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Cross-border Investigative Journalism: a critical perspective

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Cross-border Investigative Journalism:
a critical perspective

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ABSTRACT

Focusing on power relationships in the context of Cross-Border Journalistic Investigations (CBIJ) this study takes into account a critical approach of the emerging field. The thesis differs from other accounts on CBIJ, be it from practitioners or academics. Although studies in global media have examined new frameworks and developments, as well as emerging new practices in global investigative journalism in a digitally networked society, this has usually come from a positivist view of strengthening democracy, with an added techno-euphoria.

This research presents an analysis of the power relationships in CBIJ as well as its challenges in the global context. Going beyond the usual positive tech-determinist approach the thesis explores how journalistic practices in this field are shaped in two different CBIJ networks when their two major CBIJ projects overlap, through the study of data generated by participatory observation, autoethnography and archival research. The analysis is giving a special attention to both technology communication infrastructures and non-profit funding models and is showing power inequalities and limitations of CBIJ networks as well as implications of contemporary platform investigative journalism and their unintended consequences. As such, this study is providing the insight of an Eastern-European journalist, a long-time practitioner and CBIJ network facilitator, so the analytic focus on the backstages of managing access control in two major cross-border investigations enables another contribution.

This thesis finds that CBIJ has been building up based on a (white male) elitist identity for investigative journalists, first in the US in the '70s and then in Europe and beyond in the context of Post-Cold War globalisation. To add credibility to this identity, scientific techniques have been replicated in what was called 'precision journalism ' which later became data journalism and now has been used in the mega-leaks CBIJ projects. Such data-sets have been building up to such an extent that they create the authoritative source many journalists would like to have access to (i.e. Panama Papers or Football Leaks data). While shifting CBIJ to rely heavy on big data-sets (leaks) and expensive software and computing power (to process data and to share information securely across borders), statistical techniques do not reveal main stories and most of the data work is done by engineers to index and clean data and make it available for the easiest search operations possible (*type and click*).

Because of this dependency, this research shows that today CBIJ networks incur high costs which, in the case of the largest CBIJ organisations, are not paid by media partners of such organisations but are subsidised by media assistance or philanthropy, both governmental and private. This double capture in the technology and non-profit realms gives an unusual strong leverage to the few financial donors and platforms owners, without any accountability, on influencing the CBIJ field at a global level.

Contrary to the public claim, this thesis finds that investigative platforms can act as amplifying agents of national commercial (and non-profit) competitive interests at an international network level. Furthermore, journalists accepted as members of a given investigative platform work for free in the platform realm; such network technological infrastructures and the hosted data-sets are not co-owned (in some cases not even co-managed) by all participants in the network. Without decentralised technology design and without governance documents, such platform are totalitarian governance systems (surveillance and control build in) putting access control for collaborations in

the hand of a few people. Thus modern CBIJ systems re-create the past pain points of commercial news industry, creating even less gatekeepers than before.

I conclude that CBIJ network centralization of socio-tech access control, bankrolled by philanthropy, are building more walls and barriers contrary to current claims and past configurations. As such, the current combination of data journalism, network structures, non-profit and commercial models, and the contemporary 'precariat' indicates that cross-border investigative networks are in the data feudalism realm. Combined with the standardising of the field to be platform ready, CBIJ becomes also ready for its own colonisations.

This research makes an original contribution to existing literature, especially in the global media studies, more specifically in journalism studies with a focus on collaborative journalistic practices from a political economy angle. Last but not least, I hope this thesis contributes to the de-Westernizing process of journalism studies.

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DECLARATION:
I hereby declare that the material contained in this thesis is my own work.

Ştefan Cândea

13 April 2020

Introduction to Cross-Border Investigative Journalism (CBIJ)

'The Swissleaks, Luxleaks, Panama Papers and Bahamas Leaks revelations [...] are individual manifestations of a global phenomenon' (European Parliament, 2016): this formulation is part of an official text adopted by the European Parliament at the end of 2016 proposing a directive to increase access to anti-money laundering information for tax authorities. The European Parliament is in fact referring to the 'global phenomenon' of money laundering and tax evasion by invoking another important phenomenon, namely collaborative investigations exposing it, thus proving their global impact. The names mentioned are the names of recent investigative projects run by International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ), called 'mega leaks' or 'mega investigative collaborations', running between 2013 and 2016, involving hundreds of journalists, media partners and stories in several different countries.

These are just the most recent and most highly publicised cross-border projects. With such projects, the general public became aware of something that had in fact been brewing for a long time: the emergence of Cross-Border Investigative Journalism (CBIJ), a process that had been more than three decades in the making.

When starting their work, organisations operating across borders and boundaries, such as the ICIJ, which was founded in 1997, positioned such actions outside of traditional media because of the limitations imposed by the news industry. As the Manifesto published at the founding of the ICIJ in 1997 states: 'commercial demands of the news industry have often meant that such information is brief, disjointed, and confusing in the larger context, and therefore seemingly less relevant to domestic audiences[1]' (Lewis, 1997).

Two decades ago, then, the problem was simply that of connecting journalists working in different countries for different media, because their way of working was previously restricted to the local or national level. At the time, journalists were nevertheless still involved as part of the novel solution. Now, after several different crises, the media across Europe and North America as an industry has been decimated. In some places, content produced by local media has even disappeared as a concept (Ganea et al, 2014, 2016), national media involve fewer and fewer actors and employ fewer and fewer journalists; advertisement, the main revenue source for journalism, has all but vanished.

As a beacon of light against this grim backdrop, recent events show a successful international spread of cross-border journalistic projects bankrolled by donated grants and by subsidies, as a merger between the non-profit model and what is left of the traditional news industry. One should maintain a sense of proportion, however: worldwide, there are only a few such successful projects initiated in the non-profit realm that set the international agenda and such projects involve a low number of journalists (and pay for the work of even a smaller number of journalists).

Resources are scarce, there are fewer news industry outfits, which themselves lack a clear business model, and more non-profit actors with growing but still limited access to donations and subsidies:

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[1] https://web.archive.org/web/19971222092832/http://publicintegrity.org/icij/index.html

are these not the perfect conditions to breed concentration and to lead actors to join forces in oligopoly alliances who's end goal is towards obtaining a monopoly?

In other words: the apparent success of cross-border investigative networks that is heralded today is in fact having the hidden and unwanted consequence of producing less investigative journalism? This is not to say less in terms of the quantity of stories published, but rather in terms of a decreasing number of different topics that attract journalistic investigative attention. If hundreds of journalists worldwide focus as a network on a single topic for a whole year or more, following the same narrative and the same workflow, analysing the same type of data, and reporting the same type of stories in a similar way, then what is lost in the process? Moreover, how many cross-border networks organised in this manner are able to function in parallel and what is happening when they overlap?

It is evident that for various reasons the globalisation of journalism is unfolding at the same time and under the prerequisite of participating in the standardisation of journalistic language, definitions, the understanding of democracy, of techniques and technology as well as the standardised access to support from private donors or governmental subsidies. An entire framework of thought is being rolled out and globalised, one built on the English language and the Atlantic vocabulary of economy, politics, democracy and journalism (Meyer; Brink-Lund 2006).

The one-size-fits-all trend brings a consolidation towards a few big players in the field of cross-border journalism. Under such circumstances, the globalisation of investigative journalism raises another big issue: who is, or who is likely to be, in control of the shaping of CBIJ knowledge production ?

This phenomenon is of great importance, but the various definitions of this process are subject to debate (Lewis, 2016; Gearing, 2016, Alfter, 2016/2; Demeneck 2016), showing that this emerging field is an under-investigated one. In order to answer these questions one must start by understanding what is going on and who is doing what.

Investigating how investigative journalism works is not an easy task. Leaving aside the secrecy involved before breaking a story to the public, it seems that there is little desire to study, analyse and share among those promoting and organising non-profit structures in the cross-border investigative realm.

The following situation is typical, and I have witnessed it many times over: at the beginning of 2016, a practising journalist and PhD candidate in Australia asked the Global Network for Investigative Journalism (GIJN) mailing list if practicians of cross-border investigative journalism would like to participate in building a methodology for this new practice. One of the veterans of the mailing list and of the media assistance intervention in such journalism, an editor of OCCRP, replied: 'This is not rocket science. […] I didn't know we were at that stage where we were giving fancy academic names to this now but I guess that happens at some point. I thought it was just investigative reporting.' (Sullivan, 2016)

This is exactly the point of this present research: against such resistance to outside scrutiny and further education, I aim to observe how CBIJ works and analyse what effects it has on journalistic practices, so that those interested in the CBIJ praxis can proceed based on systematically

documented and shared knowledge about this field, and hopefully integrate suitable elements of it into their daily practice.

Based on my experience, I understand cross-border investigative journalism as a process in which 'the producers, users and subjects need not, and often do not, share a common national orientation' (Reese, 2007).

In practice, however, the meaning of cross-border investigative journalism implies sharing even less common ground: language, culture, discipline, socio-political background, and even the vocabulary of production and consumption. Accordingly, the process could be better described as cross-boundary investigative journalism. An endeavour prone to tensions.

There are a number of claims and statements being made around the issues above, mostly from stakeholders in the field: beneficiaries of support programs, owners of non-profit structures, donors, consultants and evangelists. But there is little evidence-based research that critically analyses the various claims made in this field and the tensions that shape it.

What is more, discussion around such issues usually takes place in the Global North (North America and Western Europe). As such, there is little diversity of perspective. My background from Eastern Europe, as an observing participant in this field for almost two decades, will allow me to broaden this horizon.

Problem statement

Globalisation has led to world-wide problems that need transnational in-depth information. Cross-border investigative journalism, which has been more than three decades in the making, seems like a perfect solution to this problem.

'With global economic interdependence, technological and communication breakthroughs, and the multiplicity of opportunities -- as well as dangers -- of life in an increasingly frontierless world, there is need for in-depth information that transcends national boundaries.' This was part of ICIJ Manifesto when it was established by Charles Lewis, in December 1997, a manifesto published before ICIJ started work on its first project.

What I will argue based on my findings, however, is that in the process, cross-border investigative journalism has the tendency to create centralised and standardised monolithic structures that often recreate the very blind spots that they seek to eliminate.

More and more media houses and journalistic networks are capturing notorious leaks or scrap databases and develop stories together. In so doing, they limit their attention to the patterns of interpretation and interest that decided what to collect and record in such databases that ended up being leaked - such data records being manifestations of the limited interest, by ignorance or by design, of governments or corporations.

Moreover, media houses and journalistic networks working across borders are evolving by design towards overly centralised and elitist organisations that resemble the governments and corporations that these networks aim to challenge. Actors within these networks are dedicating more and more

resources and attention to an increasingly small set of issues and problems. Why is this happening? Is it possible to overcome this state of affairs in the future?

Not likely. According to its 'Vision of the Future', of the annual report of the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), a U.S.-based non-profit that claims to be one of the 'world's largest and most effective investigative reporting organizations', 'Facebook and Google have become indispensable for reaching audiences, but their algorithms are inscrutable and ever-changing, and they increasingly demand payments to reach audiences' (OCCRP, 2017). The same vision of the future of this organisation invites the reader to think about OCCRP network for investigative journalism 'as the Uber or AirBnB of journalism – we don't have our own reporters, but we've built the infrastructure that lets them reach new heights' (OCCRP, 2017).

A similar infrastructural comparison is made by the ICIJ, after winning the Pulitzer Prize in 2017 for its large-scale investigative collaboration The Panama Papers. In order to allow approximately 400 journalists to collaborate, the 'ICIJ's data gurus created the i-Hub by retooling software first developed for online dating and escort services into what was, in effect, a private Facebook for journalists' (Fitzgibbon and Hudson, 2016).

The two organisations mentioned above, the OCCRP and ICIJ worked together to deliver the Panama Papers in 2016. Same year, when starting a crowdfunding campaign to sustain its network, the OCCRP invited patrons to take part in building 'the People's NSA'[2] (OCCRP, 2017).

For the last three decades, even before the financial crisis and the collapse of the media's advertisement-based financial engine, the news industry's limitations in addressing the need for cross-border knowledge production have given rise to a new phenomenon: that of journalists establishing networks to collaborate on investigative stories. Such networks are now undergoing an intensive process of expansion, globalisation and transformation. This is happening at a time when global technical platforms are becoming publishers themselves, and gaining control of the news industry and global communication infrastructure. The handful of companies who today are taking control over the attention business away from the media industry are slowly becoming the new owners of journalism. They are also becoming the new owners of journalistic communication infrastructures, the new patrons of journalism and the new business model to which journalists aspire.

A number of studies provide evidence of the effect of the collapse of the media as a business on journalism in Europe and North America, and the extent to which this collapse killed investigative reporting. The traditional news business model collapsed when media companies became unable to perform in the advertising business, with the status of the so-called 'attention merchants' shifting from media companies to Silicon Valley platform capitalists.

As Katherine Viner, editor in-chief of the The Guardian, said: 'For every new advertising dollar spent in the US, 99 cents [sic] is now taken up by Facebook and Google' (Viner, 2017).

So it is understandable that new journalistic initiatives should want to emulate Facebook, Google, Airbnb, Uber and other similar successful tech companies. What is lacking, however, is an understanding of what this means for journalists and journalism, and especially the sub-set of

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2 http://archive.today/2020.03.21-124330/https://www.patreon.com/OCCRP

journalists that perform cross-border investigative journalism (CBIJ). Investigative journalists who set out to expose power structures and abuses of power by private or governmental organisations like Facebook, Google and the NSA end up working with entities that aspire to replicate these same structures. Who might be then in a position to ask the same critical questions with regard to their own organisations?

The problems that media companies face when sustaining their business should nevertheless be investigated separately from the limitations of journalism itself.

Thus the main concern of this research is to document the power relationships shaping the CBIJ emerging field, practices and their implications, a real gap in knowledge.

In order to understand how is CBIJ taking shape, one needs to critically review what is behind the current conventional positivist view of CBIJ, what has been excluded from the mainstream narrative, and place this type of journalism in the larger context of globalization, looking at its practices from a political economy angle and review the mainstream narrative to discover excluded versions of the same story and its effects.

My place and contribution

My personal career trajectory is closely related to the growing field of cross border investigative journalism. Early in my career, I was part of a small dedicated unit for investigative journalism at one of the main national dailies in Romania. However, the more I worked for traditional news outlets, especially in my field of investigating organised crime, the more I became aware of these outlets' inability to provide 'in-depth information that transcends national boundaries' (Lewis, 1997). The concept of cross-border collaboration appealed to me the first time that I heard about it in 1999 (two years after ICIJ was established), while I was working as a young investigative journalist in post-communist Romania. For a person who grew up behind the Iron Curtain, anything that promised the possibility of crossing borders was a very attractive prospect. A few years later, in 2001, after more exposure to international training, contacts and conferences, I established together with colleagues a non-profit investigative organisation called Centrul Român pentru Jurnalism de Investigație (CRJI)[3]. Soon, our organisation was involved in co-founding the Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN) and played a central role in constructing a backbone for cross-border investigative journalism in Eastern Europe and beyond.

We were not alone, since a number of similar organisations also emerged during that period. Over the last two decades, hundreds of journalists had come to the same conclusion and joined the international phenomenon of cross-border investigative journalism, thus producing new structures, networks, investigative projects, tools and stories.

At some point, however, I realised that for a number of years this concept of cross-border investigative collaboration had been promoted by and for the benefit of the same limited group of people. Some newcomers have been entering the field, but this process of inclusiveness seemed to remain a promise for most of the people outside the Global North, a promise that was never fully substantiated.

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3 The Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism (RCIJ), with a first online presence in 2003 https://web.archive.org/web/20030420001442/http://www.crji.go.ro:80/

When I realised the shortcomings of the system I was helping to create, I started systematically collecting critical observations that now form the basis of my autoethnography work. I observed the limitations of generalised and standardised approaches when it comes to journalism across borders and cultures.

The growing number of people attracted to this new way of working, its growing audience, its significant financial costs, new emerging power structures as well as the involvement of an increasingly small number of large institutional actors, are all creating a new phenomenon. This phenomenon requires critical assessment in order effectively to determine its blind spots.

What led me to pursue this analysis in the academic context is the fact that public claims made around cross-border investigative journalism have remained almost the same for the last two decades, tend to come from the same circles of beneficiaries, are very optimistic and techno-centric, and in fact deceptive: the reality is different from what is presented publicly and needs careful insight to bring it to light, open it up to critical analysis and show how present trends should make any stakeholder in this field concerned for the future.

My privileged position as an insider – an autoethnographer and observing participant – will contribute to knowledge about how cross-border investigative journalism works today.

Motivations translated into Research Questions

Some of my practical observations and subsequent questions motivated me to embark the researching of this thesis:

- Journalists working in today's investigative networks need to enjoy a high level of personal and institutional trust from the few network managers and from peers, a type of trust that is further transferred from seniors to newcomers, a trust consolidated by participating in conferences and projects and be as little critical as possible. **Can this cult-like organizational structures be replaced by something more fair and inclusive and less elitist?**

- When journalists collaborate, they need to exchange information by way of digital tools. Today this is only possible using platforms (self-hosted or in the cloud, but centralized) and this is leading to a drive to scale up the number of journalists working on the same platform. **Is there another more participatory socio-technical solution possible?**

- CBIJ done independently from legacy media is possible today only being subsidized by donors in the non-profit realm. **Is there another business model possible, one that takes the power of decision-making away from the NGO bureaucracy and wealthy philanthropists and gives true independence to journalists?**

- Outputs of CBIJ are following a US muckraking reporter model only. **Can different languages, perspectives and techniques mingle in a CBIJ project, to reflect the diversity in backgrounds of its participants?**

- Networks seem to be a fast solution to confirm information from around the world given a shared data-set, but this only tends to amplify and propagate a few central story lines, and do not

challenge a legacy reporting style. **Is there a way networks can have a more federated approach to CBIJ knowledge production ?**

I've witnessed the platformization of infrastructures emerging in the CBIJ context and one of the main reasons why this is happening is that technology design is not taken into consideration when setting up communication infrastructures for growing networks, nor are rules of governance. Technical limitations and unchallenged bureaucratic organisational habits are thus creating places that capture users and, magnified by network effects, become monolithic, monopolistic structures. The successful ones are financially endorsed by the media assistance and philanthropy industry, subsidising indirectly media companies that benefit from free services and also turning journalists into users of a subsidised service, and ultimately into products, thus leaving them to deal with the centralised socio-technological design of such platforms.

Knowledge production resulting from such platforms is evolving towards a reductionist one-way gatekeeping model which is even less diverse than the traditional news industry it was trying to fix in the first place, resulting in the investigation of fewer topics, and ultimately, in facile surveillance, manipulation and control of its users.

Such observations have informed this thesis main research questions:

1. What are the powers at play in CBIJ networks and what are the practices, processes and its challenges?

2. Are existing networks of CBIJ (universal) replicable solutions?

Trying to find answers to these questions and keep repeating them during the last years of this doctoral research have constantly informed my reiterative approach towards different ways of configuring a real hands-on investigative network and its underlying technology.

My research attempts not only to fill in a gap in knowledge related to power mechanisms in CBIJ, but also to bring a praxis approach to the field of CBIJ, that is to keep a constant dialogue between the journalistic practices - the hands-on design and management of the CBIJ network configurations, workflows and tools - and the various theorise and concepts that can critically evaluate such practices[4] on an ongoing basis.

Outline of Chapters

This research provides a critical engagement with cross-border investigative journalism networks and offers different perspectives on how the field has evolved towards the power structures of today, as well as the implications of this evolution. I have the privilege to be involved as a co-founder with the Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN) and to be part of both networks that form the subject of my case studies, International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) and European Investigative Collaborations (EIC).

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[4] I was invited to speak about the blending of my professional experience in CBIJ and the early findings of my phd research in mid 2015 at Der Spiegel, which has led to the design and co-fouding of the European Investigative Collaborations network. Since its establishment I coordinated the network that published more than 1.500 investigative stories in a dozen of languages and more than 20 countries and coordinated the production of Liquid Investigations underlying network technology.

I will examine the ICIJ's Panama Papers project as an ICIJ member who was not involved in the investigative project itself but involved in the network as a member (same as the rest of two thirds of ICIJ members). I understand my role here as a participant observer. I will also look at EIC and its processes and activities during its first year in existence in the context of the Football Leaks project (the network's first well-known project). Here I understand my role as observing participant (I was actively involved as a co-founder and coordinator since its establishment until present).

Two observations applied to the field of CBIJ constantly inform the content of my research, because taken together, they shape CBIJ knowledge production networks: stories build up identities; collaboration requires access control.

Chapter 1 reviews the concepts and theories directly related to CBIJ, navigating between definitions, practices and documented motivations of this field. It then moves further towards concepts useful to investigate CBIJ that could explain its power structures and mechanisms, especially from the political economy angle, with a view on journalistic capital and standardisation of practices. In the last part of the first chapter concepts related to power inequalities are reviewed and limitations of CBIJ in the the context of globalisation and platformization are considered, before engaging with literature of organisational communication, critical theory and science and technology studies.

Chapter 2 details how decisions have evolved on the best tools and methods to be used to advance the research questions of this thesis. The transition from quantitative research (SNA, surveys) towards qualitative research is detailed. Main methods mentioned are autoethnography and archival research, with less guiding interviews and more participant observation.

Chapter 3 details the processes and challenges of CBIJ that have shaped the emergence of this field and focuses the exclusion lens on the current conventional narrative of CBIJ genesis of its practices and tools.

It shows how the main actors, placed in the political and economic context of their time, engaged in a causal chain of events and not as a series of disparate, isolated occurrences. The relationship to the traditional media industry and non-profit actors is of special interest, as well as the history of tensions which are mostly related to the effort to institutionalise on a global scale a certain model of organisation, journalism and society.

Applying autoethnography and archival research the chapter is set out to find what narratives or developments are being excluded when describing why CBIJ has developed, as part of the process of building up a CBIJ identity, as well as describing how CBIJ developed towards permitting control.

The concrete challenges of CBIJ processes and tools are detailed in **Chapter 4** using as case study the Panama Papers (PP) and official accounts on how investigative work was organised across borders in the context of ICIJ acting as an agent for coordinating a project on behalf of Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ), a traditional media. The main research effort is to extract CBIJ workflow structure from the public account about PP, for this purpose drawing heavily on a book published by the initiators of PP. Using participant observation, auto-ethnography, interviews and archival research, this chapter contributes by clarifying and at points uncovering previously unknown aspects that

contradict the official narrative about PP and ICIJ in particular as well CBIJ in general, focusing on tensions that appear when different CBIJ projects and networks overlap.

While **Chapter 4** identifies the gap in existing literature and research in the area of meeting arenas for both face to face and electronically mediated communication it has a limited reach in filling this gap, since as a researcher and member of ICIJ I was not involved in the PP investigation. Filling this gap is the aim of **Chapter 5** where participant observation is used to document the missing pieces using a second case study, the Football Leaks project, and the workings of the newly established European Investigative Collaborations (EIC was operational in 2016). Research rests mainly on participant observation due to my role as a co-founder and coordinator of this network. Having full access to the backstage of a major data-leak project makes little need of adding interviews, but resorts to auto-ethnography and archival research to clarify especially the inner workings of such a network and the interactions and overlaps with the wider field of CBIJ.

Such interactions and overlaps, tensions and power mechanisms are then discussed in **Chapter 6**, using the literature reviewed in **Chapter 1** as the analysis framework. The shaping of CBIJ as a process of exclusion as well the possibilities and limitations of this field are discussed, focusing on important extra shaping forces, the socio-tech systems and philanthropy. A special attention is given to the 4 Flows analysis of meetings into shaping the two (partial) organisations ICIJ and EIC. The chapter explores the appearance of data feudalism in **CBIJ**.

This work wraps up with a review of findings and the limitations of the research, proposing where to look further. **Chapter 7** concludes that that current CBIJ is engaged in a trajectory of platformization for journalistic networking, searching for information and sharing knowledge. It is set up for colonisation, following the model of today's platform capitalism businesses such as Facebook, Airbnb and Uber, what is called the 'sharing economy', a monopolistic extractive industry based on people's activities and data for the benefit of the platform owners (Srnicek, 2017).

Even if it goes against the current conventional positivist view of CBIJ, this is a hardly surprising conclusion.

At the beginning of this research in early 2015, a tweet by the organiser of that year's Global Investigative Journalism Conference, quoting one of the key staff members of ICIJ, the Data Editor Mar Cabra, read: 'Crossborder cooperations like #swissleaks & #luxleaks is [sic] the journalistic equivalent to #uber #airbnb #eijc15 #sharedeconomy[5]' (Furuly, 2015). The ICIJ is officially describing the type of cross-border journalism that they pioneer as 'radical sharing' and their work is praised as a paradigm shift. The ICIJ is clearly borrowing from the vocabulary of Silicon Valley and the rest of the CBIJ global community is cheering.

Not only the vocabulary is borrowed from Silicon Valley, but also some of its key figures. A Board member of Center for Public Integrity (the ICIJ's parent organisation until 2017) has served also as a Board member of Uber – the former Huffington Post owner and sharing entrepreneur Arianna Huffington[6]. Under the new ICIJ (established as an independent entity in 2017) a board seat is given to Stephen King[7], who is leading the philanthropic investment arm of eBay co-founder Pierre

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[5] http://archive.today/2017.03.14-171841/https://twitter.com/jfuruly/status/596608834476605440

[6] https://publicintegrity.org/inside-publici/arianna-huffington-frederic-seegal-join-centers-board-of-directors/

[7] https://web.archive.org/web/20180614020002/https://www.icij.org/about/icijs-story/

Omydiar, a major donor to ICIJ. Such an important field as cross-border knowledge production, if left to self-regulation, cannot be substantially different from the unequal globalised society in which it operates.

However noble in aim at get-go, this field does have its roots in the effort to limit the participation in investigative journalism in times shaped by the impact of Watergate. We are currently experiencing a similar moment, with the impact of Panama Papers winning a Pulitzer Prize, thus boosting the popularity of cross-border investigative journalism while at the same trying to limit the access to this field by building platforms run by 'dinner party' rules.

Combined with platformization, central implication is that platform investigations are simply replicating the problems generated by big tech, as such leading CBIJ back to a gatekeeper model, with an end result that is even less diverse than the problem it was trying to fix when it emerged.

Chapter 1. CONCEPTS AND THEORIES TO INVESTIGATE CBIJ

The emerging field of cross-border investigative journalism (CBIJ) can look very different when analyzed from different vantage points. A current mainstream view has a very positivist approach and quite a wild claim that CBIJ is shifting the way journalism is practiced. This thesis looks at CBIJ with a critical lens and from a political economy perspective, namely investigating its mechanics and power structures.

It is therefore important to start by situating this study in the wider research steaming from media studies and review the relevant concepts and theories even before analysing the genesis of CBIJ practices (Chapter 3), and before diving into case studies (Chapters 4 and 5). By doing so a different view can take shape on how this field has emerged, and this will highlight both the knowledge gap and the methods needed to fill in this gap.

A number of studies engage with the field of cross-borders investigative journalism but this remains to date an understudied emerging field, so this chapter is going to consider literature that goes beyond journalism studies in order to draw from both the literature related to journalistic processes as well as the literature that puts journalistic practices in the context of political economy literature and journalism studies, further identifying relevant work on globalization theory and global journalism from the wider global media studies field.

This chapter will also review relevant parts of existing work in global media studies (Berglez 2015, Bacon 2011, Birnbauer 2011, Castells 2010, Fuchs 2014, Gearing 2016, McNair 2006, Ward 2005), more specifically in journalism studies with a focus on investigative journalism. While looking at the distinct nature and roots of investigative journalism, the chapter will draw on Haller (2004) and then Alfter (2016) to outline the process of investigative journalism and of cross-border investigative journalism (CBIJ).

One goal of this chapter is to review relevant theory that can frame a political economy angle on collaborative investigative journalistic practices, focusing on power relationships in the context of cross-border journalistic investigations. This chapter should lay the work for later analysis, highlighting how the thesis differs from other accounts on cross-border journalistic investigations, be it from journalists and professional NGO's practitioners (Lewis, Houston, Kaplan) or scholars. It is necessary to establish which theoretical concepts will best inform attempts to determine the current state of the CBIJ field. There will be a particular focus on the recentralisation of networks that become platforms. At the end of this chapter, I will have listed all the necessary building blocks that will inform my theoretical approach, which will then allow a move towards detailing the tools and methods of gathering evidence in Chapter 2.

The first part of this chapter deals with the most prominent literature related to the field, on investigative journalism (Haller 2004, Redelfs 1996), its economics (Hamilton 2016, 2014), and methodology that was later transferred to the domain of cross-border collaborations (Heinrich, 2011; Alfter, 2016). Since one of the vantage points considered to use towards understanding CBIJ power structures was to apply Social Network Analysis (SNA), relevant parts related to network theory (Granovetter, Watts, Barabaszi) and analyses related to cross-border operations (Reese) are presented. This reveals the importance of what is called the 'extra media' level. In this case the influence of philanthropy on the CBIJ field: 'at the extra-media level we consider those influences originating primarily from outside the media organization. This perspective considers that the power to shape content is not the media's alone, but is shared with a variety of institutions in society, including the government, advertisers, public relations, influential news sources, interest groups, and even other media organisations' (Reese, 2001). The chapter draws on the rich literature related

to impact definitions and measurements (Schiffrin and Zuckerman 2015; Hamilton 2016; Kaplan and Sullivan 2016), and is adding autoentography observations, drawing from literature on the awards industry (English, 2005) and the 'celebrity cult' and 'stage celebrities' (Riemens, 2016).

The second part of this chapter aims to provide a broader political and economic context relevant to journalistic collaborations across boarders. The traditional news industry paradigm of breaking news and exclusivity is explored, a nation state-centred mode of thought with interesting implications when multiple media outlets break the same news at the same time in different countries and sometimes in different languages (as opposed to the continuous publication model of Open Data or Wikipedia). This ends with scholarship related to the distinction between 'labour' and 'production' (Fergusson, 2015) and criticism of a socio-technical view of journalism with implications like global standardisation and decreasing diversity.

The final section of this literature review deals with what I consider missing from the discussion in the context of CBIJ: critical analysis (Fuchs, 2015) and reflections that can apply to the field of cross-border networks based on the social network formation where the focus will be on the 'identity and control' framework (White, 2008), which is offering helpful analysis tools on controlling narratives and the intertwined notions of 'arena', 'interface' and 'council'. This leads to the necessity of looking at CBIJ networks that become (partial) organizations by way of observing the hands-on process of investigative work through the process of communication (direct and mediated) and how control over communication channels and messages is being implemented.

Finally, the chapter explores theory supporting analysis of the tools needed to get journalistic collaborations off the ground, namely infrastructure, mostly communication infrastructure, both online and offline. Conferencing, searching for and exchanging information is subject both to technological and sociological design and has evolved over the last three decades. Relevant factors in this domain such as speed, usability, centralization, are reviewed and elaborations on how technology is 'the continuation of politics by other means' (Csikszentmihalyi, 2016) are offered.

There is a growing body of literature documenting how social media platforms are monopolising and centralising the internet (Fuchs, 2015), as well as a number of recent studies on how such platforms are becoming publishers, leading to a model called 'the platform press' (Bell and Owen, 2017). As a practitioner I later make use of this literature to analyse the related phenomenon of CBIJ networks of journalists turning into platforms. Assuming that the development of journalism cannot be far away from where society is, and in a society where the platform model is ubiquitous will have its journalism following suite.

Therefore summing up the building blocks of the theoretical framework of this thesis, this chapter ends visiting concepts related to 'platform capitalism' (Srnicek, 2016) and the 'platform logic' (Schwartz, 2017), models that will be used to help analyse the current transformation of cross-border investigative journalism networks, engaging with concepts such as control and surveillance (Christle, Spiekermann, 2016) as well as data feudalism and digital colonisation.

1.1. Investigative journalism literature not explaining power structures

This section will review concepts and theories pertinent to investigative journalism and network practices, with the purpose of situating this study in the wider field of media and communication and reveal the knowledge gap in the sub-field of cross-border investigative journalism. Before the

drawing of conclusions, this section will review scholarship pertaining to the topic of investigative journalism across borders, directly and indirectly.

The focus will be mostly on how investigative journalism is defined by the Atlantic model and how it is viewed in the context of the larger picture of the news industry in the U.S. and Western Europe, simply because these are the places where cross-border investigative journalism originated, and where its most visible actors are based. This is not to say that there are no relevant initiatives elsewhere, but where they exist outside the Atlantic context they do so by trying to enter alliances or get support and recognition from their counterparts in the Global North. Accordingly, they use the same methods, organisation, techniques and language. There is scholarship claiming today investigative journalism is a 'Anglo-American invention' (Chalaby, 1996) and that the investigative journalism used in cross-border collaborations is using the specific U.S. framework of thought, that of reporter – muckraker (Meyer, 2019). Relevant actors in this field have defined themselves vis-à-vis an established Atlantic model, be it an organisation, fellowship, definition, network or award.

So for the purposes of this research, it will first be necessary to understand how investigative journalism is defined, its theoretical boundaries, how that definition translates into cross-border investigative journalism and whether this implies new theoretical boundaries.

1.1.1. Investigative Journalism Definitions

What are useful definitions of investigative journalism and what are the limitations of existing definitions?

Defining journalism derives from public service (Deuze, 2005), monitoring the power (Kovach and Rosenstiel 2007), critical scrutiny over power and a watchdog function (McNair 2009), questioning authority (Bromley 2008). Some of these concepts are being revisited, at least to acknowledge that investigative journalism as it is understood under the Atlantic model can also be used for a corrupt purpose (de Burgh 2008) and not only towards a societal greater good and in the public interest. There are several analytical definitions of investigative journalism. A short one would be: 'investigative journalism' is 'critical and in-depth journalism' (van Eijk, 2005, Haller, 2004). Other organisations add more context to the definition, describing it as 'systematic, in-depth, and original research and reporting, often involving the unearthing of secrets' (Investigative Journalism: Defining the Craft | Global Investigative J…, 2017). Some definitions go into the detail of what kind of data is unearthed: 'exposing public matters that are concealed' (Hunter, 2011). Others go into the details of how the data is collected 'experienced investigators review previous research to develop sharper and more insightful questions about the topic' (Yin, 2009, 14), adding computer-assisted reporting or data journalism to the definition mix.

Perhaps due to ever-growing claims of what investigative journalism is, usually made by such organisations that come to identify the field with themselves, the definition of investigative journalism has become more complex and, it is claimed, turned into 'a set of methodologies that are a craft, and it can take years to master.' (Investigative Journalism: Defining the Craft | Global Investigative J…, 2017)

Since the current and ongoing evolution of methodologies is rarely documented and is mostly showcased at conferences, there is work in progress that deals with studying and understanding them. There is little evidence presented as to how many years it takes and the process that is required to reach the status of a 'master' in investigative journalism. The same goes for the differences between countries and cultures - culture understood as 'the product of social

process' (White, 2008). Nevertheless, actors in the field and speakers invited to conferences as 'experts' come from a variety of demographics, including from the under twenty-five age group with little practical experience in journalism to the most senior investigative journalists, usually coming from the U.S. and Western Europe[8].

To make things even more complex, investigative journalism is sometimes referred to with different names. One recent term used is 'accountability journalism', which has investigative journalism as its 'iron core', since it is journalism done 'in the face of efforts to keep information secret' (Jones, 2009, p4,5). Accountability journalism again originates from the U.S. (Gruen, 2014), where investigative reporting is understood as the journalism that ensures that power be accountable and challenges the powers that be (Redelfs, 1996). Alec Kline, director of the Medill Innocence Project, argues that the term 'accountability journalism' started to be more popular with news organisations when the mainstream media was hit by the economic crisis and the collapse of advertisement revenue at the end of the 2000s (Gruen, 2014). Editors had to find a different way of packaging highly-paid work that only produced investigative reports into something that sounded more like an ongoing project. This remained mere wording and packaging, however, since accountability journalism is still publishing following the same scoop/exclusivity paradigm but also leaves room for a lower bar, not creating the expectations of finding a smoking gun. But the core principle is that of challenging powers that be and holding those in power accountable (Gruen, 2014). This approach came about in strict correlation with the 'profitable last decades of the century' for the media (Downie and Shudson, 2009, p6).

The limitation of such a definition implies that there is always a distant, different, 'other ' power that needs to be hold accountable by journalists and there is no power created by the investigative journalism itself, so it gives no practical hint into how the power of investigative journalism itself should be held accountable.

1.1.2. Motivated by the limitations of the news industry

A self-evaluation and realisation of limitations of the impact on journalism quality by the news industry as a business model it was what motivated the split of investigative journalists from the news industry in the '80s and '90s. The very roots of the CBIJ new profession are based on such a realisation, a realisation that stopped short of going deeper and evaluate the limitations of the investigative journalists themselves.

Before going into looking at the relevant concepts transferred from investigative journalism to cross-border investigative journalism, it is important to briefly look at the roots of the news industry, as well as the rise and fall of the traditional sponsors of investigative journalism.

For some authors, the gathering and reporting of news, later transformed into journalistic accounts, was initially a by-product of the need for traders to have a network of information outside official accounts (de Burgh, 2005; Haller, 2004) as networks of commerce grew during the commercial expansions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The exchange of information on trade or work had an unexpected by-product: news gathering. Some of that was mixed with pamphlets, opinion, debate. Jürgen Habermas points to the rise of educated publics in the U.K. and the U.S. as the origin of the demand for what is labeled as impartial news. Hamilton (2006) points out that economic decisions and a technological revolution were the reason why commercial news

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[8] I was first invited to be a speaker at the GIJC 2003, when I was a 23 year-old with four years' experience in journalism.

operations started to claim political neutrality in order to reach as many as possible people in a given geographical market. With this context in mind, we can locate the origin of investigative journalism in the Anglo-American world at the beginning of the 19th century. De Burgh (2005) connects the trend of objectivity to the simultaneous need to present evidence.

The dawns of today mainstream investigative journalism are located somewhere in the mid 1850's in Great Britain (de Burgh, 2005) and they involve a collaboration between a social activist trying to save young girls from prostitution rings collaborating with an independent (elitist) media organization. Recently applying this view, there is work gathering conveniently 100 years of such global muckraking (Schiffrin, 2014). However, this view is contested. Arguments are being produced that a post-war Europe had all but lost different traditions of journalists, so it did not have the time to develop different approaches to investigative journalism and especially to cross-border investigative journalism (Meyer, 2019).

For others, the roots of investigative journalism are to be found even earlier, in sixteenth-century England. Brant Huston, chair of the Global Investigative Journalism Network, in his paper 'The Future of Investigative Journalism', quotes author Douglas Underwood's book From Yahweh to Yahoo! (2002) which locates the origin of investigative reporting in the religious reformers of England. 'Many elements of the prophetic tradition – the spirit of righteousness, the indignant moralism, the effort to maintain the purity of values, the call for spiritual and ethical renewal, the fierce sense of corruption abounding everywhere – are as typically found in today's best investigative reporters or crusading editors' (Underwood, 2002).

These are two important details in the existing literature: on one hand the media as a business aims at being as neutral and wide spread as possible, on the other hand the journalists pursue a truth teller mission. The tension between the two has pushed some journalists to seek new venues for investigative journalism work.

Moving forward to this century, Castells (1996) observers that for societies the ability or inability to master technology is embodying the capacity (or lack of) to transform. This is widely applied to journalism (Gearing, 2016) thus placing the debate for journalism survival in the tech realm. This is a common thread for the last decade of journalism studies, both from practitioners as well as from scholars, to give front stage to the ongoing technological disruption of media and journalism (Schudson 2009). Technology advances are an intricate part of these studies either in the forecast of death of journalism due to decline in traditional revenue (Cockburn and St. Clair 2007; Charles and Stewart 2011) or looking at financial crisis and fragmented audiences that add to the pressure and predict a black future for media (Peters and Broersma 2013, Franklin 2014) – as well as adding practices of automated news re-transmission (google news - Boyer 2013) and newsroom doing 'churnalism ' (Davies 2009) as well as prioritising costs and speed before hard-news thoroughly checked (Segal 2008).

Now as a reaction to limitations of this said dying news industry and in parallel with the technology advances, non-profit institutions appeared (70's in California, late 80's in Washington, DC) as well as networks of journalists, mainly related to mainstream legacy media[9]. It is claimed that the reason for this was a process of dying media trying to become nodes in a networked form of journalism (Gaearing 2016). Whatever the reason, we look at least three decades of witnessing the booming in non-profits, projects and international conferences to such an extent that scholarship takes note of the traditional media broken business model morphing towards 'revenue promiscuity ' (Gruen

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[9] ICIJ has been recruiting a mix of journalists like David Leigh from The Guardian and Nieman and Stanford Fellows, having an eye on developing towards mainstream media partners

Concepts and theories to investigate CBIJ

2014), a mix of foundation money and a lot of other revenues (e.g. event organising, membership, paywall). Since this boom of non-profit comes at the same time with the declining of the media industry in the Western world, is maybe seen rather an initiative for journalists and editors to get the job done with less resources, and not a media institutional initiative.

1.1.3. Cross Border Investigative Journalism practices

What is existing literature telling us about how investigative journalism (IJ) practices mutated into cross-border investigative journalism (CBIJ) practices?

Investigative journalism is including initiative from reporter, develops causes and consequences of events, and provide interpretation and explanation (Mencher 2011/1997). According to Haller (2004) the process of collecting information and presenting evidence emerged during the twentieth century under the following structures of research:

Events/actions: the goal is to reconstruct facts, by way of linking information; the procedure is to collect declarations in order to understand chronologies and investigate actors; the method is that of following-up or verifying.

Theme-orientation: the goal is to understand trends or communities, by way of linking to present aspects of the chosen theme; the procedure is to work with data, constructing a database and to illustrate it with people and their narratives; the method is to research focused on the topic, also by way of one's own experience or undercover investigation.

Secret actions: the goal is to make inside information public by way of connecting insider declarations or hidden documents to public events; the procedure is to reconstruct secret actions with the help of insiders, declarations or documents and to connect outside leads; the method is detective work.

Again under Haller's synthesis, the methods of journalistic investigation are as follows:

The analogy plan: comparing an existing known situation in one place to a similar situation in a different place, in order to discover a story;

The event/reason plan: putting known facts and events together and formulating a new explanation, sometimes using statistics.

The dynamic plan: looking for contrast when comparing a present situation with a similar situation that happened in the past;

The hypothesis scheme: complex facts are put onto a context timeline, based on space, time and organisation; striking facts can be connected together in order to form a research thesis

Revelations – Scheme 1 (aka leak): a collection of internal documents is leaked to the outside world

Revelations – Scheme 2: internal sources observe a contradiction between what is known from the outside as an official version and the real facts.

Of the five methods listed above, the leak method is the most popular today in the field of cross-border investigative journalism. Other methods, combined most of the time with the main one, are

computer assisted reporting, statistics, batch searches – all of which date from the 1970s and which at that time have been gathered under the umbrella of 'precision journalism' (Meyer, 1973).

The hypothesis-based inquiry dates back to the 1930s as an academic research method. The MindMapping that originated in the 1970s is used today packaged as data visualisation journalism and visualization (but it is criticized for its lack of scientific rigor).

Cross-border Investigative Journalism Steps

Since investigative journalism methods were in effect more expensive ways of doing journalism, a new approach has taken shape: non profit investigative journalism and later non profit CBIJ.

The rise of non-profit investigative journalism is directly shaped in opposition to the general limitations of the news industry, and started as a phenomenon while the news industry was still profitable and paid for IJ work. This was the foundation of cross-border investigative journalism, and it was fuelled by philanthropic and government funds in the context of the end of the Cold War and the unraveling of globalisation. The financial crisis and the rapid development of communication technologies are both credited to have boosted the trend towards non-profit cross-border investigative journalism.

To understand exactly what is changing in the IJ turning into CBIJ, one has to look at the literature describing the process and the methodology of cross-border investigation journalism. There is little independent assessment available because for such assessment very good access inside CBIJ networks during ongoing projects is needed. Otherwise analysis rely on interested parties describing themselves for self-PR purposes and for convincing donors to subsidize their operations.

According to one of the few academic articles on the subject, written by a long time practitioner (Alfter, 2016), journalism needs to cross-borders following business, politics and crime. 'Based upon this simple logic journalists have experimented with cross-border collaborative journalism for decades but more intensely so since the late 1990ies' (Alfter, 2016). Alfter defines 'cross-border journalism' according to four elements: 'journalists from different countries collaborate to research a shared theme or story. They compile, mutually cross check and merge their findings in order to fact check and tell findings to their individual target groups on regional, national, or local level.'

Alfter divides the process into six main recurrent steps: 1. Networking: loose network; 2. Idea: in the journalistic process the idea is a working hypothesis; 3. Research Team; 4. Research Plan; 5. Research; 6. Publication Process.The last step then constitutes the new Step 1: Following up and networking again and developing a new idea.

Since each step above is taken for granted, both Chapters 4 and 5 will investigate how exactly such steps are unfolding in real-life projects and what it takes for them to unfold. There is clear descriptive work on CBIJ by leading stakeholders and other interested parties who usually describe their own organizations or groups and some present in a mixed journalistic-academic style their own operations in support of their own way of doing business. In numerous publications (Kaplan, Houston, Coronel, Lewis, Radu, Sullivan) that have praised the mix of global collaboration, technology, data and non-profit and claimed the downing of a global shift in journalism.

There is more from practitioners publishing on collaborative investigative journalism across borders: (Candea 2011, 2013) mention the need to use technology and networks to get out of a country-based mindset (Radu 2014) the role of data bases in such investigations (Léchenet 2014) the need for journalism to scale international organized crime (Buzenberg 2015) the combination of

boots on the ground and database access (Kaplan 2013) and finally the evergreen potential of CBIJ (Lewis 1997, 2013, 2015). The methods used matured enough to produce a 'how-to ' handbook (Alfter 2019) and methodology, building on the transnational aspect of journalistic production (Grieves, 2012) a transnational investigative journalism method (Melgar 2019) that would also include a concept of global ethics (Ward, 2010). For more on the topic by leading stakeholders see casebook collections of Hunter (2012) and Shiffrin (2014).

Global governance (Lawson, 2002) is another aspect of this topic since CBIJ is focusing on exposing corruption at global level, assuming a global agenda for the rule of law as well as a role for journalism in good governance, transparency, accountability (Protess, 1992) where usual sources like national governments are replaced sometimes by global actors (NGOs, corporate, universities).

But while we have rich literature from practitioners on CBIJ and we have a rich literature on news production as a manufacturing process (Tuchman 1978; Sigal 1973; Tiffen 1989; Foust 2005; Fishman 1980; Cohen and Young 1973; Hall et al. 1978) little critical analytic attention has been paid to access control when engaging with CBIJ manufacturing processes. Network theory (Wattson, Barabasi) and especially SNA are considered as tools to approach such analysis of CBIJ (Krueger et all, 2019) but I will revisit the limitations of this approach later in Chapter 3.

Since there is no other detailed framework I am aware of, and since I in my own practice have had more or less the same experience with the structure of the proposed theoretical workflow, I will use the studies of Alfter and Haler as a starting point to guide the collection of information and observation about the CBIJ when developing the case studies[10]. Drawing on Reese (2007) I will work with the definition of cross-border collaborative journalism as a process where the producers, users and subjects do not share a common national orientation, language, culture, discipline, socio-political background and similar frameworks of journalism.

1.1.4. Journalism meets Network: no user manual

Since the network society in a digital world has been a popular topic of the last decades, CBIJ also embraced wordings and concepts from existing network literature. This section reviews relevant frameworks of analysis related to the CBIJ and network aspects. When starting this research, I believed that questions about the mechanisms driving groups of journalists to collaborate – or not collaborate – across borders could be answered by applying a network theory approach to ties in existing investigative networks. I also considered that there was a need for more than just a snapshot of network ties, and that such research should follow a longitudinal analysis.

Network theory approach can explain the structure of a given network at a given time, as well as hint to power dynamics but cannot explain how exactly networks are formed, how they function and how they dry up. What exactly are the incentives for small groups to join such networks is one of the most important aspects of journalistic networking. However, there is a growing body of work in the field of network theory (Lazer and Katz, 2004) and recent studies that look at social networking do add to this knowledge base that can be used when looking at the CBIJ mechanics. Network scholars define networks as a group of actors (nodes) and the relationships (ties) between these actors (Wasserman and Faust, 1994).

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[10] Related to the effort of defining this emerging field, some new academic publications are in the making or have just been published: Florencia Melgar is writing a PhD on transnational investigative journalism; and Richard Sambrook (2018) has published a book entitled Global Teamwork: The Rise of Collaboration in Investigative Journalism (2018) which focuses on processes and methodologies for 'transnational investigative journalism'.

Such structures could have organisations, groups or persons as nodes who interact on a person-to-person level or person to group/organisation level. In looking at how networks function, scholars 'have examined a broad range of types of ties. These include communication ties, formal ties, affective ties, material or work flow ties, proximity ties, and cognitive ties' (Lazer and Katz, 2004). People share multiple types of ties, some strong and some weak (Granovetter, 1983). Both are present at the level of journalistic networks, as members of such groups seek both to share information within a trusted community and find new work opportunities.

Albert-Lazlo Barabási (2014), who introduced the concept of 'scale-free networks', argues that nodes develop 'preferential attachments' and 'fitness properties'. This approach can explain how networking tends to create unbalanced nodes and bottlenecks and gives opportunists a chance to abuse trust, ideas and information, causing networks to dry up if attached to the wrong nodes.

Barry Wellman (1988), considers that a network approach has 'five paradigmatic characteristics that provide its underlying intellectual unity'. The fundamental principles, synthesised and explained by Lazer and Katz (2004) include: "people's behaviour is best predicted by examining not their drives, attitudes, or demographic characteristics, but rather the web of relationships in which they are embedded; the focus of analysis should be the relationships between units, rather than the units themselves or their intrinsic characteristics. Nothing can be properly understood in isolation or in a segmented fashion; analytic methods must not hinge on the conventional assumption of independence. A population or sample is defined relationally rather than categorically. Therefore, interdependence among units is assumed; understanding a social system requires more than merely aggregating the dyadic ties. The flow of information and resources between two people depends not simply on their relationship to each other but on their relationships to everybody else; groups sometimes have fuzzy rather than firm boundaries. '

Levels of analysis: Personal, Routine, Organisation, Extra Media, Ideology

To complement network theory it is useful to take into account Reese (2010) who proposes a 'hierarchy of influences' levels-of-analysis model to help clarify and address questions related to global journalism. His conceptualisation of levels of analysis, from the micro to macro level, deals with the individual, routines and organisational, extra-media and ideological levels, with 'each successive level viewed as subsuming the one(s) prior'. Not far away from how network function in the cross-border journalistic realm. What is important for this thesis is the extra-media concept, relevant for this research since the type of cross-border investigative journalism that functions in networks is mostly done by non-profit organizations that rely on donors and grants. As with its tech component, this level of influence represented by philanthropy is a relatively new field for investigative journalism, functioning outside the traditional advertisement business under the very specific influence of media assistance organizations.

Whatever the definition of CBIJ and the influences of globalization in journalistic practices or the lens to look at this phenomenon, it is a basic requirement to have more then two journalists at different locations collaborating, thus using some sort of digital space as an underlying infrastructure for collaborative knowledge production. In publishing and dissemination, digital support is enlarging the audience that can be reached and it amplifies impact. But literature shows that in reaching audiences with the help of digital intermediaries creates problems of dependency

(Bell, 2017) and looking at these problems is informative about similar dependencies developing during the research process[11].

Explaining CBIJ through mathematical network models is the mainstream approach. However, much remains to be explained by observing hands-on CBIJ projects, starting from the model of different layers of influences, and later applying theoretical concepts that are not part of the current CBIJ literature.

1.1.5. Tech determinism in the global networked society

Claims are made that globalization is strengthening the power of journalists to call the powerful to account outside the national boundaries, but more so transnationally and globally (Ryle et al. 2013; McKenna 2014; Doherty and Whyte 2013b). The transition from IJ towards CBIJ seem to come in a wider context, not only of globalisation and networked society, but due to the US also under the specific influence of Silicon Valley tech determinism and related positivism of the sharing economy.

Journalism Practices

In an article for a German magazine dedicated to journalism in 2009 (Internationale Zeittschrift fuer Journalismus, Message 3-2009) the back-then director of ICIJ David Kaplan was describing how the collaborative work of ICIJ functions: 'We keep in touch per mobile phones, email and occasionally newsletters and conferences – not much more. Two journalists, Marina Walker Guevara and I, run the consortium from Washington, D.C. '. As this research will show, ten years after, ICIJ is just one of the places where a cocktail of digital tools are part of the daily life: index and search software, OCR of documents, visual search interfaces, information exchange applications, pgp encryption keys, 2-Factor-Authentication keeping chat applications secure. All this and much more is part of the workflow of other networks, where journalists can create internal wiki pages, can upload documents that are automatically indexed and OCR'd, can annotate documents and can edit pads at the same time.

