained my notes and a tape recorder. As frightening as the remembrance of this event still is to me, many renowned journalists may perceive this as one of the many travails of being a journalist around the world. It can be a daunting experience growing into a profession where you have been exposed to the killings of prominent journalists whose only crime was seeking to unravel/tell the truth. You wonder what laws there are to protect you when you are harassed and told to mind the stories you cover or face the repercussions. From those in authorities dictating what to cover/report, to outright being denied access to information, the challenges of reporters globally, and particularly in third world countries like Nigeria with very fledgling democracy, remain untold. Thus, it is against this background that I have set out to analyze the current trends in investigative journalism in

Nigeria asking questions like what has changed in the last years and what current challenges are there for the 21st century Nigerian print journalist.

1.1 Overview of the Nigerian Media Landscape:

Notably, Nigeria is a vibrant media society. From the advent of the print media in 1859, the Nigerian media has grown through different political dispensations, technological changes and constitutional amendments. As noted by Sobowale (1985, p2), “the history of the Nigerian press is interwoven with the history of the Christian religion in Nigeria and the contributions of missionaries working in Nigeria during the 19th century.” Thus, it was the missionary Reverend Henry Townsend who introduced the first newspaper in Nigeria named “Iwe Irohin”, which was established primarily to advance literacy among the people and propagate Christianity, (Omu, 1967). This was before Nigeria’s amalgamation and subsequent independence. Scholars often choose to divide the history of the Nigerian mass media along the timelines of pre-independence, independence, and post-independence, (Omu, 1978; Sobowale, 1985; Olayinka, 1991; Ngozi, 2001; Osoh, 2011; Ismail, 2011).

Following the launch of “Iwe Irohin”, other newspapers came into prominence introducing the era of a competitive advocacy press mostly targeted towards nationalism and independence. White missionaries introduced most of the earlier newspapers after which notable Nigerian elites like Nnamdi Azikiwe and Herbert Macaulay, pioneered some of the most revolutionary newspapers in Nigeria’s history like the West African Pilot, a newspaper that is widely acclaimed as contributing immensely to Nigeria’s independence in 1960 (Nnadozie, 2013). Most Nigerians still regard these earlier newspaper proprietors as heroes of nationalism and independence.

Shortly after Nigeria’s independence in 1960, private individuals and the government established more newspapers. In fact, as noted by Nnadozie (2013) nearly all the states in Nigeria had their own newspaper serving as a form of identity and voice to both the citizens and the government. The late 80s and early 90s saw the introduction of ‘a more independent and privately owned daily newspaper’ (Nnadozie, 2013, p. 4). As Oso (1991) pointed out, the origin of the Nigerian press is not devoid of roots in political agitations which were largely anti-colonial. As historical as newspapers are so are other media forms.

The introduction of the electronic media was unprecedented than that of the print media in Nigeria. In 1939, the British colonial government introduced the radio. At the time, radio was

primarily utilized as a tool for political propaganda and was solely controlled by the government. In 1992, during Nigeria's third republic, the Nigerian federal military government degree No 38, liberated the electronic media in Nigeria thereby empowering private ownership, (Anyanwu, Ejem, & Nwokeocha, 2015). Currently, there are over 300 radio stations in Nigeria, about 40 television stations both government, and private owned media. As a component of the electronic media, the film industry in Nigeria also stands out as a very popular media with UNESCO declaring it the second largest film industry in the world after Hollywood in 2017. Notably, as much as Nigerians love going to the movies, is as much as they love their social media. A significant number of Nigerians (approximately 30 million) are registered on at least, one social networking site and by 2023, the number is expected to climb by at least 7 million.

In an era of fake news and disinformation, Nigerians are constantly engaging multi-media platforms in search for the truth, a situation that has given rise to citizen journalism, as the audience continues to redefine the truth. Because of this, different quarters are calling for media literacy engagement with the audience leaving the gaps investigative journalism can fill.

1.2 A cursory look at the 'burden' of Investigative Journalism:

The definition of investigative [reporting] is multifaceted. It is original reporting full of rigorous documentation and numerous interviews. It is fiscally conservative, probing waste, fraud and abuse in government agencies. It is adversarial and populist, challenging the powers that be. It brings with it moral judgment, (Houston, 2010, p.45).

The definition above succinctly captures the nature of investigative reporting in part and the many debates surrounding having a generally concise definition. Scholars and journalists have long debated the meaning of investigative reporting with some agreeing that every form of journalistic engagement contains a measure of investigation, (Cordell, 2009; Peters & Tandoc, 2013; Protess, 1992; Forbes, 2005). Houston (2010) agrees that there has never been a doubt or debate as to a future of investigative reporting as there has been on how investigative reporting should be defined. Some have even argued for the rebranding of investigative reporting as a research methodology, (Levine, 1980). Forbes (2005) had also claimed that some people regard investigative reporting as a 'myth', arguing that the coinage is necessarily what journalism is all about.

Watchdog journalism, investigative journalism, advocacy reporting and muckraker journalism are some of the terms that have been used to refer to investigative reporting. UNESCO defines investigative reporting as “the unveiling of matters that are concealed either deliberately by someone in a position of power, or accidentally, behind a chaotic mass of facts and circumstances - and the analysis and exposure of all relevant facts to the public.” Inferences from this definition shows that hard work that is investigative reporting becoming almost a burden of passion for investigative reporters. One fact from this is that investigative reporting seeks to expose concealed facts – whether these facts are concealed accidentally or intentionally – and in this lies the risks inherent in investigative reporting bearing in mind that powerful people like the government are most likely to conceal facts than any other group of people.

Beyond the risks involved in uncovering concealed facts, investigative reporting is central to any functioning society. Svensson, Sæther and Zhang, (2013, p. 10) lend credence to this by noting that:

To reveal and document injustices and power abuse is central in investigative [reporting]. However, investigative [reporting] is not only about revealing injustices and power abuse, it is also about asking for accountability, fighting for justice, and promoting certain visions of justice and equality in society. This gives investigative [reporting] a strong normative appeal and an important role in a society’s public sphere. Through their reporting, investigative [reporters] give voice to a moral outrage that reflects expectations on the state and other institutions in society among a community of concerned citizens.

In an era of pro-choice and competing multimedia platforms, there is a considerable pressure on the reporter to deliver thorough news and facts. The rise of the postmodern audience brought in its wake skepticism and the media audience are becoming more subjective with news interpretation. The ‘burden’ to investigate is more evident now than ever before with the presence of an array of competing media. Audience demands, publishers’ needs and advertising concerns constantly press on journalists. The pertinence of investigative reporting is therefore

divergent as its benefits are numerous. Therefore, the pressure to ‘crack open the world’ has become a daily reality for investigative reporters, (Lynch, 2010).

1.3 A quick look at Freedom of Information in Nigeria:

Nearly a decade after the adoption of the freedom of information in Nigeria, controversies and debates continue to trail the act with concerned scholars and journalists asking whether the act is a mere formality or a genuine attempt to empower the Nigerian press. The Freedom of Information Act was enacted in 2011 after a protracted legislative battle that lasted nearly over two decades following constant pressure from the Nigerian press, civic society organizations and the international community. In a website statement, the Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (ICRC) of the office of the Nigerian President notes what the FOI should do:

FOI is an Act to make public records and information more freely available, provide for public access to public records and information, protect public records and information to the extent consistent with the public interest and protection of personal privacy, protect serving public officers from adverse consequences of disclosing certain kinds of official information without authorization and establish procedures for the achievement of those purposes and; for related matters.

In the above quote, the clause ‘more available’ connotes an underlying restriction regarding access to information, which is often backed by clearly spelt out freedom of information guidelines in the constitution regarding the protection of sensitive government information. However, opposing views hold that the Nigerian situation may be perceived to be as dictated by the government in power, (Madubuike-Ekwe & Mbadugha, 2018; Omotayo, 2015) in what Mechkova, Lührmann and Lindberg (2017) have called ‘democratic backsliding’. Generally, this presupposes that the government still determines what information to be given and would go to any length to protect serving public officers, which has been the case in Nigeria even after the country’s return to democracy in 1999. Although, the Information Act empowers public access to information and the penalization of anyone who denies the right to the access of information, it still contains a number of gaps that supports restriction to access as evidenced in sections 7, 11, 12,14,15,16,17,18,19 and 28 of the FOi Act. As noted by Madubuike-Ekwe and Mbadugha (2018, p. 9-10):

A major challenge to the implementation of the FOI Act is that it contains some inherent deficiencies. The Act has more exemption sections and clauses than sections that grant access to information. This situation has been exploited by some public officers for mischievous purposes. The culture of secrecy of government information has become entrenched among both public servants and the citizens in Nigeria. Many former British colonies including Nigeria have official secrecy laws and civil service rules, which have guided their operations for years. This affects the effective implementation of the FOI Act

Thus, as much as the Nigeria FOi Act is empowering and a huge achievement for the Nigerian press, it unwittingly contains a number of gaps that inadvertently impedes journalistic freedom and access. In a working democracy like Nigeria where a number of factors are still militating against good governance, perhaps the right question to be seeking an answer to is how best to empower the constitutional rights of journalists, enforce the freedom of expression and keep journalists safe.

1.4 Theoretical Framework: Exploring Social Responsibility and Spiral of Silence Theories

This paper is anchored on the theories of social responsibility and spiral of silence. However, the spiral of silence theory is applied to fit into the current discourse. The social responsibility theory is one of the four normative theories of the press, which is the brainchild of the Hutchins's Commission Report of 1947. The commission had been established in the United States to uncover the principles behind a functioning media in a democracy as a response to public distrust of the media and government during World War II. The report was later adopted by Fred Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm as the third theory in what is commonly known as the normative theories of the press. The four theories was developed by the authors as a response to their query about the lack of uniformity of the press in different societies, (Christians, Glasser, McQuail, Nordenstreng & White, 2010). They had found that the press takes the shape of the socio-political and cultural reality of each society. However, the social responsibility theory unlike the other theories (Authoritarian, libertarian and soviet-communist) emphasizes more on the responsibility of the press within a democracy than the normative status of the press within a society. Thus, the social responsibility theory empowers the journalists to ensure quality reportage and the delivery of facts necessary for the proper functioning of both citizens and government without fear or favour. Social responsibility theory extends beyond everyday reporting to investigative and interpretative reporting as media functions/responsibility necessary to empower the citizens in a democracy. In fact, the very

anchor of the social responsibility theory is investigative and interpretative reporting, encouraging journalists to go beyond just reporting the facts as they are to provide a background and a framework of analysis in order to have an informed audience.

In as much as this theory empowers the public sphere and freedom of expression, the media are to be held accountable and maintain the highest standards of professionalism, and in cases where the media default, the government or press councils are to step in and restore order. The social responsibility theory is still relevant in current discourse even though it was developed in the 20th century. The theory underpins the very essence of the practice of investigative reporting as a duty of the press and not a mere journalistic function. Thus, it is the social responsibility of the press and indeed reporters owe it to their audience to investigate, ask the difficult questions, analyze facts, provide background and report same without bias.

On the other hand, the spiral of silence theory explains the reasons why people may be silent on a given subject of discourse. Developed by Elisabeth Noelle-Nuemann in 1974, the behaviour psychology theory postulates that people often feel the pulse of public opinion before choosing to speak on a particular topic. The people's reluctance to speak may often be connected to fear of isolation and being in the minority and the need to feel belonged. Reapplying this theory to the current discourse, reporters are likely to experience a journalistic spiral of silence when pursuing investigative stories especially in a disabling environment. Factors that may be responsible for reporters being silent may include insecurities, lack of support from their media houses, precedents (possible news of reporters who have forayed into investigative journalism but have nothing to show for it), economic realities and a weak justice system. Thus, in order to avoid having a society where journalists are cocooned in a spiral of silence certain frameworks must be in place so that the journalist can perform their duty of social responsibility to the audience without fears of isolation. In a post-truth era characterized by fake news and disinformation, it is increasingly becoming pertinent for the redefining of the role of the journalist and the empowerment of the same.

1.5 Doing investigation in a New Media Era: Challenges, Opportunities and Journalists' Safety:

The methods of doing investigation is constantly changing. Over the past decades, especially with the introduction of digital technologies, the form of investigative reporting keeps evolving. The simple fact is reporting in the age of media convergence is different and requires different methods and competences. Along with the many opportunities accompanying digital

age reporting, are the challenges which includes the dilemma of upholding journalistic ethics in a new media age, (Posetti, 2015; Joseph, 2011; Blaagaard, 2013). Notably, doing investigative reporting has become easier with a number of digital technologies available to aid the reporter and facilitate a quicker process. The digital age has also encouraged collaborative investigative reporting where a coalition of media house come together to chase a story, (Carson & Farhall, 2018).

The new media are also helping to attract funding opportunities for investigative reporters via the means of crowd funding. By leveraging the powers of the internet, investigative reporters fund reports in the interests of the public, (Carvajal, García-Avilés, & González, 2012). Previously, there have been fears that the new media will surely eclipse efforts at investigative reporting; however, reporters are advancing the speed of gathering information on platforms like social media. One of the major challenges that have sparked debates with the role of digital media in investigative reporting is the concern for journalists' safety. Presently, it is the belief that it is easier to track a journalist down through their reported stories. Organizations like UNESCO, who are interested in safety of journalists, are currently setting measures on how journalists can protect themselves from cyberattacks.

1.6 What Journalists think: A Thematic Approach.

In order to capture the current trend of investigative journalism in Nigeria, the researcher interviewed six (6) select award-winning journalists who represent various media organizations in Nigeria in a bid to document the state of investigative journalism practice in the country. One of these journalists pleaded not to be named. The names of the other five participants and the media houses they represent are as follows:

1. Joshua Olufemi – Premium Times Centre for Investigative Journalism, Abuja, Nigeria
2. Hannah Ojo – The Nation Newspaper
3. Lekan Otufodunrin – The Nation Newspaper
4. Femi Joshua Asu – The Punch Newspaper
5. Emeka Attah – The Sun Newspaper
6. Anonymous – A media house in Nigeria

The interviews were conducted over emails and phone conversations and the responses were analyzed along the following themes using thematic analysis:

- Noticeable changes in investigative reporting practice in Nigeria

- New Media Influences
- Challenges
- Interventions

*Noticeable changes in investigative reporting practice in Nigeria: This theme was analyzed with respect to the journalists' experiences of change in the field of investigative journalism, comparing their past practice with current realities. Below are some of the responses:

Lekan Otufodunrin: Investigative journalism has over the years remained one of the major features of journalism practice. It is a bit much easier to engage in investigative journalism now than before, thanks to more access to information and ability to reach more sources and contacts. Many more journalists are able to do investigative reports online, before it was reserved for a few. More importantly, investigative reports are much more needed now for any media house to be outstanding from publishing routine reports.

Hannah Ojo: Nowadays, journalists have more tools to research, find data, and visualize data, use visuals and audios to engage the audience in the process and after the story has been published. Audience engagement after published reports was slower, but now it is almost at a speed of light.

Femi Asu: I think the practice of investigative reporting in Nigeria was better in the past than it is now. In the past, newspapers and news magazines published more robust investigative reports as many of them were financially buoyant and enjoyed relative independence from political and undue external influence. I think journalists were more courageous then than now and they dug deeper for information. While there may be many digital tools that can enhance investigative reporters work today, many media houses are not empowering and encouraging their journalists to use them as they are more interested in growing revenues.

The responses above clearly offered divergent views. While all the interviewees believed it has become easier to do investigative reporting now than in the past, agreeing that digital tools have changed the narrative, a number of them disagreed along the lines of best practices with some believing that investigative reporting was better before as more journalists and media houses were interested in doing investigative reports which produced some of the most outstanding discoveries of the time. Some of the participants hold that the practice in Nigeria has become even better with more and more journalists and media houses engaging in

investigative reporting as a needed activity to be outstanding in the long list of competing media houses. These views, however, are not a representation of reporters' views in Nigeria.

***New Media Influences:** The researcher wants to know in more specific terms, how the new media have changed the narratives of investigative reporting in Nigeria. Below are some of the responses:

Joshua Olufemi: The digital transition has affected the way [investigative reporting] used to be. Thus, at no other comparative time in history do we have such a deluge of information and news information providers to contend with as we have today. To illustrate, studies have shown that about 10,000 websites are opened every day, 210 billion emails are sent daily, and 161 exabytes of information are produced today just about 3 million times of information in books ever written in the history of man. What does this mean? Because of the speed and volumes through which information and news reach us, the capacity to blur the boundaries of journalism and non-journalism has narrowed, and the capacity to dis-inform and misinform has also grown out of bounds. Summarily, the practice of investigative journalism now benefits from the resources of technology and lessons of the past. For instance, the ground-truthing skills that past investigative reporters deployed required being physically present and sometimes, going undercover. However, ground-truthing has now been enhanced through satellite imageries, drones, social media reporting. Thus, investigative reporting has become relatively instant, replicable and democratic (as in the case of citizen journalists)

Lekan Otufondunrin: New media has made it much easier for the enterprising journalists to thoroughly investigate reports with various tools for verification globally. Many more journalists are able to take up the task as they are able to contact sources on multiple platforms. There is room for collaboration across countries to hold governments, organizations and individuals accountable. Reports of investigation can also be shared across platforms with more chances for impact and responses from those concerned.

Anonymous: The advent of the new media has in small measure influenced investigative reporting. There are both positive and negative effects of this. The growing competition from the new media has exacerbated the revenue challenge facing traditional media organizations, a development that has dampened reporters' appetite to do investigative reports. On a flip side, a number of online media platforms have emerged in the past few years and some of them are breaking new grounds in terms of investigative reporting.

Emeka Attah – The new media have infused technology into investigative reporting. Nowadays, it almost near impossible to engage in investigative reporting without having a technical know-how.

Hannah Ojo: The most notable change for me is audience engagement. Journalists no longer publish and go to bed as the engagement with the readers continues long after the story is published.

The responses show that the coming of the new media has introduced a number of changes to the practice of investigative reporting in Nigeria including the following, **replicability of investigative reports, collaborative reporting, audience engagement and digital tools for reporting**. The changes new media have effected in the general journalism practice are notable and for some of these participants, the changes are growing monumentally as the journalism profession continues to be dynamic.

***Challenges:** The interviewees were asked about the challenges to doing investigative reporting in Nigeria today and a common thread in their responses was financial constraints to doing investigation in Nigeria.

Femi Asu: I think the greatest challenge is the drastic decline in the revenue earned by media houses, particularly on the back of the downturn in the economy. This has in no small measure affected the way journalism is practiced in general. Many mainstream media outlets have taken a beating as online journalism continues to gain momentum. Newspapers have witnessed declines in sales and adverts amid competition from online newspapers and blogs. This revenue crunch has led to massive sacking of reporters by media houses and intensified competition for adverts. Today in Nigeria, the pursuit of adverts has greatly influenced the way stories are reported. In their quest for survival, many media houses are now sacrificing professionalism and journalistic ethics.

Emeka Attah: I believe one of the challenges to investigative reporting in Nigeria is the fear for journalists' safety. The justice system in Nigeria is not exactly at its all-time best and journalists have little or no insurance at all. With surging crime rates and insecurities, most journalists are afraid of pursuing stories that are 'unsafe'.

Anonymous: Low remuneration of journalists is also a factor. Most media houses in Nigeria don't pay their journalists well. Some owe salaries for months. With this factor alone, I can

imagine why many journalist won't want to venture into investigative reporting. How will you fund it? Similarly, there is the lack of enough resources by most print media houses to fund investigative reports. Many of them don't have investigative desks like they used to do and some of their reporters are not as digitally savvy as they should to be able to utilize some of the new media tools that can aid investigation.

Joshua Olufemi: There are challenges, from financial crises to conflict between economic model and social model of investigative journalism. Journalism flaunts two conflicting but complementary models: the social model [accountability] and the economic model that enables it. There are other “practice” issues that lean on public trust, media credibility and capacity building. The broad social preoccupation we serve, from defending democracy to expanding freedom, providing oversight against a rapacious state, advocating for development solutions, and anti-corruption all fall within our social model. These lofty aspirations will achieve no penetration except we secure the right fit of the economic model to enable them, and to ensure they serve their true purpose. So, the central problem of Nigeria's investigative reporting is the deficit of media innovations and an aggressive erosion of an independent tradition of media practice in the country.

***Interventions:** The researcher sought for recommendations from the interviewees based on their experience as long-time journalists. A major thread in their responses is better financing and funding for investigative reporting.

Joshua Olufemi: To effectively serve democracy, accountability journalism must innovate its revenue methods, competition, and practice. To innovate revenue, newsrooms must go past depending on ad revenue primarily built on eyeballs and pitching readers' metrics to advertisers. Media practitioners in Nigeria must reinvent their product offerings beyond regional and indigenous language publications. They must be able to repackage their eyeball headlines into data analytics and decision applications, translate special features and niche investigations (that currently yield near-zero repercussions for political and corporate criminals) into genuinely different subscription products.

Again, innovating competition. No print media organization in Nigeria can boast of fifty thousand sales volume from its daily paper circulation. In 2010, a study conducted revealed that less than three hundred thousand newspapers combined were daily circulated. As contested by publishers in 2010, it may well be contested today, but the fact remains that all the newspapers in Nigeria today do not have a combined circulation figure of just Daily Times of

Nigeria in 1980. So what then is the real cost of competition? Collaborative investigations and purposive publishing can guarantee amplitude and resonating magnitude of policy change. It defies the notion of a general mistrust of cooperation that has characterized the media industry. It restores an amount of trust, which the media is struggling to retain with the public. It venerates media economies of scale and reduces the cost of investigations and safety. Therefore, media organizations in Nigeria must disremember the ideology of winning the attention game by purely breaking the news and cut off the reflexes to keeping scoops to self. Collaboration must be deliberate and frequent; the news media must synergize and weigh in on the strength capable of piecing together a complex puzzle. No reporter or editorial team can do it alone.

Hannah Ojo: Adoption of hybrid newsrooms by print media houses in Nigeria and a digital strategy driven by demography. I am very passionate about audience engagement and therefore believe that a mobile first approach will help reach a wider and more diverse audience.

Anonymous: I believe in the empowerment and proper remuneration of journalists. If Nigerian investigative journalists are well-funded and paid, then we will have better outputs in investigative reports. Again, there is need for collaboration among media houses in Nigeria, the era of clinging to selfish scoops is over.

Emeka Attah: The print media in Nigeria must devote more funds and more journalists to investigative reporting. These reporters should be continuously trained according to needs of the time. Nigerian reporters and media houses should also begin to access available grants and fellowships to enable them conduct outstanding investigative reports.

The interview showed that Nigerian journalists are interested in investigative reporting but are mostly handicapped by factors such as lack of funding support, security and safety, digital expertise and proper remuneration and support from their media houses. Possible interventions as gathered from the interviews will include increased funding for investigative reporting, collaborative reporting with other media houses and training of journalists on digital competences.

1.7 Conclusion: Towards a theory of Investigative reporting in developing countries:

Responses from the interview have revealed a number of interesting findings namely:

- Investigative reporting in Nigeria has changed due to digital technology. This means that the ways of going about investigative stories have been heavily influenced by the new media.
- Nigerian investigative journalists need trainings at intervals to keep abreast digital tools for reporting.
- Audience engagement is extending the reach of investigative reports.
- Safety is a concern for most investigative reporters in Nigeria.
- Funding is a major challenge.
- Collaborative reporting should be encouraged among media houses. The age of scoops in reporting is slowly becoming overtaken.
- Poor remuneration makes reporters disinterested in pursuing stories

Thus, it appears Nigerian reporters may be practicing safe journalism. Factors such as poor remuneration, insecurity and a weak justice system, organizational support, lack of equipment, may easily force reporters to consider the types of stories they choose to pursue.

The way forward then will be enabling the justice system so wronged journalists can get justice. This also means upholding the constitution in relations to journalists' welfare and safety. Again, media houses should properly remunerate their staff and provide them with the needed equipment to practice and protect themselves while in the field. Most reporters in Nigeria are not insured by their media houses against damages and accidents. This should be highly prioritized by media houses to motivate their staff. The Nigeria media landscape also needs additional non-profit investigative reporting outfits to continue to fulfil the media's duty of social responsibility and hold government accountable.

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Periodistas de a Pie: towards a truth production framework for Mexican journalists

(FULL PAPER)

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the result of a series of semi-structured interviews with Periodistas de Pie (PdP), a group of female reporters who have already challenged given assumptions of the press in liberal democracies, in Mexico specifically. Their practice, used as a case study, can teach us a great deal of what it is like to do investigative work in Mexico, as well as the solutions they found beyond the media system and their own ideological practices in order to conduct investigations. But it will also show certain continuities in their work and organisation, from reporting practices to the problems of international funders shaping their investigative agenda, and even restricting political action.

Introduction

A decade of a savage war on drugs has left Mexico with hundreds of thousands of victims, including journalists, and a deep mistrust in local and federal governments prompted by blatant corruption cases (Lizárraga et al, 2015). Caught in-between, journalists in Mexico face a serious identity predicament about their professional and political roles. It is in this daunting pitfall where the expectations of the press in a liberal democracy are viciously called into question.

The liberal model of the press, either as a watchdog or as one of the checks and balances that holds power accountable (Lippman, 1922), finds its pinnacle in the practice of Investigative Journalism (IJ). Such a practice is said to be vital for a healthy democracy and its media system (Curran, 2011; Protesse, 1992; Waisbord, 2000), because it has the possibility “to escape” from the usual constraints of a commercial press — heavy workloads, tough deadlines, and no time for verification, which has ended up with a low-quality, utterly undemocratic content also called churnalism (Davis, 2010).

But what if the liberal model of the press has also made too many assumptions about its star informative product? What happens when the institutional array and the rule of law are rendered void in the middle of an armed conflict? Furthermore, what if the very nature of IJ is to be a valve scape for media corporations to keep the vast majority of journalists in the business of churnalism?

In Mexico, a group of journalists called Periodistas de a Pie (PdP) found themselves in the middle of an internal conflict, facing a media model they disliked because there was little

room for the kind of journalism they considered valuable, and with almost no opportunities to carry out investigations. A group of colleagues and friends came together to organise a series of talks first, and later on became a more formal organisation 2007, and ever since they both have been advocating journalists' safety in Mexico and have been instrumental in leading collaborative investigations, challenging hegemonic narratives and even the media system they used to be part of.

History

PdP is a particular organisation in Mexico. It does many things, from training journalists, to campaigning to protect freedom of speech, and even doing journalism themselves. It is halfway between an NGO and an independent media organisation, because it engages in journalistic work but at the same time advocates for certain issues in a very straightforward way, like journalist's safety or immigrants' rights. Furthermore, legally, it is registered as a "Cultural Association", a legal figure similar to an NGO which enables them to receive funding from national and international donors (Interview BD1, 2019). All these activities did not come at once, they came as part of a process that one cannot help but call organic. It all started as a simple group of reporters and friends who wanted to talk about journalism in Mexico, looking for the training they were not given by the media organisations they worked for, mainly from national newspapers like Reforma, El Universal or La Jornada. They used to meet in Mexico City's cafes or restaurants for dinner, sometimes to hear each other's complaints about their working conditions or how little their editors cared about the stories they covered on poverty or education, almost always obscured by the spectacular political headlines of daily news. It is this informal and fluid character that makes it difficult to mark a specific date of its origin or to name who were considered part of the "network". But their first meetings took place between 2005 and 2007, just at the point the armed conflict was about to burst out in Mexico.

At the beginning, their training workshops revolved around long-form journalism, with some of the most influential by-liners in Latin America, from Juan Villoro to Alma Guillermo Prieto, which attracted a good number of reporters in the capital, in part because they were for free. Then violence in the country started to escalate, and they felt the need to listen to other journalists' experiences covering armed conflicts and victims outside the Mexican capital. That led them to have more formal talks with reporters and academics working in Colombia, for instance. But suddenly that same violence reached journalists themselves. People they knew personally told them how difficult it was to write about the things that were taking place in other parts of the country, from censorship to threats and attacks on reporters. But the real

turning point came in 2010 when a reporter some PdP members were acquainted with was murdered, leading to a national manifestation called “Los Queremos Vivos” (“we want them alive”) according to interviews for this paper. His death made them realise that, as a journalist group, they had to somehow react. It was in this moment when they decided to have a more vocal stance to fight for reporters' security, which was a step forward to advocate publicly in demonstrations and press releases, and even for some of their colleagues' protection. This move would mark PdP first schism, because some of them feared the possibility of being called activists, which seems to be a major problem among Mexican reporters because of an exacerbated professional ideal of what a journalist should be, which resorts to given assumptions of the role of the press as an objective, detached activity. However, the organisation core remained together, and PdP became a sort of shelter for journalists at risk, both by publishing their stories or providing legal advice and in some cases even a temporary home.

Most of those who had some connection with PdP worked for different media organisations, mainly national newspapers like *Reforma* or *Excelsior*, and because of the workshops they organised, some reporters from state media outlets had joined them as well. That meant that the training they had with PdP, focused on professional skills, was then employed to produce stories for the media companies they used to work for. But for various reasons, from the increasing precarity of journalists' labour spaces (Espino-Sanchez, 2016) to direct and indirect censorship (Salazar-Rebolledo, 2017), some of these journalists were soon left with no platform to publish their stories. That situation led them to take the decision of finding creative ways in which they could publish the investigations, chronicles and interviews they were not being able to publish at the time. So, they set up a webpage that served as a container of the stories that had been censored both in national and local media, and which in the future would be transformed into a more autonomous media outlet with reporters working specifically for that website, now called “Pie de Página” (“Footnote” in Spanish). On that website, PdP has published investigations on clandestine mass-graves, migration, victim's testimonies, and just recently, according to what the members of the board of directors have said in the interviews, now they have included a section to investigate extractive industries like mining or the oil industry. Some years ago, PdP stories started to be published both on PdP's official website as well as on some mainstream media outlets under the agreement that the credits had to go to PdP. This was only possible because PdP has managed to get enough international funds (e.g. Open Society, Ford Foundation, and so on) to hire a number of home-based reporters, as well as a somewhat regular group of freelance collaborators.

Methodology

The route PdP had followed since 2006 up to this day make it a suitable case to be studied for the purposes of this research and the main traits of counter-investigations:

- a) Its origin lies in the discontent with the traditional media environment. them more
- b) It has been very difficult for their stories to have some resonance on mainstream media, posing several questions about the possibilities of investigative journalism being aired on traditional forums.
- c) And the political role PdP has adopted leans towards an interventionist one, challenging the top-down authorities' narrative of the war on drugs, and focusing on the victims of violence.

That is why when one has to think about previous attempts to do investigative work with a different approach in Mexico, and with a transformative aim, PdP stands out as an ideal case to be scrutinised for research purposes. Also, the compactness of the group provided some degree of reliability and coherence if one were to study its operation, aims, and challenges in the Mexican context.

-Semi-structured Interviews with PdP

Based on the assumption that we can know and analyse interactions between individuals and organisations or structures they belong to, this research have deemed the use of semi-structured interviews as the more appropriate method to do so in order to address the research questions. Semi-structured interviewing is a research method in which the researcher asks questions to individuals related in some way or another to the subject that is being analysed (Kvale,1996). Those questions are more or less planned beforehand, but the interviewer has always the liberty to slightly digress or deepen on a certain issue, as long as it serves the major goal of addressing the research goals (McNamara, 2009). This type of interview, unlike other qualitative research methods like surveys or focus groups, enables the researcher to explore perceptions and conditions in the voice of the interviewees, leaving more leeway for reflection and ideas to sprout out. Such liberty has many limitations in terms of accurate description, since it can imply misconceptions, vague memories, over or understatement, (Kvale 1996). However, that does not mean that those appreciations are untrue, or that the reality that they contain cannot be used to describe social and political events (Wengraf 2006 in Wright 2011). Furthermore, this same liberty is ideal if one is to explore interviewees' considerations as a point of departure to

elaborate a framework for investigations, thinking together about its feasibility in specific contexts the interviewees know very well and have even transformed already. By conducting semi-structured interviews with PdP members it was possible to explore what the constraints in national media and attacks on the press are, as well as what the experiences of reporters are in dealing with cases where the Mexican state is involved in wrongdoings. And using the researcher’s own experience as an investigative reporter in Mexico, adds another layer that explores the possibilities and challenges of undertaking investigations in that country.

In total 19 active or former members of PdP had been interviewed for this study. 9 of them are members of PdP Board of Directors, which is the whole leadership of the organisation in charge of providing identity and making major decisions about budget, activities, and partnerships. Most of the members of the board are mid-career journalists, between 40 and 50 years old, with more than 10 years of experience in legacy media, some in national outlets and others in regional media. All but one of the members of the board are women and from a mixed ethnic background. 4 former members of the organisation were interviewed, including some of the key journalists responsible for its foundation but no longer playing a big role in PdP, although they are still in contact with the organisation and still occasionally collaborate. Finally, 5 collaborators or former collaborators with occasional but regular publications on Pie de Pagina (PdP’s website) were also interviewed. Key founders were selected; one in particular because other interviewees acknowledged that she was responsible for holding some of the first meetings and the idea of forming a network was hers. Another founder was also referred to as one of the few men who took part in the process. In like manner, the current collaborators that were interviewed were three female journalists and two male collaborators, which to a certain degree represent the group composition.

Table 1

Number	Code	Organisation	Position
1	BD1	PdP	Board of Directors
2	BD2	PdP	Board of Directors
3	BD3	PdP	Board of Directors
4	BD4	PdP	Board of Directors
5	BD5	PdP	Board of Directors
6	BD6	PdP	Board of Directors

7	BD7	PdP	Board of Directors
8	BD8	PdP	Board of Directors
9	BD9	PdP	Board of Directors
10	F1	PdP	Founder
11	F2	PdP	Founder
12	F3	PdP	Founder
13	F4	PdP	Founder
14	F5	PdP	Founder
15	F6	PdP	Informal founder/Friend
16	C1	PdP	Regular Collaborator
17	C2	PdP	Former Collaborator
18	C3	PdP	Collaborator
19	C4	PdP	Regular Collaborator
20	C5	Freelance	Regular Collaborator

Half of the interviews were face to face, between late 2018 and early 2019, all of them recorded on audio. Two of them took place in their headquarters, an old building preserving its colonial architecture in the city centre which they share with an independent online TV project called Rompeviento, and in cafes across Mexico City. The duration of these interviews was between one hour and one hour and a half. The other half were conducted via WhatsApp calls. These were also between one hour and one hour and a half in length. The general structure of the interviews, though a simple guide to understand and listen to the interviewees' reflexivity, was constructed based on the data that was required for a section of a PhD dissertation on investigative journalism in Mexico. That structure was more of a guideline than a rigid protocol, and the exact order was not always followed:

1. The beginning of PdP.
2. Members and Collaborators and why they joined.
3. PdP role in Mexican society or vocational goals.
4. What topics are covered in your investigations and who decides so?
5. What are the voices that are privileged in the stories published by PdP?

6. Processes of validation, verification, treatment of evidence and objectivity.
7. What are the expected outcomes after publication?
8. Funding schemes.

-Anonymity

All of the interviewees' identities were anonymised because of very real risks to their physical safety. Mexico is one of the most dangerous places in the world to be a journalist and some reporters who collaborated with PdP have been murdered or have received threats in the past decade (Article 19, 2018). Even if most of these journalists by-line their texts still, providing another way in which their identities could be linked to their work or how they do it would have been a bad idea. Therefore, their names are not disclosed and they are just refer to as "Interviewees" identified by a code, e.g. "BD1, F1, C1..." Their real identities are not crucial for the objectives of this dissertation, so anonymising them should not pose a problem for the aim of this research.

-Consent form and data processing

Every interviewee signed a consent form, following the October 2018 format version of Informed Consent Forms recommended by Goldsmiths University of London, which in 2017 adopted the UK Research and Integrity Office's current Code of Practice for Research as its institutional code in relation to research ethics and integrity. This is in line with the provisions of The Concordat to Support Research Integrity and in accordance with the UKRI Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct. This consent form informed the participants that the interview was recorded on audio format, that their identities were anonymised, that it involved potential security risks, that they were giving full authorisation to use the information they provided for the purposes of this research and specified the conditions under which they agreed to participate in the project. These interviews were first saved in digital format in an online server not available to the general public. The interviews were transcribed in Spanish, analysed using a coding system to find common threads (both by using analytical reading and using the software NVivo) and then the most relevant concepts and quotes were then translated into English. It is worth remarking that this analytical process started even from the moment the interviews were taking place, while their experiences and the aim of this project were being discussed; also, a record of that has been kept through written notes, diagram sketches, relevant concepts, and so on.

Findings

- PdP and the brutality of Mexico's journalism industry

For most of PDP journalists founders the political conditions under which they have been doing journalism for the last 20 or 30 years is very clear: traditional journalism has not been a watchdog, but a lapdog. Stories on handouts, political favours, propaganda, favourable coverage and so on, are used by them to describe the relationship between political power, which is also economic power, and the Mexican press at large. Take for instance the story of one of the interviewees, who has been working as a journalist in the southern state of Chiapas for more than 20 years. She used to write for one of the supposedly most progressive, socially driven national newspapers, La Jornada, which has praised itself for being the national left-wing newspaper, and regularly putting out stories on labour and social movements, indigenous groups and their struggles, etcetera, until she felt at odds with the kind of agenda the paper was putting forward:

“In 2009, my partner and I had serious conflicts with the state, and then we suffered labour harassment at La Jornada (national newspaper). At that moment, La Jornada decided to make advertising agreements with many local state governments and that meant going astray of the newspaper's traditional editorial line. At the time I refused to do it. I was in that tense situation for a whole year, because they wanted me to byline official press releases and things like that [...], it was a very hard year,” Interviewee BD9

That blackmailing dynamic, in which press releases were almost exactly published by the media as journalism was precisely what the interviewee was reluctant to accept. And she decided to leave the seeming left-wing media outlet that had fallen prey of clientelism and, ultimately, churnalism.

The particular brutality Mexican journalists go through finds its centre in the corporations they work for. Structural hurdles for transformative investigations in journalism respond to both the architecture of the media companies and the ideological assumptions shaped by these structures and adopted, consciously or unconsciously, by journalists (Bourdieu, 1977). In fact, the argument I have developed in previous chapters indicates how these “ideology” stems from continuities and constraints in the Mexican press, technological and geopolitical global dynamics, and idealistic views on what good (investigative) journalism should be and what role it should be playing in the political landscape.

Newsrooms in Mexican media are precarious labour environments, and most of the interviewees tell the stories of how these conditions have been deteriorating for the last 20

years. This is the perspective of a journalist who took part in the first meetings but later on left the group. She has long been working for a variety of legacy media, from print platforms to TV and online editions, on is very aware of how producing the news has suffered a process of pauperisation, affecting information quality and ultimately leaving little room for investigations:

“I myself am in a pauperised newsroom, I work in a newsroom with no tools to pick up a phone... I edit, I report the story, I verify... because my reporters do not even bother to read the documents. The reason why is because I need to produce a daily program, and I don’t have the time to sit down and tell them, ‘look, you should have read this and that’. I simply have no time at all! [...] And I don’t have time because I must submit my stories into a production system that is closer to producing tortillas, because there is no time to find new images, because it is done as a piecemeal, and they are overloaded...” Interviewee F6

This description corresponds to the kind of journalism industry more concerned about producing information in the market, (i.e. in the form of increasing the price of publicity spaces to offer). Once in this circle, public service is the last thing media corporations care about, so do the journalists working for them. In this situation, time is a too expensive commodity to be spent on investigations, so they prefer to use it to sell easy made, churnalim pieces. In fact, the lack of investigations in the Mexican journalism has led some of the interviewees to think that, by and large, there is no investigative journalism in Mexico, as the following one:

“It is naïve talking about ‘doing investigative journalism’, that is not true, we pay for workshops expecting that one day you will be able to do investigative journalism and find where to publish, find someone to pay for it. [...] Where are the journalists who do IJ, all of them are freelancers or working for NGOs because they are the only ones who can pay for that. So, IJ is not present in the formal media system that is supposedly creating public opinion in Mexico. It is a commonplace (saying that there is IJ in Mexico) that we have not discussed enough in practical terms, and I think, IJ is too idealised and does not exist,” Interviewee F1.

That perception is an interesting point of view, problematising on who does investigations in Mexico and since when. Sure, she was not saying that investigative journalism is completely non-existent, but rather, that the prevalent conditions within the Mexican media are such that investigations — allocating enough time and other resources to investigate a story — are more the exception than the rule. In other words, that investigative journalism is only carried out by a few, not because others don’t want to, but because the chance to do so in traditional Media are still very rare.

-On the Formation of a Space to Collaborate

The need for a different kind of journalism and more platforms to publish the stories they wanted to investigate was there in the conception of PdP as a group. However, these ideas and projects were born in the middle of human interaction and planned to remain as collaborative efforts. It was so, when they started having “reading groups” in which they read each other’s investigations and stories, and it remained like that when they invited famous journalists to “teach them” how to do better journalism. This space to come together and share time, experiences, and concerns, soon evolved into a deeper sense of collaboration. And because of the conditions under which reporters had to do their job, this collaboration was not only a way towards professionalisation, but almost inadvertently, they also disrupted a competition-based industry, that had left them at their own risk and peril covering an armed conflict. This was explained by an interviewee with a vast experience in local media; for her, PdP was some sort of refuge for those journalists who were isolated, and therefore more vulnerable to receive threats and suffer attacks:

“Yes, because it is very symbolic that a journalist is always by himself; even if he or she works for a big media organisation, at the end of the day, is always by themselves and the attacks are focused on the individual [...]. So, this thing about feeling part of a group without officially being part of it (goes against individualisation),” Interviewee BD8.

Apart from that association feeling, a collaboration spirit had an impact on their reporting practices and how they got information from their sources, in concrete practical terms, as this PdP founder recalled an episode in which they went as far as being ready to share their phonebook contacts:

“I said that we had to change our mindset (chip), ‘we must have a shared contact book, it doesn’t matter if it is your source, what does matter is that the information is important, that is good information, it doesn’t matter if (the one you’re sharing your information with) is your competitor; we need to share, because what does matter is that the reader may access good information.’ [...] And the other thing that we promoted was, ‘if they don’t want to publish your story, it doesn’t matter, pass it on to someone else,’” Interviewee F3.

It is not clear how much resistance they had to face when trying to introduce these kinds of practices in the early stages of PdP. But still, slipping of a proposal like that among daily news reporters is a big change. Of course, there are accounts of Mexican journalists sharing audios and information from press conferences, carried out publicly (Rodríguez et al, 2015). But the circulation of such a private asset, that is the contact book, was a big change for the old adage of Mexican newsrooms saying, “a reporter is worth his contact book” (Arias, 2008).

Furthermore, the encountering of journalists with similar agendas, risks, and personal circumstances, led to a personal, closer involvement between those who joined PdP meetings. According to one of the founders, this closeness occurred from the very beginning, forming bonds of cooperation and solidarity beyond professional interests, even at the intimate level of the care of their families:

“One of the things that I have defended the most is the network model, and we were very aware of it. [...] Most of them had children, so we managed to set up group in charge of looking after the children, while the rest could discuss in the meetings [...]. We were always aware of those who were moms and that was a very strong bond of solidarity, that gives you another level of bond, to be honest,” Interviewee F1.

Summing up on the kind of collaboration that led PdP to become the group it is today, one can fairly say that they became some sort of shelter in the middle of a violent conflict. Gregarious behaviour seemed a natural response to a national emergency, protecting, reporting and sharing. This is how they evolved from a very informal group of friends interested in learning new ways of doing innovative journalism, to a more cohesive, concrete group, and decided to take on the task of protecting journalists at risk and doing journalism collectively. But in order to respond to the emergency, they realised they had to formalise such an enterprise. It was only then when the process of institutionalising a “red” (network in Spanish), not only to overcome the unbearable conditions of doing journalism at the time, but to build a place to live their lives together, got started.

-Continuities in PdP Practices

When taking the decision of avoiding forming any kind of union they very aware of why they were not doing that. It seems that they all agreed on the point that adopting the label of a union was more prejudicial than helpful because of the bad reputation these organisations had in Mexico. It was “very clear”, in the words of one of the interviewees, that they were not going to take that route. It is not quite clear, though, if they have realised that part of that bad reputation was based on the media owner’s resistance to protect and provide all the resources a journalist should have if it is to “hold power accountable”. Some agree that they were completely frightened by the possibility of losing their jobs, even at a stage when PdP was already incorporated as an NGO:

“We were afraid of losing our jobs and to being ‘blacklisted’, so no one else in the media would hire you [...], if you tried to organise something no one would hire you [...], that is a sort of straitjacket preventing journalists’ organisation, preventing them from speaking out their opinion, from thinking

[...]. As a political actor, as a social actor, and someone with rights you were completely nullified, so you were simply a fucking employee”, Interviewee F1.

In short, deciding not to address labour conditions was explained by two reasons at least — bad union reputation, and the fear of losing their jobs in the traditional media they used to work for. At this stage, little after the formation of PdP in 2010, the situation of many journalists collaborating in different investigations and attending workshops organised by PdP, was mixed. Some of them were still working for newspapers, radio stations, and other local media, while at the same time they were trying to form collaboration bonds at PdP’s network. That is why the fear of losing their jobs was so acute. Still at this stage, much of the work was being done in some sort of volunteering work, where journalists donated their time, and sometimes even their money, to organise workshops and pay for the speaker’s meal and accommodation. “All our weekends as a donation” (Interview BD1, 2019), one journalist said when talking about the meetings and activities they did at the time. Little by little, PdP members started to move into freelancing, which for some of them meant having have more free time to volunteer for the organisation. For one of the founders, the idea of getting paid for the work they were doing never really crossed their minds:

“T and I never accepted a payment for what we did at PdP, we used to say that it was for free because we wanted to be able to work still (in the media industry)”, Interviewee F3.

-Problems in their funding model

PdP’s funding model has had three main stages over 12 years of existence, each one of them with particular advantages and questionable threats, both to the operation of the organisation as a whole and for PdP members as well. Firstly, it was based on some sort of cooperative, in which organisers of meetings and workshops collected voluntary funds from journalists themselves, for minor operation requirements. As PdP activities became more demanding, PdP started to receive donations, which increased as they launched their legal incorporation process. Doing so, really made a difference in the amount of resources they received and enabled them to have a more formal role in training, protecting journalists, and started funding some investigations. It is also a funding model that became quite common across the continent, perhaps following ProPublica’s example in the USA (Carvajal et al, 2012), and having large international foundations’ aid as their main flow of income (e.g. Open Society, Ford Foundation, and so on). The second stage is still a big part of PdP’s budget, according to interviews with Board of Directors’ members, but is now being modified, and have tried to build an online media outlet they say they can monetise in the future (apparently opened to the

possibility of selling advertisement spaces and crowdfunding), which is the first stage that has just been launched.

But what was the impact of international foundations funding model on PdP's work? It all started with a few donations which they used for daily operation, and once they could accept donations by themselves, they started looking for projects they could fund with the help of those international foundations. According to some of the interviewees, PdP started to look for what is called "becas" (fellowships) for specific projects of reporting. At least three interviewees acknowledged that, for instance, funders specifically funded migration stories or training about reporting issues related to that theme: "We had specific funding to cover migration", Interviewee F2

Just as that founding member said, a Board of Directors member confirmed that PdP had to find a way to fit into a funders' agenda:

"This was very important because Open Society Foundation has many areas, some of them do not have any contact with each other, so this (first funding) was not from the freedom of expression office, it was from the migration area, [...] and they were interested to tackle the issue on migrants. [...] And this became a little newspaper project and the other thing was a micro website with investigations on migration," Interviewee BD1.

What this interviewee is saying is crucial. It means that what PdP was looking for was funding from international aid, and at first the Open Society section on freedom of expression rejected it. But then, because there was a budget available to tackle issues related to migration, PdP accepted to receive this funding under the condition that they would produce a "tiny" newspaper migrants could read while crossing Mexico with information they might find useful on their way to the US. Here the question arises of whether PdP's and Open Society's agendas met, or if PdP acquiesced to follow an agenda constructed from an office in London, with most probably a global approach to migration. This is not necessarily an ethically questionable association, but it does show how funders using these models are still in a position where they can privilege or limit certain topics to be investigated, which is something scholars like Pickard (2016) have been saying for a time now.