During the last decade the evolution of journalism practices has been changing from mostly traditional offline towards full digital and in a collective setting. Consequences for the practices themselves must be huge, even if not studied from to many angles. The collective side of this type of work, as well the multidisciinary and interdependence to co-produce have become mainstream (Boud, 2009). Not only that journalists have to deal with many situations of co-producing together with other journalists or media workers (coders, designers to name a few of such workers), but the public has more hands in the game, the more the many-to-many digital communication technologies are spreading in the news creation and dissemination (Hermida 2010).

Interesting to note that early definitions of 'network journalism ' referred not to networks but to 'the convergence between the core competences and functions of journalists and the civic potential of online journalism ' (Bardoel, Deuze 2001). More effects on journalism practices have been observed: the creation of unlimited space (Fenton 2010, Foust 2005), the support of multimedia formats (Gunder 2003), wider reach and higher speed (Quinn 2002); online crowd sourcing and crowd funding; social media news gathering (Heinrich 2012). The dramatically change of the journalistic practice by the digital tools, and the need of multiple skills for performing journalism,

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[11] Further useful reading on this topic by Nechushtai, E. (2018) 'Could digital platforms capture the media through infrastructure?', Journalism, 19(8), pp. 1043–1058. doi: 10.1177/1464884917725163 and   Kleis Nielsen, R. and Ganter, S. A. (2018) 'Dealing with digital intermediaries: A case study of the relations between publishers and platforms', New Media & Society, 20(4), pp. 1600–1617. doi: 10.1177/1461444817701318.

has been announced almost two decades ago, at the same time with a caution of looking into combining core competencies of both old and new journalism (Bardoel, Deuze 2001).

Journalism Studies

Journalism studies, within the communication discipline, are considered a recent phenomenon and researchers in this field have been taking several turns that overlap and inform each-other: the 'normative research ' dealing with the place of journalism in society, a US 'empirical turn ', a further Ango-American (Atlantic) 'sociological turn ' and finally a 'global-comparative turn ' emerging during the 90's (Wahl-Jorgenson, Hanitzsch, 2009, p4). This present work is situated in the latest realm, since it is dealing with cross-border investigative journalism, specifically understood by practitioners as a way to keep up with a globalized world.

A network of journalists from various locations, data and technology, and a non-profit underlying infrastructure - these are the main components of the current CBIJ that have evolved during the past decades independently from each-other, only to converge into today's sub-field of journalism practice. They translate to concepts individually and separately covered by a wealth of existing literature. So when situating the field in the relevant literature context, I will engage first with literature related to these individual concepts and then move on towards making connections between such concepts and ideas in order to inform my later analysis. The sort of investigative journalism that will be the basis of networked approach has been brewing since the 70's when literature about precision journalism emerged (Meyers) and social science methods have paved the way for the future computer assisted reporting and data-journalism.

During the mid 90's when ICIJ was taking shape, the 'network society ' was being formulated (van Dijk, 1991) and taking a mainstream position, and later was put in the emerging global and digital context (Castells, 1996, 1997, 1998). The very nature of globalized businesses, politics, corruption and crime syndicates have been part ICIJ Manifesto in the mid 90's with the observation about the build-in limitations of the news industry who is not, and cannot, keep up with globalization (Lewis, 1997). Mid 2000, when the Global Network for Investigative Journalism was taking shape precisely to meet the needs of individual journalists following up information across borders (Candea, 2003) the work of Yochai Benkler on networked information exchange and peer-to-peer collaborations has been published (2006). At about the same time towards the end of 2000's when investigative journalistic collaborative projects and organizations have been seen booming (Lewis, 2010) scholars have looked into the role of journalists, among other individuals, who 'by responding to expectations of their roles, engage in their various pursuits that culminate in macro collectivities ' (Rosenau, 2008).

In the journalistic communities these are the years of expansions and there was no time for critical reflection. Both non-profit and data are embraced as the pillars of this new form of journalism and this is endorsed by papers and contributions by stakeholders (Kaplan, 2013). It is the time of 'open source ' and 'open data ' (O'Reilly, 1998 and 2003) and social media like FaceBook and Twitter as forces for good, connecting people across the world to spread democracy and support political uprisings, and later feeding into techno-philanthropy. Later on, this chapter will engage with texts that asses critically these concepts from the perspective of Science and Technology Studies (STS).

Media and journalism studies reflect the developments towards a networked, digitized and globalized world. Comparative efforts are initiated (Worlds of Journalism 2006) and older models that look at how journalistic content is shaped and influenced are adapted (Reese, 2007) or explained from a global perspective (Berglez, 2008). Optimistic and positive definitions of

globalization observe the 'intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa' (Giddens, 1990, 64). Since the 'circumstances where territorial space is substantially transcended' (Scholte, 1999, 12) opportunities arise and an 'increasing number of social processes that are indifferent to national boundaries ' (Beck, 2000, 80) and the 'capacity to work as a unit on a planetary scale in real time or chosen time ' (Castells, 2000, 10) are highlighted.

When scholars observed the emerging of a 'fundamentally new global news culture […] enabled by digital technologies' (Heinrich, 2011) journalists, like other knowledge production professionals, have been making use of technology advances to exchange information but this has been described by practitioners including myself first with the caution of late adopters (Kaplan, 2009) and then with more and more hype (Lewis 2010, Houston, Coronel, Candea, Campbell).The critical aspects of globalisation did not seem to have found their way into CBIJ assessments. Neither did the possibility that global institutions are part of 'the concept of Empire posits a regime that effectively encompasses the spatial totality, or really that rules over the entire 'civilized ' world ' (Hardt and Negri, 2000, xii, xiv.) with the political, economic, cultural-ideological implications towards cultural hegemony and good old imperialism. According to Cottle (2009) 'studies within the 'global dominance ' paradigm generally work within and update the critical tradition of political economy while those conducted under the 'global public sphere ' paradigm represent a more diffuse group of recent disciplinary infusions from cultural studies, anthropology and approaches to the global 'network society. ' The global dominance – rooted in power critical tradition of political economy, global public sphere – rooted in transnational cultural flows, optimistic, positivist[12] are useful concepts to further put CBIJ in perspective.

This debate between two different views on globalisation is present in the way journalistic practices in the global context are analysed, especially when it comes to new technologies. Such technologies can come across as positive facilitators of cross-border information exchange or as means of control and dominance. The history of comparative journalism studies that exist in the global context of journalism – where different topics like professionalism, news decisions, historical developments are compared between two or more countries (Hanitzsch, 2008) show how little territory can be usefully used in comparisons and how much a western bias can be overlooked when comparing western/US journalism and journalists to the rest of the former (colonised) world.

Global journalism adopting a global outlook on stories (Beeglez 2008, 2013; Van Leuven and Berglez 2016) is expecting global connections. Although studies in global media have examined new frameworks and developments in global journalism (Reese, Berglez) as well as emerging new practices in global investigative journalism (Gearing) this has come from a positivist view of journalism in the context of globalization as a strengthening democracy tool, usually with an added techno-euphoria and techno-determinism coming from social network studies (Castells).

Changes because of globalization in journalism (Berglez 2008, 2013; McNair 2006; van Dijk 2012) loop in with claims of practitioners (Lewis, 1997). There is the claim of a global public sphere taking shape at the intersection of national, transnational and global spheres (McNair 2006) seen as a 'network of networks '. Also, there is the observation that reporting with a global outlook is a different task that needs different reporting competences if it is to be considered global journalism (Berglez 2013). Such a model of journalism is not questioning the basics of journalistic framework and ideas. On the contrary, it has a strong element of US journalism, the populist view of regular

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[12] useful reading offers Simon Cottle who puts journalism studies in global context in Handbook for journalism studies; David Weaver, The Global Journalist

individual against (this time) global powers. But it is claiming a different space (different than national, regional or international) a global space where otherwise separate phenomenons are actually connected. Existing literature shows that claims of the need of networks of collaboration become part of the regular discourse of practitioners of CBIJ (Lewis, Candea, Kaplan, Houston, Alfter, Radu, Ryle, Walker). Especially when presenting projects, from small ones to large ones (e.g. Panama Papers) such claims always come at the same time with the observation that technology has lowered the barrier for such collaborations. But literature shows that reality at regular newsroom level is that media and journalists are followers of new technological and digital options, and not championing the internet revolution (Berglez 2013; Reich 2005; Nicholas et al. 1998; Spyridou et al. 2013).

To conclude, on one hand there are bold claims of benefits global CBIJ, data-based and non-profit, but at the same time the existing literature shows what are the flags that show how a critical approach towards journalism in the context of globalisation may provide a different version of the mainstream story. Since there seem to be a gap in knowledge about how power mechanisms work in the context of CBIJ, the next section will explore relevant literature and concepts outside of the CBIJ realm that could clarify such questions.

1.2. Political Economy and Media Research

This section will review concepts that are relevant in the context of power relationships in media, concepts that could be useful to later analysis applied to findings related to the CBIJ processes and tools.

1.2.1. Political Economy questions applied to CBIJ

Looking at first at the economics to understand tensions created by the source of money to do this type of journalism, the section will continue to review what political economy questions are useful in the context of CBIJ. From previous sections two important observations emerge: first, that journalism itself was a by-product of business networks and was originally intended to inform businesspeople (elites); and second, that early accounts of investigative journalism were actually put together by human rights activists across borders and given exposure by an existing, established, recognised platform. There is a body of literature examining how the development of the news industry impacted upon investigative journalism, ultimately explaining why, even in its best financial times, the news industry would allocate limited resources to investigative projects. Investigative journalists would draw from non-profit research work done by activists, with some of them in fact embracing such forms of activity and organisation and starting to leave the news industry for the non-profit sector.

I draw here on research of James Hamilton (2004; 2016) which detail how the media as a business is not making profit on hard news and investigative journalism in the U.S. market. Even if costs for in-depth research and producing hard news would be zero (which is not the case) Hamilton argues that still the business model of commercial news operations is making such hard news not-profitable. The perspectives of making profit directly out of selling IJ is so bleak that the promise of a profit is searched somewhere else.

So Hamilton (2016) goes further, asserting that investigative journalism is profitable for society as a whole, even if it does not bring a direct return on investment for the media owners and shareholders. Important to note: Hamilton argues his claim by quantifying the value of human life in money. Reluctance to put a dollar value on anything, especially on human life, opens a way of analysis for later, in the impact section. It is interesting to keep the detailed evidence that leads to the conclusion that even in a highly developed media market such as the U.S., where the current model of investigative journalism has been invented, investigative journalism is doomed to be subsidized, that is, not paid for as a service by consumers[13].

There is more to power mechanisms than the question around business models. So going further, Mosco (2009) displays four ideas that are useful in explaining political economy better than a definition: 'social change and history, the social totality, moral philosophy, and praxis. ' Praxis has been introduced by the exponents of the Frankfurt School of critical thought as a general form of action (that includes work as one type of action of many) and it 'guides a theory of knowledge to view knowing as the ongoing product of theory and practice ' where knowledge 'grows out of the mutual constitution of conception and execution ' and because of that a main tension exists between understanding 'sources of wealth and productivity ' advise elites to take action by way of policies (Mosco, 2009, p.35 – 36). This is a particular useful framework to understand the various aspects of journalistic practices, especially in the transnational context as well as in the technologically mediated realm.

Because of time constraints journalists rely on a small number of authoritative voices, reinforcing the status quo of an elite, propagating a social construction of reality – to say that even if given the impression of independency in selecting sources the process of using elite news sources is perpetuating a systematic bias (Tuchman 1978).

There were never golden ages of hard news investigative journalism – and this is not only because of the reliance on authoritative sources but because of the economics of the news industry that do not see an economic incentive in investing more resources (financial, in the end) into producing in-depth hard news (see Hamilton above).

However, it is agreed (at least in the Atlantic context anyway) that independent journalism is central to democracy (Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch 2010; Gans 2003). Such interdependency is traced back to the invention of the printing press that has eventually broke down the authoritarian rule by church and state (McNair 2009, Louw 2005). 'Political journalism of the modern type emerged in parallel with the first democracies, and the bourgeois revolutions of early modern Europe. Nearly 400 years later, the spread of democratic regimes across the planet, and the steady decline of authoritarian government since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union, has been accompanied by the growth of a globalised public sphere ' (McNair 2009, 247).

Emphasis is put on the huge potential of having journalists networking in the digital realm and on not filling this promise because of the financial problems media companies have as well as because of journalists and media being late adopters of technology. When looking at the backstages of networks in two major projects, I will investigate these claims that seem to be taken for granted: more money and more technology brings more collaboration and more impact and more democracy.

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[13] (Hamilton, 2004) All the News that's fit to sell: how the market transforms information into news; (Hamilton, 2016) Democracy's Detectives – The Economics of Investigative journalism

There is a history of political economy research in media and communication studies (Winseck, 2011, Mosco 2009) and also on the Frankfurt School as a critical theory useful in the social media realm (Fuchs) because it is concerned, among other things, with ethics and with criticizing domination and exploitation, expectation to react instead of act, technological rationality (Marcuse). Critical theory is useful to understand if the benefits of a few do not disadvantage others. Both are dealing with media as a mean of ideology and media as techno-social systems (Giddens, 1984; Fuchs 2014) for sure I need to look up the power structure presented by the underlying digital systems used not only in the publication phase, but in the research phase (the 6 steps described by Alfter happen somewhere – this is what will need to be investigated).

1.2.2. Global CBIJ and journalistic capital

Bourdieu may provide a useful analytical concept when starting to understand where and why the tensions in the field of CBIJ arise. When looking at the CBIJ field in terms of Bourdieu 'a field may be defined as a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, 96-7). According to Bourdieu different autonomous spheres of action are present in modern society (fields of politics, economics, religion, cultural production) and there is a competition between individuals and organizations over various forms of capital in such fields. Capital can be 'a capacity to act and get things done' (Thompson, 2010, 5) or as Bourdieu thinks capital 'is what is efficacious in a given field, both as a weapon and as a stake of struggle, that which allows its possessors to wield a power, an influence, and thus to exist, in the field under consideration, instead of being considered a negligible quantity ' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, 98). 'Economic capital is the accumulated financial resources, including stock and plant as well as capital reserves. […] Human capital is the staff employed by the firm and their accumulated knowledge, skills and expertise. […] Social capital is the networks of contacts and relationships that an individual or organization has built up over time. […] Intellectual capital (or intellectual property) consists in the rights that a publisher owns or controls in intellectual content, rights that are attested to by their stock of contracts with authors and other bodies that they are able to exploit through their publications and through the selling of subsidiary rights. […] Symbolic capital is the accumulated prestige and status associated with the publishing house ' (Thompson, 2010, 5-6).

Data is an important part of the journalistic capital in the realm of CBIJ. Access control to data and network is access control to such capital. But when it is only possible to use it, not to co-own it, is making the place of network interactions the feud of the gatekeepers and owners. So in order to see the boundaries of this field I need to look at where is this data flowing, who is managing and owning it and who is endorsing such gatekeepers and owners. Current configurations show that CBIJ is run by a small group of people, so a useful concept to understand how this can be done is the concept of oligarchy. Oligarchy 'is a concentration of entrenched illegitimate authority and/or influence in the hands of a minority, such that de facto what that minority wants is generally what comes to pass, even when it goes against the wishes (whether actively or passively expressed) of the majority ' (Leach 2005).

Meyen (2009) develops the idea of a 'journalistic field ' that has a 'journalistic capital ' as 'the sum of (…) cultural capital (journalistic skills), social capital (networks) and symbolic capital (professional reputation) '. Competition for such capital must be present in the emerging CBIJ field and tensions will appear where the autonomy of the journalistic field is challenged by other overlapping fields such as donors (governments, corporations or foundations) or technologies.

Such tensions will be either discussed, negotiated managed or simply ignored - depending on the configuration and overlaps of various CBIJ actors. What are the monopolies and the relations of domination, similar to those identified by Bourdieu in fields of cultural production (Bourdieu, 1991) and where to identify them?

Donors and Impact

Since an important tension could be observed related to donors in the CBIJ field and since such an 'extra pressure' (Reese) has a very important role in the analysis of cross-border journalism, I will detail the forces at play that impact upon this field from the direction of donors, both the impact as it is understood by the journalistic community and the way it is understood by the donors who are subsidising the growth of the non-profit investigative journalism community.

To understand how non-profit mechanisms function, this section will briefly look at how the field developed mechanisms of evaluation and the trend of 'evidence based' monitoring and evaluation. It is important to understand not only the evolution of investigative journalism towards CBIJ but also the evolution of its most important and unknown 'extra pressure '.

Literature on the field shows the origin of current evaluation models in the context of American war in Vietnam that shaped the US international assistance programs and the strategy to evaluate their efficiency. A contractor was paid to design an evaluation system for USAID (Pomerantz, 2015) where the underlying strategy was designed to pursue a military victory. The system goes by the name Logical Framework Approach (LFA), and has several other names, but follows the same principles. At the end of the 1970s, the same framework was re-used and re-named and transferred to Europe to the DG7 (Directorate General for Development of the European Commission) with the LFA, based on a different acronym called ZOPP (Zielorientierte Projektplanung)[14].

'In some other agencies, LFA became in its 'second generation ' a procedure for analysis from problem formulation through project design, not only for later selection, monitoring and evaluation. Around 1980 the German technical cooperation agency GTZ initiated new studies, including again by Practical Concepts Incorporated (Steigerwald, 1994). The outcome was ZOPP, the German acronym for objective-oriented project planning, an upgraded LFA. Remarkably, despite ZOPP's origin, some American audiences are not aware of it as a variant, indeed generation, of LFA. By the early 1990s versions of ZOPP were adopted by NORAD, DANIDA, the European Community and others' (Des Gasper, 2000)[15].

Recent work also criticises the influence donors have on non-profit journalistic organisations. The first observation is that donors are pushing non-profits into a 'Catch-22 because of competing demands to achieve both economic 'sustainability' and civic 'impact', ultimately creating pressures to reproduce dominant commercial media news practices or orient news primarily for small, elite audiences' (Benson, 2017).

Awards and stage celebrity

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[14] See the Rosetta Stone of Logical Frameworks; it shows the different names that the Logical Framework approach take: http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/Rosettastone.doc

[15] For more background on the topic of Impact measurement, development programs and Journalism see: (Konieczna and Powers, 2016) What can Nonprofit Journalists Actually do for Democracy? Impact on Democracy because going beyond just reporting, towards changing policy; (LaMay, 2007) Exporting Press Freedom, Craig L. LaMay; (Eyben, 2015) The Politics of Evidence and Results in International Development – measuring impact, evidence based approach; (Pomerantz, 2015) Illogical Framework: The Importance of Monitoring and Evaluation in International Development Studies ; (Des Gasper, 2000)

Equally important in CBIJ is the journalistic capital represented by the membership in networks, awards and participation in industry events like the Global Investigative Journalism Conference. This is a further overlap between the journalistic field and that donors, since attending such conferences and being awarded a prize is again in the hands of the same very few people.

The impact of cross-border investigative journalism also has correlatives in the industry created around journalistic awards. One only needs to look at the websites of major non-profit investigative organisations and read the long list of awards that is carefully kept up to date. Any journalist would post their most important awards on their profile page so they are at least as visible as their biggest published stories. This is giving rise to a 'celebrity cult', not unlike the one present in the world of computer hacking, and mostly visible at international conferences. 'Making the rise of celebrities possible inevitably ensures the creation of a celebrity cult' (Riemens, 2016)[16]. Reviewing recent developments and crises in the world of computer hacking may shed light on how such a trend is impacting upon the cross-border networks created around investigative projects, since a celebrity cult is also piggyback on some existent power relationship.

One place where this celebrity cult is visible is at the Global Investigative Journalism Conferences (GIJC) where highly decorated journalists are speakers and several awards are handed out on a central stage. When analysing how the team and network is selected for any given cross-border investigative project, I will also refer to collected observations that show the importance of attendance at such events and how access is mediated and controlled. The celebrity cult starts from top down; for instance, the director of the GIJN, who is the co-organiser of the GIJN, took over the stage literally by forming a music band (The Muckrackers) and playing as one of the main events during the global conference, or the organizers of GIJC 2015 distributed vouchers for free drinks to all participants, printed in the form of U.S. 10 dollar bills with the face of the same GIJN director in the background called 'kaplans'[17].

There is a whole body of work on awards and their importance, how they influence publication schedules and how the growing number of awards is showing a 'sustained willingness, even as intensified obligation, on the part of journalists and others to accept the purported equivalency between cultural prizes and cultural value' (English, 2005)[18]. The resulting tensions should be observed in the workflow of investigative projects.

If investigative journalism cannot be a product that is directly producing profit (see Hamilton 2004, 2016) then why bother with monetization, sustainability plans and return on investment figures and not discuss a (digital) commons approach ? The reason is clearly that such a turn would discard any possible leverage on CBIJ from philanthropists, governmental programs and their bureaucratic managers. How this tensions are playing out in the real life of CBIJ projects will the subject of chapters 3, 4 and 5.

1.2.3. Standardisation of journalistic practices

With the growing hype of the network theory, or a specific approach to network theory (Castells 1996, 1997, 1998, 2012) has come also the widely use of such theory as a framework to understand CBIJ (for example in Gearing 2016, linking Castells theory with Berglez's concept of global

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[16]   http://archive.fo/2017.03.31-194254/https://cryptome.org/2016/06/appelbaum-rise-fall-celebrities.pdf

[17]   Vouchers were called 'kaplans', instead of dollars, referring to the name of GIJN director David E. Kaplan

[18]   The Economy of Prestige, James F. English for more background on the prize frenzy in the larger sociohistorical scheme and how awards become a capital in a given field, something to exchange.

journalism). But that type of approach toward society was also criticized for 'overestimated the role of the Internet in society, neglecting or downplaying the importance of other dimensions of society' and contributing to the wave of 'techno-euphoria' and 'technodeterminism' (Fuchs, 2012).

A Critique of standardisation and reductionism

So far, due to expanding a specific model of journalism and democracy from the US towards Europe and beyond at a global level, standardisation has been impossible to avoid in the way journalism is being done, the way impact on democracy is to be measured. So it is important to review the critique of socio-technical systems and standardisation in journalism because it will be useful for the conclusions reached at the end of chapter dedicated to case studies, where I review socio-technical systems used in cross-border investigations.

First, there is relevant critique of the use of a single language (English) in such cross-border networks – or what Meyer and Brink Lund (2014) call 'international language monism and homogenization of journalism'. It is argued that different frameworks of thought about journalism and thought about the contribution of this profession to democracy are being lost because of a current homogenisation of journalism following the model of the 'Anglo-American reporter traditions'. In their view, this constitutes 'a loss of diversity in journalism and even a threat to democratic diversity in Europe'.

Second, Meyer and Lund critique of 'understanding human communication as a socio-technical activity', is focused on the socio-technical perspective (and not the practice) which is criticized for leading to standardization. 'Useful as it is for many purposes, the scientific framework (as defined by the socio-technical perspective and the logic of production) is likely to increase standardization and prevent diversity when applied prescriptively to communication and other human affairs. […] The wider framework of praxis, on the other hand, comes with a pluralistic understanding of human reality. It is not, therefore, at odds with the open-endedness of human language that allows multiple interpretations to unfold; and its case-by-case approach directs attention to the context and substance of individual instances. That, again – supported by the distinction between technical and practical issues – may facilitate different cases being treated differently'[19] (Meyer, 2012).

Models of journalism

Looking at diversity in journalistic approaches, frameworks and ideas, Europe is a place to expect finding such different models because of diverse political cultures and languages. Surprisingly, cross-border journalism has not evolved to expand such different approaches to journalism but, it is argued, it only developed based on one specific framework, which is the US muckraking tradition of reporting (Meyer, 2019).

Understanding cross-border investigative journalism as accountability journalism, as a way to keep the powerful in check and having to deal with loads of data in order to reveal the truth – such are the common lines that 'appear to be beyond critical reflection in their own right – as understandings that have specific historical and cultural origins and practical effects and might be contradicted or supplemented by other understandings, with other origins and other effects ' (Meyer, 2019).

Investigative journalism has many understandings and definitions – but cross-border investigative journalism seem to be stuck with a single homogenous approach for now and that is based on the

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[19] For more background on this topic, see International langauge monism and homogenisation of journalism, Check text of this note2008, Meyer, Gitte, Brink Lund, Anker; Practical diversity, Meyer (2015); Practical Reasoning Meyer, Brink Lund (2015); Almost lost in translation – tale of an untold tradition of journalism Meyer, Brink Lund (2014)

Atlantic media model, a reporter tradition of journalism (Hallin and Mancini 2004). So at this point, different journalistic logics are replaced by one single international model coming from the US (Chalaby, 1996). It is argued that this model is rooted in the notion of the truth, scientific but also religious (Nord, 2001; Underwood, 2008); that is based on dualist approaches to politics, public interest and claims an objectivity similar to the scientific approach to facts. The underlying logic of today's CBIJ seem to be the muckraking variation of the reporters logic (Meyer, 2019) which was developed during a time in early 20th century when populism in the US was a positive notion of anti-elitism and the muckrakers would target corrupt practices exposing crooks and telling the truth. Much like today's 'truth-travelers and truth tellers ' (Lewis, 2018) of the global network of investigative journalists where their bi-anual global conferences are literally run by a veteran US journalist bringing on stage the journalist band called 'the Muckrakers'[20].

Meyer goes beyond critical observation and is developing a possible different model, that of 'cosmopolitanism' (Meyer 2019), that would combine the old muckrakers model with a forgotten framework for doing journalism in the German and Scandinavian speaking countries, with a framework she calls 'the publizist logic '. Her observation is that such journalism was widespread in Europe but lost out to the Atlantic model in the wake of the US wining the Second World War. 'Publizist journalism is by definition participative (as distinct from partisan or activist) and interpretative (as distinct from advocative or manipulative) and (...) the notions of truth-seeking, the people, the masses versus the elites, and control with power holders are absent from the logic as is, importantly, the dualistic framework ' - an investigative journalism is to 'enquire beneath the surface of phenomena ' (Meyer, 2019) that is to stimulate critical thinking.

The unquestioned development only using the muckraker reporter logic is problematic not only for the sake of diversity, but also because it cultivates in the audience the identity of 'powerless, excluded, oppressed ' like serfs are. 'Actually, the completely unintentional generation of populism – and of self-righteousness in journalistic practitioners and their audiences – appear as more probable outcomes '. Cosmopolitanism and care for diversity maybe a way to integrate different frameworks (Appiah 2007; Beck 2004). Such approach is usually not taken into account because the rule of thumb is that US is best approach and pushing enough of it around the globe will create also transnational networked public spheres.

Platform ready standardization leading towards digital platforms and infrastructure captures

Arguing that providing the majority of audience, Google and Facebook 'amounts to a new form of capture, that can be called infrastructure capture ' Nechushtai (2018) is examining the relationship between news industry and digital platforms using a political economy framework. Focusing on Google and Facebook it uses the theory of regulatory capture (regulators tend to be captured by the business they oversee) to expand it over the businesses that attempt to capture non-governmental institutions or media that should critically scrutinize them.

While journalists do have critical accounts about how the control over the news have been seized by platforms (Greenberg, 2016; Carr, 2014; Greenslade, 2016; Herrman, 2015; Newitz, 2016; Shontell, 2015) this is usually directed towards Google, Facebook, Youtube, Instagram and similar – but the criticism is not extended from content distribution to content creation where other platforms are active, both for profit (e.g. Slack, Github, Atlassian, Skype) as well as non-profit as digital intermediaries for CBIJ (e.g. ICIJ, OCCRP, GIJN).

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[20] https://web.archive.org/web/20200407162157/https://gijc2019.org/receptions/

Disproportionate influence that sources can have on news selection and framing (Berkowitz and TerKeurst, 1999; Carlson, 2009), especially if they have an elite status (Bennett, 1990; Gans, 1979; Hallin, 1986; Tuchman, 1978). This dynamic, often referred to as access journalism, is described as generating capture (Schiffrin, 2010; Starkman, 2014). Access journalism is covering what is deemed interesting by elites. And since media scholars recognize a number of possible outside influences on news content (Shoemaker and Reese, 2014) 'it is perhaps time to adapt existing political economy frameworks to discussions on new digital realities and their impact on autonomy ' as Nechushtai (2018) suggests, also in the CBIJ realm and explore if this a problem only because media shouldn't be dependent on other entities they need to cover critically or simply because media operations should be autonomous in terms of their tools, methods and infrastructures, in other words to avoid being 'platform ready ' in order to avoid infrastructure captured phenomenon.

1.2.4. The hope for a vigilant transnational public sphere

The positivist approach to globalism seem to cause the ignoring of the above questions, focusing instead on the possible emergence of a 'vigilant transnational public sphere ' (Lück and Schultz, 2019) thanks to CBIJ, while looking away from the global dominance aspect of current configurations. Collaboration is about mutual communication involving direct and continuously interaction and has been studied in the context of cross-border collaborative journalism (Graves and Konieczna 2015; Chadwick and Collister 2014; Sambrook 2018; Melgar 2019; Ben-hur Demenek 2016) as well as in the context of the possibility of creating transnational public spheres (Heft 2019). The theory is that when transnational communication is at play the information transcends borders (Heft 2019) and boundaries lose their relevance in communication processes (Wessler and Brueggemann 2012). It is argued that common transnational public sphere (Eder and Kantner) can become transnationally networked public sphere by communication flowing directly across borders (Koopmans and Erbe 2004) and further on it is argued that such networked communication creates networked public spheres made possible by networked information environments (Benkler 2006). But is actually transnational public sphere and audience of CBIJ really happening, in order to justify the financial and logistical effort of large numbers of journalists doing global CBIJ projects as well as its unintended consequences ?

So a globalized public sphere (McNair 2014) seem to be possible only when ignoring differences and when comparing journalism in different countries using a single model, the Anglo-American model; as it was observed before (Josephi 2005) the lens being used is based on long tradition of US journalism studies and is a result of a concentration of academic publishers on this topic in the UK and the US. But, more important, when investigating the possible emergence of a transnational public sphere Heft (2109) makes the point that the more participants in a transnational collaboration the less transnational the collaboration is, making networking and exchange within national sub-groups more likely when large number of participants collaborate, also quoting previous research in other contexts (Offerhaus 2010). Also, Panama Papers is viewed as a 'highly structured organization with strict rules ' having a high degree of 'centralized and hierarchical approach ' functioning on ICIJ's infrastructure and following its logistical lead.

So existing literature hints that transnational public sphere does not happen, and also it shows that a landmark CBIJ project like Panama Papers is shows that the more journalists in a network, the more local groups emerge.

1.3. Extra pressures: platformization and data feudalism

Studies in global media have examined new frameworks and developments in global journalism as well as emerging new practices in global investigative journalism, but those looking at CBIJ are coming from a positivist view of strengthening democracy, usually with an added techno-euphoria and techno-techno-determinism coming from social network studies. This section looks at concepts that can be useful for a critical approach and deeper understanding of where to look for power inequalities and limitations of CBIJ networks as well as their unintended consequences.

This section will inform the concepts used to investigate the CBIJ communication, meetings, and technology, taking into account how power mechanisms are shaped by socio-tech systems in the process of CBIJ projects, networks and organisations.

Important research related to group definition has been published over the last two decades. The work of Coleman (1990) and Putnam (2000) on social capital explains the incentive for journalists to join networks and exchange information, even if they come from very different cultural backgrounds. This angle will inform new perspectives on how professional networks grow and decline, but also on tensions in networks between nodes competing on capital, and power structures resulting from this, especially within boundaries of network infrastructure. Recent work looks at the promise of networks in journalism powered by the internet and digital tools. There is a focus on networks connecting small nodes that provide relevant and verifiable information for (Western) society as a whole (Sharky, 2011; Melle, 2013).

At the same time critics show that even though it is very diverse in the number of content providers, the alternative brought by the internet is not living up to its promise (Coleman and Blumler, 2009) because it is creating audience magnets with very little diversity and participation (Mossberger, Tolbert and McNeal, 2007). Other types of criticism look at the internet and digital tools adopted by networks as honey traps, which are used by governments and big corporations to spread targeted propaganda (Edelstein, 2009) and run deep surveillance programmes in order to control dissent and manipulate or suppress information (Morozov, 2011).

1.3.1. Critical approach of Networking

The platform ready paradox and the network effect are pointing to the need of critical approach and more consideration when mixing up networks with journalism.

Limitations of Social Network Analysis

Below I will review my quest for literature on different network models and interpretations, as well as types of measurement. This will also show my own displacement towards social network theory outside social network analysis, towards the frameworks offered by White (2008) and Kavada (2015) in order to help me identify main themes and points of tension within networks of cross-border investigative journalism.

In business training, network exercises are developed to enable the best managers to cultivate connections to diverse nodes active in different fields (Ibarra, 2002). The exercises on diversifying contacts are intended to help create a network effect as part of a power play where the network is viewed as an asset. Entrepreneurs are also encouraged to aim to become 'master networkers'. In the corporate world, when everybody is connected, the effect is a 'small world' that has a high density

and as well as a corporate elite (Davis, Yoo, Baker) similar to an oligarchy. What is the process whereby a diverse, decentralized and fragmented group like the journalists who (some of them having left newsrooms) now network across borders, turns into an easily controlled centralised structure? It can be explained by the evolution of the technology that is empowering cross-border journalism infrastructures, the technology that is supporting fast and cheap communication for cross-border interactions.

In How Control Exists After Decentralization, Galloway explains that 'the Internet seemed unpredictable mass of data – rhizomatic and lacking central organization' but that 'this could not be further from the truth […] protocol is how technological control exists after decentralization'. (Galloway, 2004) In his analysis, 'after' denotes post-decentralisation, meaning that decentralisation has finished and has been replaced. So, tech protocols, not controlled and not even understood by participants in CBIJ, are to be observed and analyzed. So are rules of connections and resulting network configurations.

Nodes group in networks following certain rules. ’Popularity is just one dimension of attractiveness, another dimension is similarity' (Papadopoulos et al, 2012). Popularity is attractive, and involves preferential attachment explaining the scaling of networks following power laws (Papadopoulos et al, 2012) - such power laws, known as network effect, basically follow the rules of 'rich getting richer '. 'Nodes that are similar have a higher chance of getting connected, even if they are not popular' (Papadopoulos et al, 2012). This shows the importance of respecting and assuring diversity in journalistic networks, otherwise the majority of the first group will steer global development in terms of language, style and social status.

Other configurations exist. 'Robust yet fragile' (RYF) is a concept that relates to complex networks that are applied, for instance, to explain the construction of the internet. The main idea is that a network is robust against the failure of random components but vulnerable to targeted attacks on key components (Doyle et al 2005).

Critical approach is needed for network

According to Sharon Hayes (1994), 'social structure consists of two central, interconnected elements: systems of social relations and systems of meaning. […] If one wants to understand the resilient patterns that shape the behavior of any individual or group of individuals, both the cultural and the relational milieu must be taken into account'.

In this second section, I highlight what is missing from the analysis of cross-border journalism: the critical approach, the description of the inherent fight over control and the analysis of collective action through communication processes and channels. Due to the main language (English) and sponsorship (US and Western Europe) in this new field of CBIJ, as well as the underlying single-model used for journalism (and democracy), other voices from other cultures, languages, backgrounds are not really taken into consideration unless they serve the purpose of the network masters.

CBIJ is an Atlantic affair. Criticism in the field of cross-border investigative journalism networks is not welcomed but also not practiced. This is an old problem – Marcuse calls it the 'one-dimensional man', referring to a conformist society that lacks any critical dimension. In his view, in such a society, there is no distinction between fact and potential, appearance and reality, or true and false needs. Even if his analyses refer to the society of the 1960s, they show the importance of critical theory when faced with technologies that, far from revealing and explaining the organisation and

utilisation of society's resources, in fact serve to institute new forms of control: 'Not only a specific form of government or party rule makes for totalitarianism, but also a specific system of production and distribution which may well be compatible with a 'pluralism ' of parties, newspapers, 'countervailing powers, ' etc.' (Marcuse, 1964).

Most of the work describing the emerging method of cross-border investigative journalism is technology centric and tech euphoric, and does not question the relations of power created during the process[21]. One finds guidelines in Fuchs's Social Media – a Critical introduction (Fuchs, 2014), where critical thinking means being concerned with the questions of power and who controls society: 'critical theory questions all thought and practices that justify or uphold domination and exploitation – one group benefits at the expense of others'[22].

Applying SNA to the CBIJ field over more then two decades, Krueger (2019) quickly reaches the limitation of not being able to understand from mathematical modelling who has actually a truly influencing role in CBIJ networks and acknowledges that what is needed is 'a measure combining the worth of one's social contacts with the weight of one's position inside an organization or project ' as well as a way 'to make visible 'grey eminences ' whose influence is not reflected '.

So models of networks and their phenomenons can take us only so far as to get a glimpse of what's happening in CBIJ in terms of power mechanism. What other concepts related to networks can be useful ?

1.3.2. How networks emerge: Identity and Control

Power in networks can be investigated when looking after those in position of control. Since they do not necessary advertise such a position, and some are rather bidding it behind a game of inclusive and non-hierarchical journalistic network, theory about social networks can be useful.

In his social network theory on how social formations emerge, White (2008) introduces the concept of 'identities, which are nodes, trigger out of struggles for control as they seek footing with each other and so co-evolve along with networks in one and another tangible domain of activity' (White, 2008). It is clear that the drive for control between identities is neither optional nor necessarily intentional, meaning that such a struggle or drive is a given and need to be taken into consideration by default, both as self-reflection and as critical analysis.

So I will draw from White's theoretical framework, which deals with explaining the 'how' of networks. By doing so, I aim to understand where to focus when looking at networks for cross-border investigative journalism in action following the realisation that 'networks lay out the space for social action' of White (2008) who proposes that identity and control processes 'are recursive and can yield distinctive levels' and then explains that networks grow around stories marking particular relations as ties: 'social processes and structure are thus traces from successions of control efforts' that take place in demarcated social spaces and netdom, which is a term composed of 'net', referring to network relations and 'dom' from domain of topics` – is an experiential process and a context.

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[21] There are buzzwords that sound like alarm bells for critical reflection: leadership, social entrepreneurship, excellence, professionalism, radical sharing, innovation.

[22] See also Fuchs, 2014, Social Media – a critical introduction; Gitte Meyer, Different frameworks of thought: Reporter, Publizist, Public Journalism; Fuchs, 2012 - Some Reflections on Manuel Castells Book Networks of Outrage and Hope. Social Movements in the Internet Age.

'Out of netdoms from a particular domain comes a network in a particular type of tie'. When networks evolve, sets of stories start to characterise that type of tie. This is why the chapter dedicated to the genesis of CBIJ will focus on the recurrent claims made by the major players of cross-border investigative networks.

White then proposes that operating effectively involves settling into one of three domains: 'interface', 'arena' and 'council'. This is the reason why the emergence of the ICIJ, GIJC and GIJN as informal groups with distinct areas of operation (investigations, conferencing, shaping the field) in the domain of investigative journalism in a particular type of tie, cross-border investigative journalism.

Since the translation of the terms of 'interface', 'arena' and 'council' is explained into the cross-border investigative journalism field in several places across several chapters, let us first see how White (2008) framework is appropriate to describe the interactions in the CBIJ field.

White (2008) dedicates a full chapter to the three disciplines of action that offer the 'rules of the games ' that can turn chaos into coordinated tasks that eventually get various jobs done. 'Disciplines order ties between identities, enabling joint accomplishment of tasks ' and they are the processes that describe how is the struggle for control unfolding.

In brief, in White (2008) terms the Interface is a discipline of committing action, the Arena is the discipline of selecting (membership for instance) and Council is the discipline for mediating between different affiliations.

Further levels appear and disciplines fold into a style, characterised by meanings and then language induces a setting towards rhetoric and institutional systems, and finally supports regimes of control. Shifts in rhetoric are important because they may indicate switching between control regimes. White concludes that 'any social formation whatever, complex or not, tends to settle into blocking action over time' – so the general problems are both achieving action and gaining control.

White's framework explains the importance of language in the narratives that are shaped to gain control, and as a direct consequence the importance of controlling the platforms where such narratives are built, as well as the languages in which stories building such narratives are told. For White, 'social process even thousands of years ago could develop only in co-constitution with full-fledged language'. Here he is building on Luhmann's theory, identifying six views of sociocultural process that depend on each other 'becoming constitutive, not optional'. This will connect to further reviews of concepts related to the idea that 'communication is constitutive of organisations' (Kavada, 2005).

To come back to White, he argues that 'control efforts need not have anything to do with domination over other identities' but rather with 'finding footing among other identities'. Without such footing, identities would have no meaning and thus no communication.

'Person is the attitudes. Each set of attitudes can be seen as distinguishing an identity' (White, 2008). White explains the term of identity very generally as 'any source of action', not to be mistaken for a person, who would be a 'bundle of identities' (except from the moment a person is asleep). So 'the world comes from identities attempting control within their relations to other identities' and switching between 'network-domains', thus being 'at once a decoupling from somewhere and an embedding into somewhere'.

White demonstrates that 'identities find positions in relation to other identities. Together with the stories that tie them together, structure and meaning are produced […] Identities couple and decouple, thus continuously creating social space and time.' From this play of switching and by way of communication, which gives the meaning of events and interpretations of relationships, White demonstrates that there are only two faces of social organisation: 'blockage and allowance of fresh action'.

White is laying out the reasons on why the struggle: 'The triggering of one identity activates control searches by other identities'. So the driving force of any practical activity are identities seeking control. Part of White's theory is the concept of 'disciplines' as 'self-constituting conveners of social action, which each induce an identity on a new level'. Such disciplines, the 'interfaces', 'arenas and 'councils', relate to process and not to structure, and they are important in understanding where 'control struggle takes place' as well as the different rules at play.

'Within the same network, for example, identities will appear to differ in strength, visibility and longevity' (White 2008) so some will disappear. Since identity emerges out of a heterogeneous field by drawing on observation and reflexive self-observation, it means that gaining absolute control over it is necessarily impossible.

According to White framework, relations between pairs of identities are called ties; larger contexts in patterns of ties are networks; a story is a tie placed in context. Stories structure switching into accounts with a beginning, middle, and end; story-making frames social time.

'A network can be traced as similar stories appear across a spread of dyads.' 'Repeated communication will include arguments and attempts at influencing the opinion of the other participant in a tie'. Coupling (ties) means inclusion; decoupling means severance. Stories serve to describe the ties in networks so types of tie are factored as sets of stories: 'social networks emerge only as ties mesh with stories'.

This is important for Chapter 3, where the genesis of this field is reviewed, because it draws attention to what the official version of the story is and opens the questioning about who is telling that specific story and if there are possible other untold stories and unheard voices that may inform the overview of CBIJ genesis.

'Network analysis provides only one window on social process and structure' - this is how White alerts to the importance to avoid what might be called 'temporal reductionism': treating relations and structures of relations as if they had no history that shapes the present situation. 'Structures of relations also result from processes over time' (Breiger, 1990). 'Networks supply some sense of social space […] but only partial insights into social processes, which involve more complex interactions such as the disciplines' (White, 2008).

Both of these statements contributed towards the informed decision in turning away this research from SNA as a possible method to investigative CBIJ and opened up other more suitable methods, like participant observation focused on processes happening during investigative projects.

Even if SNA alone will not explain current configurations of networks of CBIJ, there are still important learnings from existing network literature. One of specific importance is the work of Granovetter to show possible types of ties and of networks. For Granovetter ties are labelled based on intensity (weak versus strong) – and higher connectivity across the network is given by weaker ties.

Important observations can still stem from understanding the architecture of dense ties within the cross-border investigative journalism field, one being that finding a dense network, it could indicated that 'close-knitness of a network is highly correlated with involuteness' (White, 2008). Not necessary having a negative connotation, involuteness in White can mean also specialisation. That comes together with the membership that 'presumes, as the norm, lack of questioning' .

'The effect of formal organization is to block fresh action' [...] 'blocking action is induced, and sometimes motivated, in projects to maintain some coherence and some effectiveness of production'. In other words, when networks talk about 'professionalization ' they become increasingly less open for experimental approaches, try to become organizations. 'Any changes must originate from countering the inertia endemic in social organization, that is, change comes from fresh action against blockage. A given structure and fresh action each exists only with each-other.

The context of a discipline, both social and technical, has three dimensions: dependency, differentiation and involution. Dependency of the operational environment (also named clientelism), differentiation that is determining the visibility – members channel attention towards those of higher prestige. After clientelists ties are established, new actions are blocked by the routinezed interaction subsisting in each tie'.

'Boundaries are both matters of perception and of construction and thus subject to speculation and to gaming'. White states that boundaries in networks are imposed arbitrarily by observers and that 'identities are embedding via some stories with respect to various other identities in a network population evolving during the course of continuing struggles for control.' That is why processes (diffusion, manipulation for control) cannot be treated properly by a network stripped down to only the display of connectivities.

Since White considers boundaries in networks as 'subtle and complex products of action', this is the reason why the focus on analysing cross-border investigative projects should be on hands-on projects, the most relevant way to set the boundaries in this field with the data a practitioner has access to (e.g. platforms for communication for specific project), because the intention is to understand the mechanics of cross-border networks outside simple network diagrams.

Production interface, council, arena and narratives are shaping and breaking networks. Who get's a voice and who's narrative counts, what are the main narratives and formulate clarifications and counter-narratives. This will be documented in both chapter three and later chapter four and five.

1.3.3. A game of exclusion in the CBIJ context

One way to block action in a network is to exclude voices with the pretext of efficient distribution of resources (for instance when deciding on the limited number or people who can be subsidised to travel to a global conference or the number of journalists permitted to join an investigative project). 'Critical political economy is concerned with how resources are produced, distributed and consumed and which power relations shape these resources ' (Fuchs 2014, p18). Having such a critical approach in mind, and drawing from globalisation studies, useful concepts can show how the processes of exclusion functions in the journalistic environment.

A global audience is claimed to be formed as a consequence of work published across the globe by networks of investigative journalists (Berglez). But looking closer at it from the point of view of social media work on Panama Papers, research shows that did not actually happen. So when

exclusion takes place, are we rather looking at a form of cultural hegemony (Gramsci) and colonisation of journalism ?

Cultural Studies and Postcolonial Theory

At least in the CBIJ field the Atlantic model is for journalism today the global standard, the ideal model that tells practitioners how things should be done (Schudson 2003, Thussu 2007, Meyer 2019). Since the Atlantic model is not a universal concept, it has historical, cultural and societal roots that explain how this model came to be (Grzeszyk 2019). Being pushed in the aftermath of the Second World War and since all relevant initiatives and organizations, as well as much of the funding outside the news industry to perform CBIJ comes from US sources, this combination of influences does create enough reason to look at it from the 'cultural hegemony ' perspective (as understood by Gramsci) and further investigated it through a postcolonial theory paradigm - that is that journalism is claiming objectivity and neutrality, but practicing objectivity can actually reproduce and reenforce stereotypes (Grzeszyk 2019).

An useful analysis to deconstruct the roots of the Atlantic model of journalism and its global spread combines Cultural Studies (Foucault) with Postcolonial Theory (Said), focusing on the common concept of exclusion as a tool of journalistic process that has to make constant decisions about what to exclude from the working hypothesis, from the research process, from the number of sources used and from the draft text before the final text get's published (Grzeszyk 2019). According to Foucault (1960), focusing on the *other* is shifting the attention from what is known to what has been pushed away; according to Said (1978), the *other* is best illustrated in the case of Orientalism, an imaginary world invented by the narrative of a colonialist drive in Western Europe in order to help preparing and justifying to occupy and subordinate.

The separation of news journalism from the spheres of literature and politics in Anglo American journalism is credited to have created the premises for the Anglo-American journalism to become a 'global discursive genre ' (Chalaby 1996). It has done so by breaking the news from the literary style (see the edge of precision journalism) and by breaking the financial-political dependencies, becoming economical viable based on the selling of advertisement starting in the mid 1800's.

Interesting that the same advance that has pushed journalism for independency under the umbrella of the news industry – advertisement – had a build-in financial reasoning limitation to actually motivate the news industry to not invest in in-depth investigative and hard news on the long term (Hamilton 2004) and to push for objectivity as a way to attract a wider audience (Schudson, 2003) in order to be able to sell more advertisement.

So voices and narratives are excluded in journalism - how and where is this happening in CBIJ ? Next section looking at literature on organizational communication may provide hints.

1.3.4. Shaping (partial) organisations of CBIJ

Exclusion is best operated at the communication processes where access control is being enforced by design of infrastructures.

Observing communication infrastructure

Having researched the connections between various organisations active in the field of cross-border investigative journalism, it is clear that a social network diagram will not offer a deep understanding of how connections are formed and which paths are used to how such networks function, nor it will

inform about the boundaries of this field. Part of this thesis theoretical framework rests on White's theory of identity and control, and correlated stories and ties. In order to identify the boundaries of this field, however, a useful framework from the communicative constitution of collective action (Kavada, 2015).

Kavada proposes a theoretical framework that helps identify collective action as a phenomenon emerging in communication. The framework is constructed by combining insights gained in organisational communication, especially 'the claim that communication is constitutive of organizing' with social media research as well as media studies. According to Kavada, traditional theories of organisational communication consider 'communication as something occurring within organizations rather than as something that creates them'. In her analysis, Kavada introduces the 'concept of 'conversation site ', which alongside text and conversation, can help us to better conceptualize the role of the media in the constitution of collective action'. Most relevant addition to my theoretical framework is the conclusion that 'spatiality and temporality are affected by the codes of the media which may include the software codes, rules of conduct, technical capacities and architectures of different mediated settings'. In my research, such 'mediated settings' are so-called cross-border network infrastructures, be they online (forums of information exchange) or offline (the Global Investigative Journalism Conference).

The conceptualisation proposed by Kavada looks at collective action 'as emerging in interconnected and overlapping texts and conversations that unfold in conversation sites with varying spatialities and temporalities in which people came together to coordinate and act collectively' (Kavada, 2015).

As per White's theory, context is crucial to the set of stories that characterise types of ties in given networks. This is the reason why I review here the political and economical context relevant to cross-border investigative journalism and why, in the next section, I will look at the social and technical context.

Debates on organizational communication leading to meeting arenas

Research in organizational communication have dealt with this field in the context of globalization, and a body of research exists concerning the effective communication in organizations across different spaces and times, under multicultural workplaces and have asked how organizing is shaped looking from a political economy perspective.

Early models of researching communication followed a simplistic model: S-M-R-C. That is 'Source transmits a Message through a Channel to a Receiver ' (Miller, 2015, p12). New models focus on a more elaborate view, looking at a constitutive model of communication, a 'process that produces and reproduces shared meaning ' (Craig, 1999, p. 125).

Mapping communication in the network realm is important, since a formal chart of relationships of people is not going to reflect how the network is really communicating.

Explaining communication in networks relies on understanding the properties of networks, which are systems of links among components (individuals, work groups, organizations and actually meeting arenas). According to Miller review (2015, p66) such properties include network content (what is been transmitted), network mode (what is the medium for transmitting) and network density (many interconnections among members, or less). Level of analysis is important, to understand if the focus is within an organization or between organizations.

Further, links between nodes also have properties: strength (a lot of communication), symmetry (asymmetric for supervisor/subordinate) and multiplexity (different kinds of content being linked). Network are made of nodes that have specific roles: isolate, group member, bridge to nodes outside the group, liaison between bridges.

Network communication is changing and such changes are also changing the shape of the network and the roles of the nodes. To understand such dynamics first it should be understand what is the purpose of communication in a given network. One influential theory is Karl Weick's Theory of Organizing (1979) which focuses on the process of making sense of information in a given information environment where organization is taking place. Weick is using the assembly rules as guiding procedures of sense making and communication cycles to repeat the process until equivocality is reduced. After that a retention process kicks in and rules are made and saved for later.

But since past research in this field has focused on organizational communication as happening in a given container, recent research is criticizing such an approach and moves towards looking at theories considering the communicative constitution of organization (CCO) which is based on the idea that reality is not objective, but it is constructed through communication. CCO is trying to understand what is the process of interactions that create, change, re-create organizations.

Two directions of thought have been influential in the CCO field.

First, the Montreal School, focused on how conversations emerge and scale up into texts, such texts having their own life outside the original conversation (as rules, textbooks, manuals, strategies).

Second, The Four Flows, where four specific flows are constituting organization: membership negotiation, self-structuring, activity coordination, and institutional positioning. Organizational texts and communication flows are created and recreated. It is noted that such approaches sometimes may not see the larger issues of power structures and control (Miller, 2015) but the approach is nevertheless useful providing structure to observations and data collected. Such structure can be used in the case of CBIJ as a complementary way of structuring and analysing collected to the six steps approach of the investigative workflow (Alfter) used in the two case studies and will be useful as a complementary tool for analysis in chapter six.

Power in the context of organizational communication has several approaches, the relevant ones being symbological approach which is situating power as a result of communicative interactions and relationships and radical-critical approach, looking at the deep structures that shape power.

In this approach Morgan (1979) has identified fourteen sources of power within the organizational setting:formal authority; control of scarce resources; use of organizational structure, rules, and regulations; control of decision processes; control of knowledge and information; control of boundaries; ability to cope with uncertainty; control of technology; interpersonal alliances, networks, and control of 'informal organization '; control of counterorganizations; symbolism and the management of meaning; gender and the management of gender relationships; structural factors that define the stage of action; the power one already has.

These are not exhaustive sources of power and with each context and analysis other may appear.

Furthermore, critical theory points to the power as a force of control, the control over shaping a pattern of behavior over individuals, and that such a process of control will ultimately lead to shaping a certain ideology that will translate ultimately into hegemony. Ideology will shape

behaviors by justifying and legitimizing actions. Shaping ideology is power and if imposed by a dominant group over other groups is leading such groups to accept norms imposed by others, thus accepting subordination, a situation described by the concept of hegemony (Gramsci, 1971).

The theory of concertive control (Katherine Miller, 2015, p108) is focusing on the modern days team-based or other type of alternative forms of organization, and differs from simple, technological or bureaucratic. Concertive control looks at how workers develop their own rules without the direct involvement of management. This can happen if identification exists, if individuals are self perceived as members of a collective and if discipline is enforced by way of rules developed through communicative interaction (which will include rewards and punishments)[23].

Constitutive and critical approaches to organizational communication are closer to the needed frameworks to understand CBIJ. Especially the contribution of critical theorists who consider the impact of these technologies on the distribution of power within the organization.

CBIJ can only be informed by such studies, to understand where to look and what are the gaps left from previous questions asked, previous studies. And clearly one gap is that of context: organizational communication deals with organizations and CBIJ is happening outside organizations, at the intersection of several types of organizations (media, non-profit) and in a space where organizational hierarchies from different organizations overlap for a while (project based, meeting based).

Meeting arenas

The first thing that was pointed out by journalists participating in a review of EIC early months of existence was that online calls on a weekly basis are the events that keep the new network together and that they should be complemented with face to face meetings.

Increasing scholarship on social movements, looking at communication around the fabric of protest, is dealing with the role of communication, online and offline (Kavada, 2010) and other aspects of the field such as democratic practices, decision-making, the formation of collective identity, the politics of organization and practices of network organizing.

Trying to explore relevant concepts in understanding power structures in networks, organisational communication is mentioning the communication flow in meeting arenas. In order to be able to see the backstage of CBIJ, the right framework in communication science needs to be identified, the framework that could apply to networks of investigative journalism working across borders.

A useful approach can be found in the research looking at meeting arenas as infrastructure 'between organization, network and institution ' (Haug, 2013). Even if the starting point is a focus on social movements and collaboration between activists, it is informing the decisions on where and how to collect data in the case of collaborations between journalists as well as a later analysis since it builds on the concept of 'partial organization '[24]. In this case I am specially interested in the blind spots of meetings and face-to-face interactions that are the backbone of CBIJ, these being the 'meeting arenas ' developed as a concept.

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[23] During early years of EIC meetings, a larger number of references from EIC journalists to how ICIJ has worked in the past in domains like data journalism have been made; also some other references where opposing ICIJ ways of doing things, like in the case of tech capacity for user surveillance based on search terms; such ideology is effective since it is copied without being imposed, willingly adopted and enforced

[24] In the case of ICIJ the 'meeting arena ' is itself an actor in competition with media partners using the ICIJ meeting infrastructures, and that meeting arena is not a co-owned structure (like in the case of EIC); an extra layer of analysis has to be added, in terms of what are the tech limitations and the governance documents of such 'partial organization '.

Existing research is rather focusing on mediated communication and looking at the role of communication using the framing approach (Snow, 2004) but face-to-face meetings are only emerging as a field of study in social movements – in contrast with what is available in management studies. Haug (2013) observes that meetings in formal organizations are formal affairs that can at most show the failure of internal workflows, while meetings in social movements, and number of participants, are indicators of successful movements.

What has a social movement have to do with CBIJ ? I am interested in the communication aspect of the collaboration component which is the same for both SMO's and CBIJ. CBIJ networks are based on 'interactions between individuals, groups and/or organizations ' (Diani, 1992, p. 13 in Haug) organizing information exchange, going through decision making processes, strategizing about possible obstacles from power structures and governments – exactly like Haug (2013) points out in the case of social movements that such interactions, involving organizations collaborating, cannot be contained in formal organizational structures. And same as in the case of social movements, CBIJ is based on trust, which has a central role in building collaborations, and such trust cannot develop without face to face meetings. This aspect of the importance of face to face meetings has been highlightend by many practitioners of CBIJ (Buzzenberg 2015; Lewis 2005; Walker 2016; Ryle; Candea 2013; Alfter 2017; Obermeyer 2016; Buschmann 2019). According to Haug, networks and organizations are produced in face to face meeting arenas.

A gap in researching such infrastructure from the point of view of mobilization of groups and organizations (mesomobilization) is identified by Haug – and for sure I am not aware of such research in the realm of CBIJ especially in production, since such work is highly secretive (for that matter, no similar work is available on mediated communication either and that is for the same reason of secrecy of communication during research and production of investigative stories). And as Haug is showing, this approach is not limited to social movement organizations but actually about a different domain, the inter-organizational domain.

Drawing on Haug, I can see how the 'mesomobilization ' in the case of groups and organizations doing CBIJ is covering the logistics of connecting resources while preparing research and publication (the 'structural integration ') as well as actively negotiating a common way of understanding investigative journalism across different political contexts (the 'cultural integration ').

Noting the limitation of framing research, focusing on actors instead of places of interaction, Haug propose the concept of 'mesomobilization meeting ' referring to meetings 'whose purpose is to assess the mesomobilization potential and coordinate the activities of micromobilization actors ' (Haug, 2013, p 708) and is pointing out the fact that such meetings are between participants that do not necessary share a 'stable group identity ', thus making mapping such infrastructure a tool for understanding the powers at play. Haug is drawing on Ahrne and Brunson's (2011) distinction between organization, institution and network looking at how such social orders stay in tension shaping partial organization through the decision process (instead that of hierarchy).

Definition of meeting is 'an episodic gathering of three or more co-present participants who maintain a single focus of cognitive and visual attention '(Haug, 2013, p 709) while discussing common business. The meeting is different then a private discussion because the communication between two participants is monitored by a third (with assembly as the larger meeting version and conference a number of meetings held close to each-other in time and space).

Haug is distinguishing between a meeting as event and a meeting arena as the underlying structure for the event to take place: it has purpose, duration, range of topics to discuss, type of participants, rules of conduct, style, specific meeting place, setting arrangements (tables at GIJC during the conference award dinner) but also relations to other arenas (for instance the paths of Lillehammer during the Global Conference in 2015).

Arena, as opposed to groups, has no permanent members – in fact arena is a concept that can be used to investigate collaboration between groups and organizations since mapping a meeting arena of a 'particular mobilization ' is highlighting its characteristics but also its role in the wider context where meeting arenas of a specific field are intertwined.

Haug (2013, p 712-713) introduces three principles of social order interplaying in meeting arenas, drawing again on Ahrne and Brunsson (2011): organization ('decided order '), network ('interpersonal relations of trust ') and institution ('taken for granted beliefs and norms '). This is to point out the importance of the different forms of order over the distinction between organization and its environment, which is a more established view, and to show that meeting arenas are partial organizations.

Now let's pause here and bring this home, from the social movement field to the CBIJ field. In the case studies of chapters four and five, we look at how a large number of journalists who trust each-other (network) run a complex game of sharing information and negotiation towards publication that will benefit their own existing systems in place (organization) in the realm of a set of taken for granted norms – that is the institution of investigative journalism. As we shall see, in both case studies, the most difficult points are in the decision making of publication dates and formats, turning meeting arenas where such decisions are negotiating, into 'partial organizations ' where relevant elements are actually not decided (as they are in complete organizations).

In a meeting arena, there are interdependencies between organization, network and institution as well as limitations.

The organization logic is showing the meeting 'as a planned event ' with elements of membership (participation rights), hierarchy (roles, tasks), rules (time, place, agenda, purpose, frequency), monitoring (checking accomplishment of tasks, evaluation, reporting, minutes, channel of record) and sanctions (negative sanctions such deny the right to speak, exclusion or positive sanctions such as offering positions of power). The limitation of such a logic for a partial organization is with the decision making – who enforces a decision about who decides? In the case studies of chapters four and five we'll see that such decisions are taken either based on previously signed agreements and workflows, or if that is not working or is not available, deciders are either enforced arbitrarily by way of a power play making the decider to be taken for granted (institution) or such decisions are guided by trust (network).

If the institution logic comes in, it comes with taken for granted agreement, practices, routines and styles. But the limitation of such a logic comes in when people coming together sometimes realize they are fundamentally different or they imagine a total different institution for which they use only a similar name. Such situations will make individuals misbehave – in that case there will be sanctions, exclusion (organization) or social pressure and control (network ties). This will be observed in chapter four where the institution enforced by one organization is compared to a 'dinner party ' and the failure to align with it will attract exclusion from the next party.

The network perspective of meeting arenas is where personal ties grow, where communication, learning and free association of participants is facilitated towards developing a sense of trust and inspiration, away from production (organization of work towards configuring institution). 'Net-talk ', where less connected participants are ignored, is a possible side-effect of network of trust without rules but with informal leaders, a hidden agenda and possible structures of dominance. Also, the limitation of network is when trying to do things only as a network of trust, because such a network will have individuals connected to other individuals through trusted go-between – and that is when more then trust is needed, specifically organization and / or institution.

This approach is showing that while the CBIJ six steps (Alfter) are useful for following up hands-on CBIJ work, as equal important are the four flows to follow power taking shape during CBIJ project's information exchanges as well as meeting arenas (offline but also digital).

1.3.5. Critical theory meets Science and Technology Studies

In order to be able to observe how exclusion works in meetings infrastructures, arenas and platforms, a review of related critical theory and science and technology studies (STS) on sites of content exchange in the digital realm is needed.

Basic directions

Digital tools to communicate between journalists have become ubiquitous, following the ubiquitous electronic communication flows of everyday life. Even before going into the analysis of CBIJ workflows and the use of technology to support such processes, we can hint that the online activities of any knowledge producer are related to at least the exchange of information and access to source documents in the digital realm. So the following paragraphs will explain what is the impact of such platform, with both positive and negative effects, that can be relevant in the context of CBIJ.

Since technological infrastructures have become the gatekeepers of existing networks involving any information-exchange activity, human communication, in daily social or professional life, can be seen as a socio-technical activity. This is being used as well in communication infrastructures for cross-border investigative journalism, because cross-border investigative journalism is an activity between at least two people and since most of the time it is not done in the same space, face-to-face, so it requires information-exchange infrastructure.

As I will show in the next chapter, but briefly introduce here, in early accounts of the first cross-(federal)-border investigation (the US Arizona Project in the late 1970s) the technology toolbox was very simple: an ad-hoc physical newsroom hosted in hotel rooms, using extra telephone lines and fax machines. Participant reporters would come and go, filing typed memos or reporter notes at the end of each day, and each new day would start with the coordinator reviewing the growing printed knowledge base. Technology usage advanced slowly in investigative journalism. Only decades later, in the early 2000's, journalists at mainstream media (e.g. The Guardian, Le Soir) started to use PGP encryption in the context of cross-border investigative work (e.g. with ICIJ); this move was followed by the adoption by the Global Investigative Journalism Network of electronic emailing lists. In the late 2000's proprietary software to synchronise files and folders during a cross-border investigations was tried. In early 2010 ICIJ slowly introduced different project-based emailing lists, trying to make different groups talk in different places owned and managed by ICIJ. The lack of knowledge in managing and using such tools made the logistics of communication an operational

nightmare. Users often sending messages from one e-group to a completely different one or inadvertently leaving backdoor access to the content of these emailing lists wide open for any outside intruder. All of this saw no big change from the 70's to the end of the 2010's. But today, at the beginning of 2020's, infrastructure for cross-border investigative journalism has converged with platforms hosted in corporate data centres, serving and organising anything journalists do, from international conferences to searching of leaks and information exchanges. And this is really an important change for the CBIJ field, a change that requires new tools and concepts to analyse and discuss its implications.

Type of needs informing the recognition of technical affordances

I will briefly review the main type of needs that a network infrastructure serving journalists should address, based on presentation materials elaborated by practitioners in this field[25], just to understand what existing scholarship of STS and Critical Theory is pertinent for the purpose of this study. First, general and project-based network infrastructure for conferences, and meeting places (both offline and online); second, project-based research infrastructure for search tools and visualisation, search queries dialogue support; and third, project-based information exchange infrastructure in order to synchronise reports and build a knowledge base.

All of these needs are served by various technologies with different design implications for different users, different ways of controlling access at different levels as well as code dependencies that should be discussed in the context of concrete investigative projects where concrete software and hardware is necessary[26], which will be the focus of the following chapters.

By way of design, there are proprietary tools and free software ones; by way of technology, tools are self-developed, customized or simply off-the-shelf; they can operate on computers small and large, cloud based and self hosted or user based. There are very different price categories, so tools are from free to very expensive, sponsored or paid-for by way of advertisement barter exchanges.

Therefore Critical Theory is a useful approach, but it does have its limitations. Feenberg (2017) argues that the line of thought of early critical theorists such as Marcuse and Adorno, who have described how technical rationality has colonised a technocratic society and who were concerned with the ways of technology being used for control, have been put aside and that such thinking was not continued by their successors, who starting with Habermas focused on other issues ignoring technology.

A good introduction into what STS contribution could be in a study trying to investigate aspects of underlying technologies used for networks is offered by Feenberg (2017) who briefly reviews the highpoints in the history of the general public being introduced to the politics of technology (e.g. feminists demanding changes to the over-medicalised childbirth or environmentalists similarly highlighting the toxicity of various technological processes) and concludes that such critical view of the politics of technology has lead to democratic interventions (controversies, creative hacking and participatory dialogue between actors, both expert and lay). It is argued that STS can be the critical framework needed for our contemporary technological society, since it deals with the political

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[25] For one example of this, see this presentation at Data Harvest 2016 by Mar Cabra and Matthew Caruana Galizia https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1fUC5EuUTr1Bc9gvwJUVEmGFd3sTWRe7PaKUekPsOxyM/edit#slide=id.g869786b4b_0_74

[26] For more background on the topic in the context of journalism, see (Stray, 2015) What are the editorial products we're not building 'combination of professionals, participants and software' - 'information ecosystem' (Candea, 2016) Liquid Investigations, http://niemanreports.org/articles/an-investigative-toolkit-for-the-post-snowden-era/

Concepts and theories to investigate CBIJ

implications of technologically deterministic and positivistic perspectives, and since it focuses on empirical approaches.

STS developed as an academic discipline in the mid 60's in the US and turned the sociology of scientific knowledge towards technology, currently having its key themes deal with the studies of technology in historic, social and philosophical context; research into the larger societal impact of technology; and public policy related to technology and engineering, including ethics. Considering that a multitude of rationalities have emerged from the Marcuse 'technological rationality ' that defines early Critical Theory, Feenberg (2017) explores the need for new concepts in order to investigate such rationalities. Such scholarship will be useful to apply to the field of CBIJ.

For the purpose of this research, the relevant part deals with co-production and networks drawn from STS where very concrete actors influence how technology is going to be designed and developed, as opposed to claims that technical decision making is based on pure reason, science and mathematics. Drawing on Latour's actor-network theory (1992) Feenberg shows how individuals participating in networks shape their perspective on the networks as well shaping their 'participant interests ' which develops further into 'programs and anti-programs ' trying to go beyond the initial intention of dominant forces in such networks. This can go so far as to even trying to challenge control and the technical status quo. Feenberg makes a point that such value-based challenges are being always met with accusations of irrationality but considers that 'values are routinely delegated to technology; thus there is no obstacle in principle to these discursively formulated values eventually reshaping the technologies. (…) Values are thus in some sense the (possible) facts of the future ' (Feenberg, 2017: p6).

Feenberg observes how history proved the limitations of Marcuse's belief that technology redesigned under socialism will have different values than the values developed under capitalism (it did not) but also observes that Marcuse formulated a hope that a more humane technology will appear. Here Feenberg is optimistic as well, seeing an opportunity beyond the dialectic capitalism vs. socialism and punctuating with an observation by Foucault that socialism does in fact not have its own art of government (Foucault, 2004, p93 in Feenberg 2017, p10) . So Feenberg proposes to consider the 'technical code ' (social needs translated into technical specifications) a code that can be so wide in reach that could turn into 'domain codes ' (e.g. inventions under capitalist technology serving the needs of centralised management of production) and can become subject to a shift in the dominant ideology, thus exposing the possibility of 'context-dependent character of rationality ' (Feenberg, 2017, p9) instead of the unfulfilled hope of socialist technology. According to Feenberg, where there is knowledge of the elite on how to control subordinates, there is also a counter-knowledge emerging from below 'reflecting the experience of subordinate participants in technical networks ' (ibidem, p10) similar to Foucault's concept of 'subjugated knowledge '.

Platform capitalism and data feudalism

Existing STS research into social media and social networking sites indicates that concepts of platform logic and network effect are central to networking based on information creating and sharing. What used to be the newsroom where all journalistic material was conceived, information was centralised and copy was distributed has today turned into the virtual newsroom in the form of a platform. A multiplicity of information and journalistic material from multiple participants can be centralised and distributed when using a virtual newsroom, and at present all cross-border investigative journalism networks are using such platforms (in the cloud or self-hosted). Since the general trend is to make use of Software as a Service (SaaS) and Infrastructure as a Service (IaS) for a growing number of people, the infrastructure involved with building and maintaining a platform

presents a new type of problem: there is no fair ecosystem or automatic balancing of such tools, and the technological complexity of such networks comes with the need for rules and human intervention. Depending on the platform, more or less granular access is permitted, but access control again becomes an issue regulated by many variables, including the exclusivity paradigm mentioned in a previous section. For instance, no competing media in a given territory have access to the virtual newsroom, whereas journalists can visit competing media outlets' physical newsrooms and not be shown journalistic material or information that is kept secret. Critical approaches towards platforms, mostly towards today's internet giants like Facebook, Twitter and Google offer detailed analyses of those who have access to such platforms as well as the types of control available to their owners and users.

It is instructive to take into consideration the growing body of critical literature that documents how social platforms are monopolising and centralising the internet (Fuchs, 2015), as well as recent studies of how these platforms are becoming publishers themselves, leading to a model called 'the platform press' (Bell and Owen, 2017). However, the reverse phenomenon should be investigated as well: networks of journalists shaping their existing networks into platforms. Put in a historical light, the platform is part of today's 'platform capitalism' model (Srnicek, 2017), and even if it is presented as a radical novelty, it represents a mere continuation of capitalism, since the platform's goal is to raise productivity at all levels, obtain maximum efficiency and reduce production costs. Srnicek (2017) explains the evolution towards this new business model by showing how today's natural resources in the platform context are people's activities that produce data, the equivalent of raw materials that are extracted, refined and used to produce more activities and more data. Accordingly, the platform business model becomes the attempt to monopolise huge amounts of data to be extracted and analysed. Instead of creating a marketplace from scratch, platforms build infrastructures where users are locked in, the users who are offered tools that enable them to build their own products, services and eventually marketplaces, thus offering infrastructure to mediate between different groups of users, who in turn generate more activities and more data and eventually produce the network effect that makes such infrastructure too big to be avoided (as in the case of Facebook and Twitter, in their promotion and dissemination of journalistic content, or Google as a bundle of tools for finding and exchanging information). Srnicek observes platforms' natural tendency towards monopolisation, as well as the 'cross subsidisation' that occurs between two services used by the same platform: one offers products for free to attract users, while the other sells data on, or access to, these users to another group.

Critical view of technology

The society is networked, globalization works best for Organized Crime and journalists are catching up fighting networks with networks. Or so the story goes. Castells' technological positivism is criticized for having 'overestimated the role of the Internet in society, neglecting or downplaying the importance of other dimensions of society' and contributing to the wave of 'techno-euphoria' and 'technodeterminism' (Fuchs, 2012). This goes beyond the realization that there has been during the last decades a lack of critical evaluation when mixing up old problems that journalism and the news industry has, with new solutions.

Critical theory of technology of the Frankfurt School together with the latest responses of Science and Technology Studies look like the appropriate concepts that can be used in designing the methodology used to tackle the gap in critical research of CBIJ. According to Fuchs (2014, p57) the need to increase profit is fuelled by increasing productivity – the foundation for capitalism and since 'productivity and competitive advantages tend to be asymmetrically distributed ' this leads to

monopolies and concentration of capital, a structural feature of media as of any business in capitalism. Relevant for CBIJ, the idea of community is idealized – and it is forgotten that community can turn into a fascist mob in situations of crisis (Fuchs, 2014, p60), such an idealistic view is taken of journalistic communities, where simply the fact of connecting and building a community of journalists anywhere and everywhere without any critical self-reflection and participatory governance is the norm. Foucault observed that critical theorists pick and choose work of professional historians as material for their interpretation of sociological phenomena and simply presuppose that economy has the prime spot in society. But Foucault also considers power to be of 'a different order ' and not subordinate to the economy, considering economy is run by the state and not the other way around.

Fuchs believes that media and communication studies should focus on the commodification in culture, on class and participatory democracy and 'forget about the vulgar and reductionistic notion of participation ' (Fuchs, 2014, p65) that deals with the different operations around content. Since cross-border investigative journalism operations are in fact large groups of authors sharing information and content and shaping published products using platforms, the ownership of such platforms, the commodification of the products collaborative exchanges, and the resulting power structures and tensions, are all subject to the critical focus mentioned by Fuchs.

It is important to discuss power in this context. In the view of Foucault power is the linking of individuals to particular identities and ways of conduct and managing to hold individuals to follow imposed norms. Power manages to make someone to act other than the person would normally act under the peril of sanctions (Luhmann, 2000). Power comes with surveillance, to gather knowledge about an individual respecting the imposed norms. Observing that power has not necessarily bad connotations, and such relations of power always comes with some reaction of resistance, Foucault points out that power 'produces reality, it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production' (Foucault 1977, p194) .

But critical theory is questioning power in order to discover unrealized potentials of society. And Fuchs believes that power, understood as transformative capacity, is leading to the realization that co-operation is 'the most fundamental process in society ' (Fuchs 2008, 31-34). Co-operative work means no one can reclaim the authorship of an article, since it is the result of the work of more people (like in Wikipedia). Humans 'need to collaborate in order to exist. A collaborative society requires participatory democracy and collective ownership and control of the means of production. '

Business strategy in today's platformization is not to sell access to a platform, but to give access for free and sell prosumers (who both consume and produce on the platform) to third parties. The logic of accumulation applies. Part of such networks are commercial media companies, with their own structure of ownership that tend to be concentrated, and also non-profit groups or alternative media, who exist on 'precarious labour and resource precariousness ' (Fuchs, 2010). If the production of shared research, ideas and stories is commodified by someone in the platform and sold through third parties, then all the working hours and days contributed by the authors of such research, ideas and stories become unpaid labour that generates profit for the owners of the platform and for third parties. This is packaged as 'radical sharing ' but it is actually exploitation. If on top of that user interaction is sold to third parties so the platform can either be maintained or improved, that would be appropriation of user data (and not necessary a privacy issue). In the context of Facebook sharing 'is the euphemism for selling and commodifying data ' so it remains to be seen what is kept as data

and what, if anything, is sold in the realm of 'private Facebook of journalists ' used as the underlying technology of CBIJ.

A combination of Critical Theory and STS is described by Feenberg as a possible framework of analysis: 'Rational critique of reason ' (Adorno) from the Critical Theory of Frankfurt School has similar political implications as the 'critique of positivism and determinism ' of Science and Technology Studies and together they offer a 'new concept of politics '.

Marcuse's 'technological rationality ' is ideology based on media (as a force for integration), culture (redefine social conflicts as technical problems) and top-down control of technological design (political values embodied by the design). The main point of the Frankfurt School is that 'we live in a technocratic society with a culture colonized by technical rationality ' and that 'not only is the culture technological but the actual technology that we employ is adapted to technocratic control of the underlying population ' (Feenberg, p3).

Built on decades of 'democratic interventions ' in fields related to technologies – technical politics - STS rejects technical determinism and also considers as exaggerated the role of technological efficiency. 'Networks are assemblages of people and things, joined together by causal and symbolic bonds. Individuals acquire a perspective on the technical networks in which they are enrolled as well as what I call 'participant interests'. These interests reflect the new needs or problems that may arise from their participation' (Feenberg, p6).

'But technical politics reveals the existence of another kind of knowledge, a knowledge from below reflecting the experience of subordinate participants in technical networks. (...) Experiential knowledge is responsive to a broad range of values, not simply efficiency and control. It inspires resistance to the dominant organization of technical networks (Feenberg, 1999: 110–14) '

No research I know of deals with the technologies that are underlying the infrastructure for CBIJ. It is useful to note, on one hand, the self description of such technologies as the 'private Facebook of journalists ' by the managers of ICIJ and, on the other hand, the fact that there is research dealing with Facebook design when used for coordination and communication by different groups (in the political realm). Such research finds that there is an incompatibility between commercial interests behind the design of such a social media platform as FaceBook and the horizontal ideology. 'The highly vertical and centralized architecture of a social network medium has allowed the founders and leaders of the movement to perpetuate ownership and to take control over information flows' (Coretti, 2014).

This is a well documented realization: 'The flow of information through social movement websites is often vertical. Many such sites are little more than online versions of traditional party organs, with a small handful of writers and an even smaller number of editors who make all publishing decisions ' (CostanzaV Chock,2006, p2). Such work could point towards finding out if there is an incompatibility between commercial interests behind the design of platform used, as well as the design of intermediary organization that are hosting the meeting arena in CBIJ, and the ideology of journalistic 'radical sharing ' preached by current CBIJ evangelists.

As will be shown in the following chapters, CBIJ transformation (platformization) arrived in the late 2000's, after the dot.com bust and the early 2000's transformation into what is known as Web 2.0 platform (O'Reilly) dependent on creating a network effect based on attracting more users. In this context the network effect it is based on Metcalfe's Law (Correti, 2014) putting the value of a given network in direct proportionality to the number of people connected to it. The more on a

given hub or platform, the bigger its value, to a point where it is not only useful to be part of such a network, but necessary 'as not being part of the network means exclusion from the flow of communication and the exchange of information ' (Correti, p28). Social Media are considered 'a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, which allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content ' and are categorised in six different types of social media : collaborative Projects (e.g. Wikipedia); blogs; context communities; social networking sites (e.g. Facebook); virtual Game Worlds; and virtual Social Worlds. Furthermore social media are operating on two dimensions: social presence and media richness and self-representation and self-disclosure (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p60).

From the point of view of knowledge production work across borders, surely the two categories of collaborative projects and social networking sites are the closest to describe sharing and enriching of information. However, the 'social networking site ' denomination is challenged and the term of 'social network medium ' is proposed (Coretti, 2014). Drawing on the concept of 'technological affordances ' (Hutchby, 2001) as 'an interchange between the essential properties of technologies and the use that is made of them ', it is considered a good analytical tool that has evolved beyond tech-positivism and tech-pessimism and towards the treatment of technology 'as an agent that is driven by values which are rooted within society, rather than outside of it ' (Coretti, 2014, p33).

Early critical theory of technology as politics (Marcuse) is being explained in the context of recent developments as relying on technical code, 'the realisation of an interest or ideology in a technically coherent solution to a problem ' (Feenberg, 2005, p52). This research will look at the ideology of CBIJ and its translation (or lack of) into the technical solutions of CBIJ today. Why is this important ? In the wider societal context, it has been important to realise that 'the degradation of labor, education and the environment is rooted not in technology per se but in the antidemocratic values that govern technological development ' (Feenberg, 1991, p3).

Before going into CBIJ journalistic affordances, it is worth noting that social network sites are considered to provide four social affordances: Persistence, Replicability, Scalability and Searchability (boyd, 2010). Even if in a secure and closed environment, such affordances may still be valid for a number of journalists working together in the context of CBIJ projects, but at the same time very different affordances must be special to CBIJ only, when compared to Facebook or Wikipedia. At the same time, significant differences but also significant similarities maybe observed when taking the political economy of Facebook and looking at the political economy of platforms used in CBIJ projects, especially when looking at the financing of such platforms and projects and at monetization and commodification strategies in this realm, since the CBIJ is very active in the non-profit realm, and thus highly dependent on donors.

Social network sites sell people's interactions, thus relying on a system of monitoring and commodifying people, growing bigger and offering more and better features in order to attract even more people and sell their increasing number of interactions into ever more and more sophisticated data-points. Also, research so far shows that communication on social network sites follow a power law distribution (Benkler 2006, Shirky 2010) towards oligopolies - leading to a lack of innovation if allowed to function only regulated by the invisible hand of the market.

How does this translate in the CBIJ realm, since CBIJ migrated from face to face towards platforms and what types of platforms and values are we talking about, what is the technical code in which CBIJ operates ? A deeper look into CBIJ evolution and ideology, processes, organization, lifecycle of CBIJ projects and their translation into underlying technology will be key to this research. This

thesis will look at the relationship between values and technology in CBIJ starting at the messo-level and will discuss micro- and macro- implications.

Digital intermediaries – platforms and publishers

Scholars have examined phenomena ranging from videotext and early Web pages in the 1990s (Boczkowski, 2004; Singer, 2005) to social and mobile media in the 2010s (Chadha and Wells, 2016; Westlund, 2013) and focused on how different organizational structures, work practices, conceptions of the audience, and structural contexts influence how 'old ' professions and organizations embrace 'new ' technologies (Anderson, 2013; Boczkowski, 2004; Usher, 2014). ' (Kleis Nielsen, Ganter 2018).

The question is to understand how the journalists and media organizations adopt new technologies and then develop them for their own purposes: 'how news media not only shape but are also shaped by broader technological developments (Braun, 2016; Domingo et al., 2015; Lewis and Westlund, 2015).

More on infrastructure and Data as platform ready

To capture this, the diverse emerging 'platform studies ' in media and communication research is useful (Gillespie, 2016; Just and Latzer, 2017; Montfort and Bogost, 2009; Plantin et al., 2017) work that examine social media platforms used in news production (Belair-Gagnon et al., 2014; Cozma and Chen, 2013; Hermida, 2013) or where the focus is on infrastructure, platform, and distribution (Braun, 2015; Gillespie, 2010; Helmond, 2015) or platform ownership in business, social, and cultural dynamics (Scholz and Schneider 2017) and importance of infrastructure in studying press autonomy (Ananny, 2011).

Platform studies show that arenas are not some neutral infrastructures, but actors with their own interests: 'platforms govern, platforms are governed, and platform companies are companies ' (Gorwa, 2019). Digital intermediaries are 'new gatekeepers who may, deliberately or otherwise, control or constrain access' (Foster, 2012: 15). 'Facebook and Google now influence all three stages of news production: internal and external communications, tools and platforms for crafting stories, and platforms for news distribution. ' (Nechushtai, 2018).

Platform studies (Montfort and Bogost, 2009) are a helpful entry point into understanding what's going on from several points of view: economic models (Srnicek, 2017), ownership structures (Scholz and Schneider, 2017) and big data and journalism (Lewis and Westlund, 2015). According to such studies, at the core, the justification to use digital platforms is efficiency. But the underlying infrastructure to make a platform efficient is the 'technical capacity of unyielding local control' at micro level. And the effect of having an efficient platform in the field of knowledge production at a global level is 'consequential concentrations of global dominance by a handful of corporate actors' at macro level. 'Digital platforms are not just software-based media, they are governing systems that control, interact, and accumulate ' (Schwarz, 2017). Such systems need to be led by someone, the same person(s) who would also make decisions about what needs to be efficient, excluding other views in the process.

Platform have been described as enablers of interactions between distinct parties (Gillespie, 2010) and when looking at how former places called 'social network sites ' have turned into platforms it is argued, as a critique, that platformization is the process 'of the decentralization of platform features and the recentralization of 'platform ready ' data ' (Helmond, 2015).

In the context of platform capitalism, data feudalism has been used to frame the direction where big data corporations like Google and Facebook are pushing the digital ecosystem making huge profits on user activity being locked into platforms that give little agency and no co-ownership to its users (Morozov, 2019).

Platforms are positioned for extraction, as an apparatus for data, and amount to politics, having a unilateral set of rules. Srnicek observes five types of platforms based on the services sold: advertising, cloud computing, industrial, product, lean (also mentioning that some platforms, like Amazon, consist of all the five types models).

The main narrative of platforms was that of a needed radical shift towards democratising communication and allowing for liberation especially liberation from gatekeepers – but it turned out to become a tool for making profit out of the business of surveillance and monetising free labour, reshaping the position of gatekepers. Srnicek sees this as the logical continuation of the global outsourcing trend that began in the 1970s and persists in an extreme form in the present day: 'a tool of survival is being marketed by Silicon Valley as a tool of liberation ' (Srnicek, 2017).

Today, platforms are funnelling data extractions into siloed data centres, locking in users attracted by free services without giving them real portability options, heading for a monopoly capitalism, where the suppression of privacy is 'at the heart of the platform model ' and where expanding and renting services will be key to their survival. Srnicek concludes that this huge scale has the network effect produced by the largest platform companies, such that 'even if all its software were made open-source, a platform like Facebook would still have the weight of its existing data, network effects, and financial resources to fight off any coop rival'. His conclusion is that only state regulations have the power to control platforms. Others called this platform model the 'surveillance capitalism ' (Zuboff, 2019) with an engine of advancing based on 'accumulation by dispossession ' towards 'new, undefended territories ' (Harvey, 2005).

Trying to avoid technological determinism, the concept of technological affordances is one way, where it is shown that 'affordances arise in the interaction between users and technological tools; thus affordances result through the interaction between the capacities of the technology and the capacities, goals, and culture of the user '.(Coretti page 27)

Feenberg explains the two layers to critically look for useful properties and identify affordances and second to re-contextualize with a socio-political environment. 'The primary level simplifies objects of incorporation into a device while the secondary level integrates the simplified objects to a natural and social environment' (Feenberg, 2004). On this front, the thesis will identify the affordances provided by CBIJ platforms and then will put them into the context of where such investigations take place, integrating questions and conclusions on the political economy of CBIJ.

Platform capitalism and post-colonialist context

The micro level is where control takes place, the macro level is where accumulation shows consequences; in between there is convenient interaction that justifies the acceptance of the other two. The argument is that 'digital platforms enact a twofold logic of micro-level technocentric control and macro-level geopolitical domination, while at the same time having a range of generative outcomes, arising between these two levels' (Schwarz, 2017). These in-between outcomes are the key points of why such arrangements are so easily accepted.

The argument of Schwarz is that platform logic has both the 'technical capacity of unyielding local control ' (micro level) and the 'consequential concentrations of global dominance by a handful of corporate actors ' (macro level). It is argued that in between these levels there is a intermediary link that produces 'efficacy, convenience and generativity ' (the meso level).

While using Schwartz description as pattern recognition, I will explore where corrections, social or tech or socio-tech, are possible.

Using the definition of Schwartz I will extrapolate in the investigative journalism platforms field: 'a platform is a digital infrastructure (software-based, but sometimes hardware-based)' (p376) intended for users to apply either computer code in the conventional sense (i.e. to run applications or fetch data from it), or to apply a set of human uses (delimited, formalized, and patterned by the design of the platform in question). This definition could cover both the journalistic interactions (human uses) and the coders interactions (supporting applications, software and hardware).

Schwarz observes Gillespie (2010) description related to media where a platform role goes beyond the computing capabilities and provides among other things a foundation for actions to take place, where opportunities and insight appear. In the news industry business where there is a premium on speed and insight, this is a lot of competitive advantage.

Tech as capture and expansion

Schwarz notes: 'individuals are not only users but also `inputs` since their participation creates value for other users '. So when such a platform is owned by someone, that value is captured by the owner.

'Platform logic is twofold; it rests on an interplay between local instantiations and global repercussions, something that Tilson et all. (2010) have called 'the paradox of control. ' When focusing on the local, intraplatform mode of operation, the digital character of platforms is seen to strongly determine structure; to all intents and purposes, this is an absolute form of control—totalitarian even. By contrast, when focusing on the cumulative, geopolitical power arrangements arising in the platform society, patterns can be observed that suggest similarly worrisome tendencies toward market dominance, colonisation, and consolidation. These two tendencies are intertwined: Superlative efficacy and network effects produce market leverage—in turn, this market penetration enables richer data and path dependency, thus more efficacy' (Tilson et all, 2010).

Schwartz concludes that in platform logic 'code-based control need not be a problem ' but the main issue is about who get's to decide about setting code-based rules, who runs the show and 'whose interests they serve' (p391).

This realisation opens the discussion of post-colonial analyses in the realm of technology. Scholarship in this field, looking especially from the STS perspective of intervention into the activity of hacking technology, observes the limitations of real diversity in both technology and communities that specifically aim at being inclusive and produce free and inclusive technologies, but also observes the little critical attention to these issues. 'Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are inseparable from the emergence and expansion of modern capitalism, colonialism and racial regimes of militarised power, yet they have remained peripheral to decolonial critique ' (Chakravartty and Mills, 2018, p1) and so mainstream or Western initiatives and organisations promoting free and open source technologies do not even consider that they may be

reproducing imperialist powers by not examining other needs and intentions outside the mainstream focus on privacy and libertarianism.

At the dawn of a the Iron Curtain and before the river of goodwill aid and expertise overflowing Eastern Europe and then the rest of the 'savage ' world outside the US and Western Europe, postcolonial theorist Edward Said writes: 'The colonised ' has since expanded considerably to include women, subjugated and oppressed classes, national minorities…The status of colonised people has been fixed in zones of dependency and peripherality, stigmatised in the designation of underdeveloped, less-developed, developing states…To be one of the colonized is to potentially be one of a great many different, but inferior things, in many different places, at many different times ' where the description of 'the colonized ' is to have people as 'dependents, subalterns, and subjects of the West ' (Said, 1989, p206-207).

Particularly relevant for the emerging field of CBIJ where so much comes from the US and expands globally is the observation that 'there is no vantage outside the actuality of the relationships between cultures, between unequal imperial and non imperial powers (…) When we consider the relations between the United States and the rest of the world, we are so to speak of the connections, not outside or beyond them ' (Said, 1989, p216-217). Furthermore, this translates in the technical realm, where this thesis will focus: 'an undemocratic technical system can offer privileges to its technical servants that might be threatened by a more democratic system…The most important means of assuring more democratic technical representation remains transformation of the technical codes and educational processes through which they are inculcated ' (Feenberg, 1999, p143).

Such a colonial tech approach is recognised at the global level, 'technologists are often implicated in impulses to solve perceived problems in the Global South with Global North tech fixes ' (Dunbar-Hester, 2020, p177) and it perpetuates an inescapable matrix of dominance. This platform capitalism model comes the closest to be used when investigating most of today's developments in cross-border investigative journalism network infrastructures, a model that opens the way for critical discussions related to control and surveillance in networks (Christle 2016; Spiekermann, 2016).

The most important fact to be analysed in the chapters which follow is if in investigative networks, owners of platform infrastructures are giving journalists the chance to access data and knowledge - their main raw materials – and if they are then monetising the data they obtain, for instance by relating the activities of journalists to the donors to non-profit investigative networks. If that is the case, then one can argue the field is regressing to a state of data feudalism. Central is platform and network effect in the realm of CBIJ.

Utilising the existing STS scholarship to shape the discussion of findings will mean investigating how technology (platformization) reinforces known processes of control thus making them possible in the digital realm but with consequences in journalistic real life. Since the search and info-exchange are the two main components of any CBIJ project, this is where the framework of this thesis goes, to find out through case studies the role of digital and offline investigative platforms on the process of communication during the content creation phase, and the power grab that follows.

I conclude that the intersection of criticism of techno-determinism and description of cultural hegemony are shaping the lens useful to scrutinize the public account of CBIJ, as well to make use of data collected through participatory observation, archival discovery, autoethnography, the methods and tools described in Chapter 2.

The next chapter will be about how to operationalize this theoretical framework in the current research and detail the methods and tools to support the research and data gathering efforts towards understanding how CBIJ is shaped, by looking at two different organizations when their main investigative projects overlap. Chapter 2 will describe how to apply both theory and tools to material gathered as participatory observer in two prominent cross-border investigative projects. This should inform to the main research questions: what are the power mechanisms in cross-border investigative journalism and is the current CBIJ model universal applicable ?

In particular, I will describe next why in this kind of analysis and at this moment in time there are only a few tools available to advance knowledge on this specific emerging field and why the focus of this research will be on the tensions behind the big claims of this industry. Since journalism production is a constant work of taking decisions of exclusion, I will focus on tensions produced by exclusion decisions, like who gets to join a network, who can be called an investigative journalist, and who gets to decides these things. My focus should be on documenting cases and occasions of exclusions, both from the general narrative of the genesis of this field and its practices and tools (Chapter 3) as well as from concrete CBIJ projects (Chapter 4 and Chapter 5) and then use this existing literature review for discussing the implications of findings in Chapter 6.

Chapter 2. METHODS AND TOOLS

During a formal discussion to describe this research to one of the co-founders of the Global Investigative Journalism Network, I was asked what tools and methods can ever explain cause and effect of early decisions to invite this or that person back in 2003 at the conference dedicated to establishing the Global Investigative Journalism Network, which is seen as one of the most important moments for this emerging CBIJ field.

That is not the point of this research and the focus is rather to take a step back and ask: what tools and methods can explain how such decisions are made, by who, and with what implications - who has the power to decide who decides?

As my theoretical framework shows, as interesting may be to know who is connected to who using SNA, more useful in order to understand CBIJ power mechanisms is to see where the tensions of exclusion arise and what are the tools of exclusions. This chapter describes how to operationalize my theoretical framework in my research by using autoethnography, archival research, content analysis as well as participant observation.

The first part of this chapter reviews my engagement with this field and how I interpret the developments that I have witnessed, discussing both the opportunities of, and limitations to, performing this research.

It then continues in the second part to discuss the concrete methods, tools and sources used and how initial reactions shaped this research design and ultimately set it on the present course. The types of data gathered will be described and it will conclude with the concepts and analytical categories that help make sense of what is known so far, outlining the limitations of what the data can tell us.

2.1. How and where to investigate CBIJ

My first research question is: What are the powers at play in CBIJ networks and what are the processes and its challenges ?
My second research question is: Are existing production networks of CBIJ universal replicable solutions ?

Before going into explaining the tools and methods used, this section will review my position in this research and in the wider field of CBIJ.

2.1.1. CBIJ journalistic practices and digitalisation

My view of the field

The starting point of this chapter is asking what exactly, from the CBIJ processes, can produce enough data to inform the impact on the ground of the different narratives and actions at play in this field. The process of choosing the right methods and tools is guided by the literature review and informed by my long-time experience in this field as well as by assessing what type of access is needed to produce data: is it quantitative, is it qualitative, or is it both ?

For a number of years now, cross-border investigative journalism has been migrating from the news industry into the non-profit realm and thus has given immense power to set the agenda to media assistance programs and other types of philanthropic interventions. Such actors are making (or breaking) networks of CBIJ by way of deciding (or not) to grant subsidies. Such grants are investing tax payer's money, either directly (through government agencies) or indirectly (through tax breaks for those who established private foundations).

However, because it needs quantifiable impact and metrics, cross-border investigative journalism is quickly coming back to the news industry in hybrid joint-ventures. Journalists are eager to collaborate, but are also caught in the middle, pressured by globalized and sometimes conflicting forces, as well as the various interests of state and philanthropic donors and media corporations.

What is Happening on the Ground

Like many journalists before him, Rosenau (2008) documents two trends over the last decades: on one hand, the world of globalised business, politics, crime is integrating swiftly, and on the other hand, global knowledge and understanding cannot keep up, meaning that journalists have a big role to play. The need for journalistic cross-border collaboration is claimed to be the 'next big thing'. But it would be incorrect to think this is a new phenomenon.

'Today, many of society's major issues cannot even be broached without addressing their global dimensions and context. […] Too often most of these kinds of significant but complicated issues are ignored as too complex or inaccessible because of insufficient time, expertise, or money to investigate them.' (Lewis, 1997). This was part of Charles Lewis's manifesto when he established the ICIJ more than two decades ago. It has since been longingly repeated during the last decades, sometimes as a prophetic call to arms, other times as a brand new discovered fact, at conferences, media assistance reports and in journalism books.

For almost three decades, journalists have been involved in building initiatives and organisations dealing first with crossing internal borders in the U.S., then externally on a global scale, and then crossing other types of boundaries (in data journalism), waving the flag of cross-border collaboration. Most prominent organisations positioned such actions outside of traditional media because of the limitations of the news industry (ICIJ Manifesto, Lewis 1997). Many of the cross-border initiatives gained traction in the field of investigative journalism, and more recently in data journalism, as part of the cross-border investigative journalism effort, finding a home in the non-profit realm with one foot in journalism schools.

The non-profit model is now merging with what is left of the traditional news industry and is triggering similar forms of cross-border organisation in the news industry. Standardisation is on the rise, and appears to be fuelled by a dependency on sponsorship, which requires standardised, mostly quantitative, impact measurement (e.g. vanity metrics – clicks and followers), and may explain why an activity that had positioned itself outside the news industry is moving back towards traditional newsrooms (Schiffrin and Zuckerman 2015). This means it also reverts to the old habits of media, since it is built by old participants who replicate the same constructs, even if they are using new tools (competition for resources, exclusivity approach).

Recent events show successful international development of such cross-border journalistic projects, a development that is nevertheless marked by a trend towards consolidation into a few big players

in the field and thus presents certain areas of concern: namely, as to who the biggest players are and where they are based, the question of centralisation and emergence of elites, dependency on a few donors, the exclusivity paradigm and the advertisement model.

Consolidation comes with a natural need for standardisation: firstly, in the way journalism and democracy are understood and secondly, in the way journalism operations should be run, from workflow to supporting tools.

A few models are being espoused internationally at conferences, at awards ceremonies and in what donors tell grant recipients they should do. A certain culture is emerging, with its celebrities and big crowds of followers. Such models and celebrities advertise a few investigative platforms, and pressure is exerted upon journalists to join them.

What journalists are doing

In practice, experience among journalists indicates that the context of journalism is changing with growing internationalisation, networking and digitalisation.

With internationalised power structures in all fields of life in need of being covered, journalists started to organise themselves internationally with new structures, (van Eijk, 2005; Smit et al., 2012; Kaplan, 2013; Lewis, 2016) to develop new working methods (Alfter, 2016/2) and legal considerations (Sullivan, 2010), related fields in the technological and academic communities involve considerations about technology designed to work in the public interest or technology as `the continuation of politics by other means` (Csikszentmihályi, 2016).

Both surveillance states and technology businesses rely on the gathering and analysing of big data, so it unsurprising that new practices of reporters should involve the processing and analysing of large data sets. Such practices need new methods for organising work and are highly dependent on technology. The latest cross-border mega-corporations show how central to the network technology is, especially in the processing of large data sets and exchanging information.

The internationalisation of cross-border journalism relies heavily on the rapid development of internet and communication technologies (ICT), which in turn makes journalists dependent on the new digital tools available and the business models and workflows developed based on such tools.

Such developments bring to light two new areas of concern. First, at the journalistic level, the investigative process and the relationship to sources is more than ever subject to surveillance by government and private communication agencies. Second, at the organisational level, such cross-border investigations become assets of private groups, which makes them vulnerable to market acquisitions, even by the very big agencies involved in the surveillance process (e.g. AT&T's acquisition of Time Warner).

It is therefore possible to identify a list of problems, challenges and different perspectives on cross-border collaborations in investigative journalism. There are critics of a universal model of journalism and some observe a direct link to an upsurge of nationalism in journalism (Zagidullina, 2015). There are barriers to understanding: attempts to translate journalism rather than understanding the way of communication of individual target groups in respect of journalistic and literary traditions, as well as national, regional and local contexts. Technical access and technical

understandings are growing boundaries to be crossed as well (lack of media literacy, lack of resources). Political systems are different, so different ways of doing journalism should reflect different political systems and cultures, therefore universal cross-border models inevitably reduce diversity. There are barriers to access: the question of who can access networks, at the individual level (coder, student, intern, woman or man, as well as other diversity issues like background, language and culture). Conflict between national legal issues play a growing role because of different legislation, solving a problem in one country means creating a problem in another country. There are conflicts arising from issues of ownership, including corporate ownership, competition following the exclusivity paradigm (fight for exclusivity) and finally various views on ethics and position of journalism in society.

Furthermore, power structures emerging in cross-border investigative journalism have to be taken into consideration and clearly defined, with a specific focus on the following general points: journalists care about business models or grassroots movements, or both; the relationships between for-profit and non-profit structures; the question of including the constitutive effects of evaluations when measuring impact in journalism; understanding what are the drivers for donors to provide access to funding for journalism non-profits – potentially including correlations to public diplomacy efforts, military operations, economic strategies and ideological propaganda; looking at how supported groups deal with donor dependency versus editorial independence and the possibility to maintain a critical mindset; analyzing to what extent does there exist control (by design) over the technology used; review the main new competencies in journalism vs. academia; education and training; identify control over the network infrastructure / arena (conference and awards); look for centralisation versus distributed / decentralised networking structures; revisit the taken for granted cross-border collaboration as a universal model.

My Role so far

For any practitioner in this field of CBIJ a paradox is visible: the more cross-border investigative networking occurs, the more centralisation appears. This makes certain networks more attractive than others and eventually they turn into platform. The end effect is ultimately that less investigative journalism is possible. Such a paradox has deep effects, to such an extent that firewalls arise within investigative teams working within same news organisations who are trying to take part in different platforms[27]. Control is involved, but is this intentional? Where and how exactly is it happening?

In choosing the right methods and tools to investigate how this paradox appearing in cross-border investigative journalism, I am informed by my actions as a practitioner in this field. My intuition is that such control appears in communication platforms and infrastructures, from taking control of face-to-face interactions (e.g. conferences) to controlling the project-based search and information exchanges (e.g. investigative platforms).

What exactly is my engagement with this field so far?

First, as a long time participant in this field and network facilitator, I myself have tried the 'entrepreneurial' approach, meaning that I have co-founded several investigative ventures, networks

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[27] This leads to logistical nightmares in terms of publication, as this piece of news shows, where one media had two teams, firewalled, working on the same topic, one together with the ICIJ and the other team alone https://web.archive.org/web/20200213163008/https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/02/12/new-york-times-scoops-its-own-collaboration-effort-then-apologizes-oversight/

and initiatives and was indeed involved with shaping several of the stakeholders that have become major investigative platforms in the CBIJ field[28]. I would say that the work I have done over the last twenty years has contributed to the foundations of investigative journalism-related initiatives in Europe and beyond (so I can clearly be biased having such a position).

Second, having publicly criticised the institutionalisation and centralisation of some of these platforms, I have noticed how criticism had the immediate effect of marginalising either myself or the people and organizations I collaborate with. Since 'membership presumes, as the norm, lack of questioning ' (White, 2008), critical voices and diverse views inside such platforms are not welcome.

Third, I have realised the importance of control over information, even in the smallest details, such as the decision to allow access to networks and direct communication channels or deciding whose conference participation is endorsed or owning the conference website[29].

And finally, I have taken my own observations and ideas and had the chance to test them in real life, establishing and coordinating a brand new investigative network (EIC, 2016), looking not only at the network itself but also at the interactions and overlaps it was producing in relation to existing platforms.

2.1.2. Qualitative research needed

Where to gather data from

Having reviewed what I need to look up, the question is how and where to look further in understanding networks of CBIJ. So how best to approach research into such a secretive field as cross-border investigative journalism? One is immediately faced with a number of challenges to start with.

First, except moments when face to face meetings occur (at conferences or at project dedicated meetings) there is no physical place in which the action of a CBIJ project takes place.