PdP's funding has seen some changes for more than a decade of existence. It has passed from a collecting model where participants took money out of their pockets to finance the first activities, to a more institutionalized model that enabled them to receive international funding. These funds have let PdP operate and grow during most of its institutionalised history, challenging both colleagues' premonitions and scholars' concerns (Pickard, 2016; Requejo Alemán & Lugo Ocando, 2014). However, this model is not free from a dynamic in which

investigations' agenda is driven by those funding it. That is why finding a recurrent funder influence in PdP's agenda should be seen with suspicion and alarm. Because if PdP does not take any measures to avoid that influence, they run the risk of looking too much like the kind of journalism they so strongly opposed when they formed PdP.

-Political Action Curtailed

From the many repercussions institutionalisation and the choosing of a funding model have had for PdP, the severing of politically committed subjects is perhaps one of the crudest effects brought up by neoliberal practices. In the case of PdP, their political persona has been in the middle of a contradiction between their ideal objectives of change — even social change — and the actual constraints they have imposed on themselves by the decisions they have made in order to keep the organisation going.

On the one hand, PdP founders' motivation behind creating a group of fellow journalists was that, among the many dissatisfactions with the media model they were part of, there was little room, if any at all, for political participation. At face value, a political restraint has been imposed on reporters in the name of objectivity and impartial reporting, and therefore, a detached way of reporting was preferred in the newsrooms. However, deep down this argument other motivations may be unearthed; for instance, that a journalistic enterprise supposedly devoid of political intentions, would serve best to a market driven media economy, and in the case of Mexico, a journalism deprived from political incidence would be completely malleable to fit into the requirements of whoever is the incumbent ruler, corresponding to the prevalent clientelist relation to power in that country.

But even if one of the motivations behind PdP creation was gaining back their rights of mobilisation and organisation (i.e. doing politics), they have ended up accepting conditions under which their margin for political action is curtailed. Instances of this is how incorporating PdP as an NGO limited the kind of activities they were able to perform as a group, particularly in regard to guild formation and labour rights defence, as this interviewee's response shows:

“The political definition is this — PdP is not going to lobby lawmakers again, because it is forbidden to do so by its very own constitution (incorporation documents), but it does accept recommendations, it can for instance say, ‘yes, you can get advice from such and such journalists’, in case they are going to pass a new law. PdP does take part in the discussion, but it would never be able to sit with the legislators and elaborate a new law on advertising, for instance, that is forbidden by its constitution,” Interviewee BD8.

In a similar way, international funders have conditioned their financial support for PdP's work as long as they are not engaged in "political work", including again guild formation, or any kind of representative activity related to elections, as this Board of Directors member accepted:

"I did tell my colleagues that, as a union, you have lots of limitations and risks, and furthermore, this is a character that foundations do not fund or support," Interviewee BD3.

But, what does this political privation means for journalism in Mexico after all? Most probably, these effects have not been experienced by all PdP journalists, but it can fairly be said that certain traits and characteristics have derived from the limitations to their political persona. Firstly, there is some level of contradiction in the way PdP is currently operating, because it is said that they have assumed an activist position in order to defend journalists and transform the practice; and yet, their protection power has its hands tied up when it comes to protecting them against one of the chief threats Mexican journalists face in the newsroom — poor labour conditions and lack of political representation.

Political constraints might also be interpolated into the character of the investigative work they publish. This might be so because, as PdP's constitution and funders require them to avoid any political involvement, a more committed type of journalism would be breaching those terms. In other words, in the search for the objectivity and impartiality that endows PdP with the aura of a professional journalism organisation worth receiving international funds, PdP journalism may be inhibited from having a more interventionist role. This means to go back into the myth of a professionalised liberal press of the Anglo-Saxon traditions of the 20th Century, whose only concern and aim is "informing the public" as if such action could be neutral or apolitical.

To put it plainly, although PdP was established as a place where journalists could have a more participatory political role, PdP's constitution and funding model is preventing them from taking steps beyond publication. Most of the interviewees agreed that their professional role finishes when the investigation they have worked on is finally published, and one of them said she was very sceptical about journalism producing change:

"(I am interested in) understanding others' grief. That is the way I saw it, I have always been very sceptical about the possibility that journalism could really change things, it is a kind of scepticism of protections against disappointment, because sometimes nothing happens," BD4.

Of course, this is not to deny that publication is a political action per se. But it should be singled out how assumptions about objectivity and detached reporting are bolstered and reinforced by crucial factors, such as the organisation's constitution and those funding its

operations. Such situation, in which political rights are severed in the name of financial operability is also one of the effects a neoliberalist mentality has had on workers at large in liberal democracies (Boltanski et al, 2015), but this situation is particularly worrying for a profession like journalism in which politics play a major, although sometimes concealed, role in democratic life.

CONCLUSIONS

As a conclusion, this paper has shown how PdP was a disruptive group of journalists for the media system in Mexico and its political landscape. Out of dissatisfaction with the state of traditional media at the time, they organised a series of activities and discussions that ended up creating a new space, a new locus as it were, where they could resort to in order to create the kind of journalism they thought was necessary. In doing so, they did not only change themselves, but also shaped certain reporting practices, including the way they were doing investigative work.

Some of those innovations in practice challenged certain assumptions on the role of the press in liberal democracies. That was very clearly the case when they adopted a more interventionist stand before the stories they were reporting, chiefly in the middle of an armed conflict that put even journalists' lives at risk. Another instance of disruption was collaboration in different levels, from the formation of the group organising and carrying out various activities in a cooperative manner, to the sharing of information within and without PdP, privileging the information before competition, and the public before the sale of papers.

However, there are some continuities still. The funding model they have chosen so far (international funding aid) has had also questionable effects on their reporting agenda, with funders having an influence on the subjects they report, which resembles the concerns between the relationship traditional media and their advertisers. Also, in spite of all the organisation work, PdP did not tackle labour issues in a thorough, profound manner. One may think that this was so because of the particular history of unionism in Mexico, but it is also true that PdP has taken some cognisant decisions that have restricted their actions on that front, particularly when it came to legal incorporation and funding. These decisions have had an impact on PdP's political role, restricting its participation to publication only and, therefore, limiting the scope of a more committed type of reporting. These continuities in PdP's work, are in stark contradiction with the original concerns that motivated the creation of an independent group of journalists that decided to "take a political definition" by defending journalists and challenging hegemonic narratives.

Nevertheless, some PdP members are aware of some of these issues and have been talking about tackling them through different means, for instance by painstakingly selecting funders or finding alternative in which they can participate politically, or even join discussions about journalists' labour rights. It is left to be seen if these measures will effectively palliate negative effects on reporting and will enable the original motives behind the creation of PdP — championing committed, investigative journalism.

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**Digital Security Act- 2018 of Bangladesh; a Study on the Situation of Press Freedom
and Journalistic Investigation**

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Digital Security Act- 2018 of Bangladesh; a Study on the Situation of Press Freedom and Journalistic Investigation

Abstract:

Digital tools became blessing for both general mass and the journalists in Bangladesh but it also came up with different scopes of misapplication. To minimize the offences, the government approved Digital Security Act (DSA) – 2018. However, the journalists, right workers and activists became vocal against some sections of the law claiming those would hinder press freedom and freedom of journalistic investigation. They termed the law as ‘black law’ and ‘suppressive in nature’ as, to them; there remain scopes of misusing against journalist and others. The study researched the ‘kittle’ situation of press freedom and journalistic investigation in this context. The key question was- ‘Is the DSA- 2018 creating barrier in press freedom and journalistic investigation?’ Obtaining Discourse Analysis and In-Depth Interviewing methods, the relevant sections of the DSA - 2018 and the opinion and evaluation of different stakeholders (investigative journalists, journalists’ leaders, legal experts and government authorities) examined. The collected data evaluated through the theoretical framework of Freedom of Expression concept. The findings revealed: investigative journalists and other media professionals were suffering from a sense of fear; eventually they were censoring their contents which actually went against the standard of freedom of expression.

Key Words: Digital Security Act, journalistic investigation, freedom of expression, press freedom, self-censorship

1.1 Introduction

One fine evening, when one of the researchers went to take the interview of an editor of a media house and vice-president of a journalists’ association, he agreed to talk with the condition of not disclosing his name. Showing the vulnerability he said, “You know the situation of the country. If I openly tell anything regarding the negative sides of the law, I would have to face embarrassing comments from higher authorities”. Getting promise, he came up with lots of alarming situations of press freedom and freedom of expression such as the ownership pattern of the media, politicization of journalists and owners, threats and pressures from higher authorities and the legal situation as well. His expression of helplessness denotes the present situation of freedom of expression in the country. An editor of a house who is also a leader of journalists’ community is feeling at risk and pressured to speak out on the regular problem the journalists are facing.

In the study, the situation of press freedom and journalistic investigation is studied where the aftermath scenario of passing the Digital Security Act (DSA) - 2018 was the main focus.

Although the government and ministers are crying freedom of press is safeguarded by the governments and the new law, DSA-2018, is a new accumulation to enrich it, but strong protests and criticism are coming from the journalists, freethinkers and right workers. This situation motivated to study whether the law is creating any barrier for investigative journalists or not. Taking freedom of expression concept as the theoretical framework, the researchers analyzed the debated sections of the law as well as took in-depth interviews of the stakeholders to understand it.

The study revealed that journalists' basically investigative journalists are continuing their profession with the sense of fear and anxiety after passing the law which is ultimately resulting self-censorship and in the broader perspective it is contributing to curb the freedom of journalistic investigation as well as demining the standard of freedom of expression.

1.2 The Research Context and Research Questions

According to the definition of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights- 1948, the right to express any opinion without any interference, exchange views, information and ideas through any media are acknowledged as freedom of expression. (Universal Declaration of Human Rights ([1948] 2015)

As a cosigner country, Bangladesh acknowledged the freedom of thoughts and expression as fundamental rights in the Article 39 of the Constitution of Bangladesh. (The Constitution of Bangladesh, 2019)

In 1971 when the country got independence from the control of then Pakistan, it absorbed all the laws made in Pakistan period which were previously engrossed from British colonial laws. There were many debates about the spirit of laws which were mainly come from tyrannical colonial era.

In recent years when the Information Communication Technology Act (ICT Act)-2006 passed, journalists, freethinkers, social media activists, bloggers raised their voices against the Section 57 of it saying it was against free expression and more repressive than the previously formatted existing colonial laws. The act was amended in 2013 but this time the criticized sections made stronger with higher degree of punishment. Under the Section 57, deliberately publishing fabricated, provoking, offensive or penetrating material on web or any digital platform which are defamatory and have the potential to create turbulence in law and order situation of the country or hurt religious sentiments were criminalized. If anyone commit any offence under the section would get maximum 14 years of jail and/or a Taka 1 crore fine. (Shaon, 2018)

According to the finding of Habiba, Kundu, Rahaman & Rhaman (2017), while the section was prevailing in the country, many online activists, bloggers, social media users were censoring them as the section leaves room for subjective interpretation which eventually become a tool to harass people legally. (P-137-148)

Using the ICT Act at least 1,417 cases were filed between 2012 to June 2017. (Accessnow, 2018) Cyber Tribunal special public prosecutor Md Nazrul Islam Shamim said to the New Age, in September 2017, 65-70 percent cases under the Section 57 could not be evidenced. On the other hand, many cases were totally false and filed to harass people. (Rashid, 2019)

Faced with gross criticism government formulated the new law earlier in 2018 titled 'Digital Security Act (DSA)-2018'. The bill with the signature of the president of Bangladesh turned into act on October 9, 2019 but before and after passing the law, several provisions of it were criticized home and abroad. (Daily Star (i), 2019)

After passing, within four months at least 63 people, including journalists, were arrested under it mostly for defaming the prime minister, father of the nation and government. A journalist of

a national daily was also arrested in accusation of ‘false’ reporting about the irregularities of 2018 national election. Having the similar kind of faulty of vagueness and unclear terms in the newly made DSA-2018, journalists and right bodies are considering it as ‘black law’ which may create hindrances in free speech and independent journalism. (Rashid, 2019). The Editors’ Council (*The Sampadak Parishad*), an association of editors of different media, issued a statement titled “Why Sampadak Parishad opposes the Digital Security Act” was published in national dailies, where they, analyzing the law section by section, said the law is against the spirit of freedom of expression and they asked to review it. (The Editors’ Council, 2019)

On the other hand, the cabinet secretary Shafiul Alam said in a press meet on January 29, the day when the cabinet approved the draft of DSA-2018, the law was made to ensure cyber security not to target journalists. (Dhaka Tribune (i), 2019)

Given the both situation of the journalists and the government, the study intended to examine whether the law is really creating harsh situation for journalists or not. The prime research question was- ‘Is the DSA- 2018 creating barrier in press freedom and journalistic investigation?’. To find out the situation some other sub questions were explored. They are: 1) How was the law framed the discourses, 2) Is the discourses of law have any room to misinterpret and misuse, 3) How are the stakeholders of the law evaluating the situation, 4) Is the law compromising with the spirit of freedom of expression granted in Bangladesh constitution, 5) Is it anyhow creating barrier in journalistic freedom.

2.1 Reviewing the Literature and Research Gap Identification

Free press is one of the most important constituents of democracy as it assists to keep balance between government and mass. Bangladesh, a third world democratic country, ensured the freedom of expression in Article 39 of its constitution. But according to the World Press Freedom Index, 2019 by the Reporters Without Borders, the country is now 150th which arose doubt about the situation of freedom in the country. Besides, after the emerge of DSA-2018, the journalists, right bodies, civil society members from home and abroad are vocal saying the new law will curb the journalistic freedom.

The conflict of journalistic freedom and legal regulations are being researched for many years in the country. More or less many of them found the principles of laws not always play positive role in safeguarding free press moreover develop barriers.

Analyzing the legal situation regarding press and journalism, Khan and Kaarisma (2014) found, the tradition of long colonial legacy in law formation, laws were made to curb press freedom in British era so that their corruption would not be revealed. They also argued the passing of Right to Information Act- 2009 was a positive symptom of democratizing the information and increase the accountability in information flow. The democratizing is ensuring better access to information but still state plays a large role to manipulation the media and information flow.

From 2006 to 2018, the Information Communication Technology Act (ICT Act) -2013 was used against citizen journalists, bloggers, journalists and social media users. The Reporters

Without Borders reported on 2018 that the impact of ICT Act- 2013 resulting self-censorship in media outlets. (Arman, 2018)

Habiba & et. al. (2017) found bloggers of Bangladesh, after the starting of the use of ICT Act-2013 to detain online activists, started censoring their online contents, got self-censored. Many of the bloggers were harassed by the law as well.

Afterwards, the DSA-2018 passed but criticized blaming that the new DSA-2018 not only infected by the negative elements of the ICT Act-2013 but brought more danger for investigative journalists through Section 32. (The Editors' Council, 2018)

The Centre for Law and Democracy assessed the bill (before it was passed) in 2018, which found the bill contained some sections which were inconsistent with the international standard of freedom of expression. The analysis recommended making the law clearer and compactly self-explanatory so that the scopes of misuse can be stopped.

So, from legal, social and security perspectives a number of researches have been done, still the DSA-2018 and its relevance with investigative journalism and press freedom yet to be studied. In this context the research was conducted with the objective of exploring some new contexts and dimensions to fill the gap.

2.2 The Concept of Freedom of Expression as Theoretical Framework

The General Assembly of United Nations (UN) accepted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 1948 which ensured Freedom of Expression as a fundamental right in its Article 19. It said, regardless of frontiers, the right of opinion and expression has ensured through any kind of media without interference. (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948)

This declaration is the recognition of political, social, economic and cultural rights of human beings though it has no legal bindings. But all country who have signed in the declaration are morally warranted to protect these rights. (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2019)

The First Amendment to the United States Constitution ensures that congress would not pass any kind of law which would curtail the right of freedom of expression or of the press. Though the freedom is not absolute as in some extreme cases such as child pornography, state security and obscenity the court and government agencies can interfere. (Ruane, 2014)

The Constitution of India also protected freedom of expression as basic human rights in its Article 19 (1) saying "All citizens shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression". (The Constitution of India, [1949] 2016) In case of Bangladesh, Article 39 (2) of its constitutions guaranteed freedom of expression and press with reasonable restrictions imposed by the law of the country. (The Constitution of Bangladesh, 2018)

So freedom of expression is a fundamental right where a human being regardless of class and creed can hold, share, and exchange their thoughts, opinions and beliefs through any kind of media. Sean MacBride (1980) argued that the standard of freedom of expression has no exception and it is applicable for all people by the virtue of their human dignity. (MacBride, 1980). But the right is not always absolute as it is regulated with some restrictions as well

though in many cases the restrictions ended up with the mutation of peoples' freedom of expression.

2.3 Methodology and Sampling

In this study, discourse analysis and in-depth interviewing methods are used to collect data and to conduct analysis. Mainly discourse analysis implemented to analysis the DSA-2018 where the language and its context were examined.

Discourse analysis is mainly the study of language in a particular social context (Gale, 2010). The method is used to analyze the text (spoken or written) in every day's social context. So here the discourses cannot be seen only through the meaning of its language but from meaning created by the users in a particular social context as well. (Shanthi & et al, 2015)

The method is used in critical researches where 'language' and 'the subject' are understood by investigating power relations in a society. Foucault contributed to state the starting point of discourse analysis for understanding subject. According to him, discourses (language having social context) became important when it is spoken out through a person (subject). (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002)

So, through the method the texts of the law were analyzed aiming to identify the underlying power relation between the discourses and the social context of user and maker of the law. In the research, the discourses of some selective sections of the law were analyzed. The sections were identified depending on the statement made by the Editors' Council published in national dailies. As the research is about the situation of investigative journalism and press freedom in current Bangladesh in the context of the passing of DSA-2018, their statement was very relevant with the study as they analyzed the law section by section and placed their argument and objection regarding it. Their statement could establish that the sections were problematic for free journalism that is why the sections were taken as the sample of study.

Another method, in-depth interview, was applied collecting date. It is qualitative research method involves intensive individual interviews where the researcher tries to explore their ideas and evaluation of a particular subject. Here the number of respondents usually remains small. (Boyce & Neal, 2006)

In this research, in-depth interviews of five personals from four categories were conducted. The samples were: one senior investigative journalist, two editors and journalists' forum leaders, one legal expert and one person from government authority. The population was selected through purposive sampling method.

3. Data Analysis

3.1 Analysis of the troublesome parts section by section

After passing the Digital Security Bill-2018 in the Bangladesh Parliament on September 19, 2018, the Executive Director of the Transparency International Bangladesh Iftekharuzzaman said, as a reaction given to a national daily Dhaka Tribune, "No investigative journalism can

be done under this law. The law will work to protect corruption and irregularities”. (Dhaka Tribune (i), 2018) Not only he, but the journalists’ associations, right bodies, civil society members, legal right campaigners expressed their disappointment after the passing of law. Some of them rejected it saying, ‘it is against the spirit of freedom of expression and made to stop the public voice in digital form.’

What are the alarming elements of the law; considering that voices from all areas are coming against it? Here the objected sections- Section 8, 21, 25, 28, 29, 31, 32, 43 & 53 were analyzed. The Editors’ Council issued a statement after the law was passed regarding their considerations of why the law to be anti-free press and anti-freedom of expression, where they addressed the above-mentioned sections as the matter of worry. (The Editors’ Council, 2018)

The law is still in Bangla language and the English translation is yet to be published so for the research purpose, here the English Translation done by the Editors’ Council has been used.

The **Section 8** of the law is one of the objected sections, where it is written:

Power to remove or block information and data: (1) If the Director General is satisfied that something that is published or disseminated in the digital platform falling within his domain may poses threat to digital security, he may request Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) to remove such information or data or, in specific cases block the platform. (2) If it is evident to the law enforcing agencies that something published and disseminated through any digital device or digital medium can create disunity in the country, disrupt economic activities and security, defence, hurt religious values, create communal hatred or bad feelings, create turbulence in law and order situation then the law enforcing agencies can request the BTRC to remove such content or block it. (3) On receipt of such requests, BTRC while informing the government will take immediate actions to remove or block the content. (The Editors’ Council, 2018)

There are some issues which are not clearly explained such as ‘the power of the Director General (DG)’, ‘power of the law enforcement agencies’, ‘blocking and removing contents’, ‘something..... can create disunity in the country’, ‘disrupt economic activities and security, defence’, ‘hurt religious values’, ‘create communal hatred and bad feeling’, ‘create turbulence in law and order situation’ etc. Each of the terms and ideas demands more explanation and clear account about the given power of the DG and law enforcers as well as about the pre-determination of the crimes mentioned here.

According to the comment of the Editors’ Council, the given power of the Director General (DG) of forthcoming Digital Security Council and in addition the power of law agencies to block and remove the contents may curtail the freedom of media. (The Editors’ Council, 2019)

The DG and police have given decisive power to take decision of content whether it can ‘create disunity’, ‘disruption of economic activities’ etc. As the explanation of the offences are not clear enough, the possibility remains for these two entities to use the section by their singular perception and scopes to abuse it against any person

The international and regional standards recognized free press and freedom of expression as the core of guaranteeing human freedom and dignity. (Center for Law and Democracy, 2018) Nonetheless, these terms may compromise with the well-established standards of free speech and push the journalists to censoring their report.

Section 21 criminalized propaganda against the Liberation War of Bangladesh, hurting the spirit of the war, Father of the Nation, National Anthem and National Flag. (The Digital Security Act- 2018 & The Editors' Council, 2019)

This section is also being blamed for its broadness, ambiguity and lack of proper explanation. The ideas 'spirit of liberation war', 'propaganda against Father of the Nation, National Anthem and National Flag' are criminalized with the punishment up to life-term or/ and 30 million AS fine.

A law which is about crime and punishment should be clear and well-explained, there should not remain any overbroad and unnecessary regulatory. (Center for Law and Democracy, 2018) But here the terms are not elaborated enough so that the journalists as well as general mass may feel risky of getting harassed under the section as the country is very law abuse-prone.

The statement of the Editors' Council said they are also in favour of protecting the history and great legacy but when laws are being framed it need to be very specific otherwise it will bar the freedom of journalists. (The Editors' Council, 2019)

In the **Section 25**, the offences regarding defaming, humiliating and embarrassing a person, damaging the image and reputation of state and so one are addressed as crime.

The terms 'defaming, humiliating and embarrassing for a person' and 'damaging the image of state and its reputation' are failed to stipulate clear and strong intent requirements for being criminal offences. So, the law enforcing agencies and the upcoming commission have power to interpret it in their own way.

The Editors' Council claimed this section would directly hit the heart of investigative reporting. The investigation tries to find out irregularities, corruption and misdoing of people and after unearthing such information those people can feel 'defamed, embarrassed and humiliated' as well if the story is about national level irregularities it also may interpret as 'damaging the image of state' as the terms as over broaden and not clear. So, given the situation of lack of clear definition of the terms, the law is legalizing the punishment of journalists and newspapers for making such reports. (The Editors' Council, 2019)

The **Section 28** criminalized hurting 'religious values'. It said in 28(1), "if any person or group deliberately and knowingly and with the intention of hurting religious values or sentiments or with the intention to provoke such sentiment publishes or broadcasts information then such actions will be considered a crime". (Digital Security Act-2018)

Here, the idea 'religious sentiment' is open-ended. It is very subjective matter. In a country, having religious dogmas and less tolerance, these terms of offences should be explained more sophisticatedly. The Council argued that if anyone wants to write news on unlawful fatwa of the religious leaders, it can also be perceived as 'hurting the religious sentiment'. As it has

included here in an ambivalent way, nobody will feel comfortable to talk or report on the issues as well as do research on the religious issues, cultures and practices-malpractices.

In case of **Section 29**, publishing defamatory information mentioned in section 499 of the Penal Code (Act XLV of 1860) via website or/and electronic media will be penalized. But there remains an inconsistency in punishment degree. According to the Penal Code 500, the punishment for offences under Penal Code 499 is two years of imprisonment which is bail-able. On the other hand, for the same offences in different medium, will get three years of jail or Taka 5 lakh in fine or both which is non-bail-able.

As the Special International Joint Declaration on Freedom of Expression and the Administration of Justice, 2012, “Criminal defamation is not a justifiable restriction on freedom of expression; all criminal defamation laws should be abolished and replaced, where necessary, with appropriate civil defamation laws.” (Joint Declarations, 2013)

On the other hand, enhancing the punishment may discourage the citizens and journalists to use the digital media and exercise freedom of expression.

The **Section 31** deals with offenses and prices for deterioration of law and order, etc. According to the subsection 31(1) it is written:

If a person deliberately publishes or broadcasts via a website or any digital platform anything that creates enmity, hatred or acrimony among different classes or communities, or upsets communal harmony, or creates unrest or chaos, or causes or begins to cause deterioration in law and order, then that activity of the said person will be considered a crime. (Digital Security Act-2018)

Here the objection is: the problems mentioned here is not necessarily can take place only for a digital media content, rather it depends on other social elements. Communal hatred, enmity are deeper social problem. Hence, the section is talking about a big social issue, which is positive. But the argument from the Editors’ Council is that if news published about probable labour turbulence, forthcoming hartal or protest can be interpreted as a step of “creating unrest in law and order situation” and action can be taken under the section. So, to them the section has the potential to bar the freedom of reporting. (The Editors’ Council, 2019)

The **Section 32** which is about offences and penalty for committing crime under the Official Secrets Act, 1923. It said if any person break official confidentiality which is under the act using a computer and/or digital device and/or network will get maximum 14 years of jail or/and Taka 25 lakh in fine. If the person commits the crime for second time or repeatedly will get life sentence and/or a maximum fine Taka 1 crore. (Digital Security Act-2018)

This section is highly criticized among the journalists’ community and legal right campaigners. Firstly, the section the authority made Official Secret Act (OSA)-1923 stronger. The OSA-1923 was formed under colonial British Government in undivided Indian Subcontinent to protect the then corrupted British Administration out of accountability. In 2009, Right to Information Act passed in the country, which gave the public ‘right to know’ about the government activities for ensuring more transparency and good governance. Here the inclusion of the offences of the OSA-1923 is making the spirit of Right to Information Act-2009 deemed.

The argument of the Council is if government did not make any information publicly accessible is called official secret. They, bringing the example of the recent news reports of huge bank corruption in Bangladesh, said these kinds of information regarding irregularities are not publicly open, but for informing people and doing investigation journalists have to collect and report them. As the law has already been passed, if any journalist collects the information through electronic device, for example, take a photo of any official government document, will be accused under the law which is a great threat for investigative journalism. (The Editors' Council, 2019)

The Myanmar Reuters journalists, Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, were detained and punished under the country's Official Secrecy Act-1923, which was also formed by the British Colonial Government. The duo reported on Rakhaine Rohingya crisis on 2017. The two were known for their hard-hitting stories on the Rakhine crisis. They were arrested for possessing confidential information relating to Rakhine state. (Center for Law and Democracy, 2018)

This is an example of using (misusing) law against journalists, though they were awarded prestigious Pulitzer Prize. The journalists' communities of Bangladesh are also getting afraid of the uncertainty of the law and also this situation is creating barrier of free investigation.

According to the DSC-2018, if anyone does any offences under this section, will have to face maximum seven years of jail and/or give Taka 25 lakh as fine. For those who commit the offence for the second time, will get life time imprisonment and have to pay taka 1 crore as fine. This section is highly getting resistance and criticism throughout national and international level for its nature.

In **Section 43**, the law enforcing agencies are given the power to search anyone, and any place, seize the devices, network, data etc. and arrest anyone if they feel that crime under this law 'has been or is being or will be committed'.

This section was termed by the Council as 'the most dangerous' section of the law. (The Editors' Council-2018)

Through this section the law enforcing agencies got the authority to enter any place, search electronic devices, any person, seize the devices and even arrest anybody on suspicion without any court warrant and where most of the offences are non-bailable. As the police have the power to arrest anyone on suspicion, to the Council, 'then the media freedom will be buried under this law'.

This section is not only threatening for the journalists but the whole media house as every media work in their own server, have their own online version. So, if the police suspect that the activity of the house 'has been or is being or will be committed' any crime under the Digital Security Act-2018 even they can shut-down the whole station as well.

So here, the insecurity for journalists has grown because of some sections here is very open-ended and undefined coupled with the unlimited power of police. So, in a legally uncomfortable environment, journalists may not practice their works independently as well as media house may turn into just a public relation outfit.

Lastly, the **section 53** describe about the segments of the law which are cognizable or not and bailable or not. According to it, 14 offences are non-bailable and cognizable offences out of 20 or so more provisions.

After the analysis of sampled sections of the DSA-2018, some common allegations are noticed such as: 1) unclear, vague and unnecessary terms, 2) high range of punishment, 3) huge power given to the law enforcement agencies, 4) room to misuse the law, 5) elements can be harmful for investigative journalism as well as overall freedom of expression and so one.

The high degree of punishments as well as the nature of non-bailability are creating non-cooperative environment for journalists especially for investigative journalists. The main objective of the law is to curb the rate of digital offences and ensure cyber protection for the people, in large extent getting deemed for some unclear, vague and unnecessary terms. Some freethinkers and civil society members came up with the thought the elements of the ICT Act-2013's Section 57 has just redistributed in the DSA-2018. (Dhaka Tribune (ii), 2018)

Given the situation, there has another flaw that there has no provision to prevent the misuse of the law so that the authoritative ones would not think twice to abuse it against anyone.

3.2 The Analysis of Interviewees' Responses

In this context, as a method of data collection, in-depth interviews of five respondents from four categories of stakeholders, one investigative journalist, two editors and journalists' forums' leaders, legal expert, and government authority (former information minister), were taken. Each of them were asked different dimensions regarding the law including present situation of freedom of expression in the country, the situation after coming the law, the barriers or fear created by it, regarding most criticized parts of it and the probable solutions to erase the worries and so one. For security reason the names of the respondents were not disclosed in the discussion.

The overall situation pushed the interviewed journalists to imply self-censorship which is driven not only for legal situation but for the absence of professional safety, politicization of the media ownership, absence of strong journalists' forum, not having proper environment of free speech, culture of impunity regarding journalists' harassments and some recent incidents of harassing right workers and journalists by police and administration.

The subject one (Investigative Journalist) said in current Bangladesh a journalist has to think about the aftermath consequences before reporting. He said not the law is only responsible for the situation but the 'context' is important. To him the context is "when I see for saying something about 'Safe Road Movement' of Bangladesh, though which was apparently going against the government, an eminent photographer of the country Shahidul Alam got arrested and harassed on August 05, 2018, as a journalist it made me afraid thinking if I tell anything on the issues I will also be in thick soup." He thought, Shahidul Alam might commit offence, but the way he was treated was frightening for the others.

According to the Second subject (An Editor and Leader of a Journalists' forum), in Bangladesh the number of media, journalists and media workers were huge but the real journalism is very

negligible and he made responsible the ownership pattern of the houses as most of the owners were politically connected. To him, the owners managed to create a ‘nexus’ with the government authority and business persons which creating barrier to report irregularities, corruption and other issues, he alleged. Given the situation, the interviewee argued, the DSA-2018 has overburdened the journalists, more specifically investigative journalists, by lessening the courage and increasing scenes of fear. He also said, as the media could not come up with truth and in-depth reports in recent times, audience drops their confidence and trust on media, they are getting dependent on personal online sources.

The third subject (Another Editor and Journalists’ forum member) made the mass people’s ignorance responsible as, to him, the Bangladeshi citizen did not have proper consciousness of freedom. The process of de-politicization through cultural, educational, and market economy people lost the command to practice freedom. He said, in this situation, the limited number of people those who have the courage to practice freedom of expression, are managed to make muted through this law.

Most of the interviewees viewed the law as matter of fear as there remains several parts which can be misused thanks to the unclearness and vagueness. They alleged that the law goes against the spirit of freedom of expression.

The fourth subject (Legal Expert) terming the law as ‘suppressive’ said the underlying intention of making this kind of law is nothing but to stop the public voice. He also said both journalist and mass people who want to speak out using digital media would be affected and currently they are suffering from self-censorship. The legal expert said if the people talk only about the flaws of the sections that denote people are, accepting it, criticizing the errors only. But, according to him, people should address the law makers’ contextual purposes of forming these kinds of laws conflicting with basic human rights.

The fifth subject (Former Information Minister) while informed about the worries of the journalists’ by the researchers, overruled the point saying there had no ground to be afraid of the law as it was formulated to govern and manage the digital world including economy, safety, privacy etc. not to punish any journalist. He said it was the demand of time to form a digital security law because it was impossible to address the digital crimes without it.

The fifth interviewee also ensured that law is not any stagnant identity; it can be amended anytime as per the requirement. He asked the journalists to increase their engagement with authority and make the government aware about the issues which can be solved mutually.

4.1 Findings and Conclusion

The data collection and analysis of the law and interviews suggested some findings which will be discussed through the theoretical framework.

In the discourse analysis of the law, it was found that the discourses of the sections, both crime and punishment, were framed in a way which were essentially creating a sense of fear and anxiety among the stakeholders. For example- ‘create disunity in the country’, ‘hurt religious values’, ‘create turbulence in law and order’, ‘propaganda against Liberation War, father of the

nation, national anthem and flag’, ‘embarrassing person’, ‘damaging the image of the state and its reputation’ etc. were addressed as criminal offences prescribing punishment from three years to life time imprisonment and high ranges of fine which may create discomfort among the journalists to speak about the issues.

On the other hand, the recent experiences of the respondents suggested that there remains room for misusing law against journalists and right workers. Analyzing the reactions of right bodies, civil society members, journalists’ associations published in mass media and interviewers, the researchers found the formation of the legal discourses as well as the recent experiences of misusing the law managed to create apprehension among investigative journalist resulting self-censorship which in long run hampering the freedom of journalistic investigation and freedom of expression as well.

The respondents as well as the reactions of different journalists’ forums are evaluating the situation of press freedom, freedom of journalistic investigation and overall freedom of expression as ‘endangered’. To them, the current country’s situation as ‘problematic’ and not free enough to report any controversial issue freely because of the political economic pattern of the media ownership as well as absence of strong journalists’ organization which was overburdened with the DSC-2018 which goes against the spirit of freedom of expression granted in Bangladesh Constitution. But on the other hand, the interviewee from government authority stated “the law is not to target the journalists so nothing to worry about.” So whether the law is against the spirit of freedom of expression or not, it is the subject of in-depth research, yet still it could manage to develop a sense of anxiety among the journalists.

Given the situation of gross feeling of fear regarding the law and other situation, journalists started to impose self-censorship which eventually curbed their courage to cover any issues mentioned in the law. As a result it is creating barrier in journalistic freedom in broader perspectives though government yet to recognize the issue saying the law is formulated only to manage the digital world not to curb the freedom of journalists or anyone.

The recommendations of the study are: the government should be more flexible to cognize the anxiety of the journalists and bring positive changes in the law as well as ensure the free environment to practice free journalism. On the other hand, the journalists should put more concentration on their unity, professional honesty and good will to work for the voiceless, so that they will get more public acceptance which will ultimately safeguard their freedom.

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Challenges facing investigative journalism in the MENA region

*Paper prepared for Global Investigative Journalism Network's 19
conference to be held in Hamburg September 2019*

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Introduction

This paper is written based on 39 years of journalistic experience and 10 years of chairing the Arab world's leading investigative Ngo ARIJ as well as supervising a number of award-winning investigative reports at the Amman-based AmmanNet/Radio al Balad.

This paper will focus on three levels of impediments facing hard hitting investigative journalism in the Arab region.

This background the paper will deal with three basic challenges facing journalists in the MENA region wishing to produce hard hitting investigations. Below are the three areas that will be covered.

- **Danger to journalists-**

While investigative journalism is dangerous throughout the world, the situation in the MENA region is much worse and as a result most journalists stay away from this kind of journalism literally for fear of their lives and then for fear of their livelihood. The case of Jamal Khashoggi perhaps illustrated this problem but we have for years noticed the high level of self-censorship practiced unabashedly by many journalists. While the traditional media has long stayed away from this kind of hard-hitting investigative reporting, many journalists have tried on their own using websites or other online media platforms to publish their reports. Yet even when done on online or social media journalists have suffered.

Danger and pressure take different forms. It is often a mix of carrots and sticks that are offered to journalists to toe whatever line the government and its supporters want. Statistics about dangers to journalists published in major media watchdog organizations are misleading because they fail to understand that countries with the least cases of complaints and violations are among the highest violators to the degree that the chilling effect of their actions have totally silenced journalists and as a result no one complaints of violations because there is no one willing to test the government after seeing colleagues restricted, beaten, imprisoned, and killed.

Some of the injuries and killings are done in a way to make it look like an 'accident' while at other times some governments have no problem in boasting about what they are doing with the aim that this can act as a deterrent to anyone even thinking of challenging the authority's aim at silencing dissent.

While physical danger is usually the most glaring kind of danger that journalists face, the vast majority of the pressure against journalists is done indirectly through pressures towards employers and other direct pressure. Some of the indirect pressure is what we often call invisible law.

This is often how governments use the various levers of parakeratotic power to cause harm and pressure. In most countries in the MENA region you need security clearance for almost any publicly issued permission or document. Something as mundane as renewing your passport, getting a marriage or birth certificate or even a driver's license can be held up for a long time if.

Bureaucrats tell you that they have not received the approval from the security departments. The Security apparatus is often unanswerable to the general public and you get lost in this bureaucratic vicious circle until you decide to meet up with the intelligence department and seek to find out what you can do to make these problems get resolved. And they are often resolved after a meeting in which it is understood that the journalist has blinked first.

Pressure to media outlets

While pressure to journalists can be difficult governments often skip this part and go directly to putting pressure – or offering carrots- to media owners. Media ownership is often the government itself or media that is semi-governmental or even private but is totally in bed with governments. But in the few cases in which media owners are genuinely independent, governments use various techniques to try and break a media outlet these techniques include but are not limited to:

- Pressure on advertisers
- Pressure on regulators not to renew licenses
- Usage of an assortment of laws to punish and restrict the work of independent media
- Usage of legal and tax issues to cause delay and problems to the media owners
- Use rumors to besmirch the reputation of the media outlet including spreading fake news and hinting on various issues aimed at creating mistrust to these independent media outlets.

Access to information-

When direct pressure on journalists and on media owners fails to produce the desired results, governments often control the flow of information denying access to important documents and data using a variety of excuses.

Even in countries, like Jordan, which has an access to information law, such a law, is without teeth and has been repeatedly proven to be ineffective in producing desired documents and information.

This section will review difficulties facing journalists wishing to get information from government and public sources. While a few countries in MENA have passed access to information laws and are members of the Open Government Partnership these laws have done little to provide enterprising journalists with the raw data that they need.

Efforts to pry away sensitive information from government or governmental agencies have been regularly rebuffed. In 2007 Jordan was the first Arab country to pass such a law even though the Jordanian law is without teeth as was regularly tested by investigative journalists.

Article 7 of the Jordanian law requires that an applicant requesting information have a legitimate interest or a legitimate reason, without specifying the meaning of “legitimate.”

Since Jordan only recognizes members of the single closed shop syndicate as journalists and since the access to information law stipulates that the only person with standing to ask for information is a person with a direct interest, journalists who are not members of the Jordan Press Association (the syndicate) are not eligible to ask for information because they are not journalists and therefore they have no direct interest as per the law.

Attempts to fix this and other parts of the law has laid for years in parliament without being amended. A study by Jordanian journalist Majdolin Allan in 2010 shows that only 5% of 130 Jordanian journalists reviewed actually used the access to information law that year.

Other countries have passed access to information laws. Yemen did so in 2012, Tunis in 2013 and Lebanon 2017. They all have also passed laws with differing degrees of effectiveness.

The Tunisian law appears to be the most progressive and effective. Palestine, Iraq and Morocco appear very close to pass such laws. Various drafts are being discussed and debated.

Absence of a welcoming publishing environment-

While online outlets are available to most investigative reporters, traditional media still are more effective and have a wider reach. However, the problem is that for the most part the mainstream media in the region has been largely off limits to investigative reporting. The culture in most mainstream media outlets reflects the ownership and management structures which are biased to governments and ruling parties/families.

Without mainstream media that is able to publish/broadcast hard hitting investigation, few journalists will have the interest in pursuing the difficult and dangerous work of doing hard hitting investigation without the payback of publication and potential accountability to the culprits.

Media licensing laws for newspapers and broadcasters tied the hands of publishers and broadcasters. Most Arab countries laws include along list of exceptions that criminalize any publication or broadcast that deal with the following areas:

- Critical of royal head of state
- Negatively affecting relations with friendly countries
- Affecting national unity
- Damaging trust in national currency
- Sedition
- Religious strife

Absence of a defense network

Journalistic syndicates in the Arab world are usually not very effective in defending journalist and their rights. Since the ownership of most media is governmental or semi-governmental, this translates automatically to the fact that most Syndicates in the Arab world are close to the ruling powers.

This means that the journalist's syndicate do little to help an investigative journalist who is on the wrong side of the government wishes. Journalists in many Arab countries are defined only as members of the single largely pro government syndicate thus leaving a huge swath of nonmember journalists outside the superficial protection of the national syndicate.

In recent years local and regional NGOs have arisen that provide documentation and some help to arrested and imprisoned journalists. These local media watchdogs are well connected

to international media institutes which can sometimes prove to be helpful, although not always.

Absence of inter media solidarity

While journalism is a competitive sector, one would expect a minimum level of coordination and solidarity when an outside force – such as the government- persecutes members of this sector. But because the media ownership is largely governmental this fact makes it difficult to come up with any reliable solidarity or the creation of media owner’s association that would put the rights of the sector as a whole ahead of the rights of individual media. Attempts by independent and private media to incorporate or create their own associations has largely failed for numerous reasons.

Absence of a culture of investigative journalism

Independent investigative journalism is relatively new in the Arab region. The Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism established in 2005 by a number of Arab journalists in cooperation with the International Media Support and other international donors, began addressing this problem through training, funding and networking.

While the Amman-based ARIJ succeeded in providing important added value in this field, its regional efforts are a mere drop in the bucket of an Arab region that spans over 400 million people in over 23 countries and thousands of media outlets, tens of thousands of journalists and media workers.

Attempts to create local investigative associations have largely failed due to government pressures and lack of funding. Some individual media outlets tried to create their own investigative units and these efforts have had limited success.

Success stories

Despite all the above a number of high-profile investigations have provided tangible change among them:

- Closure of handicapped centers after an investigation about abuse by Hanan Khandakji and a [BBC Arabic documentary](#)
- Loss of MPs in elections of the 18th parliament after a Radio al [Balad investigation](#) of corruption in tenders to members of the 17th parliament. By Musab Shawbakeh

- Introduction of Muslim clerk to arrange for a written marriage contract after the investigation on unwritten marriages in Zaatari camp by Etaf Roudan
- Stricter laws and monitoring of high school tawjihi tests after our investigation on cheating. By Musab Shawbkeh

Conclusion

While a number of courageous journalists and the MENA region's only support organization ARIJ continue to work hard to produce quality investigations, the need for improvement on all fronts is badly needed.

Media laws must be reformed, media environment welcoming investigative journalism is needed and continued training and financial support to professional investigative journalists continues to be needed not only on the regional level but also on country level as well as on the level of independent media outlets.

Investing in people and in investigative reports is crucial for the continuation of this important journalist's genre. Independent funds must be established giving serious investigative reporters and media outlets enough funds to be able to allow their staff enough time and expenses to be able to produce the needed investigations.

Finally, it is important that an enabling legal, administrative, legislative and media environment is created with the help of political activists, human rights groups NGOs and other media outlets which can contribute to the continuation and success of investigative journalism in Jordan.

Appendix I

AmmanNet/Radio al Balad experience

The investigative team at AmmanNet/Radio al Balad produced a record number of investigative reports in a short period in cooperation with ARIJ. The investigations dealt with local issues such as early marriage issues, abuse of the handicapped, medical costs and educational issues (such as cheating in the *tawjihi* exam and plagiarism in the post graduates papers) as well as the political issues such as exposing corruptions among members of parliament, Syrian refugees and their enablers.

AmmanNet/Radio al Balad was also a partner in a number of worldwide collective investigations including the Panama Papers. Published reports as part of these collaborative activities have received worldwide attention.

Results from the investigations

Almost all the investigations produced impressive changes and results:

- The report on the abuse of handicapped centers was aired on BBC and that followed by a royal decision to close all the abusive handicapped centers and a serious investigation followed by the installation of cameras and eventually the passing of a far reaching integration law that orders all handicapped centers closed and merged with general centers.
- The report on *tawjihi* cheating brought about changes and stricter supervision of the tests including the suspensions during test hours of social media accounts to prevent use of social media for cheating.
- A number of reports on Syrian refugees produced impressive results among them:
 - a. After reports on the spread of unregistered marriages brought about the opening of an office of the Islamic clerks in the Zaatari camp thus allowing the marriages to be registered.
 - b. The investigation that exposed forged labor permits lead to the arrest and trial of a number of Jordanian police officers.
- In the elections for the 18th parliament and following the investigation on tenders belonging to members of the 17th parliament 14 out of the 16 MPs we had exposed didn't get reelected.

Challenges faced by the AmmanNet/Radio al Balad team

A number of issues affected the ability of the team to produce regular investigations including:

- Weakness of the access to information law. While our team was credited for more than half the annual complaints to the Informational Center because of lack of compliance, decisions of the Information center were not taken seriously and ignored. Attempts to appeal to the courts also failed to produce successful results.
- Turnover- the team working on investigative journalism witnessed a high turnover, many going to bigger and better jobs.
- Absence of public follow up- while most of the investigations dealt with issues of high public interest, not enough action was done to follow up on the results of our investigations including by government, parliament, the media and civil society. This is due in large part to a lack of a culture of follow up and collaboration of media reports by independent journalists.
- Cost one of the biggest obstacles in continuing to carry out investigative reports is the time needed and the high cost of producing the reports. Many of the investigations required months of labor and this is too much financial and labor cost for small media outlets with a shoestring budget.
- With the exception of ARIJ there is little access to financial and other support to investigative journalists working for independent media.

To read investigative reports by AmmanNet/Radio al Balad please click below

Originals in Arabic

<https://ammannet.net/%D8%AA%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%AA>

In English

<https://ammannet.net/english>

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Under-reported Challenges of Investigative Reporting in FATA Conflict

Shaista Malik and Salman Danish

Abstract

The US attacks in Afghanistan in the aftermath of 9/11/2001 pushed the resistant groups into the bordering Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan. Since then the region had literally been turned into a ‘conflict prone’. But over the years, through the ‘Zarbe Azab’ military operations, Pakistan has cleared these areas from terrorist outfits and a relevant calm has returned to the troubled region and rest of the country.

Talibanization started in Pakistan in the early 1990s as a result of rule of Taliban militias in Afghanistan, intended to impose Islamic Sharia Law in Pakistan (Gregory, 2011). Jenkins, et al. (2017, p. 112) argue that Islam is a “source of reconciliation”, but Taliban used the name of this religion to perpetuate conflict; and literally converted the FATA region as an epicentre of extremists’ activities. After use of military force in the region, the federal government introduced an agenda for reforms and development in FATA; and in a bid to mainstream the tribal areas, FATA has been merged into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province as per amendment in the Constitution in 2018.

Amid this background, the study employs qualitative analysis to examine various challenges being faced by investigative journalists in the conflict region of FATA. The study explores the kinds of constraints to investigative reporting, including security threats from non-state actors, such as Taliban leadership and threats from state actors such as government institutions. Each conflict actor has distinct demand from media practitioners. For instance, the Taliban push media to describe their dead militants as ‘Shaheed’ and describe their enemy as ‘kafr’ (infidels). Amid threats from all shades of conflict, selection of words to report an incident has emerged as one of the big challenging tasks for journalists.

Moreover, the study identifies multi-layered complex risks that had impeded investigative reporting during the three phases of FATA conflict- pre-conflict, in-conflict and post conflict/rehabilitation. The research also explores a tri-model of investigative reporting-

international media, national and indigenous/local journalists reporting from conflict zones. The study suggests as to how this tri-model investigative reporting posed a severe constraint for media coverage in the former FATA region. This tri-model also sometimes influenced media coverage of the conflict and in turn media presented an untrue picture of the conflict.