There is, however, one relevant physical space that can be observed, and that is the venue of specialised conferences, or what are referred to as networking infrastructure. In the context of my research, there is only one such relevant conference, the Global Investigative Journalism Conference (GIJC)[30], which is happening every two years since 2001.

There are limitations as to what can be observed in a conference in general and at GIJC in particular. The GIJC is becoming less transparent by the year in terms of the availability of

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[28] I have been involved in co-establishing the Global Network for Investigative Journalism in 2003 (http://web.archive.org/web/20090205174819/http://lists.globalinvestigativejournalism.org/pipermail/global-l); involved in co-eestablishing OCCRP between 2006 and 2011, expanding the network of journalists and running one of the first large projects (https://web.archive.org/web/20100827133346/https://www.reportingproject.net/peopleofinterest/); have been part of the ICIJ Offshore Leaks core team (between 2011 and 2013) contributing in shipping the ICIJ 'leak machinery ' used in mega leaks projects such as Panama Papers

[29] As an experiment to test the importance of such platforms, I took the step to register the domain names gijc19.org and gijc2019.org before the organisation of the Global Conference GIJC2019 has started, and offered it to the local partners of GIJN; this created a strong reaction from GIJN director and board who insisted that the control over the domain name should be hand out to GIJN staff.

[30] Not to say there are no other relevant events where investigative journalists meet, on the contrary, there may be too many, but GIJC is the only one that claims to cover this new field globally.

information that could be subject to meaningful observation, such as lists of participants and their details. On the other hand, such conferences publish a great deal of information online, before, during and after events, using conference platforms to organize the program and for self-registration[31]. But from the point of view of the value of such data, self-declared participation is not such a valuable data-point (systems in use permit anybody to login as attending even if they do not attend; also not all those attending are actually logging in).

Second, cross-border investigations may have no brick and mortar venues, but they have all developed virtual spaces that serve as the home for collaborative journalism and participants do meet face to face from time to time. Such spaces are usually secret, secured and protected from the outside world, leaving no chance for an outsider to perform direct observation. However, even watching such platforms from the outside may provide important information. They are usually off-the-shelf products, installed and managed by the organisation that hosts the collaborative work, meaning that the entire architecture and features of the technical solution can be studied since its code is publicly available or similar code can be used in other settings.

Also, related to meetings, there is a growing amount of material published after investigations such as books, reports or conference presentations, where the journalists involved in the process document and describe how the collaboration was executed. Such materials are used for presenting collaborations or reporting to donors, and while they are usually put together for the purposes of self-promotion, they nevertheless provide valuable information that can be cross-checked and restructured.

The wealth of data available online also needs to be managed from an archival perspective, and there are tools that help with the archiving of such resources for further preservation. There is also the Internet Archive, which constantly and automatically archives web pages from the last two decades, so it is possible to go back in time and compare versions of the same page or find pages that no longer exist, like past conference pages.

From SNA and process tracing to ethnography

It took me a while to understand the concrete practical challenges when a practicing investigative journalist becomes a critical researcher in his field of expertise. When I designed my research plan, I was counting on transparency practices I have witnessed in this field, a given standard at that point, and deep access based on my own activity, presence and contacts which stretch over two decades of participation in the field. Accordingly, my two directions were initially: 1) to collect data on actors/participants and 2) to observe directly on the job non-profit organisations that are involved in cross-border collaborations.

Among the first research tasks was collecting data for social network analysis and performing semi-structured interviews with major stakeholders in the field, as well as preparing for a survey during the 2015 Global Conference. The data collected (names and details of participants) was supposed to form the foundation of this research. Archival research uncovered all past GIJC conferences (2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2011[32]). Then I realised that from 2013 onward there was no more data available.

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[31] Since leadership of the conference was transferred from a volunteer committee in 2013 to a director, such list of names, media and direct contacts per country are not available anymore.

[32] These data-sets are now available in my archive only.

My request for access for the missing data, to the newly established director of the GIJN and the new established board, to the lists of participants of latest GIJCs (2013 and 2015) was denied. The GIJN Chair invoked the lack of a policy on how to deal with personal data of participants.

What is more, my plan to undertake field observation did not come to fruition because I was unable to secure the funding for the planed research trips. With partial data gathered and with no field trip possible, I would have produced only a snapshot of the networks I am looking at, which would not have been relevant due to the lack of context. Accordingly, I had to find another source of relevant data and another research plan.

The refusal to grant access to participant lists came at the same time as the institutionalisation of the GIJN that started in 2013 with the establishment of a permanent position of Secretary and continued through 2014 with registration of the GIJN as an organisation in the U.S.. Previously, lists of participants were always available to the participants themselves in order to find each other before, during and after the conference, and such past lists are accessible using online archive tools.

I conclude, therefore, that with institutionalisation comes control, with access to communication channels and contacts being routed through the intermediary who is in control – a visible change in the organisation of a previously informal network. This fact made me understand that I should explore both the venue of the GIJC and the GIJN itself as platforms and the journalists and organisations using such platforms as users. The way these platforms deal with the control of communication of users and the users' reactions informs the shape the organisation takes.

I reflected on what other such platforms exist in the non-profit realm and realised that I myself am part of a rather important one: the ICIJ. The ICIJ is a platform for its staff and members to talk to each other and to exchange group messages. For such communications, the ICIJ uses an email marketing solution and has different sub-groups of communication, for ICIJ members, partners and project-based interaction.

On top of that, each investigative project has historically used a bundle of different dedicated tools, but with the enlargement of the network and the first major leak investigation, the ICIJ evolved towards bundling their communication, information exchange and search tools into platforms.

I therefore decided to focus on how the communication process has evolved and is controlled in such platforms, in order to understand the power structures at play in the field of networked cross-border investigative journalism. For my case study, I focus on the ICIJ's Panama Papers, its latest large-scale cross-border project. This is giving me thee necessary boundaries within I can focus, the where of my research.

The second case study will offer an even deeper insight to a cross-border investigative collaboration. During my research, I was invited by a large media organisation, Der Spiegel, to write the concept and co-establish a European Network for Investigative Journalism. I presented a concept paper and a work plan, and sign up as the coordinator of a new network called European Investigative Collaborations (EIC). My observation and case study covers 2016 and the first month of 2017, during the project called Football Leaks. But I maintain under observation the developments that have come later, even up until 2020, and update with relevant consequences in footnotes or in the last chapter dedicated to conclusions.

The reason for observing these two major projects in detail is to shed light on the mechanisms of collaboration between journalists and investigative platforms. I try to understand the degree to which control is relinquished over research and journalists, the nature of the interaction with such platforms, and how the transfer of power from publishers to investigative platforms occurs. I investigate the scale of change in the following areas: networking, production and distribution of cross-border investigative journalism.

Participant Observer and Observing Participant

For both case studies, I use the methodology of the participant observer, because it involves 'getting close to people and making them feel comfortable enough with your presence so that you can observe and record information about their lives' (Bernard, 2006). It is the network 'professional life ' I am interested in. It is a 'strategic method' that suits my position, since I am placed in the middle of the action I want to observe. With such a position, I can collect all types of data, related to the professional life of a network, including narratives, numbers and surveys.

Much of the data collected by participant observers is qualitative (field notes, open-ended interviews or in this case notes on electronically mediated discussions and interventions). 'When it's done right, participant observation turns fieldworkers into instruments of data collection and data analysis' (Bernard, 2006).

Spending time as a participant on the platforms used for cross-border investigation builds trust (or rapport), resulting in ordinary, everyday behaviour from the participants. Attending meetings or engaging with the platform is possible only for an insider (for members in the case of ICIJ, or coordinators in the case of EIC).

I am concerned about my objectivity, but I understand I can train and build it as a skill. My goal is to transcend my bias and achieve accurate knowledge. I do identify myself with the phenomenon that I am studying, since I am fully immersed in it, but I am also aware that I need to switch back and forth between the insiders' view and that of an analyst.

'Objectivity does not mean value neutrality' (Bernard, 2006). I understand that there is no way to eliminate my personal involvement in the participant observation fieldwork, since I am part of the community that I study.

I also understand cross-border investigative journalists as one cultural group who agrees to expose and criticise power structures. There are five reasons why participant observations on cultural groups is best suited to my research. First, it opens access to these groups – it would be impossible to get access to a secret collaborative platform otherwise. Second, it reduces the problem of reactivity – especially with the journalists who master narratives techniques and could manipulate interviews [presence builds trust, trust lowers reactivity]. Third, it allows one to ask sensible questions – knowing the sensitive points and appropriate language. Fourth, it helps one understand the meaning of one's observations – instead of glorifying the use of tools I understand how people are restricted, for instance, by such tools [qualitative and quantitative data inform each other]. And fifth, it is the only possible solution for some research problems, like letting an outsider researcher to observe secret groups working on secret projects

Fieldwork Roles

Out of the three different roles that a researcher can take (1. complete participant; 2. participant observer; 3 complete observer) – I take the participant observer role, in two different ways: 1.) as an ICIJ member who is not involved the Panama Papers project, I research what I can, being a participant observer not involved in the project; and 2.) as an EIC co-founder and co-ordinator of Football Leaks, I am an insider and I conduct research as an observing participant involved in coordinating the project.

Both types of observation will inform each other, since 'total objectivity is, by definition, a myth' (Bernard, 2006) and more attention should be given to credible data and strong analysis than to the position of the researcher. Indeed, I am aware that in the end participant observation would help me intellectualize what I already know.

The key to high quality is formulating a clear question and limiting the study to five focus variables. Since the research is exploratory, as a researcher I can only guess what these variables are.

My main question is the following one: what are the mechanisms of collaboration between journalists that produce investigative platforms? My secondary questions are: what is the process of cross-border investigative journalism, and what are the powers at play, including the incentives that attract users?

My focus variables are (Carstens, 2012): pre-project (network), pre-publication (tools, team, drafts), publication (confrontation) influence the outcome on post-publication (new network) and socio-technical system, within the network and across the entire field.

I do not intend to personally identify anybody in the study, and will focus on actions not on people, but I do maintain a detailed log of people's actions, not intending to publish it. This is the how of my research.

Process tracing

An initial intention of this study was to use process tracing as an analytical method for the evidence collected. By doing so, the research plan was to attempt building a theory of the power structures of cross-border investigative journalism networks.

Process-tracing in social science is commonly defined by its ambition to trace causal mechanisms (Bennett, 2008a, 2008b; Checkel, 2008; George and Bennett, 2005). A causal mechanism can be defined as 'a complex system, which produces an outcome by the interaction of a number of parts' (Glennan, 1996).

Process-tracing involves 'attempts to identify the intervening causal process—the causal chain and causal mechanism – between an independent variable (or variables) and the outcome of the dependent variable' (George and Bennett, 2005).

There are different process-tracing outcomes. The three variants within social science are: theory-testing, theory-building, and explaining-outcome. In my case, I intended to use observations gathered in two different case studies and attempt the construction of a theory, since there is no

available theory that is applied to power structures shaping cross-border investigative journalism networks.

According to Beach and Pedersen (2013), 'theory-building process-tracing seeks to build a generalizable theoretical explanation from empirical evidence, inferring that a more general causal mechanism exists from the facts of a particular case'. The authors maintain that even if process-tracing is analytically useful, there is no literature that offers guidelines about how to proceed with this approach.

But while developing the analysis of my findings (in Chapter 6) I realised that theory-building cannot be the end result of the analysis. I will limit myself to a critical approach where I present several perspectives on the issue of investigative platforms.

Having to deal with an ongoing changing field, with variables from the tech, nonprofit, for profit, donors, I think the critical approach that is opening up to various perspectives is bringing a far greater contribution to knowledge than a theory building exercise would have done.

Conclusion on theoretical framework operationalised

Having reviewed what to the best of my knowledge are the relevant concepts, literatures, theories, methodologies and tools that can be applied to understand how power relationships of cross-border investigative journalism networks function, here is how I should operationalise my theoretical framework.

I draw on White's theory of identity and control, and of networks whose ties are defined by stories put in context. Reviewing the main stories (or claims) in this field, I identify the main themes (categories) of elements of cross-border investigative journalism networks. This will be explained more in detail during the next section, and the research will take the form of chapter three, focusing on the genesis of CBIJ.

The content analysis used to identify the main categories of elements that are claimed to form cross-border investigative journalism networks, are then validated (or not) and illustrated with elements from two different cross-border projects carried out by two different networks, but which overlap and influence each other, looking closer at those categories relevant in the context of communication as constitutive of organisations (CCO). I draw on CCO looking at the different levels of access to sites, texts and conversations, and review the different sets of powers in relationship to the capacity to create, manage and articulate them (the power to access, manage, articulate, create, represent). I discuss at points the influence of other network infrastructure relevant to my case studies, as well as the outside pressure exerted by donors and technology upon non-profit actors in this field.

During my research I aim specifically at finding a distinction between fact and potential, appearance and reality, and true and false needs in the sense of Marcuse's critical analysis. I then discuss the results of the organisation and utilisation of the resources of investigative journalism networks, and how technology is being used to institute new forms of control.

My empirical material derives from ethnography tools (autoethnography and participant observation), as well as from archival research (books, material related to such organisations,

statements, reports; articles published in industry magazines; blog posts, transcribed conference speeches, public emailing groups and other statements) and content analysis. The research makes use of a small number of in-depth interviews (eight), with a handful of main people behind the principal organisations or projects in this field. The limited number of interviews were conducted face-to-face and online, and most were audio recorded. Interviews were not anonymised, and are between one and three hours long.

The need of a qualitative approach is being validated by research papers published recently, dealing with both the wider field of CBIJ and with the work of ICIJ on Panama Papers.

First, with the help of a social network analysis of available data between 1998 and 2018 on staff and board members involved with organisations active in CBIJ processed data from 67 organisations and 3.410 individuals, Krüger, Knorr, Finke (2019) were looking to understand who are the most influential organisations and persons in this field. The general answer was that this is a spot occupied by US based organisations and journalists. But when trying to understand who are the 'grey eminences ' who hold influence that is not reflected in high-ranking spots highlighted by the SNA, the authors recognize the limitations of such a method and admit the need to 'conduct interviews with actors and content analyses of their journalistic output '.

However, another recent paper, where Lück, Schultz (2019) tried to explore the work of investigative data journalism in the context of a globalised world, looking at work done during Panama Papers, conducted an online survey with ICIJ participants. Even if the survey was run by a former participant in a previous ICIJ project (Swiss Leaks, for SZ) and that the survey was advertised three times by ICIJ management and by both of the journalists leading Panama Papers (Frederik Obermeier and Bastian Obermeyer), only 67 journalists responded out of 569 recipients of the survey form. Authors note that 'journalists are generally a difficult group to get a hold of for research (investigative reporters are even more suspicious of sharing information on themselves) '. Not only the low rate of respondents among journalists is relevant in this case, but also the substance of responses. For instance, even if the entire study was directed at a large group of journalists established around the work with leaked (stollen) source documents, some respondents indicated that they would 'not approve under any circumstances ' the following: using confidential business or government documents without authorisation - 3 responses; making use of personal documents (…) without permission - 14 responses; use unauthorised material - 24 responses. This type of responses contradict the very reason of these journalists to be part of the survey in the first place.

Since journalists are hard to convince to share through interviews accurate information on themselves and since SNA is not enough to show how power relationships work in CBIJ, it is therefore more appropriate to make use of qualitative methods such as ethnography (autoethnography and participant observation) as well as content analysis, but not on journalistic output, instead on public statements about the field of CBIJ and its landmark projects.

2.2. Qualitative research and newsroom ethnography

Qualitative research methods are most appropriate to study how microcosm cross-border collaborations are created and how they function (Bryman 2012; Denzin and Lincoln 2002; Flick et al. 2004). To see how and to what is being specially stressed – certain topics means to apply focus analysis, a specific principle of critical discourse analysis (Van Dijk 2011, 398).

Drawing on anthropology, the methods used in this research gain inspiration from newsroom ethnography work, having in mind that newsroom ethnography focuses on the privileged journalistic practices and that anthropology of journalism needs a process of self-reflecting work, a focus upon its own practices that 'need to place questions of the hierarchies of power in journalism and the academy ' (Wahl-Jorgensen, p34).

Wahl-Jorgensen (2009, p26) argues that the need to construct a field when looking at processes ('anthropological locations '), has been bringing too much attention to routines, thus bringing homogeneity in the spotlight over differences. Building on Anderson (2013) Ozan (2018) considers 'the space of news production is an environment of interactive engagement, in which journalists are compelled to respond to changing social, institutional, and technological dynamics within a journalistic culture '. Furthermore building on Cottle (2000) Ozan concludes that 'the entire organization of news production consists of a dynamic and complex network of intersections between journalistic practices, hierarchical positions, and textual platforms '. The location for this research on CBIJ, however, is not the newsroom (which is abruptly fading away from media operations anyway) but is following in the first place the interactive production of news (Bird, 2009; Cottle, 2000) site of contestation (Ryfe, 2016) and negotiation (Bird, 2009; Ryfe, 2009).

One of the methods I will use is autoethnography, which is 'a research method and methodology which uses the researcher's personal experience as data to describe, analyze and understand cultural experience and a form of self-narrative that places the self within a social context ' (Campbell, 2016).

Among the first to lead this field, Ellis (2011) describes autoethnography as 'an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno). '

If not focusing on the audience, at least revealing the power structures behind the scenes from the observational point of view of a participant. Looking at what people do as participant observer and analyze their activity (in time and space) and their input, instead of relying on interviews is avoiding missing important points that could help put things in the larger context and that are considered maybe irrelevant in the classic interview approach.

In the realm of meeting arenas (instead of newsrooms) looking at how tensions are solved when they arise, and how the virtual newsrooms are shaped by technology, thus shaping the emerging organizations, such meetings can give new perspective on leadership, hierarchy and control, democracy, inter-organizational collaboration.

Questions on leadership from the meeting arenas realm can be instructive: who is leading in the network realm? Haug, looking at global justice movements, is describing 7 types of leadership based on different sources of authority, with the first 4 being connected to the meeting infrastructures: organizers (related to meeting arenas); facilitators (responsible for progress); veterans (experience based); brokers (have good ties); experts (knowledge); representatives (have a constituency); mobilizers (have capacity to mobilize).

Hierarchy and control (what power struggles emerge in the meeting and who is gaining authority, by reporting to others back home o by summarizing discussions to spin action items and decisions)

and aspects of democracy (observe the dependence on newsrooms to be able to agree on things, like negotiations on the publication plan) that is reflecting on the network output; as well as change where meetings are seen as events that instigate change (they interrupt an existing flow and push for self reflection).

Also looking at the time and place coordinates is important: why in a specific place at a specific time, should it be not clashing with other events or rather happen at the same time ? This will inform about the bigger field, the calendar and geography of inter-organizational collaboration: how it relates to other inter-organizational infrastructures or resources (overlapping research meetings of ICIJ and EIC with larger events such as GIJC and Data Harvest); research show that face-to-face is not redundant to new communication technologies, because each does something else, where face-to-face is important for solidarity at distance; emails can be important important for divergence and diversity (Kavada, 2010) and face-to-face for unity; all relevant descriptive literature (Walker, Obermayer, Buzenberg) speak about building trust.

Important to look also for meeting numbers and their consequences: small (are they creative?), or big (do they produce conformity?) and the tendency for some to break into small groups or to push for plenary sessions.

2.3. How to clarify the public CBIJ narratives

What is a case study? Media studies point out that case studies should have a focus on the particular operations in a given situation that shows a bounded system (Hollifield and Coffey, 2006) like in the case of individual firms (Gershon and Kanayama, 2002) – CBIJ in the context of a project, like the Panama Papers and Football Leaks, are cases where firms are bounded by the agreement to assign individual reporters to form teams in order to research and produce news out of a shared data-set.

Not much analysis exists on what exactly can a study of organizations in the context of CBIJ networks can reveal because such projects happen in secrecy, with a very strong access control. Most of existing studies on this topic rely on interviews (Gearing, 2006; Melgar 2019; Ben Hur; Berglez; Alfter 2019) and post analysis of outputs (Heft, 2019).

So I chose case studies that are well known, that involve large-scale operations that I can detail, and most important, that highlight the tensions build in CBIJ, tensions that are not part of the public or academic discussions. But most important I focus on cases where I have access – since I consider that for this specific field at this specific stage in time access is most important.

This study's findings are based on two years of ethnographic fieldwork from June 2015 to June 2017 in the backstages of two networks (ICIJ, EIC) and their overlapping projects (PP, FL), from the position of an ICIJ member journalist not taking part in the Panama Papers and a co-founder and coordinator of EIC network, before, during and after the publication of its main project, Football Leaks.

The data generated from this field research are related to the mechanics of power in the daily activities, discourses, and interactions of journalists that occurred during the CBIJ production processes, prior to the appearance of the published CBIJ projects. Such data outputs refer to daily activities, discourses, interactions prior to publication – but mostly detailed meeting notes (for

routine meetings, one-to-one or small group meetings, extraordinary or crisis meetings, face to face meetings) and post-mortem evaluation of stories.

In the case of EIC and Football Leaks, my participant observer position is of full access and immersion.

In the case of ICIJ and Panama Papers, my observer role as an ICIJ member who did not take part in Panama Papers research is supplemented by a thorough analysis of the book Panama Papers (Obermeyer, Obermeier, 2016) that provides a detailed account of how the project backstage looks like, a book which I use extensively to cross-check with other sources using archival research and autoenthography and which I re-structured following the same pattern of CBIJ six steps process (Alfter) and my own analysis. My contribution when using this book extensively in Chapter 4 is to clarify and structure using outside sources the process of CBIJ in a landmark CBIJ project such as the Panama Papers, but also to later uncover contradictions of this official narrative by using authnography and further participant observation when Panama Papers overlaps with Football Leaks.

An additional interpretation of CBIJ is presented to shed light on the process by which CBIJ genesis came to be, and there is no time limitation for my ongoing auto ethnographic effort that started long before this PhD research and continues in the present. Also, especially in order to describe the intersection between relevant meeting arenas and their context, I sometimes have to use autoethnography constructing a self-portrait in order to explain my role.

For the duration of my fieldwork, I was present online in the various communication and research electronic spaces used, as well as offline during face to face meetings at events dedicated to EIC investigative research, events that I co-organized and coordinated, and as well at industry conferences such as the Global Investigative Journalism Conference and Data Harvest.

As a participant observer, my principal objective was to immerse myself in the CBIJ social world: to observe from the inside how communication unfolds, mediated or face to face, how tech tools and governance rules shape the CBIJ networks, and how the research process in CBIJ works.

I attended editorial meetings, had private chats with CBIJ practitioners, and joined casual conversations in newsroom, cafés or bars. Specifically on EIC, I spent during the fieldwork each day working more then 10 hours in the network chat, each week spent one hour running the weekly network meeting, and dedicated several emergency meetings and face to face meetings on the content side; as well as spending several hours per week dedicated to the EIC tech team that was building the tech tools needed by the network (building a search tool and integrating information exchange applications) where my role was to bridge between the needs of journalists and the tech possibilities.

This participant observation was supplemented by eight in-depth, semi-structured interviews. I chose strategically the targets of these interviews and the stage in time when these interviews were made: from the donors perspective I interviewed Algirdas Lipstas (heading the Independent Journalism Program at OSF in London) and Merel Borger (heading a similar program at Adessium Foundation) both two of the most important foundations granting large sums of money to CBIJ operations; the director of ICIJ Gerard Ryle (before Panama Papers was published); the founder of

CPI and ICIJ Charles Lewis (before Panama Papers was published); the former head of CPI before ICIJ split, Peter Bale (after his departure from his role at CPI/ICIJ and after Panama Papers was published); one of the first and longest mainstream media partner of ICIJ, David Leigh, from The Guardian (before Panama Papers was a published); one of the main freelance senior journalists involved in ICIJ projects from the first project until Offshore Leaks, both investigative journalist and data journalism manager, Duncan Campbell; and finally Brigitte Alfter, an ICIJ member and the initiator among other CBIJ ventures of Data Harvest, the main investigative journalism conference in Europe.

The goal of these interviews, done at an early stage in the research, was to first cover a sample of CBIJ stakeholders that would also offer a sample of the main roles involved (sometimes overlapping in the same person): investigative journalist, investigative editor, non-profit manager, CBIJ board member, trainer, conference organiser.

The above interviews had a pre-structured list of questions divided in five parts, modelled on the five levels of influence on the global journalist (Reese, 2001): individual; routines (dealing with journalism and dealing with her main organization); organization (related to the interaction within the organization and the outside, especially the interaction with the Global Network for Investigative Journalism); extra-media (related to the interaction with Donors); ideology (what is the CBIJ dream-structure and eco-system). The interview included a short network exercise[33]. The semi-structured interview turned more into a guide of interview, and had a duration between one and three hours, depending on the setting (face to face interviews with Charles Lewis, David Leigh, Duncan Campbell and Algirdas Liptas were longer then online interviews with Gerard Ryle, Peter Bale, Brigitte Alfter and Merel Borger).

The intention was to enlarge the sample to 30 interview subjects and furthermore to shape based on this a shorter online survey for both ICIJ and GIJC subscribers, a total of 1.500 possible recipients. This plan was abandoned.

Second purpose, it was to get a feeling of the limitations of performing such interviews. And the limitation kicked in quite fast, when realising that a lot of the responses were similar to public statements, conference presentations, blog posts or book chapters, which made me realise that I will not be able to go much deeper with such an approach. At that point I decided to move towards participant observation in the real life of a CBIJ network and project and stop collecting interviews. I also stoped building up a survey.

The collected information in interviews is used, where relevant, to add background information to specific events, since interviews brought also some historical relevant information. Also, the collected interviews helped shape not only the choosing of new methods (participant observation and autoethnography) but shaped the area most needing such an attention, which is the communication in meeting arenas, face to face and mediated.

Informed by limitations of already published research based on SNA or surveys (see below), I specifically choose not to include quotes from interviews made with participants in the case studies chapters 4 and 5. The reason lies with the limitations of the insight given by quotes in interviews in substantiating my analysis. I focused more on using these interviews as a guideline towards

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[33] Asking for 3 names of journalists discussing journalistic practices, 3 asking for advise and 3 names for journalist friends in order, an network collection exercise inspired by a Pharma study with 125 respondents (Coleman, Katz, Menzel, 1957)

collecting participatory observation data on communication, processes and tools, instead of illustrate my findings. Another strong reason to not use quotes in Chapter 5 is related not only to the secrecy of such work but also to the fact that the source of the Football Leaks data leak is currently before court in Portugal, and there could be legal implications for both Football Leaks participants and the source when detailing work with such a data-set[34].

I also made use of a preliminary SNA calculation of degrees of connectivity between boards of CBIJ non-profits. The role of the preliminary SNA, done early in this research, was to understand what findings are shaping with the data available and to evaluate if 1.) enough data was available (relevant data was just becoming unavailable as a response to my initiative to gather data, in the area of participants and panelists at the Global Investigative Journalism Conference); 2) if data would be consistent across the CBIJ field (it is not, especially when it comes to boards and staffs, that kind of information is widely unavailable outside the US and UK).

Even if I progressed from social network analysis and interviews to ethnography tools of participant observation and autoethnography, I am able to use where necessary information from recently published work on the research directions originally envisioned. A recent social network analysis of 67 entities over a period of 21 years by Krüger, U.; Knorr, C.; Finke, F. (2019) looking at the entire CBIJ global field, a survey of Lück, J; Schultz, T (2019) on 67 Panama Papers and Paradise Papers ICIJ participants and an analysis of the twitter presence of Panama Papers by Heft, A. (2019) in search for CBIJ transnationally networked public spheres.

Making use of archival research, content analysis and user analysis on technology used by the CBIJ networks is also based on autoethnography note taking done on a continuous basis before and after the field work of this current study, autoethnography focused on commercial and non-profit media ownership, management, network decisions and technology user experience. I was involved in critical observation of media during my two decades, first in the context of my own national landscape in Romania (Candea, Ozon, 2005[35] and Candea, 2011[36]) and post 2011 in the documenting and publishing critical assessments on OCCRP (Candea, 2011), GIJC (Candea 2014, 2019) and data journalism (Candea, 2020[37]). So I make extensively us throughout this thesis of public and private archival records (Denzin, 1978) making use of the internet archive and my personal collection of conference documents, publications, websites, conference descriptions, media descriptions in general but also news industry publications and mailing lists (Berg, 2009).

Realised that a lot of the material I am getting is used for self-promotion and has consistency in claims made publicly and sometimes needs some critical approach (Berg, 2009). Looking in the interviews and meeting notes for themes, then placing the themes into categories to reveal the process of CBIJ and the logic of the field.

I am also using a few public voices throughout chapter three and chapter four because of two reasons: first, there is only very little published on this new field of CBIJ, and mostly is published by stakeholders; second, to my best knowledge nobody actually looked with an informed critical eye to fact check the claims made in such texts, their veridicality when checked against actions or

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[34] https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-portugal-footballleaks-crime-idUKKCN2570YX

[35] https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-arhiva-1211175-dinozaurii-media.htm

[36] https://niemanreports.org/authors/stefan-candea/

[37] an upcoming chapter in the Data Journalism Handbook 2

other sources, their impact on the wider field. The small number of voices and published material existent (and extensively referenced in this thesis) shows also how very privileged few really do have a voice and a stage in this emerging field of CBIJ.

Besides participant observation as a collection of data strategy, I also use short post-mortem surveys (within the EIC network, I asked for feedback after Football Leaks was over) and I cross-reference these observations with data originating from archival research.

Since an important part of my research gives me access to data produced by the platform used, I use in detail the technical descriptions where available and possible, or statistics produced by the platforms (e.g. statistics produced by sandstorm.io, the platform used by EIC, related to the list of users, their usage metrics etc). I will investigate what these platforms offer from an outside perspective (e.g. users with pgp keys, notifications system etc).

Total Users	97
Active Users	97
Total Rooms	628
Total Channels	15
Total Direct Message Rooms	606
Total Messages	85290
Total Messages in Private Groups	497
Total Messages in Direct Messages	80525

Fig 3. Number of EIC chat messages. This shows the type of data available in the Sandstorm information exchange platform where the main chat system (Rocket.Chat) used by EIC during Football Leaks (starting in June 2016) is providing metrics (total users, total rooms in existence) but not content. The system shows that out of more than 85.000 messages exchanged through the app, only 5.000 are exchanged for all users to read, and more than 80.000 messages where direct messages (person to person).

A general list of the tools put at use to operationalise the theoretical framework of this study: archival research and review the content of online archives, public email lists, observation (GIJC), internal documents; content analysis; testing the supporting software from the user perspective; where online archives are not available search deeper with the tools of archive.is / archive.org and contribute to the online archives by uploading online sources showing when the content was archived by url containing the date; archival research and review content on other sources: book on Panama Papers, internal membership e-lists, meeting notes, meetings, emails; because a lot of research relies on online published material, I decided to quote the archived urls of text I quote, thus including a date/time stamp on the material and making sure the content will not get lost; I use using two separate tools, most of the time the Internet Archive (www.archive.org) but for websites that do not accept such tools, I use http://archive.is/, a tool to collect snapshots of web pages.

All conversations and interviews during the research were carried out in English or German and all of the meeting notes and observations are in English or Romanian (translations to English from German and Romanian are mine) .

As the main units of analysis in this study, the claims, actions and limitations of CBIJ participants were analysed with regard to their interaction with, first, CBIJ issues of access control and exclusion, and second, the six steps of CBIJ processes, in four different contexts: (1) Interviews, feedbacks or public statements, (2) everyday interactions (3) offline and online platforms, and (4) autoentographic archival research.

GIJN and ICIJ are US based non-profit organisations and EIC is a not-registered association of media partners (project based and non-profit partners); all are investigative journalism networks operating from multiple locations (ICIJ and GIJN have offices in the US; EIC address is represented by Der Spiegel in Hamburg). Currently EIC has no staff (only freelance and part-time collaborators including myself); ICIJ has a staff of approximatively 40; GIJN has a staff of 20. All have either boards of advisors or directors, or both.

I chose ICIJ and EIC as my comparative case studies for three reasons. First because the deep level of access: having been involved with ICIJ as a member since 2006 and having participating in various projects, including the first mega-leak investigation of Offshore Leaks, and having good working relationship with an important number of ICIJ members; having been the co-founder of EIC network and its first coordinator (this position continues in the presence). Second because it was possible to shape EIC based on a contesting ideology related to CBIJ vis-a-vis ICIJ and at the same time test what is replicable from the ICIJ model and what is not, keeping mind that some members and media partners of both networks overlap (this will eventually lead to a tension when PP and FL do overlap). Third, because both networks engaged in large scale cross-border investigations.

I choose to look at the genesis of CBIJ through the lease of GIJN because I have been involved with GIJN since its establishment in 2003 and being a panelist and organiser until 2015 that gave me the in-depth access, knowledge and chance of cross-checking claims made by stakeholders with auto ethnography research and observations.

During my ethnographic fieldwork, my critical view on the current development of CBIJ (which may be termed my 'researcher bias') helped me developing a rapport with EIC journalists, some of them aware of the limitations of ICIJ or GIJN. Also, this research contributed to my praxis, being informed by autoethnography, participant observation, archival research, content and user analysis.

Conclusions

It is clear that what is suppose to be a non-hierarchical informal CBIJ network of journalists once made to fit into a given platform to do work, it will have to take the shape of that platform, which will follow for sure a top-down hierarchy. So going upfront and ask about power plays the different statkeholders and regular journalist participating in CBIJ is not going to work. Highly trained narrators, having to navigate the slippery world of networks, will not provide much critical assessments on the record. 'Next time no more party ' is the warning published by the Panama Papers managers.

How is the operationalize my theoretical framework impacting my research questions ?

My first research question is: What are the powers at play in CBIJ and their networks ? For this I am looking into underlying infrastructures of such networks (offline, like conferences, and online, like technological platforms to support information exchange and investigative networked production). My goal is to determine how access control is performed when boundaries of this field are drawn and how power balances shift during the process. And off-course I am looking at how exclusion decisions are taken.

My second research question is: If such systems of CBIJ pioneered by ICIJ are based on managing exclusion decisions, are they replicable by those who do not get accepted ? If yes, at what scale and what does it take ? Responses to this question will be especially informed by looking at the emerging of EIC with the Football Leaks data project and the overlap to Panama Papers of ICIJ.

Limitations of this research design

My own access to data initially sought for has been diminished by the adverse reaction from stakeholders in the field in the face of independent research (GIJN and GIJC) and as well as what is perceived as competition in the Field (ICIJ vs. EIC). Doing case study research on the relationship between media and digital intermediaries other authors complain about how difficult is to get editors and journalists to talk and the need of anonymity (Kleis Nielsen, Ganter 2018; Lück, Schultz, 2019).

And yes, one major limitation is that this research is looking at the largest CBIJ collaborations to date, at the elite of mostly Western European and US newsrooms and at the journalists involved, so is actually 'Studying Up ' (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2009), not looking at what and how such work is really impacting the audiences in different places where stories are making revelations or where focus on CBIJ is missing important local stories. But I do so consciously, while trying to look specifically for power structures and bring a reflexive approach to practices I am involved with, especially coming from an Eastern European journalist.

Also, a strategic case study selected to enable logical generalization (Luker, 2008); maybe not representative, but strategic allowing for logical generalization even if most networks will be likely less big, have less resources for technology and meetings and less time.

Other limitations are related to the fact that maybe not all relevant data were collected or not all relevant tools to be able to measure fine grained (like at the beginning of this research there was no way to measure who's talking for how long in each meeting, online or offline; or who's adding the most relevant input in the system). It is possible that maybe I evaluate things in a wrong way – and therefore more empirical work is needed. There are limitations on time, funding, complexity added to have to move from my own country (Romania) and do most of the work away from the university. Also, exploring in detail PP and FL as well as ICIJ and EIC interactions could be a unique moment that will not necessary have relevance in the future.

Moving on

I now proceed to use the theory framework and the research methods and tools mentioned above and illustrate the process of cross-border investigative journalism focusing on power and control.

Chapter 3 will list findings related to the genesis of CBIJ, focusing on what's being left out.

As a participant observer in PP (ICIJ), chapter four will look at what is out there, both in public and archival, in the realm of meetings (face to face and online mediated) and will highlight the gap: details about power structures of meeting arenas and details about tensions in overlapping with other meeting arenas are not known.

Further on, as an observatory participant in FL (EIC), chapter five will show what are the different characteristics of meeting arenas of EIC during FL and what are key meeting arenas that overlap with both ICIJ and EIC. Chapter five is to actually document that specific gap identified in chapter four, which is what does the meeting arenas and meeting events show about organizations workings CBIJ networks.

The findings will be discussed and analysed in chapter 6.

Chapter 3. GENESIS OF CBIJ

Recent decades have seen the slow rise of cross-border investigative journalism, culminating in the large international network of almost 400 participants that delivered the Panama Papers, a series of articles that was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 2017. This chapter is dedicated to reviewing the historical background of this journalistic practice: its origins and evolution, its main actors and central claims.

The globalising phenomenon of cross-border investigative journalism evolved historically during the last three decades towards the main actors active within the present boundaries of this field. Using autoethnography and a genealogy approach – the archeology of today with the help of archival research - this chapter will add context to what is publicly stated by the official global evangelists of CBIJ, in order to identify different views and the CBIJ narrative they tell about the genesis of this field. By pointing out important developments in this emerging field, as well as its practices and tools, this is laying the ground for the next chapters that detail the processes and challenges of CBIJ. The chapter responds to the *why* and the *how* CBIJ developed. Having its roots in the elitist approach of US investigative journalism of the 70's as well as being further motivated by the news industry editorial and financial limitations, CBIJ grew at the same time when traditional media was expanding towards outsourcing beyond the physical newsroom (in the time when some media was expanding and local media was shutting down). CBIJ grew fast because a few very important phenomenons: easier and cheaper travel, globalisation in the contest of post-Cold War and technology advances. CBIJ was - and still is - bankrolled by non-profit private and governmental funds, making a case about the work with data that could bring democracy and the rule of law across the world, and exporting an impressive number of US based organisations, experts and bureaucrats of CBIJ across the world, exploding the number of dedicated conferences with more and more participants by the year.

But what does the tech positivism and network effect created by the current CBIJ leave behind ? Cross-border investigative journalism is spreading around the world a hegemonic journalistic model that has fluid theoretical boundaries but that shaped very clear physical and electronic boundaries. This chapter aims to explain the clear physical and electronic boundaries of this field: who belongs to CBIJ, as well as the key themes around which discussion is organised.

3.1. Building an Identity: Excluding the unethical, incompetent, unskilled

CBIJ today looks like an elitist global taskforce of truth-tellers. This narrative was build up in the '70 in the aftermath of the Watergate scandal, in order to enforce some boundaries around who can claim to be an investigative journalism and who can't. Precision journalism was glued to that identity so it provided also a scientific edge (away from literary techniques) and evolved towards the data-journalism of today, an attribute of CBIJ. It was that easy to construct a prescriptive narrative, ready to be exported from the US around the entire world in the context of globalisation at the end of the Cold War, end especially using emerging democracies in Eastern Europe as a laboratory of expansion.

3.1.1. US: defining the boundaries by creating a narrative

The origins of the field: preserving the craft

'The Panama Papers has showed that a formerly unthinkable project of collaboration can work. When we shared the data of the papers with a team of 400 reporters worldwide, we brought together a vast number of investigative reporters who typically compete which each other. The main reason why our newspaper, the German newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, shared the story with competitors was simply that it was too big and too important to do alone.' ('We broke the Panama Papers story. Our next mission: Donald Trump', 24th January 2017, *The Guardian*[38]*)*

The above quote comes from a 2017 article authored by the initiators of the ICIJ's largest project to date, The Panama Papers, and urges American journalists, to 'unite, share and collaborate', claiming that such an undertaking would 'mean embracing something quite unfamiliar and new to American journalism' (Obermaier and Obermayer, 2017). It is a call to arms to the best of the best to rally and investigate Donald Trump, the new US president. By the end of his tenure, nothing of that sort has happened. But the rhetoric of the article is worth analysing. Is collaborative cross-border investigative journalism really something unfamiliar to American journalism? This chapter will show that on the contrary, cross-border investigative journalism started in the U.S. and was subsequently exported around the world, and that its main players are American individuals and organisations. Not only that the authors of ICIJ Panama Papers & *The Guardian* seem not be aware of a long U.S. history of investigative journalism collaborations, but the collaboration of 400 journalists in 2016 cannot be 'unthinkable ', provided one is aware of at least ICIJ previous projects just a few years back, like Offshore Leaks, Swiss Leaks, Lux Leaks, projects where on average more than 100 journalists have collaborated.

A historic account of the genesis of cross-border investigative journalism seems to be necessary, in order to put things in perspective. In 2016, shortly after the same Panama Papers was launched, Sheila Coronel's keynote speech at the annual conference of the U.S.-based organisation Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE) claimed that 'the era of the lone wolf is over' and described how a 'golden age of global muckraking' had been in the making for the last decade[39]. 'A borderless world needs watchdogs who can transcend borders' she continued (Coronel, 2016). The speech was held in front of almost 2,000 people, mostly U.S. journalists (Coronel occupies several board seats in the non-profit investigative world, among them charing ICIJs board[40] at the time of writing this thesis). Two decades before that speech, the same observation had been made when the ICIJ, the organisation who broke the Panama Papers story, was established in 1997 in the US: 'Today, many of society's major issues cannot even be broached without addressing their global dimensions and context. […] Too often most of these kinds of significant but complicated issues are ignored as too complex or inaccessible because of insufficient time, expertise, or money to investigate them' (Lewis, 1997). Lewis states that he had the vision to start such a network in the early 1990s when visiting post-communist Moscow in a context of an International conference for journalists. In fact, the crossing of borders and collaboration among investigative journalists working for competing media has been advertised since the mid-1970s, when IRE was established. Back then, according to a longstanding IRE director who is now Chair of the Global Network for

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[38]   http://web.archive.org/web/20170124114114/https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/jan/24/panama-papers-media-investigation-next-donald-trump-hold-accountable

[39]   http://archive.is/2017.03.27-170324/http://gijn.org/2016/06/20/a-golden-age-of-global-muckraking/

[40] https://www.icij.org/about/icijs-story/

Investigative Journalism, 'nearly 40 journalists from 23 outlets teamed up to tell the Mafia you cannot kill journalist'[41] (Houston, 2016).

So what exactly constitutes the novelty of this field of cross-border investigative journalism today, where did it start, who are its main actors, and what are its current boundaries? This chapter will review all of these questions and situate the developments of this field in their historical context. Any inquiry into this field should start by focusing on the historical evolution of a small group of names that are restricted to an even smaller number of organisations, all of which are based in the U.S.. In order of appearance, these organisations are: Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE), the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ), the Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN) and its biannual Global Investigative Journalism Conference (GIJC), and the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP).

IRE: its origins as both arena and interface across federal borders in the 1970s

In 1975, shortly after the Watergate scandal, a national membership service organisation was established in the U.S. as an attempt to preserve the journalism profession, an organisation that now boost 5,000 paying members – Investigative Reporters and Editors.

The inception of the IRE

IRE came about in 1975, the year after the press coverage of the Watergate scandal, above all in the *The Washington Post*, led to the resignation of President Richard Nixon. The publicity around the story made investigative journalism so popular that 'the ethical and unethical, the competent and incompetent, the skilled and unskilled – wanted their own Watergate to bring them fame and fortune[42] (Aucoin, 2007, p181). IRE originated in Indianapolis, based on a donor check and a meeting in Reston, Virginia to establish an informal organisation called Investigative Reporters and Editors, to deal 'with the nuts-and-bolts concerns with a minimum of philosophical discussions' (Aucoin, 2007). A steering group to work on preparing a national meeting was then formed. The first report of the working group was sent to the donor (Lilly Endowment, Inc.) and was part of the expenses report: the 'executive committee was directed to undertake a survey to determine the services needed by journalists, issue press releases on the meeting, seek funding, determine procedures for a formal organization, build a directory of investigative reporters, and plan a national meeting' (Aucoin, 2007).

From the start, IRE tried to establish itself within a university, having to choose between locations at universities in Boston, Massachusetts and Columbia, Missouri. The first IRE conference also started the first cross-border investigative reporting and publishing project, labelled 'a mammoth collaborative journalistic enterprise' (Marron, 1997). It was triggered by the murder of IRE member Don Bolles, a reporter for *The Arizona Republic*. According to veteran investigative reporter Craig Pyes, the origins of cross-border investigative journalism can be traced to the formation of IRE and the first cooperative investigation into the murder of Bolles. The project took thirty-eight journalists from twenty-eight newspapers to work together and highlight the web of corruption connecting local organised crime with public officials that led to Bolles's murder. 'From the day of Bolles's death, Wednesday 13 June 1976, to the 1981 resolution of a series of lawsuits from *The Arizona*

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[41] http://archive.is/2017.03.27-170949/http://gijn.org/2016/04/13/panama-papers-showcase-power-of-a-global-movement/

[42]   Edit ref. James L. Aucoine, The Evolution of American Investigative Journalism, p. 181

Project, IRE was usually controversial and seldom out of the media's spotlight. Internal dissension; external criticism; scorn by the elite media; and *The Arizona Project's* series of twenty-three stories about the Machiavellian manoeuvring of Arizona-connected mafia, politicians, professionals, and business people, were among the hallmarks of the organization's early years' (Marron, 1997, p61). The first five years of IRE's existence (1976 –1981) were shaped by actions related to Bolles's death. According to Marron, these years were a drain on the organisation, which nevertheless survived with national publicity, credibility and a 'corps of perspective leaders'[43] (Marron, 1997, p61). Its early years were marked by fights and criticism from within, which were expressed in the media.

The IRE founding group had to choose between continuing the publishing of projects and offering of infrastructure and help to members. They considered it 'more efficient and more successful' to help journalists 'to follow leads outside their circulation areas'. IRE's first president (Robert Green) intended to give the organisation a cross-border scope, making it a 'grassroots, functioning organization throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico' (Marron, 1997, p72).

After the Arizona Project ended and inspired the publication of a long series of articles, as well as books about how it was done, several newsrooms started to allow similar partnerships on a smaller scale, and even included freelance journalists in the scheme. Nevertheless, due to internal scandals produced by reporting on the Arizona Project, IRE continued to shift the focus from reporting towards organising conferences and servicing membership, which were considered ways of fulfilling the initial need for a 'nationwide network while undertaking their investigation' (Marron, 1997, p57). In short, instead of spending resources on investigative journalism, IRE choose to focus on providing the necessary arena for showcasing the best work, practices and tools.

At the same time, two organisations granting money for investigative reporting were already active in the U.S.: The Alicia Patterson Foundation (founded in 1965) and the Fund for Investigative Journalism (founded in 1969). In 1977 a group of journalists (among them Lowell Bergman) established the Center for Investigative Reporting (CIR) in California, an organisation focused on publishing investigative stories, some of which reached across U.S. borders. One of the first foreign investigations was undertaken in 1981 by Mark Schapiro and David Weir on pesticide dumping, called 'Circle of Poison'. Five years later, in 1986, David E. Kaplan and Alec Dubro published their investigation on the Yakuza[44]. It was a slow start. In the early years, as it is today, the system of publishing investigative journalism relied on a combination of money from grants, traditional media and the non-profit sector. As Craig Pyes recalls, 'I started collaborating with CIR in 1979, reporting on corruption in the drug war in Mexico, and CIR used to write me a letter of recommendation and the Fund would give me a grant, and in return I would credit CIR on the story when it was published'[45] (Pyes, 2015). And, as it is today, such reports were published by the for-profit news industry. Similar to how today non-profit journalism like ICIJ needs to rely on strong international commercial media partners (like The Guardian) to amplify its stories.

A short history of the role of grants in investigative journalism

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[43]   Maria B. Marron : The Founding of IRE The Founding of Investigative Reporters and Editors, Inc. and the Arizona Project: The Most Significant Post- Watergate Development in U.S. Investigative Journalism, American Journalism Historian Association, Volume 14, Number 1, Winter 1997

[44]   https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/entertainment/books/1986/10/26/the-shadow-of-japans-criminal-empire/53e7e332-507e-4eda-8da9-f6c150f4c3e5/?utm_term=.d55ab05dd060

[45]   Interview with Craig Pyes at Data Harvest, 2015. Three decades on, Kaplan will become the director of the Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN).

From the early years of cross-border investigative journalism, this emerging field was supported by grants. As seen above, grants had a role in sustaining both the early arena (conferences, training) and the early interface (published projects) of investigative journalism. In order to understand the development of cross-border investigative journalism, the history of the field needs to take into account the context in which it grew. The grantmaking sector grew in parallel with the expansion of cross-border investigative journalism (a review of key political, economic and technological moments will follow below). To start with, some of the people involved in this field from the early years note that such journalism initially needed little in the way of resources. As Lowell Bergman of the CIR notes, 'Back 40 or 50 years ago, some of us did it for nothing' and that some grant givers from that period are still operating in the sector: 'Remember that when Sy Hersh did the My Lai story, which is a Pulitzer Prize-winning story about massacres in Vietnam, he had to go to the only existing nonprofit organization at the time, the Fund for Investigative Journalism, and get a grant to cover his expenses. It's the same place I went to in those days'[46] (Gladstone, 2008).

However, this period also saw the emergence of governmental foreign aid programs, some of which became involved in media and journalism. In the context of the Vietnam war, the U.S. Department of Defence wanted to engage USAID in wining the 'hearts and minds' of local populations, and since they did not know how to measure the effectiveness of such programs, the US government commissioned outside consultants to design a guidebook (Gasper, 2000; Solem, 1987). The Logic Framework Approach and the associated LogFrame Matrix were born by a D.C. consultancy company[47], and this system of evaluation and monitoring of projects was adopted by the U.S. government branch dealing with aid and development (USAID), before spreading rapidly around the whole world. Between 1970s and the 1990s, major development agencies were established in Western Europe, all of which needed a bureaucratic model to evaluate and monitor grants. Such a widespread system was also quickly adopted by private foundations, and it has shaped the aid and development industry for the last five decades. In short, this framework states that projects should be evaluated based on input, output, outcome and impact. As Pomerantz notes, 'Critics contend that the methodology is too rigid, overly simplistic, ethnocentric, and devoid of organizational context. Donors often mandate the approach ex post facto, after development workers have already designed or implemented a project, disconnecting the process from reality. The approach favours quantitative data, sometimes rarely available or unreliable, over qualitative data, and easily ignores beneficiary experiences. It also restricts adaptation and often favors a single community perspective or outcome' (Pomerantz, J.R. 2011). It is important to establish the above facts at the beginning of the history of cross-border investigative journalism network because starting with the establishment of IRE, no single major development in this field over the last five decades has been disconnected from the non-profit and grantmaking industry, private or governmental or mixed. Knowing how projects are going to be monitored and evaluated leads to customised project proposals that focus on quantitative results, such as conferences and workshops where the number of participants can be accounted for. This explains why so much of the outline of the boundaries of this field in what follows is related to the conferences, training and the focus on numbers that were initiated by IRE in the U.S. and continued by the Global Investigative Journalism Conferences, first in Europe with an eye on Eastern Europe, and then worldwide.

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[46]   http://archive.fo/2017.12.16-142210/http://www.wnyc.org/story/131078-shining-a-light/?tab=transcript

[47]   Practical Concepts Inc - Leon Rosenberg

3.1.2. Building credibility: precision journalism to leaks

In order to bring more credibility to investigating journalism, in its quest for elitism, the claim that investigators are using scientific methods when using data journalism has been pushed forward since the 70's. The historical account of how data journalism came to be is related to US journalist Philip Meyers who returned from a Nieman Fellowship at Harvard in 1967 equipped with new tools for reporting: social sciences helped by computational methods, that is applying statistical techniques and who won a Pulitzer Prise for his local reporting using such techniques in the context of the 1967 riots in Detroit (Berret, 2016). Meyers book, 'Precision Journalism ' (1973) came out at the same time when IRE was taking shape, and was advocating for precision journalism based on data and scientific techniques as opposed to the narrative techniques, with the goal to be as closest to the US journalistic goals of objectivity and truth (Bounegru, 2012). It is claimed that even the Arizona Project of IRE used such techniques (Houston, 2014) in order to map out the corruption links in Phoenix between businesspeople and politicians. Precision journalism turned into Computer Assisted Reporting (CAR) and later on started to be referred to as data journalism. At the beginning of the 80's an academic article pushed the 'new relationship ' between journalism and social science (Weaver, McCombs, 1980) and soon enough IRE, and its program NICAR, embarked on a 'missionary'[48] role over the last three decades in spreading the word and information on how to use CAR and data in journalistic work. Focused extensively on the how-to of acquiring data, cleaning, sorting and visualising, it has produced entire generations of journalists dedicated to this field[49]. However, the world outside of the US where this method was evangelised did not necessary have the same access to data-sets, data-bases or, as I witnessed as a practitioner of investigative journalism, had and still has problems with data formats, paper documents, lack of accuracy and structure and multiple languages and alphabets (e.g. only in Europe a mix of Latin, Cyrillic, Greek, Georgian alphabets). But once the label of data was added to that of investigative journalism and glued to the CBIJ field, it was easier to find problems to match existing data solution, then to split the two. And such problems did not wait long to appear in the form of leaked data-sets. Since 2010 when drives with big leaks landed on desks of the US and Western European newsrooms during the collaboration with Wikileaks (e.g. War Logs, Cable Gate), such data-leaks become larger and more diverse from the point of view of content.