The following discussion presents a brief historical background of the then FATA and multiple phases of conflict in which investigative reporting faced a lot of challenges.

Introduction:

The tribal region of Pakistan formally known as the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and now recently the part of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province are on the borders between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Since the birth of Pakistan, FATA was administered through a special law, The Frontier Crimes Rules (FCR) introduced by the British rulers. Under this law, the region had to maintain a semi-autonomous system until the amendment in the Constitution of Pakistan which has mandated its merger with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in May 2018.

Looking back at the history, a nexus can be seen among Pakistan-Afghanistan-America with the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan. At the time of war, the then FATA was the main channel to provide a massive US assistance to Afghan Mujahedin (the Islamic warriors), such as weapons and war supplies (Wang, 2010, p. 79). Islamic madrasas (seminaries) in FATA were reported to have been used to train students (Taliban) to send them for Jihad against Soviet forces. In this way, FATA was used as a major source for garnering the Taliban in Afghanistan (Bergen and Tiedemann, 2013). As a result of Soviet war lasted for over nine years, millions of Afghan Pushtoons arrived as refugees in FATA and parts of KP, Punjab and Baluchistan provinces. Even after the Soviet withdrawal, the refugees were reluctant to leave Pakistan. Although UNHCR made efforts to send Afghan refugees back through some voluntary repatriation schemes, still a significant number of refugees are living in Pakistan (Borthakur, 2017, p. 490). As a consequence of the war in Afghanistan against the Soviet supported regimes in Kabul, a huge influx of Afghan refugees (almost three million entered in Pakistani territory; some Afghan warlord and influential in the refugees reportedly introduced narcotics as a commodity and Kalashnikov culture in Pakistani. So, the guns and heroin (drug) trade spread in most parts of the country. Some studies estimate that drugs' production increased from 180

tonnes in 2001 to 3000 tonnes in 2002 and then 8000 by 2007^[1]. Many researchers traced the links to guns and drugs with some warlords who earned huge sums from this trade to fund their war against their enemy in the region.

After the Soviet defeat and complete withdrawal from Afghanistan in February 1989, Taliban took over Afghanistan in 1990s but warlords with Taliban and those who opposed Taliban government in Kabul continued fighting with the money they have been earning from guns and drugs trade. The 9/11 in 2001 gave war in Afghanistan a new turn when the United States in its second stint bombed Afghanistan which led to collapse of the Taliban government in Kabul. Since then the regimes coming into power with the support of the United States and allied forces are being considered as having some reservations with Pakistan. They have reportedly been involved in exporting violent extremism and terrorism in FATA.

In fact, the seeds of extremism sown during the Soviet invasion emerged in the form of the Taliban. Acharya, et al (2009, p. 97) identify that all Taliban are not similar. They have different agenda. Describing the difference between Pakistani and Afghani Taliban based on their agendas say that the Pakistani Taliban are engaged in fighting against Pakistani armed forces and they are supposed to have support and backing from anti Pakistan groups inside Afghanistan, while Afghan Taliban are fighting against the Afghan government and the allied forces in Afghanistan and they are supposed to have backing from Pakistan. Islamabad says it has ceased its support to Taliban with joining the U.S.-led war on terror in the aftermath of September 11 twin tower attacks (Afzal, Iqbal and Inayat, 2012, p. 196). Several analysts agree that 9/11 brought FATA into a high focus and it emerged as a sort of hub of the war activities and movements across the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema (2008: August 19) says, "After the shock of 9/11, the FATA all of a sudden became one of global concerns". The War on Terror launched by the then U.S. President gave a new fame to FATA (Javaid, 2011, p. 174). The military never intended to participate in war on terror, but the U.S. aid had pushed Pakistan to move the army into the FATA area to fight against Taliban (Nawaz, 2009, p. vii). Hence the support of Pakistan in Afghan war along with other international actors in terms of training of freedom fighters had perpetuated the ongoing violence and terrorism in the region. FATA which was considered as a safe haven for terrorists and extremists in the name of Islamic Jihadism has returned now to peace after the military operations against them (Mirza, 2009, p. 18).

Talibanization in Pakistan got roots in the South and North Waziristan Agencies of FATA in early 2002 and gained strength during 2003–2004 (Acharya, Bukhari and Sulaiman, 2009, p. 96). Talibanization is seen as a process of imposing a self-crafted ideology of “Islamic Shariah” which otherwise has nothing to do with the real teachings and texts of Islam, (Misra and Clarke, 2013 p. 131). Islamic text does not allow hate and discrimination whereas Taliban’s whole philosophy is based on these two traits. Talibanization also refers to as a political and social process imitating a sort of political system of their own, some selected and narrowly interpreted religious laws and the typical lifestyle of Taliban. With formation of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in 2007, this process of Talibanization was spread in Pakistan particularly in FATA (Ibid).

To understand the challenges of investigative journalism, it is important at the outset to distinguish between media coverage of war and routine media reporting of any incidents. In Pakistan, largely the war reporting is done on the basis of the information provided by the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) and then such information is disseminated in the form of news by media outlets.

There is a significant difference between routine media reporting of any incident and war reporting. The way we report a story of war is different from that of our daily news coverage for media. We use a distinct style of reporting for signifying any issue relating to war. In everyday reporting, we use a low tone of voice in written and verbal communication, but the content and tone of media war coverage is always strong and powerful to emphasise the critical view of the war situation. The most important difference is that the war reporting is time bound, i.e. a war correspondent should be quick and fast in reporting within a short amount of time; a journalist needs to collect all the required information and shape it as a news story to make it public. A reporter must need to learn multi-tasking because of nature of war-reporting. For instance, to write even a single story, a war correspondent has to collect data of casualties from hospital, measure the nature of bomb blast and take a note from higher military authorities. Our media organization may compromise at time in day-to-day reporting but the news editor constantly puts pressure on a reporter to provide them latest war news.

This is how a war reporter who was interviewed for this study paints a picture of the war reporting. In three phases of FATA conflict (pre-conflict, in-conflict and post conflict/rehabilitation), the media reporting was marked differently. For example, Pre-war reporting is based on the statements of political agents (administration) delivered on various occasions (e.g. visiting a school of tribal area and meeting with a tribal Jirga i.e. a traditional assembly of tribal elders that makes decisions by consensus and according to the teachings of

Pashtunwali code of Pashtuns). In this era, the political agents provided their written statements to the media and all the media had to publish the same story next day because they were source of their income in the form advertisements.

The study sees a strong consensus among social scientists and investigative journalists interviewed for this research on the state of coverage and role of political agents in providing chosen information suiting them. For instance, Elahi (2019, p. 6) suggests that the then mujahidin were named as ‘freedom fighters’ when reported in the Western media during Soviet war in Afghanistan but similar fighters were branded as ‘terrorists’ when they started resisting and attacking the U.S. and its allies’ troops. Aljazeera reports that “with a single lifetime, the tribesmen of FATA have been portrayed first as a brave warriors resisting the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and subsequently as the minions of al-Qaeda.² Similarly, the investigative reporters stated that the narrative built by the state in pre-conflict era was in favour of the Afghan Mujahideen. The reason was that a positive picture of jihad was depicted in the narrative against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. In this era, Afghan-Taliban appeared in Afghanistan all of a sudden. As per the set narrative at that stage, media and State both had a consensus to introduce Islamic Shariah in Pakistan. The literature used for militants to incite them for Jihad was also employed by Taliban to support radicalization. The Taliban used two main newspapers ‘Islam’ and ‘Zarb-e-Momin’ to establish the Jihadi narrative. The state also supported these two newspapers to strengthen this discourse. The journalists said that they had witnessed promotion of Jihadi culture during pre-conflict stage.

The narrative built in the Post-conflict is pro-military. The media has no freedom as we are supposed to signify the achievements of the Army. This discourse comes as a consequence of change in the relationship of Pakistan with other nations. For instance, within the course of conflict, Pakistan had a strong relationship with the U.S. which influenced the narrative that was anti-Taliban. In contrast, the current discourse depicts a true picture of the relationship between Pakistan and China that is based on authoritarian approach.

In the second phase, the reporting was mostly relied on the statements from military and Taliban (militants) sources. The focus of attention of the investigative reporters was to find terrorism related stories, and war affected families. The journalists covered various aspects of

<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2016/09/fata-terrorists-victims-covert-war-160912084500746.html>

the conflict, such as impact of conflict on local people, economy, health, education and infrastructure.

During the operation/war against Taliban, 80% of the stories we covered related to the war events, while the rest of the 20% stories were related to the impact of the conflict on local communities. We reported only major news items that could easily be sold by our news organization. Generally, the major stories were related to bomb blasts, meetings with Taliban leaders and drone strikes. Indeed, the media did not report daily routine stories during war time such as shortage of water in war areas or issues related to educational institutions. However, we focused on the news stories in case the Taliban attacked on any school building. Sometimes, we reported stories of the impact of war on civilians e.g. effects of war on children, psychological impact of war and violence on local people. We also highlighted stories on how Taliban war had affected badly the families of victims who lost their lives.

Within the conflict phase, the pro-Mujahideen narrative was replaced with the anti-Taliban discourse. Earlier, the Pakistani authorities that used to hide their identity to promote Talibanization, later they used the same technique to set up anti-Taliban discourse in the society. The investigative reporters stated that the authorities reportedly disguised as Taliban to spread pro-Taliban messages before conflict started. The change in narrative from pro-Taliban to anti-Taliban was happened when the people noticed Taliban's involvement in brutal activities, sexism, and violence against women and also other terrifying actions they took during conflict phase. As a result, the people started getting scared not only of Taliban but they were also afraid of Islamic Shariah, the self-crafted brand Taliban wanted to impose on whole of society. The narrative in war expressed that the Taliban believe in terrorism.

Besides the inhuman deeds of Taliban, the reporting in the third phase has been dramatically changed mainly due to the 25th amendment in the Constitution of Pakistan that integrated tribal areas and its people in mainland Pakistan. In the post-conflict period, the main media reporting is on local issues regarding education sector, health sector and infrastructure and rehabilitation of the war-ravaged tribal areas and resettlement of the temporarily displaced people.

Methodology

This is an important piece of qualitative research that examines the challenges of reporting in the war in Pakistan's tribal areas. The study covers three stages of investigative reporting in the formerly Federally Administrative Tribal Areas (FATA), i.e. pre-conflict, in-conflict and post conflict/re-development phase. To collect the data for this study, 16 journalists who had worked

in the above stated three phases were interviewed. The selection was based on their work experience for local and international media while covering the war. The sample was representative of mid-career media professionals associated with electronic, print and online media houses as they were more vocal in terms of expressing their professional experiences. The interviewees were media workers who had covered diverse 'beats' in three phases of the conflict in FATA.

While applying snowball sampling, we used a network of journalists to approach investigative journalists. The results of this study cannot be generalized to overall challenging environment of investigative reporting in Conflict of FATA region.

The current study employed qualitative approach to understand various modes of investigative journalism in the conflict areas. The well-reasoned and convincing rationale for using this method is that qualitative research allows to unveil multiple perspectives of sole phenomenon (Marshall and Rossman, 2011, p. 92). With this perspective, this method contributed to capture context, journalists' own version about war reporting based on their personal interpretation. Thus the current study is exploratory along with descriptive in nature to examine the obstacles faced by the Investigative Journalists as guardians of public interest.

Due to the sensitive nature of the study, a pilot interview with an investigative journalist was conducted prior to further interviews for the study. The pilot interview was viewed as a preparation for the subsequent interviews. The pilot interview helped to learn various aspects relevant to investigative reporting in war conditions. This interview was also useful to prepare a list of questions for the remaining discussions with the respondents. Prior to the interviews for this qualitative study, a list of questions was designed to assist the interviewers.

Findings

Despite a declining trend in killings and victimization of the media professionals since 2014, press freedom significantly remained restricted as the country's strong authorities pushed the journalists to employ 'self-censorship' through direct and indirect acts of intimidation; and even allegedly resorting to violence on reporters. This was reported by an international

organization ‘Committee to Protect Journalists’³. The journalists in FATA had to face the similar environment while reporting war in all the three phases of conflict. Beating, harassment, and threats to investigative journalists have been very common episodes in FATA, if they critically examined and reported the actions of the government authorities or Taliban.

The investigative journalists draw strength from the ‘Fourth Pillar of the State’ Model that allows media to make the governments accountable. But when it came to the investigative journalists covering war in FATA, they felt they were denied to enforce this model and that had caused a number of challenges. According to this model, investigative journalism serves as a valuable monitoring system of the state’s institutions by publishing information related to public matters to empower the masses (Peters, 2005, p. 15). As referred by Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001, p. 96), investigative journalism plays a watchdog role. In doing so, the media’s function is “to promote transparency, accountability and public scrutiny of decision-makers by highlighting policy failures, maladministration by public officials, corruption in judiciary, and scandals in the corporate sector” (Norris, 2008, p. 188). In this perspective, the analysis of this study examines whether investigative journalists of FATA were able to assess the performance of the governmental bodies as per constitutional mandates (Waisbord, 2002, p. 380) and what are the diverse challenges they had to face to perform their duties. The analysis proposed that freedom of expression was limited to the press in FATA as the media was accountable to various other ruling authorities holding power in the war zone in FATA.

The following analysis is divided into three sections in accordance with three phases of conflict in FATA. The first section describes problems faced by investigative reporters before the conflict in FATA initiated. The second section explores a tri-model reporting system in which reporters from global, national and local levels facilitated each other for accessing the news during conflict in FATA. This section also reveals a range of challenges of the conflict period reported by the investigative journalists. The last section draws attention towards issues being faced by the media reporters after conflict phase.

Investigative Journalism in Pre-conflict Phase

³ <https://cpj.org/reports/2018/09/acts-of-intimidation-pakistan-journalists-fear-censorship-violence-military.php>

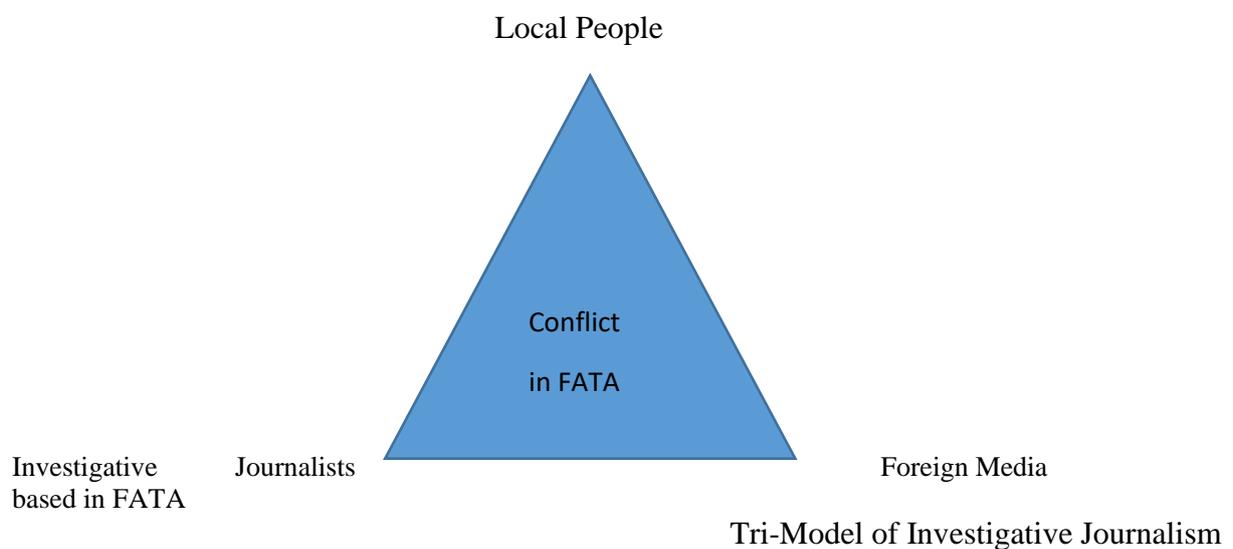
As determined by the fourth pillar of the state model, free press is generally linked to the survival of an independent institution that works free of government and political pressure (Waisbord, 2002, p. 383). It represents a classic model of investigative journalism; however, Pakistani journalists cannot implement this model due to 'media control' approach of the authorities. Not just in the time of conflict in tribal areas, the media in general work under multiple pressures in FATA. A significant obstacle to the media freedom has been the pressure from politicians and powerful people. Journalists had to report in favour of the political agents. They have to toe the lines of the ruling party otherwise they have to face severe challenges. These conditions were unsuitable for a fearless and an effective role of the media as a watchdog.

In pre-conflict era, we reported only common news such as news of lack of education facilities, Jirga or clashes between local parties. The extreme point of concern was that the tribal advisors could sacrifice their children to make happy to their political agents. However, if we touched sensitive issues, we were at risk. Once I did a comparative story on prices of oil smuggled from Iran with local Pakistani product. I reported the quantity of smuggled oil bought into Pakistan. In this report, I also reported about the amount spent by local administration on tokens for oil smuggling on daily basis. On reporting these issues, I was arrested and was sent to jail by the frontier corp.

In short, the respondent's account witnessed that the freedom of expression was limited. The press was not able to investigate the wrongdoings in the public administration but if they try to do so, their life was in danger.

Watchdog Role of Media in Conflict

The analysis reveals that a tri-model reporting mechanism was established wherein global, national and local reporters relied on each other for reporting during conflict in FATA. Foreign reporters had an access to Peshawar sources but they could not approach tribal areas easily. Thus, to access the news from conflict zone, this multi-layered channel was used which raised significant concerns regarding press freedom and the role of media as a fourth pillar of the state. For instance, the foreign media hired stingers from among journalists who were connected to sources in tribal areas. They used to pay money to local people to get information. However, later they started getting back to receive the information from local journalists of the tribal areas when they heard about the huge payments by foreign media to the journalists based in Peshawar.



While local people were the primary source of information in this set up, they reportedly used to take unfair advantage of their importance. Local media reporters started making fake stories which was mainly as a result of lack of direct access to tribal areas. Owing to that reason, journalists had to be more careful about contacting the locals. These news stories misinformed the public and simultaneously they became the greatest threat to free debate that might have an enormous impact on government policies in war.

We were hired to cover war as reporters so we relied on various sources instead of depending on one source of news; we contacted local people, our friends based in war area, also got access to militants and military sources. Moreover, we planned everything before we started working on any story idea as abrupt reporting was not possible in war area.

As noted above, the media is considered as the fourth pillar of the state for being objective and fair in reporting. In Eide's (2016, p. 15) words, "diverse, multiple voices are important for free speech in democracy and, equally, for a broad understanding of knowledge and autonomy. The quotes from a couple of Investigative reporters have confirmed that the respondents had always maintained objectivity in their stories while reporting on the FATA conflict. Some statements from the respondents revealed the reasons for being unbiased and fair reporters. In their quotes they say that Pakistani media professionals had to scum to the pressures from various groups in the conflict phase including Taliban, military as well as political administration. Few

journalists in FATA reported that they were heavily dependent on pre-packaged news items either in the form of written statements from the political agent or press releases issued by the military. This can be marked as an open challenge to objectivity of journalism. Therefore, unlike objective reporting, some reporters believe that they in their war reporting portrayed issues and events as sketched by the military and the militants/Taliban.

Currently in Pakistan, media is under control of the authorities and no one can even think about investigative journalism while facing tight monitoring and denial to access the sources of news.

Well, being a journalist, my first job is to inform readers and for that I need to be objective.

Yes. I have always reported to the point and remained objective as much as I could.

We tried our best to maintain objectivity in our reporting as we believe that the war coverage always portrays issues and events in a neutral and unbiased manner. But when the Taliban issued their statements, they forced us to report it without any modification. In that case, we had to compromise on objectivity. In the same way, we used to file news stories as issued by the military sources. The main reason was that we lacked access to conflict zones.

After a military operation in 2010, on invitation of ISPR, we visited Shakai valley of North Waziristan that was the main heart of Taliban's activities. We saw a broken house damaged in a bomb blast and only one wall was remained intact there. ISPR told us that it used to be a safe haven of the Taliban. We reported it as per the briefing by ISPR. We could not have the opportunity to further investigate the other point of views, if any, related to this damaged building.

As declared by the investigative journalists, the militant groups tried to dictate media through their press releases and statements of their leaders and by hurling implicit threats. By publishing the press releases of one group, media become target of authorities or stand exposed before other militant groups. A threat of portraying one party gives an impression that a journalist is taking the side of one party.

Yes, definitely the organization was also part of propaganda with the government but it's the journalist who faces the hard times at ground. It was always difficult to remove that tag but militant organizations were always intended to pressurize us. At that time, it was simply the way of not contacting them frequently but whenever they contacted us, we had to file the story.

During the war period, military always took media on Inter Services Public Relation's (ISPR) trips wherein they informed them about their victories, e.g. the areas they

recovered from militants. The sole purpose of these trips was to highlight the success stories of the Army. Similarly, in the war phase, we also had several meetings with Taliban leaders, e.g. Hakeemullah Mehsud, Baitullah Mehsud, Maulana Fazlullah, Qari Hussain, Ahmad Shah Massoud, and with several other Taliban commanders. On their demands, we had to cover their news stories which with a war lens were newsworthy.

Both parties always try to give the data that favours them and when you try to find anything that can go against them then it becomes dangerous. So as I said earlier I stayed as a reporter and never mess with anyone.

On a similar topic, the research suggested that in conflict phase of FATA, mere reliance on official sources turned media into a tool to spread government propaganda. This was acknowledged by the respondents of this study in their statements. However, the media in war as a propaganda tool had restricted the public debate and limited the potential to raise the people's voice. In other words, the sole media's function was to gain support for the military actions. The point matters here that Pakistani media was likely to be unsuccessful in playing a role of watchdog in critically examining the affairs of the key authorities which otherwise should have been necessary for an ideal society wherein media is responsible for safeguarding citizen's rights and interests.

That conflict was all about war economy and our role was creating hype and intensifying the conflict through giving voice to military's actions and that's why war was propagated hugely in the media

Yes, no doubt it was government control over media in the name of national interest and practically there is a thin line between national interest and propaganda.

The selection of right choice of sources in FATA conflict to maintain accuracy as a professional journalist was also a big challenge. The sources and their hidden agendas create confusion among journalists during violence. Therefore, many journalists find an easy way to depend on official sources of government agencies. However, in that case journalists have to compromise on their professional ethics. In contrast, some journalists used their long standing experience in journalism to make difference between true and fake story.

For stories, I travelled and wrote about people and places; if I need army or Taliban's version, I used to contact my sources there. But I don't believe in embedded or propagated journalism. Since we are in this bizarre kind of situation for a decade now and we understand the difference between the hidden agendas and real stories.

Journalist is the best source in these conditions. Years long relationship with them made them trustworthy and one can trust them.

There is no standard definition of national interest but in simple words, it is “the perceived needs and desires of one sovereign state in relation to other sovereign states comprising the external environment”(Donald E., 1976, p. 247). This definition suggests a close relationship between national interest and international relations. At the same time, the role of war correspondent has been portrayed as a romantic lore, in reality it is indeed attached with various characteristics, obligations, facts, and balance (Allan and Zelizer, 2004, p. 3). In context of fourth pillar of the state, an investigative journalist must critically evaluate and balance the story at the time of filing it for publication. The important task is to balance the reporting while protecting national interests. In response to a question, the respondents seem unclear about the concept of country’s interest but it is understood that they know their responsibility to provide accurate, objective and unbiased information as long as it does not harm the interest of the nation.

It’s always impossible to do so, the word national interest is always unclear so it is better to play safe and keep it to the point. At time, we cover the war just as an event reporting without undergoing an in-depth work when we feel that any security risk may harm us.

I believe that in journalism there is only one ‘ism’ and that is journalism; I try my best to uphold journalistic values amid national interest debate.

During the war phase, we had no organized system of instructions regarding what is important to bring in the news for the sake of national interest or what should be avoided. However, we always tried to avoid news stories that we thought could harm the national interest. For example, we did not report mistakes made by our forces. People were curious to know as to how Fazlullah fled to Afghanistan from the area that was cordoned off. However, we did not highlight this issue in national interest. We didn’t report any criticism on our forces. Like other journalists do globally, we did not report stories that may harm national interest.

As discussed, an independent press constitutes fourth pillar of a state to identify problems in a society; but it is only possible if the government upholds the freedom of expression as a right of journalists. As opposed, the investigative journalists stated that the government’s response towards the then investigative reporting on the situation in the FATA was discouraging. As per the respondents’ comments, the government institutions seem unsuccessful in providing facilitating environment to the journalists of FATA to serve as a watchdog rather they had to face the challenge of Taliban rule.

It was discouraging

There was no government support in these seven districts everything was happening under TTP strict Shariah and the government also discouraged free flow of information in these areas.

In the absence of independent press, the watchdog role of a journalist in war becomes a more challenging responsibility which urges to deeply investigate the story to uncover the truth. It is especially important in connection to the role of media in the protection of human rights. In FATA conflict phase, the job of the media professionals was not simple, but the prolonged and intense experience of war made them expert war reporters with extensive knowledge on the conflict.

I believe those who work on ground can gather the actual information, and journalist's role is crystal cleared to write about people and places

War reporters visit conflict area on a regular basis, and hence they keep on building their knowledge base and expertise on war reporting. For example, when we visited those areas with a known Pakistani journalist and an expert on conflict reporting; he asked us about Taliban, their background and ethnicity. We gave him all the information he inquired. We have noticed that there are several authors who wrote books on Taliban war but they hardly visited the conflict areas. A number of noted war reporters gained information about war through their embedded visits with the military and they did not visit conflict areas independently or through other sources, so they generally have limited information. As compared to them, we gained more and diverse information exhibiting all shades in the war and we got some expertise on war reporting as we know the ground realities on the conflict.

The most important challenging situation was physical and mental abuse faced by the reporters which is not uncommon in conflict regions. Media can be a victim to threatening behavior, e.g. harassment, humiliation, in some cases even murder. These challenges happen mostly to pressurise particular media outlet to impair its accountability mission. The journalists' responses evident that journalists in FATA perform their duties under critical threats.

Yes, I was threatened many times but I wasn't abducted in that period.

I am a journalist and write the tragedies of the people, as far as I understand.

No reporter intends to put his/her life at risk. However, in some cases, journalists take some risky steps to visit a conflict area. But most often, Pakistani media organisations demand the journalists to provide them news from conflict zone. As a result, journalists had no other option but to take such risks. We know, if the journalist faces any problem during visit to conflict area, the media would not take responsibility for physical and emotional support. In such cases, not only the journalist but his/her family will also bear the consequences of such incidents.

A senior war reporter asked me to visit North Waziristan to collect some information. During my trip, I met some militant leaders. While meeting the militants, I found 14 Canadian militants who were engaged in getting militant trainings. The Canadian group informed me that they had no intention to attack Pakistan, but they would go back to Canada and target some places in Canada and America. I provided all that information to a senior journalist for his story which was published in international news media with a by-line of that senior journalist as I did not agree to disclose my name in the foreign media.

After publication of this story, the Canadian embassy asked us to visit them. In our visit, they asked many questions about the Canadian group we met in North Waziristan. We showed them the pictures of Canadian militants. We came to know that there was a resolution passed in Canadian parliament about this incident as how to deal with the Canadian militants. They also offered us to visit Canada to discuss this issue but they didn't contact us again. The main point here is that when we publish any story, we have to be ready for all circumstances; and to deal with it, we should have all the factual information along with evidence, otherwise our lives can be in danger.

Another critical challenge to investigative reporting was psychological impact of war in FATA. The reporters' quotes highlighted that journalists in FATA war experienced psychological effects.

I have written a piece on journalist trauma, it reveals shocking information that journalists at the time became alcoholic, dependent on sleeping pills due to trauma, stress and anxiety.

Not one but many; even we had a special unit established by the journalism department in university of Peshawar to help out journalists who are psychologically affected.

Apart from emotional abuse, media workers in Pakistan are confronted with diverse challenges depending upon whether they are working with national or international media. The journalists with local media organisations do not have a protective work environment, whereas those who work for international media institutions have a mechanism of safety and security with tracking of the well-being and protection by their employers. Similarly, the journalists associated with international media enjoy more freedom of expression than local journalists. The life of correspondents of international media is more valuable than the equipment such as camera as

compared to the local journalists. Lack of formal professional training was also a challenge for journalists from local media groups, but sometimes they received verbal suggestions from their organisations. In contrast, the war correspondents worked for international organisations received safety measures' trainings on a regular basis.

One of the European ambassadors offered me to go and live in Europe if I feel threatened here. My international media organisation took practical steps to protect us; they gave us a bulletproof jacket, helmet and mask to be used while reporting the war/conflict. They always showed me the edited version of my stories as what they were going to publish under my by-line. Before I plan to visit a war zone, they always checked the area in advance if it was safe to visit. In 2009, at least 30 people were killed in a bomb blast in a mosque in Dir, a North-western region of Pakistan. I along with a cameraman and another reporter intended to visit the blast hit area. When we started our journey to a war area with due permission from the authorities, firing was started. The cameraman and my colleague reporter came under gun attack but they survived. I informed my Bureau Chief of the foreign news agency. He asked me what are the options available to protect. We cannot hire a helicopter because only military can use helicopters in that area. My organisation contacted a foreign company which provided all medical treatment in their own hospital. In contrast, the administration of Pakistani television contacted us and inquired about safety of the camera and not about the cameraman. You can see the difference between international and local organisations how much they are concerned about the protection of their journalists and their equipment. Instead of providing security, the said TV fired their staff as they demanded for follow up medical treatment. Moreover, no media organization covered this story. It means that journalists in Pakistan are always vulnerable as no one owns us and treat us as we are not human beings.

During the war period, I was travelling with our driver in Swat. All of a sudden, someone opened fire at our car. Luckily we did not get any injury. When we reported this incident to our media organisation, they asked about the car not about us. This is a clear example that we should take care of our lives as our media organisations have no interest in our lives.

While navigating various challenges, it is important to understand that the right to seek, access and receive information is crucial for investigative journalists because it enables them to play their role as public watchdog in a conflict situation. Journalists act as a communication agent to inform the public. Lake and Rothchild (1996, p. 73) argued that conflict can escalate if media fail to provide timely and credible information. The right to access information was reportedly violated by the forces during the conflict times. The following quotes from the respondents highlight various issues at the time of crisis; such as access to primary data, limited opportunity to capture incidents in the form of images, non-cooperative attitude of the local community in war area.

Traveling was not allowed and then local sources were also afraid due to military and militants, both groups discouraged flow of information

Received so many calls from both sides and both blamed us as the agents of the other party. Even simple report used to be under observation and both parties always pressurized us for playing their cards.

Several challenges we faced during war period. For instance, military did not allow us to visit freely to war zone area until they plan a visit to conflict areas. Therefore, we had to build liaison with locals of war area. In doing so, we had to contact local commanders to access the news. For example, American air and artillery strikes killed 11 Pakistani paramilitary soldiers during a clash with insurgents on the Pak-Afghan border, and we wanted to cover this story but the authorities were reluctant to allow us to access that place. However, because of anti-American sentiments and the relations between militants and army, the Taliban took us to the visit of the place. Similarly, we several times visited Waziristan with militants.

Some challenges are related to use of various technological gadgets specifically for the coverage of conflict that has been dramatically changed due to moving images and sound and sometimes live reporting, (Bignell, 2012, p. 249). Sometimes, live coverage helps to build perceptions about parties involved in a war. Timely and accurate information about the war support to an effective official response. However, war actors often create problems in collecting facts for filing a story– such as challenges to audio or video recording. This was another form of challenge faced by war reporters in FATA.

During 2008-2015, camera was not allowed in north Waziristan which was the main hub of militants; so it was also a major challenge for us to report the incident with footage. Likewise, radio was not allowed in the militants' area except for those radios which were produced by local people and hence it has also been a challenge to access them.

I never try to contact people from erstwhile FATA, but preferred to come to bigger city and file the story to avoid any life threatening risk.

Fake news is also a serious issue because sometimes it happens to be part of the game. For example, a fake story about a girl from Swat was considered as a truth. The majority of the people in Pakistan understand that it was not a true story, but it was recorded and reported in academic literature just as it happened. For example, (Norris, 2008, p. 188) stated that “a young girl beaten by Taliban caught in camera as an evidence of Taliban's brutal activities”. The real challenge is that sometimes fake news created to deliberately misinformed the public and

promote a biased opinion. As observed, during the war, the reporters also received incorrect information but they judged the accuracy of the information based on the information received from various sources and also with the use of news sense.

On the day of my wedding, I was in Swat. Someone called me to share some information. During the discussion, he showed me a video showing the public of Swat flogging a teenage girl. Since the exact location of the incident could not be determined from the video, therefore, it was difficult to verify authenticity of the video so I didn't share it to my channel. I always verify data before publishing the story. However, a CNN correspondent received this video and telecast it on CNN. The moment it broadcasted on CNN, it went viral. I believe it is our duty to cross check the story before report it. During the FATA operation, several times military provided us the number of killings in the operation, but we always reconfirmed it with the information provided by our local sources. Sometimes we also used our news sense and personal observation. For example, if someone informed us that a drone attack killed 3 civilians in Lahore. I will not report it as I know drone attacks can be happened in tribal areas not in Lahore. At conflict time, a number of fake stories were spread, such as dogs were eating human bodies in Swat's streets, but we knew it couldn't be possible as the relatives or colleagues can't leave the bodies for animals.

Another enormous challenge is limited sources of information. As per accepted news criteria, particularly in Western countries, news must be neutral, impartial and it should cover various stances (Allan and Zelizer, 2004, p. 302). Nevertheless, war reporting is not a straightforward task and often a journalist can access to only partial information because of the physical difficulties and dangers involved. Sometimes, the reporters need some information from various sources or they need to contact some local sources to access the information. In the event of war, Pakistani reporters also had contacts of local sources of information to collect primary data. Journalists needed to collect the information, weight them up and use their critical thinking to write a story based on facts. However, that was certainly a challenge when a journalist needed to trust the local sources of information.

Only for balancing the story I often ask ISPR or Taliban to provide such information on any incident. Recently I balanced a story it was about Afghanistan and I talked to Afghan Taliban, and yes, I trust my sources because we know each other since long and when reporter remains objective and keep aside "interests" then it works.

Yes, we had our media friends and also reporters of our organizations. We have faith in them and they were tested in the past which made them trustworthy.

We had to rely on our limited sources as it was difficult to access the conflict areas and collect direct information about any incident. However, because we remain in touch with the locals on a regular basis so we could determine whether the news was real or fake. At the same time, we also assess the nature of the story based on the information

collected through the military, intelligence institutions and local sources. For example, if the military or militants claimed that they killed a number of people but we did not report the number of killings as they informed us. But to get the actual casualties, we always contacted hospitals as how many bodies they had received. In some areas, we were not allowed to visit them such as in Kurram, so we gathered the factual position through our contacts in Kurram agency. Moreover, to make the news reliable, we always tried to report less number of casualties compared to the information provided by the military or the militants.

Reporting in war phase was always in absence of written documents as evidence. We had to trust on our sources but we could easily judge the credibility about the information our local resources provided. Sometimes our senior reporters use unethical stories. For instance, they give us stories which they think they can't report it with their by-line. But once the story publishes in the newspaper, our senior reporter receives several benefits from the party involved in the news, in some cases from both parties.

One more challenge is the commercial control as the media management receives pressure from their shareholders to maximize profits by using cost cutting as well as sensationalism. The media for profit maximization thereby compromise the independence of the press. Seeking out for allegiance to citizens, media need to separate itself from the focus on profit earning. The public duty of the media is to be a custodian of the people's rights, but if the media work only for boosting its own income, it becomes a major challenge. Just to grab the attention of the audience for the sake of profit, media give less time to dig out the story to highlight the facts. In this way, the media left the idea to work for the public interest, but put all the efforts to gain profit. The analysis of the respondents' quotes indicates the fact that the media in FATA could not set an ideal example to protect the citizens' rights to achieve its profit targets.

During the war phase, rating and breaking news were also a big challenge for the media professionals. For the sake of rating and news room pressure, reporters were engaged in reporting sometimes concocted stories.

On demand from the newsroom, our colleagues reported a concocted story of a bomb blast. When the story was on air, Taliban contacted him to claim the responsibility of the incident, but the interesting point is that they did not even know of the exact location of the incident. Taliban always wanted to be in the media. A gunman killed several people in Minnesota. We received a call from a senior Taliban leader claiming that the gunman was sent by the Taliban for shooting.

In sum, investigative journalist contributes to accountability by monitoring the functions of government institutions. However, the reporters' statements unveiled a range of problems and issues faced by investigative journalism during the war in FATA. For instance, access to

primary data was challenging task during the conflict. Therefore, reporter had to approach various indirect local sources, but then it became difficult to maintain the accuracy of the data. Physical and psychological barriers were also involved in investigative reporting during the war. Several pressure groups such as military and Taliban made the media coverage of war more difficult. Apart from these challenges, media administration also posed many challenges to media professionals for maximizing profits at the cost of its freedom to serve the public.

Despite these challenges, journalists working with international media organizations had the opportunity to work more freely compared to media professionals associated with local media. They had more freedom and safety than any local journalist.

Media in the role of a Custodian in the Post Conflict Phase

The following discussion examined numerous difficulties on the way of reporting in Post conflict phase. Freedom to expression is a fundamental right of a journalist as a social watchdog. The primary aim of the investigative journalism is to gain deep understanding of the problem and share the information with the masses for the sake of their interest. This role becomes more critical to be a champion of the public interest in the post war, just as in the conflict time. It is the duty of the media to provide the facts to the people so that they can face the challenges of the war. The media are responsible to report what has happened but also what is going to be happening; so in this way, they are bound to inform the public about a way forward. They can be a crucial part of the consensus that can lead to devising new policies and helps in decision making. However, the study refers that the media was dominantly military as source of news.

In this environment, the analysis suggests that the Pakistani media were ineffective in building a civic culture in FATA wherein the people do not necessarily participate in the politics, but they should be part of the public policies and decision making that may affect their lives (Álvaro Moisés, 2011, p. 327). The inhabitants of FATA are still deprived of a number of basic human rights even after withdrawal of FCR. For instance, the military operations against Taliban initiated to eliminate violent activities have displaced millions of non-combatant civilian FATA residents and ruined their lives (*Shaping a New Peace in Pakistan's Tribal Areas*, 2018, p. 2). Apart from that, it can be argued that the FATA's merger with KPK is a positive step towards peace building and a prosperous society.

Due to ban on militant activities, the journalists are not allowed to cover the stories of conflict areas. Currently, ISPR releases its own news, statements, and information about their activities. However, being a media correspondent associated with an international media organization, I gave coverage to the activities of the so-called Pashtun Tahafuz Movement that claims to work for the rights of Pashtuns.

In the current era of post conflict, we are still facing many challenges. For example, the attack on Army Public School in 2014 was a major incident which remained under-reported till now. This is also a big challenge for us when we are not allowed to cover such stories because if we dig out information about those events, the facts we will encounter may contradict any official narrative of any incident. We don't receive direct instructions not to investigate those incidents but we know if we report such incidents, we may have to face consequences so we don't take any risk. People think that media do not want to cover such a story.

Availability of incomplete information is also a major issue for the journalists working in FATA. Based on half picture of any incident, media cannot serve as an effective watchdog. Instead of supporter of any authoritative party, media must keep an eye on powerful groups to make sure that their actions don't conflict with public interest. And it can be possible if media have complete information about all the actions.

Unlike other major cities of Pakistan, we are always in warlike situation so the reporting in this area is dissimilar to the press reporting in other areas. The most significant challenge is that no one gives us complete information, neither our media organization shares complete picture of the situation nor any other institution provide us complete information. Therefore, we are always in an unclear situation. If we write a pro-government story then the party such as militants will respond very badly. A response of militants can be determined from the incident when militants attacked the press club wherein several journalists were killed but no one realized our vulnerability. No one owns us. We have to work independently and without any support.

In 2012, a sudden attack on Malala Yusufzai by a Taliban gunman became a lead story worldwide. Following the attack, a little news about Malala was given much attention in the press and was covered as an international breaking news even in *Agence France Presse* (AFP). We raised this issue in a press briefing by the forces and they responded that she would be dead soon. This was the unreported fact that could not be covered in the media. The point here is that we were not permitted to bring much factual information that we came to know through several sources in the media.

Even after conflict, investigative reporting in FATA is not an easy task. The research shows that the conventional idea of looking at media as an independent pillar of the state remained unthinkable at the time of war in FATA. The fear factors, such as physical, psychological attacks and lack of security had pushed the media to use self-censorship in terms of publishing news stories without reporter's by-line during the war. In practical terms, a by-line story adds

a level of legitimacy to the news and gives credit to the journalist, but the anonymous news story without credit of a reporter though lose some weight but it too highlights the problems and informs the public so it gives voice to the vulnerable segment of the society which is important for free press.

Sometimes we needed to hide our identity so we tried to avoid by-line stories. Our step not to show our identification in the press coverage was based on the fears and threats to our lives.

On Eid (Islamic festival) in 2010, we were asked to give an Eid greetings message of Hakeemullah Mehsud, Taliban commander, in the press. I talked to my editor in this regard and he said that we had already covered the stories of Eid wishes from Barak Obama, the then US president and the other from Mullah Umer's message on Eid so we couldn't give coverage to another such story. These were routine challenging issues we had to face and which used to put us at risk.

A cameraman from Khyber TV was beaten by Taliban in 2007. They also damaged the camera. During negotiations with Taliban, they asked us about the price of the camera. We told them that it is about two lakhs and they decided to pay it back. After Friday prayers, they collected money from militant fellows in a mosque and gave the money to the cameraman. Pakistani Taliban have had established almost a parallel governance in these areas; they were able to collect substantial revenue from the local population in terms of taxes, protection money, and the likes in their respective areas, (Acharya, Bukhari and Sulaiman, 2009, p. 97).

One of the main challenges journalists faced while covering FATA war was mass surveillance of the investigative journalists which at times created a great risk to their lives, impeded people's right to know truth and marred the very essence of the concept of free and independent press in FATA. The surveillance mechanism prevented the FATA journalists to dig out the truth. To ensure freedom of expression for journalists, especially in war reporting, the journalists need to be given a safe passage to collect information confidentially and report the news without any kind of fear or interference. Without due consideration, it is asserted that conflict reporting is comparatively easier than routine or any other form of reporting because it drives through action that is enough to attract a reader (Risso, 2017, p. 59). This claim seems interesting as media reporting from a conflict zone revolves around numerous challenges, especially the FATA region where the safety of the journalists was not guaranteed^[1]. For instance, conflict in FATA has resulted in a number of deaths of media professional so far.

We lived with multiple challenges during the conflict period but reporting in the post-conflict era is also difficult job. We are always under surveillance. We have a constant

fear of life whether it is from military, intelligence agencies, clerics or from political administration. We know, all of them are engaged in protecting Al-Qaida. But we can't report it as it is not safe for us. For example, in the current situation, if we report these issues, the conservative clerics can issue a fatwa (a nonbinding legal opinion) that he is not Muslim as it happened to many people who raised their voice against them. Our media institutions also advised us to stay away from conflicting issues. We can see many stories that need our attention such as anomalies in budget spending in tribal areas on development sector but if we report them, we can put ourselves on risk.

Another challenge has been the surveillance of media by Taliban. They always monitor our day to day reporting. They have highly systematic media monitoring mechanism, including recording or television and radio broadcasts, collection of press clippings from print media and gather data from online. Once our newly appointed colleague reported Taliban's attack on a tomb. Within a few minutes, Taliban contacted him and warned him not to construct a negative image of the Taliban, otherwise he would be responsible for the consequence.

The life of war correspondents remains at risk as they are under surveillance almost all the time for their movements and engagements and even their family members are also watched. One of the respondents said once he was at a music concert and when he left the concert half way, he realised that his presence in the concert was also noticed. So, it is challenging to work in such a situation.

To conclude, FATA is in the transition phase from conflict to the rehabilitation process. In this post conflict stage, the media is still unlucky to gain the status of an independent people's voice that is free of influence by government or any corporate interest. Media face multiple constraints and challenges. Lack of information is one of the barriers to freedom of expression. Another critical challenge is the security issue that forces investigative journalist to be anonymous and file their stories without their name identification. The biggest challenge is consistent surveillance on media which has weakened its capacity to be the fourth pillar of the state.

Conclusion

Generally, the public's watchdog function demands that media do perform a surveillance role to strengthen accountability system in a society. The notion of 'Fourth pillar' demands that the investigative journalism must perform as a two-way supply chain of communication between the state and public; but it looks that Pakistani media do not offer such a platform for free debate and exchange of ideas. In case of FATA, journalists appear to be controlled by various powers. Media in Pakistan is just a spoon-feed as they are not allowed to bring about any change in the society. It would, however, be unfair to blame journalists for relying on pre-

packaged information. An international organization, Reporters Without Border (RSF) in an open letter to Pakistan's Prime Minister also recognised "the alarming decline in the state of press freedom in the country and to take urgent measures to address the issue".⁴ The challenges and problems to investigative journalism in the three phases of FATA are the same. The only change recognized by the journalists is in the narrative of the mouthpieces of Taliban to the military. With integration of FATA into KPA, the investigative journalism is still under threat. There is a need that the authorities rethink their policy and allow investigative journalists to play their role which is vital for development of the under-developed areas such as the FATA territories.

⁴ <https://rsf.org/en/news/after-year-press-freedom-violations-rsf-writes-pakistans-premier>

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Introduction

To define investigative journalism, we quote Hugo de Burgh " *The investigative journalists associate rational observation with moral empathy and make exploitation and abuse a subject for analysis, discussion and investigation. more and more common* " (H. de Burgh, 2008, quote pp, 16). For Mark Lee Hunter, " *Investigative journalism involves exposing hidden information and stories to the public - either deliberately by someone in a position to do so, or by chance, behind a chaotic mass of facts and circumstances that obscure the meaning of things* " (MLH, 2009, quote pp. 7)

Both of these definitions show that investigative journalism is a special genre that is not limited to publishing information but to revealing facts previously unknown to the general public. Unpublished information on cases whose secret details are by a person in a position of strength. Through a long-term work and its own initiatives, the journalist realizes substantive work, consult different sources, overlaps information, digs deep, picks the smallest details, questions experts. He rakes up every finding. A substantive work that requires the mobilization of significant human and financial resources, in short. The aim is to carry out a reliable, high-quality investigation revealing facts hitherto hidden. " *We need journalists living their profession as a commitment. Journalists, who not only do their work seriously by being rigorous, accurate and complete, knowing how to check, cross check, source, contextualize, respecting all the rules of their professional craft, but also, if not especially, journalists aware of the democratic responsibility that is required from them. Journalism, in short, that works on two legs, the job one lives of and the democracy that legitimizes it* " (Edwy Plenel, director of Médiapart, 2013 quote pp.24) "

Investigative journalism is a journalistic genre that stands out by the duration of work on the same subject. The survey can be spread out over weeks or even months before the results are ready to be revealed to the general public. With great perseverance and patience, the journalist consults his various sources, checks, interrogates the sources, makes the witnesses speak His analysis of the facts is motivated by the expected result : the discovery of new facts. As a result, investigative journalism assumes that the journalist had direct access to the sources, that he personally verified the information - not by proxy - before proceeding and publishing facts. It also implies a responsibility, an independence from the political or economic powers, and a depth of analysis that resists the temptation of the audience or the race to exclusivity.

Thus, investigative journalism is a job that requires sacrifice, time, availability and resources. So many cases revealed through investigative journalism (Watergate, Rainbow Warrior, the case of tainted blood, Panama Papers ...) have put news hunters in the spotlight. However, given the global economic situation, there are few newsrooms that can afford to invest financially for investigations that can span several months, with the risk that the investigation will not succeed. Note however that the financial constraint is not the only one to take into account, we will come back to it later on.