Today, CBIJ and data-leaks are a given. Such leaks glue CBIJ networks and projects even if the original intention of using scientific methods for reporting purposes has all but disappeared and journalists working on large datasets are mainly typing keywords and clicking the search button, leaving the data work to computer engineers who can clean, index and make such data searchable. This angle will be investigated further in the next two chapters.

3.1.3. The US narrative on investigative journalism expands

The Centre for Public Integrity comes to life at the right time, just before the Iron Curtain collapsed, and at the right place, in Washington D.C., the hometown of the LogFrame and USAID, where various US governmental agencies will be involved in pushing a US agenda throughout post-Soviet states and former satellite states and then across the globe, an agenda that will use media

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[48]   http://archive.fo/2017.11.06-153354/https://github.com/cberret/teaching-data-computational-journalism/blob/master/chapter_1_defining_the_field_of_study.md

[49] For further information, a good collection of use cases and some reflections on journalism and data can be found here https://datajournalism.com/read/handbook/one and here https://datajournalism.com/read/handbook/two

development heavily, thus spending billions in journalistic programs that make use of US experts to meet and lecture wannabe journalists around the world.

The Center for Public Integrity

It took some time for the conference and training industry to grow rapidly worldwide. Before the expansion of IRE across borders, and thus the expansion and institutionalisation of a global arena, there was another important stage. An interface was starting to take shape as a result of U.S.-based organisations and journalists being able to have a closer look at the world, in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War in the 1990s. In the late 1980s, Charles Lewis quit a high profile job at CBS 60 Minutes[50] in Washington D.C. and established in March 1989 a new investigative non-profit, the Center for Public Integrity. In an interview (Lewis, 2015) stated that after he left CBS News, he did not want to work for the traditional commercial media and there was no other option in the non-profit sector except the Center for Investigative Reporting, located on the other side of the US. As he later wrote, 'I had been pressured by my superiors to take specific information out of the script for reasons entirely unrelated to journalism' (Lewis, 2014, pp 193-200). He started the Center for Public Integrity soon after. 'My dream was a kind of journalistic utopia - an investigative milieu in which no one would tell me who or what not to investigate and in which the final story would be unfettered by time and space limitations, and untrammelled by the power of corporate or government interests bent on burying the truth'(Lewis, 2014, pp 193-200).

The CPI produced investigative reports and presented the result of their work at press conferences, wishing to retain the label of journalism and avoid being associated with non-profit activism. It also published books, articles, reports, and created data-sets. During the research phase, the CPI started to collaborate with universities and local media, providing data-sets and asking to share findings and being credited in return. After publication, the CPI projects described the methodology used in great detail. This model provided the basis of current ICIJ work.

At about the same time in 1989, on the other side of world in the Philippines, Sheila Coronel established a similar organisation called the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ), and in Northern Europe, a few associations of investigative reporters were formed, organisations that were similar to IRE. All got inspired from the U.S. original non-profit structures mentioned above. During that same year, the Iron Curtain began to unravel. The Berlin Wall collapsed, as did the Iron Curtain of Soviet satellite states and, before long, the Soviet Union itself. Media assistance programmes were put in place, and money flowed to programmes designed to benefit emerging democracies in Eastern Europe. Most of these programmes, functioning with government money, aimed at exporting of a particular understanding of democracy and journalism: the U.S. model of journalism and of political democracy. Such programmes operated according to the Logic Framework Approach and the LogFrame Matrix, or variations of these with different names,[51] organising conferences and workshops as an easy means of gaining funding related to journalism. Conferences and training sessions were organised in huge numbers as this phenomenon grew. An international conference-circuit has been born. Both Charles Lewis and Bill Kovach talk about an epiphany in which they realised the need for a structure for investigative journalists to collaborate that occurred at such international conferences in Eastern Europe: Lewis in Moscow in 1992, Kovach in Prague 1990.

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[50]   https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/06/chuck-lewis-60-minutes-108415?o=0

[51]   https://web.archive.org/web/20171218204809/http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/Rosettastone.doc

In 1997, after a long period of searching for funding and exploring different ways of proceeding, funding was secured and Lewis was able to launch the ICIJ he envisioned while in Moscow. That was the moment marking the start of exporting the model of investigative journalists elitist truth-tellers across the Atlantic towards Eastern Europe and then globally.

The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists

Charles Lewis established the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists in 1997 as a department of the Washington D.C.-based Center for Public Integrity. In the second half of 1997, during a weekend on the Harvard University campus in Cambridge, Massachusetts, 'a very unlikely collection of people' gathered in the same room, 'whose collective history of conflict with the authorities seemed likely to generate a truculence factor way off the scale', remembers David Leigh (Leigh, 2000). It was here that the ICIJ began. One of the CPI's key people, Lewis's successor Bill Buzenberg, published a detailed account[52] of how cross-border collaborative investigations function, based on his long term position as the executive director of the Center for Public Integrity (CPI) that oversaw the ICIJ's work. While a Shorenstein Fellow at Harvard, Buzenberg put together a paper that describes how the ICIJ came to be, how it evolved to a model to perform 'the very largest collaborations, where a hundred or more journalists work together' and what lessons it learned in the process (Buzenberg, 2015). The paper is a useful document for understanding the view from within the organisation regarding what it takes to build cross-border collaborations on a large scale, as well as the future of similar, even competing, initiatives.

Buzenberg explained how in order for the ICIJ to respond to contemporary demands and, later, to be able to undertake its work on the Panama Papers, a bold vision was necessary: the result was more than twenty major investigative projects over eighteen years – all of which were endorsed by charity donations worth somewhere between thirty and forty million dollars. A clear emphasis is put on the importance of the role of Europe in garnering the ICIJ the global renown it enjoys today, above all the role of Europe's traditional media.

Three premises on which ICIJ was established

First, as Buzenberg writes, the 'ICIJ sprang from the fertile mind of Charles Lewis, founder of the nonprofit Center for Public Integrity and the spark for its brand of deep watchdog-style investigative reporting on a national scale'(Buzenberg, 2015). Second, the founding manifesto published by Lewis in 1997 states that the ICIJ was created to meet the 'need for in-depth information that transcends national boundaries' as a response to a globalised world and to the failure of journalism due to the 'commercial demands of the news industry' (Lewis, 1997). So not only to perform investigative in-depth journalism independent of any commercial constraints, but also to do it across boarders. And third, the Consortium was not designed to give journalists jobs, but to give them work in situations where 'no payment of money was involved' as David Leigh notes (Leigh, 2000). This last point is important, since it is even more present as part of today's thinking about collaborations. Indeed, one of the twelve lessons of Buzenberg's paper is that 'money is best kept out of the equation' (Buzenberg, 2015). For a mainstream media staffer in the UK or for an owner of the platform who is farming user interactions, this is a very convenient resolution. For

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[52]   http://archive.is/2017.03.28-044256/https://shorensteincenter.org/anatomy-of-a-global-investigation-william-buzenberg/

all others who have to struggle to find paid work as journalists, this sound's like an invitation to contribute with free labour.

The consortium started with almost fifty journalists recruited by the first director, Maud Beelman, most of whom were 'drawn from the previous ten years of [Harvard] Nieman Fellows who were also investigative reporters' (Buzenberg, 2015). More members were suggested by the Knight Fellows program at Stanford. These two programs at Harvard and Stanford are considered the elite fellowship programs for senior journalists worldwide. David Leigh writes: 'Investigative journalists are notoriously suspicious types. But Charles Lewis's scheme to set up ICIJ managed to tap into something less obvious – the sense of camaraderie and the love of detective work that it seems bind them together the world over. […] And something less tangible but perhaps even more romantic has been nourished as well – a worldwide optimism about new possibilities for chasing the truth' (Leigh, 2000). In the space of ten years, by 2007, the ICIJ had doubled its membership, boasting one hundred journalists from fifty countries. After another decade it has already reached 'more than 200 investigative journalists in seventy countries' (ICIJ, 2018)[53] and a list of 120 partner media organisations.[54] By 2020 there are almost 250 ICIJ members from five continents[55].

Over the last eighteen years up to the writing up of this thesis and the split from its parent organisation, the ICIJ has published twenty-four major projects (and at least one every year), and has had an operating budget of between one and two million dollars per year. Other costs, like legal insurance and fundraising, have been covered by its parent organisation, the CPI.

The first big project was published in 2000 and was initiated by its then-director and assisted by two members from the U.K.: David Leigh and Duncan Campbell. It targeted the tobacco industry, and focused on 11,000 British American Tobacco internal documents that had been made public by a lawsuit. *The Guardian* was instrumental in the first publication of an ICIJ project. 'The ICIJ communicates via the internet and a system of secure emails. Its existence demonstrates that it is possible to use the net not merely as a source of information, but as a means of bringing journalists together to work in a new way'[56] (…) 'With luck, this is the kind of creative thinking which is going to go a little way towards helping journalism catch up with the activities of mega-corporations and mega power blocs' (Leigh, 2000). Projects published during recent years show how this was the case. The latest investigations deal with offshore secrecy and those around the world who use such services, from corporations to politicians and mobsters. A few details about such investigations.

Offshore Leaks, 2013: 'one of the largest and most complex cross border investigative projects in journalism history' that involved more then 110 journalists in 58 countries working on more than 2.5 million documents for more than a year (ICIJa, 2013)[57]. In 2013, the ICIJ referred to the data as 'the hoard of documents represents the biggest stockpile of inside information about the offshore system ever obtained by a media organization'(ICIJb, 2013)[58].

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53   By December 2017

54   https://www.icij.org/about/media-partners/

55   https://web.archive.org/web/20200408222338/https://www.icij.org/blog/2019/04/icij-adds-18-new-journalist-members-across-5-continents/

56   David Leigh, The Guardian, Monday 31 January 2000, http://www.theguardian.com/media/2000/jan/31/bat.mondaymediasection

57   https://www.icij.org/investigations/offshore/about-project-secrecy-sale/

58   http://web.archive.org/web/20130414082854/http://www.icij.org:80/offshore/secret-files-expose-offshores-global-impact

Genesis of CBIJ

LuxLeaks, 2014: 'a collaborative investigation that exposes for the first time on a global scale how Luxembourg works as a tax haven in the middle of Europe' where 80 reporters from 26 countries worked with 'nearly 28,000 pages of leaked confidential documents' (ICIJ, 2014)[59].

Swiss Leaks, 2015: an investigation based on leaked secret accounts of HSBC, was published by sixty-five media outlets in fifty-six countries, with even more outlets having expressed an interest in publishing it, according to Buzenberg: 'more than 400 media organizations have now contacted ICIJ to join in its Swiss Leaks project' (ICIJ, 2015). The work was carried out by 140 reporters in forty-five countries who analysed 60,000 leaked files. This is also the first project where the Global I-Hub communication and research platform was introduced to ICIJ members.

The Panama Papers, early 2016: 'an unprecedented investigation that reveals the offshore links of some of the globe's most prominent figures' with 122 media partners and 392 reporters listed on the project page[60] who worked on what was 'likely the biggest leak of inside information in history', dealing with more then 11 million leaked files (ICIJ, 2016). The global I-hub platform was enhanced and a 2-factor-authentification (2FA) layer was added.

The Paradise Papers, late 2017: 'a global investigation into the offshore activities of some of the world's most powerful people and companies' involving '95 media partners explored 13.4 million leaked files' (ICIJ, 2017). 381 reporters are listed on the project page[61].

When this research started in 2015, almost forty per cent of ICIJ members were from Europe, a higher percentage than that given in the ICIJ's own stats published in 2012[62] and twice as many as when the Consortium started in 1997, when ten out of fifty journalists were from Europe. It took a long time for the ICIJ to attain the numbers it enjoys today. Even if it is based in the U.S. and has a global focus, the ICIJ was mostly popular with European media, as Beelman, its first director, tells Buzenberg: 'I think there is a culture of collaboration abroad that just doesn't exist in the United States', and it has been that way since the beginning of the ICIJ, she adds (Buzenberg, 2015). Beelman was herself a U.S.-based journalist who returned after working for The Associated Press in Europe and around the world. Not all major European media outlets have been interested in publishing ICIJ stories over recent years. Notoriously, an ICIJ member in Germany running *Der Spiegel* declined to join the first large-scale collaboration under the Offshore Leaks project,[63] and as a result a new coalition emerged between ICIJ and *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and public television stations NDR and WDR. This happened in 2012, and after the publication of the 'largest journalism collaboration in history'[64] the ICIJ quickly became well-known (and the said ICIJ member moved from running *Der Spiegel* to running the *SZ*, NDR, WDR coalition).

The ICIJ responded emphatically to initial encouragement given by its founder, Charles Lewis, for investigative journalists to transcend national boundaries. Nevertheless, the model that others in

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[59]   https://www.icij.org/investigations/luxembourg-leaks/about-project-luxembourg-leaks/

[60]   https://panamapapers.icij.org/about.html

[61]   https://www.icij.org/investigations/paradise-papers/about/

[62]   http://web.archive.org/web/20150724122634/http://www.icij.org/blog/2012/06/who-are-icijs-members

[63]   http://www.mediummagazin.de/archiv/2013-2/ausgabe-04052013/inside-offshore-leaks/

[64] https://www.icij.org/blog/2013/04/likely-largest-journalism-collaboration-history/

commercial and non-profit media were to replicate was not clear. The focus of Buzenberg's paper is not the growth of the ICIJ as an organisation, but instead logistical questions relating to three major collaborative investigations: Offshore Leaks, Lux Leaks and Swiss Leaks. Offshore Leaks and Swiss Leaks are the foundation on which recent ICIJ projects build, and Buzenberg describes in detail how one project led to another, starting with the recruitment of its new director, Gerard Ryle, who brought to the ICIJ the leaked database that was the starting point for its investigation into the secret offshore world. Buzenberg draws a list of twelve main lessons that such 'mega' collaborations must take into account. A large number of the details revolve around how to deal with a large collection of unstructured data, and here the ICIJ learned these lessons as the project progressed, establishing a five-strong data unit to lead the data work.

The process of bringing together investigative journalists from different countries began in order to respond to the genuine need for journalists to piece together in-depth information across borders, fast and cheap, and the ICIJ provided a framework to do this by helping to establish a new field: cross-border investigative journalism. As its 1997 manifesto says, the ICIJ was established as a response to a globalised world and the failure of journalism due to the 'commercial demands of the news industry' (ICIJc, 2013). The news industry's tendency to favour soft news over hard news has since been studied and confirmed by scholars (for a review on related literature read Hamilton, 2004 and 2016). Hamilton (2004) argues that the decision on turning specific information into news is an economic decision, and hard news is overlooked, even when and if it comes at the same production cost as soft news. However, when one looks at the publication partners listed under the last major project it is interesting to observe a shift: the ICIJ's work has become more appealing to mainstream media. Only a quarter of the media outlets involved with the Pulitzer Prize-winning Panama Papers are non-profit organisations[65]. Could this claim be made only for marketing purposes ?

The formation of councils

Several important developments unfolded in the early 1990s that slowly led to the formation of a 'council' (White, 2008) related to cross-border investigative journalism, that is, a small group of people, each one involved with different working groups and who advise each other on the direction of the same field, in this case the emerging field of cross-border investigative journalism. Since the CBIJ field grew using the non-profit infrastructure, it is easy to identify the members of such councils by looking at the founders and boards of directors of the main organisations dealing with cross-border investigative journalism initiatives today.

Such a '*council*' emerged based on the overlaps between the growing '*arena*' and '*interface*' disciplines (White, 2008). In this research *arena* is understood as the manifestation of the industry conferences dedicated to exchanging *savoir faire* relating to investigative journalism (the IRE and GIJC conferences) and data journalism (the NIA and later NICAR conferences) and to reward the best work in cross-border investigative journalism. The '*interface*' is understood as the manifestation of the production of cross-border investigative journalism projects. Both impose different disciplines. Geopolitical changes, technological advances and the financial crisis all played important roles.

The collapse of the Iron Curtain led to hundreds of millions of dollars being poured into governmental and private programs in order to advance the interests of the U.S. and Western Europe

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[65]   https://gijn.org/2016/04/13/panama-papers-showcase-power-of-a-global-movement/

in Eastern Europe, the Balkans and the former Soviet Union. The spread of these money through different programs and agencies makes it difficult to account for the exact entire sums. The goals of such programmes were in accordance with these governments' interests: to strengthen democracy and bring the rule of law so that foreign investors could come in to the countries. Part of the democratisation process involved fostering capacity building, strong independent media and the professionalisation of journalists, all following one single model: U.S. journalism and its media sector, in the context of US neoliberal democracy.

Based on this groundwork, large support organisations such as Internews, Irex, the Open Society Institute (OSI) and later the Open Society Foundations (OSF) emerged as supporters of CBIJ. Their programs endorsed, among other things, a flood of conferences, meetings and training sessions that involved sending experienced and less experienced journalists, mainly from the U.S. and the U.K., to Eastern Europe to speak, teach, and exchange information and opinions. Such conferences constituted an early offline network infrastructure, the arena that would lead to the emergence of the main actors in this field (CPI, 2005)[66]. The second important development was the entry of computers and the internet into the daily routine of journalists, both for research and publication purposes. From the late 1970s, computer assisted reporting, now known as data journalism, gained more and more traction. What is more, the internet started to erode the traditional business model of both television and print media. With this comes the last important development: the beginning of a decline in media revenues, which translated into substantial cuts in resources for investigative journalism.

Experienced and well-travelled investigative journalists became aware of the possibility of going totally independent and shifting towards the online non-profit model. The steering of this trend was carried out by a 'council' that began to take form through its organisation of the Global Investigative Journalism Conferences (GIJC) and the newly established Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN) in early 2000's. At the end of the second GIJC in 2003, when the GIJN was being established, the co-organiser and director of IRE, Brant Huston, thanked two people: Nils Mulvad, for hosting the conferences in Copenhagen and David Kaplan, for helping invite the international speakers[67].

During the early 2000s, the formation of councils was informal, but with the push by donors towards institutionalisation during the 2010s, the council became visible by the people who sit on the boards of the main organisations active in the field of cross-border investigative journalism. The people who were the main players in 2003 are still the main players almost two decades later and their structures have been formalised. Kaplan is the director of the GIJN today, Huston is the chair of the board and Mulvad was the part of the first board of the GIJN[68].

After showing next how the investigative journalistic identity was exported from the US to Europe and beyond, this chapter will move on to detail the processes of institutionalisation.

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66   http://archive.fo/2017.11.07-085352/https://cloudfront-files-1.publicintegrity.org/legacy_projects/pdf_reports/CROSSINGBORDERS.pdf

67   https://web.archive.org/web/20040114153538/http://www.globalinvestigativejournalism.org/news/2003/conference0503.html

68   https://web.archive.org/web/20150716081933/https://gijn.org/about/board-of-directors/

3.1.4 Excluding the unethical, incompetent, unskilled beyond the US

The field of cross-border Investigative journalism expanded towards Europe in a series of waves, each coinciding more or less with one of the three decades after 1989. It also defined, together with its European partners, what today appears to be a global practice, keeping the strong US background of elite truth-tellers and data journalism.

The expansion of the field over three decades

The finding that US organisations and journalists occupy a central place in CBIJ is being confirmed not only by the number of studies focused on organisations such IRE, ICIJ, GIJN but also by empirical measurements. According to Krüger, Knorr, Finke (2019) after performing SNA on data covering 21 years, 67 organisations and more than 3.000 individuals active in this field, the conclusion is that most influential organisations and persons in CBIJ are US based organisations and journalists. This comes in tune to other scholars who demonstrate that today investigative journalism is an American invention (Chalaby) and with my own experience as a long time practitioner in this field. How did this type of journalism expanded to Europe and beyond ?

First, the few existing non-profits in the U.S. and Western Europe seized the chance to obtain financial support by accessing money made available by programmes seeking to build democracy. Before 1990, there was little activity in this area, but with the collapse of the Iron Curtain and the Soviet Union, assistance for the media grew exponentially. Such programmes had been supported by both governmental and non-governmental institutions and public diplomacy efforts in order to facilitate the transition from totalitarianism to democracy. Later on, such programmes prepared for the expansion of the European Union and NATO, and also dealt with the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, both during and after the war.

The media development industry has been growing ever since the early 1990s and, according to different estimates, it today amounts to half a billion dollars in the U.S. alone[69] and almost a billion dollars per year globally (Foundation Map | Foundation Center, 2018)[70]. European sources of funding, mostly from European Union programs, matched the U.S. figures. It is hard to give exact yearly figures, firstly because there is little centralised data, especially for the first two decades, and secondly, because journalism conferences and training programs were organised under the auspices of international aid like media assistance and democracy building, as well as direct military aid (CIMA, 2015)[71].

The projects that were recognised as efficient and available by donors entailed reduced or in some cases virtually no funding for performing investigative reporting by locals, but a wealth of resources to fly experts to Eastern Europe or to fly eastern European 'beneficiaries ' to the U.S. and Western Europe. Money was available for organising conferences and training aimed at the professionalisation of journalism, business development, organisational capacity building and institutionalisation. During the last decade, such programs turned towards the development of

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[69]   http://archive.fo/2017.11.13-112336/http://www.cima.ned.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/CIMA-Investigative%20Journalism%20-%20Dave%20Kaplan.pdf

[70]   Database measuring all grants in the US from 2009 onwards, check 01 November 2017 https://maps.foundationcenter.org/

[71]   http://www.cima.ned.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/CIMA-The-Pentagon-and-Independent-Media-Update.pdf

technology and media platforms and more financial resources were available to some of the most visible cross-border investigative actors (Ryle, 2017)[72]. A second wave that helped expand the field in Europe was a resolution on the part of skilled investigative journalists to do things differently compared to the mainstream media, a reaction similar to that of Charles Lewis in the US when he left a well-resourced job as a producer at CBS 60 Minutes to establish the Center for Public Integrity in 1989. This second wave came to an end with the end of the 2000s. Finally, because of the 2008 financial crisis and the further collapse of the media industry, the non-profit investigative journalism boomed in the U.S. and continued to grow in Europe during the decade after 2009, and this for a simple reason: there were fewer jobs and resources for journalists at media companies, and new opportunities in the non-profit realm. The Investigative Reporting Workshop at the American University put together a database of non-profit investigative entities under the name of 'The New Journalism Ecosystem'[73]. Their numbers show that during the 1990s, only eight such organisations were formed in the U.S., while fifty others were established during the 2000s. Among them, two thirds were established between 2008 and 2010, with a clear spike occurring in 2009 when eight such organisations emerged. Since 2010, media development and assistance money has been spread around virtually the entire world. The more funding was awarded and made publicly visible, the more counter-reactions it caused by various governments or politicians targeted by independent reporting.

It should therefore come as no surprise that the end of this last decade coincided with the institutionalisation of informal networks for cross-border investigative journalists. This was the time when the model that originated in the U.S. in 1970 became the dominant model around the world.

Preparing the European arena

Europe was not a *terra incognita* for investigative journalism, non-profit structures or the associations that tried directly or indirectly to organise and support such work. The expansion emanating from the U.S. did not therefore occur in a vacuum but opened the eyes of practising investigative journalists to cross-border investigations, created a growing number of journalistic conferences and fostered exchanges. Scandinavian countries had some forms of organisation in place during the 1990s: Grävände Journalister, formed in 1989 in Sweden, the Stiftelsen for en Kritisk og Undersøkende Presse (SKUP) in Norway and Foreningen for Undersøgende Journalistik (FUJ) in Denmark in 1990[74].

For Eastern European countries, it took another decade to initiate similar structures: Romania and Armenia did so in 2001, with Bosnia creating its first organisation in 2004 as a US initiative[75]. When opening such structures, similarities with organisations growing in countries with a longer democratic history actually existed more in name and on paper than in their effective structure.

Scandinavian countries have had decades to test different ways of forming organisations. Eastern European countries, by contrast, were just coming out from decades of dictatorial terror and were

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[72]   https://www.icij.org/blog/2017/04/omidyar-network-grants-45m-support-icij-projects/

[73]   Consult the formation of investigative non-profits in 2008 and 2009 here https://web.archive.org/web/20180720183220/http://www.investigativereportingworkshop.org/ecosystem/

[74] On these organisations, see: http://archive.fo/2017.11.08-115955/https://www.kaasogmulvad.dk/en/2015/06/40-years-of-investigative-journalism-in-europe-a-fast-trip/

[75] Romania: https://web.archive.org/web/20030611143246/http://www.crji.org/; Armenia: https://web.archive.org/web/20020614112351/http://hetq.am/en/about.html; Bosnia: https://web.archive.org/web/20041126191854/https://www.cin.ba/

only able reproduce on paper the structures they had seen in the West. The relationships between East and Western Europe tended to be akin to that of school pupil to master. Eastern Europeans were lectured on what to do and how to do it, both in terms of journalism and organisational structures. Nevertheless, groups of people from North America, Western and Eastern Europe started to talk to each other, visit each other and share experiences and stories. Based on such encounters seeds spread towards the continents of Africa, South America and Asia. These associations started to organise yearly events where, at some point, foreign journalists were invited. Two of these Scandinavian associations played a major role in expanding the field of cross-border investigative journalism. The FUJ was instrumental in helping set up Scoop and the GIJC conferences (twice, in 2001 and 2003 in the capital of Denmark); the SKUP organised the GIJC on two occasions (2008, 2015) in the Norwegian town of Lillehammer.

In between, there were parallel efforts by donors from the U.S. and Western Europe to build organisations for the freedom of expression and journalism, governmental transparency advocacy and freedom of information legislation, as well as the professionalisation of journalism. To this end global franchises were set up (Freedom House, Transparency International, IFEX) or expanded (Internews, Irex, the CPJ, RSF).

Eastern Europe was a laboratory for media assistance in all forms: conferences, training, and the setting up of organisations promoting the freedom of expression and training in journalism. There was a very determined effort from the outside to show locals what has been done in Western Europe and the U.S. and to recruit such locals to start similar organisations (but with little or no money support, only training materials and experts sent to preach).

The Establishment of the Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism in 2001

My colleagues and I came to the idea of starting an investigative non-profit during international training sessions, while working as staffers at a daily newspaper in Bucharest, and after reading online about the work of IRE and the ICIJ. Different then most of the similar structures set up in post-communist countries, we had no international funding available and invested our own money in setting up the nonprofit organisation while working in parallel for a traditional commercial newspaper. Initially we intended to open an investigative boutique as a limited company that would sell freelance investigative talent above all to foreign media investigating stories in Romania. However, encouraged by foreign advise, we established Centrul Român pentru Jurnalism de Investigație (CRJI) as a non-profit association, a structure that was less expensive to run and manage than a limited company. After all, it was advertised during international conferences about how such organisations can obtain grants and sponsorships. We received our first project-based funding as late as 2003, in the form of small journalistic grants for investigative research and stories under the Scoop support structure for investigative journalism in Eastern Europe.

The formation of Scoop

CRJI journalists were invited to the initial meeting of Scoop in Kiev in early January 2003. This was a support program for investigative journalism in Europe, put together by Danish journalists together with a non-profit, International Media Support, and paid for by a Danish Foreign Ministry programme.

The Scoop group started to grow to include national coordinators and our meetings, when possible, were organised at the same time as global or regional conferences. As with the global conferences, Scoop was endorsed by the local journalistic association FUJ mentioned above. It was a unique scheme where IMS was the buffer and accountant receiving funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and had an understanding with FUJ, who had the full editorial independence on content and could decide on which investigative stories to spend the money. Danish participants in the project were working journalists, first on a voluntary basis, then on freelance contracts, and a group of 'national coordinators' were paid to help decide which stories to endorse.

CRJI was among the co-founders of the GIJN in 2003 and started getting involved with national, regional and international organisations active in non-profit journalism, freedom of expression and training. Later, CRJI journalists became members and core team participants of the ICIJ, and participated in the establishment of some of today's most important players in the field, like the OCCRP and the EIC.network. Fundraising proved much more difficult than we ever imagined, and at the time of writing this thesis, the bureaucracy associated with funded projects and the lack of money is about to shut down the organisation.

Expanding the Arena and Council towards Europe

According to Lewis (interview, 2015) when the ICIJ was formed and publicly announced in 1997, the entire board of IRE led by Brant Huston (now GIJN Chair), visited the CPI and asked for an explanation, since they feared losing out on an opportunity to expand IRE internationally, something that was aimed for with Mexico for a long period of time since establishing the organisation, but was not successfully implemented because of lack of grants. As shown above, IRE had the desire to work cross-border since their inception in 1975, aiming at least to operate in the U.S., Canada and Mexico (Marron, 1997). Later, Brant Huston and the board of IRE had the intention to expand IRE's model but were unable to find the right financial support. As a response to the request for explanation, ICIJ back then director allegedly said: 'you train them, we hire them' (Lewis, 2015). This was indeed what happened during the years that followed: ICIJ members met at conferences where IRE were training. Since the ICIJ enlisted international journalists, who were mostly current or past fellows at Harvard and Stanford, this approach spread internationally.

By then, European journalists were starting to attend as participants IRE and NICAR conferences. This started as early as 1996 (Global Conference, Global network, 2015)[76] and the internet archive shows the first European on the NICAR speakers list[77] in 1999. The then-director of IRE Brant Huston came to Denmark to organise a journalism conference and spoke with Nils Mulvad in order to establish the first Global Investigative Network Conference in Denmark.

The Global Investigative Journalism Conference (GIJC) and Network (GIJN)

The first two Global Investigative Journalism Conferences, in 2001 and 2003, were held in Copenhagen and were the result of a close collaboration between FUJ, Nils Mulvad from DICAR, an organisation constructed on the model of the U.S. NICAR of IRE, and Brant Huston, who at that time was a director of IRE in the U.S., and past director of NICAR. Another person was involved`,

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[76]   http://archive.fo/2017.11.08-104410/https://media.illinois.edu/global-conference-global-network

[77] Tommy Kaas, who is the colleague of Nils Mulvad; they co-established the Danish Institute for Computer Assisted Reporting (DICAR) and later both become trainers for data journalism, especially at journalistic conferences https://web.archive.org/web/19991007070031/http://www.ire.org:80/training/boston99/speak.html

David Kaplan, was thanked by the conference organisers Mulvad and Huston for making the conference possible through the invitation of foreign participants.

In some respects, the situation remains the same to this day; Huston, as well as the original team Nils Mulvad and David Kaplan, are still behind the conferences and training, and the ICIJ is still enlarging the number of members and media partners involved in publications based on such conference participation (only not employing the ICIJ members to work on projects).

The second Global Conference was held in May 2003, and before the conference a global email list, as well as a website, were created[78]. The GIJN was established and decided to hand over the organisation of the GIJC every two years to a different member organisation and in a different city. Amsterdam, Toronto, Lillehammer, Geneva, Kiev, Sao Paolo, Johannesburg, Hamburg. Between 2003 and 2013 the work of organising the conference was done by a Steering Committee made up from representatives of GIJN member organizations. After 2012, it was steered by a new self-appointed secretary[79] who became GIJN's director at the end of 2013. In a 2011 initiative to build a permanent secretariat, Kaplan proposed himself as the secretary and director of the GIJN[80]. The US based OCCRP offered to serve as a fiscal sponsor for the GIJN during the building of the secretariat, fundraising for the institutionalisation of the GIJN, an offer which was refused by the volunteer group. Another US based organisation (INN, chaired by Brant Houston) took the fiscal sponsorship role. In 2014, a vote of all member-organisations in the GIJN was organised in order to decide on registering the GIJN in the U.S. and accept Kaplan as director[81]. The vote resulted in registering the GIJN in the U.S., appointing Kaplan as the executive director and appointing a board of directors that included ICIJ and OCCRP representatives; former IRE director Brant Houston was appointed the chair of the GIJN board, with Nils Mulvad as a board member[82].

With the emergence of the secretariat and the registration of the GIJC, the transparency of the informal group vanished. There were no more lists of participants and their contacts available for the 2013 and 2015 conferences. When I asked for a copy of such lists for the purpose of this research I was refused, with organisers invoking the privacy and protection of the participants. At the same time, however, the conference's speakers and panels were featured on live TV streaming.

The takeover of the GIJC was signalled in two other symbolic ways. Vouchers for getting free drinks at GIJC 2015 in Lillehammer were printed in the form of fake U.S. dollar bills. They had the new director's face on the bill and they were called 'Kaplans' (See Figure 4.1.1). The same face was to be seen in the special event section, leading the concert of the 'GIJN's own band', The Muckrakers[83].

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[78] Kaplan is thanked by Nils and Brant for having brought international speakers, Kaplan having been an international trainer for years; many times Kaplan was working with the US State Agency USAID (with one of the senior officers on media development Meg Gaydosik, a former collaborator of Internews).

[79]   https://web.archive.org/web/20170629203440/https://gijn.org/2013/10/02/gijn-membership-meeting-background-and-key-issues/

[80] Soon after having to quit his director position of ICIJ, Kaplan was being named as Editor at large at OCCRP and was trying to establish a company called Investigative Consultants together with Brant Houston.

[81] Originally I was running for a Board position, but opposing the registration of GIJN in the US; since the two questions have been forced together onto GIJN voting ballot, I withdraw my candidacy for the Board position as a protest and sent a message to the Global Network email list, publicly available here: http://archive.vn/2018.10.12-154043/https://po.missouri.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A2=ind1405&L=GLOBAL-L&P=R882

[82] https://web.archive.org/web/20141211043011/http://gijn.org/about/board-of-directors/

[83] See http://archive.fo/2017.11.14-130230/https://gijc2015.org/2015/08/28/come-dance-with-us-the-muckrakers-return-to-lillehammer/

Figure 4.1.1. TEN KAPLANS
A picture of the free drink voucher I received as a participant in the Global Investigative Journalism Conference in 2015 in Lillehammer; it pictures the face of David Kaplan, the new director of the Global Investigative Journalism Network, newly registered in the U.S.

Figure 4.1.2. GIJC 2015 official publication
A picture of the cover page of the Global Investigative Journalism Conference 2015 official magazine, containing the conference program and other information. It leads with the picture of imprisoned Azerbaijani journalist Khadija Ismayilova

To put things in context, while the signal on who has the power was indicating a senior US white male, the face of the conference was chosen to be that of an imprisoned female journalist from Azerbaijan, a choice that illustrate the wider conventional narrative of why CBIJ is needed, to free and educate the Other.

Both the Arena and the Council of the CBIJ global movement ended up in the hands of a few individuals.

Expanding the CBIJ interface

Between 2003 and 2011 a wealth of new CBIJ projects and productions happened. They started as informal projects, grew bigger, took steps towards institutionalisation and coopted other media organisations. For instance the Scoop support structure for investigative journalism in Eastern Europe put together an informal network of people, who started practical collaborations on investigative stories, just before the GIJN was established. It grew fast with each investigative story, it started its own mini-conferences and also sent speakers to the GIJC and IRE, where Scoop network held informal meetings. During the Scoop program, the RCIJ worked on investigative projects with organisations and reporters around the whole of Eastern Europe, both in the former Yugoslavia countries and in former Soviet Bloc countries. In 2006, one of the investigative projects co-financed by Scoop, looking at corruption in electricity production and distribution in several countries, opened a dedicated website to host the stories and credit the cross-border team[84].

The site was given a name, 'reporting project ', who later evolved into 'organized crime and corruption reporting project ' (OCCRP) used for a funding grant request. OCCRP became the name of an informal network who was captured and registered in the U.S. in 2011 without the involvement of the informal network partners. A member of the CRJI at that time, Paul Radu, was involved in founding the OCCRP organisation with an American grant manager Drew Sullivan[85], who in the early 2000's was posted to Bosnia to work for a US media development company (IREX) but also started a local centre for investigative journalism with the support of a USAID grant through his organisation Journalism Development Group LLC, a Delaware based company[86].

The proposal of Sullivan and Radu towards CRJI and other Eastern Europeans was to gather existing investigative non-profit ventures around a joint project name that would stand for the main focus of the different groups: the Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project. On these premises, the CRJI brought together Scoop and other pre-existing contacts, stories and ideas. An important reason was that at that time, in 2007, Scoop could no longer support Romania and Bulgaria as new EU members. In addition, Hungary, Croatia, Poland, Czech, Slovakia, Slovenia, were countries where we could develop investigative projects but where Scoop could not bring any money. Later, in 2010, without the knowledge of OCCRP members, another structure was formed as a non-profit, the Journalism Development Network, based in Washington DC. This organisation took over all grant applications and the Delaware LLC was silently shut down at the end of 2010.

The original understanding, based on internal discussion and documents exchanged in 2011, was that OCCRP umbrella would help Eastern European investigative structures to get organised, connect, work together, and become independent and strong and then let the OCCRP expire. The proposal came from Sullivan, who presented himself as an experienced fundraiser, building on his relationships and work with IREX, Internews and USAID and who offered assistance for the above mentioned goals. The initial plan changed, however, especially due to donors' expectations, and the OCCRP slowly and unilaterally turned into an organisation. The fundraising was carried out by Sullivan and for the first OCCRP USAID grant in Eastern Europe the original JDG LLC in Delaware was used.

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[84] https://web.archive.org/web/20070120071830/http://www.reportingproject.net/#

[85] https://web.archive.org/web/20061214024434/http://www.drewsullivan.com/resume.htm

[86] CIN – website started in 2004 : https://web.archive.org/web/20041126191854/https://www.cin.ba/

In 2011, the OCCRP was registered as a trade name by the newly established JDN. Since most decisions were taken by Sullivan and Radu, and the board of directors did not reflect any of the diversity of Eastern Europe, but was instead composed of well-known U.S.-based journalists, the RCIJ decided to step down. In response, and in order to meet fundraising obligations, the OCCRP started two different organisations in Bucharest: a local center Rise Project (which replicated a similar structure in Moldova) and a JDN non-profit, to deal with projects in Europe. Strategy was mostly geared towards donors and securing funding and was successful in this, with a budget of almost six million dollars according to Sullivan. Its membership rules are not transparent, and in many cases it was not clear which authors had worked on which stories or projects.

Structures emerging from Scoop

Other structures emerged out of the Scoop support program, and the support grant made to the Scoop Core Team in Denmark followed different routes. One part, which was called the 'neighbourhood programme ', focused further on the countries that could be supported with Danish public funds through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Parts of Russia, Ukraine and Moldova are still covered by this programme, with operations in the Caucasus region having been suspended. Scoop started two more programmes, exporting the same methodology, starting in 2005 in the Middle East with the Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (ARIJ) and in 2008 in West Africa with the Program for African Investigative Reporting (PAIR).

In parallel, a member of the Scoop team Brigitte Alfter, co-started the Journalism Fund in 2008, a support scheme that makes grants to small investigative projects, and Data Harvest, a network infrastructure to host conferences. Based on previous collaborations between correspondents from traditional media outlets in Brussels, an informal group for information exchange was established to look at different aspects of EU expenditure and transparency. The first official gathering was held in January 2007. This effort started to combine coders with journalists to get batches of information on agriculture subsidies (the most important budget area of the EU) and to analyse big data-sets. Since May 2011, the group has met on a yearly basis, adopting the name DataHarvest.

The traditional media's slow adoption of CBIJ

Traditional media outlets have been slow to follow the phenomenon of cross-border investigative journalism. Smaller papers in different countries have embraced it, but the most relevant U.S. newspapers have been very late in participating in cross-border investigations. For instance, *The New York Times* acknowledged a novel kind of 'cross-border journalism' in 1997, seventeen years after it was first experimented with by journalists from the Center for Investigative Reporting (CIR) and at the same time as the foundation of the ICIJ. The paper's letter to support an entry that won a Pulitzer prize read: 'In 1997, *The New York Times* decided to undertake something almost unheard of in foreign correspondence: a major investigative project on a foreign country, one vital to the United States' security. The aim was to look systematically at the corrosive effects of drug corruption on Mexico, using the techniques of investigative reporting to develop stories from sources on both sides of the border' (NYTimes, 1998[87]). The co-author of that investigation, Craig Pyes, says that there was a long struggle to establish investigative reporting within the foreign desk: 'They were hostile to it' (Pyes, 2015).

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[87] https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/library/national/041498mexico.html

Later on, the ICIJ offered *The New York Times* the opportunity to take part in Offshore Leaks in 2012, but the offer was declined. Finally, having been questioned and pressured by their own readers as to why they are not part of the Panama Papers project, *The New York Times* asked to join the cross-border investigative collaborations in 2016. In 2017, they actually joined such a project from the beginning, being part of the Paradise Papers, and acknowledged: 'We would have to learn how to share'[88](Forsythe, 2017). This statement in a major global newspaper such as *The New York Times* signifies that the loop of tree decades of constant spreading, from the early cross-border attempts of IRE and the cross-border visions of CPI under Lewis in the late '80s, going through the non-profit and governmental media assistance programs in post-Soviet states and their former satellite countries and beyond, has finally come to an end. CBIJ is global and mainstream.

Building an identity: relevant findings

To sum up, this section finds that during the 70's, IRE in the US has build an elitist image for investigative journalism, in order to exclude wannabe journalists who would be unethical or unskilled and by doing so established boundaries for this field. Further on, it finds that the field of investigative journalism expanded that elitist image with the introduction of Computer Assisted Reporting, based on precision journalism, which evolved towards today data journalism but which has nothing in common with the original intention of precision journalism to introduce scientific methods in journalism. Such boundaries have been exported to Europe and beyond by IRE and CPI and later other US based organisations and journalists. Another relevant finding is that such US organisations and their journalists today occupy a central role in the global CBIJ. Today CBIJ is connected to data journalism, but in the area of data leaks and not data scientific methods of discovering facts.

3.2. Building Control: How CBIJ developed

3.2.1. Institutionalisation: CBIJ registered in the U.S.

When starting this research at the end of 2014, the field of cross-border investigative journalism was principally located at the intersection of four organisations: IRE, the ICIJ, the OCCRP and the GIJC/GIJN – all U.S.-based non-profit organisations.

The Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN) was described in a IRE conference keynote speech mentioned above as 'the communications and resource hub for watchdogs around the world' (Coronel, 2016). Its executive director, David Kaplan, who is named 'the guru of GIJN' (Coronel, 2016), is a former director of the ICIJ, former editor-at-large of OCCRP and long time member of IRE. The chair of the GIJN, Brant Houston, is a former longtime director of IRE, who also sits on the advisory board of the ICIJ. Marina Walker, the treasurer of the GIJN is the deputy director of the ICIJ and a former IRE intern, sitting on the GIJN board together with the executive director of the OCCRP, Paul Radu. A member of the new ICIJ Board sits also on the OCCRP board. OCCRP editors and board members have served on the board of IRE.

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88   http://archive.fo/2017.11.08-192257/https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/06/insider/paradise-papers-appleby-leak-icij.html

During this research I have initiated, observed and participated in a growing Europe-based alternative (European Investigative Collaborations, EIC) that was sidelined by these main actors, who for different reasons perceived it as a threat.

Apart from IRE, all other are fairly new organisations: ICIJ has been functioning as a program of a bigger organisation since 1997 but only became an organisation in its own right in 2017; EIC was established in 2016; GIJN in 2015; OCCRP in 2011. There is therefore a legitimate claim to make that we are actually witnessing a process of professionalisation in the emergent field of CBIJ. To dispute this claim the actual process of institutionalisation should be scrutinised in detail, paying special attention to the signs of oligarhization and platformization of this field.

The increase in institutionalisation in the U.S. towards a global reach

The informal character of early structures involved in this field has to be emphasised, same as the boundaries of membership to such organizations. When the GIJN was established at the GIJC in 2003, it was structured as an informal hybrid of, on the one hand, an informal group consisting of member organisations who would decide on the coordination of the GIJ Conferences, and, on the other, an electronic mailing list group, with a public archive where individuals could contact each other about the latest methods, tools and techniques related to investigative journalism, as well as the sharing of information related to the FOIA, CAR, and non-profit business models. The mailing list, called Global-L[89], was maintained based on IRE infrastructure and administration and hosted on the servers of the University of Missouri. It was agreed that the conference would be held every two years in different places in order to make it a global event and benefit from differences in location, expertise and cultural background. The same approach was used initially at the OCCRP, where several existing organisations first decided to publish stories together[90] and then set up 'a project'[91] to report on organised crime. The organisations came together once a year at a conference and maintained a non-public email list owned by the initiator of the OCCRP, Drew Sullivan. This was a Google email group hosted in the gmail online cloud.

At ICIJ during the first years, there was a 'members only' password-protected space hosted on the ICIJ website. In late 2008, that section disappeared during the re-construction of the site, and the rules of engagement were not revisited until 2017 when the ICIJ was registered as a new organisation. Director Gerard Ryle, who took over the ICIJ in 2011, was not aware of any rules of engagement for members and stressed this fact late 2017 on the ICIJ members list. Since at least 2007, several ICIJ email lists had been in place for general discussions among members. From 2010 onward, some dedicated sub-lists were used for communication between project team members. Starting with the Offshore Leaks project in 2012, several bulletin boards were put in place for journalists to communicate and share documents on the same platform and avoid sending information via email. Then the Global I-Hub was created, a customised version of a dating software. By 2017, most of the communication between ICIJ members and partners was moved towards the Global I-Hub, a platform described as a 'the ICIJ virtual office […] Facebook for journalists' (Hare, 2016, Raab, 2016), and a new general email list for members was put in place.

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[89]   https://po.missouri.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A0=GLOBAL-L showed a public archive between 2009 until today (since October 2019 it is accessible only for registered members; an older archive of the Global List between 2003 to 2009 is available here http://web.archive.org/web/20090205174819/ http://lists.globalinvestigativejournalism.org/pipermail/global-l/

[90]   https://web.archive.org/web/20070922154010/http://www.reportingproject.net:80/#

[91]   https://web.archive.org/web/20080515195902/http://www.reportingproject.net/

Between the ICIJ, GIJN and OCCRP only the ICIJ network had basic rules of engagement once members joined and this was only in the first decade of existence. Two paragraphs outlined the conditions under which members can be suspended or disbarred:

> 'Accept employment outside journalism, including with a governmental or non-governmental agency or organization, political party, or in industry/business.
> Violate the Center's journalism practices and standards and/or accepted code of ethics.
> Violate editorial confidentiality.
>
> Face a unanimous vote for such action by the ICIJ Advisory Committee, with the agreement of the ICIJ Director and the Center's Executive Director. ICIJ Members who have been suspended may be reinstated as active members upon their return to full-time journalism and with the agreement of the ICIJ Advisory Committee and ICIJ Director and Center Executive Director'.[92]

So initially one would be a member if listed on a site, if having access to some mailing lists, but not having clear rights and obligations with clear governance rules.

The first steps towards institutionalisation

In 2011, major informal groups active in the field of cross-border investigative journalism were steered towards registration in the U.S. First it was the OCCRP editor, Sullivan, who in 2011 decided to take the step without informing member organisations. This came with a split, with the RCIJ deciding to withdraw. The OCCRP specifically fundraised in order to help its member investigative centres in Eastern European countries. As such it had to establish a replacement organisation (called RISE Project) to take over the vacant place left by the RCIJ. Once registered in the U.S., the OCCRP incorporated a network of subsidiaries and expanded, opening a branch in Romania and one in Moldova. At the end of the same year, the strategic move to establish a 'general secretariat' of the GIJN was launched at the GIJC 2011 in Kiev by David Kaplan, who left the position of ICIJ director that year and was an editor-at-large for the OCCRP.[93] It was not met with enthusiasm by every participant in the meeting, but the secretariat came into being nonetheless. Kaplan became GIJN director, and in the following year the process of registering the GIJN as a non-profit in the U.S. was initiated and implemented[94].

In mid-2016, another network of investigative journalists began the institutionalisation process: the International Consortium for Investigative Journalism (ICIJ). The process started just after the successful release of the Panama Papers in 2016 and was publicly announced in 2017[95]. The new ICIJ was mainly the result of a decision by director Gerard Ryle and his deputy Marina Walker without informing the larger ICIJ membership. The structure was temporarily hosted by a fiscal sponsor of INN called WIRE Inc[96] (which recalls the WIRE structure that Charles Lewis imagined

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92   Personal member archive archive, archived on 09.05.2008

93   http://archive.fo/2017.11.08-133741/https://www.occrp.org/index.php/en/about-us/biographies/1706-david-e-kaplan

94   https://po.missouri.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A2=ind1405&L=GLOBAL-L&D=0&P=12101

95   https://www.icij.org/blog/2017/02/after-panama-papers-success-icij-goes-independent/

96   https://www.icij.org/blog/2017/267/work-isnt-done-heres-can-help/ 'After ICIJ spun off from the Center for Public Integrity, we existed as a project of the Institute for Nonprofit News (INN) called the Worldwide Investigative Reporting Enterprise (WIRE). INN provided fiscal sponsorship while we waited to receive our 501(c)(3) status from the IRS'.

in an article about the positive future of cross-border investigative journalism)[97]. Soon after the new ICIJ obtained legal non-profit status in 2017, directors Gerard Ryle and Marina Walker appointed a board of directors, an advisory committee and a network committee (again, without any communication towards the larger ICIJ membership). The board of directors included for the first time a representative of a donor, in fact of their largest donor, Omidyar Networks, a philanthropic arm of eBay owner Pierre Omidyar's organisation. The network committee drafted an ICIJ charter that would govern the 200 members as well its new membership and send it to the board for approval, without having to debate with its members. The ICIJ Charter describes a series of obligations, but no specific rights are listed.

All this is showing that the process of institutionalisation cannot be explained by profesionalization and it is rather the will of a very few people forced onto a very large group of people who have no saying (close to an oligarchy system).

3.2.2. Blockage: oligarchization of global CBIJ

Blockage, which means the stopping of fresh action, comes with the merger between 'interface', 'arena', 'council' in the hands of a very few people. The groups that emerged from institutionalisation over the last decades in the field of cross-border investigative journalism try to follow a process of professionalisation and specialisation. This has come in the form of a corporatist approach, with previously informal groups becoming institutionalised and specialised, some producing cross-border investigative journalism projects, and others producing network infrastructure like conferences and training packages.

When the ICIJ and the GIJN started almost two decades ago, the journalists worked together in producing stories and met from time to time to discuss their work, taking turns in organising such meetings, the early Global Conferences. The same person would switch between different disciplines, sometimes being active in journalism, sometimes showcasing work, and at other times choosing to get involved with the organisation and direction of the network.

With institutionalisation, what were previously disparate disciplines become embedded into new structures. Same persons are involved now representing institutions (sometimes representing more institutions at once) and those institutions are interlocked. Such structures restrict novelty, however. 'The effect of formal organization is to block fresh action'(White, 2008, p 312). To make things work and deliver on promises made to institutional donors, a relationship of dependency is created between the participants of the new structures. Such dependency on giving and receiving favours (e..g. to be invited to participate in a research projects or to be sponsored to attend a global conference) can be viewed as *clientelism*. White, who has looked at the role of blockage in networks that are structured in organisations, notes: 'After clientelist ties are established, new actions are blocked by the routinized interaction subsisting in each tie' (2008, p 312).

Institutionalisation, which was the first step toward shaping new organisations in the field of cross-border investigative journalism, started to occur from 2010 onwards. When boards of directors were formalised, other phenomena became visible: the centralisation of the field, the emergence of a few very strong ties keep this network together and the combination and consolidation of what used to

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[97]   http://archive.fo/2017.02.27-224823/http://archives.cjr.org/feature/a_socialnetwork_solution_1.php

be the three domains of interface,[98] arena and council[99] into the hands of a few people. There seems to be no real opposition to this trend (see mailing lists), but also no fresh action from the outside that is focused on the core group. The network infrastructure was taken over by a small group of people and direct contacts of participants have not been available since 2013, when institutionalisation began at the GIJN. The transparency of the informal group is gone.

By 2019 the blocking situations become visible. A veteran journalist member of the Global List is expelled from the emailing list without warning for criticising OCCRP's work[100]. Two new European structures with a long track-record in investigative journalism (European Investigative Collaborations network and Arena for Journalism) are refused GIJN membership without explanation. Soon after that, at the end of 2019, the Global List becomes private without notification or without requesting the consent from all GIJN members, after 16 years of being publicly available as a public resource for journalists around the world[101].

3.2.2. Decoupling: alternative CBIJ structures in Europe

Decoupling in order to be able to organise fresh action is the result of blockage in a network. As in White's (2008) analysis of network formation, the blocking of action is leading towards getting control over control and towards decoupling from the status quo. In the case of GIJN, it led to the establishment of a new arena (Data Harvest) and a new investigative interface (European Investigative Collaborations), both independent from each-other but overlapping (and overlapping still with GIJN and ICIJ).

An alternative to the blockage of cross-border investigative journalism was made possible by the organising of a new and independent European network infrastructure called Data Harvest. It started in 2007 with a small group of journalists meeting to work on fresh data-sets released by the European Union (specifically data on recipients of farm subsidies). Over the years it became the most important meeting point for European investigative journalists and coders, hosting almost 400 participants. Data Harvest was co-developed by JournalismFund.eu, a programme that gives small grants to journalists proposing cross-border investigative ideas. Both Data Harvest and JournalismFund were co-founded by Brigitte Alfter, a Danish journalist who was part of the core team of Scoop[102], the Danish support programme for investigative journalism in Eastern Europe. Stories produced with JF support have been presented at a new independent conference (Data Harvest) and have brought journalists together in a context totally independent from existing, usual suspect organisations blocking the development of the field. An alternative Arena was created.

Based on Data Harvest and Journalism Fund infrastructure and connections, a new group for producing cross-border investigative projects emerged, European Investigative Collaborations (EIC), a hybrid organisation in a number of respects (type of participants, internal informal group).

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98   https://www.icij.org/about/ and https://www.occrp.org/board-directors

99   http://archive.fo/2017.12.08-142043/https://inn.org/about/board-of-directors/ and http://archive.fo/2017.12.08-142339/https://gijn.org/about/board-of-directors/

100 https://web.archive.org/web/20200409150835/https://www.thekomisarscoop.com/2019/05/occrp-gets-lucy-thrown-off-journalists-list-for-citing-browder-testimony-that-it-is-his-collaborator/

101 The communication exchange of the Global List and of the google list dedicated to GIJN members could be a further study target, especially to investigate how the registering of GIJN in the US has changed communication patterns, who are the most communicators now (for instance the deputy director of GIJN has sent 140 emails to the 185 GIJN members list out of a little bit over 200 emails exchanged between 2014 and 2020)

102 http://archive.fo/2017.12.26-124735/https://i-scoop.org/scoop-history/

Membership of EIC is restricted to media organisations. However, the work is done by the journalists collaborating on concrete projects. Some of the EIC's co-founders are also members of the ICIJ and some of the media partners also partner with the ICIJ on publishing stories. The reason why EIC started, however, was the ICIJ's inability both to undertake other, shorter projects in parallel and to limit its activities to Europe.

There is more to the blockage of action that caused the emergence of EIC, and this is related to the business logic of traditional commercial media. In 2012, when the ICIJ Offshore Leaks project was in the making, the offer to participate in the project was ignored by the editor-in-chief of *Der Spiegel's* weekly magazine, who was one of the two ICIJ members in Germany. After being ignored by the weekly *Die Zeit*, Offshore Leaks was then offered to the daily *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, a competitor of *Der Spiegel*. *Süddeutsche Zeitung* joined forces with two regional public broadcasters, NDR and WDR. After Offshore Leaks was published, the ICIJ member lost his position at *Der Spiegel* due to unrelated events and quit. He was appointed as the head of the investigative collaboration of NDR, WDR and *SZ* in 2014, a powerhouse who blocked any real possibility for any other media from the German market to be part of ICIJ projects in the future.

European Investigative Collaborations

Background discussions related to the establishment of this European Network started in mid-2015 and involved Jörg Schmitt, Jürgen Dahlkamp, Alfred Weinzierl and Klaus Brinkbäumer from *Der Spiegel*, and myself representing the Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism and *The Black Sea* online magazine. I was commissioned a concept paper by *Der Spiegel* and in September future members were approached to discuss the formation of a European Network for Investigative Journalism. The journalists contacted had different backgrounds: some had already been part of international collaborations. some had not been part of such networks, and some were part of the ICIJ (and of other networks, like LENA). Alain Lallemand from *Le Soir* joined the group, and later so too did John Hansen from *Politiken*, Milorad Ivanovic from *Newsweek Serbia*, Florian Klenk from *Falter*, Paula Guisado from El Mundo, Vlad Odobescu from The Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism, Michael Bird from *The Black Sea*, Fabrice Arfi from *Mediapart* and Vittorio Malagutti from *L'Espresso*. EIC partners pull together resources to do investigative research but also to develop tools and information design. EIC is building tools under a Free Software Licence and the lead product manager is *Der Spiegel's* IT department, but all EIC member organisations have committed to contributing. Later on, the informal EIC decided to take a formal structure because of the need to operate a common budget, so a non-registered association was established.

At the time of submitting this research, both EIC and Data Harvest are established organisations. Data Harvest has been growing independent under the organisation name 'Arena for Journalism in Europe ' and is led by Brigitte Alfter, with a Board of three. Its main focus is the yearly organising of 'Dataharvest – the European Investigative Journalism Conference ' but also keeping topical information alive in-between conferences[103]. EIC, on the other hand, has become a 14 media partners network by agreement and in 2020 has a budget that partners collect together of EUR 200.000, being dependent on donors only if wanting to scale up freelance reporting in Eastern Europe in order to balance the Western European heavy focus.

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[103] https://web.archive.org/web/20200409102743/https://journalismarena.eu/the-networks/

Building control: relevant findings

To sum up, the relevant findings of this section are that cross-border investigative projects start or get planed at investigative conferences (which are network offline infrastructures) and that CBIJ thrives on data-sets. Also relevant is that CBIJ is mostly subsidised by the non-profit industry. Further on, the section finds that dependencies to offline infrastructures, data-sets and non-profit sponsorship enforces standardization and the spread of the Atlantic investigative journalism model (as opposed to other journalistic models) at a global scale. The relevancy of this is that with the institutionalisation of CBIJ by the U.S. based nexus of GIJN - GIJC - ICIJ appears control, involution, clientelism and then blockage. As a reaction to blockage, alternatives appear in Europe, but such alternatives are not totally decoupled (both new arena and interface overlap) and are still dependent on the same journalism model and same hunger for resources provided by the same non-profit industry.

3.3. The main claims of CBIJ Genesis

Following White (2008), this section will group CBIJ claims by content analysis of topics, with the goal to follow the ties forged by similar narratives distributed in the CBIJ networks, in order to identify *netdoms* at source, bringing clarity in networks grouped by same identities, that form similar arena and council. At the end of this section a short list of main claims that make the official version of CBIJ today will be reviewed from the perspective of exclusion: what do such narratives keep out from discussion ? Authoetnography perspectives will be used for analysis and furthermore such claims will be verified against the next two case studies chapters.

3.3.1. What are the CBIJ elements

This section will collect and review the main claims that stakeholders in cross-border investigative journalism have publicly made over the past forty decades about this evolving field. The focus will be on organisations promoting or implementing cross-border investigative journalism networks and people who are branding themselves as practitioners, managers or facilitators of cross-border investigative journalism. Attention will be given to declarations from large organisations in this field, like the Center for Public Integrity, ICIJ and the OCCRP, who occupy the top spots in terms of yearly budget and number of employees (see the lists compiled in American University's JLab studies 'The New Journalism Ecosystem'[104] and the 'New Journalism Global Ecosystem'[105]). Such prominent positions are confirmed by a more recent study (Hume, 2018). Under scrutiny will also come declarations by their staff and key people, and the most connected people in this field indicated by the composition of boards of directors and advisors in such structures in the U.S.[106] and around the world[107] as well as at speakers at the most important industry conferences, the Global Investigative Journalism Conferences[108].

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[104] https://web.archive.org/web/20180720183220/http://www.investigativereportingworkshop.org/ecosystem/

[105] https://web.archive.org/web/20180720190721/http://investigativereportingworkshop.org/investigations/new-newsrooms/htmlmulti/nonprofits-worldwide/

[106] https://inn.org/members/

[107] https://gijn.org/member/

[108] https://gijn.org/global-conference-2/

Looking at these claims helps define the categories that shape the field's boundaries and is translated into the choice of observation categories that will be used in chapters four and five. For instance, there is an important and recurrent claim that the use of technology is revolutionary for networks of cross-border investigative journalism. So after reviewing how that claim evolved, I go on to observe what type of technology is used, when and how it is deployed, and who controls it in the context of projects executed by two different networks: the Panama Papers of the ICIJ and Football Leaks of the EIC.network.

The collection of the claims below show that the cross-border investigative journalism model is a cycle of several elements that co-exist in a loop over a long period of time, with pressures coming both from within and from the outside, pressures that arise at various moments and on different levels. Such work involves a clear distinction with an elite group that gathers to protect the craft by showcasing how it is done, either through investigative projects or through exhibiting tools and methods. Usually, this element claims a special status and protection for their own journalism and stories. Another tendency is the growth of the group on a global scale with the help of a non-profit arena. As it was mentioned above, the use of technology is another important element that distinguishes its methods from those of traditional mainstream journalism. Other elements that separate it from traditional mainstream media are its collaborative method and its use of a non-profit model. But the realities of nonprofit financial possibilities, such as non-profit structures are dependent on the amplifying and multiplying force of mainstream media. So in order to gain enough impact, however, the cycle then moves towards the mainstream media. Such work is described as very expensive, so another important requirement is that it be sponsored and protected, hence the need for a special elite group to manage resources. In this way, the same loop reproduces itself.

The following seven sub-sections will review and detail the narratives behind the elements that shape the field of cross-border investigative journalism.

An elite is needed to protect the investigative journalism craft

There are two narratives at work here: the highest standards of the journalism craft need to be protected and those who do it claim an elite position, which also needs special protection. Organisations promoting or undertaking cross-border investigative journalism claim that the reason for getting organised lies not in the need to invent something new, but rather in fixing something that is broken, inevitably suggesting the fact that there was a 'golden age' when the craft of journalism worked better. In 2017, the OCCRP declared: 'The age of trust is over. When information is no longer mediated by history's gatekeepers – whether religious leaders, government regulators, education institutions or media watchdogs – there is a need to rethink the entire infrastructure of information from top to bottom.' (OCCRP, 2017)

Usually such claims are made by senior and accomplished journalists, editors and managers who see the limitations of the commercial media in reaching the highest possible standard of journalism. If there are journalists who are not senior or accomplished already, they find other ways to signal that they are part of a special group.

Even if they quit the media and start new types of organisations, such professionals still carry out their work to the same high standards imposed by the media they quit, but add a call for a sort of special status and protection for their peers and their stories. With every new group or network or project, there is a legacy and their craft that is being perpetrated and consolidated.

More than forty years ago, when Investigative Editors and Reporters was established in 1975, the reason to formalise an institution doing cross (federal) border investigative journalism was that of preserving a craft that was being abused by reporters in search of fame: 'the ethical and unethical, the competent and incompetent, the skilled and unskilled – wanted their own Watergate to bring them fame and fortune' (Aucoine, 2007, p118). It was what they perceived as poor investigative journalism that the co-founders of IRE 'hoped to counter with a national organization that could prod practicing investigative journalists to seek out the best practices for the craft' (Aucoine, 2007, p120). Accounts of how IRE was started focus on the 'best-known investigative reporter in the room' and highlight those who had already won Pultizer and other journalistic prizes. It refers to the journalists in the group as being 'prominent journalists' (Aucoin, 2007, p97). Most of them were white males.

In his book *The Evolution of American Investigative Journalism*, author James L. Aucoine argues that already in the 1970s modern investigative journalists realised that they had to offer more than just highly-developed skills because the complex investigative stories that were published took on powerful people and institutions. Accordingly, 'they would have to embrace intangible qualities of character that would infuse their work with legitimacy', or in other words, would have to display 'virtues' such as 'courage, justice, honesty, and a sense of tradition' (Aucoin, 2007, p97). More than two decades after the IRE moment, when discussing the creation of the ICIJ during the 1990s, two other prominent journalists also highlighted the fact that the journalistic craft was in danger. First, 'the press was in fact losing its independence. Powerful private interests were in a competitive struggle over how new communication technology would be organized economically and politically' (Kovach, 2005). Second, the 'ability to hold power accountable was dissolving in a froth of infotainment' (Kovach, 2005). Maintaining an independent press strong enough to monitor power was therefore becoming a struggle, and 'has become more about how words are controlled than about how technology is managed'(Kovach, 2005)[109].

Over the last decade, the emphasis on an elite carrying out important work has persisted and multiplied. As the OCCRP's 2013 annual report claims: 'It is obviously very dangerous to report on organized crime. We have been forced to develop sophisticated ways to protect our reporters' (OCCRP, 2013). Reporters themselves who are working with such an organisation are signalling that they are part of something special that is not available to all journalists: 'Vasja Jager, Slovenia: Thanks to OCCRP we have a chance to follow the money. The mobsters went global and now we are able to go global with them' (OCCRP, 2013). It is so special that it has a mystery aura: 'Olegsandr Akimenko, Ukraine: Being part of OCCRP is very important. When I show people that there is data - when I tell them about the Investigative Dashboard and show them that there are a lot of places where you can get records - it's a mystery to them. It never happened before in the Ukraine' (OCCRP, 2013). This kind of special group needs extra security and protection for doing the work: 'Dejan Milovac, Montenegro: Our innovative cyber-research tools assist risk-free research, while 2012 saw us develop our own security manual' (OCCRP, 2013).

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109   Bill Kovach, in 2005 CROSSING BORDERS OPENING DOORS [https://cloudfront-files-1.publicintegrity.org/legacy_projects/pdf_reports/CROSSINGBORDERS.pdf

The elite theme has come back even more recently, in 2016. The ICIJ initial membership is described with reference to its affiliation to Ivy League Universities: 'original ICIJ members were alumni of U.S. journalism fellowships, like the Niemans at Harvard and the Knights at Stanford. Dozens more award-winning journalists from over 65 countries were added over the years' (Houston, 2016)[110]. There are other ways to highlight the distinction of this elite group. They insist that there is a very limited number of people worldwide doing this type of work. Drew Sullivan from the OCCRP claims that there are 'maybe 10,000 investigative reporters worldwide at most, and only hundreds of experienced editors' (OCCRP, 2016). Second, it is claimed that the cost of training such special reporters is very high: 'training a real investigate reporter can cost two to three hundred thousand dollars and years of work under a veteran editor' (OCCRP, 2016).

A special group of people, protecting a special craft, need special organisations, and such special organisations have to make clear what makes them special when they ask for financial endorsement: 'in a time when our news - the real news - is more necessary than ever, we have less money, more headwinds, more enemies seeking our destruction, and more work to do than ever before' (OCCRP, 2016). Same elitist view from ICIJ: 'Our expertise, our global network and our access to data sets that exist nowhere else make us uniquely qualified to find information that is hidden from the public'[111].

The need for collaborative global knowledge

Another important element in the mix of cross-border investigative journalism is collaboration, especially between reporters or media who would otherwise be in competition. This is advertised as a tool for bringing information to light that the powerful want to hide, or for exposing misinformation and 'fake news'.

Ever since IRE started in the 70's, the case was made that loner journalists would benefit from collaboration. Referring to the Arizona Project, Aucoin notes: 'never before had reporters from different news organizations worked together in a non-competitive situation to produce a single report. IRE had pioneered a new concept in investigative reporting: direct cooperation among reporters' (Aucoin, 2007, p149). According to the same account, in 1977 *Newsday* labelled the Arizona Project 'an unusual experiment in collective journalism'. For the author of *The Evolution of American Investigative Journalism*, James L. Aucoin, the Arizona Project in 1977 was 'a defining moment in the history of journalism, particularly investigative journalism, for it was a rare case when normally competitive investigative journalists set aside their egos and worked together on a story that was too big for any one of them alone.' The collaboration ensured the necessary resources for 'a story that was bigger than any individual newspaper or broadcast news operation'.

Just over a decade later, the Iron Curtain collapsed and the Soviet Union disintegrated, which meant that all of a sudden U.S. and other Western Europe journalists found themselves around conference tables preaching about high quality investigative journalism. In a short space of time, the promotion of the concept of information exchange between reporters increased dramatically. According to Charles Lewis, who would later establish the ICIJ, 'Phillip Knightley, the internationally renowned, London-based author and reporter [...] eloquently and indelibly stressed the paramount need for competitive, often paranoid, investigative reporters to help each other with information (ICIJ,

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[110] https://gijn.org/2016/04/13/panama-papers-showcase-power-of-a-global-movement/

[111] ICIJ, 2017, from https://www.icij.org/blog/2017/487/more-documents-more-journalists-and-bigger-revelations/

2005). This was happening in 1992. When the ICIJ was launched in 1997, the message revolved around the same concept: 'With global economic interdependence, technological and communication breakthroughs, and the multiplicity of opportunities – as well as dangers – of life in an increasingly frontierless world, there is need for in-depth information that transcends national boundaries' (Lewis, 1997). With the first big project published by the ICIJ in 2000, David Leigh at *The Guardian* tells its readers that 'investigative journalists, too, are now learning how they must go global' and that such an approach is 'helping journalism catch up with the activities of mega-corporations and mega power blocs' (Leigh, 2000).

The message is clear: with such global knowledge, obtained based on investigative collaborations, the people will obtain more power. The ICIJ''s mission, it transpired, was 'to conduct investigative projects across nation-state borders on the premise that an enlightened populace is an empowered populace' (Leigh, 2000)[112]. I myself was a true believer of this idea. When early in 2003 I was invited to the second global conference where the Global Investigative Journalism Network was being established, one of my first messages on the dedicated email list was: 'I am very glad to see that this idea came true, as I am already convinced by the necessity of creating this kind of network. Actually, the organized crime got transnational a long time ago, the law enforcement tried to catch up with that – is now for us to think sometime, investigative journalism in a global manner' (Candea, 2003)[113]. In the decades that have followed, I have read or heard many times over in the context of cross-border investigative journalism, this statement about criminals, businesses, money moving free and fast across borders and the need for journalists to do the same in order to be able to report in-depth. I still hear it today.

Bill Kovach's foreword to a 2005 collection of ICIJ article, states that collaboration among competing journalists across borders is a tool for fighting dis- and misinformation: 'Leaders of political, economic and social power the world over grow ever-more sophisticated in their use of words to misinform, mislead and propagandize their citizens, their messages delivered via media outlets over which they have no direct control. Strengthening our ability to penetrate this fog of dis- and misinformation has become our most pressing challenge—a challenge that may prove fatal to informed self government if this generation fails to rise to meet it effectively. This report stands as eloquent testimony to the importance of international cooperation among independent journalists to do just that. For those of us who live in the United States, this report should be a humbling reminder of the extent to which we allow our First Amendment freedoms to rust from disuse' (Kovach, 2005)[114].

David E. Kaplan, a former director of ICIJ and current director of GIJN, reported in the winter 2009 edition of the *IRE Journal* that 'In a world that's increasingly globalized, the crooks cross borders, transfer money and shift identities with ease, while the cops and reporters too often are several steps behind. Few journalism organizations can field the resources to take on sophisticated multinational targets. The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists was created for precisely this purpose – to provide an institutional base for complex cross-border investigations' (Kaplan, 2009).

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[112]   from David Leigh, in 2000, jan 31:
        http://archive.fo/2017.11.19-131941/https://www.theguardian.com/media/2000/jan/31/bat.mondaymediasection

[113]   Email sent to on Tue, 01 Apr 2003; the entire archive of the Global Investigative Journalism Network email list (Global-L) was public and a copy of the emails exchanges since it started in 2003 to 2009 when it was moved on a different server is available for download here http://web.archive.org/web/20090205174819/http://lists.globalinvestigativejournalism.org/pipermail/global-l

[114]   Bill Kovach, in 2005 CROSSING BORDERS OPENING DOORS, https://cloudfront-files-1.publicintegrity.org/legacy_projects/pdf_reports/CROSSINGBORDERS.pdf

And the OCCRP, the organisation in which Kaplan served as editor-at-large and a member of the board, refers to itself in its 2013 annual report as a group of 'pioneers in distributed, virtual newsrooms that span time-zones, cultures and experiences' (OCCRP, 2013). Furthermore, the director of the OCCRP states that 'The power of reporting without borders is in the sharing of information among those who know all about the situation in their home countries' (OCCRP, 2013).

A few years later, shortly after the ICIJ published the Panama Papers, Sheila Coronel, another board member of both the OCCRP and the ICIJ, declared in front of almost 2,000 participants at the Investigative Reporters and Editors annual conference: 'The era of the lone wolf is over', adding that '[a] borderless world needs watchdogs who can transcend borders' (Coronel, 2016)[115]. At the end of the same year, the ICIJ itself, this time with a different leadership from the one it had when it began two decades before, considered that Panama Papers was a 'story that was too important, too complex and too global for any individual journalist or media organization to tackle on their own' (Walker Guevara, 2016)[116].

In 2017, my last year of research for the present thesis, one of the journalists from the German magazine *SZ* who actually brought the Panama Papers data to the ICIJ, said: 'But the truth is that journalism – especially investigative journalism – needs much more radical sharing to thrive in today's media environment where resources are strapped, distribution is disaggregated, and audiences are dispersed and distracted. [...] We cannot let hubris and competitive paranoia keep us from going after stories with all of our might' (Obermeyer, 2017)[117]. I will revisit this public statement in the next chapter, in the context of SZ/ICIJ cutting the access to journalists working on Panama Papers on a suspicion that information they access from PP data-set could benefit stories prepared by another network. Enough to say here that this narrative that the story is the most important thing to justify a so-called 'radical collaboration' has become a leitmotiv. Wolfgang Krach, Obermeyer's editor-in-chief, who had observed the collaboration of *SZ* with the ICIJ since 2012, told reporters: 'We have been covering globalization and the problems of globalization for twenty years now [...], and we haven't found an adequate journalistic answer to deal with global issues.' (Zerofsky, 2017). The Panama Papers, he argued, had been the first true global journalism project.[118] Referring to the Panama Papers, Sheila Coronel sees it as the new global standard for investigative journalism: 'The Panama Papers showcases not so much technological power but the power of the global investigative reporting movement' (Coronel, 2016).

There is a forty-year time period between 1977, when the Arizona Project made 'investigative journalists set aside their egos and work together on a story that was too big for any one of them alone' (Aucoin, 2007) and 2017, when current ICIJ director Gerard Ryle declared: 'We believe that today, more than ever, some stories are too big, too complex and too global to be tackled by lone-wolf investigative reporters or even individual news organizations' (Ryle c, 2017)[119].

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[115]   http://gijn.org/2016/06/20/a-golden-age-of-global-muckraking/ , transcript of speech at IRE conference, Sheila Coronel

[116]   https://www.icij.org/blog/2016/12/radical-sharing-breaking-paradigms-achieve-change/

[117]   Bastian Obermeyer http://www.cjr.org/the_feature/panama-papers-partnership.php

[118]   SZ editor in chief, Wolfgang Krach, https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/how-a-german-newspaper-became-the-go-to-place-for-leaks-like-the-paradise-papers

[119]   https://www.icij.org/blog/2017/02/after-panama-papers-success-icij-goes-independent/

Growing out of non-profit arena infrastructure, online or offline

The phenomenon of face-to-face meetings and online communication of professional communities is well known. There is no cross-border investigative journalism organisation that does not cite in one way or another the crucial importance of conferences and online forums for the development of cross-border investigative projects and networks. Conferences, workshops, training sessions and round-tables have been abundant during the last decades, especially since 1989. A few of these conferences have become some of the most important events in the field of cross-border investigative journalism. For some the function of these conferences is that of an 'arena'[120]where the best work is presented, while for others they represent a place to gain inspiration, make new contacts, learn new techniques or simply obtain confirmation of the importance of investigative journalism.

Since the most important events to date are the IRE and NICAR conferences in the U.S. and the Global Conferences run by former IRE core members and which feature U.S. presenters, such arena infrastructure has become a place that promotes a certain cultural model and exported a certain way of doing journalism. Such gatherings are viewed as 'electrifying' or epiphanic moments. The Arizona Project, a collaborative investigation published in 1977, began to take shape at the IRE first conference a year before. The killing of the journalist Don Bolles came at the same time at the conference and so 'the annual meeting was electrified' (Aucoin, 2007).

Bill Kovach refers to the moment when he first saw the need to put journalists together across borders at the first conference organised in Prague soon after 1989 (Kovach, 2005)[121]. Shortly after, Chuck Lewis, who established the ICIJ, had his own 'personal epiphany about the possibility of collaborative, across-border investigative reporting occurred in 1992, when I was invited to speak at an extraordinary international investigative journalism conference in Moscow' (ICIJ, 2005)[122].

The founding statement of the Global Investigative Journalism Network in 2003 was crafted and published during a conference, the second Global Conference, and made the focus of the network that of keeping alive infrastructure for 'independent journalism organizations that support the training and sharing of information among journalists in investigative and computer-assisted reporting' (GIJN Organising Statement, 2003)[123]. Looking at how projects like Panama Papers are possible, former IRE director Brant Huston considers that the 'GIJN has held ten international conferences and trained thousands of journalists in investigative reporting and data analysis. It has become a global hub for the world's muckrakers and served as a catalyst for the formation of nonprofit newsrooms and cross-border collaboration' (Houston, 2016)[124].

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[120]   Interview David Leigh, The Guardian, 2015

[121]   Forward by Bill Kovach, in 2005 CROSSING BORDERS OPENING DOORS https://web.archive.org/web/20170613021059/https://cloudfront-files-1.publicintegrity.org/legacy_projects/pdf_reports/CROSSINGBORDERS.pdf

[122]   Charles Lewis, in 2005 CROSSING BORDERS OPENING DOORS https://cloudfront-files-1.publicintegrity.org/legacy_projects/pdf_reports/CROSSINGBORDERS.pdf

[123]   GIJN Organizing Statement at https://gijn.org/about/organizing-statement-2003/

[124]   https://gijn.org/2016/04/13/panama-papers-showcase-power-of-a-global-movement/

GIJN director Kaplan sees the future of the conference's offline and online infrastructure as 'working to strengthen investigative journalism groups across the globe' and attempting to 'expand GIJN's online resource center; increase our capacity to respond to requests for help; and train investigative groups in business skills, fundraising, and revenue diversification' (Kaplan, 2015). During a keynote speech at IRE conference in 2016, Sheila Coronel outlined her view that interactions at conferences workshops 'have fostered camaraderie and trust. They have laid the groundwork for a truly global and networked journalism' (Coronel, 2016). She also argued that such infrastructure is the key to creating across the globe 'the bonds of professional solidarity that [...] made the Panama Papers possible' (Coronel, 2016). Specifically, she spoke of the GIJN, which has turned into a global investigative journalism hub with 'over 100 investigative reporting centers and organizations outside the U.S.': 'The Global Investigative Journalism Network is the communications & resource hub for watchdogs around the world' (Coronel, 2016)[125] and labelled David Kaplan, the director of the structure, 'the guru of GIJN' (Coronel, 2016).

A one model fits all

Another crucial element of cross-border investigative journalism is the collaboration that creates effective networks comprised of media, non-profits and other groups and that produce a sense of camaraderie. The model is claimed to work without a hierarchy, instead being based on the condition that people be 'nice' and obey a so-called 'radical sharing' ideology[126]. After The Arizona Project was labelled 'an unusual experiment in collective journalism' in the U.S., Lewis wished to build upon his epiphanic moment at the Moscow conference and so, prefiguring his later founding of the ICIJ, wrote to the board of the CPI that 'we are building relationships with investigative reporters around the world' (ICIJ, 2005). It took five more years actually to found the ICIJ, but the networking of journalists was the cornerstone of this project: 'Following the successful path forged by the Center for Public Integrity – respected as an honest broker of information – ICIJ will extend globally the Center's style of enterprise journalism in the public interest by marshaling the talents of the world's leading investigative reporters' (Lewis, 1997)[127].

In 1998, after the first ICIJ report was produced, Lewis noted how he had proof of concept and had reached a 'momentous milestone after six long years of exploration and stubborn determination not to be deterred. The model worked, the concept and the Fundamentals were in place, and an astonishing assemblage of talent was on board in Washington, D.C., and around the world' (ICIJ, 2005)[128]. That proof of concept was reinforced by the ICIJ's first large-scale international project investigating Big Tobacco in 2000: 'Today's remarkable revelations about British American Tobacco owe their genesis to a group of investigative reporters whose newsroom is the world', wrote David Leigh in *The Guardian* (Leigh, 2000)[129]. He observed that the chances of convincing reluctant investigative reporters to collaborate were low: they were an 'unlikely collection of people to get

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[125]   http://gijn.org/2016/06/20/a-golden-age-of-global-muckraking/   , transcript of speech at IRE conference, Sheila Coronel

[126] The terms 'nice' and 'radical sharing' are used by ICIJ deputy director Walker to describe the people and the work interaction within ICIJ: https://www.icij.org/blog/2016/04/faqs/ and https://www.icij.org/blog/2016/12/radical-sharing-breaking-paradigms-achieve-change/

[127]   Chuck Lewis ICIJ Manifesto, 22 Dec 1997: https://web.archive.org/web/19971222092832/http://publicintegrity.org/icij/index.html

[128]   Charles Lewis, in 2005 CROSSING BORDERS OPENING DOORS https://cloudfront-files-1.publicintegrity.org/legacy_projects/pdf_reports/CROSSINGBORDERS.pdf

[129]   David Leigh, in 2000, jan 31:
       http://archive.fo/2017.11.19-131941/https://www.theguardian.com/media/2000/jan/31/bat.mondaymediasection

together in one room, whose collective history of conflict with the authorities seemed likely to generate a truculence factor way off the scale. How on earth was anyone going to get them to agree about anything?' But since it worked, it sparked 'worldwide optimism about new possibilities for chasing the truth'. Then Leigh (2000) observes what seems to be a central part of the collaborative claim of cross-border investigative journalism: 'Charles Lewis's scheme to set up ICIJ managed to tap into something less obvious - the sense of camaraderie and the love of detective work that it seems bind them together the world over.' The element of collaborative journalism developed from 'group' to 'network' and is mentioned in self-descriptions of organisations that joined this field after 2000.

In 2013, the OCCRP described themselves as 'a peer-to-peer investigative network extending from the Balkans to Central Asia, working with reporters round the world' (OCCRP, 2013). There is no clear understanding of what such networks are, of whether they are collaborations 'Our real collaboration is based on the common goal' or cooperations: 'we are first and foremost a manifestation of cooperative journalism' (OCCRP, 2013).

For Brant Huston, co-founder and chair of the GIJN and former long-time director at IRE, the 2016 publication of the Panama Papers by the ICIJ 'represents the culmination of a significant shift in the way journalism is now practiced' (Houston, 2016). The shift rested on 'collaboration, both on small and large scales'. The work started by IRE with the Arizona Project in 1976 'represents the result of 40 years of work done by groups of investigative reporters to bring the profession into the 21st Century'. It looked like 'the shift has been made and is a milestone on this road to a form of investigative journalism that meets the challenges of a world of overwhelming data and international schemes' (Houston, 2016). The same observation was made the same year in front of IRE conference participants by Sheila Coronel, who was witnessing 'an explosion of investigative reporting around the world' and the way in which 'watchdog groups have seeded the unprecedented collaboration of journalists working across borders and across newsrooms' (Coronel, 2016).

For Coronel, the key element was again the power of collaboration: the 'successes I've described demonstrate not so much technological power as collaborative power… the power of individual reporters working together to produce journalism that is greater than the sum of each of their individual efforts' (Coronel, 2016). Collaboration leads to groups and networks, and the claim is that 'unlike traditional newsrooms, networked journalism is, for better or for worse, horizontal and non-hierarchical. Membership in the network is informal – there are no membership lists or dues' (Coronel, 2016). She also makes the more specific claim regarding the specific structure of networks for cross-border investigative journalism: 'There are hubs, but no single mission control. Cross-border journalist networks operate the same way', and ICIJ is described by Coronel, who sits on its board, as being one of these hubs: she speaks of the 'ICIJ's stellar work as a hub for distributed, cross-border reporting' (Coronel, 2016).

For the OCCRP, 2016 was the year that made clear the need of collaboration as a way to reinvent the craft, to 'continue the revolution that OCCRP and its partners represents, finally reinventing journalism and helping to reform the information economy for the 21st century' (OCCRP, 2016). The motor of such collaborative networks is claimed to be the 'radical sharing' of data and information, which today is considered to be the ICIJ's method. 'Instead of following instinct, tradition, and their own egos, these journalists decided to share their scoops. Not just with one or two colleagues, but with dozens of them. In fact, with hundreds of them. Not just in their own countries, but in countries across five continents […] we call it radical sharing' (Walker Guevara,

2016). The claim, then, is that we are witnessing a shift in journalism and the highlighted elements of the shift are collaboration, networked newsrooms, journalists who trust eachother and data-journalism skills obtained by means of conferences, all of it under auspices of non-profits subsidised by donors. The claim remains consistent over time. For instance, in 2016, the claim related to Panama Papers was that when the biggest leaked data-set was available, so too were 'networks of journalists and newsrooms that had learned to work with and trust each other, a high level of expertise in traditional and data journalism built up through conferences and workshops, and donors to support all of it' (Houston, 2016).

In 2016, the ICIJ offered the world an 'opportunity to rethink the way we work, just like the Panama Papers reporters changed their lone wolf ways and created a more efficient model of collaboration and trust' (Walker Guevara, 2016). For ICIJ deputy director Walker, this was a long journey. It took twenty years 'to develop the methodology and the trust that ultimately led to what today we know as the Panama Papers'. For IRE former director Houston, reaching the current state of collaboration in investigative journalism took forty years. For both individuals, these periods coincide with the entire existence of their respective organisations.

Reinventing investigative journalism with technology

Journalism in general was changing together with various technological advances, so it is unsurprising that technology should be another key element of the claims made about cross-border investigative journalism. In this specific context, technological advances are credited after any important investigative project. This credit is usually related to new ways of researching or sharing information, but also of new ways of packaging, visualising and publishing information. Data journalism, security, visualisation, innovation, automation and platforms are all key technological buzzwords. In short, the claim is that with the help of new technology, investigative journalism is reinvented or revolutionised. Even if IRE's Arizona Project was done by telephone and by way of fax machines, the project 'also included data analysis in the form of social network analysis, perhaps the first time it was used in journalism' (Houston, 2016).

Later on, the use of computers to aid research in the U.S. became more common and started to be introduced in journalism schools: 'during the 1980s, data journalism began to be used more and more in the U.S. until various educational programs coalesced at IRE in the form of the National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting, which started in 1994 as a successor to another program at IRE's University of Missouri headquarters' (Houston, 2016). Even with the growth of PCs, Charles Lewis points to the lack of internet as one of the main reasons on why collaboration in journalism did not develop during the 1980s: 'in this pre—Internet era, there was no formal -or even much of an informal - mechanism for the kind of cooperation and collaboration that Phillip Knightley had described' (ICIJ, 2005). During the early 1990s, Lewis began to think of a new type of network organisation that would be made possible thanks to new and relatively inexpensive video technology: 'taken with the Sony Hi8 camcorder and other new video technologies, I had begun brainstorming with a former ABC News colleague, who had become CNN vice president'. He then went on to realise that cross-border journalism was related to technological advances in many other ways, but mostly through what he called cyberspace technologies: 'blazing this amazing new trail in journalism throughout the world would not only demand substantial funding, but it

would also aggressively and innovatively require utilizing the Internet as well as encryption and other dynamic, new Cyberspace technologies' (ICIJ, 2005)[130].

From the beginning, one of the central roles of the ICIJ was that of making available communication infrastructure for the international network, a role outlined in the network's Manifesto in 1997: 'ICIJ will give them a means to communicate and collaborate, individually as well as on ICIJ-funded projects' (Lewis, 1997)[131]. After the publication of the first big project, descriptions of the technology used became part of the story. For David Leigh of *The Guardian*, the ICIJ 'so far has married investigative skills with global technology in an interesting way'. Leigh goes on to explain that 'the ICIJ communicates via the internet and a system of secure emails. Its existence demonstrates that it is possible to use the net not merely as a source of information, but as a means of bringing journalists together to work in a new way. We can do much more complicated things, and do them in more places, with more people, than ever before' (Leigh, 2000)[132]. The security aspect would be repeated on subsequent occasions.

Around that same time, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, search technology and computer-assisted reporting became omnipresent in all investigative journalism-related initiatives, whether they were projects, conferences or training. A growing and fast-changing collection of resources and tools was shared in all directions. Any description of a collaborative project had something to say about technology, whether it was trivial or genuinely new. 'We are linked together by cell phones, e-mail and occasional newsletters and conferences [...] to share notes and files, our team made use of Groove,[133] an encrypted, collaborative online workspace. Groove, however, has presented a number of technical challenges, particularly for sharing large files and in countries with uneven or slow broadband access. We also made use of communications through Skype' (Kaplan, 2009)[134]. This was still the standard for the ICIJ in 2009. Later, in 2012, the first communication and search platforms were introduced: 'ICIJ's team of 86 investigative journalists from 46 countries represents one of the biggest cross-border investigative partnerships in journalism history. Unique digital systems supported private document and information sharing, as well as collaborative research. These included a message center hosted in Europe and a U.S.-based secure online search system. Team members also used a secure, private online bulletin board system to share stories and tips. The project team's attempts to use encrypted e-mail systems such as PGP ('Pretty Good Privacy') were abandoned because of complexity and unreliability that slowed down information sharing' (Campbell, 2013)[135].

Search tools available for networks became more sophisticated and competitive, so new players in the field agreed to donate for free such tools in exchange for advertisement: 'One of the main investigative tools we are using – and which was donated to us free-of-charge – is specialist software from the Australian-based company NUIX, which allows for the processing, managing and

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[130]   Charles Lewis, in 2005 CROSSING BORDERS OPENING DOORS, https://cloudfront-files-1.publicintegrity.org/legacy_projects/pdf_reports/CROSSINGBORDERS.pdf

[131]   CIJ Manifesto, 22 Dec 1997: https://web.archive.org/web/19971222092832/http://publicintegrity.org/icij/index.html

[132]   David Leigh, in 2000, jan 31:
         http://archive.fo/2017.11.19-131941/https://www.theguardian.com/media/2000/jan/31/bat.mondaymediasection

[133]   Groove, a Microsoft peer-to-peer collaboration software;

[134]   Winter 2009, The IRE Journal, David E. Kaplan

[135]   https://www.icij.org/investigations/offshore/how-icijs-project-team-analyzed-offshore-files/

searching of large volumes of unstructured data. The initial reporting on this project was based on 2.5 million secret files related to 10 offshore centers' (ICIJa, 2013)[136].

The claim that investigative journalism was being re-invented by new technologies became more widespread: 'We seek to redefine the investigative experience to include interactive tools, visualizations, multimedia and a matrix of connections to resources around the world, whether people or data' (OCCRP, 2013). Four years later, describing the work of their growing tech team, they write that 'they are developing information databases, dissemination tools and continuing to evolve resources for reporters such as ID Search. In short, they are revolutionizing the way journalism is done' (OCCRP, 2017). Every prominent actor in the arena of cross-border investigative journalism ascribes a crucial role to technology in advancing the field. For Brant Huston, the technological factors in a successful investigative journalism mix are 'increased sophistication in data analysis and ability to handle large datasets'; 'the advent of the Internet, which has led to easier communication and collaboration' and 'rapid globalization spurred by the communications and information revolutions' (Houston, 2016). In 2016, as much as during 2012's 'Secrecy for Sale' project, platforms, encryption and leaks were crucial to global investigations: 'aided by secure collaborative platforms, encrypted communications, and massive leaks, today's ICIJ would manage a team of journalists reaching into an extraordinary 80 countries' (Houston, 2016).

The same year Sheila Coronel noted that technology 'has empowered the new global investigative reporting. The Panama Papers and similar stories benefited from software that allows reporters to communicate and share documents securely across oceans, and from algorithms that enable them to search millions of documents in real time wherever they are' (Coronel, 2016). Technology also holds significant promise for the journalism undertaken by the OCCRP: 'We need to keep changing and getting better; better and more creative content; more innovative ways of telling stories; more technology tools to lower costs and coax out stories from big data; more connections to people who can help' (OCCRP, 2016).

The tools are supposed to help deal with the deluge of information available to journalists. 'We are fortunate to be living in a golden era of information that can empower and strengthen investigative journalism. Information is being offered to journalists on a scale never before thought possible, not only from whistleblowers such as the Panama Papers' so-called John Doe, but also from publicly available sources – government websites, data obtained through freedom of information laws, and corporate reports' (Ryle, 2017).

The interest around technology and investigative journalism is such that a standard tendency of the investigative industry today is to 'reach out to other professions – including engineers, developers, data analysts' (Walker Guevara, 2016) and major global technology players are becoming role models for investigative organisations. The OCCRP urges readers to 'think of [it] as the Uber or AirBnB of journalism – we don't have our own reporters, but we've built the infrastructure that lets them reach new heights' (OCCRP, 2016). The ICIJ is developing its platform, the global I-Hub, which is a 'specially developed technology [...] used to interrogate and distribute information, connect journalists together in an online newsroom and ensure that the journalists work as one

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global team' (Ryle b, 2017)[137]. It is compared to a private 'Facebook for journalists' by both editorial and research staff of the ICIJ (Houston, 2016)[138][139].

Technology has apparently changed investigative journalism's capabilities, powers and possibilities to such an extent that the OCCRP felt emboldened to declare in 2017: 'We are 'The People's NSA'.

A non-profit solution for blind spots of commercial media

When one puts together all of the above elements key to cross-border investigative journalism, they constitute a unique mix: elite journalists using elite tools and resources, benefiting from special venues and training sessions and meeting similar special journalists and disruptors who are multi-awarded and widely recognised, all of whom are collaborating in order to put together global knowledge. Since the model is subsidised by donors, it needs special structures different from commercial for-profit structures in order to operate. The widely advertised special structure is the tax-exempt charity, usually referred to as non-profits or NGO's, but sometimes also called civil society organisations (CSO). This is another key element, considered to be in itself a protection against the commercial goals of traditional media operating according to the logic of the market.

First of all, the non-profit is designed to fend off external influences on its journalism, as opposed to commercial media, which is subject to direct or indirect influence from owners, advertisers or shareholders. Second, the non-profit is designed to provide more resources directly for the journalists and editors involved in production, since it cannot make profit or pay dividends.

The non-profit element started to be more present after IRE started in 1976 and the Arizona Project was published the following year. That same year, Lowell Bergman, who was a participant in the Arizona Project investigation, established the Center for Investigative Reporting in Berkley, California together with Dan Noyes, Henry Weinstein, and David Weir.[140] The investigative journalistic groups were not the only journalists starting non-profit structures. In the 1960s and 1970s, a new wave of underground or alternative press was established across the U.S. The alternative press expanded so rapidly that an 'Association of Alternative Newsweeklies' was even established as a non-profit in 1978[141]. If alternative news operations were opening up at a fast pace, this was not the case for investigative non-profits. It was only in 1989 that the next big non-profit, the Center for Public Integrity, was established by Charles Lewis on the East Coast, in Washington D.C. From that time on, successful fundraising from donors could make or break an investigative journalism project.

It is telling to read the public account given by Charles Lewis, where he recalls how not having donors to financially back-up his idea of a cross-border network for investigation journalism delayed the founding of the ICIJ for more than five years, and this on a number of occasions, even

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[137] https://www.icij.org/blog/2017/487/more-documents-more-journalists-and-bigger-revelations/

[138] https://www.poynter.org/news/how-icij-got-hundreds-journalists-collaborate-panama-papers and https://journalism.arizona.edu/sites/journalism.arizona.edu/files/Q42016.pdf Michael Hudson, ICIJ senior editor

[139] https://newsroom16.journalists.org/2016/09/16/panama-papers-still-spurring-collaboration/ Emilia Díaz-Struck, ICIJ research editor

[140] See http://www.investigativereportingworkshop.org/ecosystem/organization/8/Center-for-Investigative-Reporting/

[141] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Association_of_Alternative_Newsmedia

when he had a plan that was detailed and evolving. The first such occasion was in 1993, when both the CPI and CNN were interested in starting such a network, but 'that possibility later died when a philanthropic foundation flirting with awarding a multimillion-dollar grant to CNN changed its mind' (Kovach, 2015). All the necessary ingredients had been there since 1994: 'journalists and others in a few European countries had urged the Center to open offices there and extend our unique style of investigation internationally'; 'We have found that there are literally hundreds of enormously talented enterprise journalists with practically no outlet for serious writing'. The plans advanced in 1995 with financial help for a feasibility grant to 'investigate the efficacy and wisdom of opening an International Centre for Public Integrity in Paris, to investigate such issues as bank and other transnational economic crimes, environmental malfeasance, arms sales, child labor and so on. Could a small 2-3 person subsidiary be opened in Paris, which could power up as needed, depending upon funding and editorial interest, allowing for a tough, credible, Civil society entity to begin replicating the U.S. model, networking with hundreds of journalists abroad as a resource?' (ICIJ, 2005). This plan also failed because the funding fell through. In 1996, Lewis noted: 'l have become convinced that the Center can play a critically important convener or facilitator role to investigative journalists around the world, at practically no major expense. After literally years of fermentation, I believe we are finally positioned properly to take a significant step forward, into the international realm' (ICIJ, 2015). And finally, 'by the summer of 1997, the Winston Foundation, based in Washington, D.C., and the London-based Rausing Trust had given grants for this new idea' (ICIJ, 2005), thus establishing the first cross-border investigative journalism non-profit structure, which was still only a department of the Center for Public Integrity.

The financial set-up is not the only reason a non-profit is needed. In the view of Lewis and Kovach, for-profit commercial operations are limited and not able to investigate important stories. When launching the ICIJ, Lewis wrote that 'commercial demands of the news industry have often meant that such information is brief, disjointed, and confusing' (Lewis, 1997)

Kovach, referring to ICIJ stories, notes: 'These are stories that likely would have gone unreported by news organizations that have suffered the loss of both resources and the desire to do investigative journalism'. And then he details: 'articles in this report, all produced by ICI] members, have injected information into the mainstream that might have otherwise gone unreported. [...] This information is of such fundamental importance that it boggles the mind how venerable news organizations could not have been aggressively seeking out these stories' (Kovach, 2005). The view of Lewis and Kovach is confirmed by senior journalists still working for traditional media. 'ICIJ and its cadre of international journalists investigate major global issues that affect us all', said David Leigh of *The Guardian* in 2000 (Leigh, 2000).

The importance of the non-profit model in sustaining cross-border investigative journalism was underlined increasingly frequently from the early 2000s onwards, when more non-profit organisations doing investigative journalism were established. In 2010, Lewis documented the 'enlarging public space for investigative journalism' and described his and his colleagues' work at American University's Investigative Reporting Workshop (iLab) centred around the growing non-profit status of investigative journalism compared to the late 1980s: 'for the past few years, I have been researching and writing extensively about the remarkable emergence of nonprofit investigative and public service news organisations. When I began the Center for Public Integrity from my house in 1989, it was only the second nonprofit, investigative reporting center in the world. Today there are literally dozens of them, most of them begun in just the past five years from the diaspora of immensely talented journalists suddenly without a commercial newsroom' (ICIJ, 2005).

Since the non-profit is a type of entity usually used by activists, some journalistic organisations feel the need to stress the fact they are maintaining journalistic objectivity. In its 2013 report, the OCCRP states: 'Our job is to tell the truth and then run. We have to maintain our objectivity. Our activism is in our work. The real activists must be the voters, and we can empower them to change the world'(OCCRP, 2013). The non-profit model was evangelised in investigative journalism circles to such an extent that IJ conferences have dedicated entire tracks on 'non profit' and 'new models'[142].

In 2016, after the publication of the Panama Papers, one of the long standing promoters of cross-border investigative journalism observed that 'more than a quarter of the 107 partner organizations in the Panama Papers are nonprofits' (Houston, 2016) and that the 'rise of nonprofit journalism allowing journalists to focus on in-depth investigations' has become 'a global movement of newsrooms independent of government or corrupt publishers' (Houston, 2016). Huston asserts that this global spread is 'spurred by professional groups and conferences, commercial media, international aid programs, and universities'. Huston claims that the key to such a development 'was the global spread of the nonprofit model pioneered by IRE, CIR, and others', mentioning specifically the 1977 Arizona Project that 'helped inspire other group investigations and the creation of IRE-like associations throughout the world' (Houston, 2016). This claim is made in an article published on the Global Investigative Journalism Network site, where Huston holds a position on the board as its Chair.

Supporting the claim that investigative journalism non-profits constitute a global movement, Huston quotes a report by the Center for International Media Assistance authored by the director of the same GIJN, David E. Kaplan: 'in 2007, there were 39 nonprofit investigative journalism groups in 26 countries, with more than half of those founded since 2000, according to the Center for International Media Assistance. A follow-up 2012 survey[143] found that number had more than doubled, to 106 nonprofits in 47 countries. Today, the number is more than 130 worldwide' (Kaplan, 2007 and 2013). The non-profit model is described as being so successful that even weakened traditional media are forced to join it: 'mainstream media increasingly joined ICIJ's projects, particularly outside the U.S., as the loss of ad revenue and audience weakened traditional newsrooms.' The claim here is that the non-profit model is the type of organization needed to coordinate the mix of other non-profit and commercial media. 'So when the Panama Papers were leaked there awaited a coordinating organization' (Houston, 2016). This is the claim reinforced by the ICIJ regarding need for a non-profit organisation that is beyond all the usual challenges of traditional media: 'a virtual newsroom that transcended the borders of their countries and the politics and the financial constraints of their own newsrooms' (Walker Guevara, 2016). The non-profit status seems to guarantee a sort of 'coordinator-coach role': 'A lot of the work we do is like being the coach of a team where we're saying 'yeah come on guys, pass the ball!' (Sambrook, 2018).

Such claims showing that traditional media is partnering up with non-profits are often to be found when non-profit organisations make the case that with a small staff and limited investments, they have a high impact thanks to traditional media partnerships.

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[142] See http://archive.fo/2017.12.13-120807/https://gijc15.sched.com/overview/type/Non-profit+track and http://archive.fo/2017.12.13-120012/ https://gijc17.sched.com/overview/type/5.+Nonprofits+%26+New+Models?iframe=no&w=100%25&sidebar=yes&bg=no

[143] https://www.cima.ned.org/resource/global-investigative-journalism-strategies-for-support/

In its latest available report (2017), the OCCRP claims: 'This year we reached around 4 million readers and viewers on just our website and YouTube pages. That's not counting the dozens of millions more we reach through our primarily distribution network: our partners in the traditional regional media' (OCCRP, 2017). Even for non-critical authors to this field, this is a claim that screams to be fact-checked independently (Hume, 2018). In the same way, the ICIJ positions the organisation as 'one of the most important whistleblower outlets in the world', asserting that with a staff of less than fifteen they have a higher reach and impact 'by working with nearly 200 ICIJ member journalists from more than 60 countries' and with a network of media: 'We work side-by-side with more than 120 news outlets worldwide, ranging from *The New York Times* and *The Guardian* to small nonprofit outfits' (Ryle c, 2017). And thanks to such a collaboration, they claim 'we achieve results and impact that no outlet could achieve independently' (Ryle b, 2017).

Judging by these claims, non-profits seem to be the new mainstream for investigative journalism-related organisations who work across-borders and other types of boundaries. The OCCRP's 2017 annual report asserts that there is a need for a global investigative force to verify facts in the public interest: 'we aim towards two significant global goals. The first is the establishment of a data commons: a massive repository of verified facts, mostly publicly available, that will form the basis of investigative work not just for media organizations but also NGOs, lawyers, and concerned citizens. The second is the creation of a trust for investigative reporting that will help to secure the long term sustainability of non-profit public interest media' (OCCRP, 2017).

The non-profit model is considered to be such a success that major traditional news outlets have not only started taking part in cross-border investigative journalistic projects together with the non-profits,[144] but have also started their own non-profits themselves. *The Guardian* and *The New York Times* have recently staffed their own operations which are paid for by charitable donations with editors and fundraisers to advance investigative journalism[145][146].

Public return on investment despite high costs

The final element in this mix is the claim that even though such specialised investigative journalism is very expensive, and that it may not make business sense to those paying for it or have any immediate political effect, it still offers a return on investment in terms of value for a given state and long-term impact in terms of values for the society as a whole, especially when considered in a global perspective. Early on, such cross-border journalism established by the ICIJ was considered 'a means of giving work to experienced investigative journalists' who would inject the results of the network into their respective media (Leigh, 2000)[147].