Investigative journalism also includes risks. In fact, by investigating sensitive cases, journalists can put their lives in danger. For example, Nicolas Giudici, journalist and philosopher was murdered in 2001 near his village of Haute-Corse at the age of 52 years.

Jean-Pascal Couraud and Kieffer have respectively disappeared under mysterious circumstances in 1997 and 2004 ... just to name a few.

Commercial or political pressures are also exerted. The investigation can also lead to legal proceedings against the journalist and the media he or she represents. For toughest, the purpose is to succeed in "tying» the record in a professional manner, evidence to support, despite all the obstacles. Indeed, the investigative journalist is aware of the role he plays in the democratic management of public affairs, by informing citizens about possible dysfunctions in public affairs.

In Morocco, the margin of maneuver of journalists is marked by landmarks with constitutional value and limited by red lines. Hence, the interest of our study in which we will attempt to answer the following questions:

- Does investigative journalism exist in Morocco?
- What are the prospects for the future of investigative journalism in Morocco?

Limiting the scope of this theme leads us to restrict it to a more specific question / problem: If it does exist, how can investigative journalism developed in Morocco ?

These questions already assume that in Morocco, there would not be many investigative journalists. And that, if they exist, their room for maneuver is limited. These hypotheses remain to prove, explain and validate. This is why we have planned to carry out a research to define the positioning of Morocco compared to other countries from the point of view of freedom of expression and practice of investigative journalism To conduct our research, we will examine the period spanning the first decade of the 2000s, which represents the golden age of the independent press in Morocco. To take stock of investigative journalism in Morocco would allow us to forecast its future.

Comparative to the international:

Before answering these questions, it is important to anchor a point of reference to Moroccan investigative journalism in relation to other countries. The situation of this journalistic genre can vary enormously between countries for a plethora of reasons relating to the freedom of the press, the limited rights granted to independent journalists or even - and especially - to the existing state system. Other political factors can seriously undermine the practice of this genre by independent journalists, or even jeopardize their careers or their lives. Thus, we will begin by giving an overview of investigative journalism in Europe, the Americas and Hispanic countries before delving deeper into the question of Moroccan investigative journalism through a comparison with the mentioned cases. earlier.

I) Europe and North America:

at. In the United States :

Historically, the print media is the source of investigative journalism. The Watergate affair, which broke out in the United States, has publicized the concept of investigative journalism following the spectacular consequences it has led to. Indeed, the scandal of Watergate, which is a matter of political espionage, led in 1974 to the resignation of Richard Nixon, then President of the United States. At the base, Robert Woodward and Carl Beirnsstein, two curious and stubborn journalists from the Washington Post, have come back on the trail of clues discovered in a simple burglary, which will take them to the White House. The authorities have been forced to take action. It should be noted that the two journalists had a secret and reliable

source in the person of W. Mark Felt (aka “deep throat”) , former deputy director of the FBI under Richard Nixon. This information , namely his identity was revealed 31 years later, by Vanity Fair May 31, 2005.

Today, investigative journalism in America is no longer the priority of editorial teams on the lookout for sensationalism and immediate gain. The time and money required for the investigation is a deterrent. As is the risk of costly lawsuits against the media in question. The investigation gradually shifted away from sensitive politics and corporate topics to portraits of celebrities and easy topics (Mark Lee Hunter, 1997).

Historically, the Watergate affair is the best thing that has happened to the profession. It has helped to make journalism credible and to give its acclaim to this genre: investigative journalism.

b. In France :

The French journalists have been marked by the Watergate affair demonstrates the ability of journalists to exercise public morality to trigger the resignation of a president of the United States. It was in the years 1980 then 1990 that this new form of journalism has emerged then asserted itself in the French Hexagon. Famous writings like *The World*, *The Express*, *The Point*, *The Chained Duck*, *Liberation*, *The Event of Thursday ...* start to deal with important sensitive issues : the flaws in the independence of justice, the major political parties, major institutions such as the Presidency of the Republic, the Gendarmerie, large companies (Credit Lyonnais, ELF ...). However, " *The journalistic investigation in France suffers from the difficulty of accessing the official documentation, unlike the United States where journalists can use the Freedom of Information Act to break the law. wall of the administration's silence* ", (Mark Hunter, 1997).

II) Latin America:

at. Case of Hispanic Countries:

Investigative journalism in Latin America has caused the imprisonment of high-ranking personalities. Indeed, in the past 15 years, corruption scandals and human rights violations have been reported in Mexico, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Peru, Chile, Argentina and Brazil (Cárdenas and González, 2006). The press played a key role in uncovering the illegal and unethical behavior of the main authorities in the countries of the region. In each case, the reports had a double impact: first, they became Latin American Watergates equivalent, ambitious institutions, persecuting influential figures and demanding reforms. And, secondly, they have transformed the way in which Latin American research journalism was understood and have influenced it to date. In addition, the projection and the consequences of these stories have multiplied because of the media coverage of our societies. The impact of these cases is understood not only by the characteristics they themselves have and by the actors they have involved, but also by the fact that the press and the media have on many occasions been involved in the role they should play in institutions such as the judiciary, for example. Where, supposedly, institutions should work, journalism has often taken its place. All these cases are reminiscent of the Watergate affair and the series of notes and reports published by the Washington Post in the 1970s that contributed to the resignation of Richard Nixon from the presidency of the United States in 1974. The two young journalists Robert Woodward and Carl Bernstein who uncovered an illegal scheme and unethical designed by the White House itself and to sabotage the Democratic candidate for president, George McGovern. For this, Woodward and Berstein methodically followed the clues and encountered enormous obstacles

(Bernstein and Woodward, 1984). This well-known case is the canon of investigative journalism and is the model used by Latin American journalists.

b. Case of Brazil:

If journalists from Hispanic countries receive praise and encouragement for successfully exposing a number of scandals related to corruption in their political circles despite cartel threats, Brazil is not particularly known for its respect for human rights and liberty of press. In this regard, let us mention the example of the Brazilian journalist Wellington Macedo, who received not less than 59 legal proceedings for his report "Educação do Mal" (The Education of Evil). According to the 2019 Reporters Without Frontiers (RSF) report on the independence of medias, Brazil remains one of the most violent countries in Latin America for the practice of journalism, and media professionals are regularly murdered for their work. » . Brazil ranks, according to the report, the 105th in the world rankings for freedom of the press in 2019.

In Morocco / History

Investigative journalism in Morocco as elsewhere is needed as a genre expected at a time when the conventional press is running out of steam. All the more because of the change in journalistic practices and the habits of readers. Investigative journalism, or investigative journalism, could therefore take over and allow big business to break out. But is there a real expectation of this kind of unprecedented revelations from Moroccan readers and from those responsible? Yet especially from a citizen who puts his stability and security at the top of his priorities?

Since independence, and for nearly four decades, the print media in Morocco was mainly a partisan press. Each political party has its own press organ, in Arabic of course and even in French.

However, during the reign of the late King Hassan II, this press affiliated with the national political parties was slowed down in its tracks. The regime does not tolerate that the " fourth power " weighs heavily on the sociological field or the political field of the country. Over the years, the tone of the early sixties of the partisan press will weaken. The trend is in alignment. The press should not be disturbed. The country is still far from the freedom of expression punctuated by international organizations. Concerning radio and television, and through the reign of the late king Hassan II, they are wards of the state.

A new era, however, will begin in the 1990s, with the emergence of an independent press, not affiliated with political parties. It focuses on outreach and gives primacy to information. Several titles will appear gradually and distinguish themselves during this decade : Al Moutine, Al Oubou3 Sahafi, Al Ahdate Al Maghribia ... or other media, who would like to make economic investigation their specialty.

A specialty much more terrifying than political attacks. The work of investigation, which is the weak point of the national press, is beginning to become serious . And the regime lets it go, with however red lines not to be exceeded. The country does not want to be accused by the international community of missing the basic rules of democracy, particularly on the freedom of expression aspect. Khalid Jamaï, editor of " L'Opinion " (affiliated with the Istiqlal party) will also participate in the experience of the newspaper " La Vie Economique " and will be the subject of many censors. In 1997, the press organ " Economic Life " was bought by Aziz Akhannouch, current Minister of Agriculture, Maritime Fisheries, Rural Development and Waters and Forests. However , young independent journalists, trained in economics and finance

have made their hand in the columns of " La Vie Economique ". Notably, Aboubakr Jamaï (son of journalist Khalid Jamaï), Ali Amar, Ahmed Réda Benchemsi.

Although the field of freedom of expression in Morocco is sensitive , these journalists will launch in the late 90s, titles that will resonate with the readership and will prevail in the Moroccan media field : The Weekly Newspaper (flagship support of the independent press in Morocco, created in 1997 under the name *Le journal*) by the trio Aboubakr Jamaï, Ali Amar and Hassan Mansouri. The fact is that this independent newspaper has talked topics previously taboo like, human rights, Islamism, the years of lead....The activity of the weekly will be definitively stopped on January 25, 2010 .

Telquel (created in 2001) by the Telquel Media Company is a weekly magazine whose free editorial line is often critical of the Government . He will be the subject of numerous legal proceedings since 2003 . Ahmed Reda Benchemsi, director of Telquel eventually sells his shares and left Morocco in 2010 for the United States where he became a professor at Stanford University.

These two supports, *The Weekly Newspaper* and *Telquel* defended free editorial lines and especially critical of the power in place. This was their least fault.

25 November 2000, the newspaper *the Weekly* published the letter Faqih Basri, former socialist leader, in which it accuses the left-wing party and its leaders to be involved in the failed coup of 1972 . The Government of Abderrahmane Youssoufi is splashed. A fault considered unforgivable The Journal, printed in France, is prohibited entry to Morocco . The Minister of Culture and Communication, Mohamed A Chraïri announced on December 2, 2000 the definitive ban on the publication of *the weekly* for having "undermined the stability of the State" (Article 77 of the Code press which entitles the Prime Minister to ban a publication if the content violates the foundations of the state. (the same section 77 has long been maligned).. Pressure and a strategy of strangulation end up having the better of " *The Weekly Newspaper* ". It will be seized by ushers in 2010. A few months later, *Nichane* , the Arabic version of *Telquel* aborted and went bankrupt because of advertisers boycotting them. Long before, in 2003, Ali Mrabet, founder of *Demain magazine* (in French) and *Doumane* (in Arabic) , two satirical publications, goes to trial for " attacking the person of the King ". He will be banned from writing in national newspapers for 10 years. He will choose to go into exile in Spain. Other journalists, too curious of the taste for the leaders will be arrested. Case of Rachid Niny.

Ahmed Réda Benchemsi, Aboubakr Jamaï, Ali Amar and Hassan Mansouri, will go to exile in countries abroad.

The Moroccan regime wants to preserve its interests and its image. They also have at their disposal a surefire means of pressure on the media : advertising, the nerve of war without which weekly and daily press can not survive.

In Reporters Without Frontiers (RSF) 2019 World Press Freedom Index, Morocco is ranked 135th of 180 countries. *In Morocco, in addition to the trials that have been going on for years against several media players, the year 2018 has been marked by strong judicial pressure on journalists. The Moroccan authorities deliberately hindered the work of national and foreign media working on the Rif Hiraq or the now taboo issue of migration. Several lawsuits have been filed against both citizen and professional journalists. Several are currently imprisoned, and prison sentences and fines have been imposed, while foreign journalists have been deported.* ", Says the report of the organization.

It should be noted that in this ranking, Morocco is ahead of Tunisia (72th), Mauritania (94th), Lebanon (101th), Kuwait (108th). As for Algeria, the country is ranked 141 in the RSF ranking.

However, the Ministry of Culture and Communication considers this report biased :

" In a new violation of the rules of impartiality, the organization Reporters Without Borders (RSF), published its report of 2019 which the part devoted to Morocco reports the " decline " of the freedom of the press under the year 2018, through what this report describes as "strong pressure of justice against journalists" and "high number of complaints against professional journalists and some" citizen journalists ". The same report argues that "the Moroccan authorities have deliberately hindered the work of national and foreign media ," said the statement of the Ministry of Culture and Communication, which accuses the report of RSF to be imprecise.

Morocco : Difficulty breaking the wall of silence

In 2002, the Moroccan authorities in the context of the modernization of the sector, agree to open the sector of the press to private initiative.

Official Bulletin of 1/12/2016 states that *freedom of the press is guaranteed, in accordance with the provisions of Article 28 of the Constitution, and can not be limited by any form of prior censorship. Freedom of thought, opinion and expression is guaranteed to all, in accordance with the provisions of Article 25 of the Constitution. These rights and freedoms are exercised in accordance with the Constitution and under the conditions and in the manner provided for by this Law, Law No. 89-13 on the status of professional journalists and Law No. 90-13 on the National Council of the press. Freedom of printing and distribution of newspapers and other publications is guaranteed under this law* (Official Bulletin of 1/12/2016).

In 1948, Morocco, then colonized by France and Spain, was a signatory of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. " Freedom of opinion consists of the freedom of thought associated with freedom of expression : it allows everyone to think and express their thoughts without prior censorship, but not without sanctions, if this freedom harms someone ". Morocco, however, will quickly ratify this declaration as soon as it becomes independent.

It should be noted that the Moroccan legislator has defined priorities such as the constants of the Kingdom which must be respected. According to Article 1 of the Basic Law, these constants are " *moderate Muslim religion, national unity with multiple tributaries, constitutional monarchy and democratic choice* ".

a / The Muslim religion :

Islam is the first " *unifying constants* " on which the nation relies in its collective life . Therefore, no publication should affect it. In 2006, the Arabic-language weekly *Nichane* published a report entitled " *Moroccans laugh at religion, sex and politics* ". The article was embellished with jokes around these three aspects. In conservative circles, it was a shock. The sentence was not long in coming : Three months in prison suspended and a fine of 80,000 DH pronounced by the Court of First Instance of Casablanca against Driss Ksikès, Director of the support, and Sanâ El Aji, editor.

b / National unity :

Territorial integrity or national uniqueness is one of the main constants of the country. The late King Hassan II and King Mohamed VI use the term " first national cause " in this sense. This is how the Sahara affair is a taboo, a red line that must not be crossed. In 2000, the weekly *Le Journal* had made an interview with Mohamed Abdelaziz, Secretary General of the Polisario Front, in which he called for the independence of Western Sahara. If the journalist violates Islam or territorial uniqueness, the penalties and fines are applied.

c / Constitutional Monarchy :

In Morocco, any publication that touches on the monarchical nature of the state is prohibited. Offenses against the King or the Royal Family are not tolerated. (quote article new press code) In 2009, and the Arabic-language daily *Al Jarida Al Oula* (director Ali Anouzla) and the Arabic-language weekly *Al Michaâl* (Director Driss Chatane) had published false information, according to the floor, on the health of the King. But the person of the King is " inviolable " as specified in the Constitution. His health is a taboo subject. Hence the sanction against the two supports including a year in prison for Driss Chahtane in October 2009. (The journalist will then be pardoned by the King for family reasons).

Other constants can be quoted ... because they could be considered as a brake on the freedom of expression However, it would first be necessary to advance a conclusion : In Morocco, the majority of the editorial offices are only exposing and commenting information (electronic newsrooms, in their race to click, are not as demanding, so regardless of the financial and human resources that the investigation requires, is journalistic conduct first of all mastered and the nature of the environment Is it adequate for its expansion ? " As the most complete form of the information profession, investigative journalism requires a perfect mastery of the most advanced journalistic techniques to track down secrecy wherever it is ." It is therefore imperative for the journalist to know how to master the various journalistic techniques before being able to aspire to the title of great reporter investigator.

In Morocco, the wall of silence is hard to break and the access to information problem is the biggest obstacle that faces nt journalists. The Article 6 Law No. 8813 on the press and publishing in Morocco stipulates also that

" Journalists and press organizations and institutions have the right to access sources of information and to obtain information from various sources, except for information that is confidential or for which the right of access limited in accordance with the second paragraph of Article 27 of the Constitution. "

Bearing in mind that Article 2 of the Press and Publication Law No. 8813 in Morocco stipulates that " freedom of the press shall be guaranteed in accordance with the provisions of Article 28 [1] of the Constitution, and can not be limited by any form of prior censorship. Freedom of thought, opinion and expression is guaranteed to all, in accordance with the provisions of Article 25[2] of the Constitution . For journalist Aboubakr Jamai, a teacher since the closure

of the Journal Hebdo in 2010, there are no longer independent media institutions and yet recognizes the individual work of some " honest journalists " (in The Desk of 8/12/2016)

In Morocco, independent news organizations that have invested investigative journalism have not been able to register in sustainability because of the retention of information following the sensitive topics raised. But also because of the pressures financial exercised e s via the yoke of publicity , lawsuits The period spanning the first decade of the 2000s was the golden age of investigative journalism in Morocco. After the historic stage of the Arab Spring , a new form of journalism emerged. It is more spectacular and faster.

Media media working to avoid prosecution. It should be noted that these " pressures " are not unique to Morocco. It's the same in other countries, more free. " *We have all experienced the phone calls made to our press bosses to try to block a publication or broadcast, threatening letters, lawsuits, some of us have even been placed under surveillance* " , (Fabrice ARFI and Paul Moreira in *Informer is not a crime* , page, 8).

Conclusion

In Morocco, although the country is a signatory to various international covenants and treaties relating to equality to rights and freedoms, the environment is not conducive to the conduct of the investigation. The climate oscillating between freedom and non-freedom. Difficult access to information also does not facilitate the task and restricts the freedom of the press and the room for maneuver of journalists. Thus, repressive force, a new form of journalism has emerged, a journalism called " investigation " my is cheaply, safer and more spectacular. Where journalists reinvest land already exploited to recycle scripted information, regulated by the return of chestnut trees.

Now, investigative journalism is necessary to safeguard public morals. It should be noted that the obstacles to investigation are not only the difficulty of access to information and certain red lines. Training is also essential and will allow journalists to be well prepared to analyze, crosscheck, manage sources, formulate hypotheses, verify them, then affirm or deny them. The challenge for the media is to stand out with in-depth articles. This is not necessarily the case today as the media tend to become more standardized and end up resembling each other.

Real information, unprecedented, is relegated to the background in favor of more spectacular information, more noisy, less thorough but more buzz.

It follows from the above that in Morocco, investigative journalism deviates from its primary function of informing by raising the veil on sensitive issues to switch into entertainment and the spectacular. In this context, does this journalistic genre have any chance of developing and surviving in Morocco or will it sink into oblivion?

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Fact-checking, Democracy and Public Transparency: The 2018 Brazilian Elections Case

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Abstract

This paper presents partial results of a doctorate research about the usage and the availability of data for the fact-checking practice during the 2018 Brazilian elections. Based on the perceptions of journalists who worked as fact-checkers, we discuss the impact of the verification practice in the promotion of democracy and public transparency in a disinformation scenario. Our conclusion is that the checkings had low traction amongst the citizens compared to the reach of fake contents, which represent a challenge to the contemporary journalism and democracy in emerging countries.

Keywords: fact-checking; data journalism; public transparency; democracy.

Introduction

This paper presents partial results of the doctorate research defended by the author in March 2019, at Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (Porto Alegre, Brazil). Based on the Weberian method, the thesis describes an ideal type – “verification journalism” – to study the practice of fact-checking under the perspective of the structural changes in journalism (Charron; Bonville, 2016), from the case of the *Truco nos Estados* project, supported by *Agência Pública*.

The sliced data presented in this essay has compiled data from a questionnaire answered by 17 of the 31 journalists who worked as fact-checkers for *Truco* in the 2018 elections, which represent 54.8% of the professionals associated to the project. Some results bring attention to limits and potentialities of fact-checking in the promotion of public transparency and its impact on democracy in times of disinformation. The questionnaire was distributed through the newsroom internal mailing to be answered spontaneously and anonymously online.

Competencies associated to data driven journalism were strongly used by the fact-checkers: for 88.2% of the interviewees knowledge on sheets and tables are necessary for the checking process, as well as notions on accounting and open data. Although finding data was not considered a difficulty for their work, 88.3% strongly agreed that, despite the existence of

available data, it was not always friendly to an automated reading, which reveals precariousness in the active transparency of governmental bodies.

Moreover, none of the interviewees accredited a high level of impact of their checkings on the public, which can be partially associated to a difficulty the fact-checkers had to distribute their contents through more attractive channels and formats, but can also be understood as part of a broader phenomenon of rejection of facts, typical of a post-truth environment.

Communication strategies in closed groups with the use of fraudulent or ill-intended contents apparently had more traction amongst Brazilian voters: statistics gathered by the fact-checking site *Aos Fatos* showed that fake news was shared 3.8 million times during the 2018 presidential campaign.

By deepening the thinking about these results, this paper contributes to the discussion about the risks of these practices in the young democracy of developing countries, in order to build coping strategies that involve media platforms, governments and the civil society.

Context and concepts

Throughout the 20th century, journalism was reinforced in democratic societies as a discursive practice committed to the ideals of truth, objectivity and public interest. Influenced by the positivist spirit of the age, the journalistic text became a specific discourse genre, the “news”, based on facts and evidences. The newspapers assumed the role of government inspectors, guardians of democracy or “society’s watchdogs”.

From the 1970’s on, tensions between journalism, politics and market, potentialized by intense technological transformations, promoted a paradigmatic change in journalism (Charron; Bonville, 2016), expressed in the discursive practices of newspapers and journalists. In a hypercompetition information market, the Canadian researchers Jean Charron and Jean de Bonville (2016) identified changes in the tone and format of journalistic texts.

Even to inform, understanding is now also necessary. The subjectivity of the interlocutor is more and more aggravated, the journalist tries to dialogue with the reader and the segmentation of content is more and more determined by the consumer preferences. The public sphere is reduced to small groups of specific interests and there are fewer great topics shared in society. In this scenario, the journalistic paradigm designed by the Canadian researchers blooms as “journalism of communication”.

The paradigmatic – or structural – changes in journalism described by Charron and Bonville (2016) inspire the formulation of “journalism of verification” as an ideal type to study

new transformations in journalism, in a media ecosystem dominated by digital platforms and algorithms (Bell; Owen, 2017). More than the collapse of the traditional journalism business model, this new environment, made of multiple channels and abundant information, created a paradox: disinformation [1] (Wardle, 2018).

Democratic processes around the world are being impacted by this ecosystem, which is implicated in the creation of a strongly polarized political environment, which brought into evidence new journalistic practices and initiatives from outside the mainstream tendencies. That is the case of fact-checking specialized agencies, which are not dedicated to verify information checked by journalists in a newsroom, but to classify public discourses based on levels of veracity.

According to a *Duke Reporters' Lab* recent survey, the quantity of active fact-checking projects more than tripled since their first survey, in 2014, going from 44 to 149 initiatives in 2018 (Stencel; Griffin, 2018, online). These initiatives are present in all the five continents, including operations in places such as Israel, Kenya, South Korea and even China.

In a speech during the 5th Global Fact-Checking Summit, carried out in Rome, in June 2018, attended by 225 participants from 55 countries, Alexios Mantzarlis, then the director of the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN), pointed out, however, that the influence has grown much faster than the quantity of the initiatives (Mantzarlis, 2018, online).

An evidence is the fact that Facebook, a media platform of great influence in the voting processes of 2016, which involve the Brexit campaign, in the United Kingdom, and Donald Trump's election, in the United States, signed partnerships with fact-checking agencies to verify suspicious contents in the social network. The measure was an attempt to reduce disinformation in other democratic processes, such as the 2018 elections in Brazil. From this specific case, we intend to discuss the impact of fact-checking on the promotion of democracy and public transparency in the Brazilian context.

In the doctoral thesis, which serves as basis for this paper, "journalism of verification" was used as an ideal type (Seibt, 2019) to study the empirical phenomenon observed in the daily practice of the journalists who worked at the *Truco nos Estados* project, supported by *Agência Pública*, which verified the statements of governor candidates in seven Brazilian states, as well as pronouncements of presidential candidates in the 2018 campaign.

The case study was developed as a participatory research (Peruzzo, 2006), since the researcher acted directly as reporter and editor at the *Truco* project in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. Notes in camp diaries and interviews with journalists were the main sources for empirical data to establish relations between the practices, processes and perceptions of the

journalists with the ongoing social changes, in order to discuss the possibility of a paradigmatic change in contemporary journalism. The research results indicate that the transformations in journalism are deeper than “ordinary changes” [2], yet still premature to sustain a paradigmatic change.

The most important is highlighting that, although the economic dimension of journalism has a significant impact on the discursive practice of journalists – and it is this relation that drives Charron and Bonville’s (2016) historical typology of journalistic practices –, merely finding a new way of financing will not solve this matter. There is a more significant institutional disruption in contemporary democratic societies, which trespasses the very normative principles that inspire journalists and the psycho cognitive environment in which the journalistic text is decoded in the current socio-historical context.

These observations support the hypothesis that we face a pre-paradigmatic period (Kuhn, 1975) in contemporary journalism. In this way, “journalism of verification” as an ideal type (Weber, 2014), now considered to study the practice of fact-checking, can inspire research on other journalistic practices or even the creation of new types.

Methodology

Ideal type is a theoretical-methodological instrument created by Max Weber, in the beginning of the 20th century. Considered one of the founders of modern sociology, Weber uses “pure” types as theoretical models to compare them to what is observed in empirical reality. To be valid, an ideal type needs to reach empirical evidence, because, if there is no proof that the ideally constructed deployment of behavior takes place *in some manner* in practice, this sort of law, the more evident it may be, would be a construction of no value to the knowledge of real action (Weber, 2014, p. 7, emphasis added).

In other words, if the ideal-typical action is not minimally reproduced in the real action, its formulation has no value to sociological knowledge. Charron and Bonville (2016) use the Weberian method to describe a historical typology of journalistic practices. According to them, Weber, being unable to describe a reality in an exhaustive way, suggests replacing that description by an ideal type, that is, an abstract representation of this reality with some traces considered typical or characteristic by the researcher (Charron; Bonville, 2016, p. 36). Thus conceived, an ideal type is taken by the Canadian researchers as a guide to observe the reality and formulate hypotheses.

Based on the typical characteristics of the journalistic discourse published in Quebec newspapers from the 17th century to the end of the 20th century, Charron and Bonville (2016) describe four ideal types of journalism: transmission (from the 17th century to early 18th century), opinion (from the end of the 18th century to early 19th century), information (from the end of the 19th century to the 20th century) and communication (the last decades of the 20th century).

The most recent type, identified in the 1970's, is stimulated by technical innovations and liberalization of markets. According to Charron and Bonville (2016), the digitalization and miniaturization of equipment and the development of telecommunications put the norms of production, broadcast and information consumption at stake, affecting the journalistic text formerly materialized in the news. In the last decades of the 20th century, the journalistic genres are more acceptant to subjectivity and conceive vast space to commentary.

The hybridism between the discourse of the press and other forms of mediatic discourse is tolerated and even encouraged: fiction mingles with reality; secondary news acquire the status of event; information becomes entertainment and easily adopts a humourous or familiar, conversational tone; effusion and emotion substitute explanation; the tone and style of promotional discourse impregnate the discourse of the press. (Charron; Bonville, 2016, p. 30).

The meaning the authors give to “communication” in the definition of this ideal type refers to the practice inspired by the interpersonal communication: journalists trigger all the functions of discourse in order to simulate a direct and personalized communication with the audience, stressing the phatic function of language as a distinctive characteristic [3]. In such scenario, the news goes into decline.

Each type of journalism identified by Charron and Bonville (2016) represents a “journalistic paradigm”, which elaboration takes us to the study of scientific paradigms by Thomas Kuhn (1975). Detailing this concept is not within the scope of the present paper. However, in general terms, it is possible to say that the paradigm corresponds to a “normative system”, a set of rules with a founded practice recognized by the journalistic community (Charron; Bonville, 2016, p. 68).

Throughout history, journalistic practices were reproduced and accepted within the correspondent paradigms, which went through gradual changes as the sociohistorical contexts

of their production changed. As deviations from the rules overlap, the paradigm is no longer recognized by the community and then there is a rupture.

To identify such paradigmatic changes, the Canadian theorists conceive their paradigms in a structural perspective, founded in 14 parameters that interrelate in the journalistic paradigms. The parameters are: journalistic texts, journalistic practice, journalists, journalistic organization, media production, media, information sources, financing sources, audience, cultural practices and values, socio-cultural institutions, law and political system, economy.

It is from the crisscross of the structuring parameters of the journalistic paradigm that Charron and Bonville (2016) recognize the transformation factors that lead to the transition of a paradigm to another throughout history. This is only noticeable through the observation of what the Canadian theorists call “newspaper system”, in other words, the set of media vehicles that coexist in the same space-time.

“Journalism of verification” is conceived as a theoretical model to be used in the comparison with the empirical phenomenon observed in the contemporary “newspaper system”. For such observation, three strategies of approximation to the object of study were undertaken: observing the work routine of journalists at the *Agência Pública’s Truco* project newsroom, in São Paulo, before the electoral period; working as a fact-checker in the 2018 elections coverage for the *Truco nos Estados* project; and making structured interviews with the journalists that took part in the coverage.

Partial results

One of the indicators of change in the journalistic paradigm that helps thinking over the impact of “journalism of verification” in the promotion of public transparency and democracy concerns the capacity of journalism to influence reality. Charron and Bonville (2016) assume that the journalistic production influences reality which journalism has the mission to represent. Therefore, the kind of journalism that is produced corresponds to the adjacent sociohistorical context and vice versa. The reality represented by a newspaper in the 1800’s deeply differs of the reality represented by a newspaper in the 2000’s, according to the authors. Thereby, understanding the sociocultural values of a determined space-time, as well as the relation between journalism and these values is fundamental to tension the changes in journalism.

Based on this premise, Charron and Bonville (2016, p. 222) verify if it is the social actors that define reality in the newspaper or if it is the newspaper that lends its definition of reality to the actors in order to direct their actions. In the historical typology of journalistic

practices they elaborated, it is evident that the influence of reality in the newspaper and vice versa was more balanced in “journalism of information” and would be totally inverted in “journalism of communication”.

In the “journalism of communication” paradigm, the authors realize that the media exert a disproportionate influence on the sociocultural values. The “consumption society” would have created an environment in which the media production determines behavior and actions more intensely than behavior and actions are capable of determining the media production because of the strong interference of the financing sources in the production of content. This limits the editorial penetration of certain topics in the news, which reduces, therefore, the influence of reality on the newspaper.

In the “journalism of verification”, there seems to be again a balance in this game of influence, if we consider that the fact-checking practice deals with the discourses that are already public, that is, they already compose a dimension of the reality that the newspaper intends to represent. This happens because, in the contemporary media ecosystem, where the digital platforms of social participation are protagonists, there is a minor dependence of the established media vehicles for topics, brands or actions to gain visibility.

Besides that, it is necessary to point out that the journalistic reality in the contemporary context is no longer restricted to a concrete referent, but to something that “virtually happens”. Ronaldo Henn (2013) has been working on the elaboration of a “cyberhappening” concept that helps understanding what we are talking about by triggering this kind of referent of the “journalism of verification”. For Henn (2013, p. 8), social networks on the internet are not only sociability spaces, but also profitable places for the outbreak of happenings.

The concept also bears other more fluid ways of happening on the internet, as a place that potentializes the circulation of news or viral content that becomes news. When fact-checking promotes the verification of rumors and largely spread web chain letters, it can be said that the journalistic production is based on a cyberhappening, and that is a form of influence of reality over the newspapers. This also occurs when the practice takes into consideration public statements of great repercussion.

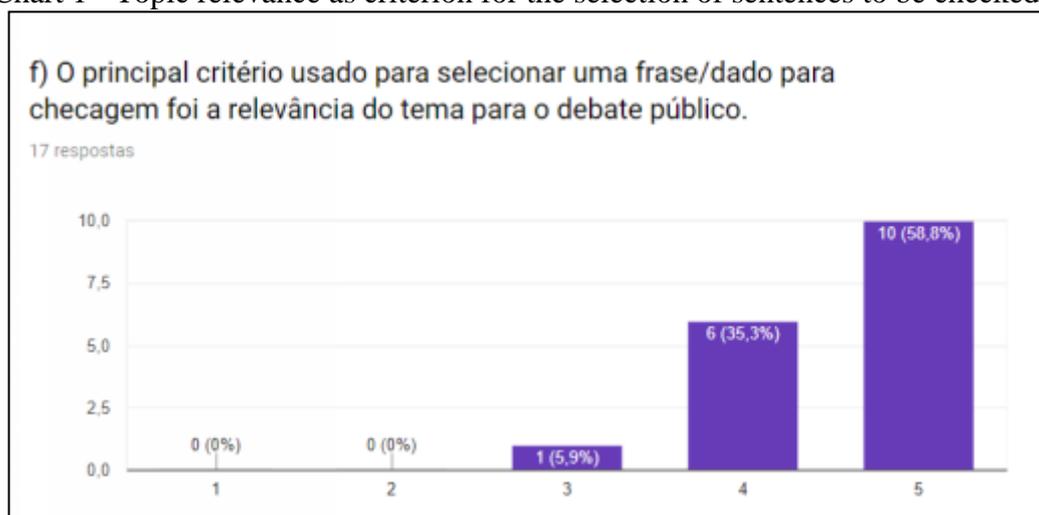
It is in this way that the balance between the influence of the actors over the newspaper and vice versa is reestablished, which can be problematic to democracy. Excessively determined by the verification of rumors and social network chain letters or even controversial statements uttered by public agents that buzz on the internet, fact-checking may end up giving more attention to minor topics in the perspective of the democratic agenda. Instead of debating

major themes, the coverage may give emphasis to lies and false polemics that went viral on digital platforms, providing them an even wider reach.

In the case of *Truco nos Estados*, the journalists indicated low preference for viral contents in the selection of discourses to be checked. After the coverage of the 2018 elections, an online questionnaire was sent to the 31 journalists who were part of the team in seven states. The corpus is made of 17 respondents, with representation from all the seven project participant states.

In the questionnaire, the journalists were asked about how much they agreed with a set of assertions, being 1 the lowest level of agreement and 5 the highest. In face of the assertion that the relevance of a topic to the public debate was the main criterion to select a sentence to be checked, 94.1% (or 16 of the 17 respondents) strongly agreed (levels 4 and 5 in the chart below, in which 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree):

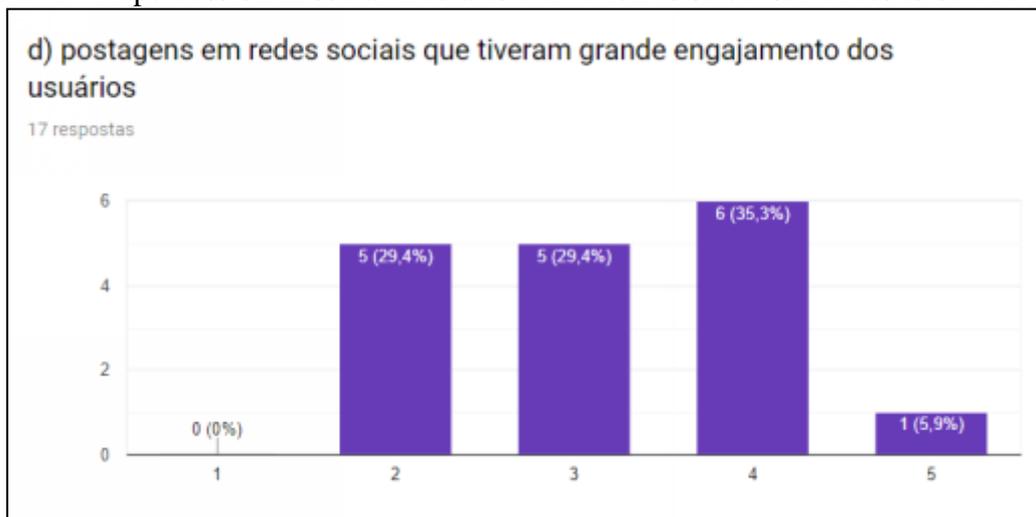
Chart 1 - Topic relevance as criterion for the selection of sentences to be checked



Source: Seibt, 2019, p. 179.

Truco's Fact-Checking Handbook [4] indicates five prerequisites for the selection of sentences and “being relevant to the public debate” is the first one. Still according to the online questionnaire, the criterion of relevance to the public debate had significantly more importance to the journalists than the repercussion of the topic in social networks, which was indicated as a source of selection of sentences by 41.2% of the interviewees (options 4 and 5 in the chart, in which 1 = very rarely and 5 = very frequently):

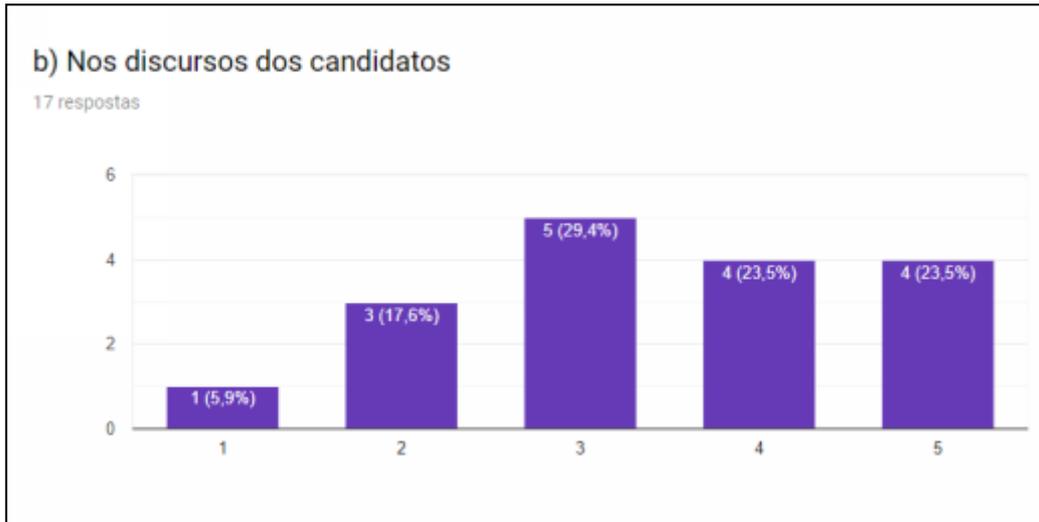
Chart 2 - Repercussion in social media as a criterion to select sentences to be checked



Source: Seibt, 2019, p. 180.

If the case of *Truco nos Estados* is little illustrative of how viral contents represent an influence factor of the social actors over the journalistic reality, other than different fact-checking initiatives [5], the influence of newspapers over the actors could be dimensioned by the impact on the candidates' discourses: 47% of the journalists indicated higher levels of influence over the candidates' discourse (levels 4 and 5 in the chart, in which 1 = low impact and 5 = high impact):

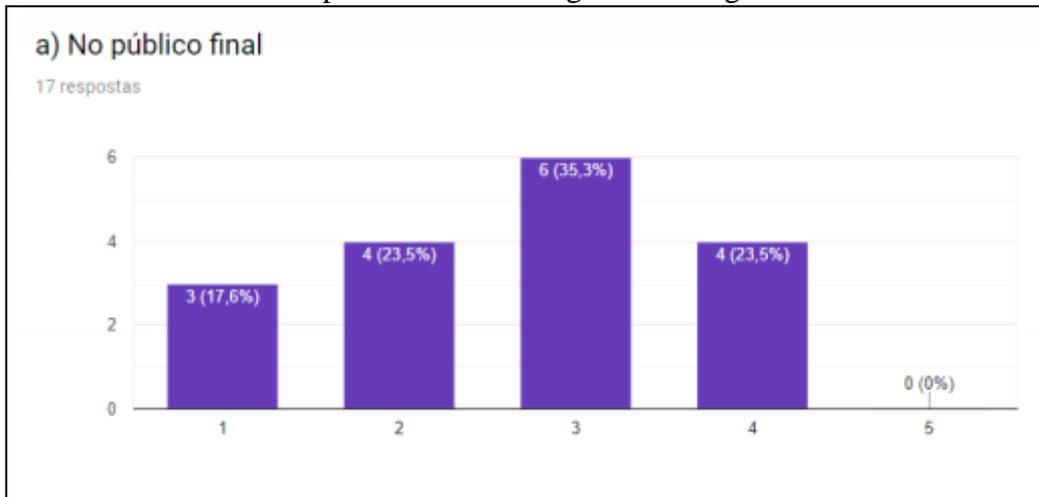
Chart 3 - Impact of the checkings on the candidates' discourses



Source: Seibt, 2019, p. 195.

The level of influence on the target audience was much lower, as demonstrated in the chart below (in which 1 = low impact and 5 = high impact):

Chart 4 - Impact of the checkings on the target audience



Source: Seibt, 2019, p. 195.

Truco orientated the journalists during the coverage of the 2018 elections to feed a report of impact, in order to generate more qualitative metrics to evaluate the coverage.

One example of the impact observed in the participant research was the checking of data about the land concentration in the state of Rio Grande do Sul mentioned in a government action plan. The data had as reference the 2006 Census of Agriculture, made by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics [*Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, IBGE*],

but in July 2018, IBGE published new data from the 2017 Census of Agriculture, which changed the proportion.

The checking labeled the original data as “true”, considering the reference period, but presented the updated data in the text. The content was reposted on the candidate’s official Facebook page and he started to quote, in interviews and debates, the updated data. Yet, he never directly referenced the checking. In some manner, this arrangement qualifies the public debate, as fact-checking contributes to a more transparent and precise democratic agenda. Even if voters do not directly access the content of the checking, the correction in the discourse of the political agent has an indirect impact on citizens.

In this perspective of conversation between political actors and journalists, fact-checking as a discursive format of journalism presents interesting possibilities for the promotion of democracy. However, there is a relevant limitation: the psycho-cognitive environment in which “journalism of verification” presents itself as a deviant paradigm of “journalism of communication”. The appeal to the phatic function of discourse has a very strong influence on the definition of reality by the reader, which implies admitting that the discursive construction of reality is no longer an exclusive prerogative of newspapers (Alsina, 2009).

Perhaps it is here that resides the greatest risk offered by social platforms against democratic processes, especially when political leaders violate unwritten rules of democracy, which include the idea that presidents should say the truth in public and should respect the work of the independent media as a bastion of democracy (Levitsky; Ziblatt, 2017, p. 189).

The strategy of delegitimizing the electoral process and the work of the media, besides denying the commitment to believable information, was observed by Levitsky and Ziblatt (2017) in different countries, including Donald Trump’s United States. Comparisons to what was seen in the campaign strategies used by Jair Bolsonaro, elected president of Brazil in 2018, are inevitable. But the Brazilian case had an extra factor: the set of restrictions imposed to the electoral use of Facebook may have contributed to overflow WhatsApp with ill-intended rumors, as the *Aos Fatos* director, Tai Nalon, wrote in *The Washington Post* soon after the run-off.

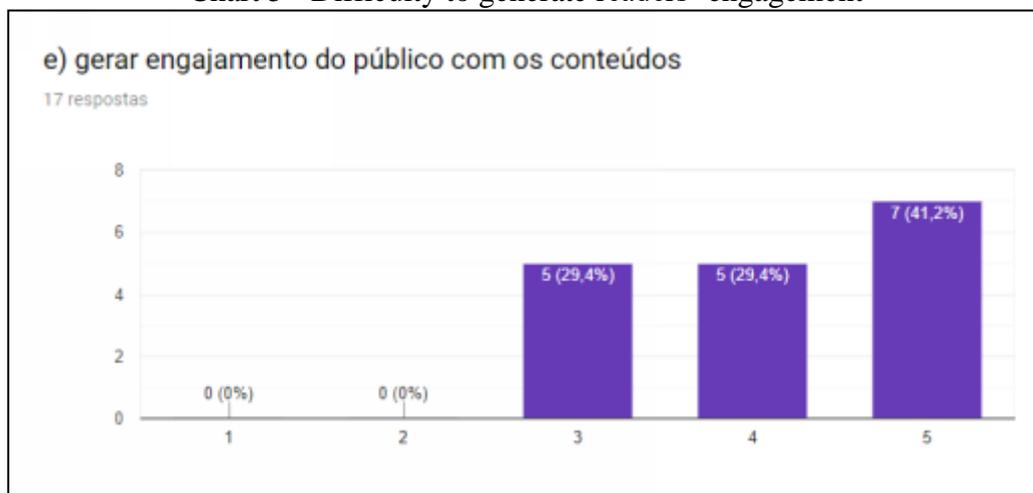
A study conducted by *Aos Fatos* in partnership with the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ) showed that one out of four internet users in Brazil uses WhatsApp weekly to find information about current events (Nalon, 2018, online). The relationship of Brazilians with the app has important socioeconomic issues, starting with the standard internet access of

the population: practically 95% of internet access is by cell phone – and half of the users access the internet exclusively by cell phone (IBGE, 2018, online).

Moreover, 60% of the cell phone plans are prepaid (Nascimento, 2018, online). In these plans, the main argument in advertising is usually the unlimited access to social networks. In other words, with WhatsApp a client can get information without using their mobile data plan and without generating additional costs, while journalistic sites, besides consuming data, have restricted access due to paywall mechanisms. In addition, there is one more ingredient to be mixed in this recipe: according to the *Functional Literacy Indicator*, generated by the Paulo Montenegro Institute and the Non-Governmental Organization *Ação Educativa*, almost 30% of the Brazilian population have difficulties in interpreting texts and identifying ironies (Fajardo, 2018, online).

In a media ecosystem with such characteristics, “journalism of verification” finds significant barriers to be recognized by the audience, what remains evident in the questionnaire answered by the media professionals at *Truco nos Estados*: 12 journalists (70.6%) marked the highest levels of difficulty on this matter (4 and 5 in the chart, in which 1 = very easy and 5 = very hard):

Chart 5 - Difficulty to generate readers' engagement



Source: Seibt, 2019, p. 202.

This difficulty can be partially associated to the formerly mentioned campaign to weaken the media credibility driven by political agents that recently gained popularity. In the United States, Donald Trump pointed a finger at *CNN* and said, “you are fake news”. On a giant screen set on the main avenue of the biggest Brazilian city, São Paulo, Jair Bolsonaro, then the presidential candidate of the Social Liberal Party [*Partido Social Liberal*, PSL], said

to thousands of people, a week before the 2018 run-off, that the newspaper *Folha de S. Paulo* is “the greatest fake news in Brazil”.

Bolsonaro’s supporters accuse the fact-checking agencies of being leftists. Even big media corporations, such as *Rede Globo*, are now considered “communist” by conservative political groups. Orchestrated attacks against journalists in social media have become frequent as a strategy to mobilize public opinion against journalistic practices that investigate – or check on – the ones who have power.

In the struggle against disinformation, “journalism of verification” was held hostage by this political segmentation of the audience, strongly influenced by external factors relative to parameters of the journalistic paradigm, such as law and political system, cultural practices and values, sociocultural institutions and economy.

As observed in the thesis that supports this article, sociocultural values, religion, prejudice, moral values and patriotism were strongly associated to misleading contents that circulated during the 2018 elections: the supposed usage of the More Doctors [*Mais Médicos*] program [6] to finance the Cuban socialist regime and even the absurd creation of a “gay kit” to be distributed in public schools are some examples of messages that were proven to be false by checking agencies during the campaign (Seibt, 2019, p. 203).

In addition, users rarely access the checking of a false content they have received (Guess; Nyhan; Reifler, 2018), which can also be explained by the audience segmentation barrier implicated in the political polarization favored by social platform algorithms as much as by a psycho-cognitive environment in which objective facts have less influence on public opinion rather than emotions and beliefs – a “post-truth” environment (Oxford, 2016, online).

Final considerations and referrals

It is evident, from the case observed, that “journalism of verification” has the potential to cause impact over the discourse of public actors, thus responding to purposes of public transparency, even if fact-checking has been little effective in slowing down disinformation in the 2018 Brazilian elections.

To reach a conclusion, differentiating “journalism of verification” as a theoretical model – an ideal type – from fact-checking as its most representative empirical manifestation is fundamental to the due debate about the results presented here. Fact-checking may not be consolidated as a discursive format, but its typical characteristics may inspire other journalistic formats. One of these characteristics is transparency as a normative principle.