Slowly, such networks began to describe themselves as media organisations with high operating costs. In 2013, the OCCRP stated that it had reached '$1.1 million in revenues, 50 investigative projects per year and 90 reporters, editors and support persons working together' (OCCRP, 2013).The report presents no proof for this claim, but if true it would mean that the OCCRP spends on average 100,000 U.S. dollars a month to produce and publish about one project per week, so

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[144]   https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/06/insider/paradise-papers-appleby-leak-icij.html

[145]   https://theguardian.org/about-us/

[146]   https://www.nytco.com/a-new-role-for-janet-elder/

[147]   David Leigh,
        http://archive.fo/2017.11.19-131941/https://www.theguardian.com/media/2000/jan/31/bat.mondaymediasection

about 25.000 U.S. dollars per weekly project. In 2016, the OCCRP concluded that 'investigative journalism is the most expensive form of journalism and, due to the complexity of the resulting product, is also the least profitable' (OCCRP, 2016).

That same year, in her speech in front of IRE members, Sheila Coronel noted that such work is expensive and that 'donors invest at most $20 million a year in international investigative reporting' (Coronel, 2016)[148]. In 2017, the ICIJ asserted on its homepage that 'independent, fearless investigative journalism is expensive', and in the 'About' page added that 'cross-border investigative journalism is among the most expensive and riskiest in the world' because it helps protecting 'global societies from unprecedented threats' (ICIJ, 2017).

Coronel asserts that such investment is not enough, however, and justifies the claim that the money is well spent by giving some figures relating to results of cross-border investigative journalism: '0.2% of the 7 billion pounds worth of London real estate secretly purchased – *The Guardian* found all these properties' and 'the OCCRP estimates that the total of money frozen or paid in fines since it started work has reached $3 billion' (Coronel, 2016). That figure grew in the 2017 OCCRP report, which claims that since 2009, OCCRP reporting has led to 'US$ 5.735 billion in assets frozen or seized by governments' (OCCRP, 2017). No proof and no methodology is provided in order to be able to check the claims independently. The ICIJ lists 'at least 150 criminal, civil, and regulatory investigations in 79 countries stemming from the Panama Papers revelations. Tens of millions of dollars, more precisely $110 million, have been recovered by governments – and billions are being traced' (Walker Guevara, 2016). Again, no proof nor any methodology is provided.

There are other factors that are invoked to justify such high budgets for non-profit investigative entities and without being questioned they find their way into the mainstream narratives of today, one of which is the training of a high number of journalists. The example of the ARIJ is given, which 'has trained 1,600 journalists', some of whom are responsible for the discovery 'that Syrian president Bashar al-Assad and his allies skirted international sanctions by registering shell companies in places like the Seychelles' (Coronel, 2016). According to Coronel (2016), the numbers are not the only return on investment that matters: 'investigative reporting is more than just exposing the bastards, although that is immensely satisfactory', it also 'about opening up spaces, providing facts to inform intelligent public debate [and] making readers empathize with the suffering of others.' She concludes that cross-border journalism offers a 'spectacular return on investment'.

We thus have seven distinct elements claimed to form CBIJ, and they coincide with various stages in networks' production of stories for cross-border investigative journalism.
1). Protection of the journalism craft, of an elite group, protection for reporters, protection for stories. This is a legacy element present in the traditional commercial media; 2) The need for collaborative global knowledge (against fake news, other forms pushed by powers, or hidden information). A similar legacy element that justifies media as curators and gatekeepers and is shaping the prepublication research stage; 3) The need to be hosted by non-profit entities; 4) The entire CBIJ process is a single universal collaboration model at work producing universal networked newsroom, fuel only by claimed camaraderie, being nice, no hierarchy, radical sharing; 5) Tech that supports work together or new ways to publish, share, security, data journalism, visualization, innovation; 6) Importance for publishing by non-profit in order to maintain high

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[148]   http://gijn.org/2016/06/20/a-golden-age-of-global-muckraking/ , transcript of speech at IRE conference, Sheila Coronel

quality interface platform but a need to co-publish with commercial media traditional for interface; back to traditional media for impact; 7) Expensive, but revenue for journalists, sustainability from different sources, return on investment for donors (instead of taxes being paid to have strong authorities).

Each of this element is not really new, but the claim is that taken all together they revolutionise journalism. The validity of claims made according to the above categories will be assessed in chapters four and five of this thesis, applying participatory observation methodology to the ICIJ's Panama Papers and EIC's Football Leaks. In chapter six, the implications of the findings will be discussed.

3.3.2. Questioning the claims

Before looking at how such claims play out with the two CBIJ projects, such claims need to be examined more closely with regard to how they play out in real life. What is more, they need to be put in perspective and their implications need to be examined critically, even before going into the detailed observation, in order to know what kind of details may be of importance.

Let's start with the core claims that were made when it was predicted how the field of cross-border investigative journalism would look in the future.

In *The Future of Investigative Journalism*, published in 2010, Brant Houston of IRE and the GIJN said: 'playing the more prominent role in creating the future for investigative journalism are three phenomena: the rise of nonprofits, the rise of machines (computers and their software) and the rise of networks' (Houston, 2010). Today, these factors do not seem to be the main drivers of investigative journalism. The latest cross-border investigations undertaken by the ICIJ originate from data-sets brought to *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, a traditional commercial news organisation. Only a quarter of the long list of publishing partners of the ICIJ are non-profit organisations. Studies show that the non-profit model is a victim of donors' pressure both to have impact and be sustainable, 'ultimately creating pressures to reproduce dominant commercial media news practices or orient news primarily for small, elite audiences' (Benson, 2017). And the 'rise of machines' has not really translated into a revolution, only a promise that has yet to be achieved. A recent paper looking at data driven journalism (DDJ) concludes: 'our findings challenge the widespread notion that DDJ 'revolutionises ' journalism in general by replacing traditional ways of discovering and reporting news' (Loosen, Reimer and De Silva-Schmidt, 2017). They find that data-driven reporting evolves slowly and is inconsistent. More important, however, is the fact that 'it appears to be resource and personnel-intensive' and 'reliant on the availability of data'. This dependency translates into the neglect of domains that do not produce data-sets, or that produce data in different languages then English. The conclusion is that today, 'data journalism is more likely to complement traditional reporting than to replace it on a broad scale' (Loosen, Reimer and De Silva-Schmidt, 2017). As far as networks are concerned, current configuration show institutionalisation and centralisation, the exact opposite of what networks should be.

A similarly optimistic piece published in the *Columbia Journalism Review* in 2009 by Charles Lewis[149] predicts a bright future for cross-border investigative journalism, imagining how a fiction privately-owned company called World Investigative Reporting Enterprises (WIRE) would look in

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[149]   http://archive.fo/2017.02.27-224823/http://archives.cjr.org/feature/a_socialnetwork_solution_1.php

a not so distant future, in 2014. 'How investigative reporting got back on its feet' describes in detail the future of WIRE, which had implemented a 'social-network strategy' and by 2014 was able to employ twenty staff members, as well as having 'five consulting regional editors and 150 premier investigative journalists from seventy-five countries, each paid a respectable, annual contributing writer fee plus a potential revenue share of annual profits'. After paying all of these people, WIRE would make a profit of five per cent, have 1,000 media partners worldwide and 'thousands of civic-minded individuals' contributing with donations and sending reader contributions. There is no similar organisation that exists to this day, even years after the imagined moment of 2014. Other networks mentioned in the article were shut down during the years since the article was written[150]. The envisioned online advertisement model is simply not working for investigative journalism outlets and all are even more dependent on philantrophy[151].

Despite claims of a radical shift arriving after constant collaborations over a period of forty years, we are reminded that the field is still only in its infancy: 'Behind its many successes, cross-border investigative reporting is a flickering flame' (Coronel, 2016).

The following claims are to be questioned by observing two real life projects, the Panama Papers and Football Leaks:

Claim 1: an elite needed to protect the journalism craft

This constitutes the '*what*' of cross-border investigative journalism: what is this field producing in terms of valuable published work that justifies the need to protect the craft that produces it?

It is claimed that 'the age of trust is over. When information is no longer mediated by history's gatekeepers -- whether religious leaders, government regulators, education institutions or media watchdogs -- there is a need to rethink the entire infrastructure of information from top to bottom' (OCCRP, 2017). However, this claim is contradicted by recent work that sees an insignificant influence in social media spreading so-called 'fake news' and the great influence of setting the agenda with the traditional (faulty) media coverage (Watts and Rothschild)[152].

Claim 2: the need for collaborative knowledge

This is the '*who*' of cross-border investigative journalism, the entry point of participants and the level of strategic selection based on affiliation, geography, expertise or allegiance.

As Gerard Ryle declares: 'We believe that today, more than ever, some stories are too big, too complex and too global to be tackled by lone-wolf investigative reporters or even individual news organizations' (Ryle c, 2017).

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[150] See   https://web.archive.org/web/20111222234735/http://www.politiconetwork.com/network-members/

[151]   https://www.theguardian.com/media/2017/nov/16/katharine-viner-we-need-public-interest-journalism-in-turbulent-digital-age

[152]   https://www.cjr.org/analysis/fake-news-media-election-trump.php

What needs to be explored is what exactly participants, journalists and media organisations are bringing to the table. Is it a distributed initiative and effort, or a centralised operation where participants execute the verification of leads listed by the initiator?

Claim 3: growing out of non-profit arena infrastructure, online or offline

This would be '*where*' cross-border investigative journalism happens and is showcased in order to generate more projects, organisations, groups. Such hubs, online and offline, are used to provide an arena infrastructure – 'GIJN has held ten international conferences and trained thousands of journalists in investigative reporting and data analysis. It has become a global hub for the world's muckrakers and served as a catalyst for the formation of nonprofit newsrooms and cross-border collaboration' (Houston, 2016).

Such hubs have formal owners and no clear rules, a lack of transparency in deciding who can participate and a lack of description of the rights of participants. For the purposes of this research, I asked, as a participant in GIJC 2015, and also the representative of an organisation that co-founded the GIJN, to see the list of participants and was refused. Since the GIJN started on the path of institutionalisation in 2013, such lists of participants have no longer been available, neither online nor even for the conference participants themselves.

Claim 4: a one model fits all

This claim is about the '*how*', the execution of cross-border investigative journalism.

'Charles Lewis's scheme to set up ICIJ managed to tap into something less obvious - the sense of camaraderie and the love of detective work that it seems bind them together the world over' (Leigh, 2000). 'Instead of following instinct, tradition, and their own egos, these journalists decided to share their scoops. Not just with one or two colleagues, but with dozens of them. In fact, with hundreds of them. Not just in their own countries, but in countries across five continents[153] (…) we call it radical sharing' (Walker Guevara, 2016).

What exactly is being shared, and by whom? For instance, there is a big difference between sharing access to data by way of granting access to a temporary online search tool and sharing physical identical copies (clones) of raw data-sets. It is also necessary to ask what the limits of such collaborations are. Who can join the party, and who controls the process, and at what level do they do so: access control, control of searched content, control of content of information-exchange ? How is the contribution to the project evaluated, and is the distribution of free labour quantified?

An analysis should look at the balance between exchanging information and exchanging support in creating a worldwide echo chamber. In other words, is the partner contributing with investigative skills or is it contributing to the general PR of the project, to the amplifying effort, sharing its audience and reach in exchange of original exposes done by others in the network.

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[153] https://www.icij.org/blog/2016/12/radical-sharing-breaking-paradigms-achieve-change/

Claim 5: Reinventing investigative journalism with technology

Now we have to look at this claim by understanding if technology is really reinventing journalism or is it merely complementing traditional reporting?

So big is the hype around technology and investigative journalism that a standard part of the investigative game today is to 'reach out to other professions – including engineers, developers, data analysts[154] ' and major global technology players are becoming role models for investigative organisations. So what are the real powers of the tools and how are they going to impact journalists if being missused ?

Claim 6: Non-profit solutions for commercial media's blind spots

'In 2007, there were 39 nonprofit investigative journalism groups in 26 countries, with more than half of those founded since 2000, according to the Center for International Media Assistance. A follow-up 2012 survey[155] found that number had more than doubled, to 106 nonprofits in 47 countries. Today, the number is more than 130 worldwide' (Houston, 2016).

First, these numbers do not match those in the database published in 2016 by iLab who only identified seventy-one organisations and could only list feedback from twenty-seven of them.[156] If this was just a passing outburst, or is the non-profit trend in investigative journalism in fact set to grow, then what is non-profit bringing ? How many successfully financially stable non-profit organizations can exist at the same time in one geographical place ? If we would believe the choir of investigative nonprofit missionaries, any small group of journalists who want to do cross-border investigative stories should get up and establish a nonprofit organization. Second, when ICIJ director Ryle refers to the work of ICIJ, he speaks of the diversity of participants as if all participants have an equal role to play in reaching a shared goal: 'We work side-by-side with more than 120 news outlets worldwide, ranging from *The New York Times* and *The Guardian* to small nonprofit outfits' (Ryle c, 2017). Thanks to such a collaboration, he adds, 'we achieve results and impact that no outlet could achieve independently'.

The model of ICIJ seem to be possible, however, thanks to the non-profits having put much efforts into expanding its partnerships with traditional media in order to obtain impact and numbers that can then be reported to donors (in exchange, traditional media will obtain work for free from journalists around the world and exclusive access to secret information). But if more nonprofit organizations will appear in the same space, non-profit investigative journalism will start competing with each other for attention, impact and resources (aka donors). So what will inform limitations they face is needed to be understood. For instance, a clear area of differentiation between non-

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154   https://www.icij.org/blog/2016/12/radical-sharing-breaking-paradigms-achieve-change/

155   https://www.cima.ned.org/resource/global-investigative-journalism-strategies-for-support/

156   http://investigativereportingworkshop.org/investigations/new-newsrooms/htmlmulti/nonprofits-worldwide/

profits is the question of who can be accepted as a donor[157]. It is important to understand if existing networks of non-profit emulate the competition limitations of for-profit participants. Then, it should be observed how for-profit and non-profit organization are mixing their models, and who is taking over.

Claim 7: Public return on investment despite high costs

High costs for cross-border investigative journalism are a given to such an extent that justification of what is an acceptable price for different modules needed for CBIJ to function is not discussed, but instead the discussion is only focusing on why high costs should be accepted. So looking for the categories listed above in the context of two different cross-border projects, I will identify what exactly makes cross-border investigative journalism expensive. Choices over tools, software, hardware, technology and development teams, research teams, meetings, participation in conferences, the level of seniority of journalists involved, coordination staff and legal support – all of these choices present different financial burdens.

Another aspect of this element is that expensive projects help reinforce the image of a global journalistic elite doing special cross-border projects. This is how a loop is produced, so what are the justifications for investing in such projects? Recent explanations of why is it worth endorsing expensive cross-border investigative journalism refer to its 'spectacular return[158] on investment' (Coronel, 2016). Investments in organisations like the ICIJ or the OCCRP, which are U.S.-based, are made by donors from the U.S. or Western Europe, and the stories mentioned mostly expose individuals in other countries, such as corrupt regimes in Russia, Azerbaijan and other places. Moreover, the numbers of trained investigative journalists and their actions are listed as a good return on investment from organising the Global Conferences, again an organisation based in the U.S. It suffices to note at this point that claims stressing that such cross-border journalism is necessarily expensive are justified by the claim of a return on investment on behalf of a global society.

If returns of investment in the public interest are so high, then it would be logical to have as many journalists and concerned citizens as possible around the world doing this kind of work. But can the current design of CBIJ digest a huge participation ?

3.4. Current CBIJ Practices and Tools

So far this chapter looked at the why and how CBIJ developed and next two chapters will look at two case studies in detail, based on two large cross-border projects, the Panama Papers and Football Leaks, and their overlapping. But before going in depth with these case studies, this section will close the current chapter with a review of the consistent findings from these two network projects informing the current CBIJ practices and tools, as direct consequences of the *why* and *how* CBIJ developed.

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[157]   'Unlike other non-profit organizations, we do not take funding from governments' https://www.icij.org/blog/2017/487/more-documents-more-journalists-and-bigger-revelations/

[158] Explaining the 'public return on investment ' in the understanding of CBIJ stakeholders: https://gijn.org/2016/03/17/investigative-journalism-and-foreign-aid-a-huge-return-on-investment/

3.4.1. Practices of CBIJ: conferences, philanthropy and leaks

The observation that initiated this research was that networks for cross-border investigative journalism started initially as a way to avoid information control by elites and to fill in gaps of availability of information at the national level following a process of globalisation. Independently of the geographical, social and political background of actors involved establishing such networks in the 90's, such initiatives were also a criticism of the limitations of the news industry (Lewis, 1997) which was so common a cultural framework that it became an ideology for those working in cross-border investigative journalism.

Based on my participatory observation but also blending archival research from my ongoing autoethnography, focusing on exclusions in communication, offline and mediated, this section will discuss how such networks function: at the *individual* level, where networking occurs and networks are shaped; at the *routine* level, where research is carried out and workflows are established; at the *organisational* level, where media partners need to prepare for production and publication; and at *extra-media* level, that is where tools, non-profit funding and other outside pressures influence the work of the network and the network's configuration.

These levels influence each other in a cycle and form an ideological context in which networks operate. That ideological level, which encapsulates the main tensions of cross-border investigative networks, will be the basis of my conclusions chapter: has the ideological framework shifted from where it started towards something new and different, even if not clearly stated?

Projects shaping the Legacy Network

In both cases of the ICIJ and EIC it is evident that each project does indeed shape the boundaries of the networks. Just by looking at the list of partners and media credited at the end of each project, and comparing to subsequent projects, it is clear that some people and media organisations are constantly taking part in such projects, while others never come back. So if we agree that the publication of each networked project is the start of a new future project that already has a legacy network to work with, who decides who can take part in a network in practice and where does this process actually start?

To respond to this, we look at the individual level, firstly in the physical places where such networks started, that is, at conferences dedicated to discussing the practice as well projects, and secondly in the online realm where participants in such networks need to have access to electronic communication. These are considered to be the original network infrastructure that facilitated projects such as the Panama Papers (Huston, 2016)[159] so even before a post-project legacy network existed, there was individual intensive networking in the offline realm. This meant that that attendance at such past networking events had an important influence on today's legacy networks.

Networking and Arena shaping Projects

In order to understand the evolution of the cross-border investigative field, one has to pay attention to the mindset of the individual journalists who have started investigative non-profit structures over the last three decades. One immediate way of doing this is to look at the names of such structures.

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[159]   https://gijn.org/2016/04/13/panama-papers-showcase-power-of-a-global-movement/

Besides indicating the nature of the entity by including the word 'investigative' in the title, most include the word 'center' or 'bureau' and the geographical coverage, usually a country (e.g. Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism, established in 2001) or do not mention the country and instead have their name in the local language (e.g. Foreningen for Undersøgende Journalistik in Denmark). The claim of geographical coverage extended relatively quickly towards entire regions (e.g. Balkan Investigative Reporting Network, established in 2005; European Investigative Collaborations, established in 2016) or simply indicated that an entire topic or the whole world was being covered (e.g. International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, established in 1997; or the Global Network for Investigative Journalism established in 2001).

Later on, when the Field expanded and the national or centre names were already taken, words like 'project' were added to newly-established entities, as well as the claim on the focus of that investigative non-profit (e.g. the Organized Crime and Reporting Project, established in 2006 or Atlátszó standing for Transparency, established in 2011 in Hungary).

It was only during recent years when newcomers had to find names unrelated to the geography nor to the focus of their activities, and even older 'centres' changed their operating names. The first such institution was established at the end of the 1970s, the Center for Investigative Reporting in California, changed its name to Reveal News; another institution on the other side of the US, the NECIR (standing for New England Center for Investigative Reporting) changed its public name The Eye.

This process mirrors a path traditional media organisations have taken before, where journalists establishing such structures were thinking in the same terms as older media operations did: to use the name as a specific claim on an empty field.

It was the same path that was taken when shaping the first networks of investigative journalists at international meetings, conferences and workshops. Such conferences, the offline network infrastructures, are mentioned as key places that initiated the establishing of structures like the ICIJ (at a conference in 1992 in Moscow) and EIC (at GIJC 2015 and Data Harvest 2016). Such conferences are the places where Panama Papers (GIJC 2015) and Football Leaks (Data Harvest 2016) are discussed in detailed.

Who attended these conferences?

Individual journalists from various countries make up the list of the first Global Conference for Investigative Journalism in 2001 in Copenhagen; two years later, more geographical centres appear on the list to the point that the Global Investigative Journalism Network was established as an informal group of such entities.

Such early established centers and entities, where the pool of early participants were invited to attend conferences dedicated to cross-border investigative journalism, took as inspiration for their newly established structures what were mostly U.S.-based models: the Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE) and its data journalism program the National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting (NICAR), the Center for Investigative Reporting (CIR) and the Center for Public Integrity (CPI) with its international program the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ).

From the beginning, such events were endorsed by non-profit sponsors who would subsidise the attendance costs for journalists who could not afford the travel – in other words, almost all those outside the U.S. and Western Europe. The costs, the visa requirements and the conference language (English) were the main barriers to compose a balanced list of participants and speakers. For an event like the first GIJC in Copenhagen in 2001, which had a little over one hundred participants coming from thirty-nine countries outside Denmark, it was difficult to find the people to invite and the primary criterion was geographical location, in order to have a wide spread participation from as many as possible (so the quality and the journalistic skills were not important).

In 2017 there were more than 1,200 participants coming to the tenth edition of the GIJC. Sponsoring all those who wished to attend was impossible, as was selecting only based on the country of residence. For instance, in order to attend GIJC 2017, a call for fellowship requests was opened[160]. According to its website site, GIJC had 200 travel fellowships to offer but received 1,611 applications[161] from 147 countries, or an average of nearly 11 people per country. A selection process was required, so a group of individuals acted as a filter. The selection process was not documented, and neither were the criteria nor the team dealing with vetting such a large number of applicants[162]. Outside the GIJN official travel fellowships, there are less-known ways to gain access to the conference for free: being part of the organising committee, being a speaker, or being invited by one of the existing networks organising meetings there (e.g. the ICIJ or OCCRP). None of this is transparent to the GIJN membership or GIJC participants.

Even if they obtain access to such conferences, this does not mean that the individual journalist obtains access to a specific network project. The next filtering level is at the level of network individual membership. For instance, not all ICIJ members present at GIJC 2015 took part in the project discussions related to Panama Papers that were organised in secret at the venue.

Among ICIJ members who do not join these projects are journalists who are in an excluded position because of belonging to conflicting (due to ideological differences or a lack of trust) or competing media organisations or networks (private competition, non-profit competition). Journalists who are inclined to work alone and not in teams will be sidelined based on their character traits and not their professional skills.

Those participants who can join a network investigative project have to deal with being non-paid staffers, freelancers or sponsored journalists, and thus some of them have high transactional costs to make the collaboration work (pitching, writing grant proposals). There are also journalists who are accepted to join and maybe even make it to the conference meeting but cannot fully engage due to a lack of technological literacy, money to support their further work (even if it is only a matter of having access to a personal computer), problems with language outside mediated meetings, and visa barriers for future meetings.

Adding to the linguistic, technological, visa and financial issues, a clear arbitrary barrier exists to accept some journalists and keep other journalists away from events, cross-border networks and investigative projects.

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[160]   https://web.archive.org/web/20200411154828/https://gijc2017.org/fellowships/

[161]   http://archive.today/2018.09.18-212550/https://mailchi.mp/gijn/global-network-news-protecting-sources-how-not-to-be-wrong-algorithms?e=8805916d3c

[162]   As a past member of various organizing committees for past GIJCs, the offering of a travel fellowship is a totally arbitrary process at the discretion of a small group that must take into consideration only the geographical location of the participants and speakers.

Council shaping Projects

With the early conferences, two people were praised as the founding fathers of the network, Brant Houston (who was also and IRE director in the U.S. at that time) and Nils Mulvad, who was running DICAR in Denmark. As the organisers of GIJC 2003, where GIJN was established, the organisers also thanked US journalist David Kaplan for finding the best possible speakers[163]. Almost two decades later, in 2020, Houston and Kaplan still run both GIJN and GIJC, Houston as the Chair of GIJN Board[164] and Kaplan as GIJN executive director[165].

The past informal groups that formed GIJN, which organised the GIJC global meeting once every two years and who stayed in touch through public emailing lists evolved and formalised their relationships.

David Kaplan, after running the ICIJ as a director for three years, proposed at the GIJN 2011 in Kiev that a permanent secretariat should be established and that he should run it. Both founders Houston[166] and Mulvad endorsed the move.

That proposal to establish the secretariat of the GIJN and of taking over the executive director position was run by Kaplan under another non-profit, called the Global Center for Investigative Journalism (GCIJ) that was established by Kaplan in 2011 after he left the ICIJ. The non-profit was granted seed money from large donors Adessium and Open Society foundations) to develop a strategy and funding proposal related to the creation of 'a global hub, an advanced networking platform, a micro-financing mechanism, and an editorial laboratory' (Kaplan, 2013)[167].

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the GIJN and GCIJ soon after the global conference in Kiev was over, at the end of 2011; the GCIJ took over the secretariat of the GIJN and had the right to fundraise on behalf of the informal GIJN. Since it did not have the 501(c)(3) tax exempt status it had to work under the fiscal sponsorship of other organisations[168].

Not long after, GIJN was registered as a non-profit in the US in 2014 and received the 501(c)(3) non-profit organisation status in 2015, with Kaplan as a director, Houston as a Chairperson and Mulvad as part of the first Board of Directors to which the executive director reported.

The first GIJN Board of Directors included, and includes to this day, the deputy director of ICIJ, Marina Walker, as well as the executive director of OCCRP, Paul Radu. GIJN is a member of

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[163]   https://web.archive.org/web/20040114153538/http://www.globalinvestigativejournalism.org/news/2003/conference0503.html

[164]   https://web.archive.org/web/20200411155405/https://gijn.org/about/staff-member/brant-houston/

[165] https://web.archive.org/web/20200411155255/https://gijn.org/about/staff-member/david-kaplan/

[166]   Early during that same year, Kaplan's CV mentioned him being a partner at an entity called Investigative Journalism Consultants: http://web.archive.org/web/20130613221452/http://wpfd2011.org/speakers%E2%80%99-bios ; a website with that name, investigativejournalismconsultants.com was registered in April 2011 under the name of Brant Houston. These links suggest an entrepreneurial relationship between two main figures of GIJN

[167]   According to a document called THE GIJN PROVISIONAL SECRETARIAT A FIRST-YEAR REPORT TO THE VOLUNTEER GROUP. Sent per email to the GIJN Volunteer Group, March 2013[Available in my personal archive as a member of the GIJN Volunteer Group]

[168]   The entire 2012, Midwest Center for Investigative Reporting was the fiscal sponsor, where Houston was in the Board of Directors http://investigatemidwest.org/board-of-directors-2/ ; since January 2013 INN has taken over the role fiscal sponsor https://inn.org/2013/02/inn-providing-fiscal-sponsorship-services-to-start-up-nonprofit-newsrooms/, where Houston was the Chair of the Board https://web.archive.org/web/20150716074431/http://inn.org/about/board-of-directors/

Investigative News Network[169] where Houston is a Secretary and a Board Chair Emeritus[170]. The nexus between a few leading US based non-profit organisations in investigative journalism (IRE, GIJN, ICIJ, OCCRP, INN) and a small number of interconnected individuals who are most connected with the rest of the investigative non-profit industry is the shaping of a *council* on cross-border investigative journalism. A *council* is associated by White (2008) with the 'allocation of resources, both material and social ' and has the mediation role, being 'centered on balancing contending but ever-shifting coalitions '.

Such a council would advise on investigative projects[171] but also on network and conference organisation (all those involved with organising the GIJC, curating the agenda, the list of speakers, the people entitled to travel grants) and all approving or rejecting new members of the GIJN. Even if new GIJN members are announced on a regular basis[172] the process of acceptance or rejection lacks transparency and accountability from GIJN members and from the outside world. A clear arbitrary barrier exists at individual level in taking new GIJN members[173]. This is in brief the work of a council, trying to shape the configuration of a field from the backstages, in this case the field being the cross-border investigative journalism networks and projects worldwide.

As it was shown earlier, the importance of few individuals in this small council become established to such an extent that organisers of the GIJC 2015 printed vouchers for free drinks under the form of 'Ten Kaplans', a replica of a US ten dollar bill with the face of Kaplan, GIJN director, printed on it. At the beginning of the conference, each journalist attending received these as part of their conference package. The Muckrakers band, led by the same GIJN director, this time from the position of an amateur musician, closed one of the conference days with a live concert in the evening[174].

Closing the Circle of Trust

At the individual level, the above-described circle of trust did in fact not become larger after each investigative project and conference, but instead tended to ossify. It had a remarkable stability in terms of control, same names of people and organisations being the core leaders of the field from its beginning. Moreover, mixing private media institutions with the non-profit that organised the GIJC and ran the GIJN (planning and promoting and awarding cross-border investigative projects) certainly excluded other competing non-profit or private media actors.

Kaplan's intention in 2011 to develop a 'global hub' for investigative journalism has materialised into grabbing the total access control of previously informal GIJN/GIJC, that is a global offline networking infrastructure for investigative journalists. Past open arenas and councils are closing. The legacy network is entering a kind of impasse, where criticism is not wanted, self-righteousness

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[169]   INN, now standing for Institute for Nonprofit News, was initially designed as a replica of the GIJN only for the U.S.; INN is a member of GIJN and GIJN is a member of INN,

[170] https://web.archive.org/web/20181121072701/https://inn.org/about/board-of-directors/

[171]   The ICIJ working together with the OCCRP on Panama Papers; the OCCRP working with the GIJN Board colleague from Berlingske on the project Laundromat https://gijn.org/2017/11/08/how-they-did-it-the-azerbaijani-laundromat/

[172]   https://web.archive.org/web/20190101000000*/https://gijn.org/membership-in-gijn/

[173]   EIC.network, as a non-profit organisation, applied for GIJN membership in mid-2017 and was refused membership in mid-2019.

[174]   https://web.archive.org/web/20201127062058/https://gijc2015.org/program-gijc15/ and https://web.archive.org/web/20151205114727/http://gijc15.sched.org/

reigns and stage celebrity becomes a religion, and where there is only room for those who approve this system if they wish to participate.

CBIJ projects observed

Looking at how the above is translated into concrete hands-on projects would indicate how CBIJ elements consistently translate into CBIJ practices and tools. The below section will investigate such practices and tools by looking at the projects of Panama Papers and Football Leaks.

Standardisation: access to information and technology

A system that worked is not easily replaced; maybe slightly changed meaning that standardisation comes from past projects finding continuity in consecutive CBIJ projects. Project ready and platform ready are the tools to standardise as much as possible the format of source documents, information exchanges workflows, production phases, important other steps like confrontations and legal screening. It is a way to try and manage chaotically interactions between large numbers of journalists and their various backgrounds, organisational habits and so on.

Once the network is set, the next level that should be discussed is the routine level in the research phase, from how ideas are turned into a network project, how cross-border teams are set, how the research plans are put together, how searches are performed and shared.

The trend observed here from both Panama Papers and Football Leaks, and in fact no matter where one looks in other smaller projects, is a standardisation toward the Anglo-Saxon model of reporter journalism, and to be more specific to the muckraker model – accountability investigative journalism.

Moreover, the bigger the data-set that has been leaked, the stronger the glue for large international cooperations. If similar data-sets are in the public domain, they do not seem to attract such a level of participation (see for instance the Wikileaks searchable public data-sets, including the Cable Gates data made available for searches).

On the other hand, once synthetic topics are proposed, networks do not generally glue to the same extent. Some network members participate less than others. According to the post-mortem of the first EIC.network project[175], one could argue that the network started following a *publizist* framework (Meyer, 2018), looking at the system and the relevant legislation in Europe from a critical angle, but that was not enough to glue a story together and certainly not enough to secure the participation of more reporters from other countries. In some countries the topic may not have be considered interesting enough. The collaboration only really took off when one of the partners, Mediapart, shared a collection of unpublished judiciary documents that helped track the route of some concrete weapons. Matching the previous research work done by the network and adding some incognito research, in the end it showed how the European system for keeping arms under control had ceased to function. This result was closer to the reporter-muckraker journalistic framework (Meyer, Lund, 2008).

Access to information is mediated by technology, since there is no other way that even a small

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group of journalists are able to analyse large collections of documents and share information, except by using technological tools to support such work.

Since English is the *lingua franca* of cross-border networks, data-sets should be in English. They should also be secret and should be made searchable; this brings an incentive for users activity, further generating new information, new participants and new tools.

Getting on the team

In the case of Panama Papers, it was showed that when the data leak was growing, *SZ* decided early on that the project needed the ICIJ to 'look for the right investigative journalists on the ground' and 'if ICIJ will not join the project, we will do this on our own.' (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016, p 43). The authors' reason for establishing such a network was to have access to better local knowledge. There was a need to work with journalists speaking the local language, to know where to look for and to have a good knowledge of the investigative field, such as published stories ' (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016, p 41). There was no possibility of paying for such work, so *SZ*, and later in the project the ICIJ, instead of paying the research work with money, offered to pay in exchange with access to the leaked information.

Different people in the team enjoy different type of access to leaked source documents but also different types of access to funds for doing research. The team is shaped following at first a strategy to create the project and attract the interests of more partners to get involved.

So when big findings are made, they are used as the bridge to get the attention of a growing network and expand the original team. It shows the compromise made in order to go from a local project to a network project; the compromise to save a headline for a more powerful headline, because research-wise the story is the same. This leads to a situation whereby delaying the breaking the news is done not in order to have a bigger story in terms of content, but rather a bigger spread of the same story a year later. Delaying news may appear to be against the interests of any commercial mainstream news organisation, but it in fact constitutes an investment for the project owner in spreading the brand name. It is up for debate how successful this strategy is, and for whom. Clearly *SZ* stood to benefit from the Panama Papers in terms of brand exposure. Panama Papers has also been a good advertisement for cross-border investigative journalism, but because other networks will use the same cross-border investigative approach (see Chapter 5), then the competition will again revolve around the question of who is faster. For many reasons, sources for leaked material wished for stories to be published quickly (for fear of being arrested or face other legal issues, or the desire to make the most out of the story in a short term).

Choice of partners can be categorised by the order of priority: in the case of the Panama Papers, the first to be chosen were those who best served the creation of a global echo-chamber; second were those who had specific nationality and could discover more information related to already existing discoveries and promising leads; third were those who could pay outsourcing reporters to cover more territory, for helping both with the echo-chamber effect as well as with possible further discoveries (e.g. US OCCRP network paying for investigative journalists in Eastern Europe whose work is used by both non-profit as ICIJ and for-profit as *SZ* or *The Guardian*).

Access to leaked data-set conditioned by literacy, money, language and other issues

According to lessons from Panama Papers, face to face meetings are crucial for building up trust between participants and the will to share information. That also means that those who are unable to attend are less trusted. The more people are involved, the more such face-to-face meetings become an organisational challenge and a clear filter of participation for various reasons: money available to travel the world, visa limitations to travel to the initiators who are located in hard-to-access locations (USA, the Schengen area), availability in the newsroom to free a reporter from daily assignments to be able to travel.

Such meetings are very dependent on access to data and previous work being done. If they are arranged too far in advance, they are too early. If they are arranged last-minute, they become very expensive and those who do not have enough money or need visas are unable to move so fast. Other problems arise limiting the access to face to face meetings: there are visa issues since the meetings are held usually in the U.S. and in the EU; financial sponsorship needed for travel, accommodation, per-diem; language, including confidence when participating/speaking up in a forum; resources to arrange for replacement when traveling for newsroom or for caregiver duties.

Beyond face to face meetings, what follows is intensive online work - so the access to the tech platforms is still the subject of limitations: language, tech literacy and tech availability. For instance, not being able to connect to search or download documents; to afford phone, internet[176], constant electricity down and not having a safe newsroom[177].

Standardisation of journalism

More standardisation comes when moving to the *organisational* level of discussion. This is visible when one looks at how the publication stage is organised.

As shown in the next chapters (4 and 5), the publication phase is focused on finalising media products (articles, illustration, logo); branding the project (logo, name); choreography of publication embargoes, social media and other marketing tools, as well as on confrontation and legal issues.

In many instances journalists talk about doing searches within a secret project referring to it as an addiction. Instead of starting with an idea or a hypothesis, in the case of big leaks the drive is similar to gambling, like with a slot machine. Not winning money, but instant gratification (search-find-group notification). The drive to be able to search the same data-set, in the same way as a bigger group. I found the same description within an older text of mine referring to the Offshore Leaks project[178].

In the case of Panama Papers, judging strictly on the cross-border aspect of the investigation, the most relevant findings that would become lead cross-border stories were discovered before the cross-border group of 400 journalists was established. Most relevant findings turned into stories published on the ICIJ website (the main publication package that was offered for translation to selected ICIJ partners in various languages around the world) are discovered before even the entire

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176   Internet issues in Senegal: http://web.archive.org/web/20180221230636/https://www.icij.org/blog/2016/04/ndr-video-behind-scenes/ and min 10 to 13 at https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=5&v=edIjDRghH0A

177   Burkina Faso, need to go to hotels exposing to risks detailed here http://web.archive.org/web/20180221225810/https://www.icij.org/blog/2018/02/work-high-tech-global-project-limited-internet-phone-connection/

178   http://web.archive.org/web/20160808073133/http://niemanreports.org/wp-content/uploads/pod-assets/Image/Nieman%20Reports/ebooks/IR_Spring2013.pdf

group will have access to search the entire collection of processed data. The entire group has five months to research all the data before publication, but comes with little new discoveries on top of what was already found during the early months of research. In other words, not much passed the ICIJ filter. The Panama Papers data shows that for this cross-border investigations the size of the data and the size of the investigative group have no impact on the quality of findings and published stories. Also it shows that while there is a need to invest time in such a collaboration, the sixteen months dedicated for this project is too long a time period to make an impact in new findings and new stories, but in exchange it provides partners enough of a collaborative sentiment that they do publish ICIJ created stories in local languages, which in turn amplifies the global impact of the entire project.

When stories are drafted, they all have to pass a US standard of journalism: 'ICIJ defaults to U.S. standards and style because they stand up elsewhere in the world '[179] (Hudson, 2017).

With the Panama Papers, the choice of the project's name, and thus the identity of the project brand and group work, was made neither by the participants, nor by the journalists who brought the data, but by the director of the ICIJ. The final say on the publication date was also held by the ICIJ. The ICIJ also prepared a publication package that shared with all the journalists participating in the project. They were thus ready to publish articles, in English, with illustration and logos, edited and fact-checked (for the U.S. jurisdiction). The entire network of participants would take these stories, translate and sometimes add local angles or details, and run them in their own media outlets around the globe. Some would run their own stories that would not be on the ICIJ page. As a consequence of this workflow here was a clear push from Washington towards the rest of the world of a certain type of journalism and of media products.

With EIC the name of Football Leaks was chosen by the media that brought the data-set, by *Der Spiegel*. The rule followed by EIC was that the initiator of each project, in this Football Leaks case *Der Spiegel*, would have the final say on the publication schedule, dates and stories. In practice, however, a long discussion and negotiation took place. With EIC the illustration and logo work were a team effort by the journalists working with the different media partners. There was no central editorial package, but participants shared drafts of stories in English within an internal wiki system, which were fact-checked but not edited and did not follow a specific style. Each media partner had its own way of packaging the stories.

Confrontation: standardisation within the network

For most of the targets of journalistic investigations, the moment when a list of questions about future revelations are sent by journalists is the first moment they find out about possibly damaging stories. In legal parlance sending out such questions is called pre-notification; journalists call it confrontation. Facing legal reactions and threats from these powerful people or institutions against individual media outlets, the network is approaching the confrontation stage in a strategic and organised way.

Even if between the ICIJ and EIC confrontations there are differences, there is a clear standardised way of doing this by following some basic rules: questions are sent in writing, responses are requested in writing and no off-the-record response is accepted; questions include details of future

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[179]   https://www.cjr.org/tow_center_reports/the-case-for-media-impact.php/

revelations and of the project and its partners, so that nobody is taken by surprise about what is going to be published and also to make sure that everybody in the network can use the responses (or the lack of response) in their stories. Most of the questions are sent in the English language (with some exceptions); questions are sent at least a week in advance before publication, but in other cases confrontations start almost two months before publication.

This practice levels the playing field on a global scale, because each journalistic culture has a different way of doing such confrontations, some heeding from the ethical obligation to listen to the accused and some following the legal obligation to give the accused the chance to respond. But in some journalistic culture such confrontation is a more informal process, where journalist and target meet and discuss. There is no place for such differences in cross-border investigative projects.

The timing concerning sending off the questions is important. The responses after the confrontation questions are sent are different: it could be a spin campaign, a legal threat, an injunction, or simply breaking the story with the competition for damage control.

Such reactions test the coherence and discipline of a network, and bring yet another element of standardisation: the responses to confrontation questions usually try to attack and to delay publication dates, so networks usually decide to stick to such dates, which may not be what each individual media would do individually.

Confrontation is led by those media outlets that have enough resources for sound legal advice and who risk more in terms of liability, in other words the biggest commercial or non-profit media partners in the network, all from the Global North. Such partners are also chosen as targets for legal action during the confrontation period, and especially as targets for injunctions.

There are new lines of legal retaliation in this area, especially since journalists advertise their work with large leaked data-sets. In such cases the right to confidentiality or to privileged communication (e.g. between lawyer and client) are invoked.

There are also new interpretations of the legal obligations of journalists in Europe – especially related to leaks and manipulating large data-sets - the field of leak journalism is only starting to develop and so the legal challenges coming with an emerging field will continue to change for the future[180].

Legal issues: institutionalising network journalism

Choosing to institutionalise a journalistic network and a brand is helping to fight big institutions, but it is also attracting bigger players fighting back; also it imposes certain rules and workflows instead decentralized actions. Is it really needed the institutional support in order to fight big players who could shut down a story? Chapter 5 will detail how Football Leaks gagged stories (the Beckham's stories) prove that injunction is not going to stop the information from spreading within

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[180] This exceeds the purpose of this research, but the confrontation requirements are subject to different legal interpretations and are considered by the European Court of Human Rights a possible limitation on investigative journalism https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{%22itemid%22: [%22001-104712%22]} 'However, the Court has consistently emphasised the need to look beyond the facts of the present case and to consider the broader impact of a pre-notification requirement. The limited scope under Article 10 for restrictions on the freedom of the press to publish material which contributes to debate on matters of general public interest must be borne in mind. Thus, having regard to the chilling effect to which a pre-notification requirement risks giving rise, to the significant doubts as to the effectiveness of any pre-notification requirement and to the wide margin of appreciation in this area, the Court is of the view that Article 8 does not require a legally binding pre-notification requirement. '

a network across borders, but it can stop the media who researched the story from publishing.

Tensions built by scoop and exclusivity

Exclusivity is a main driving factor to decide starting a project, and that will influence the rest of the process (network team, publication dates etc). No later than during the first pages of the book describing the Panama Papers investigation, it is clear that the drive to engage with a source proposing a leak is motivated by competition: 'Nothing would be more annoying than finding a story that was proposed to us, in Spiegel or Zeit' (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016, p8).

This is part of any discussion concerning the decision to undertake a project: is it a prospect for an exclusive story?

To understand how strong the exclusivity motivation is, consider that both Panama Papers and Football Leaks had initially published articles on the future cross-border project before there was even a project[181]. There may be several reasons behind this. Among them it may be a strategy to claim the field and discourage other media outlets from trying to obtain the same data-set and invest long months of work. On the other hand, it can show little trust in the source, making sure to claim ownership over exclusive material in the case that other media is working on the same story already.

Something that is often praised is the way cross-border investigative collaborations manage to deal with the most problematic attribute of journalism in the industry media: the need to be the first. The exclusivity paradigm, it is claimed, does not exist in cross-border investigative projects. This research shows that it may be non-existent at the individual level during the research phase for those who are inside the circle of trust, those inside the network boundaries. But it certainly exists towards the outside world of journalism, both at national level as well as at the international level vis-a-vis other networks.

Accordingly, when setting the embargoes for different stories, huge tensions are created. The reason for this is that journalism in the news industry functions on a breaking news or scoop-based cycle. Indeed, the early investigative non-profit approach was different, more focused on continuous publication on a given topic over a longer period of time (see early 90's projects by the Center for Public Integrity).

With cross-border investigative projects that have to accommodate both approaches, things get complicated because non-profit organisations have a much more relaxed way of setting deadlines for publication. For the news industry that means extra costs and resources and if they are really needed only by the non-profit actors, this may be an unacceptable compromise. It was the case in the past, during Offshore Leaks, the first 'mega-leak' ICIJ project, that one single newspaper and one TV station published their research and stories four months in advance of all other ICIJ partners[182].

Things get even more complicated when having to accommodate a large number of news industry

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[181] *Süddeutsche Zeitung* published in February 2015 related stories, announcing that it was in possession of leaked material that was being analysed by the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, WDR and NDR German consortium. http://www.sueddeutsche.de/wirtschaft/luxemburg-steueraffaere-erschuettert-commerzbank-1.2366678 ; in early February 2016, *Der Spiegel* published the information pointing to documents first shared with the magazine http://www.spiegel.de/sport/fussball/toni-kroos-verdient-bei-real-madrid-10-9-millionen-euro-pro-jahr-a-1075883.html

[182] *The Guardian* and the BBC's Panorama programme published their stories at the end of November when the initial publication deadline was set https://www.icij.org/investigations/offshore/ All other publications, including ICIJ, launched Offshore Leaks on April 2013.

operations which publish in different media and in different countries and languages. It may appear easy to deal with both online and print, because the former one can theoretically publish at any time, but in fact this is not true. Each online publication has some optimum times at which it reaches its maximum audiences (e.g. very early in the morning as opposed to late afternoon on a weekend) and online publications can accommodate shorter pieces while print favours longer articles. The difficulty comes from accommodating daily print with weekly magazines and also accommodating everybody else with television slots, especially when large stations are involved.

There is another tension in the need for an embargo before publication: the secrecy added to the project and the care not to outscoop media outlets from other countries or publishing in slower media, leaves very little room for promoting what is going to be published. Everybody hopes for a large impact for a cross-border project in which considerable resources have been invested, but that impact cannot be achieved through ordinary means involving the usual marketing tools. It is true that the silence before launching such a project is compensated for by the simultaneous interest created when media outlets from multiple countries publish at the same time on the same topic under the same brand for days or weeks.

Sometimes it is simply not possible to satisfy the need for secrecy/exclusivity because of the confrontation phase before publication. For instance, during the Panama Papers project, the lead story about the Icelandic prime-minister was discovered in early 2015 by German journalists long before they had an agreement with ICIJ (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016). It was saved for later and offered eventually to the Icelandic journalist who started to work with the ICIJ, a freelancer who dig out much more on the establishment relationship to the Icelandic financial crisis. Being a journalist in a very small country, he chose not to offer the story to any media outlets and hid the story from his friends[183]. However, the story got out several weeks before publication because of the confrontation phase – the Prime Minister was asked about his hidden ownership in an offshore structure and the news was let out in a controlled way[184], outside the control of ICIJ.

Strategy of embargoes

After the conflict of possible outscooping each-other is over, the discussion goes towards the best publication day and time slots. Such cross-border projects produce between twenty and thirty main international stories spread over two to four months. There is a discussion on how to start, on general weekly topics, and on how to deal with possible PR spins and legal threats during publication.

When comparing the evolution of ICIJ and EIC decisions on publication embargoes, a clear development is that the longer the network exists, the stronger the discipline in accepting to lose breaking news (the news industry logic) in order to create a powerful eco-chamber (the network logic).

Rule of thumb is that if a story goes out in a media in a national context, trying to outscoope the coming wave, it will be buried by the wave of publications under the same network brand for the weeks to follow. This is consistent with the experience of both ICIJ and EIC and it empowers networks to a level that single media do not stand a chance (opening discussions about the need of media networks plurality).

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[183] https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=5&v=edIjDRghH0A at min 3:50 to 8;

[184] https://web.archive.org/web/20160316140754/http://icelandreview.com/news/2016/03/16/pms-wife-owns-company-abroad

3.4.2. Tools and communication infrastructures of CBIJ

Socio-tech systems: different shapes of organisations

Analysis of socio-tech system created by cross-border investigative projects, with a focus on access and communication reveals that today technology systems for CBIJ are build with centralisation in mind, for reasons of scaling up while serving clients with new features, as well as for security reasons. With such a development comes even more standardisation, brought by the CBIJ tools used to connect journalists, which are becoming investigative platforms.

This section aims to analyse the role of access and communication tools in cross-border networks of investigative journalism. This is the *extra media* level: the blend of technology in use, the social implications within the network and to some extent the role of non-profit organisations in the mix.

This is one important ingredient of any cross-border investigative project, which is not part of the model proposed by Alfter as one of the six investigative steps (Alfter, 2016). The underlying technology and the correlated communication workflow, as well as the type of ownership of such technology, this mix is shaping a network during a cross-border investigation. The sociotechnical system shaping the network dynamics, in networks using technology to collaborate, indicate the politics of power.

'The collective action model assumes that under conditions of market failure, innovators collaborate in order to produce a public good' (von Hippel et all, 2003). This was the mantra for cross-border networks doing investigative journalism that the news industry was failing to do (Lewis, 1997): to bring the best journalists around the world together to focus long-term on a specific project and publish at the same time around the world. It is claimed that Panama Papers have 'showcase[d] the power of a global movement' and represent 'the culmination of a significant shift in the way journalism is now practiced' (Houston, 2016). It is thus necessary to discuss the implications of the socio-technological systems behind this new 'power of the global investigative reporting movement' (Coronel, 2016).

First, why is the detailed discussion of the technology related to networks of investigative journalists so important? Any cross-border investigative network will build a set of tools to host the search and the information exchange for a group of journalists.

In the words of the director of a ICIJ, such tools constitute a 'virtual office': 'We required all of the journalists to use a virtual newsroom that we set up specifically for the project. So every day, each reporter would go to their physical offices but they would also go to the ICIJ virtual office. Think of it as a Facebook for journalists. There they could report their findings, form groups around certain topics, swap tips. It was important that we also go outside the documents, to court records and other kinds of public records. The virtual newsroom was also the place where we could upload and share those kinds of documents'[185].

Such tools are divided in two categories: tools related to the transfer, processing and searching of data and possible visualisations; and tools related to communication, the sharing of information and

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[185]   https://web.archive.org/web/20200411173005/https://gijn.org/2016/04/11/behind-the-panama-papers-a-qa-with-icij-director-gerard-ryle/

new documents, meetings and supporting the publication process. All of them should be wrapped behind a security layer[186].

Both the ICIJ (Panama Papers) and EIC (Football Leaks) chose the tools to use based on previous projects, technological expertise and budgets available.

Panama Papers was built based on ICIJ experience acquired since the first such project was completed, the Offshore Leaks. With that project, the ICIJ used for the first time a global platform for communication (a secure bulletin board) and a global platform for search (based on a proprietary free text retrieval software DtSearch hosted in the cloud)[187]. By the time of Panama Papers, other technologies were chosen, and both the search and the communication platforms were merged into one single platform, called the I-hub, which was in existence before Panama Papers started in 2015. EIC.network had no stack of tools ready when Football Leaks started, but it was already experimenting with different technologies, favouring free and open software tools.[188] It started to develop its own search tool that one of the non-profit partners built from scratch (Hoover, developed by the Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism) and customised an instance of a free software communication platform (a start-up Sandstorm.io).

For Panama Papers the ICIJ has repurposed tools build by others with non-journalistic use cases in mind and without the intention to support cross-border collaboration. EIC has self-developed a search tool based on clear journalistic intentions (e.g. do not keep user search logs) and integrated other tools where the intention was aligned between the developers and EIC use cases (e.g. delegate trust on access control management for those on board).

Detailed solutions and limitations in tools design for investigative networks

The ICIJ compared its global collaboration platform, the iHub, to a private Facebook for journalists. It is an industry standard in CBIJ to compare such tools with the large platforms from Sillicon Valley. For instance the OCCRP, one of the most important networks doing investigative journalism world wide, and the exclusive partner of the ICIJ in Eastern Europe for Panama Papers, says: 'Think of us as the Uber or AirBnB of journalism – we don't have our own reporters, but we've built the infrastructure that lets them reach new heights'[189]. They also say: 'we are 'The People's NSA ''.