The moment the news emerges as a specific text of “journalism of information”, the journalist community strongly shares an ideal of objectivity. Normative principles such as truth and objectivity have high congruence with the sociocultural values and the political system of our time. When studying the pioneer fact-checking initiatives in the United States, Lucas Graves (2016) classified their emergence as a “reform movement” in journalism, which would bring back the ideals of truth and objectivity to the center of the journalistic practice. The study performed at *Truco nos Estados* during the 2018 Brazilian elections revealed that the journalists have a different perception: the normative principle most strongly associated to the fact-checking practice was transparency (Seibt, 2019, p. 190). In the preface of a reviewed version of *The Elements of Journalism*, Kovach and Rosenstiel give emphasis to transparency:

We argued a decade ago that a transparent method of verification was the most important tool for Professional journalists trying to answer doubts the public had about their work. Now it is also a way to invite the public into the production of the news, to create a collaborative journalism that is better than either journalists or citizens could produce alone. (Kovach; Rosenstiel, 2014, p. XIV)

Kovach and Rosenstiel (2014) distinguish principles from practices. They defend that what defines journalism is its principles more than its practices. It is possible, according to the authors, to reproduce the same practices based on different principles. And fake news is exactly this: something that imitates, that appears to be news, but is not, for it is in disagreement with the principles of journalism (Seibt, 2019, p. 231). Nevertheless, for that to make sense, it is necessary a favorable psycho-cognitive environment, in which journalism and the elements of journalism worry all citizens, “[...] because the distinctions between citizen and journalist, reporter and editor, audience and producer are not vanishing but blurring” (Kovach; Rosenstiel, 2014, p. X).

According to the referred authors, to survive in this media ecosystem of blurred frontiers, all citizens must understand and apply the elements of journalism, what implies taking, as journalists, not the role of a judge, but of a facilitator of the truth. As Claire Wardle (2018, online) points out, many of the contents shared in closed or ephemeral spaces, like WhatsApp groups or Instagram Stories, which are inhabited only by friends and family members and are full of emotional, disproportionately visual messages, are not checkable by

the fact-checking criteria. Therefore, an agenda for media education would be fundamental for journalism to do its duty of relevance in the promotion of democracy and public transparency.

By drawing attention to the structural parameters of the journalistic paradigm, the sociology of journalism proposed by Charron and Bonville (2016), inspired in Weber (2014), offers instruments to observe the efforts of journalism to reposition itself as a social practice. By exploring other research methods and other journalistic formats, we may reach more precise considerations about the limits and possibilities of “journalism of verification” in the promotion of a democratic agenda more adapted to the contemporary sociohistorical context.

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[1] Researchers have been avoiding the use of the expression “fake news”, which became popular as a synonym of “false news”. Besides the terminology itself being problematic, due to the assumption of commitment to the truth that characterizes news, the meaning of the expression was vulgarized in the political debate, being used to attack the media when it antagonizes political interests or currents. Disinformation is the expression in vogue to characterize, in a broader way, the phenomenon of the contemporary communication, that goes from misleading, ill-intended content, shared by artificial intelligence, boosted by digital marketing mechanisms, etc., and its respective impact on public opinion.

[2] Inside a structure, there are “ordinary changes”, that is, transformations inside the structure, and there are deeper changes, capable of completely mischaracterizing the structure in such a way that it is no longer recognizable (Charron; Bonville, 2016, p. 104). These are the structural changes.

[3] The functions of discourse appropriated by Charron and Bonville (2016) come from Roman Jakobson (1963). According to Jakobson, every discourse operates with six elements (a sender, a receiver, a contact, a code, a referent and a message) to which correspond six discursive functions (Charron; Bonville, 2016, p. 34). The discursive functions are: *referential* (targets on the object of the message, the referent), *expressive* (oriented on the sender), *conative* (tells the receiver to act), *metalingual* (targets on the code of discourse), *phatic* (makes

a connection between sender and receiver) and *poetic* (targets on the aesthetics of the message). The phatic function can be exacerbated in “journalism of communication”.

[4] The *Fact-Checking Handbook* is an internal reference material that was distributed to the *Truco nos Estados* team.

[5] Because of the partnership with Facebook, initiatives as *Aos Fatos* and *Lupa*, for instance, gave greater emphasis to the verification of viral contents, but still checked a significant amount of candidates’ statements.

[6] The *Mais Médicos* program was launched in 2013, during Dilma Rousseff’s [Workers’ Party, PT] administration, to bring doctors to places where there were no healthcare professionals. The program welcomed foreign doctors, and thousands of professionals came from Cuba to Brazil.

Why have issues involving large amounts of money not been properly investigated in Malawi and Zambia?

Zimpopoma Sambri

Abstract

This paper presents results from a study investigating problems that have evaded investigative journalism in Malawi. The study used corruption to understand the relationship between investigative journalism and public funds embezzlement. A number of cases that have been handled and some that have not been handled were used in this study. Stratified as well as simple sampling methods were used to choose respondents numbering to 50 and included journalists and policymakers. The study was answering a research question on why some cases have not been properly handled by investigative journalists although large amounts of public funds have been involved. The conspiracy theory has informed this qualitative study. The study echoes the message that investigative journalism is a farfetched dream for some developing countries in Africa and unless some laws are amended and funding is available for investigations, funds will continue to be embezzled. The study generates lessons on issues happening in Sub-Saharan Africa but can be replicated anywhere in the world.

Keywords

Investigative Journalism, Malawi, Zambia, stratified sampling, simple sampling, Sub Saharan Africa

Research Question

Why some cases not been properly handled by investigative journalists although large amounts of public funds have been involved?

Introduction

During the time Malawi had a one-party system of government from 1964 up to 1994, draconian laws were used to muzzle the press and only Government media such as Ministry of Information and Malawi Broadcasting Corporation were allowed to operate. This also included The Daily Times and Malawi News, newspapers owned and controlled by the former President Dr.Kamuzu Banda. After the country adopted a multi-party system of government, a number of radio stations were allowed to operate under the Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority, (MACRA) (NAMISA, 2012).

In Malawi, broadcasting is tainted with a past of oppression and intimidation

right from the colonial days when the colonial office in Salisbury used the radio to disseminate colonial information in addition to messages on agriculture and health. This mistrust of the radio continued after independence because of the first President of Malawi Dr. Kamuzu Banda used the radio to fight his opponents. There was no freedom of expression or speech, and many journalists were arrested during that time. Paul Sturges from Loughborough University describes this situation:

....The 1965 Public Security Regulations made it an offense, punishable by up to five years imprisonment to publish anything likely 'to undermine the authority of, or public confidence in, the government'. From 1973, life imprisonment was the penalty for sending 'false information' out of the country, and the president had personal powers to detain people without charge under the 1965 Regulations. The Censorship and Control of Entertainment Act of 1968 established a Censorship Board, which prohibited works on various grounds, including 'the interests of public safety or public order. Under this system, the press was strictly controlled, and journalists were regularly detained without charge for alleged offenses. There were only two newspapers published in the country, The Daily Times and Malawi News, both of which were government-owned, as was the Malawi News Agency (MANA). Interestingly enough, the company through which Banda managed his financial dealings in Malawi was called Press Holdings. The radio service of the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation was likewise a channel for the government's version of information, and there was no television service (Sturges, 1998, pages 185-201).

Donald McNeil, a New York Times reporter, describes Dr. Banda as a dictator and someone that did not want any opposition at all concurring with Sturges above. This is how he describes him:

.....many regarded him as the father of their nation, the former British Nyasaland, a Pennsylvania-sized splinter of land between Zambia and Mozambique. But after a revolt within his cabinet, he declared himself President for Life in 1971 and said his opponents would become "food for crocodiles." Hundreds were killed, tortured or forced into exile -- and yet Malawi, which describes itself in tourist brochures as "the warm heart of Africa," managed to keep its reputation among Africans as a pocket of gentle-spirited people (McNeil, 1997, page 1).

The news wings of change blowing across Malawi as a result of pressure groups and the churches brought in Political change. After a referendum in 1993 won by multiparty advocates. It was during this time that a number of publications were established but folded. The main reasons were 'lack of business, acumen among the pioneer owners mostly journalists with no business training, as well as lack of or restricted access to capital' (Manda, 2011).

Soon after the referendum media laws were enacted to support the freedom of speech as well as the freedom of expression. This was in line with the multi-party dispensation that the country adopted.

The constitution of Malawi(Section 37) says: Subject to any Act of Parliament, every person shall have the right of access to all information held by the state or any of its organs at any level of Government in so far as such information is required for the exercise of his rights'.

Section 36, which empowers journalists to publish freely, also says: The press shall have the right to report and publish freely, within Malawi and abroad, and be accorded the fullest possible facilities for access to public information.

After the 1994 multi-party elections in Malawi, the Communications Act (1998) was passed in Parliament. This led to the establishment of the Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA). The aim of MACRA was to allow a level playing field in the practice of broadcasting. In addition to this, Presently MACRA issues licences to broadcasters and manages the liberalization of the airwaves. This development has led to the establishment of more private radio station as well as community radio station. Community radio stations have been established in some geographical areas.

Mary Myers offers a flexible definition of 'community media' as 'small scale decentralized broadcasting initiatives which are easily accessed by local people, actively encourage their participation in programming, and which include some element of community ownership or membership' (Myers 2000: 90)

Media environment and Laws

For a long time, following attainment of independence from colonial masters, most African leaders were sceptical of the Western (countries that include Britain, France, Germany, USA) press. They were very sceptical of the Western (Britain, France, Germany, USA) type of press. For them, objective news coverage would mean encouraging the opposition to criticize their policies thereby derailing development. Their other fear was that such type of media would divide their people along tribal lines (Faringer, 1991).

These leaders felt that since their countries had just secured independence from former colonial masters, there was need to concentrate on nation building rather fighting one another along party lines.

However, the consequences of these decisions caused more harm than good. Leaders became dictators and used the top bottom approach to governance. Many journalists were arrested and put in detention without trial (At the Crossroads, 2000)

In Malawi for example, a number of journalists were arrested on allegations

that they misinformed the public (Sturges, 1998) Because of these developments, only very few remained in the profession as others opted to go into safer career options.

Siebert (et al.1984) says in the authoritarian system government has the direct control of the media. Government has very limited ruling class and the media is not allowed to print or broadcast anything which could undermine the established authority.

THE MALAWIAN SITUATION

The presentation by Reuben Chirambo (2004) which is titled Subverting Banda's Dictatorship in Malawi: Orality as Counter-Discourse in Jack Mapanje's *Of Chameleons and Gods*, notes that the government of former President-for-Life Dr. H.K. Banda and the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) in Malawi was a dictatorship that relied on coercion as well as mobilization of grassroots popular support and consent to maintain itself in power for 30 years (1964–1994.) To that effect Chirambo, (2004), says the regime's 'coercive tactics included draconian censorship of stories, poems, plays, songs, and other creative work that contained any critical commentary of the dictatorship. The ruling party also made liberal use of detention without trial, the torture of political opponents, extra-judicial killings, and forced exile against those it deemed a threat to its survival (At the CrossRoads, 2000).

During this time many political leaders or intellectuals deemed to be enemies of the state were arrested and tortured. They fled the country for fear of persecution and torture. Anxious to protect his image, Dr. Banda used the only radio station, Malawi Broadcasting In a similar vein, Father Padraig O'Maille, a Roman Catholic Priest who at one time lectured at Chancellor College, a constituent college of the University of Malawi says in the book titled "Living Dangerously" that many lecturers, mostly from the Northern part of the country, were arrested without trial and tortured (O'Maille, 1999).

Even in exile people that had fled the country were not safe as the country continued sending the Paramilitary wing of the party called at that time Malawi Young Pioneers to kill them or arrest them. Mr Orton Chirwa and his wife Dr. Vera Chirwa were some of the victims of this paramilitary wing (O'maille P., 1999).

A monolithic publication owned by Dr. Banda was run and one of its aims was to create a good image of his rule while spreading negative publicity of all people who were fighting against him in neighbouring countries like Tanzania and Zambia (At the Crossroads, 2000).

Censorship policies were put in place to ensure that people were not reading books critical of his dictatorial rule. It was during this period that George Orwell's "Animal Farm" and Simon and Garfunkel's song "Cecilia" were banned. Animal farm talked of dictatorship tendencies using animals

and some of the ideas were used in Malawi while Cecilia was banned because the official hostess at that time of Dr. Banda was called Cecilia and people were comparing the name in the song with the official hostess (O'Mallie, 1999).

Chirambo (2004) writes that Banda was called Mpulumutsi, meaning Messiah or Saviour. He says this title was derived from the fact that in 1963 Banda led the people of Malawi to independence from British colonial rule. In so doing he assumed the stature of a god similar to Jesus. Being the Messiah, so urges Chirambo (2004), meant that Banda alone had divine blessings to rule Malawi which justified his life presidency.

Chirambo,(2004) says Banda was also called Ngwazi (Conqueror), a praise name from the Ngoni people of Northern Malawi, meaning that he was brave ferocious and invincible: no one could harm or defeat him. Films being shown by the Ministry of Information and Civic Education indicate that whenever he wanted to speak, people would shout lion! Lion! ('Mkango' in Chichewa, the vernacular language). Songs were composed showing that he was a courageous leader and that there was no other leader of his calibre (Chirambo, 2004)

Machipisa Munthali, Malawi's longest-serving political prisoner, who was released on June 1992 after 27 years' imprisonment, and of the sentencing of Chakufwa Chihana, an international trade union official, to two years' imprisonment for sedition in December 1992. At that time Felix Mponda Phiri was working as a freelance for the (Chirambo, 2004)

Jack Mapanje, one of Malawi's leading poets, was arrested and detained without charge from September 1987 to May 1991. At the time of his arrest, Mapanje was serving as Chair of the English Department at Chancellor College of the University of Malawi. But up to this day, the government has not revealed the actual reasons for his detention. But Banda, gave a hint on this in a letter he wrote to the faculty of the University of Edinburgh in 1988 in response to their protests over Mapanje's detention saying in it, Banda accuses Mapanje of 'using the classroom as a forum for subversive politics'(O'Maille, 1999). It is highly probable that what Banda calls the use of the classroom for subversive politics refers to Mapanje's own poetry in *Of Chameleons and Gods*, a book that was so much loved by students (Chirambo, 2004).For many years Malawians could only get their news from state owned newspapers, the state-owned radio as well as the state owned Agency (Malawi News Agency). Mphande (1996) says the regime had tight control of what information was disseminated and also ensured that state media sang its praises all the time.

The act that was gazetted in December 1998 created the Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA) which now is at the helm

of overseeing regulation of the postal services, as well as telecommunications which among others include broadcasting, frequency allocation, Internet service provision, as well as communications policy and licensing.

However, staff at MBC later learned that in spite of transition they were not to undertake investigative reporting and were to shift to their political allegiance to the new ruling party. Soon after the second democratic elections in 1999 they were warned by Information Minister Brown Mpinganjira that he would not protect any reporter who “deliberately engages politicians”. A month later came threats of dismissal against staff seen to be opposition party supporters’ (CrossRoads, 1999).

This trend continued with the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) who took over reigns of power from UDF. In 2005, in the later years of Dr. Bingu WA Mutharika rule, Journalists were harassed and intimidated. During the July 20th demonstrations, some journalists were beaten up by the Police and one photographer from the “Nation Newspaper” lost a lot of blood in the process (NAMISA 2011).

The DPP Government continued muzzling the press. In 2010 it passed legislation (Section 46 of the Penal Code) in Parliament which empowers a minister of information to ban publications and importation of any publication deemed to be against national interest. The section was later repealed by the current People’s Party after entering the government in April 2012 (NAMISA, 2011).

Journalists are currently guided by the new constitution which came into effect in 1994, section 36 of which says: ‘The press shall have the right to report and publish freely, within Malawi and abroad, and to be accorded the fullest possible facilities for access to public information’ (Malawi Constitution, 1994).

Communications scholar Patrick O’Neil notes in his book, *Communicating Democracy*, that despite the monumental democratic changes that have taken place in Eastern Europe and Africa in the last decade, there appears to be a glaring omission in scholarly literature explaining the role that the media can play in these societies that are in transition (O’Neil, 1998). The time has come, O’Neil says, for scholars in these societies to begin to write, from their own perspectives, explanations of the role that media are playing in these changes.’ In line with O’Neil’s writings, this theory is only applicable in part because democracy is still developing in Malawi. There are a number of laws that were enacted in colonial times, at a time Malawi was under Great Britain. Some of these laws are still used by the

Government. There are equally other laws that were enacted during the transition to independence. These too have not been repealed and hence make investigative journalism difficult. These include Section 181 of the Penal Code which is abused to limit critical views, the Official Secrets Act (1913), the Printed Publications Act (1947), the Censorship and Control of Entertainments Act (1968) as well as the Protected Flags, Emblem and Names Act (MISA Malawi, 2019).

Latest reports indicate that Malawi has moved from 70 in 2017 to 64 in 2018 on the Reporters Without Borders (RSF) Index, an indication that the environment for investigative Journalism is becoming hostile (Kaledzera, 2018)

Poverty and Corruption

The Irish Government's defines poverty in its National Action Plan for Social Inclusion (Department of Employment Affairs and social protection, 2019) and states that;

... People are living in poverty if their income and resources (material, cultural and social) are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living which is regarded as acceptable by Irish society generally. As a result of inadequate income and other resources, people may be excluded and marginalized from participating in activities that are considered the norm for other people in society.

World Bank used the GDP per capita in purchasing power in 2013 as the most common method to determine the wealth of countries. Using this internationally accepted method, Out of the 184 Countries of the world, Malawi is number 177 which means Malawi is among eight most poor countries of the world (World Bank, 2013). The poorest country was the Democratic Republic of Congo while the richest country is Qatar.

In 2010 OXFAM classified Malawi as one of the poorest countries of the world with a per capita income of 911usd (OXFAM, 2015).

Ted (Bradshaw, 2005) in his paper titled 'theories of poverty and anti-poverty programs in community development' fits so well with the Malawi scenario. He describes poverty as:

.. caused by cultural belief systems that support the subcultures of poverty.
Poverty is created by the transmission over generations of a set of beliefs, cultural values, and skills that are socially generated but individually held.

Individuals are not necessarily to blame in this theory because they are victims of their dis-functional subculture or culture (Bradshaw, 2005, page 8).

In Malawi, the description of poverty by Ted Bradshaw above fits so well in this study and. Children inherit things from their parents through observation as discussed above. In Malawi, children inherit lands from their parents. By observation, they copy the farming system their parents were using. Some farmers still use varieties of maize inherited from their grandfathers although they are not high yielding because they believe the varieties are strong and cannot be destroyed by weevils. Through observation, they copy how to plant them and how to care for them and continue practicing this type of farming after the deaths of their grandparents.

For example, their parents went to South Africa to work in the mines; they came back and became poor. Because they say their parents are going there, they too went to work, they came back and depleted their resources and became poor again (Masauli, 2014). It is a vicious circle they believe in which is inherited and makes them poor.

Many people in Sub-Saharan Africa live below the poverty line of United Nations US\$ 1.25 per day (Ravallion et al.2009, p.164). Both men and women are in dire need and hence look for money for basic needs.

However, poverty does not only refer to lack of basic necessities Mulwo (2009) and Kunda (2009) (cited in Govender (2010 p. 212) in their study found out that students who were studying at the University of Kwazulu Natal in South Africa were engaging in what they called 'transactional sex' because they wanted fancy cell phones, rides in BMW's and Levi jeans. To the two researchers, this was circumstantial evidence of intergenerational and transactional sex which, they said was extending beyond Maslow's (1943) the first level of physiological needs. All these factors indicate poverty levels in African countries.

A World Bank report in 2017 shows that the population living below the international poverty line has not changed between 2010 and 2016 in Malawi (IMF Report, 2017). The scale of poverty is escalated by the laundering of money by senior government officials from the government reserves. To make worse most donors withdrew aid making the situation even more severe. Almost 40 percent of Malawi's budget comes from donors (The Borgen Project, 2018). According to the US Embassy, (2017):

Corruption is a barrier to poverty reduction, diverting scarce resources away from healthcare, schools, and water provision. It affects critical capital investments like road and power generation. Corruption is a disincentive for private sector investment, economic growth, and jobs.

The major cause of the slow development of economies in Africa is corruption. Research by AFRO Barometer (2012) revealed that there is a relationship between corruption and poverty. More corruption will be translated into more poverty.

The results of the research also showed that 'poor people are indeed much more prone to pay bribes to government officials. This suggests that the people who are worst off materially are also more likely to be victims of corruption (AFRO Barometer, 2012).

Conspiracy can mean 'a secret arrangement by a group of powerful people to usurp political or economic power, violate established rights, hoard vital secrets, or unlawfully alter government institutions' (Uscinski and Parent 2014: 31). Conspiracy means 'an explanation of historical, ongoing, or future events that cites as a main causal factor a group of powerful persons, the conspirators, acting in secret for their own benefit against the common good' (Uscinski, 2017). The important element in the conspiracy theory is the fact that they deal with power. In most instances, such a group could include a legislative body, corporation, a president, multinational company, chiefs, among others.

Most marginalized and poor people rarely come together to rise against the rich using a successful conspiracy. While Machiavelli argues that the weak should be the ones that should be conspiring because they do not have the force to get what they want while the powerful do not need to conspire because they have the power, the opposite is true ((Machiavelli, 1996). There has been research going on in conspiracy theory. In a study by Michael Wood, Karen Douglas and Robbie Sutton revealed that 'many people who believed in a conspiracy theory also believed in other conspiracy theories which logically could not also be true (Woods, et al. 2012)) while other scholars reveal that 'some people are more prone to believing in conspiracy theories than others'(Uscinski et al. 2016). In other words, some people will believe in conspiracy theory with little evidence while others will not believe at all even if there is much evidence that has been revealed.

A report by the Transparency International shows that Malawi is 120 least corrupt nation out of 175 countries. According to their rankings, Malawi

averaged 90.81 from 1998 until 2018, reaching an all-time high of 122 in 2017 and a record low of 43 in 2000 (Trading Economics, 2018). This shows that corruption is increasing in Malawi.

When the Anti-Corruption Bureau was getting established it was estimated that Malawi was losing one-third of its revenue it was generating to corruption. However not much has been done to arrest the problem. In addition to this many Malawians revealed in a study that they pay bribes to access public services and the rich, the study revealed are likely to use bribery as well as personal connections to their advantage (AFRO Barometer, 2017).

In Malawi, there was what was named 'Cash gate Scandal' which was labelled as the biggest financial scandal in the history of Malawi. Civil servants colluded to steal large amounts of money meant for the development of infrastructure and social services of the poor people in Malawi. This scandal affected the relations with donors who contribute almost 40% of the national budget (Harawa, 2014).

President Peter Mutharika of Malawi was accused of pocketing (\$ 3.9 million, 2.8 million pounds) as a kick pack for favours. This happened after the Anti-Corruption Body memo was leaked to the public in Malawi. This was an alleged kickback contract to supply food to the police. According to the report, it was alleged that the Asian businessman deposited the money into the ruling party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), and the President was the sole signatory to this account (BBC, 2018). In a twist of events the ruling party, DPP, paid back the money and in a U-turn that surprised the public in Malawi, the Anti-Corruption Bureau cleared the President of any wrongdoing.

In July 2018 Civil Society Organizations (CSO) heaped blames on the Anti-Corruption body for not doing enough to investigate the death of Njaunju murder. Issa Njaunju was one of the senior officers in the anti-corruption bureau who was investigating senior government officials in the Peter Mutharika administration who had become filthy rich overnight. He died a mysterious death on 4th July 2015.

Methodology

This study used both qualitative and qualitative methods. When a full investigation has been made using different research methods as stated above, results are recorded, analysed and interpreted with the confidence and reflect the actual situation on the ground because a complete investigation had been carried out in the survey undertaken. Another advantage of using different methods is that one weakness of one method is always compensated by the strength of a different method (Day, 2003).

Research methods

These are the methods that were used in this study

Questionnaires

These were given to people that were not able to be interviewed face to face because of various reasons which included being busy or being shy to speak in a group or face to face. Because most journalists are busy people by the nature of their jobs, most opted for questionnaires.

Thirty-five people were interviewed using this method

Face to face interviews

This method catered for people who were free to speak to the researcher. This method helped the researcher to ask follow-up questions. Most policymakers opted for this method. Fifteen respondents opted for this method

Areas of inquiry

These were two areas of inquiry

- 1 Finances to help inquiry
- 2 Laws that bar inquiry
- 3 Working environment
- 4 Skills

Ages and classes of people

The ages ranged from 18 years up to 45 years. Both men and women were interviewed.

Sampling methods

Stratified sampling method was used. Offices were used as stratas and offices of media houses are in all the three regions of the country and in major districts. Mzuzu strata represented six districts, Lilongwe eight districts, Zomba five districts, and Blantyre five districts.

Thereafter simple sampling was used to choose the respondents.

Rationale for sampling areas

It was difficult to interview all people. The stratas, therefore, represented other areas.

Ethical considerations

Investigative nature of research can have repercussions because it reveals corruption. It is in this context that many people are not free to talk for fear of their jobs as well as for fear of their lives. To ensure this stumbling block there was a memorandum of understanding that was written and signed between the respondent and the researcher. In addition to this, the names of the interviewees have been kept secret and even in the results section, only synonyms have been used to represent the people that were interviewed. All this has been done to protect the identity of people that were interviewed.

Results

These were the results of the study. In each inquiry comments, two people have been taken on board to represent others.

Area of Inquiry	Numbers
Finances to help inquiry	16
Laws that bar inquiry	7
Working environment	11
Lacking Skills	12
Those that abstained	4
Total	50

Finances to help inquiry

This is what journalists and policymakers said:

..... If they are unable to pay us at the right time, where can they get money for investigations? Corruption is a syndicate involving many people or organizations. You also need airtime. Not many organizations can afford that. It is a farfetched dream for the media in Malawi. We have financial problems not only in my organization but in many media institutions. In some instances, they tell us that advertising has been poor that month such that we shall receive the money late. In other months we are sometimes told there might be retrenchments (Jessica, 005, 9.30)

This is what John said:

.....The owner of the media organization has never been a journalist. What he is interested much is the revenue in the form of advertisements. He takes much interest in the marketing department than in the news section. We have been making resolutions in our editorial meetings in investigating issues about corruption in Malawi and embezzlement of funds. There are over ten story ideas to that effect. All that our Chief Executive Officer says is that they will fund us if the financial status of the organizations improves. This answer has been given to us for two years now.

(John, 005, 13.40)

Laws that bar inquiry

This is what they Alefa said:

..... Section 181 of the Penal Code limits critical views. It is used mostly to silence journalists. Most journalists are afraid to break the laws hence just cover breaking news.

(Alefa, 002, 08.40)

This is what amuda said:

.....In this country, we have a problem with the office of the President. They say he is protected and hence even if there are investigations the law protect him. Even if he is taken to task, the case goes nowhere at all. Look at the issue of the Anti-Corruption Bureau and the President. The case went nowhere after investigations. Such laws must be appealed with we want investigative journalism to bite hard.

(Amuda, 004, 12.04)

Lacking Skills

This is what Enwood said:

..... In the dawn to multiparty way back in 1994, we had so many donors who came to train us and because of that, we acquired a number of skills that also included investigative journalism. Those donors went and we rarely have courses on investigative journalism. This is even worse for freelance journalists who work on their own unlike those that are employed full time by media houses.

(Enwood, 004, 11.40)

This is what Analla said:

.....Journalism schools must conform to the changing times. With corruption that has enveloped our country, the focus must be on this area of journalism so that journalists go to the industry well trained. Lack of such skills is hampering the growth of investigators in this country. The country is losing billions through corruption and we are not doing much on this. Surely the focus should change. If journalism schools don't have lecturers in Malawi, they should get them from other countries especially those in the west.

(Analla, 003, 1547)

Working environment

This is what Abala said about his working environment

.....The situation is very volatile. It comes right away from the newsroom when they discover that the person you are investigating is a close friend. Then they phone the person who in turn will entice you with money and if that fails will send death threats. In some cases, others have been harmed because of working in environments of that nature. This makes reporters, especially women to refuse such tasks.

(Abala, 003, 1257)

This is what George said

..... Powerful politicians or chief executives are still powerful and they get their way. If you publish a story and the media house has been threatened that they will no longer advertise, the next thing you are told is to retract the story. Some of these stories reveal serious frauds. Sometimes you are even threatened with a dismissal. These sometimes use their influence to intimidate reporters with arrests. They will sometimes force a media house to expel a reporter. They sometimes warn a media house that they will not advertise with the media company unless that particular reporter is dismissed.

(George, 005, 17.20)

As discussed in the literature review and theoretical framework which have been revealed in the results, there exist people that are very powerful and can conspire to defraud organizations or the government. Many poor people are at the mercy of these powerful people in society. For funding meant for the poor people to reach them there is need to reveal such 'dirty actions'. However, there is need to have a press that is not corrupt and a press that is professional to write such types of corruptions that involve the President and powerful politicians. Because people are now living in a global village, there is need to help the struggling media houses, especially in the third

world to ensure that they are properly trained to do their work better. Laws that were enacted during colonial period have not been repealed. These continue to muzzle the press and the government keeps them to silence the press. Such laws are slowing down investigations in fraud and corruption.

Although Malawi is now a multiparty government, few politicians still muzzle the press. The government uses the police to intimidate reporters and in some instances with court action. This delays the investigations process. Most journalists and policymakers revealed in this study that there is need to finance investigations (16). In the study most revealed that some of the investigations stopped at a certain level because of lack of funding as corruption and fraud is a syndicate that involves people from different parts of a country or from various countries.

Lacking Skills

The second most inquiry that polled more journalists and policymakers were lack of skills. It is recently after multiparty dispensation that the journalism school at the University of Malawi opened its doors. Later Malawi Institute of Journalism also opened its doors. Although investigative journalism is learned, there is not much focus because other areas have to be taught too. With the problems of fraud and corruption now locking the country, most journalists and policy want this as a special course up to Diploma. This would ensure a more equipped media that is ready to tackle investigations. Already, it was revealed that many cases involving high-level corruption have not been concluded

Working environment

The working environment was the third most polled. Most journalists that were interviewed explained that when they handle investigative assignments they are intimidated, both from outside the media house as well as inside the media house. They say it becomes worse when the media house does not have a lawyer who can give direction in some issues being investigated. In some instances, it was revealed that within the media house some overzealous journalists people inform the person being investigated even before the reporter approaches the person. In such circumstances, the reporters are threatened even in their residences and they sometimes threaten even members of their families.

Laws that bar inquiry

Laws that bar inquiry was the fourth and least polled. This is because recently the government passed the access to information bill which was seen as a milestone in the growth of investigative journalism. However, there are some laws that are still in the statute that hamper investigations. These include Section 181 of the Penal Code which is abused to limit critical views, the Official Secrets Act (1913), the Printed

Publications Act (1947), the Censorship and Control of Entertainments Act (1968) as well as the Protected Flags, Emblem and Names Act(MISA Malawi, 2019).

Conclusion

Investigative Journalism is just developing in Malawi. There is need to support it so that it grows.

There is also need for coordination among journalists from various countries. This can help in investigating a case or an issue cheaper. The government must also show responsibility by repealing laws that are in the statute that hamper the growth of investigative journalism. A serious government will surely get better results from investigative journalism because it ensures checks and balances of power which can help theft and fraud. In this way, money meant for poor people cannot be stolen, embezzled for fear that the media will reveal this and they can be arrested.

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V. State of Investigative Journalism

Vive la petite différence! Gender and News Reporting of Financial Statistics in the Arabian Gulf Media

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Vive la petite différence! Gender and News Reporting of Financial Statistics in the Arabian Gulf Media

Abstract

In this article, we explore the use of statistics in financial journalism the Arabian Gulf with a focus on the role of Arab women in such reporting. The aim of this research is to better understand how women in Arab countries practice their role as journalists while maintaining their journalistic professionalism and to explore the issues that boost or hinder them in performing their role. In doing so, we explore how Arab female journalists in two states – the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and United Arab Emirates (UAE) – use statistical data to develop financial news stories, and how this reflects upon professional practice. To do this, this research is based on the triangulation of several qualitative methods. The overall data suggest that Arab female journalists do tend to over-rely on one type of source, whether government or international. Moreover, journalism in these countries suffers from the same situation at that seen in Western liberal democracies, in that men dominate the hard news profession.

Keywords: Arab women, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, statistics, financial journalism, feminism

Introduction

Woman's voices and rights is currently one of the most relevant issues in the Middle East and urgently needs to be addressed, given women's problematic status in those societies and the challenges they currently face in the region (Charrad & Zarrugh, 2015; Sakr, 2005). Of particularly importance is the need to improve and empower their presence as newsmakers in order to facilitate access, provide a voice and improve the representation of gender issues in the Arab Gulf's public sphere (Guta & Karolak, 2015). As such, some scholars have paid attention to Arab women journalists' status in specific Arabian countries (Al-Malki, Kaufer, Ishizaki, & Dreher, 2012; AlMunajjed, 1997; Kirat, 2004; Kurdi, 2014; Mellor, 2010), concluding -among other things- that a truly non-Western feminist perspective is needed for Middle Eastern populations to appropriately understand the context and complexities that surround journalistic practices in this region (Kurdi, 2014, p. 28).

This new perspective needs to be initiated by acknowledging the profound cultural and political differences between women's roles in the West and in the Arab Gulf. Indeed, while in liberal Western countries the number of female journalists increased in parallel

with the changes implemented in newsrooms (Djerf-Pierre & Löfgren-Nilsson, 2004; Melin-Higgins, 1996), this has not been the case in most Arab countries, where women continue to occupy a secondary status. Moreover, the West has seen an increase in the number of female journalists in newsrooms, thereby leading to increasing equality at all levels -despite persistent pay gaps and women's lack of access to senior editorial roles- (Gallagher, 1995). Consequently, and despite a long road ahead, female journalists in the West today participate more effectively in the production of news and in shaping public opinion. However, initial expectations for similar achievements worldwide have not materialised (North, 2016, p. 369). A number of studies found that male journalists continue to vastly dominate the production of hard news in every single news beat in different parts around the world, particularly in the Global South (Ausserhofer, Gutounig, Oppermann, Matiasek, & Goldgruber, 2017; Byerly, 2011; Kirat, 2004; Kurdi, 2014; Romano, 2010).

The prevalent culture in most news media organisations in those countries continues to see female journalists better equipped to deal with soft news than are their male counterparts (De Beer & Steyn, 2002, p. 41). However, such culture does not consider women journalists to be as equally prepared as men to take up hard news stories, which tend to dominate daily news agendas. Female journalists are perceived as more emotional and, accordingly, are often assigned to the 'soft news' category of reporting (North, 2016, p. 357). In addition, their male counterparts continue to enjoy easier access to editorial decision-making roles (North, 2016).

In fact, North (2016, p. 359) argued that globally, female journalists have suffered from decision-making role segregation both vertically and horizontally. Vertically, this segregation takes the form of women having greater difficulty in being appointed to decision-making roles in newsrooms that are predominantly occupied by men. Horizontally, this segregation takes the form of the "gendered division of tasks assigned and at a micro-level, gendered divisions in the types of stories reporters are [assigned]".

In the Arab Gulf, all these problems in relation to women are exacerbated by cultural, religious and political settings that limit their ability to perform as independent professional journalists. In that part of the world, women are under-represented in the media in general (Ayish, 2001) and are even more commonly excluded from most editorial roles in which decisions are made about the news agenda and the issues to be covered. Indeed, as Hijab and Shalabieh (1999) pointed out more than 20 years ago when looking into the Jordanian context, women journalists working in media outlets are often relegated to second-class roles in relation to foreign assignments, editorial responsibilities, job advancements and training. Other, more recent, studies pinpointed that this continues to be the case. Kurdi (2014) and Kirat (2004) explored the status of women journalists in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), stating that male journalists still widely dominate the media.

Following this line of research, the present study explored the role of female journalists in producing news in the Arab Gulf by analysing the use of statistics in financial news.

Our findings suggest that there are important deficiencies in relation to female journalists' ability to engage with and use statistics in the articulation of news. However, these deficiencies, as we argue, are due to contextual and structural conditions. Our study calls for important changes in the news media environment to allow women to access the news production process and for additional support and training to be provided to female journalists as a key element in making a long-term difference, even in the face of existing significant cultural, religious and political limitations.

We argue that education is of particular importance given that the overwhelming majority of women who trained as journalists in the region do not end up working in the field. Instead, they tend to work in fields such as teaching or public relations (Kirat, 2004, p. 59), which means that the considerable investment infused into the development of human resources is redirected to other activities less relevant to reshaping public opinion. This phenomenon is partially due to cultural and social factors as a large proportion of the population in these societies "completely rejects the idea of a woman working for a news organization - mixing with various people and working with men for long hours, sometimes late at night in various places and sometimes in various countries" (Kirat, 2004, p. 60).

It is undeniable that the segregation of male and female journalists is a limiting issue in the Middle East. In countries such as KSA, as Kurdi (2014, p. 142) has argued, segregation is evident not only in the newsroom -reflecting the wider segregation that occurs in all public spaces- but also in the outputs:

Looking at the newspapers in this country, you can see that segregation very clearly by just reading the headlines. Most of the female journalists in the kingdom report on stories that are about women. They investigate women's issues, women's contribution to society, women's participation in sport or science or economy, women's role models and women's interest in general, whether these stories are located inside women's homes, women's centres, or women's schools.

Furthermore, women journalists are treated more like readers than like journalists themselves. Women are unable to follow their work through the production and editing stages, which are completed by men. One female journalist interviewed by this author at that time stated that,

We are shocked sometimes with how our articles were changed after publication, such as changing the headline or deleting some interviews made with some sources. Such changes break the trust between us and our sources. (Kurdi, 2014, p. 142)(Kurdi, 2014, p. 14) points out that even today male Saudi journalists continue to dominate hard news beats. She found around only 5% of news stories covering the economic sector were written by women. Furthermore, the need

to increase the number of female journalists in KSA is very important given that segregation also restricts male journalists' ability to cover women's issues (AlMunajjed, 1997).

Overall, this study aims to examine the practices of female journalists in covering financial news. Specifically, it aims to identify how the use of statistics in the reporting of financial news can inform us about the role of women as newsmakers in the Arab Gulf media. It does so by looking at the cases of KSA and the UAE and how female professionals in these countries reported on the global financial crisis (GFC) of 2008. In so doing, we provide a series of conclusions and suggestions that we hope bring new insights and understanding as to what to do in relation to improving the position and status of women journalists in the region.

Methodology

This research explored the access to and management and interpretation of statistics used by Arab female journalists to cover financial news in two states in the Arabian Gulf, KSA and the UAE. As part of a larger study, we collected 1,321 articles produced by 4 newspapers, of which almost 1% (12 articles) were written by women (8 women in total). Three of the studied newspapers are from KSA -*Alriyadh*, *Aleqtisadiah* and *Asharq Al-Awsat* (pan-Arab newspaper, which is located in London)- and one is from the UAE -*Alittihad*. Among the four newspapers, one, *Alriyadh*, had not published any articles written by women in the period studied (see Table 1 below). Specifically, we covered the period of August 2008 to October 2008, which was defined by the GFC of 2008. The specific topics evaluated in this study were the stock market, the housing market, oil prices and the baking sector.

Newspaper title	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<i>Aleqtisadiah</i>	3	25.0	25.0	25.0
<i>Asharq Al-Awsat</i>	6	50.0	50.0	75.0
<i>Alittihad</i>	3	25.0	25.0	100.0
Total	12	100.0	100.0	

Table 1. Frequency of business articles containing statistics.

The study was undertaken in two stages. First, a close reading was carried out on all the articles written by women (n=12) to gain an understanding of who they tended to use statistics and form the basis for our argument. To achieve the aim of this study,

we determined quality to be related to three criteria: validity, the reliability of statistical sources and statistical interpretation. Validity is the ability to use the correct numbers to communicate what is appropriate and relevant to the issue; reliability entails the assurance that the numbers were produced, assessed and provided by a news source that is credible and legitimate; and statistical interpretation means either the journalists themselves or their sources have provided a sense of clarity and detail about the statistics (Cushion, Lewis, & Callaghan, 2017).

In the second stage of the research, semi-structured interviews were conducted with Arab female journalists to identify the various approaches they used when incorporating statistics into their financial news reporting. These interviews, which took place in 2018, were conducted with four Arab female journalists⁵ from the sample newspapers. Their identities have been anonymised throughout this study following the recommendation of the ethical committee at our universities. Although we recognise that the number of interviews conducted might seem small, when they are compared to research that has been published in other parts of the world, we believe these interviews are not only representative but also insightful, given the current changes taking place in the countries where the study was conducted. It is worth noting that the triangulation of methods used followed that applied in similar work undertaken by other scholars in the field (Appelgren & Nygren, 2014; Cushion et al., 2017; Lugo-Ocando & Faria Brandão, 2016; McCombs & Ghanem, 2001) who have also sought to examine the common journalistic practices related to the use of statistics by journalists.

Findings and discussion

The findings of this study indicate that Arab female journalists are constrained by certain shortcomings in dealing with statistics in the news, particularly the tendency to excessively rely on one official source in their reporting, whether such source originates from the national government or a multilateral organisation. However, it is important to clarify that in this respect, journalists in the KSA and the UAE face the same limitations that confront their counterparts in Western liberal democracies.

The analysis of the business articles produced by women (n=12), using close reading techniques, suggested that while in the majority of articles female journalists tended to use valid statistics, cite reliable statistical sources and provide proper clarity and detail to the statistics used, they were not sufficiently critical of the statistical data provided to them nor did they attempt to verify or question such data. They also inordinately depended on the statistical data interpretations provided by the official sources from which the data originated in the first place.

⁵ All the female journalists from the larger sample (i.e., eight female journalists) were contacted; however, only four of them responded and agreed to participate in this study.

The uncritical treatment of statistical data and the overreliance on official statistical sources affected the overall quality of the news stories written by the female journalist respondents, with these issues rendering the articles mostly descriptive and deprived of the more nuanced aspects that readers expect. For instance, in one of the articles analysed, the main title of the article presented statistics that did not challenge, criticise, interpret or even comment on the actual content in the article. In addition, the statistical sources used in that article were not provided.

Another case in point is an article wherein the journalist mentioned statistical data only in the title, disregarding the provision of further details: “Fear of non-payment . . . pays 70% of real estate offices to refuse renting property to women”. This statement reflects the central argument that seems to have motivated the reporter to write the article, with the particular intent to include a statistical detail that supports the idea that a real problem exists. However, the journalist does not mention the source from which the figure was derived. Compounding this deficiency is the fact that the information is presented only once throughout the article and is lacking in inquiry, criticism, verification or even commentary.

Maier (2002, p. 509) suggested that mathematical errors made by journalists in the misuse of numbers when articulating news stories does not seem only to relate to ignorance or mishap. As Huff and Geis (1954, p. 101) pointed out, “as long as the errors remain one-sided, it is not easy to attribute them to bungling or accident”. In the cases examined in the present work, errors are ascribed to a lack of critical engagement and an over dependency on official interpretations.

We interviewed four of the eight women journalists whose bylines appeared in the articles that covered the 2008 GFC. Some of them viewed statistics as unimportant in story development, whereas the others regarded them as crucial. The context in which statistics should be incorporated seemed an essential element in their decision to include or exclude such data. The comparative analysis of the overall situation advanced our exploration of the reasoning and rationale behind the incorporation of statistics by female journalists into their financial stories. As asserted by one of the journalists, using statistics is important only in a specific context:

*No, they are not always necessary.... [T]he use of numbers and statistics is only appropriate in certain contexts and should serve the press story to give it accuracy and clarity but not be the centre of it.
(#INT12)*

Another female journalist interviewed thought that using statistics in an article held little to no value to the audiences for whom they write and that context is defined by who reads the news. She went on to say that statistics are only important for specialists but not for the general public:

Based on my journalistic experience, I expect that those who read the financial and economic press in the Arab world are specialists. However, economics in relation to foodstuff, for example, might

interest an ordinary reader. Therefore, the statistics should be simplified as percentages, for example, where the news reports such statistics and compares them to those of previous years. (#INT14)

Despite the decision to forego the use of statistical data or reliance on context, the female journalists interviewed stated that they do believe in the value of statistics to support the accuracy and credibility of news stories. One of them stated, “yes, [statistics are important] because they are an accurate indicator of financial performance in all quarters” (#INT08), while another said that statistics are important for an article so that the article “becomes more credible. In the financial news, figures and statistics are necessary” (#INT07).

In fact, all the female journalists interviewed believed in the significance of statistics for financial and economic journalism. Half of them believed that statistics give the financial news its accuracy. One of the journalists interviewed stated that statistics are important in the business newsbeat “because they are official statistics issued by reliable sources and give the article more accuracy” (#INT08). In addition, another journalist mentioned that she used statistics “often, considering that the language of numbers gives weight and accuracy to the news” (#INT12).

Indeed, most researchers recognise the quest for ‘accuracy’ as an important consideration by journalists in their endeavours to achieve ‘quality’ in news reporting (Bogart, 2004; Kanuri, Thorson, & Mantrala, 2014; Kim & Meyer, 2005; Rosenstiel & Mitchell, 2003; Thorson, 2006). Equally important is the application of a scientific approach, which has been recognised as an important practice that should be used within journalism (Meyer, 1973; White & Levine, 1954).

Another aspect that drives emphasis on the importance of statistics is their consideration as part of the language that is required in financial journalism. One female journalist argued this point, saying, “numbers are the required language, especially in financial and economic news” (#INT07) while another journalist highlighted that,

Financial and economic news without numbers and statistics will not have value. For example, in terms of oil prices, when we say that the price of Brent reached \$70, this figure in itself will not be as important to the reader if the reader did not know how high oil prices were a day ago or a week ago or even further back in time. To let a reader understand the change in oil prices allows the reader to consider whether or not the figure of \$70 is good. If statistics are presented in this way, then they give the reader confidence in the news. In contrast, readers will be less likely to trust news coverage related to countries where their official statistics are not trustworthy, due to political reasons or a lack of transparency. Therefore, we expect that such news lacks the necessary strength. (#INT14)

This use of numbers as a component of a 'performative' role (Mellado & Van Dalen, 2014) and a none written organisational culture seems to demand that female journalists employ statistical data in producing stories that revolve around finance and business. In a newsbeat dominated by men, we can therefore expect the imposition of strong pressure, both externally and from within, on women to comply with the dictates of language. We are not saying that numbers are unimportant, but if the goal of news reporting is to communicate information to the public, and journalists recognise that numbers can obscure rather than elucidate issues in certain cases, then a plausible conclusion is that the incorporation of statistical data into stories is driven by pressure from performative and organisational cultures.

Another important finding indicates that female journalists encounter more difficulties than do their male counterparts in accessing statistics in KSA and the UAE. As one of the journalists stated:

It is very difficult to obtain financial and economic statistics for us, and usually, we could not get the statistics that we needed because most of the sources did not respond to our request and said that they did not have the information available to share. They would warn us that it might take more than one month to obtain it. Moreover, very little is required by law of the sources to provide statistics to us. We had to ask many questions before they provided details of the statistics in question. Otherwise, these officials provided vague numbers. (#INT12)

However, another journalist believes that the difficulties they face as women in accessing financial and economic statistics can differ from one Arab country to another:

The situation in Arab countries is different from one country to another. For example, it is difficult to obtain statistics from Arab countries in North Africa, but by contrast, in the Gulf countries, especially Saudi Arabia, we find that it is easier to get a lot of statistics, even if there are some problems with them. We should note that in the past few years there has been some improvement in the Gulf countries in accessing statistics and that we journalists have become better equipped to understand and analyse them (#INT12)

Nevertheless, limitations to access of data is not only constrained by the factors mentioned above. Other female journalist finds statistics difficult to access because of the nature of the data itself,

The most difficult statistics are economic and financial ones because they do not rely on approximation or assumption; rather, they depend on specific criteria, information and measurements. In the Kingdom, they are difficult to obtain because we do not have a clear list of

statistical information. Each sector depends on its own measurement and statistics, which makes getting statistics so hard. (#INT07)

Overall, context appears to be the most important element in determining access to statistics. This context, however, is not limited to the nature of sources or newsbeats being covered but extends to the media system in which a reporter operates and the educational background of a journalist. In contrast to this point of view of practitioners based in the KSA, the interviewed Emirati female journalist encountered no difficulty in accessing statistics, stating that statistics “can be obtained. Many organisations publish them on their websites and sometimes as journalists we request them” (#INT08). This situation highlights a media environment where expectations and norms around what is covered differ in terms of how sophisticated they are.

Power, anxiety and knowledge

Female journalists seem to prefer engaging with national government sources to a greater degree than do their male counterparts. Amongst the respondents, only the female journalist who worked for a pan-Arab newspaper deals predominantly with international organisations. She shared the following experiences:

When I write any article, the sources that I rely on at the beginning are the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, even if the news relates to an Arab country. Then, I visit the official websites related to the statistics. The reason for my choice of these international sites is because the information is updated continuously and periodically. In addition, both websites contain files specific to each country. In short, I visit international sites such as those of the IMF and the World Bank, then I visit the official sites of the target country and then I consult other sources. (#INT14)

This statement indicates that being based in London rather than in an Arabian Gulf country eases divergence from the norm. Nevertheless, the journalists working in Gulf-based newspapers favour interacting with government sources, arguing that these informants are more reliable when it comes to providing statistical data:

The source of statistics is important for the credibility and accuracy of information. For example, government agencies provide statistics as part of their responsibility, which ensures their accuracy and validity. (#INT12)

These journalists recognise the connection between power and legitimacy, stating that they rely “on government sources in statistics as it is the official authorised body to obtain the most reliable and credible information for the public” (#INT07).

Additional support is extended to this orientation in Western studies, which uncovered that in practice, journalists in the North are as dependent on official sources for

statistics, particularly governments and official representatives as main sources when gathering and reporting data (Malone, Boyd, & Bero, 2000, p. 732). In fact, Fink and Anderson (2015, p. 476) pointed out that most journalists face at least an occasional obstacle when trying to get the data they need from government sources.

This situation is problematic for journalists who raise normative claims in relation to their roles in society and who are unable to craft holistic stories and reports when compelled to relying solely on government sources. The authors noted that this is not only a challenge when using government press releases as a primary source; the deficiency can even be caused by failing to critically examine government-released data (Lugo-Ocando & Faria Brandão, 2016, p. 9).

Journalists who rely on the sources' own interpretations and explanations of statistics could also result in governments' own interests being served instead of society's interests (Lugo-Ocando & Faria Brandão, 2016). Furthermore, some sources - particularly official sources that produce statistics published for public scrutiny - intentionally try to conceal some information that could be harmful to their reputation or does not benefit them by releasing a huge amount of data at the same time or releasing information at a time when journalists are generally unavailable (Brook, 2013; Nguyen & Lugo-Ocando, 2016, p. 7).

This absence of critical engagement with numerical data is unsurprising as the main function of local Arab media is to support the government in articulating its news and to control the news from foreign sources (Mellor, 2005, p. 38). As a result of this perspective, most Arab media outlets, particularly newspapers, predominantly serve their governments (Nötzold & Pies, 2010, p. 60), whilst many newspapers publish news stories from outside the region to avoid difficulties (Mellor, 2011, p. 61).

Other important aspects are education and skills. The educational backgrounds and competencies of newspeople are key not only to explaining their ability to analytically evaluate statistical data but also to reinforcing their confidence in doing so. Journalists all over the world tend to experience anxiety when dealing with statistics. As suggested by Curtin and Maier (2001, p. 733), a journalist's perception regarding his/her ability to use maths is a principal determinant of how accurately and effectively he/she can work with numbers. Some journalists erroneously believe that they are required to calculate, measure and analyse statistical data using complex formulae, when in fact, they simply need to apply straightforward and valid reasoning (Nguyen & Lugo-Ocando, 2016, p. 4). Maier (2003, p. 930) added that journalists generally possess the mathematical competence to perform basic maths, but they do not have the same confidence or belief in themselves when using statistical data in reporting.

As previously described, most of the female journalists in both countries who hold journalism degrees are predisposed to avoid carving a career as reporters in news media outlets. None of the interviewed Saudi female journalists holds a degree in journalism. One completed high school education, another obtained a BA in public relations and a third acquired an MA degree in international political economy. This

educational profile suggests that incorporating data and statistics into the journalism curriculum in these countries might be insufficient to improve the ability of women to engage critically and effectively with numbers.

A more viable approach would be to address this issue from an organisational perspective. When asked about whether they received any help in dealing with statistics from their superiors, all the female journalists said 'yes', but they also pinpointed important challenges within the organisations themselves. One such challenge was explained thus:

Sometimes [we received help when dealing with statistics]. There are technical statistics that need clarification when being conveyed to the reader; they need to be relevant and easy to understand and to take into account the different and various sections of the community. (#INT07)

In terms of the help provided by newspapers themselves to their journalists, the Saudi female journalists agreed that their newspapers supported and encouraged them when using statistics. The female journalist who worked for the pan-Arab newspaper gave more detail, as follows:

Yes, [we receive help] because the editorial department demands accuracy and is very strict about advertising materials; we see some of the articles as being advertising [instead of news reporting], and our editorial department rules out anything they consider to be an advertisement. Furthermore, the production of news material is handled in stages and is reviewed by more than one person. When the journalist finishes writing, the editor comes to review it and then the managing editor to review it again. Asharq Al-Awsat has always asked for at least two sources of news to be used in a story. (#INT14)

The journalist from the UAE summarised the assistance that she was afforded as follows: "we have a report unit that studies the information and draws the statistics from it" (#INT07). She stated that she often taps into this unit for support. The majority of the respondents relied on the help that they receive from their colleagues:

Often, yes, I ask for help from specialists to confirm the total numbers and ratios. In addition, I investigate other aspects of the subject by asking about the possibilities that might predict the statistical future, together with any indicators. Usually, we didn't receive any help from statistical sources. (#INT12)

The awareness of the female journalists regarding organisational deficiencies meant that they also know on which areas and topics they require assistance. One sought the confirmation of at least two specialists when providing an interpretation of statistics:

With some of the statistics, I take my colleagues' opinions. Usually, when I deal with statistics, I rely on two sources, one of which is an expert in the field related to statistics (for example, real estate or oil) and the second of which is a financial expert, to give a reading of the subject. (#INT14)

In terms of the time pressure under which all journalists must work, the majority of female journalists interviewed agreed that dealing with statistics is a major factor contributing to the stress of time pressures. One of them articulated this point as follows:

*Sure, because statistics need to be compared with other statistics and then analysed to be understood. In addition, it needs other sources to be verified. Journalists often work to tight deadlines and against demanding deadlines on a daily basis. Often, they have just four hours to prepare an article. In contrast to journalism, in magazines such as *The Economist*, the more relaxed deadline allows them to come out with journalistic material that contains highly professional statistics. (#INT14)*

Regarding the ethical issues related to dealing with statistics, the majority of the female journalists interviewed agreed on the importance of articulating accurate, credible, transparent and unbiased statistics. One of them highlighted the following:

[Journalists should be conscious about the] credibility of statistics, accuracy of information and transparency. Also, it is important to make sure you are not misled by a source or susceptible to a particular idea or the existence of personal interests. (#INT12)

Interestingly, one of the journalists mentioned the following:

Unfortunately, these types of journalists [who are unethical] exist and are usually paid. Journalists know that statistics are an important source and attract the reader, so they exaggerate them in a way that serves the advertiser. (#INT07)

This finding is supported by the study conducted by Aljumaiahe (2010, p. 183), who found various ethical issues and conflicts of interest relating to statistical sources. For example, some journalists worked as consultants for news sources, and some public relations staff in various private and government institutions worked as part-time journalists. He added that the aim of such journalists may be to ensure positive coverage of their institutions and to prevent any adverse criticism rather than to report statistics in an unbiased manner. In addition, he pointed out that that some journalists do not mind accepting gifts, free trips and other privileges in exchange for providing positive coverage. These may include not only material gifts but also commercial or government transactions that serve the same purpose of rewarding the journalist for positive coverage (Aljumaiahe, 2010, p. 254).

To avoid these unethical practices, the suggestions provided by female journalists to avoid ethical issues varied from one journalist to another. For example, one of them focused on the process of dealing with statistics:

After confirming the credibility of the source, the journalist needs to simplify complex economic and financial statistics. Usually, the journalist encounters many ethical and legal issues, the most important of which is to ensure that the statistics are not influenced or affected by personal considerations. As such, criticising is an important requirement before publication, especially because the source might not be official, and the journalist may face legal issues. (#INT12)

Another journalist concentrated on external factors when dealing with statistics, as follows:

Do not use statistics to achieve sensational headlines. Also, do not allow advertisements to affect the content of news containing statistics, and try to emphasise the use of experts. (#INT14)

In terms of cross-checking statistics, the majority of the female journalists interviewed found that it is difficult to cross-check statistics. One journalist stated that this process is difficult:

For example, we worked as a team on a news story that included the level of poverty in Iran for the period between 2012 and 2016. Then, we found that getting reliable and creditable statistics was very difficult. This is because entities such as the Revolutionary Guards have their own numbers, government agencies give different numbers, and the World Bank also gives figures that are quite different. Finally, we had to rely on the recognised international organisation (the World Bank), but unfortunately, even the World Bank did not have individuals on the ground to verify these data. Another example from the same state [Iran] is that, in our search for statistics relating to unemployment among young people, one source stated that unemployment was 40%, while the government source quoted 29%; the difference here was very large, and we could not verify these statistics. We tried to gather the most correct information and then explain this to the reader by mentioning that there was more than one source of information and that these sources were conflicting. (#INT14)

Another female journalist highlighted the following:

When the statistics are obtained, the first question is about the source of the statistics. The journalist must make sure of the data's source and history. In general, government statistics are considered to be

reliable in the media. However, multi-agency statistics depend on the centre that issues those statistics. There are international centres whose studies are considered reliable and there are those whose studies have been prepared to serve a product or source. Therefore, checking or validating statistics is a requirement for every information institution and its employees. However, recently, there has been greater interest in statistical standards and the source of information. (#INT07)

Conclusion

Being a female journalist who operates in a non-democratic regime and is constrained by cultural and political limitations in practicing news reporting might be seen by many as an excessively problematic obstacle to overcome. This misconception drove numerous practitioners in the West, for years, to out rightly dismiss any attempt to improve and empower news reporters from the Gulf region. However, the rise of new media outlets and the increasing presence of reporters, particularly female ones, in the blogosphere have raised journalistic standards in the region. Moreover, thanks to the Worlds of Journalism Study (2016), normative and deontological in these societies are now similar to their counterparts in the West. Journalists in the Gulf want to exercise good reporting, which entails the professional autonomy to perform a critical analysis of their societies.

By exploring how female journalists engage with statistics in financial news, we provided a glimpse into the long and overdue effort by Arab female journalists to construct their own self-ideas of professional engagement with their societies. The data showed that they contend with graver obstacles than those encountered by their male peers but that they are well aware of such situation. Yes, the data suggested that female journalists over-rely on government and international news sources, but as we explained, this is no different from the tendency of males in general or Western reporters in particular.

Where they do differ is in their ability to perform a more critical analysis. This as we seen is a problem of context and power. Not one that can be overcome easily in all cases but one in which steady steps can be taken to improve both the position and capabilities among women reporters.

Such improvement can be initiated primarily by creating resources and support within the organisations that employ female journalists, a measure that necessitates efforts to supply news media organisations in the Gulf with access to statistics and expert opinions that can help them interpret statistical data in ways that extend beyond officially supplied explanations. Business and financial news, along with those featuring sports and science, might be one of the domains that is minimally subjected to regulation and imposition by central governments. These sectors in the Arab region

are therefore fertile breeding ground for change and reform, expanding women's horizons and cultivating the power to communicate with their own voice.

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An Innovation on its Way to Normalization?

Data Journalism at German Newspapers and Public Broadcasters.

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While relying on different skills, epistemologies and socialization than traditional reporters, data journalists are said to enable new forms of journalism and to change the journalistic trade from the inside (Coddington, 2014; Hermida & Young, 2016; Usher, 2016).

In times of mis- and disinformation and 'fake news', data journalism's ability to enable truthful, objective and authentic reporting has come into spotlight. One paradigm of the practice has been described as "reporting through the articulation of quantifiable evidence" (Borges-Rey, 2016, p. 841). On a content level, notions of fact-checking (Borges-Rey, 2016; Cohen, Hamilton, & Turner, 2011) as well as transparency and open source (Aitamurto, Sirkkunen, & Lehtonen, 2011) resonate with data stories. Practitioners are furthermore said to aspire to scientific ideals such as transparency and reproducibility (Weinacht & Spiller, 2013). Considered together, data journalism could be imagined to be an effective enabler of truthful, objective and authentic reporting.

Do such assumptions hold true when surveying data practitioners? To what extent do data journalists associate themselves and their reporting with notions of objectivity and transparency? How far has the practice spread since its initiation in the early 2000s? Using a standardized computer assisted telephone survey, the paper seeks to explore such questions and validate existing insights on the practitioners and their perception of the trade (Baack, 2017; Parasie & Dagiral, 2013), the characteristics of data journalistic coverage (Loosen, Reimer, & De Silva-Schmidt, 2017; Stalph, 2017) as well as used organizational setups (Boyles & Meyer, 2017; Hermida & Young, 2016).

A population of 305 German newspapers and public broadcasters was surveyed between July and August 2018 for data journalistic activities in the past twelve months and connected conceptualizations, contents, structures and processes of data journalism. The survey's response rate was 36% for newspapers (105 out of 293) and 100% for public broadcasters (12 out of 12), with overall 75% of the respondents holding executive or supervisory editorial positions.

The results indicate a high activity among the surveyed outlets. 75% of the participating media conducted at least one project within the past 12 months. On average, daily newspapers conducted 20 data projects. Public broadcasters followed with 18 projects

on average in the last 12 months. The number of given projects ranged from 1 to 60 projects. Therefore, it can be stated that data journalistic reporting in Germany seems to be regularly practiced.

The surveyed data journalists demonstrate a strong believe in the craft’s ability to transform journalism towards more transparency (see fig. 1). 66% respondents among newspapers and 70% respondents from public broadcasters agree with such a statement. At the same time, practitioners are not convinced that data-based reporting is more objective than other forms of journalistic representation (28% among newspapers, 22% among public broadcasters).

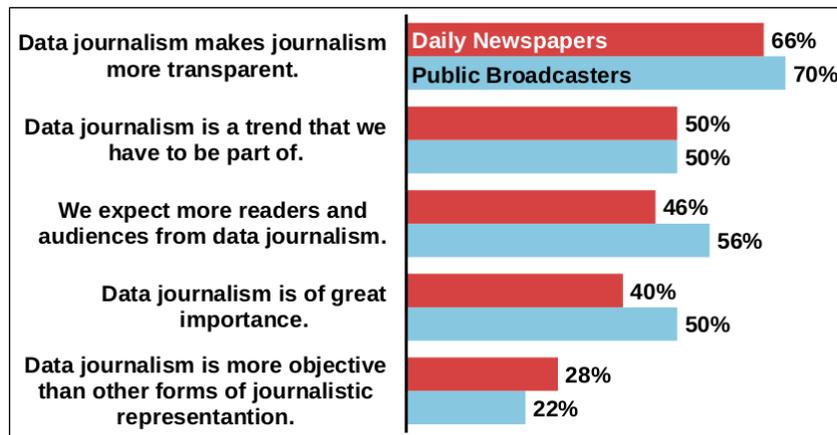


Fig. 1. Perception of Data Journalism, “rather agreed” category of support.

Data journalism in Germany is well established and mostly practiced by “lone wolves” or teams of 2-4 journalists (see fig. 2). In only 4% of the daily newspapers and 10% of the public broadcasters, teams consist of five or more people. Generally, more elaborate teams are usually implemented rather by large, resource-rich newspapers - which seems to be a highly plausible finding.

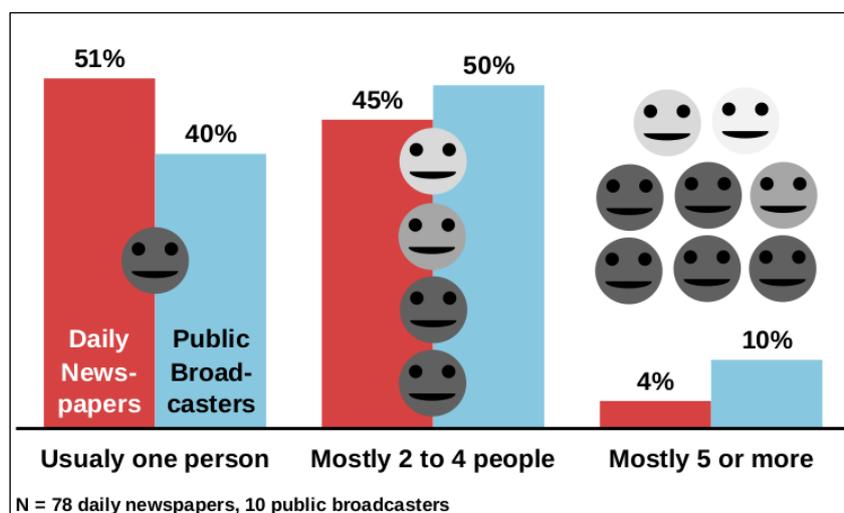


Fig. 2. Size of Data Journalism Teams.

Since data journalism in Germany seems to be a task for lone wolves or small teams, the question arises which profiles and skills exist among teams. In terms of profiles in data

journalistic team setting, there seems to be a trend towards roles uniting all needed skills such as data collection, analysis, story-development and visualization among newspapers. A stronger hierarchy and splitting of tasks is observable at public broadcasters with experts for certain tasks dominating (see fig 3).

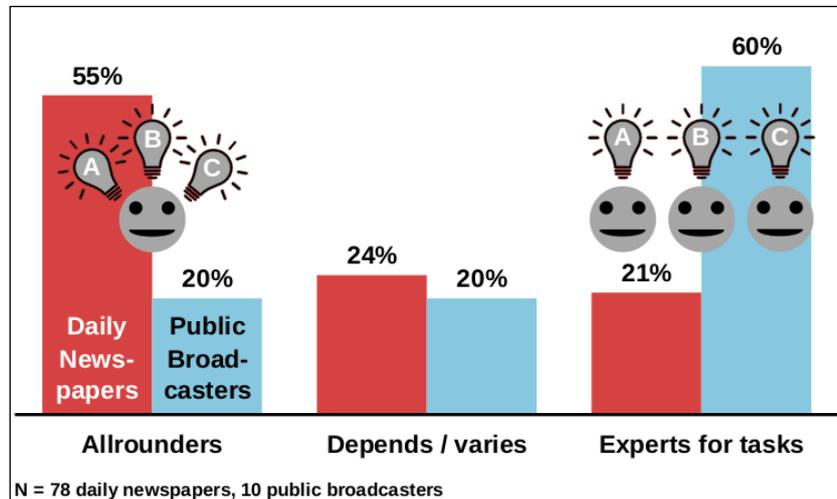


Fig. 3. Profile Specialization in Data Journalism Projects.

Analyzing the named topics of data journalistic reporting, a tendency of public broadcasters to have a broader thematic focus can be observed (see fig. 4). Among daily newspapers, the “Local/Regional” section dominates the data journalistic coverage. Among the public broadcasters, “Politics” and “Business/Economics” rank as most frequent section. At the same time, “Sports” and “Science Education” also have a higher share among data reports by public broadcasters. The respective answers should be seen in the light of the public broadcasters fulfilling their public service mission. At the same time it is worth noting that the larger a newspaper is, the more common data journalistic projects get with political or economic focus.

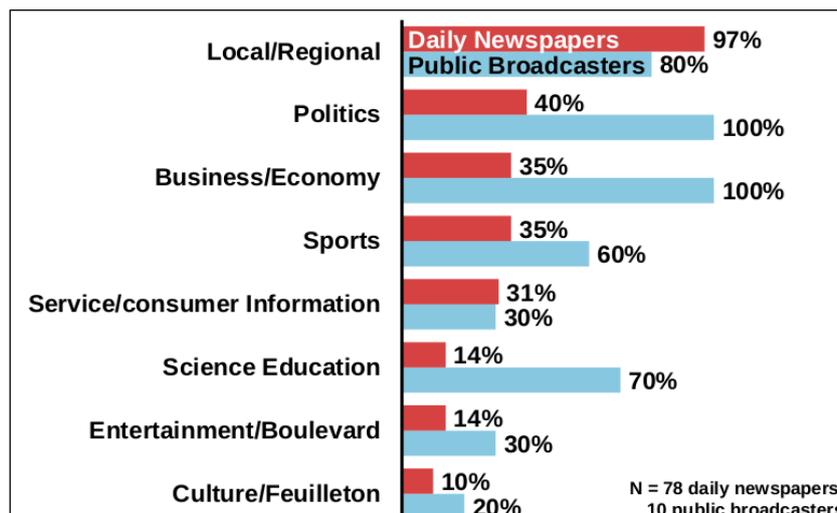


Fig. 4. Topics of Date Journalism, with multiple responses possible.

On a sourcing level, accountability-functions of journalism embodied by requests for data from authorities via e.g. freedom of information requests are outnumbered by the frequent reliance on freely available and ready-made datasets by e.g. federal offices (see fig.

5). Although a number of sourcing techniques are available to data journalists, work-intense approaches such as crowd-sourced or polled data do not get used frequently. The same applies to leaks and other data fed by informants.

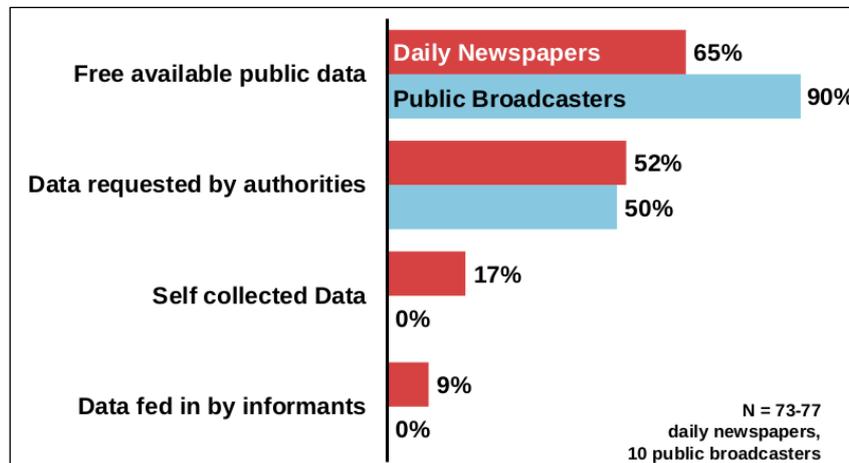


Fig. 5. Data Sources used for Reporting, “rather frequently” category of support.

In terms of the presentation of data journalistic reporting, newspapers seem to be – not surprisingly – demonstrated by text with 75% using this form “rather frequently” online or offline. Visualization are frequently present in both, the data projects of public broadcasters as well as newspapers. With regard to videos and interactive elements, it is noteworthy that these feature more prominently among public broadcasters than among newspapers. Such findings should be seen in the light of public broadcasters publishing their projects on television, radio, and online.

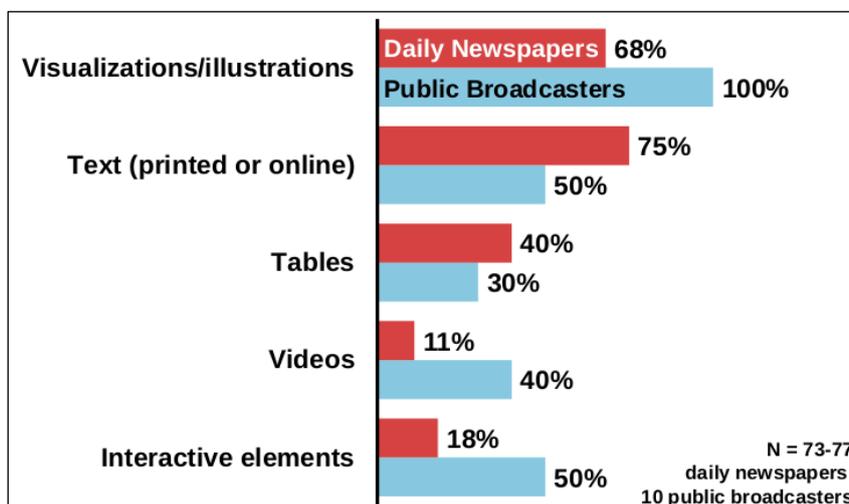


Fig. 6. Data Sources used for Reporting, “rather frequently” category of support.

Based on the responses to the survey, it can be concluded that data journalism in Germany seems to be well established. The interviewees demonstrate a strong believe in data journalism’s ability to transform journalism towards more transparency. At the same time, they are not convinced that data-informed reporting is more objective than other forms of journalistic representation.

With the outlined quantitative approach, the paper validates existing insights from previous studies and contributes the first representative survey of data journalistic activities, contents and practitioners in Germany - one of the most diverse media markets in the world. In the context of academic explorations of mis-/disinformation, the paper aims to inform the theory-building and scholarly understanding of journalism's ability to rebuild trust by providing a comprehensive assessment of the characteristics of the data journalistic reporting – a practice envisioned by some to be an effective enabler of transparent and truthful reporting.

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Adapting investigative and data journalism to new players: How are actors working globally?

Mathias-Felipe de-Lima-Santos, Clara González-Tosat, Ramón Salaverría

Abstract

Media organizations have been struggling to survive in the digital age. In order to get a chance to pull through while facing the threat of a post-truth era, data and investigative journalism seem to be more important than ever. The old model of highly competitive single newsroom environment evolve to a 'new model' of sharing information, sometimes on a global scale, dealing with new players. Thus, third-party organizations come in handy to help to overcome the lack of resources and skills within the newsrooms. This study conducted six ($n=6$) in-depth interviews with professionals working within third-party organizations, such as startups, studios or agencies in the five continents (Africa, Americas, Asia, Europe, and Oceania). The results show that the number of news outlets requesting their services have been reducing, with many organizations bringing these skills inside the newsrooms. The political context and media crisis also affect outsourcing by publishers. However, these organizations still believe they will be useful in the future with new technological capacities being requested, such as automation.

Key words: data journalism, investigative journalism, data visualization, outsourcing, third-party organization, news production

Introduction

A decade ago, The Guardian first scored a major investigative data scoop in the UK: in a thus far unprecedented move, it published 460,000 pages of expense reports by Members of Parliament, asking its readers to flag questionable claims (Flew et al., 2012; Coddington, 2015). Since then, data journalism has been spurred by different newsrooms in the world (Gray et al., 2012). However, data journalism needs to find ways to "continue innovating in order to remain competitive in the constantly evolving ecosystem" of news production (Stalph & Borges-Rey, 2018; Hermida & Young, 2017). The political watchdog reporting has been deeply challenged by new players that have emerged in the scene of data journalism (Carson & Farhall, 2018).

Today, publishers face changes in their value chain through the whole process of news production (Greenhill et al., 2015), sometimes outsourcing part of the news production to third-party organizations, such as startups, studios or agencies. These new players have an essential role in the production and dissemination of news, such as data analysis and data visualization. Considering the transformation from a highly competitive single newsroom environment to a 'new model' of sharing information, sometimes on a global scale, this study aims to understand the impact of these companies that are acting in the ecosystem of news media and the transformation of the industry from a vertical integration to a vertical disintegration, where "different firms perform different activities" (van der Wurff, 2012, p. 233). Furthermore, it aims to analyze how this situation affects investigative journalism practices, turning them into a more collaborative journalism.

Following on from a literature review that highlights what has been studied in the data and investigative journalism practice, the study presents a six ($n=6$) semi-structured, in-depth interviews with professionals working within these third-party organizations to understand how they are working with media outlets. Interviews were carried out via video conference in early 2019 with representatives of media organizations from six countries (Australia, Brazil, Kenya, United States, United Kingdom, and Singapore). The goal is to study the status quo and future challenges of production of investigative and data journalism within these new organizations and to help shed light on how news outlets can enhance their collaboration with these actors. Thus, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: Are the news outlets around the world outsourcing part of the news production to third-party organizations?

RQ2: How are these relationships being constructed?

RQ3: How are these decisions affecting data and investigative journalism in the news industry?

Finally, the paper concludes with an agenda for future research and possible limitations of this study.

Theoretical grounding

Investigative Journalism and Data Journalism

The political economy for watchdog reporting is deeply challenging in a 'post-truth age' (Carson & Farhall, 2018). Technologies made newsrooms adapt to the rapid advances in the media industry with the change of consumption habits and the emergence of new platforms (Villi & Picard, 2018). At the same time, the change in the journalist profession and the rise of new actors in newsrooms started to make profound disruptions in the way news is produced (Kosterich, 2019). Thus, outlets were forced to shift from the business models employed in the past and refocused on quality and unique journalism that people would be willing to pay for. Hence, news organizations were focusing on special topics and employing specialized techniques, such as investigative and data journalism.

Investigative journalism has a history of being considered part of the normative functions of liberal democracies. The genre has been one of the most effective ways to ensure democracy's values by providing useful information to citizens. By exposing wrongdoings, media organizations can make powerful institutions accountable for decisions and actions are taken (Abdenour & Riffe, 2019). With the disruption of Internet and technologies, publishers can influence broader audiences, which can help them to achieve their realm, as a Fourth Estate. The news media serves as a civil watchdog, which works as a counterbalance, a systemically opposite force to the actions of the powers of legislative, executive and judiciary, the three first powers. The responsibilities of publishers are not exclusively to report, but also to verify and inquiry matters of governance and public interest. The Scottish philosopher Carlyle (1841, p. 265) was one of the first to employ this term to explain the power of the press based on a statement made by Edmund Burke in a parliamentary debate in 1787. Therefore, investigative reporting is not only one genre of this fourth power but also an evident tool to enlighten people and give means to people to strengthen their critical thinking. Only with these tools, it's possible to have a *de facto* democracy.

Information and technology communications (ICT) enables a more inclusive digital public sphere (McNair et al., 2017), which challenged the flows of power. Network communication theory finds that Internet can work as democratizing bridge between the 'flows of power' and the 'flows of information.' The theory highlights how investigative journalism can bring knowledge to people across different geographies and regions. However, giving voice to actors who previously had limited access to the public domain enables them to bypass the gatekeeping function of news media (Castells, 2010). Emotionally carried and biased content rapidly spread on the Internet through false claims or hoaxes, which become part of online threads as the public may perceive it as true (Veil et al., 2012). Thus, in this era, investigative reporting is especially useful with the popularity of fake news or disinformation content.

Although the term 'fake news' has been widely spread in the media and academia, it has been considered inadequate to describe the complexities of information chaos (Schapals, 2018). Bakir and McStay (2018) may better describe the phenomenon as "either wholly false or containing deliberately misleading elements incorporated within its content or context" (p. 154). Although the practice is nothing new, the term became widespread with the US presidential election in 2016 (Schapals, 2018; Carson & Farhall, 2018). Thus, the public sphere in the form of fake news brought unprecedented opportunities for investigative reporting. By using investigative journalism, newsrooms are able to question public confidence in the veracity of information (Carson & Farhall, 2018). Consequently, the investigative reporting can help to combat disinformation or sloppy reporting.

To adapt to economic issues in the news media, a shift in investigative journalism is transforming the way that it is produced. From a highly competitive single newsroom environment to a 'new model' of sharing information now, sometimes on a global scale, characterizing the evolution of the practice. The 'old model' of highly competitive single newsroom environment was responsible for awards stories, such as "The Watergate scandal" from The Washington Post and "Spotlight" from Boston Globe (Carson & Farhall, 2018). However, the *datafication* of society made a large amount of data available and to interpret them have become more complex and longer, which required cooperation with other institutions. "Even with advanced search capabilities, a single newsroom would only manage to examine a tiny fraction of the leak [of Panama Papers], and a newspaper in Germany would search and cover different topics than newspapers in other parts of the world" (Baack, 2016).

The milestone was the release of the major investigation Panama Papers, described as the "biggest leak in the history of data journalism" (Baack, 2016) – a striking collaborative effort by no fewer than 370 journalists across 100 media organizations based in 80 different countries which revealed the secretive dealings of the offshore economy (Burgess, 2016; Cairo, 2016; Gray et al., 2012; Obermayer & Obermaier, 2016). Therefore, some scholars defend that data journalism was incorporated into investigative journalism and it was considered as an evolutionary development or reinvigoration of practice (Lewis & Nashmi, 2019).

The pervasive nature of information technology and communications (ICT) in news has explored the opportunity to collaborate with news organizations as well with non-media organizations to outsource tasks and non-organizations entities, such NICAR and Hacks and Hackers to advance the journalism practice. Castells (2013) argued that digital tools can assist collaboration across newsrooms and geographies, besides new levels of data interrogation (Carson & Farhall, 2018).

Data *per se* is a topic that has become more relevant than ever. Described by many as "the 21st-century oil", it is as a tool for a business understands users and creates a certain control over them. "Data, as a resource, is essential to run a business and likely the global economy in the contemporary context" (De-Lima-Santos & Zhou, 2018). In 2018, the scandal of the social media platform Facebook with the use of users' personal data by third parties brought the importance of the data to media again (Graham-Harrison & Cadwalladr, 2018).

In journalism, data came in the time of discussion in how journalism can win back public trust. The substantial growth of data journalism in recent years relates directly to the view that the practice is a tool “to make journalism more systematic, accurate, and trustworthy” (Zamith, 2019). The use of data in journalism is a tool to convince people about the importance of evidence in society. For example, the technical director at the Evening Post explained his intentions of transforming themselves into a “trusted data hub” in order to be “able to analyse even very large and complex datasets internally and to build stories on their insights” (Greenhill et al., 2015, p. 320). Clear then, Panama Papers helped to shape the investigative journalism in two ways: first, with advances in data journalism and automation and second, creating a culture of collaboration and sharing (Baack, 2016).

Despite the popularity of data journalism in the last decades, its foundations rely on what is known as Computer Assisted Report (CAR). This technique was popularized since the 1950s, when users’ surveys, content analysis, and statistics began to be used to validate journalists’ questions (Coddington, 2015). With the evolution and exploitation of database technologies and spreadsheets, data journalism has become widespread across newsrooms, allowing to use the digital tools to scrutinize data and produce visually compelling content.

Many authors have studied data journalism in recent years, focusing on norms, practices, and cultures of data journalism at the national level. A handful of recent studies can be listed in the United States (Parasie & Dagiral, 2013; Young & Hermida, 2015), United Kingdom (Hannaford, 2015; Borges-Rey, 2016), Canada (Hermida & Young, 2017), Belgium (De Maeyer et al., 2015), Norway (Karlsen & Stavelin, 2014), Sweden (Appelgren & Nygren, 2014), and Spain (Ferrerias-Rodríguez, 2016; Arias et al., 2018). As the practice has matured since then, scholars have used different methods to achieve their research goals, such as qualitative interviews or interviews to identify and understand the stakeholders involved in the mainstream newsrooms and how the practice is being implemented (Hermida & Young, 2017).

Scholars show how this practice has disrupted and challenged the journalism profession, adding new skills to journalistic profession, such as data analysis and new ways of storytelling. These forces drive new ways to harness data and digital journalism in the newsrooms, diversifying the jobs. These new specialists use technology to work in the intersection between software and storytelling. Popularly known as news nerds, these professionals have hybrid backgrounds or have some specialized skills, such as design and programming, and play a crucial role in bringing stories to light in the most engaging way (Kosterich, 2019). The arrival of these professionals to news industry serves as an important reminder of how big data analytics can aid the process of news work (Burgess, 2016; Cairo, 2016; Gray et al., 2012). These actors advocate for more radical transparency in the news production (Appelgren & Salaverria, 2018), in order to strengthen the journalist’s role as a public service over commercial interest. Through these years, data journalism was poised to position journalism as society’s watchdog.

In the US, studies have found the programmer-journalists, aka journo-coders, gaining ground as data journalism develops and the possibility for interactivity on news websites expands yearly (Parasie & Dagiral, 2013; Young & Hermida, 2015). This hybrid background of the journo-coders has grown in demand by newsrooms and suggests that bringing programmers into the newsroom doubts some journalistic ideals, in a setting where technology shapes journalism, as well as the reverse process (Hermida & Young, 2017).

On Europe, the studies showed different alignment in the relation of technology and journalism identity. In the UK, there is limited information yet about the journo-coders or even the presence in UK news outlets, although some case studies are presented in the first edition of Data Journalism Handbook (Gray et al., 2012 as cited in Hermida & Young, 2017). In the study of Hannaford (2015), two major legacy news organizations were studied, the BBC and the Financial Times. Opposite to the US

newsrooms findings, the UK outlets presented units that were composed by designers, programmers, and journalists acting jointly to “produce multimedia and interactive stories” (as cited in Hermida & Young, 2017). Approached also adopted in others newsrooms around the world, such as ABC in Australia (Wright & Doyle, 2018). Borges-Rey’s (2016) obtains similar findings concerning teams through the 24 semi-structured interviews he conducted with professionals from legacy news outlets, such as The Guardian, BBC, Financial Times, Channel 4, Trinity Mirror, The Times, CNN, Thomson Reuters, Telegraph, and others small outlets (Borges-Rey, 2016). Data journalism musters technologists and journalists within the newsrooms, it expands and improves their working practices while presenting newer and deeper perspectives on ordinary topics (Cairo, 2016; Hermida & Young, 2017). Data’s irruption in the newsrooms requires a new formula for news-media’s business models that involves more emphasis on the trust market instead of in the information one.

New actors in news production - Outsourcing

As an effect of digitalization on media business models, the printing revenue stream based on profit from the sales of space or spots in the newspaper or magazines for advertising employed before was no longer effective (De Lima Santos & Zhou, 2018). At the same time, tech companies like the Gang of Four caused a profound era of upheaval and change in the advertising industry. They are also known as “the Big Four,” a term coined by Eric Schmidt, former CEO of Google, in 2008, to describe these organizations behind the consumer revolution on the Internet (Simon & Joel, 2011).

Before the ‘paradigm of the platform’, as defined by Casilli & Posada (2019), where the platforms took a major role in shaping technology, society, and economy, the main source of revenue for the newspapers were the ads, followed by the subscriptions. With the upheaval in ads, brought by the rise of Google and Facebook and their programmatic ads, news outlets are suffering to find to adapt and find a profitable revenue stream model (Villi & Picard, 2018). This duopoly took the major part of the ad revenue through sophisticated algorithms to achieve cost efficiency for advertisers. Publishers found that advertisers were unwilling to pay premiums for display ads, which have never come close to matching television commercials in reach (De Lima Santos & Zhou, 2018).

To survive in this new environment news organizations had to make a significant investment in technology as well in staff that was able to work with them. As the money was running out, news organizations announced cutbacks in production, layoffs of workers or even complete closure (Ricketson et al., 2019). Thus, “[n]ews organizations have three options when it comes to controlling cost and increasing outputs; they can save on staff members work differently; they can make compromises with regard to content or go for cheaper content; and they can employ technologies to replace staff, produce content or increase their audience” (Bakker, 2012).

At the same time, entrepreneurship and innovation turned into buzzwords and took a central place in the economy (Basu et al., 2009). In recent years, a boom of startups and independent organizations that start working in the news industry. These new classes embrace a number of different organizations and startups: not non-profits or hyperlocal news efforts, but for-profits funded by venture capital, technology entrepreneurs, civic tech organizations and large companies, including media organizations (Baack, 2018; Carlson & Usher, 2016).

Entrepreneurial journalism has been incorporated in value chain affecting how the news is produced and their norms. These new actors came to understand part of news work, while they serve as third-party organizations for news outlets in the process of outsourcing or collaborating:

The networked character of news work gets amplified by a particular feature of the corporate character of the global news industry: The often translocalized nature of the media production process, as media industries cross-finance, offshore, subcontract, and outsource various elements in the production process to save costs and redistribute risks. In journalism, outsourcing is called 'remote control journalism' as news organizations move specializations or entire divisions to another part of the world, while 'journalism-by-remote-control' refers to the increased reliance of legacy news organizations on local contacts, handlers, stringers, and correspondents in (conflict) areas around the world (rather than sending contracted employees). (Deuze & Witschge, 2018, p. 173)

Media Systems and the Political Economy Framework

Since Hallin & Mancini (2004) introduced the concept of "media system models", it has become one of the most popular approaches to study transnational and border-crossing information processes worldwide. Although scholars (Hardy, 2008; Wessler & Brüggemann, 2012) consider their perspective of analysis highly focused on a systematic comparison of media systems within Western democracies, their study can be extended to other countries. Consequently, their level of analysis concentrates on media systems within the context of nation states, which requires an expansion to the political economy framework to consider each level.

The three different system models presented in the book are, briefly:

The Liberal Model, which prevails across Britain, Ireland, and North America; the Democratic Corporatist Model, which prevails across northern continental Europe; and the Polarized Pluralist Model, which prevails in the Mediterranean countries of southern Europe. The Liberal Model is characterized by a relative dominance of market mechanisms and of commercial media; the Democratic Corporatist Model by a historical co-existence of commercial media and media tied to organized social and political groups, and by a relatively active but legally limited role of the state; and the Polarized Pluralist Model by integration of the media into party politics, weaker historical development of commercial media, and a strong role of the state" (Hallin and Mancini, 2004, p. 11).

The political economy framework extends this model because it can look not just within a country, but it also examines the relationship between countries, considering the important role of the current status of the economy in that analysis. Whether the economy is improving, expanding or in contraction, this may help explain the access to and seeking of outsourcing services in the news industry. In general, the media organizations are facing up to the challenges of digital media and convergence. Key elements such as the public access to media production and distribution are translated into signs of citizen participation and other kinds of social transformation. Social and political norms are in transition, which challenges the capitalist cultural hegemony across continents and countries, revealing strong relationships between social power and the democratization of mass media (Cohen, 2018).

In terms of political economy analysis, "[w]hile such power relations have, historically, been framed as a relationship between media owners (capital) and journalists (labor), we must now add to analysis power players such as corporate platforms and app companies" (Cohen, 2018). With huge upheaval brought by economic issues in the news industry, it also requires to analyse the power players, such as third-party organizations. The political economy framework works as "a conceptual orientation", where researchers use to ask who benefit from particular transformations, practices, and decisions, and at whose expense (Mosco, 2009); and foregrounding consideration to journalists' work conditions

enables researchers to question the power relationships underpinning contemporaneous journalism. Outsourcing brings new actors to game of power where journalists are still inserted into the production process and norms, while new actors emerged and tangled up in particular power relations, which occurs in stresses being placed on their work (Cohen, 2018).

Methodology

This paper surveys how the use of third-party organizations has been embraced as part of journalistic practices and norms, conducting changes in the value chain of the news industry. To address this phenomenon of adoption of new players, this article relies on a qualitative approach. Thus, the research was designed to understand the status quo and future challenges in the adoption of third-party in different countries divided by the five (5) continents Americas (North and Latin America), Europe, Asia, Africa, and Oceania. For the purpose of this study, it was mapped one third-party organization, such as startups, civic tech organizations, studios, agencies by each continent, considering North America and Latin America as separately. It was chosen six small organizations that are or were covering aspects related data and investigative reporting on a daily basis to understand how these actors are or were working with news media outlets.

First, the companies were mapped through literature related to investigative and data journalism. It was also strategically asked to journalists in each region to name organizations that were being used by newsrooms to produce content. In total, 12 organizations were contacted, only six ($n=6$) accepted the invitation to take part in this study by the time of this paper; the others didn't reply by the time or were not available in the dates proposed. Interviewees were initially contacted via email, LinkedIn and Twitter.

Second, due to limitation of time, six ($n=6$) semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted for this project. The interviews were conducted between July and August 2019 with founders or senior staff members. On average, the interviews lasted 30 minutes. Purposely looking for global diversity in the results, the organizations that were consulted for this study are located in countries in all five continents: Small Multiples (Australia, Oceania), Frames (Portugal, Europe), VslashR (Singapore, Asia), PesaCheck (Kenya, Africa), Pitch Interactive (US, North America), and Volt Data Lab (Brazil, Latin America). These six small technological organizations work as third-party vendors or collaborators to legacy and native news media organizations in their country and region.

In Oceania, Small Multiples was chosen. Founded by Andrea Lau and Jack Zhao, this organization is composed by a “multidisciplinary team of data specialists, designers and developers, we execute every step of the process – from concept ideation and creative strategy to mockups and prototypes to design and development”⁶. They have worked with The Guardian Australia, SBS and ABC in Australia.

In Europe, Frames was selected, a Portuguese startup agency that was supported by Google's Digital News Innovation fund, an effort to help innovative journalism project thrive in the digital age. The services provided by this company include automation of charts and graphs. In Asia, the Singaporean *VslashR* was chosen. The company was founded by Chi-Loong, a former journalist, with the main focus on producing “data visualizations, serious games, animations” for companies⁷.

⁶ <https://smallmultiples.com.au/about/>, accessed on August 2019.

⁷ <https://foundry.vslashr.com/>, accessed on August 2019.

PesaCheck was chosen in Africa, a pioneering organization to “verify often confusing numbers quoted by public figures across East Africa”. This organization is considered a civic tech initiative, which helps watchdog media and NGOs in Kenya to verify the financial and other statistical numbers quoted by public figures⁸.

Finally, in the Americas, two organizations were chosen: one representing North America, the Pitch Interactive based in California, US, and another from South America, Volt Data Lab based in São Paulo, Brazil. The first is a “data visualization studio that focuses on using new technologies to address complex data”⁹. With more than a decade in the market, this organization has worked with several media organizations, such as ESPN, Esquire Magazine, The Nation, ProPublica and many others. Volt Data Lab is a “data-driven journalism agency, providing data-driven investigations, research, news stories, visualizations, interactives, on-demand projects and training to media companies and NGOs”¹⁰. The agency has worked for several news organizations in Brazil, such as Piauí, Poder360, Intercept, BBC Brazil and many others.

Over all these media organizations, it was chosen to do a comparative analysis because it “is valuable in the social investigation”, “sensitizes us to variation”, and “this can contribute powerfully to concept formation and to the refinement of our conceptual apparatus” (Hallin and Mancini 2004, p.2). Most of the scholarly literature on media is highly ethnocentric or focus on countries of the Western world. “[I]n the sense that it refers only to the experience of a single country, yet is written in general terms, as though the model that prevailed in that country were universal” (Hallin and Mancini 2004).

Third, to analyze these in-depth interviews, this paper applies the constructivist grounded theory method (GTM), because it collects and analyzes data simultaneously in order to extract categories without hypotheses (Charmaz, 2017), and “follows a systematic approach” (Lim, 2018, p. 97) such as writing analytical summaries and analyses such diverse domains as “in-depth interviews, observation, reporting, statistical data, and diaries”(p. 97). This method begins with inductive data, relies on comparative analysis, involves simultaneous data collection and analysis, and includes strategies for refining the emerging analytic categories. GTM, which extracts meaningful categories from data, is an attractive tool that incorporates such distinct forms including Glaserian, Straussian, and constructivist GTMs (Glaser & Strauss, 2017; Charmaz, 1996). After that, it was possible to conduct a comparative analysis of the interviews to understand how third-party companies are shaping the news production in the industry. “Comparative analysis makes it possible to notice things we did not notice and therefore had not conceptualized, and it also forces us to clarify the scope and applicability of the concepts we do employ” (Hallin and Mancini 2004, p. 3).

Last, based on a literature review and our findings of the interviews, our conclusions, limitations and future research related to this study are presented.

Findings

Identification

According to the description of the six organizations consulted for this study, most of them have technological competences to work with data and/or investigative journalism. As digital intermediaries

⁸ <https://pesacheck.org/about>, accessed on August 2019.

⁹ <https://pitchinteractive.com/about.html>, accessed on August 2019.

¹⁰ <https://www.voltdata.info/en-lg>, accessed on August 2019.

between news organizations and the audiences, they define their organizations in different ways, such as startup, agency, studio, and civic tech organizations. But sometimes this definition overlaps with others.

The respondent at Frames supports this viewpoint:

We are a startup because in the end, it is a technology company that works with machine learning and artificial intelligence, so it is part of our identity, and at the same time we are a kind of news agency, which instead of distributing news, distributes graphics. (Senior Journalist, Frames)

In the late 1990s, the most common type of startup company was a 'dotcom.' With the expansion to other areas, the concept of startups has become very subjective. Some have defined by their size and maturity in the ecosystem, while others consider their effect on the volume and success of the startups. Yet there are some that believe it is a state of mind (Blank, 2013; Shontell, 2014). One of the respondents showed a similar opinion that they overcome the phase of startup after a period of establishment of two years.

We are civic tech initiative. Because we've been existing for about two years now and I think we're sort of out of the startup phase, so we're still quite small but we've been able to sort of establish ourselves to the point where we have a steady source of income and we're able to keep the work going. (Editor Manager, PesaCheck)

In general, these third-party companies don't have a common identification, as they understand them as vendors of a service for other organizations or collaborators. There is no formal definition from their side and they try to define themselves from what they believe their work can do, which includes agencies, startups, civic tech organizations, etc.

Collaboration with publishers

All of our respondents showed some experience dealing with media organizations, and especially news organizations. However, most of them said a demand from news outlets have been shrinking in the last few years. The interviewees mentioned the lack of resources and the adoption of data and visual teams in the newsrooms for this lack of request of outsourcing. The founder of Pitch Interactive mentioned that his experience shows that there is a different approach from Europeans and Australians organizations to outsourcing, while in America is more common. Furthermore, he saw a lot of fluctuations in the last few years, with some rise in the recent times.

I see a fluctuation always. I think there seem to be waves where outsourcing or hiring third-party vendors is like a trend, and they're like "we've got to do this" or the problem really is that I see there aren't that many true data visualization experts. It's usually one person that deals with a lot of different things. You can't just find somebody who's just a statistics or somebody who just does concept designs; you have to find somebody who understands statistics, economics, relationships, visual representation. So, I see a fluctuation where organizations sometimes outsource their goals. And then they have to outsource it, because people move around. People move from the New York Times to other organizations. And then it's up to these organizations to figure out "OK, what do we do? Should we hire somebody? What options do we have?" (Founder, Pitch Interactive)

As mentioned before, another point that influences the requests in their opinion, it is the growing demand for new jobs by newsrooms, particularly specialized technological skills driving by new ways

to tell stories and engage audiences (Kosterich, 2019). Thus, it resulted in the arrival of new professionals with new skills and competencies, a phenomenon popularly known as news nerd. This results in changes made within the organizations, such as, for example, instead of requiring this from third-party vendors specialized in these skills, the competencies start to be implemented inside the newsrooms.

We don't do as many of them these days because I think the trend for companies. Sydney Morning Herald, which is one of the main newspapers here, they hardly have any money, so they don't dedicate much time to this. On the other hand someone like ABC, who's publicly funded, they actually do have a bit of money and they have their own internal team now because they see the value of it. So, we don't work as much anymore but we do work with bits and pieces. (Founder, Small Multiples)

This relationship between media outlets and third-party organizations seems to be built up in trust. More than half of the participants said it is a crucial factor for confidence-building the openness and transparency of the processes. They mentioned that is part of the nature of journalism to be quite reluctant about things and there is a need to explain and make clear for them what they are doing, for they can see how the services provided by these third-party organizations can be truthful and useful for them. In Frames, they mentioned when they start working with a new media organizations they spend a couple of weeks with meetings within the newsrooms for they can see the value behind their services. However, this is not common, most informants mentioned their relationship were more based on contact via virtual channels, such as videoconferences or emails.

So, we need to create a relationship of trust, and in this sense we always start working with the client, we usually are there a few days to talk with journalists, to introduce ourselves and show what our service is about. (Senior Journalist, Frames)

I worked a lot in newsrooms here. I know many journalists. It's not that hard to sell, the idea of data journalist is. Now it's easier because it's already proven to work, but at the beginning it was hard for you to say: this is cool, this is what it means. People are too tied up in an older journalism, a more primitive notion of journalism. As I told you, I know a lot of people in the area, so there's a certain confidence [at my work]. (Founder, Volt Data Lab)

Media crisis and political context

All the respondents showed concern about the media situation in the regions. The lack of clear revenue model and with only few organizations being able to make a profit, even outsourcing part instead of hiring seems a challenge for these organizations. In some countries the high control of government or the media concentration ownership limits their capability to innovate and expand their content. "Until it reaches a stage where the media is really dying, and then we are forced to be ambitious. But, unfortunately, because of the environment and the structure of Singapore is very controlled. There are two big media houses only" (Founder, VslashR).

The political context is also an issue for these small organizations, as they don't have the power and the reach of legacy organizations, to have access to data for possible investigations is also a challenge in some countries. "We're able to sort of ask them for information and a lot of times it can be quite responsive, sometimes not. So there can be a real challenge. But then in addition to that... like the government of Tanzania recently instituted a law that said you can't go collecting your own data, that sort of contradicts what the government is saying" (Editor Manager, PesaCheck).

Future

Although the collaboration between news organizations seems to be falling in recent years, informants believe that is an important way for news industry to follow, which allow them to focus their efforts on the editorial side, while they can be in charge of more specific knowledge. “In TST [The Straits Times, a newspaper that belongs to Singapore Press Holdings], they have their own internal teams to look at all these digital pieces” (Founder, VslashR). One of the respondents, believe that automation in data and investigative journalism will demand more for them in the future because it will need expertise that news organizations don't have so far.

I think the tendency is to have staff. What do you outsource is the capacity, got it? At Volt, we have the expertise to handle and analyze data that many newsrooms, and within them, either didn't have the time or didn't have that expertise. (Founder, Volt Data Lab)

It's really important and vital for news organizations to find ways of incorporating more data journalism into their stories. And I think their biggest challenge is also moving forward as finding the right people or the right partnerships to do things in an efficient way and process. So, I do think these news organizations need to establish a clear process to create these, because sometimes it can take days or weeks to create a data story and that's a problem in the newsroom. You know [news organizations need] to find tools to quickly generate stuff like I've seen things like this is how many times Trump used this word in his speech or even further to incorporate ways of using machine learning or artificial intelligence as well just to help them navigate some of the stories that they're trying to tell. (Founder, Pitch Interactive)

I face it positively whenever it is used in a way that streamlines processes and values professionals. I think this outsourcing of services from plugins or other agencies is a natural process, and one should always think strategically within the context of each company and that comes in much more to help than simply taking projects. It is much more about creating opportunity and improving the product for the customer than as a threat. So in this sense, I see it as something positive. (Senior Journalist, Frames)

Discussion and Future Directions

This first-ever study of new actors in the news production and practices focused on investigative and data journalism identified that the practice has been shaped differently in each region. This paper shows that there are less requests by news outlets to outsource part of the news production to third-party organizations. One of the reasons presented by the informants is that many organizations are bringing these skills inside to newsrooms. Many reasons can drive this decision and need to be investigated. However, outsourcing brings new actors to this game of power where journalists are still inserted into the production process and norms. Traditionally, publishers are used to a highly competitive single newsroom environment where they have the power to control and one scoop can entail reputation to their brand, by the exceptional originality and importance of the story. However, recent projects showed that big data cannot be easily managed by one single entity, and sharing this with other institutions can bring more credibility and enrich your investigation. This 'new model' of disseminating information, sometimes on a global scale, while dealing with new players, has shown very successful with Panama Papers and Paradise Papers.

The political context and media crisis also affect outsourcing by publishers. In countries with high concentration of media ownership or market share, the lack of competition can lead to an absence of investment by the news media industry. There is a need to further research on the complex relationship between these organizations and the political context of their countries.

Although the future doesn't seem very optimistic for these third-party organizations, new technological skills will be needed in the near future, and they might be useful while newsrooms are not able to have these skills in house. Automation of investigative and data journalism seems yet far from being developed inside newsrooms, these startups, agencies or studios will be useful in the future to fulfill these capacities that are not implemented yet in the outlets .

The relationship between these two actors are very based in confidence built on previous experiences. The third-party organizations, such as startups, agencies, civic tech, can be key to promote and produce investigative and data journalism in different countries of the world. The watchdog reporting that these two practices can produce are essential to inform the public about the goings-on in institutions and society, particularly in situations where a meaningful part of the public would demand changes in response. Thus, this study contributes to the academic and practical understanding that we need deeper investigative reporting from news media industry, both traditional investigative journalism as well as data journalism to prevent the abuse of power and to warn citizens about the wrongdoings in the society.

The results of this study are limited by a small population of organizations from which to draw, although it was mapped over three months. Further, because the outsourcing skills in newsrooms is fairly not discussed in the news industry, neither frequently discussed in the scholarship, can limit our study. The results also combined different countries across each continent studied and, thus, may have masked subtle differences among the regions, for instance, economic disparities, which, as mentioned before, need further studies.

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**New Roles for Investigative Journalists: How the New Media Environment
Impacts Work Practices, Using Examples from Germany and the USA**

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ABSTRACT

Changes in media usage behavior as well as the fallout from the 2008 financial crises have brought extensive cutbacks of editorial resources. Particularly investigative journalism is seen as a cost driver and is therefore often on the chopping block, despite existing research recognizing its critical role for democracy. An ongoing concern is how journalists can fulfil their watchdog function while facing financial and structural challenges. Recently, interest in the rise of “bridge roles” in news organizations in general has increased. What is not yet clear is the impact this situation may have on the work of investigative journalists. There is, consequently, a need to collect empirical data on relevant experiences of media organizations engaged in investigative reporting. This paper, based on conclusions from other recent projects, addresses this issue and pinpoints new required skills and best practices. For this purpose, 16 semi-structured interviews were conducted with investigative journalists, chief editors, journalism researchers, international journalism networks, and non-profit platforms from the following institutions: *ProPublica*, *Washington Post*, *Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE)*, *The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ)*, *Miami Herald*, *Columbia University*, *University of Missouri*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Der Spiegel*, *Die Zeit*, *Die Taz*. [Note: This is part of my PhD project, "Investing in Investigative Journalism" at the University of Vienna.] Specifically, I asked my interviewees about lessons learned regarding topic selection, storytelling, marketing and distribution, project management, Panama Papers, and collaboration in general. This knowledge makes it possible to identify new tasks in order to integrate them into educational curricula and training programs for journalists. The results of the study should help investigative journalists to achieve greater impact with the given resources and, thus, also better meet the needs of the public.

Key Words: Investigative Journalism, Work Practice, New Media Environment, Expert Interviews, Digitalization, Germany, United States of America

INTRODUCTION

The ongoing transformation of the media environment touches two dimensions: finances and, as a consequence of heavy cutbacks, quality. As a result, journalism is struggling to maintain its relevance and gain public support. Investing in quality journalism would stimulate the market, conclude Rodríguez-Gómez and Sandoval-Martín (2015) in their study on willingness to pay for investigative reporting in Spain. According to other research, public interest in in-depth journalism clearly exists and is rising (Stetka & Ornebring, 2013). Other surveys show equally high levels of interest in investigative reporting. Also, a study about the media landscape in Spain, Greece, and Romania found signs of increased support for investigative reporting (Smolean, 2015).

This sounds promising at first, but so far it has been difficult to capitalize on this general interest. The actual willingness to pay of the audience does not add up to the communicated support. There are several reasons for this, but one of them is that in the digital age even the best revelations can go unnoticed. As Joshua Benton, director of the Nieman Journalism Lab, puts it in the context of retaining digital subscribers: “It’s not just creating great journalism — it’s making sure that the great journalism gets seen by the people who’d enjoy or derive value from it” (2019).

The question of funding currently dominates the debate on the future and independence of journalism, and this is particularly true for investigative reporting. Initial studies, such as those by Abdenour and Riffle (2019), Hamilton (2016), or Oktavianti (2018), are looking into whether and how investigative content can contribute to competitiveness, brand building, and audience loyalty. However, investigative journalism as an important part of the media’s overall strategy has been insufficiently addressed in the existing literature (Aucoin, 2005, p. 5). The role of accountability journalism for society on the other hand is well documented (Aucoin, 2005; de Burgh & Bradshaw, 2000).

It is therefore of enormous importance to assess how the rapid technological changes both on the audience side and in the distribution of content affect the work of investigative journalists. Stetka and Ornebring found evidence that business failures of news organizations and failures of those organizations to fulfil the watchdog function are concomitant factors. This vicious circle primarily endangers democratic development, but also the viability of media outlets if they are less and less able to offer relevant investigations and unique content. It is therefore

fundamental to discover some empirical findings on how investigative research can be made more efficient and effective.

This paper continues the existing tradition of research on the significance of accountability journalism for democracy and expands it by examining experiences of media organizations, that, despite the ongoing funding crisis, have decided to engage in investigative reporting anyway. Recent industry reports (Schröder, 2019; Pew Research Center, 2019) indicate a tendency for these media to strengthen their circulation, especially in ePaper and digital subscriptions. At least they keep their numbers quite stable.

It is therefore quite relevant to identify those conclusions that investigative journalists in these media organizations have drawn from their individual efforts and to detail how they have been able to successfully carry out their watchdog function despite the aforementioned economic constraints. The 16 representatives of the selected news organizations in the USA and Germany were interviewed about lessons learned regarding topic selection, social media, digital storytelling, and marketing, as well as their experience of collaboration. They were also questioned as to whether the investment in investigative reporting has had an economic impact (e.g., in the form of audience loyalty and/or brand development).

This study attempts to answer the following research questions: How is the new media landscape affecting the work practices of investigative journalists today? And, consequently, what new roles (if any) have evolved in order to tap the potential of this new media environment? The answers to these questions, hopefully, will indicate the pivotal role that organizational development will play in media and in the future training of investigative journalists. News media that have identified and integrated these new roles will hopefully increase the probability that their news will be noticed by the relevant audience.

New Roles and Skills

The results indicate that traditional role models of investigative journalists have changed, as have other positions in the newsroom, as has already been explored thoroughly. Investigative journalists today also have to accomplish many more tasks than they did just a few years ago in order for their revelations to be perceived through the "white noise of news" (Malone, 2011, p. 1). This is partly due to the financial situation, as the legacy media, for the most part, still have to cut costs; but this also reflects the changing technology for producing and distributing content as well as in audience habits. As stated by Findlay, Bird, and Smith (2017), "social media and digital technology have fundamentally changed the way in which news is gathered"

(p. 3). Likewise, the work habits and practices of investigative journalists have changed as well due to the fundamental transformation of the media landscape.

If the initial findings—that investment in investigative research can contribute to the economic stabilization of media companies—prove to be true, it is important to know how this can best be achieved. In any case, the great profiteer of this would be the public. It is hoped that this paper will contribute to a better understanding of how investigative journalism can continue to fulfil its democratic function in the face of such challenging conditions.

DEFINITION

Generally following high standards of method and execution, investigative journalism is seen as a supreme discipline of journalism. By scrutinizing concentrated power sources in liberal democracies (Carson, 2014), investigative journalism fulfils a normative function, embedded in the principles of freedom of expression and social responsibility. Yet, a universal definition of investigative journalism does not exist. In the literature, the descriptions even mention investigative research as a "categorical imperative" for journalism as such (Haas, 1999, p. 107). Nevertheless, it is possible to name a few general parameters that are institutionally recognized as descriptions. James Aucoin lists five factors that differentiate investigative journalism from other forms of journalism: "1) exposure of information 2) about an important public issue 3) that someone or some organization does not want to be reported 4) that is revealed through the original, time consuming 'digging' of the reporter 5) for the purpose of inspiring reform" (2005, p. 91).

There is a consensus that investigative journalism plays a substantial role in societies and that the identification of wrongdoing serves the public interest (e.g., Carson, 2014; Aucoin, 2005; de Burgh & Bradshaw, 2000; Coronel, 2009; Haas, 1999). It is also well established from a variety of studies that investigative reporting helps recoup public money and that certain stories can even be of financial benefit to society (Hamilton, 2016). As reports show, corruption is more likely to expand when those in power do not have to fear exposure. It can therefore be argued that this is meritorious, societally highly desirable even if not often profitable (Clement et al., 2018).

One of the most significant current discussions is the funding of investigative journalism. The issue has grown in importance in light of recent reports of ongoing layoffs in the media industry. So, although the watchdog function of the media is undoubtedly one of the cornerstones of a functioning separation of powers, the media's austerity programs usually run

at the expense of research capacity. Due to often expensive investigations that do not always lead to publications, investigative journalism is primarily considered as very costly with little or no return on investment; certainly, a return on investment is not guaranteed.

Journalistic products, including accountability journalism, are increasingly treated “as commodities and judged by their potential to make profit” (Chambers, 2000, p. 93). However, new computational techniques allow cost reduction of investigative research as well as data processing and a quicker and more thorough distribution of original stories (Flew et al., 2012). The oft-mentioned high costs of this kind of journalism in past decades can therefore be reduced. At the same time, technology permits new forms of storytelling, supported for instance by video, 3D, or virtual reality. This in turn can attract a new audience (Carson, 2014), which is now also able to participate in the reporting process and public debate actively. By comparison with circumstances during prosperous phases in the past, it seems likely that the demand for accountability reporting is increasing (Malone, 2011; Rolland, 2007).

Although the economics of this type of work are often discouraging, there are also indications that investigative journalism increases news consumption and can help news outlets to differentiate themselves from competitors and draw readers as well as advertisers. (Hamilton, 2016; Malone, 2011; Rodríguez-Gómez & Sandoval-Martín, 2016). Recent research has established that television stations producing investigative journalism also earned the largest audiences (Abdenour & Riffe, 2019). “It really creates an opportunity for news outlets to set themselves apart in getting people to care and building the brand. That helps sell subscriptions or attracts viewers,” according to Martha Steffens Chair in Business and Financial Journalism at Missouri School of Journalism.

Clement et al. (2018) state, in their study on funding models, that recent changes in the media landscape have influenced the need for innovation and efficiency as two major drivers of competitiveness. In conjunction with the increased interest in investigative journalism (Kaplan, 2013), these findings form an important basis for the question of what “best practice” looks like today and how it can be developed to meet the challenges of the future.

METHODOLOGY

The study uses qualitative analysis, including expert interviews, to gain insights into the changed work practices of investigative journalists. Qualitative methods can be more useful for identifying and characterizing problems addressed in Social Science, as such methods dovetail with the “interdisciplinary nature of research” (Creswell, 2009, p. 203). The

importance of the expert interview for research practice in the social sciences is described by Bogner and Menz (2014) as "undisputed" and is regarded as the "core of everyday research routine" (p. 1). The focus of interest here is on the views and experiences of those affected. The most important function is still the gathering of information; when little data is available on the research object at hand, to explicate implicit knowledge is the preferred approach.

According to Flick (2011), it is not so much the person that is of interest, but their individual capacity as an expert in a certain field of action. Bogner and Menz (2014) define an expert as an employee of an organization who performs a specific function and holds a position that allows them to apply their explicit knowledge and make decisions. Flick in turn describes an expert as someone who is able to enforce their own orientation and, precisely because their decisions flow into practice, the expert influences the field of action of other actors in their field. Furthermore, when the decisions of an expert are put into practice, the expert influences the actions of other players in the field. This leads to the conclusion that the decision of "legacy" media organizations regarding their investment in investigative journalism can affect the decision-making process, organizational development, and strategic alignment of others, such as small media houses, journalistic start-ups, and/or non-profit newsrooms.

Since the role of investigative journalism as a strategic component of media organizations has received little scientific attention (Aucoin, 2005; Gomez & Sandoval-Martin, 2015), a historical analysis of the heydays of muckraking was carried out upfront as part of a research seminar conducted by my supervisor and me. The findings gained in this way are otherwise not available without the preliminary studies, as "very few major projects have investigated the relationship between investigative content and audience" (Abdenour & Riffe, 2019, p. 1). The aim was to draw the right conclusions, which were necessary for the relevant questions to be posed in the expert interviews. Based on the results of the historical analysis, the semi-structured guideline was developed. Experts are not the "whole person" at the center of research interest; rather, they are regarded as representatives of the actions and views of a particular group, as Flick emphasizes. For this reason, those media organizations in Germany and the USA were selected for the study that have a strong tradition of accountability journalism associated with their brand and whose investigative thrust has set trends in the last few years.

Data Gathering

Semi-structured expert interviews with a total of 16 journalists, editors, project managers, academics, and representatives of journalistic networks were conducted over a period of eight months. The organizations and interviewees were selected according to different criteria: 1)

Media that participated in the publication of the Panama Papers, 2) media that have intensified their efforts in the area of investigative reporting in recent years, 3) journalistic research institutes, and 4) international journalistic network organizations engaged in investigative reporting and collaboration. A mix of different financing models (for-profit and non-profit alike) as well as different publication forms (daily, weekly, and monthly media, print and online) were aimed at, with the intention of ensuring the broadest possible spectrum of experience (see list in the appendix).

The semi-structured approach was chosen because it allows one to reflect on the individual situation of the several media organizations. As described by Kohli (1978), this allows a better expression of the interviewee's point of view than standardized interviews or questionnaires. The category formation into four main themes and the assignment of 17 subtopics, both in the semi-structured interview guideline and in the content analysis, ensure that the statements within the sample are adequately comparable to a qualitative survey, as recommended by Flick (2011) for these procedures. The main categories included the dimensions "Changed News Environment", "Financial Constraints", "Democratic Impact", and "Economic Impact" and the interview guide was adjusted to the individual organizational forms (Publishing House, Non-Profit Newsroom, Research Institution, and Journalist Networks).

All interviews were conducted face-to-face, recorded on audio, and lasted between 30 minutes and 2.5 hours. The transcripts were evaluated on the basis of the content analysis according to Mayring (2003), using the aforementioned categories and subtopics for coding. All interview partners have received the complete transcripts for release. Any statements that could possibly lead to disadvantages in their own working environment have been anonymized.

Limitations

The fact that no quantitative survey was carried out has a potential impact on the significance of the findings. Thus, conclusions can be generalized only to a limited extent. Nonetheless, the results of the interviews provide important insights into how the working practices of investigative journalists are affected by the new media landscape.

FINDINGS

For this paper, the results for the first dimension, "Changed news environment", are of special importance, as they address new tasks and roles in connection with the implementation of investigative projects. In this cluster, questions of organizational development, new job descriptions, digital storytelling, marketing measures, and the influence of social media on

editorial work and in-house collaboration were addressed. The journalists interviewed were to reflect on how recent technological developments and investigative projects influence processes within their respective institutions today. In the following questions, the interviewees were to describe how these factors affect their work and whether new roles and tasks have been identified for the implementation of investigative projects. Finally, they were to assess how the interaction between the editorial staff, marketing considerations, and social media has changed and what they are doing differently today in terms of storytelling and digital distribution.

Organizational Development

“It is not fairy, dust and magic that gets people to read your stories. It is strategy.”
(Rick Hirsch, *Miami Herald*)

Above all, the need for **interdisciplinary cooperation** in-house was frequently mentioned. This concerned production as well as time and effort spent on social media and marketing activities in the promotion of investigative projects: "In every project, the question arises whether there should be a separate website for it, if so, who is responsible for it and which strategy for social media should be set up" (Ottlitz, *Spiegel*). According to some interviewees, in the new digital media age a lot more exchange is needed between editorial staff, technology, and sales. This indicates that investigative journalists need to develop product thinking, as they are increasingly involved in such activities.

What was described in various ways by the experts is the growing need for **project management skills**. This is connected with the common challenge of funding and revenue, but also with the increased demands of the audience for multimedia storytelling as well as with the trend towards international collaborations. A larger multimedia project can easily involve 30 to 40 people with different expertise. In some of the projects described, less than half of the team was editorial. According to some of the experts, this can be a real challenge for many editorial teams because they have not learned to work at this complex level.

When interviewees were asked about new job profiles, **data journalism** was frequently mentioned. The lack of competence in many media companies regarding the management of large data sets was described as a major challenge. An interesting statement was made by Daniel Schulz (*Taz*), who has started to organize data journalism sessions for all his team members: "It's not about everyone becoming a data journalist, but it is important that everyone knows what data journalists are talking about." This is also where financial difficulties become a challenge, as one reporter noted: "I was never going to get approval for the expense."

Especially in smaller newsrooms, reporters might have to search for free data processing tools and software on their own, which can take a lot of time.

Interviewees from those groups of media also described the **overlapping with daily production** as one of the biggest conflicts. The demands on the investigative team within the organization can be very high, as in-depth reporting should take place parallel to daily production plus exclusive stories on weekends, as some described. Especially in mid-sized and smaller newsrooms, it seems that investigative reporters have to cover much more, from tracking down a story to producing digital features on their own initiative, if they want their reports to have impact on the Internet.

Even at the *Washington Post*, where accountability has a long tradition, the implications of the faster pace of digital media are noticed. As a consequence, in 2017, a "**quick strike team**" was set up in addition to the traditional investigative team. The goal was "to get investigative journalism in the paper more often," explained David Fallis, Deputy Editor for Investigations at the *Washington Post*: "Here is a way to do things not necessarily as deep but get to some point that you can put something in the paper that reveals something."

Fallis describes newly created **bridge roles** like the web producer, as "a glue between the story and the product." In order to achieve the greatest possible impact, attention must be paid to what other major news events are upcoming and whether other departments have planned publications related thereto. He compared the complexity of the newsroom with an airport: "There would be like 2000 planes circling at once, right? You need somebody talking to the different departments. You cannot count on quiet days anymore." Besides the web producer, the *Washington Post* recently introduced several new newsroom management roles, such as the operations editor, the product editor, and the project editor.

Marketing and Social Media

"So many people only see what their friends are sharing or the politicians they agree with. We have to be creative about poking holes in their filter bubble, to get other information into them."
(Doug Haddix, *IRE*)

In the digital sphere, a "revelation" story is competing with "soft" entertainment and "clickbait" stories for attention. When asked whether it is now part of editorial work to include **digital distribution** in their thinking, all interviewees answered "Yes." The journalists frequently shared the learning that even a good story is not automatically read anymore. "You can really struggle, to get eyeballs on it. You got to be really intentional about it". stated Rick Hirsch,

Managing Editor from the *Miami Herald*. One can safely say that what used to be the sales and marketing department is now the reporter and the Internet.

The central role of **impact** in communication was addressed several times. How important it is to report on the consequences is mentioned by journalists from the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* as one of the great lessons from the Panama Papers. "We have to explain to the readers what they co-financed," stated Bastian Obermayer, Deputy Editor for Investigations. For this purpose, a separate website was even set up. However, some of the experts warned of the danger of overselling stories. For instance, in the follow-up project, "Paradise Papers," the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* used less "marketing language," said Obermayer. Nevertheless, all interviewees argue that the digital implementation of special reports should be planned carefully and strategically to profit as a brand. Marketing and the mastering of social media are therefore an integral part of journalism today. All the interviewees said that they produce fewer series and roll-outs, but smaller explanatory pieces, easy to understand and usable for social media—which means, above all, shareable.

"That is as important as mastering AP style. It is important as grammar in 2018. Because you cannot have an impact, if no one reads your story," Hirsch explained. The *Miami Herald* is now approaching this very methodically, with growth editors and a distribution plan for investigative projects. Aside from social media, the *sine qua non* seems to be the **identification of interest groups** depending on the topic. These "aggregators" and "influencers," as Managing Editor Rick Hirsch calls them, are systematically contacted in advance of publication. Also, other journalists describe that some stories only went viral when the editors specifically informed particular people about the research. Debates on the internet were then started by these experts, which led to greater coverage and follow-up reporting.

On the other hand, there is the experience that "revelation" stories are quickly adopted by others. Some of the experts promoted the production of summary pieces and other **shareable content** for social media. This would help anchor a medium as a primary source and reach people who would otherwise read nothing about a project. All the interviewees express that investigative pieces sharpen and strengthen the media brand, as described in the literature (Hamilton, 2016). Ottlitz, Product Manager at *Spiegel*, said: "My experience is that it clearly remains in people's minds. With each of these projects I would say that they were connected with the brand for years."

When asked to what extent investigative reporters are involved in social media communication, the degree of involvement appears to be very high. There are of course legal reasons for this,

but it can also indicate the **personal commitment** of the individual journalists, who want their stories to be read by as many people as possible, as the following statement by Daniel Schulz (Taz) indicates: “As an investigative reporter, that's not my job, but I'm now moderating and trying to keep this debate going in a way that benefits the TAZ.”

(Digital) Storytelling

“In the old days, it would have been: ‘Write five stories and then we publish them.’
The problem is: people just will not read it.”
(David Fallis, *Washington Post*)

The changes affect not only technical and digital aspects, but also how investigative stories are told today. Several of the experts point out that classic storytelling has changed: “For a long time, it was enough to have a file or facts and figures. Then you write them down and they find their way to the reader on their own. That has definitely changed,” observed Holger Stark, Head of Investigative Department of *Die Zeit*. **Audience engagement** plays a greater role. This in turn is caused by social media habits—short pieces, summaries, shareable. Many of the journalists therefore now advise against multi-day series or “long reads” as a narrative form. This is also confirmed by Fallis: “We told ourselves, that everybody is reading until the end. But we know from WebMatrix, that that does not happen.” Instead, the interviewees recommend a “wave” model for the publication of investigative projects today, where audiences are part of the storytelling and the reporting.

One of the interviewees stated that, today, not only the materials are more complicated, but also the audience is less well read and that investigative stories therefore need to be told even **more understandably**. This was expressed in a similar way by another journalist, who recommended many repetitions, explainer pieces, and summaries in order not to lose the audience on the way. Often these are the most read stories. According to this, stories today must be told in an exciting but straightforward way and should lead quickly into the topic. Some of the reporters testified that investigative pieces told from the first-person perspective can be very successful, whereas until a few years ago, personalization was still considered no-go.

The activities described by Holger Stark (*Zeit*) demonstrate how much the role of investigative journalists has changed: weeks before publication, he discusses ideas for behind-the-scenes videos and social media with colleagues who specialize in visualization. He is involved up to the level of photo selection because, as a reporter, he can best assess the content. Features such as **background information** could help the reader to understand, what distinguishes an investigative piece from the rest of the news. He referred to supporting material as a “launching

ramp for the actual story." That transparency and additional information is becoming increasingly important was confirmed by all interviewees. "That is going to be a growing trend in investigative journalism...so that people continue to appreciate the work that we do—and so that they fund what we do", said Fitzgibbon from *ICIJ*.

Two other factors have often been mentioned as new challenges for storytelling: the increasingly complex content of research, and international contexts. Sheila Coronel, Director of the of the Stabile Center at Columbia University, said that telling global but regionally relevant events has become a major difficulty. That was also stated by other participants of this study. Especially financial stories and those dealing with offshore business would require editors who can break down the content, but are also outstanding writers. The demands on the technical qualities, not only in the procurement and understanding of material, but also in processing, seems to have increased massively. Which leads to the next of the most mentioned new challenges: collaborations.

Collaborations

"You have to have much more people in the positions earlier. With the Paradis Papers, I didn't do a single night shift. With the Panama Papers, we almost didn't sleep at the end."
(Bastian Obermayer, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*)

Despite the many advantages of cooperation (e.g., greater reach or shared resources), many journalists reported in the face-to-face meetings that the **organizational and communicative effort** was very high. International teamwork may require travel and personal meetings for trust-building reasons, with reporters not knowing each other, said Fitzgibbon of *ICIJ*. The fact that many media are not aware of the additional effort (and costs) of large-scale projects was highlighted in several interviews. Also in collaborations, a lot of additional information has to be prepared about the project as a whole, partner organizations, funding, and so on. The importance of transparency in collaborations was frequently described by several journalists and is believed to be caused by journalism's credibility crisis.

At the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, it was recognized in the context of the Panama Papers that the newly assigned role of **project editor** pays off and that this person had to be involved in the project much earlier. "We used to stand in front of a chart and...write things into it that you didn't know about three days later," described Obermayer. „Then we had a project editor. He always knew exactly which topic was in which section." An interview was also conducted with Bastian Brinkmann, who holds this new role at *Süddeutsche Zeitung*.

He described his tasks, ranging from infrastructure management to solving organizational issues, and involving human resources and accounting. From his answers, it can be concluded that this person might also have to clarify the legal framework, especially if several companies are involved in the project team. These statements reflect the experiences of other media companies. A special project editor might also be responsible for estimating and adhering to deadlines and the coordination between departments, so journalistic background seems to be a prerequisite. These findings can also be applied to larger projects without cooperation partners.

Although many non-profit organizations today offer free support and databases for joint investigations, the majority of media houses are still not seizing this opportunity. *IRE* Director Doug Haddix stated that newsrooms today are so overwhelmed with daily work that the reporters are too busy to detect opportunities to team-up with non-profit outlets. He suggests appointing a person in the newsroom who is monitoring these possibilities and regularly communicating with **non-profit newsrooms**. Daniel Schulz from the German daily *TAZ* explains that this focus on networking can pay off. One of his colleagues has specialized in this area. This has resulted both in rewarding cooperation and in scholarships. Also, Fitzgibbon from *ICIJ* mentioned such a position: at *Toronto Star*, a reporter is already focusing on collaborations.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

The present study was designed to determine the effect of the new media environment on the work practices of investigative journalists, as well as what new roles have evolved in an ecosystem of change that is driven by technology. The results are significant in at least two major respects:

1. A considerably high involvement of investigative journalists in non-editorial activities like social media and marketing is required. Multimedia production, storytelling and collaborations require special know-how and project management skills, all against the background of funding difficulties and shortages in staff. The increased online presence of readers impacts the way stories are told today; hence, smaller pieces were suggested by all. Also, the targeted addressing of stakeholders prior to publication was recommended.

2. All interviewees report that the increased effort can pay off in order to draw attention to the stories and achieve more impact. There is a strong awareness of the importance of unique content for branding, reach, and community building, especially in times of declining business models. The statement that investigative reporting contributes to economic success was a

common refrain in all interviews. Although the results may be somewhat limited by the small sample size, they indicate that a distribution strategy is required to make sure that investigative stories are read. The findings provide an important basis for further research if investigative content increases the viability of media organizations and how the democratic impact of such content can be increased despite the financial challenges of the new media environment.

This study sought to identify the most salient challenges for investigative reporters in practicing their profession. One unanticipated finding was that several experts have cited the loss of beat reporters as one of the most extensive problems. This may have important implications in terms of developing strategies for the future of journalism, and further studies should be undertaken to examine the consequences of the reduction in beat reporters.

These findings, while preliminary, suggest that additional activities may have increased for investigative journalists more so than for other journalistic disciplines. Future investigations are thus recommended for this issue as well. The journalists interviewed repeatedly shared how time-consuming this additional work can be. With the ongoing trend towards collaborations, the need for project management and product management is likely to increase further.

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APPENDIX

List of selected organizations and experts for the study

PUBLISHING HOUSE

Name	Type of media	Interviewee	Role	Location
MIAMI HERALD	Daily newspaper	Rick Hirsch	Managing Editor	Miami, Florida, USA
WASHINGTON POST	Daily newspaper	David Fallis	Deputy Editor for Investigations	Washington D.C, USA
SÜDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG	Daily newspaper	Bastian Obermayer	Deputy Editor for Investigations, Co-head of department	Munich, Germany
		Bastian Brinkmann	Special Projects Editor	Munich, Germany
SPIEGEL	Weekly news magazine	Dirk Kurbjuweit	Deputy Chief Editor	Hamburg, Germany
		Stefan Plöching	Head of Product Development	Hamburg, Germany
DIE ZEIT	Weekly newspaper	Holger Stark	Head of Department, Member of Editorship	Berlin, Germany

COOPERATIVE & PHILANTROPIC MODEL

PROPUBLICA	Nonprofit newsroom	Paul Steiger	Founder and Chairman	New York, USA
TAZ	Cooperative	Daniel Schulz	Co-head of investigative department	Berlin, Germany

THE JOURNALIST NETWORKS

ICIJ	International Consortium of Investigative Journalism	Will Fitzgibbon	Reporter and head of Africa Desk	Washington D.C., USA
IRE	Investigative Reporters and Editors Network	Doug Haddix	Executive Director	Columbia Missouri, USA
		Lauren Grandestaff	Ressource Center Director	Columbia, Missouri, USA
		Charles Minshev	Data Service Director	Columbia, Missouri, USA

JOURNALISM RESEARCH

UNIVERSITY OF COLUMBIA	Stabile Center for Investigative Journalism	Sheila Coronel	Dean, Director, Professor	New York, New York, USA
UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI	Business Journalism	Martha Steffens	Chair, Professor	Columbia, Missouri, USA

**Cross-Border Non-Profit Investigative Journalism Networks:
A Structural Analysis of the Field**

by Uwe Krüger, Charlotte Knorr and Florian Finke (Leipzig University)

Abstract

This study presents an overview of the field of cross-border non-profit investigative journalism networks, i.e., organizations or projects such as International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ), Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN), European Investigative Collaborations (EIC), or the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), and shows the structure of the field and the structure's development in the last two decades. With desk research, we tried to grasp all organizations and projects in North America and Western Europe that are part of the field in a wider sense, and we collected the names of all their staff and board members in the period from 1998 to 2018. Then we conducted a Social Network Analysis of 67 organizations or projects and 3,410 individuals, dividing the 21-year-period of analysis into three phases of seven years each. The analysis shows that the field has grown constantly and the network of actors has become more dense, for the number of organizations and projects has increased over time as has the number of involved individuals and the connectivity between them (the average number of linkages of each actor to others). Phase I (1998–2004) we name “Establishment” of the new field, phase II (2005–2011) we call “Expansion and Commingling”, and phase III (2012–2018) is a time of “Expansion and Consolidation”. Besides, we identify the central actors in the field. The study shows that in each phase US organizations resp. projects and US journalists are the most influential; only three Europeans made it into the Top Ten of influential individuals.

Keywords: Investigative Journalism, Cross-Border Collaboration, Non-profit Organizations, Social Network Analysis, Field Analysis

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1. Introduction

Panama Papers, Paradise Papers, Football Leaks, Lux Leaks: Responsible for the largest investigations in the history of journalism have not been single major newspapers or magazines like the *New York Times*, the *Guardian*, *Le Monde* or *Der Spiegel* but collaborative networks of journalists from different countries. Joint researching and publishing instead of competition between lone wolfs seems to be the new paradigm in a “network society” (Castells 1996). While investigative journalism in Western mainstream media seems to decline due to the collapse of its business model based on advertising, subscription and sales, there is a growing field of alternative organizations and groups focusing on investigative journalism, networking across borders and financing themselves by means of donations and subsidies. Examples for leading entities in the field are the International Consortium of Investigative Journalism (ICIJ), the Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN), European Investigative Collaborations (EIC), and the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP). Those new players seem to be a good solution for the challenges journalism faces due to globalization and digitalization. They experiment with answers not only to the revenue problems of the media industry but also to the transnational activities of corporations, corrupt political elites, organized crime and other targets of muckrakers and, generally, to the increased global interdependence of political and market players.

Despite the far-reaching impact of those new journalistic entities, we still know little about them. Until today, there exists no comprehensive census of these organizations and projects, we do not know how many of them do exist at all; and empirical research about their inner structures and working processes is just evolving (Heft et al. 2017, Lück & Schultz 2018). It is even unclear with what term we should describe the phenomenon. Alfter (2019) coined the term “Cross-border collaborative journalism,” which includes four significant characteristics: “1) journalists from different countries 2) decide on an idea of mutual interest, 3) gather and share material and 4) publish to their own audiences” (Alfter 2019: 18). Heft et al. (2017) speak of “transnational journalism networks” with a similar definition: “Transnational journalism networks (...) include journalists and/or media organizations from different countries who network across national borders to investigate a common topic in a collaborative effort. They share information of their sources, compile, cross-check, discuss and merge their findings and report them individually to their respective national or sub-national audience” (Heft et al. 2017: 4).

Konieczna (2018) analyses these entities as “Nonprofit news organizations,” emphasizing on their financing resp. funding and claiming a difference to commercial media and their logic of maximizing profits. Because the concept of “Nonprofit news” with its focus on an organization’s tax status encompasses also entities such as The Associated Press, National Public Radio, *The Christian Science Monitor* or *National Geographic*, Konieczna further narrows the term by applying the following criteria: “Organizations or projects that do the following:

- were founded at least in part to fill the gap left as commercial news organizations or projects retreated from producing public service journalism;
- offer benefits to their community instead of advancing private interests or focusing on profits;
- produce educational content, informing on public issues and institutions;
- have professional staffs;
- don’t distribute earnings to private people;
- don’t endorse political candidates;
- are nonpartisan and transparent about funding;
- don’t advocate of lobby around any issues other than freedom of information and the press; and
- produce investigative or public service journalism.” (Konieczna 2018: 62)

As her last criterion shows, there is a consensus in literature that doing or supporting investigative journalism is an important characteristic of the entities in question: “The recent rise of journalistic cross-border collaboration seems much indebted to the muckraking tradition of reporting”, says Meyer (2019: 151). In this context, Alfter (2019: 5) views the murder of journalist Don Bolles in Phoenix, Arizona, in 1976 as an “iconic event”, which led to the collaborative “Arizona Project” (crossing at least the borders of several US states) coordinated by the young organization Investigative Reporters & Editors (IRE). Consequently, Lück & Schultz (2018) speak of “investigative networks”, Hume and Abbott (2017: 12) of “networked non-profit or public interest organizations that specialize in supporting or producing investigative news”.

For this study, we combine these various concepts from the literature and use the term *Cross-border non-profit investigative journalism networks*. It catches all necessary elements (the feature “collaborative” is embraced by the “network” implying connectivity, contact and horizontal cooperation) and, thus, is sharp enough to exclude those entities that are not of

interest here (like the Christian Science Monitor). In the following, we analyze the structure of the field of *Cross-border non-profit investigative journalism networks* in a historical perspective by providing a Social Network Analysis (SNA) of the respective organizations or projects in North America and Western Europe and the therein involved individuals in the last two decades. The aim is to get an overview of the field, to understand its structure (e.g., is it a centralized or a decentralized one?) and the structure's development over time, and to identify the most important people in the field. This is not only of academic interest but might also serve for the self-reflection of players in the field.

2. Theory

Following Bourdieu (1993), we imagine modern society as differentiated into semi-autonomous spheres of action, the so-called fields (e.g., fields of politics, economics, religion, cultural production). Here, individuals and organizations struggle to gain various forms of capital (e.g., financial capital, social capital, cultural capital), but they also share a common field logic and follow common rules and, therefore, are quite similar. Bourdieu regards journalism to be a subfield of cultural production; and “like other fields, the journalistic field is based on a set of shared assumptions and beliefs, which reach beyond differences of position and opinion” (Bourdieu 1998: 47). So, we look at *Cross-border non-profit investigative journalism networks* as a subfield of journalism that is characterized by the players' will to produce or support relevant, deep-researched, revealing and enlightening pieces of journalism and by their belief that the journalistic field is in trouble or needs to be fixed. Konieczna (2018: 63-69) speaks of “field repair” as a common goal of these new nonprofits.

The concept of fields, which consists of individuals and organizations interacting with each other, is well compatible with network theory and Social Network Analysis (SNA) because “network” refers to a specific set of actors (in a network graph: the nodes) and the relationships or linkages between them (in a network graph: the edges). Thus, we can ask for the networks within the sub-sub-field of *Cross-border non-profit investigative journalism networks*. This means, we ask: Who (which organizations resp. projects and individuals) are the players in the field? What are the linkages between them? Who holds what position within the network (Burt 1976); who holds a central position with linkages to many others, and who stands isolated at

the social periphery?¹¹ The position of an actor in a network tells us something about his social capital and his opportunities to act and influence other actors. Especially an actor who closes “structural holes” (Burt 1995) between distinct groups can gain comparative advantages from his position (e.g., if two organizations have no other linkage than one individual who is involved in both) because he can act as a mediator, broker or gatekeeper of important information. Thus, searching for the most important individuals in the field means to look for such brokers that are involved in several organizations because this indicates their social capital and potential influence in the field.

According to White (2008), the position of actors in a network tells us something about their identities and about their struggles for control. He explains it with a playground metaphor:

„Even though the playground is a casual setting, one can observe conflicting identities and orderliness at the same time. If the playground is observed over a long period, certain clusters of children will emerge repeatedly. [...] Choosing up sides for games will go on. This may partition children into teams, almost every child going to one team or another, but likely there will be a straggle of leftovers. Thereby identities find positions in relation to other identities. Together with the stories that tie them together, structure and meaning are produced. Any such crowd may partition anew, into teams, which make claims about specialization in relations and tasks. Or the crowd may dissolve instead into casual chasing or gossiping. Neat accounts only faintly reflect the real turbulence, energized by unending searches for self and control. In this sense, the social never stands still. Identities couple and decouple, thus continuously creating social space and time” (White 2008: 6).

If we approach the field of *Cross-border non-profit investigative journalism networks* as such a playground (newly created by the respective organizations and individuals), we can ask for the actors’ identities and their attempts to gain control. Alfter & Candea (2019) point to ways to apply White’s concept to our field:

“White describes the concepts of Arena (network infrastructure, like conferences or meeting places, awards, fellowship programs), Interface (interface for production) and Council (the small group of people at the intersection where Arena and Interface are overlapping). Such loci exist – for example the national, continental and global investigative journalism conferences – all constituting great places to start gathering empirical evidence” (Alfter & Candea 2019: 146).

¹¹ In order to avoid confusion about the meaning of “network”, we should emphasize that the “network” within our term *Cross-border non-profit investigative journalism networks* functions as a synonym for “organization” – an organization (or a project) that understands itself as an organizer of cross-border collaboration of investigative journalists. Therefore, our SNA is an analysis of the “networks between these networks”, or more accurate: an analysis of these organizations resp. projects and the linkages between them and between the therein involved individuals.

3. Methodology

To answer questions about the structure of the field, we must first decide about the organizations and projects belonging to the field. Alfter & Candea (2019) date the birth of “Cross-border collaborative journalism” to the second half of the 1990s with the founding of the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ). In her book on nonprofit news organizations, Konieczna (2018: 50) claims: “The first investigative nonprofit was the Fund for Investigative Journalism, which in its first year [1969] gave \$ 2,250 to the young Seymour Hersh, enabling him to write his acclaimed story about the My Lai massacre.” As other important organizations, she mentions the Center for Investigative Reporting (CIR, founded in 1977 by the investigative journalists Lowell Bergman, Don Noyes, and David Weir), the Center for Public Integrity (CPI, founded in 1989 by journalist Charles Lewis) and its spin-off ICIJ (founded in 1997 as a department of CPI, institutionalized 2017). In their report on the field of “networked non-profit or public interest organizations that specialize in supporting or producing investigative news”, Hume & Abbott (2017) regards the following nine US and European organizations or projects as the “major players”:

- Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN)
- Organized Crime and Corruption Research Project (OCCRP)
- Reveal News, from the Center for Investigative Reporting (CIR)
- Investigative Reporters & Editors (IRE)
- Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma (a project of Columbia Journalism School)
- International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ)
- Journalismfund.eu (the former Fonds Pascal Decroos voor Bijzondere Journalistiek)
- The Centre for Investigative Journalism (TCIJ)
- Institute for Non-Profit News (INN).

Our aim was to get a complete sample of all relevant organizations or projects in North America and Western Europe, following comprehensible criteria. North America was defined as the USA and Canada, Western Europe was defined as all member states of the European Union (EU) plus Switzerland, Norway, and Iceland. Of these countries, we selected all organizations or projects that met at least one of the following five criteria:

- I. Organizations that organized or co-organized (at least once) one of the two most important conferences in the field: the Global Investigative Journalism Conference (GIJC) and the European Investigative Journalism Conference & Dataharvest (EIJC). Organizations that co-organized those conferences but were located in other world regions (e.g., in Ukraine, South Africa, Brazil or Peru) or are academic institutions like colleges, universities and journalism schools (e.g., The Mid-Career Institute for Journalism in Denmark or The Danish School of Journalism) were not included in the sample.

- II. International organizations or projects producing investigative journalism, i.e. organizations with an explicit cross-border approach (e.g., ICIJ, OCCRP, European Investigative Collaborations, Investigate Europe).
- III. International organizations or projects supporting investigative journalism by providing financial or other resources (e.g., ICIJ, GIJN, Scoop, Dart Center).
- IV. National organizations or projects producing investigative journalism (e.g., ProPublica, CPI, INN, CIR). In federal states, such as the US, only those organizations were included in the sample that work at a national level, not only in one state.
- V. National organizations or projects supporting investigative journalism by providing financial or other resources (e.g. Fund for Investigative Journalism, Pascal Decroos Fund, Netzwerk Recherche). Included were only those foundations or funds that exclusively support journalism and were founded only to support journalism (e.g., the Knight Foundation as a major donor for US journalism was not included).

Through desk research, we found 67 respective organizations or projects. Table 1 shows the home countries, their years of existence and the criteria they meet.

Table 1: The sample of 67 organizations and projects, sorted alphabetically by acronym that are used in the following network graphs (the columns I-V show the five selection criteria).

Acronym	Full name	Country	Years of Existence	I	II	III	IV	V
100r.org	100Reporters	USA	2012-today		x			
AGI	Associazione Giornalismo Investigativo	Italy	2010-today				x	x
Atlatszo.hu	Atlatszo.hu	Hungary	2011-today				x	x
Bellingcat	Bellingcat	UK	2014-today		x			
BIJ	Bureau of Investigative Journalism	UK	2010-today		x			
BIJC	Bulgarian Investigative Journalism Center	Bulgaria	2008-2016				x	x
Bivol	Bivol	Bulgaria	2010-today				x	
CAJ	Canada Association of Journalists / L'Association Canadienne des Journalistes	Canada	1978-today	x				x
CCIZ	Ceske centrum pro investigativni zurnalistiku / Czech Center for Investigative Journalism	Czech Republic	2013-today			x	x	
CIN	Investigative Journalism Centre of Croatia	Croatia	2003-today				x	x
CIR	Center for Investigative Reporting (Reveal)	USA	1977-today				x	
Civio	Fundacion Ciudadana / Citizen Foundation	Spain	2012-today				x	
Correctiv	Correctiv	Germany	2014-today				x	x
CPI	Center for Public Integrity	USA	1989-today				x	
CPNS	Center for Investigative Journalism Slovenia / Ostro	Slovenia	2013-today				x	x
CRJI	Centrul Roman Pentru Jurnalism de Investigatie / Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism	Romania	2001-today			x		
Dart	Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma	USA	1999-today			X		
DICAR	Danish Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting	Denmark	1999-2006	x		X		
DIG	Documentari Inchieste Giornalismi	Italy	2016-today					x

Direkt36	Direkt36 / Investigative Journalism Center Hungary	Hungary	2015-today				x	
Dossier	Dossier	Austria	2012-today				x	
EIC	European Investigative Collaborations	Unknown	2015-today			x		
EJC	European Journalism Centre	Netherlands	1999-today	x		x		
FairWarning	FairWarning	USA	2009-today				x	
Farmsubsidy	Farmsubsidy.org	Unknown	2005-today		x			
FERN	Food & Environment Reporting Network	USA	2010-today				x	
FGJ	Foereningen graevande journalister / Swedish Association for Investigative Journalism	Sweden	1990-today	x				x
FIJ	Fund for Investigative Journalism	USA	1969-today					x
Finance Uncovered	Finance Uncovered	UK	2012-today		x	x		
FUJ	Foreningen for Undersogende Journalistik / Association for Investigative Journalism Denmark	Denmark	1989-today	x				
Fundacja Reporterow	Fundacja Reporterow / Reporters Foundation	Poland	2010-today			x		
GIJN	Global Investigative Journalism Network	USA	2003-today		x	x		
GRC	globalreportingcentre.org	Canada	2013-today		x	x		
Hate Speech International	Hate Speech International	Norway	2013-today		x			
ICIJ	International Consortium of Investigative Journalists	USA	1997-today		x			
IJEC	The Investigative Journalism Education Consortium	USA	2010-today					x
INN	Institute for Nonprofit News	USA	2009-today			x		
InvestigateEurope	investigate-europe.eu	Germany	2016-today		x	x		
investigativ.ch	investigativ.ch	Switzerland	2010-today					x
Investigative Fund	Investigative Fund	USA	1996-today				x	x
Investigative Reporting Denmark	Investigative Reporting Denmark	Denmark	2013-today		x			
INWW	Investigate West	USA	2009-today				x	
IRE	Investigative Reporters & Editors	USA	1975-today	x		x		
IRPI	Investigative Reporting Project Italy	Italy	2012-today	x	x			
journalismfund.eu	journalismfund.eu	Belgium	2009-today	x		x		
Mongabay	Mongabay	USA	1999-today		x	x		
MRI	Miostoeo rannsoknarblaoamennsku a Islandi / Icelandic Center for Investigative Journalism	Iceland	2011-today				x	x
MRJF	maryrafteryfund.ie	Ireland	2013-2018					x
NECIR	New England Center for Investigative Reporting	USA	2009-today					x
nr	Netzwerk Recherche / Network Research	Germany	2001-today	x			x	x
n-vestigate	n-vestigate	Germany	2015-today		x	x		
OCCRP	Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project	USA	2006-today		x	x		
opensecrets	Center for Responsive Politics	USA	1983-today				x	x
PD	Fonds Pascal Decroos	Belgium	1998-2012					x
Pod crto	podcrto.si / below the line	Slovenia	2013-today				x	
Pro Publica	Pro Publica	USA	2007-today				x	
publicherald.org	publicherald.org	USA	2011-today				x	
RE:Baltica	Baltijas petnieciskas zurnalistikas centrs / The Baltic Center for Investigative Journalism	Latvia	2011-today		x	x		
Rise Project	Rise Project	Rumania	2012-today		x	x		
Scoop	Scoop	Denmark/ Sweden	2003-today	x		x		

SKUP	Stiftelsen for en Kritisk og Undersokende Presse / Foundation for a Critical and Investigative Press	Norway	1990-today	x					x
Swissinvestigation.net	Swissinvestigation.net	Switzerland	2003-today	x					
TCIJ	The Centre for Investigative Journalism Great Britain	UK	2003-today						x
Tutkiva	Tutkivan journalismin yhdistys / Association of Investigative Journalism Finland	Finland	1992-today						x
Vsquare.org	Vsquare.org	Visegrad Countries	2017-today		x				
VVOJ	Vereniging van Onderzoeksjournalisten / Association of Investigative Journalists Netherlands	Netherlands & Belgium	2001-today	x					x
Wobbing.eu	Wobbing.eu	Europe	2007-2017		x				

We examined the organizations resp. projects for the 21-year-period from 1998 until 2018, for two reasons: First, the founding of ICIJ in late 1997 is seen as the starting point of cross-border collaboration in investigative journalism in the narrow sense (see above). Second, reliable data about these organizations is available via the Internet Archive, a non-profit digital library saving versions of websites over time (www.archive.org), from the year 1998. Using the “Wayback Machine”, a service of the Internet Archive, we visited the website of each organization or project in each year during the period of analysis (if available, in the middle of the year, from June to September) and collected the names and functions of all individuals serving as executives, members of the board of directors, staff members or members of the advisory board. “Simple” members (e.g., IRE members or ICIJ members) were not included (in many cases, they were not visible on the website), neither were jury members of awards given by an organization (this seemed to be too little involvement in the organization).

Due to gaps in the Internet Archive, there is some missing data in the sample. Table 2 shows those years, for which we do not have any information about the involved individuals. For two organizations, we have no data at all: for Finance Uncovered, a British reporting and training project, and for VSquare, a network of media outlets carrying out cross-border investigations in the Visegrad region (Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia) – both organizations did not give any names of individuals in charge on their websites. This missing data is unfortunate but should not affect significantly the validity of the results if the most important and most influential actors in the field are in the centre of interest.

Table 2: Missing data in the sample of organizations and projects

Acronym	Full name	Missing years
AGI	Associazione Giornalismo Investigativo	2017-2018
Bellingcat	Bellingcat	2018
BIJ	Bureau of Investigative Journalism UK	2018
BIJC	Bulgarian Investigative Journalism Center	2009, 2013-2015
CAJ	Canada Association of Journalists / L'Association Canadienne des Journalistes	1998-1999, 2015, 2017
CCIZ	Ceske centrum pro investigativni zurnalistiku / Czech Center for Investigative Journalism	2014, 2016, 2018
CIN	Investigative Journalism Centre of Croatia	2003-2012, 2018
CIR	Center for Investigative Reporting (Reveal)	1998-2000
CPI	Center for Public Integrity	1998
CPNS	Center za Preiskovalno Novinarstvo Sloveniji / Center for Investigative Journalism Slovenia	2011-2012, 2018
CRJI	Centrul Roman Pentru Jurnalism de Investigatie / Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism	2001-2002, 2010-2011
DART	Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma	1999
DICAR	Center for analytisk journalistic / Danish International Center for Analytical Reporting	1999-2000, 2006
Dossier	Dossier	2012
EIC	European Investigative Collaborations	2015
EJC	European Journalism Centre	2001
FairWarning	FairWarning	2009
Farmsubsidy	Furmsubsidy	2005
FERN	Food & Environment Reporting Network	2014, 2016, 2018
FGJ	Foereningen graevande journalister / Swedish Association for Investigative Journalism	1998-1999, 2001
Finance Uncovered	Finance Uncovered	no data
FUJ	Foreningen for Undersogende Journalistik / Association for Investigative Journalism Denmark	1998-2000, 2008-2011, 2014
Fundacja Reporterow	Fundacja Reporterow / Reporters Foundation	2010-2016
GRC	globalreportingcentre.org	2014
Hate Speech International	Hate Speech International	2013
IJEC	The Investigative Journalism Education Consortium	2010-2011
InvestigateEurope	investigate-europe.eu	2016
investigativ.ch	investigativ.ch	2010, 2014, 2016
Investigative Fund	The investigative Fund	1998-1999, 2001, 2003-2006, 2011-2016, 2018
IRPI	Investigative Reporting Project Italy	2012, 2014
MRI	Miostoeo rannsoknarblaoamennsku a Islandi / Icelandic Center for Investigative Journalism	2014-2018
NECIR	New England Center for Investigative Reporting	2010, 2012-2014
nr	Netzwerk Recherche/ Network Research	2011-2013
n-vestigate	n-vestigate	2015-2016
OCCRP	Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project / Journalism development network	2006, 2007

opensecrets	Center for Responsive Politics	1998
podcrto.si	Pod crto / below the line	2018
Public Herald	Public Herald	2011-2012
RE:Baltica	Baltijas petnieciskas zurnalistikas centrs / The Baltic Center for Investigative Journalism	2011
Rise Project	Rise Project	2017
Scoop	Scoop	2003, 2006, 2013-2016, 2018
SKUP	Stiftelsen for en Kritisk og Undersokende Presse / Foundation for a Critical and Investigative Press	1998-2001, 2006, 2018
Swissinvestigation.net	Swissinvestigation.net	2003-2005, 2007, 2009, 2012-2013, 2017-2018
TCIJ	The Centre for Investigative Journalism Great Britain	2003-2006
Tutkiva	Tutkivan journalismin yhdistys / Association of Investigative Journalism Finland	1998-2002, 2011, 2018
Vsquare.org	Vsquare.org	no data
VVOJ	Vereniging van Onderzoeksjournalisten / Association of Investigative Journalists Netherlands	2001-2003, 2006-2007, 2013, 2015-2016, 2018
Wobbing.eu	Wobbing.eu	2007, 2017

We processed the data with the spreadsheet program Excel and with Gephi, an open-source network analysis and visualization software. With Gephi, we drew network graphs and calculated three measures to characterize the full network (average degree, weighted average degree, average path length) and three measures for the influence of actors in a network (weighted degree, betweenness centrality, eigenvector centrality, see below).

4. Results

As mentioned above, we found 67 organizations or projects in North America and Western Europe that were part of the field of *Cross-border non-profit investigative journalism networks* during the period 1998-2018. For two organizations we had no data about the personnel, they were, thus, not included in the analysis. With the remaining 65 organizations or projects, a total of 3.410 individuals were involved as staff members or board members. Because the involvement of each individual in each organization or project in each year was recorded separately, our dataset for the analysis consists of 13.960 cases.

For the data evaluation, we split the 21-year-period into three phases of seven years each: 1998–2004; 2005–2011; and 2012–2018. The phases showed important differences, we, thus, gave them titles: phase I “Establishment”, phase II “Expansion and Commingling”, and phase III “Expansion and Consolidation”. In the following, we explain each phase by showing the full

network of the organizations in the field and the respective actors that seemed to have the most influence. The network graphs show the organizations or projects as green nodes and the individuals as red nodes, the size of an organization's node and font size indicate how many individuals were involved during that phase (weighted degree). A line (edge) between a red node and a green node shows that one individual was involved in one organization or project; the edges are not weighted in order to keep the illustrations simple and comprehensible.

Phase I "Establishment" (1998–2004)

The landscape of organizations or projects in this phase is small: There are 21 organizations, with 739 individuals involved as staff or board members. The network graph (see Figure 1) shows a clear core consisting of the relatively old and major US organizations FIJ (founded in 1969), IRE (1975) and CPI (1989) with its international arm ICIJ (1997). Those were interconnected by means of some people holding multiple positions. At the periphery, we see on the left hand a Danish cluster of interconnected organizations: FUJ (Foreningen for Undersogende Journalistik – Association for Investigative Journalism Denmark, 1989), DICAR (Danish Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting, 1999), and Scoop (2003). There is also a small Belgian-Dutch cluster out of PD (Fonds Pascal Decroos, 1998) and VVOJ (Vereniging van Onderzoeksjournalisten – Association of Investigative Journalists Netherlands, 2001); other organizations or projects look like islands with no such connections (at least not through common staff or board members). We hypothesize that some organizations did their work for more investigative journalism in their respective home countries, e.g., Netzwerk Recherche (2001) in Germany or the Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism (2001), and cross-border cooperation was not a big issue for them at that time. Another hypothesis is that persons in an organization still cannot be members in others organizations' boards when they are very young and just start their careers (this was the case with Paul Radu and Stefan Candea from the Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism in this phase).

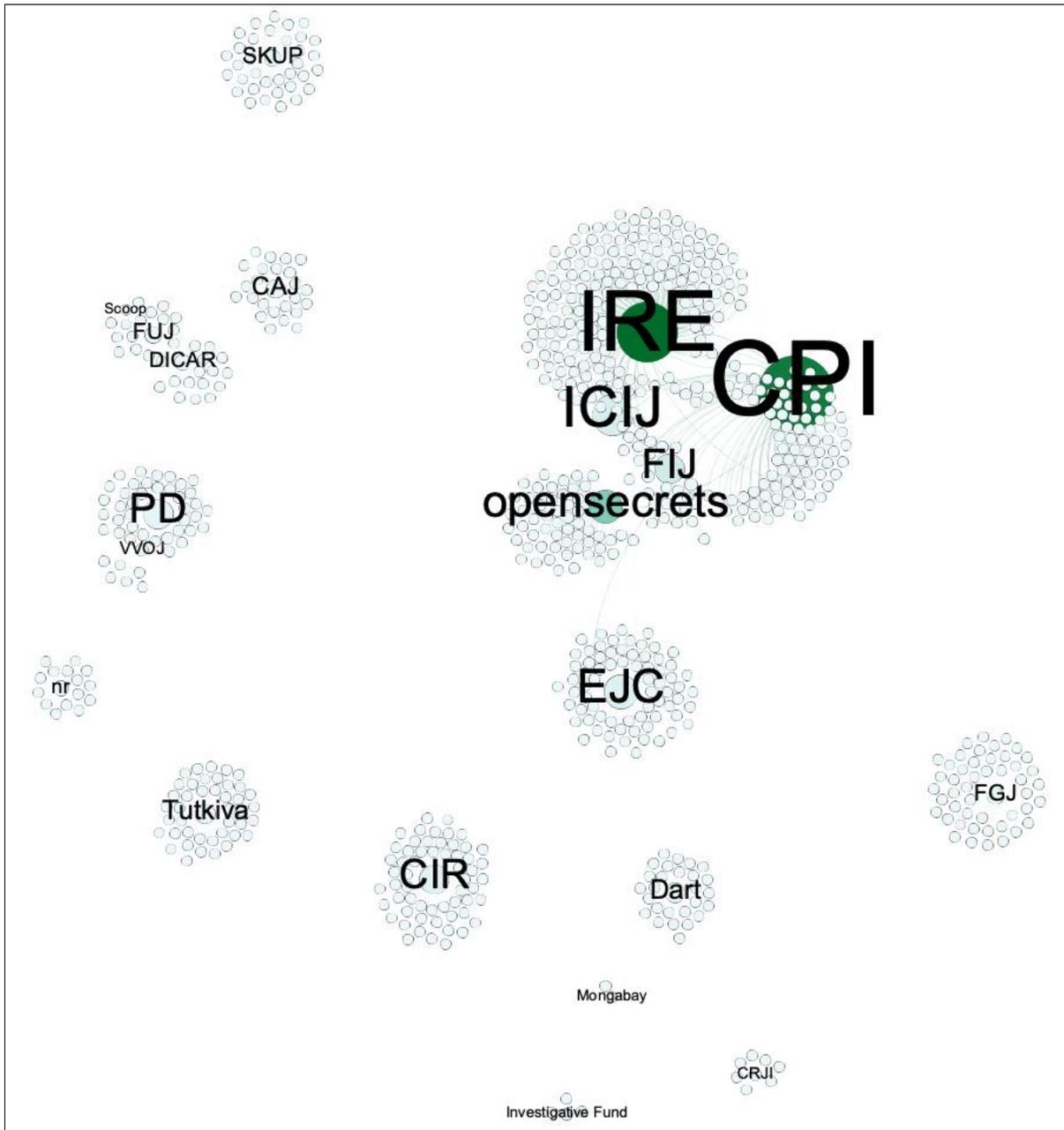


Figure 1: The organizations or projects in phase I (1998–2004). $N=1.994$, 760 nodes: 21 organizations, 739 individuals (WD: 6,15).

Which were the most important organizations resp. projects and individuals during this phase? The Top Ten “influencers” in both categories are shown in Table 3 and in Figure 2. The organizations were ranked not according to their size (the total number of staff and board members) but according to their betweenness centrality (see Freeman 1977). This measure shows which organizations have the most *well-connected* members resp. the most members whose path to other (central) organizations or projects is the shortest. Thus, a relatively small

organization like FIJ can have an important position in the field given it has important members with high level of social capital and access to other important organizations or projects.

Table 3: The ten most influential organizations or projects and members in phase I (1998–2004)

Organization	Betweenness Centrality	Rank	Member	Eigenvector Centrality
IRE	33700167	1	Bill Kovach	0,13
CPI	232510	2	Mary Jo Sylwester	0,12
opensecrets	37753	3	Aron Pilhofer	0,12
FIJ	25095	4	Roberta Baskin	0,11
ICIJ	23460	5	Alistair White	0,09
EJC	10810	6	Brant Houston	0,08
CIR	8610	7	Brent Johnson	0,07
FGJ	1081	8	Charlie Hanger	0,07
PD	963	9	Chelsea Hampton	0,07
Tutkiva	861	10	David Boardman	0,07

The persons were ranked not according to their total amount of involvements in organizations (weighted degree, i.e., an involvement in one organization or project each year) but according to their eigenvector centrality measuring both the number and the quality of an actor’s connections. According to Umadevi (2013: 68), “having a large number of connections still counts for something, but a node with a smaller number of high-quality contacts may outrank one with a larger number of mediocre contacts. Eigenvector centrality turns out to be a revealing measure in many situations”. Top-ranked is Bill Kovach, co-author of the standard textbook “The Elements of Journalism,” with the highest number of involvements and the highest eigenvector centrality. It is remarkable that all top influencers are coming from the US although there is a high number of European organizations or projects among the ten most important organizations.

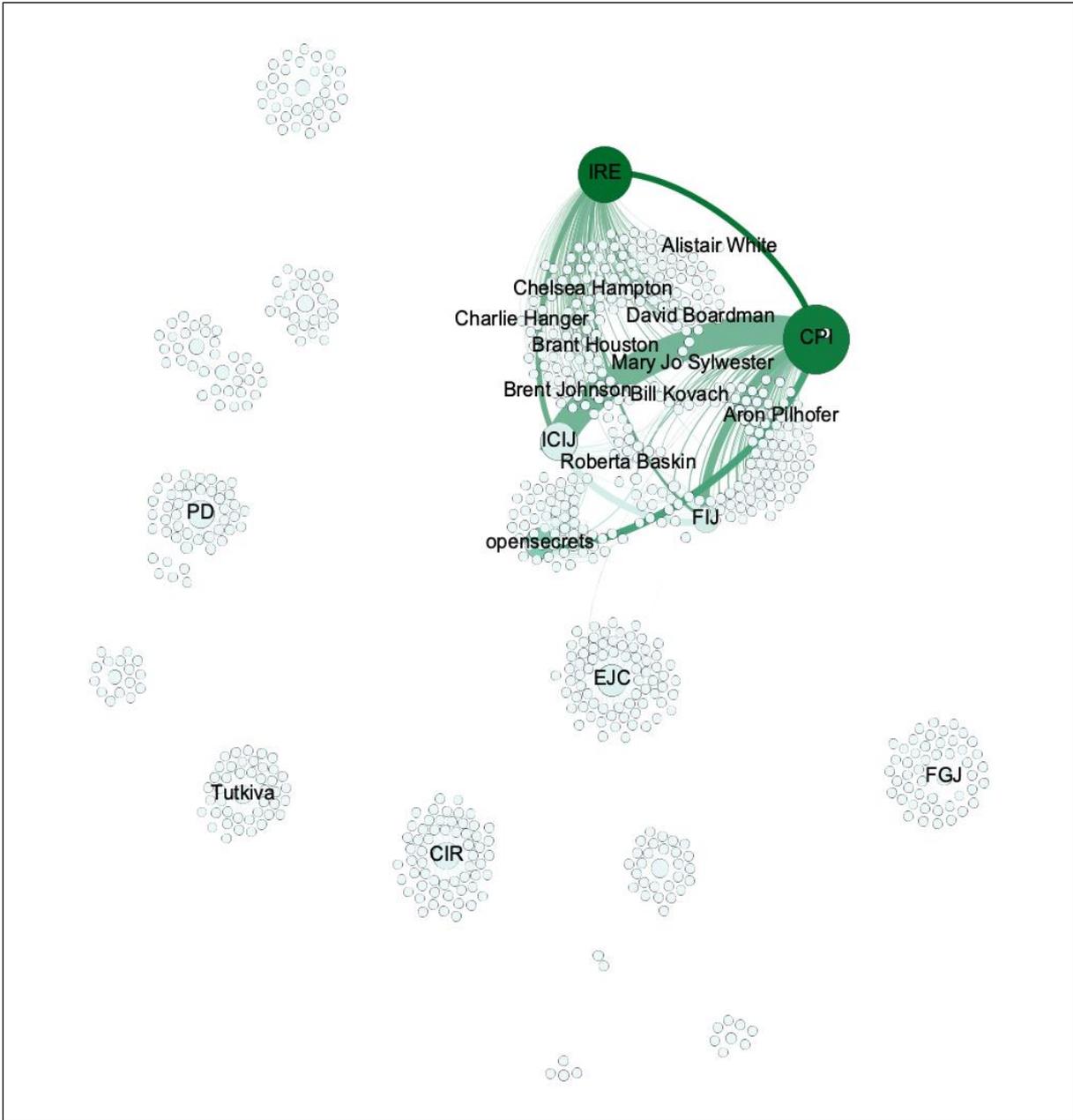


Figure 2: The influencers in phase I (1998–2004).

Phase II “Expansion and Commingling” (2005–2011)

In the second phase, the number of actors doubled compared to the first phase: 41 organizations or projects with 1477 involved individuals (see Figure 3). Many new players enter the playground: big ones, such as ProPublica producing donor-supported investigative journalism in the US with a high budget, or small ones, such as the Organized Crime and Corruption Research Project (OCCRP) and the Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN). They still hold central positions in the network because of personal ties to other important organizations. The former core of the network (old US giants) moves to the edge of the graph

while some new European organizations or projects appear close to its centre (Journalismfund.eu, Farmsubsidy, Wobbing.eu).

Along with the dissemination of actors and the shifts in positions (such as the “displacement” of the old core) we see another interesting phenomenon: The interconnectivity between the organizations or projects has increased significantly. There are less “isolated islands” than in Phase I, for example the Italian IRPI, the Swedish FGJ and the Bulgarian Bivol. To use the playground metaphor once more, we can say, not only are there more and more children, but they also mingle much more than they did before: Playing in several teams at once becomes the new trend.

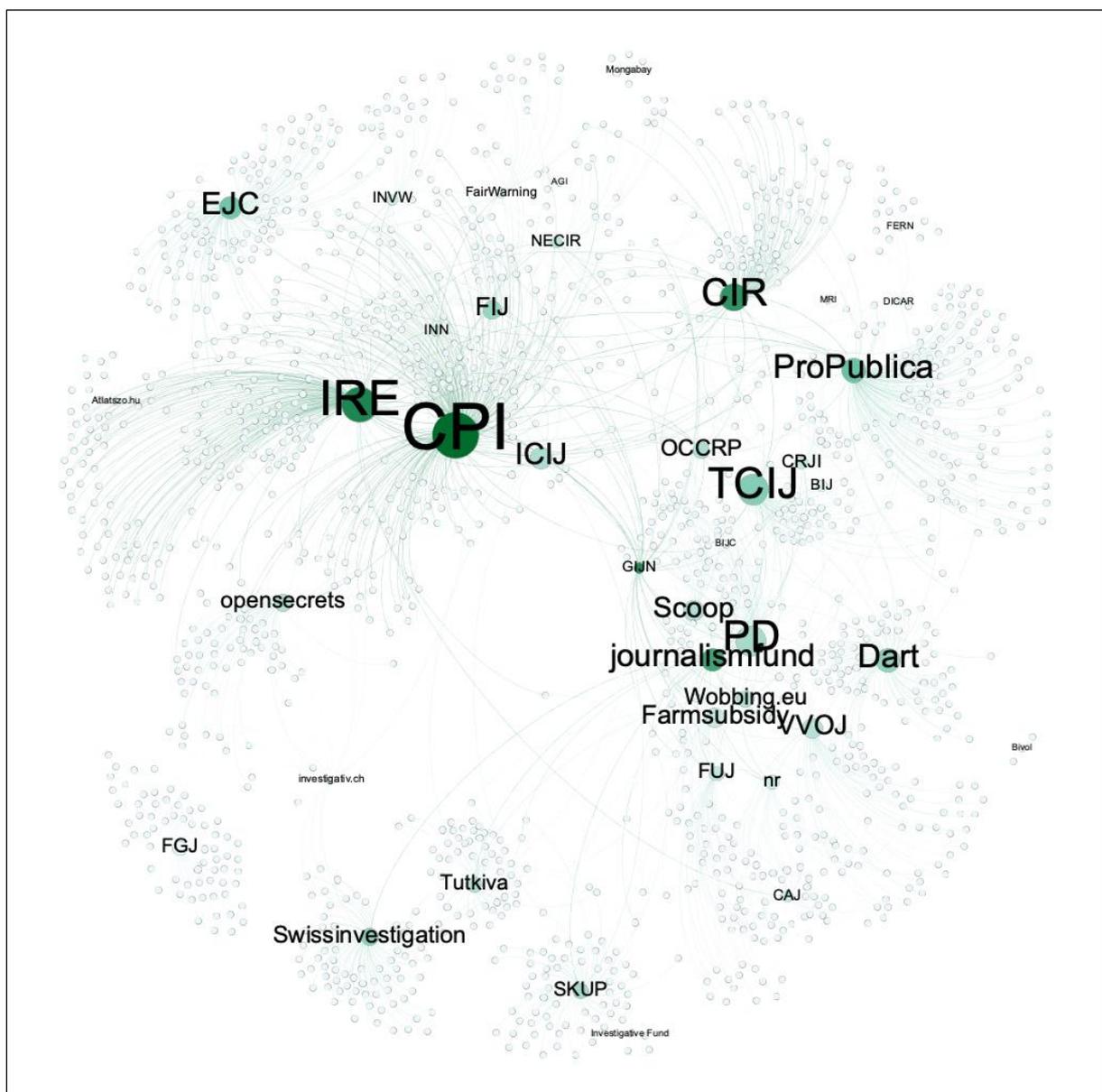


Figure 3: The organizations or projects in phase II (2005–2011); $N=4448$, 1518 nodes: 41 organizations or projects, 1477 individuals (WD: 8,31).

The ten most influential organizations or projects and the ten most influential individuals of phase II are shown in Table 4 and in Figure 4. We see some remarkable changes compared to phase I: Among the organizations, IRE and CPI defend their top positions, while the US organizations resp. projects GIJN and CIR enter high, ranking 3 and 4, followed by the new Journalismfund.eu at 5 – Europe is coming, also in the shape of (the older) EJC and the new TCIJ and Swissinvestigation (see Table 4). The case of GIJN (ranked 3 but with the smallest weighted degree of all Top Ten organizations) shows that an organization or project can be positioned very centrally in the field even if only a few people are involved in a short period of time – if it were the “right ones”, i.e., the influential resp. central ones.

As shown in Table 6, also individuals are in a state of motion: Former IRE executive director Brant Houston, now holding positions at IRE, FIJ, INN, ICIJ and GIJN, pushes Bill Kovach off the top spot and relegates him to second place. Danish-German journalist Brigitte Alfter – the mastermind behind the European Investigative Journalism Conference & Dataharvest in Brussels – enters the scene at rank 8. Alfter has positions in many organizations (FUJ, PD, journalismfund.eu, GIJN, Netzwerk Recherche, Farmsubsidy, Scoop, Wobbing.eu) over the period’s years, but a relatively low eigenvector centrality because she is missing the crucial contacts. This weakness seems to be symptomatic for Europeans, all other persons in the ranking are US journalists – while four European organizations made it into the organizations’ Top Ten.

Table 4: The ten most influential organizations or projects and members in phase II (2005–2011)

Organization	Betweenness Centrality	Rank	Member	Eigenvector Centrality
CPI	24482465	1	Brant Houston	0,16
IRE	23062339	2	Bill Kovach	0,13
GIJN	22605620	3	Roberta Baskin	0,13
CIR	21689325	4	Charles Lewis	0,12
Journalismfund.eu	19823207	5	David Boardman	0,12
ProPublica	13873328	6	David E. Kaplan	0,12
EJC	13282500	7	David Donald	0,11
TCIJ	11350779	8	Geneva Overholser	0,11
Swissinvestigation	10210000	9	Brigitte Alfter	0,11
Dart	10056822	10	Joaquin Sapien	0,09

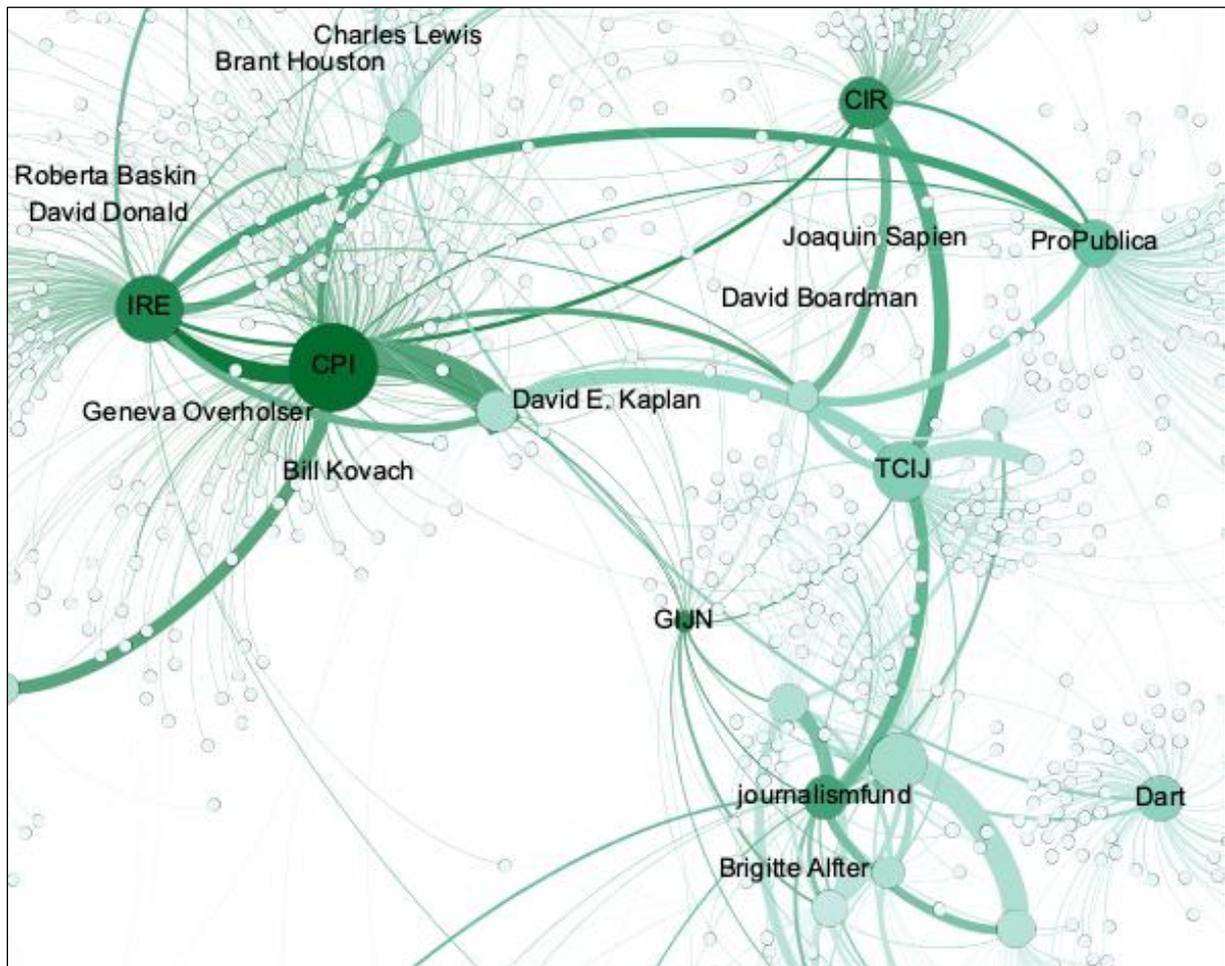


Figure 4: The influencers in phase II (2005–2011).

Phase III “Expansion and Consolidation” (2012–2018)

The third phase is characterized by a further increasing number of actors: 63 organizations or projects and 2.267 individuals are now in the field (see Figure 5). With US-based 100Reporters, a new big and central player has entered the “playground”; European Investigative Collaboration (“Football Leaks”) is smaller but also holds a central position; Investigate Europe is also small but is located at the very periphery. The graph shows a new core, consisting of organizations or projects from the old core (IRE, ICIJ, FIJ) and some newer ones having a short social distance to that old “establishment” (100r.org, OCCRP, INN, EIC). Around this big core where many organizations or projects crowd together in a confined space, there are more “isolated islands” again. This is true not only for newcomers but also for older

organizations that were still connected to others in the previous phase, like the Canada Association of Journalists and the European Journalism Centre in the Netherlands. We hypothesize that the field has consolidated: Opposite to an expanded core with big and small organizations (whose primary concern is often cross-border collaboration) is a periphery where some organizations or projects simply do their own work (again). Referring once again to White (2008), this might have to do with a sharpened sense of the actors for their own identity: The meaning they produce and the stories they tell of themselves are clearer and more profiled than before.

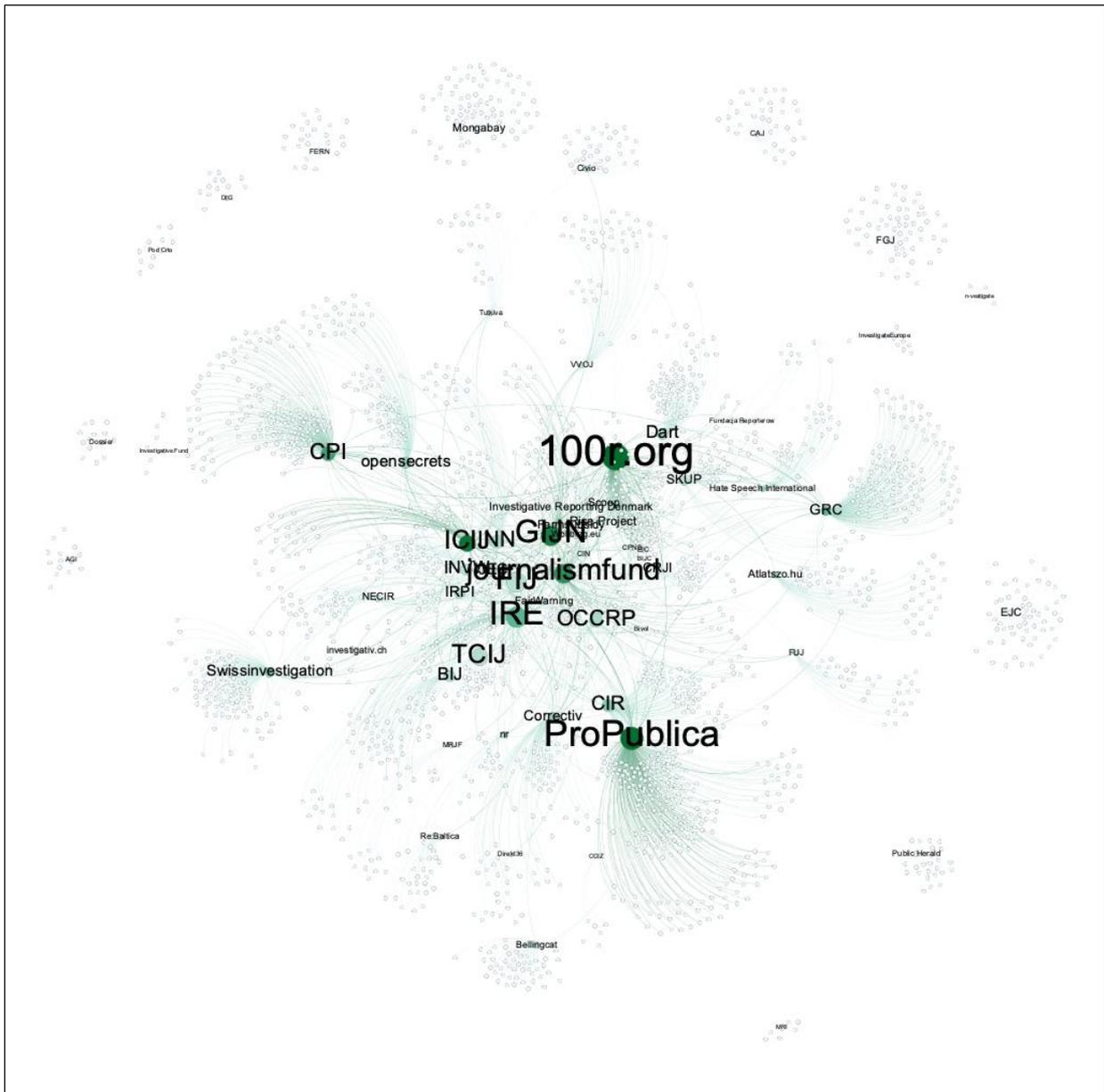


Figure 5: The organizations or projects in phase III (2012–2018); N: 7518, 2330 nodes: 63 organizations or projects, 2267 individuals (WD: 10,85).

In this phase, also the rankings of influencers have changed. As Table 5 shows, there are new organizations or projects with a high betweenness centrality (100r.org, Global Reporting Centre). With regard to the individuals, Sheila Coronel is the new champion, having functions at six more or less central organizations (100r.org, CPI, OCCPR, ProPublica, GRC, Correctiv). The former No. 1, Brant Houston, is now ranked 3, although he has the highest weighted degree of all persons. Stefan Candea who runs European Investigative Collaborations and is involved in five other organizations (100r.org, CRJI, GIJN, journalismfund, Scoop) enters at No. 5 – the highest rank of a European ever.

Table 5: The ten most influential organizations or projects and members in phase III (2012–2018)

Organization	Betweenness Centrality	Rank	Member	Eigenvector Centrality
100r.org	4.637.226	1	Sheila Coronel	0,25
ProPublica	4.109.878	2	Charles Lewis	0,24
ICIJ	3.967.238	3	Brant Houston	0,20
GIJN	3.943.224	4	David Boardman	0,16
journalismfund	3420612	5	Stefan Candea	0,13
CPI	3147385	6	Paul Radu	0,10
IRE	2758476	7	Ron Nixon	0,10
GRC	2334802	8	Josh Meyer	0,10
Swissinvestigation	2110983	9	Talia Buford	0,10
CIR	1949478	10	Susanne Reber	0,10

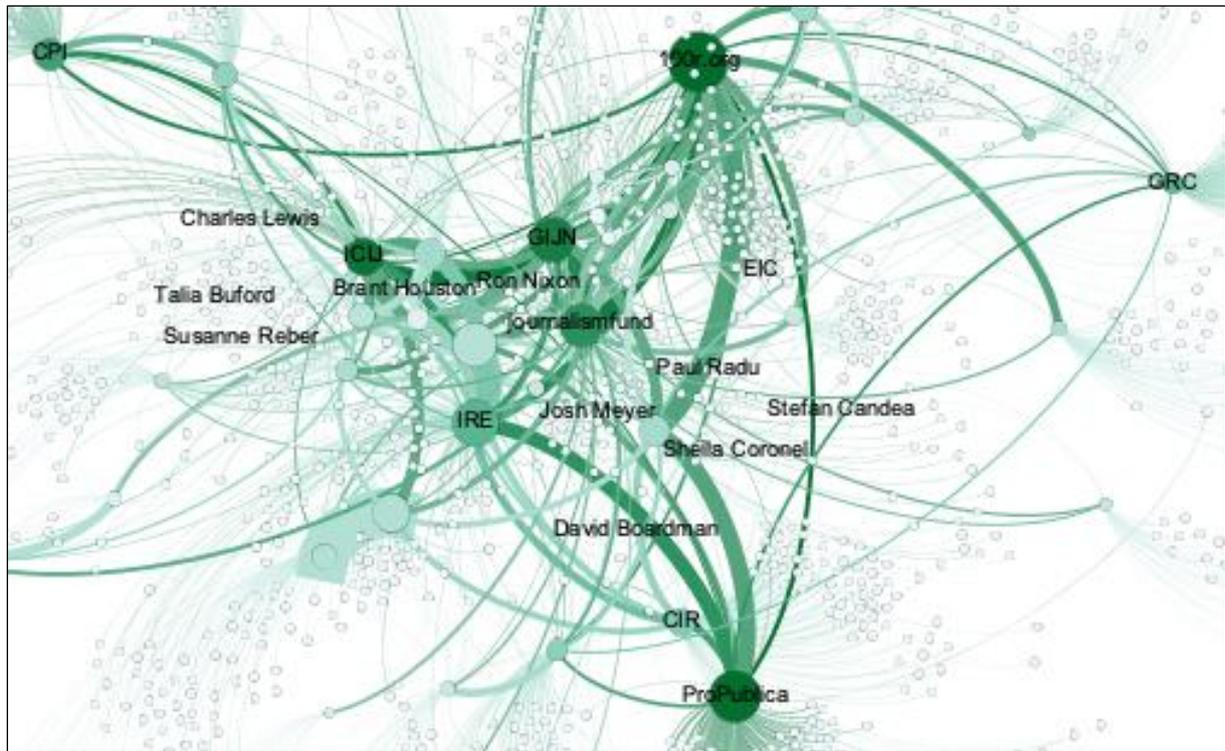


Figure 6: The influencers in phase III (2012–2018).

5. Discussion

In this study, we provided a Social Network Analysis of 67 organizations or projects from North America and Western Europe that can be considered part of the field of *Cross-border non-profit investigative journalism networks*. Our period of analysis ran from 1998 to 2018 which allows us to make some claims about the historical development of the field and its structure. Splitting the period into three phases of seven years each, we see a constant growth of the field in terms of the number of organizations or projects and the number of individuals involved in these organizations as staff or board members. Phase I (1998–2004), the initial years of the new field, we call “Establishment”. There were 21 organizations or projects forming a clear network structure with a core of big and interconnected US organizations and a periphery of more or less isolated European and other North American organizations or projects. In Phase II (2005–2011), we see “Expansion and Commingling”: The number of organizations or projects increases to 41, as does their interconnectivity through common personnel. Phase III (2012–2018) is a time of “Expansion and Consolidation” with a further growth of actors (63 organizations or projects). These actors form a new clear network structure: We have a grown core of old and new organizations resp. projects and a periphery with isolated as well as non-isolated “islands”. It is remarkable that over time not only the

number of actors (organizations/projects and individuals) grows constantly but also their average weighted degree increased, i.e., the average number of linkages of each actor to other actors. In phase I the weighted degree of all actors is 6,15; in phase II it is 8,31; and in phase III it goes up to 10,85. This shows that the interconnectivity of the actors in the field has clearly increased over time.

We also identified the central organizations or projects and individuals in each phase. The rankings of these “influencers” holding positions and high-quality contacts in several organizations or projects are dominated by US actors, such as Brant Houston, Charles Lewis, Sheila Coronel, Bill Kovach and David Boardman; only three Europeans (Brigitte Alfter, Stefan Canda, Andre Verloy) made it to a Top Ten list.

At this point, some limitations of the method should be discussed. It is possible that with our way of splitting the period’s years and our influence measures, we overestimate the influence of some individuals and underestimate that of others. Joaquin Sapien, for instance, made it to the Top Ten of the most influential persons in phase II although he never held positions at different organizations or projects simultaneously and never in a decision-making capacity. He was a rank-and-file staff member at CPI (2006-07), then changed jobs and became a rank-and-file staff member at ProPublica in 2008. In contrast, Marina Walker Guevara is not on the influencers’ list in phase III despite the fact that within the last years she has held two important positions: deputy director of ICIJ and treasurer on the GIJN’s board of directors. Also, Danish journalist Nils Mulvad is missing in the rankings although he held positions in five organizations (DICAR, FUJ, Farmsubsidy, GIJN and 100r.org) during our period of analysis and he has definitely played an important role in the development of the field, by being a pioneer of cross-border computer-assisted reporting in Europe and by inventing the Global Investigative Journalism Conference together with Brant Houston (see Kaplan 2016). The same is true for other important individuals in the field (Drew Sullivan, David Schraven and others). Thus, it seems necessary to develop the method further: We need a measure combining the worth of one’s social contacts with the weight of one’s position *inside* an organization or project; and we have to find ways to make visible “grey eminences” whose influence is not reflected in high-ranking positions within powerful organizations or projects. It is also possible that with a different division of the 21-year-period, some other influencers would become visible while others would drop out of the ranking. Furthermore, the picture might be more complete and accurate if we included also “simple” members of organizations or projects in the sample. In consequence, amongst other things, the German Netzwerk Recherche would not

hold the position of an isolated island in phase I when its vice chairman Hans Leyendecker was a (simple) member of ICIJ.

Looking at the findings of our study, more questions come up. Although we now have an overview of the field and see the actors' mathematically calculated social distances and interconnectivity, we still know little about their differences in identities, their conflicts and their struggle over control on the "playground" (White 2008). As Alfter & Candea (2019: 146) argue, we should scrutinize the "interaction patterns and power structures" within this new subfield of journalism and ask questions about "gate-keeping, institutionalisation and indeed pluralism". Surely, we should also follow the money by focusing on the donors of non-profit organizations and their influence on the journalistic output. If investigative journalism is increasingly depending on foundations and corporate philanthropists, are the muckrakers and the responsible executives of their organizations or projects then "adopting the ideology of 'philanthro-capitalism,' characterized by the naturalization of pro-market ideologies, which are supportive of the current economic and political status quo of global capitalism from which most foundations have derived their wealth" (Scott et al. 2017: 168)? Moreover, does the structure of the field affect not only the concrete journalistic content but also journalistic traditions and cultures, contributing to a worldwide "homogenisation of journalism" (Meyer & Brink Lund 2008, see also Alfter 2019: 177–181)? To answer these questions, it is not enough to carry out further Social Network Analyses; we must also conduct interviews with actors and content analyses of their journalistic output.

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