When thinking about what a global Uber for investigative journalism would look like, we should start by looking at the unintended consequences of the real Uber:

'Uber, for example, is ostensibly an ICT-driven transport service that seeks to return value to its shareholders. Weakening labour and creating worse jobs is not its core mission. But the company

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[186]   This sounds trivial now, but until 2015 just before Panama Papers started, the emailing server of he ICIJ, https://talk.netatlantic.com/read/? forum=icij, that hosted various lists of communications designated for various projects, had a public back door that allowed anybody to read all of the ICIJ communication list between 2010 to February 2015 when I discovered the back door and communicated to ICIJ management;

[187]   Duncan Campbell, who was the Data Journalism Manager for the ICIJ, during Offshore Leaks explains here the tools needed and the solutions: https://www.icij.org/investigations/offshore/how-icijs-project-team-analyzed-offshore-files/

[188]   As a coordinator of EIC.network, it was also my task to choose the technology that the journalists would use, advising with a tech team working at different media partners; also, having been involved for a long time with networks for investigative journalism, and being the assistant project manager in the ICIJ Offshore-Leaks project, I was aware of what other networks were using https://www.icij.org/investigations/offshore/about-project-secrecy-sale/

[189]   Annual Report 2017 for Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) https://web.archive.org/web/20171116221219/https:// www.occrp.org/documents/AnnualReport2017.pdf

burns the pervasive fuel of Silicon Valley strategies — liquefy labour, disrupt markets, and enforce a monopoly — so while Uber drives to the bank it spews an exhaust of disruption and alienation. The social origin and implications of such technologies are well-camouflaged with terms such as efficiency, usability, and needs; our products thus subtly elide democracy, legislating society far more effectively than they are legislated by it'[190] (Csikszentmihályi, 2016).

We thus need to discuss the detailed technological solutions and their limitations in order to understand where they lead in terms of ownership of data and user options.

Acquiring and transferring data – Panama Papers

Acquiring the Panama Papers data started with the source nicknamed John contacting the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* journalist Bastian Obermeyer at the end of 2014 (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016). There are no templates on how to leak to *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, so the first step is switching to 'encrypted channels'. No public detail is available about what these channels are, but looking at the PGP public servers shows that both Obermayer and his colleague Obermeier had had PGP keys since 2014 on their private addresses, and new open PGP keys on the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* corporate email in February 2015[191].

The exact way in which the data came to be in the possession of the journalists was not described in public, with the need for 'source protection' being cited, but it is said that it took weeks to find a secure way to transfer data. An intensive discussion between the journalist and the source was ongoing, on some days 'around the clock'.

We find out that the use of secure channels that involve encryption in transferring gigabytes of data is the first challenge for the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* authors: it was 'not easy to transfer such volumes of data' and 'even harder if the data should be encrypted' (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016). We are told that the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* authors never met the source, so we can assume that the handover of data was not done face to face. We can also build up a good picture of how much data ended up in the possession of *Süddeutsche Zeitung* a process that finished apparently only in October 2015 (See Figure 6.4.1.). The apparently slow process of transferring data was not only restricted by considerable security concerns but also by the fact that the leak contained very 'fresh data', as *Süddeutsche Zeitung* authors have referred to the ongoing leak.

A few months into the project and when reaching 350 gigabytes, a similar process started in parallel in which *Süddeutsche Zeitung* transferred the data to the ICIJ. The first batch was given in a face-to-face meeting when ICIJ staffers visited the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* newsroom. The second batch, which amounted to more than half of the entire collection, was brought by Süddeutsche Zeitung journalists to the first project meeting in Washington at the end of June. Over the next four months, another terabyte of data came into the possession of *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and was transferred to the ICIJ.

There were no other media outlets beside *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and ICIJ that would have a copy of the raw Panama Papers data-set.

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[190]   https://web.archive.org/web/20160817092655/http://pdc2016.org/closing-keynote/

[191]   http://keyserver.ubuntu.com:11371/pks/lookup?search=sueddeutsche.de&op=vindex

Acquiring and transferring data – Football Leaks

The process of obtaining the documents was initiated in late 2015 by the journalist Rafael Buschmann from *Der Spiegel*, after an anonymous group under the brand Football Leaks, began publishing online confidential documents from the world of football.

The process was ongoing and involved batches of documents received by the journalist on encrypted hard-drives at face to face meetings with the source.

At the end of March 2016, *Der Spiegel* decided to bring the leaked data to EIC and start their first large cross-border investigative project. Less than a month later, EIC members and project-based partners had Football Leaks' first face to face meeting to initiate the project and provide encrypted clones of the raw data-set to those partners who wanted them either for processing or for future back-up.

Looking at both Panama Papers and EIC, we can conclude that for several reasons, the handing over a raw clone of the original data-set was not a solution desired by all partners or initiators of such cross-border collaborations.

Initiators usually want to stay in control of the source documents and make sure nobody will use it in other contexts, such as handing over the data-set to the authorities or any other third parties. They wish to retain ownership of leaked data, and such data cannot have multiple owners (search tools are build accordingly, so users can't scrape and reconstruct the entire data-set).

Due to legal reasons, some of the partners may need to be able to ask that their access to the data be suspended in case they are called before a judge and asked to hand over the leaked material.[192] Not all jurisdictions provide enough legal protection for source material. So for such cases, only the access to the data mediated by an online search tool could satisfy such a need.

But for the network as a whole, it is a sign of full trust to simply provide the possibility of having a clone of the original data-set, and to be sure that access to searching source documents cannot be revoked unilaterally without due process.

Processing data – Panama Papers

The processing of data is the stage where original data-sets are run through free text retrieval software in order to be indexed and made available for search queries.

At the beginning of Panama Papers, at *Süddeutsche Zeitung* there was no internal technological capacity related to the processing of large amounts of data, but there is the memory of the Offshore-Leaks project and the offline tool used in the investigative process by a few ICIJ partners including *SZ*, a proprietary software called Nuix Investigator[193]. *SZ* decide that they needed a program like Nuix, but they also realised that 'Nuix is very expensive' (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016, p83).

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[192]   More details about this situation: https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/may/04/appleby-settles-paradise-papers-litigation-against-guardian-and-bbc and here https://www.applebyglobal.com/media-statements/update-in-relation-to-appleby-s-legal-action-against-the-the-guardian-and-the-bbc.aspx and here https://www.applebyglobal.com/media-statements/why-appleby-is-taking-legal-action-against-the-guardian-and-the-bbc.aspx

[193]   German data journalist Sebastian Mondial was involved in the ICIJ Offshore-Leaks core technical team; he obtained from ICIJ a Nuix licence in order to contribute to the cleaning of the data and provide data journalism support to *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, NDR and WDR.

In the end, the director of ICIJ would convince the company that created Nuix to provide a sponsored free license for *SZ* to use. 'Who ever worked with free search tools and then moves to Nuix, has the feeling of changing a soapbox to a F1 race car' (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016)

This was almost five months into the project and the leaked data that was in the possession of the German journalists amount to almost 300 gigabytes. *SZ* decision to use a laptop to process this data with Nuix showed a lack of expertise relating to such work. The laptop started crashing. Nuix is not only very expensive but it also works like an F1 race car, and needs a special hardware configuration in order to work properly during the indexing of data. During the entirety of the period over which data processing was being carried out, *SZ* would have to switch from the original laptop and buy several different machines in order to make Nuix work with the growing data-set. A PC was bought for €6,000 in July and another in October for €17.000.

Being so expensive and priced according to the number of users, Nuix could only be used by the ICIJ office in D.C. and the *SZ* journalists, and not by all 400 journalists who worked on Panama Papers. Also, the processed and indexed data could not be migrated from Nuix into an outside system to be used by others, and search can be preformed only as long as the sponsorship of the licenses is granted.

The ICIJ therefore had to find a different way of processing and indexing, and also dealing with the OCR of images – this is the process of optical character recognition of text displayed as an image and the transferring of such characters into text.

The ICIJ processing work started at the end of May and was based on the previous systems used for the Swiss-Leaks project. The ICIJ had a data team, which was composed of half the whole ICIJ staff, and also the infrastructure ready from past projects. This was called the 'Leak Machinery' (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016, p72) by the German journalists and the 'Leak Refinery' by head of ICIJ Data unit (Cabra, 2016).

ICIJ processing work will take until 29 of October when all 2.5 TB (8,2 million documents) will be ready for search on ICIJ platform. For getting speed in processing, ICIJ is processing the secret data directly in the Amazon Cloud (AWS).

Briefly, the technology behind the indexing is called Apache Solr; the technology behind processing documents is called Apache Tika; the OCRing was done using Tesseract and for speeding up the process up to 40 virtual servers in the Amazon Cloud were used. All of these technical modules are free software; the AWS cloud infrastructure hardware is outside the local control of ICIJ.

Processing data – Football Leaks

With EIC there was no institutional tech team or knowledge available on processing when the project started, so at the end of April 2016 during the original meeting between journalists who discussed the content of the leak, a small tech team gathered in the same place, made up a mix of developers from media partners of EIC or project-based partners, some working as staffers (*Der Spiegel, The Guardian*) and some as freelancers (*RCIJ, Le Soir*).

The processing of data was discussed and developed on the go, with the main focus on modularity and interoperability, meaning that processed, OCR-ed and indexed data would be transferable

between the partners and would also be usable and enhanceable with different systems.

At the start point (end of April) there were four partners who had the capability to process the data, either using features of ready-to-use systems or dealing with free software packages focusing only on specific tasks (e.g. OCR or index, but not search): Tamedia would have an internal developed data system almost ready to be used[194]; *Der Spiegel* considered purchasing two different proprietary systems[195]; *The Guardian* was working with different tools, some proprietary and some custom-built[196]; starting September 2015, *RCIJ* had been developing from scratch a free and open source tool for index and search[197].

No agreement was made at the April meeting regarding what system to use. The only deal made was that *The Guardian* and *Der Spiegel* would split the OCR-ing of data[198] starting each from one end of the collection and merge the results after.

A freelancer coder working with *RCIJ* further customised and secured the tool Hoover and within less than a month, by the end of May, a search machine based in Bucharest made a first version of processed data available for searching. This was also the moment of the ICIJ conflict that resulted in the freezing the collaboration with *The Guardian* and *Tamedia*, and eventually, in early June, in the withdrawal from the Football Leaks project as described at the end of chapter 4. This meant that *The Guardian* could not contribute with OCR-ing more documents, leaving only two partners to process and make data available for search – the project initiator *Der Spiegel* and the *RCIJ*.

On the *Spiegel* side, the entire process was split between two proprietary tools (Intella and Omnipage): processing documents, indexing, OCR (using Abby proprietary module internally), user interface and ready-to -use search features; but the work was done internally on *Der Spiegel's* local infrastructure which was disconnected from the Internet. The search was available only within the premises of a 'war room'.

On the entire EIC side, to put it briefly, the Hoover tool bundled together the following modules of technology, some of which were already in existence and some developed from scratch: the technology behind the processing documents was built from scratch and is called Snoop[199] in conjunction with the existing Apache Tika for extracting text; the indexing of documents was done by an existing free software technology called Elasticsearch[200], the OCR of documents was done first by both *The Guardian* and *Der Spiegel* and then imported into Hoover; the processing of OCR was done on self-hosted servers and not in the cloud[201], using both Abby and Omnipage.

The data coming to *Der Spiegel* and then to EIC for processing also came in batches, as in the case

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[194]   https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/2cbc/c15a21c09e99e343d15e4a02ade2e5571b3a.pdf

[195]   Der Spiegel looked at Nuix and Intella systems and choose Intella https://www.vound-software.com/resources/files/Der%20Spiegel%20Case%20Study.pdf

[196]   Having an Intella instance installed, and using Abby for OCR

[197] https://web.archive.org/web/20200803221740/https://github.com/hoover

[198]   Parallel machines running OCR at *The Guardian* using Abby; parallel machines working at *Der Spiegel* using Omnipage.

[199]   The version from 2015 is here https://github.com/hoover/snoop , now replaced by Snoop2

[200]   https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elasticsearch

[201]   Description from https://eic.network/blog/how-to-investigate-football-leaks on processing data and search

of *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and the ICIJ. In the end[202] it totalled 1.9 terabytes (18.6 million documents). Even if the process of getting batches of documents at different times was similar between the ICIJ and EIC, the EIC strategy relating to processing data and making it available for search was different from that of the ICIJ. EIC released data for search to its journalists after each wave of improving the file recognition and text extraction, so that more results were available for the search terms at different times between the end of May and September. This had the advantage of researching faster the material, but had the disadvantage of being more superficial and having journalists to repeat search terms each time after more data became available.

There are a lot of similarities between the technologies used by the ICIJ and EIC to process documents: they use both a combination of proprietary tools (Nuix or Intella, Abby, Omnipage) and free software tools (Solr and Elastic Search, Tika, Tesseract).

There are also big differences, however, and a notable difference is that the ICIJ processed data (and later sharing for search) using the Amazon Cloud service AWS, while EIC processed data on air-gaped machines only and later shared it for search purposes on self-hosted secured computers. Another big difference is the design behind the ICIJ's processing, which was focused on making everything work for one single organisation which controls the processing and later search operations, whereas the EIC data model was focused on exportability between partners and redundant, independent and distributed systems. However, even if the possibility existed with EIC that all partners could have a hands-on involvement in the data work and ownership of cloned systems and data-sets, in the end this would not be the case because most media organizations lack this kind of internal technical expertise.

The above facts bring questions of ownership and of paths of dependencies. Each new data-set will go towards those who have the knowledge, the financial resources and the tools to process data quickly. This phenomenon can be ascribed to the network effect, which means that in a very short time one organisation will have the ownership of data and tools that will put all other organisations into a position of dependency. In my practical observation I have seen that while some media organisations are concerned about this, the majority are not, and very few of them in fact take the effort and steps to become technologically independent.

Searching for Panama Papers – technology and method

At the ICIJ, after the processing work was done, the user interface for searches carried out by the large network of journalists (almost 400 people) was Project Blacklight, with some custom-made features that would serve better journalists, like batch searches.[203] Project Blacklight is free software, but the ICIJ also introduced an extra layer for searches, a visual layer that would show links between entities where structured data existed, a feature supported by a proprietary service called Linkurious[204]. Access to the search user interface was wrapped under a two-factor-authenticator security login page[205].

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[202] up to the end of this research in 2018

[203] Batch search is the searching a long list of names in one click, by copy/pasting multiple lines of names in the search field, that line up for an automatic search, as opposed to simple search, when one single line of search is manually introduced by the journalist

[204] Read more details about the technical work behind Panama Papers here https://source.opennews.org/articles/people-and-tech-behind-panama-papers/ and here much more into technical detail https://public.etherpad-mozilla.org/p/opennews-calls-Apr21

[205] Available online here https://archive.fo/IJFR0

For the smaller group of journalists working at the ICIJ and the _Süddeutsche Zeitung_ offices, the second offline tool of Nuix was available for searches. The tool had all kind of other search and visualisation features[206].

There were therefore several different tools and features available for different participants in the Panama Papers investigation. According to their own description most of the search was done by keywords (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016) to such an extent that journalists wished each-other 'happy fishing' and the mentioning of 'luck' and 'com[ing] across' related to important findings is mentioned several times.

There were also more sophisticated searches, but mostly done by the ICIJ data team, and they focused on creating lists of usual suspects from various public sources (e.g. sanctions lists) and running such lists of entities through the search tools to produce lists of 'hits', meaning findings in the documents of some of the searched entities.

Searching for Football Leaks – technology and method

At the beginning of May, Nuix was still a candidate for use by _Der Spiegel_ in a small group. In the end journalists of _Der Spiegel_ gained access to an offline toll based on a product called IntellaTeam, which has embedded functions and features like batch and matrix searches as well as the visualisation of connections (where the dataset permits).

At the beginning of May, advanced discussions were underway regarding the EIC network's use of a search tool already installed in testing at Tamedia. The tool was a customised version of a proprietary solution, and it operates on expensive hardware[207] hosted in the Amazon Cloud (AWS), offering an embedded translation engine, an OCR engine and needing a dedicated team to operate and maintain it. At the point of discussion, the _Tamedia_ tool could have been only accessed by _Tamedia_ journalists, and an exceptional one year access for non-Tamedia journalists would have needed to be negotiated.

But since _Tamedia_ and _The Guardian_ were to leave the project and return the data-sets, any discussion related to their internal solutions was cancelled. Also at the end of May, the tool developed by the _RCIJ_ freelancer (Hoover) was ready to be used behind a 2FA. So between June and August there was intensive onboarding onto the Hoover search platform.

At EIC, after the processing work was done, the user interface for searches done by the EIC network (around one hundred people) was a customised version of a free software tool called Django, a basic search interface with a search box, highlighting for matches in search results. The user interface was enhanced with feedback from journalists during the project, adding some filters (e.g. data, relevance, file type) and functioning with search operators. The user interface did offer the batch search option but that was disabled during the project, because it was overloading the system. There was no visualisation feature available. The system was wrapped under a two-factor-authenticator security login page.

With EIC there were several tools available for the different journalists at different times. Since

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[206]   https://www.nuix.com/sites/default/files/White_Paper_Beyond_Keywords_WEB_US.pdf

[207]   The cost of the tool would be at the lower end of seven figures and the cost of the hardware in the middle of five figures bracket.

there was no data-team per se, and no data journalism story, EIC did not use statistical angles to tell the story of Football Leaks. The data-set is not comparable to Panama Papers since it is a collection of very different documents originating from many sources active in the football industry, as opposed to the Panama Papers which was composed of many documents from one single company active in the offshore industry.

The search systems have a lot in common in terms of architecture, with only the technological modules differing. In terms of features, the ICIJ's search system had many more features available, such as the visualisation of links between entities[208] and bookmarking documents. Hoover had fewer features and was developed 'on the go'.

But most of the users, both with the ICIJ and EIC, used keywords searches and then after having found something of interest, explored documents related to that finding.

The major difference is that the ICIJ search system was based in the Amazon Cloud (AWS) while EIC search system was self-hosted on fast but very cheap machinery. There was a very different need in terms of the size and speed of hardware available between the stage of processing documents and the stage of making documents available for search, and the latter is not so resources-intensive and can indeed function on smaller machines.

Another difference between the systems is that EIC's Hoover does not offer bookmarking documents or show the history of searches. This is considered as a positive feature, because it means that the system does not save such information at all, so that nobody can look at what each journalist is searching for.

Communication platform - Panama Papers

The communication platform used for the Panama Papers was developed before the project started and is called iHub, a customisation of an existing open-source social media software called Oxwall[209]. It is, as it was described by several ICIJ staff and journalists working with iHub, like a private Facebook for journalists, wrapped behind the same two-factor-authentication system as the search online tool.

According to one of the many public presentations by ICIJ staff[210] the iHub customised version of Oxwall would link directly from a navigation bar placed on top of the search tool and would open a forum for journalists, have discussion groups and a place to upload and share files that can be tagged, a photo exchange, as well as a members directory and a search box for information shared within the forum. The iHub would show a list of notifications that would also reach the user inbox in real-time (apparently the text of the notification would travel unencrypted).

There are other communication channels: PGP-encrypted emails (the same presentation mentioned above showed the Hushmail web-based encrypted email and the browser-based encryption layer Mailvelope) and there are legacy email lists, un-encrypted, that are used by the ICIJ (Net Atlantic).

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[208]   This function is very dependent on the leaked data set. If the data-set has structured data, such as for instance structured information about the ownership of companies, connections are easier to show in searches; if the data-set is a non-structured collection of various documents, this usually takes a lot of effort and time to clean data and find consistent patterns that would be easy to visualise.

[209]   https://www.oxwall.com/complete-feature-list

[210]   https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1eBFXwm24frHZAbBgKXLPkxH4o2NEWJlDHQJA6_I4784/edit#slide=id.gc925fde0b_0_77

Running the list of journalists (and media domain names) participating in the Panama Papers[211] against one of the PGP public servers[212], would show when each journalist started to use PGP, providing information about the degree of technical knowledge of the users and the time of onboarding. For those journalists, the time of onboarding with a PGP public server usually coincides with the time of onboarding with the Panama Papers.

All these communication tools were already used in production with previous ICIJ cross-border investigative projects.

Communication platform - Football Leaks

As with the ICIJ, EIC customised a free, pre-existing piece of software to use it as a communication platform for Football Leaks. Unlike the ICIJ, the software was chosen only after Football Leaks started.

At first, at the end of March 2016, *Der Spiegel* was ready to pay for a corporate communication license[213]. But the limitation of the number of users, the dependency of the license, as well as the problems of integration with an extra two-factor-authentication layer, all pushed against this decision.

By the end of May, EIC was operating on a customised version of Sandstorm.io, an open source platform that makes it easy for any user to run open source web applications on self-hosted instances. The applications that can run on Sandstorm are downloadable from a limited market app,[214] and the platform was wrapped for EIC by *Der Spiegel* behind a free software two-factor-authentication layer (Privacy Idea[215]). Its email notifications were also disabled. When launched, each application is called a 'grain' and access to the grain is shared by way of sending an invite URL, a token. This can be done by any user of the application, thus choosing who to delegate trust within the group. Each user invited to use a specific application can delegate access to other participants in the platform and the initiator of the application grain can have an overview of all users who are granted access to a specific application.

Such applications include a chat system (Rocket Chat) that offers encrypted one-to-one communication and locked chat rooms; a Wiki system (Doku Wiki) which is the place where information and findings are shared in a structured way, creating and editing Wiki pages and adding to a knowledge base; a file sharing system (Davros) to share documents; an address book with all contacts of EIC journalists; pads (Etherpad) to keep meeting minutes and edit them, and much more.

Each grain owner can download an archived, compressed copy of the grain (e.g. of the knowledge base) and share it with the rest of the group for the record. Encrypted one-to-one private messages are not available.

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[211]   https://www.icij.org/investigations/panama-papers/pages/panama-papers-about-the-investigation/

[212]   http://keyserver.ubuntu.com:11371/

[213]   Atlassian was the main candidate, and a licence for a group of fifty people would cost close to 10.000 EUR.

[214]   https://apps.sandstorm.io/

[215]   https://www.privacyidea.org/

From June to August, intensive onboarding on the communication platform occurred, for which it was a prerequisite that all journalists be able to communicate with PGP-encrypted emails. Each media partner of EIC have the option to onboard its own journalists and held an administrator position within the communication platform. No emailing list was used by EIC and notifications per email, offered by Sandstorm, were disabled.

Both ICIJ and EIC used platforms to offer a virtual newsroom to journalists located in different places and working together on the two cross-border investigative projects. One big difference is that the ICIJ hosted the platform on the Amazon Cloud (AWS), while EIC self-hosted the platform and could therefore move from one physical jurisdiction to another.

Another big difference is the ICIJ's centralised approach, where the ICIJ was the sole administrator, controller and owner of the information exchange within the Panama Papers group. With EIC there was a distributed approach, and the choice of software afforded each media partner the right and technical means to claim a clone of the information exchange applications, which could be granularly backed up, shared and re-installed.

Also with EIC, each journalist could initiate a new application, delegate access and start her own work group and communicate secretly and without leaving traces, even for the administrator of the platform. Judging by the usage statistics provided by the self-hosted Sandstorm instance during the year of Football Leaks project, out of more than seventy possible apps, only five were extensively used: chat, Wiki, file sharing, address book, pads. That is, mostly those initiated by the coordinator.

Some users even complained that the system was too confusing due to the fact that it had so many options[216]. However, the options were there for the people who wanted to use them, and some journalists did indeed use the decentralisation features. All of them were aware that they existed and that each had some degree of power in the way the network works.

Routine meetings

Between face to face meetings, EIC and the ICIJ both needed to organise conference calls between the journalists involved in the project. It is not publicly known which tool the ICIJ used for this purpose.

EIC had a weekly routine meeting dedicated to discussing content, and another weekly meeting dedicated to discussing technological advances. In both cases it used both Google Hangouts and later during the project the free software tool called Jit.si[217].

Google Hangouts was not available for everybody to initiate a call, but was available for access to anybody who would have the conference call link. Jit.si, by contrast, was available for anybody to initiate, free of charge, and available for anybody to connect (all that was required was an internet connection, the meeting URL and the password).

For some countries, a dial-in per telephone was possible but rarely used because of bad sound; for

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[216]   However, using the system further until the end of 2018, the statistics havechange and users is starting to have more initiative outside the coordinator input.

[217]   https://jitsi.org/ - the tools have been bought by Atlassian and resold to https://8x8.vc/ but the free software still works to date

some journalists, a weak internet connection or a corporate internal network with access barriers would sometimes prove problematic in terms of sound and participation. Jit.si makes it possible for all participants to moderate each other and to write chat messages in case the audio connection is poor.

App name	owners		Users		Grains	
	forever		forever		forever	
EtherCalc	9		53		33	
Etherpad	14		68		106	
DokuWiki	8		78		25	
Rocket.Chat	3		88		5	
Davros	8		68		9	
Collections	4		53		5	
draw.io	1		9		1	
Radicale	3		79		4	
GitLab	6		70		15	
FileDrop	1		1		1	
EtherDraw	2				2	
Permanote	1				1	
Wekan	4		35		6	
Quick Survey	1				1	
Dillinger	1		13		1	
Idea Otter	1				1	
Paperwork	1		26		2	
Roundcube	1				1	
Gogs	1				1	
Framadate	1				1	
Hacker CMS	2				2	

Fig. 2: This shows the distribution of the total number of EIC users in the information exchange system Sandstorm. Red indicates the highest number of users for one given instance of a one given App - the chat (Rocket.Chat). Each App can have as many instances as user want to open (called Grains) and reflected in the number of Owners of grains - in this case there are 5 different instances (grains) of the App Rocket.Chat owned by 3 different users - but as the co-administrator of the system I can certify that the other instances were only used for testing. Another highly used App, in one single instance, is the internal konwledge base, DokuWiki - it has 78 users. This figure shows that even if there are many apps that users can 'own ' in building their secret teams, they choose not to do so. The highest number of 'owners ' for a given app is 14 (for 106 pads that are used by 68 users) and 9 (for spreadsheet 33 pads that are shared with 53 users).

Secrecy and Security

The choice of tools and workflows, as well as the choice of communication about both cross-border projects, revolved around the need for security and secrecy.

All work done related to a project, before, during and after publication, needs to be carefully taken into account when dealing with the issues of security.

How much of this work is self-promotion, a security theatre giving the perception of security, and how much security was really needed and later implemented?

To start with, all journalists agreed that they needed to protect their source, if the source of a leak did not wish to be known to the public or the authorities. Each leaked data-set has a higher or lower degree of risk of being investigated in order to find out about the source.

The ICIJ Panama Papers core team talked about a lot of different measures to build secrecy around the project but the two German journalists gave up at some point in the book and admitted that such a long-term project involving 400 journalists cannot remain a secret for long (Obermayer, Obermaier 2016).

Moreover, in February 2015, before going further and turning Panama Papers into an ICIJ project, there was even a first story published by *Süddeutsche Zeitung* about Mossack Fonseca, in the context of police raids at the offices of the German bank Commerzbank[218]. The story was preceded

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[218]   http://www.sueddeutsche.de/wirtschaft/luxemburg-steueraffaere-erschuettert-commerzbank-1.2366678

by a detailed list of questions to Mossack Fonseca and also mentioned the fact that *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, in collaboration with NDR and WDR, have access to a large data set related to the case.

The same is true for *Der Spiegel* publishing not the fact that it has a huge data-set from Football Leaks, but that it has some exclusivity over a small number of documents.

After such stories were published, and after the bylines naming journalists involved began disappearing from regular contributions, as *Süddeutsche Zeitung* reported, it was very easy to guess who was working on a long-term cross-border project.

Real secrecy about the existence of the project and the identity of the main journalists involved seemed to be non-existent and actually not really needed. The existence of an echo-chamber created by a large group of media outlets publishing at the same time under the same brand makes the secrecy about the project irrelevant.

Accordingly, if total secrecy around such a project is not a realistic goal, perhaps offline and online security could be.

In July 2015, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* built a physical war room where 'no security or cleaning personal can access the room' and which followed the model advertised by *The Guardian* during the Snowden investigation. 'Not even the Chief Editor' could enter this room (Obermayer, and Obermaier, 2016, p132), which was totally isolated, with offline computers and printing machines, where documents were stored and investigations and stories discussed[219].

Another security aspect is highlighted in the Panama Papers book regarding the buying of smartphones with cash in Munich, during a Panama Papers group meeting, for the two Russian journalists involved in the project, so they could access the iHub forum with codes generated by their phones so that there would be no possibility of tracing the phones in case Russian secret services were to try installing spy software to get access to the iHub[220] (Obermayer, Obermaier 2016, pp 143,176).

Such online security is best discussed some time after publication.

In the case of ICIJ and Panama Papers, during the first days after publication in April 2016, chatter on hackers and security experts forums appeared to identify the secret URL for iHub from television materials created by Panama Papers partners. In the ICIJ email list available to all members of ICIJ and all past partners and collaborators, emails started to land by mistake, coming from the email list dedicated to the Panama Papers project only, and showing several of the secret randomised URLs where iHub was relocated. Also, using a simple Google search for 'global i-hub' and 'icij', such secret URLs were also available at that point and even later[221].

This created clear disruption within the group of 400 journalists who all relied on the one I-Hub to

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[219]   What about the physical threat for the people working in such a closed environment, not cleaned, who can get sick and transmit the virus to all colleagues using the same room?

[220]   What the Russian secret services could observe is that the private email address of one of the journalists opened a PGP key registered on the public PGP server; the same address was later targeted for attacks by a hacker group Fancy Bear, mentioned in press reports as targeting journalists following orders from the Russian government.

[221]   See http://archive.fo/2016.09.27-052807/https://gv3lrq1oc6kv4zgmvasrgwtl1sn0ez.icij.org/CHANGELOG.txt and http://archive.fo/2016.10.04-134255/https://gv3lrq1oc6kv4zgmvasrgwtl1sn0ez.icij.org/

search and communicate during a crucial time, in the middle of the publication stage.

Later on, during a Data Harvest session on collaborative investigative journalism, a data journalist and security expert[222] analysed the consequences of relying on a centralised system in the open versus distributed hidden systems and showed that the heavy usage of the I-Hub secret URL by hundreds of journalists over time made the URL public with automatic free statistics and analytics services that compile information about any online website[223]. The security expert also pointed out that the I-hub login showed whether an email address could reset its password[224] thus exposing the users of the platform[225]. To my knowledge there is no existing evidence, public or not, that any content on the I-Hub platform has been exposed to outside eyes.

On the EIC.network front, the threat scenarios were a little bit different. None of EIC tools, be it for search or communication, used a corporate URL (related to EIC corporate identity, brand name etc) nor did they use a URL related to any of the partners. Domain names were changed from time to time, and platforms were moved from one physical location to another. All internal communications about Football Leaks were deleted after the project was completed. So the public exposure of a domain not linked to an official URL and without exposing the content, would not result in a significant breach. But so far there has been no public exposure similar to ICIJ Panama Papers on the EIC Football Leaks. Again, to my knowledge there is no known evidence, public or not, that any content from the content and search platforms has been exposed to outside eyes.

The point of this review is to show the different limitations of and implications for network operations when choosing different technological solutions for larger groups of users in the context of cross-border investigative journalism, as well as the difference between the perception of secrecy and security and the real level of secrecy and security when doing such an investigative project on a large network over a long period of time. 'Threat scenarios' are discussed and solutions should be designed, but the technical alternatives and the level of technical literacy, coupled with the growing number of different users are making it much more difficult to be failure proof.

Cost of Tools, including time spent by coders

Dealing with both data journalism and security over search and communication is time consuming and expensive. In addition to such costs, there is an extra need for hardware, maintenance and licenses, unless they are granted as a sponsorship.

There are other types of costs derived from licenses, since using proprietary systems, even if donated, locks users into a proprietary solution or partnership with those who are offering the solution for free. Over time, the dependency grows so strong that it is even more costly to switch from one system to another, than it is to pay for an old system.

It is hard to put exact figures to respond this question for both Panama Papers and Football Leaks

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[222]   Sebastian Mondial from Germany, who was previously part of the Offshore-Leaks data team https://www.icij.org/journalists/sebastian_mondial/

[223]   https://hypestat.com/info/panamapapers.icij.org

[224]   ICIJ partner OCCRP has a similar problems because ts secure information exchange platform, publicly available to anyone at https://secure.occrp.org/, is open for anyone to register and see the list of users who are registered on the platform, including their contact details; no other content is available from the platform except the list of users.

[225]   By displaying 'There is no user with this email address' or 'The information on changing and confirming your new passphrase sent to your email'.

since there is a mix of people, solutions and hardware. It suffices to say that with the ICIJ, the data team was composed of six staff members, or half of the total ICIJ team, including the director and deputy director. During Football Leaks, EIC worked with a part-time freelance coder who teamed up with a student intern, who was also paid part time; a major contribution was added from *Der Spiegel* in the form of in-kind work from an information security professional.

Access control - different access level in general

At the beginning of a project, questions related to data access need to cover at least the following issues. First, how data is served for searches to users: by query, by batch query, by visual representation. Second, how information is shared back with the group: findings, context to findings, how many operations to do. Third, how available raw information is enriched with other data or information and can that be migrated and shared. And fourth, what access have the owners of data to the systems they use in the future and under what conditions (e.g. access of *SZ* to ICIJ servers).

In Panama Papers users had different access level 'for security reasons' (Obermayer, Obermaier 2016, p176) and it is clear that the only who had access to raw data were *SZ* and ICIJ. So the access to raw data and the possibility for the involvement of others outside the *SZ*/ICIJ core team in investigating the possible stories in the data as well as the orientation of the project is zero. When access to data is made available online only, it is problematic for those in countries where internet and electricity are scarce.

Access is organised by way of platforms, sometimes build on top of other platforms, creating 'platform envelopment' (Eisenmann, Parker, & Van Alstyne, 2010) and comes in stages: first *SZ*, then ICIJ, then the rest.

To conclude, the rhythm of access to the data is this: the raw source document goes to *SZ* first, then to ICIJ, then only mediated access is granted to all partners. The owner of data is *SZ*, the agent operator of users is ICIJ who sits at the intersection of the two, and the infrastructure is hosted by a corporate technology company (Amazon).

An aspect of discussion related to access to the data and legal threats, especially in the realm of large data leaks that may contain private and confidential information or even some information that is confidential due to the lawyer-client relation, are the implications of technology solutions that journalists use for collaborative projects (search, communication, sharing, organisation) and are not ready to endorse bulletproof collaborations when it comes to injunctions or legal requests for accessing the data. With current systems some journalists prefer to be suspended from the search and communication tools in case they receive a legal request to provide copies of source documents – in this scenario they can truly claim that they lost access to documents after publication. Eventually, however there is an ultimate data owner, and that organisation can be the target of such legal requests and even criminal investigations involving police raids. If that is the case, platforms hold much more information than only the source documents, but also other exchanges of information between journalists.

CBIJ face to face meetings

Panama Papers had fewer and larger meeting events (two of 40 and respectively 100 journalists) compared to Football Leaks (five over a year, with a constant number of around 20 journalists). But Panama Papers has also a number of very small dedicated meetings between ICIJ and *SZ* (four such meetings in Muenchen, DC and London) that show the way decisions are shaped ourside the large network of hundreds of journalists working on the content (will come back to the GIJC meeting in Lillehammer below).

Pictures or footage available publicly about Panama Papers meeting show a large gatherings with a type of class room set-up. Football Leaks, due to the small number of journalists, always met in round tables (except part of the fifth meeting, in Lisbon, where part of the meeting during publication negotiations was held in an auditorium).

Not having access to the agenda of the meetings of Panama Papers, nor to the list of participants, the only details available about the content of the meetings are to be found in the book published by the *SZ* journalists. The first meeting of 40 people is at ICIJ office in DC at the end of June, and during two days is mainly geared to sell the project to new partners. The leading role for presenting the data is with *SZ* (Obermeyer and Obermeier, 2016, p123) who show how much the 1.5 TB of data actually means and narrates findings so far. It is a logistical meeting where decisions by *SZ* and ICIJ (who hold a previous dedicated meeting) are communicated to the partners. And it is a PR opportunity, since the meeting is video documented. Second part of the meeting is about data work.

Second meeting in mid September, with more than 100 people in attendance at SZ newsroom, also for two days, has more details about the type of stories envisioned. The format is a big group for the first day, where most participants audit the contributions lectured by *SZ* and ICIJ. The second day it is split in work groups dedicated to main topics of research, topics established mainly by *SZ* and ICIJ. Long discussion about publication date and the name of the project, subject to changes, and in the end decided by Gerard Ryle at ICIJ (Obermeyer and Obermeier, 2016, p251).

The small group meetings of Football Leaks are dedicated to different goals and show a different type of workflow. First meeting at the beginning of the project (April) is to introduce the data and what has been published before and what is probably available in the leaked collection, as well as to give access to data. Some would have raw data-sets and some will obtain access online, depending on their technical capabilities and resources available. It is an exploratory meeting, both on the content side as well as on the technology and tasks are agreed upon and divided between colleagues.

Second meeting (early June) is to update on advances on research as well as on technical tools available to search and exchange information. It is a meeting of solidarity and unity, after the shock of being attacked by the ICIJ decision to shut down access to Panama Papers for those journalists overlapping networks (described in more detail at the end of Chapter 4).

Third meeting (end of July) is mostly about content and small groups start to form and take shape around specific leads and stories. Even if as a coordinator of EIC I draft the meeting agenda, I asked the colleagues of Mediapart, who were hosting the meeting, and who were among the most knowledgeable about findings so far, to group findings listed in our online system by topic. Also, what is important to note, is that the lead reporter from Der Spiegel who brought the data to EIC

and had the direct contact to the source, couldn't participate and did not push for any topic or story to be discussed, nor for the larger framework of the meeting structure. During the meeting participants had the chance to split in small groups and work on their topic or their area of interest and skill. It was a back and forth between work in the big group and work in the smaller topical researches. So the power to shape the discussion and future stories was really distributed among participants.

Most of the main topic discussed in July are consolidated into publication chapters (waves of a number of stories published in different days over the course of four weeks) and discussed in details during the fourth meeting at the end of September. Again, the format is switching between dedicated groups around topics, and the large group negotiating publication dates. Since as per agreement the final decision concerning the publication schedule is with the initiator of the project, the long negotiations push back and forth not only full stories, but also parts of stories, in order to have each partner have a fresh chunk to publish from the bigger stake.

(For a look at the agenda structure and anonymised details of participants in Football Leaks meetings, see Annexes B.5.1.2.1 to B.B.5.1.2.5 corresponding to the five project meetings).

So judging by the organisation and the number of participants, Football Leaks meetings can afford to have smaller, creative project meetings, while Panama Papers have big gatherings that produce conformity.

Such meeting configuration speak also about who enforces a decision about who decides. The meeting agendas of EIC are drafted by the coordinator (myself) based on group discussions and then posted online in the EIC secure environment in a format that permits editing, and with enough time in advance so that any participant in the meeting can add, change or edit (not delete) the content or the order of the meeting. This is a possibility that stays open up to the start of the meeting, when the group can still add feedback on the online document of the agenda, before meeting notes start to appear for the record.

In the case of Panama Papers a huge effort of responsibility and control transpires from the *SZ* journalists, visible in instances like when they describe the burden of arranging thousands of findings over Christmas when is a time of 'unaccustomed peace and quiet ' or when they feel so overwhelmed that they 'are happy every day that the German team is not only *SZ* but also *NDR* and *WDR* ' (Obermeyer and Obermeier, 2016, p252,294). The work of their network agent, ICIJ, is described as a machinery: the 'leak machinery ' where Marina is a 'fantastic organizer ' (Obermeyer and Obermeier, 2016, p72). In no case they see a wider distributed team and the first leads of the source as well as their first findings translate into the main stories ICIJ and *SZ* are publishing when the project is out.

Conclusions

It is important to review the CBIJ claims for several reasons, but an important reason is to understand what constitutes an investigative journalism network and what does not. Are all non-profit organisations dedicated to investigative journalism able to perform cross border investigative journalism? Lewis answers this question in the negative: 'national membership service organizations such as Investigative Reporters and Editors were—and still largely remain—domestic

—focused, and for competitive membership reasons cannot publish actual investigative reports' (ICIJ, 2005) Who, then, is able to do so?

Second, some of the CBIJ claims remained unchanged continuities over a long period of time. In conjunction with the non-profit model, the donors are being sold a disease for which a 'cure' (data journalism, cross-border administration) just happens to exist. Instead of contemplating a solution to reach the level of real democratic and fair societies, donors maybe bankrolling just a classical solution bias – when the solution at hand for a few practitioners has impact on how the problem is viewed. In this case, the beneficiaries of such networks – journalists and readers – who do not directly pay for the service themselves become its 'product'.

Matching perfectly with the main claims found to be promoted as a positivist approach to the CBIJ phenomenon, one of the journalists bringing Panama Papers to ICIJ, Bastian Obermeyer (2017) gives a number of reasons to collaborate across borders on investigative stories, from the point of view of a staff reporter working for a prosperous Western European media house[226].

But each of these reasons also point to some hidden consequences that are not taken into account.

  'The best reason may be the most obvious—the splash '; 'the right collaboration with the right partners at the right time can make the cake so much bigger. Even a smaller piece of that cake is larger than the cake you could have baked alone ' (Obermeyer, 2017). Amplifying the message across the world for free seem to be the dream of any media. But such an amplifying function can push not only good stories, but also stories that are not well researched or are inaccurate or circulate stereotypes, and it can create a mob like pressure on specific targets.

  'Yet it is not enough to do simply more stories. When done well, collaborations lead to better stories. We had journalists on the ground almost everywhere we needed them ' (Obermeyer, 2017). This could be simply outsourcing for free research efforts that otherwise a commercial media must pay for.

 'On our most difficult story, about Putin's inner circle, we assigned a team of 19 reporters. For months. Show me the outlet that could or would do that on its own. Our paper could only assign two reporters to that story, but sharing the story allowed us to share resources and put more boots on the ground. (…) We asked for many such favors, and many colleagues asked us in return—and no one sent invoices ' (Obermeyer, 2017). Again, not only that this could mean outsourcing to others who may not work as staffer for a decent salary like the German journalist does, but also free labour done in a network environment is being commodified by commercial for-profit news companies who do sell the resulted end product. Also the topic of the investigation may not be chosen by the local reporters (in this case Russians) but could be fame exercise for Western journalists eager to establish themselves, and in lack of high political targets in their own countries, are looking for breaking stereotypical international stories.

 'The most common counter argument to sharing leaks and data revolves around trust (…) The answer to why strong collaborations work can be found in the realms of game theory, and especially in the construct of 'shadow of the future. ' Any reporter or news outlet that spoiled the party could be sure that was the last big party they would be invited to. And after the success of the first ICIJ

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[226]   http://www.cjr.org/the_feature/panama-papers-partnership.php

investigations, no one wanted to be cast aside' (Obermeyer, 2017). This can sound also like a threat for any participant who is not in charge of owning and managing the research platform of a data-leak - such participants should not ask questions or be critical because they will not be invited to the party next time.

'In the midst of all that trust, participants were still fierce about their local territory. That's the benefit of international collaboration: Direct competition is less of a concern. We love sharing, but we also love our newspaper. So we didn't invite other German papers or magazines, our main competitors' (Obermeyer, 2017). This goes straight against the argument that CBIJ is a cure for the media competition on exclusivity and is actually pointing out that CBIJ works as an international agent for bringing national competition to a global level.

'While government officials can try to interfere with or stop publishing of a story in their own country, there's literally no way of stopping a global enterprise that is publishing on multiple international platforms' (Obermeyer, 2017). Again, from the privileged position of a German journalist, the other side of this coin is not discussed, that is the possibility that local journalists could be actually put in the harm way in countries where corrupt forces do have the power to stop journalists and publications (see the case of the killing of Daphne Caruana Galizia in Malta, assassinated after reporting using Panama Papers material).

The above is just an excerpt of the findings where the next chapter will go.

How valid is the universality of the CBIJ model - can such collaborations function at any level, between any countries and media and on any topics ? Might there be cooperations (which share goals) instead of collaborations (which share values) ? Are we actually seeing 'radical sharing ', and who is sharing what (data, access, byline)? Understanding the reasons to collaborate, or not to collaborate, shows us the boundaries of cross-border investigative journalism.

It is important to remember that IRE came in the US as an effort to in fact put boundaries on the field of investigative journalism at a time when the impact of Watergate was so large that many people wanted to begin undertaking investigative journalism in order to become famous. Even if it started as an 'interface ' with journalists from competing media doing field work and sharing methods and information (in the form of the Arizona Project), it was very quickly turned into an 'arena ', a place to show the skills, stories and reward the best that in turn led to the formation of a 'council ', which expanded into Europe and then around the world.

There is a similar moment going on now, with the impact of the Panama Papers having won a Pulitzer prize, boosting the popularity of cross-border investigative journalism while all the same stakeholders trying to limit the access to the field with platforms run by 'dinner party ' rules. This is an effort to position such cross-border investigate journalism as the elite of journalism, the 'real news ' and the antidote to fake news and manipulation, that is very expensive to produce.

To put it briefly, little has changed in almost half a century.

In order to uncover the real-life processes and challenges of CBIJ beyond public statements, next two chapters will go into the detailed account of two landmark CBIJ projects, Panama Papers and Football Leaks, analysing them both individually and at a moment when they overlap.

Chapter 4. THE PATHS OF LILLEHAMMER

The focus of this case study is to detail the processes and challenges of CBIJ by starting with the structuring of the public account of the first CBIJ Pulitzer Prize winning project, the Panama Papers, an iconic CBIJ project. My own knowledge as a long-time practitioner in this field, and a member of ICIJ, is used to clarify and at points to uncover previously unknown aspects that contradict the positivist official narrative of CBIJ, by way of focusing on what is being excluded from this positivist narrative of Panama Papers, with the help of autoentography, participatory observation, interviews and archival research.

'We're in Lillehammer (…) the Radisson Hotel is built into the hillside a bit higher up. Here from 8 to 11 October 2015, about 900 reporters from more than 100 different countries are currently meeting for the Global Investigative Journalism Conference. (…) The conference has nothing to do with our Prometheus project[227], but some of our international partners are there too and we want to use the opportunity to speak to them in person. (…) we keep retreating to hotel rooms (…) to discuss matters of importance (…) in the nooks of the lobby (…) or when taking a walks together ' (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 pp209,210,229).

I am in Lillehammer as well, taking part in the same conference and retreating in hotel rooms and talking walks on the narrow paths of a forest between the hotel and the ski slope discussing the establishment of a new investigative network[228], the European Investigative Collaborations (EIC) and asking future EIC colleagues if their media will join as members of this new network.

When coming across some of my ICIJ colleagues I see them discussing secretly what, in six months from that moment, will be known as the Panama Papers. 'What is less ideal in the matter of secrecy is that some of our colleagues who are working with us on the Mossfon data bring up the project in overcrowded rooms (…) in front of others. We quickly steer the conversation in another direction or stare silently into space (…) ' (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 pp210,211).

The director of ICIJ, Gerard Ryle and I also go for a walk on the forest paths up to the ski slope so I can describe him what EIC will be and how it will position itself vis-a-vis ICIJ. Under the vigilante eyes of plain-cloth police agents, secretly monitoring the safety of the global investigative gathering, we cross paths with tens of other small groups of secretive preoccupied journalists secretly discussing next investigative projects.

The access (or lack of) to such hidden spaces for conversations with high and at times farcical layers of secrecy, are overlapping and shaping the CBIJ projects and networks. Such layers of secrecy create an unintended gap in the knowledge about power relationships in CBIJ networks.

By analysing Panama Papers as a case study, this chapter is aiming at uncovering the existing gap in knowledge related to CBIJ meeting arenas and, where my level of access is not enough, to use the next chapter and case study to fill in this gap. The last section of this chapter looks at what are the consequences when the focus of two CBIJ projects (Panama Papers and Football Leaks) and networks (ICIJ and EIC) overlap and the public logic of the CBIJ field is being contradicted by hands-on actions.

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[227] Prometheus is the codename for the Panama Papers project while in research and production

[228] together with co-founder of EIC Jörg Schmitt from *Der Spiegel*

This chapter starts by reviewing the main stories and claims of the Panama Papers investigative project. The analysis will follow the structure of the CBIJ six recurrent steps process (main themes and categories) that are followed during the process of cross-border investigative journalism, according to the existing theory reviewed in the first chapter (Alfter).

In order to undertake a critical analysis of cross-border investigative journalism, the chapter starts by identifying working practices and reviewing the cases where there are differences between how work is done and how it is claimed to be done, aiming to highlight 'distinctions between fact and potential, appearance and reality, true and false needs ' in the sense of Marcuse's critical analysis.

The findings are then grouped and prepared for the discussion in chapter six, looking at the organisation and utilisation of resources by investigative journalism networks.

The focus above all is on how technology is used to institute new forms of control using the lens of the 'platform capitalism ' framework. This is the best-suited framework to describe most of the contemporary developments in the infrastructure of cross-border investigative journalism networks.

The second part of this chapter elaborates on conclusions regarding centralisation (and the implications of centralised solutions that are very costly and need large numbers of users, so they can scale up and pay off, in the sense of the commercial mindset). Analytical attention will focus on how the inclusion of some users and exclusion of others occurs, and by doing so, established actors of this field, as well as its boundaries, will appear visible.

Observing how in the context of investigative networks, owners of platform infrastructures are giving journalists the chance to access data and knowledge (main raw materials) are then selling the numbers they obtain (activities of journalists) to donors specialised in effecting change by endorsing non-profit investigative networks who follow a theory of change, will reflect on how such a configuration is regressing this specific journalistic field of cross-border investigative journalism to a digital feudal type of organisation.

The main archival source for this chapter is the book 'Panama Papers ' published by the two German journalists from SZ who made the initial contact with the source of the Panama Papers leak. The book is chronologically structured, overlapping information about the CBIJ logistics with journalistic stories that illustrate the offshore world, the clients of an offshore intermediary and their businesses and source of wealth, power and influence.

Even if the focus of the book is the story of the offshore world told through the lens of a Panama based offshore agent company, this book is unprecedentedly detailed on the CBIJ project that made the articles possible, and was published at the same time with the articles published around the world by the hundreds of journalists working on this ICIJ project, which makes it a trove of useful information as historical records. However detailed it is, the book has no topic and entity index, and so my first contribution is to assess, extract and regroup logistical details around the CBIJ six step process (Alfter).

Additional research is being added from public and private archival records making use of the *Internet Archive* and autoethnographic collection of conference documents, publications, websites, conference descriptions, media descriptions in general but also news industry publications and mailing lists, both as an ICIJ and GIJN member, which is then analysed by content and added in the relevant parts of this chapter.

I also make use of my own technological knowledge, as a long time practitioner of CBIJ and power user and manager of technological systems deployed in the context of CBIJ networks in general, and my previous hands on experience with ICIJ tools in general (during Offshore Leaks) and with the tools re-used during Panama Papers in particular (tools that I used researching Swiss Leaks). The purpose of this contribution is to clarify and put in context the official positivist view of Panama Papers as a CBIJ project.

As the main units of analysis in this study, the claims, actions and limitations of CBIJ participants were analysed with regard to their interaction with, first, CBIJ issues of access control and exclusion, and second, the six steps of CBIJ processes. This was done in the context of Panama Papers project and at the end of this chapter, in the context of the overlapping of Panama Papers with the Football Leaks project.

The original contribution in researching this case study is not only putting the facts from the Panama Papers book in context, but also uncovers unknown aspects and context that show a much deeper level of insight into CBIJ power mechanisms then the book is doing or, for that matter, a deeper insight than that gained from surveys, SNA or interviews published so far on this topic.

Finally, not having access as a Panama Papers participant or not being involved in the management core team of the project and of ICIJ, not having access to meetings, to organising these meetings, to the inner mechanisms, possibilities and limitations of the technology used, my approach is limited, having to rely mostly on public accounts like this book and other public statements, even as an ICIJ member. But this is only pointing me where exactly to dig further when I do have the full access needed, a possibility to identify the important gap in knowledge about CBIJ, a gap that I can fill in moving further to chapter five, which is the second case study where I was involved not only as observer, but also as a full participant and coordinator.

In order to navigate the wealth of public material available on this topic, one of the main source on the processes and workflows of the project will be the detailed book published by the initiators of the Panama Papers project, the journalists Bastian Obermayer and Frederik Obermaier from the German newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. This research will take into account the original book published in German ('*Panama Papers. Die Geschichte einer weltweiten Enthüllung*, Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2016) as well as the English translated version of the same book, with a foreword by *Guardian* journalist Luke Harding (*The Panama Papers. Breaking the Story of How the Rich & Powerful Hide Their Money*, Oneworld Publications, 2016)[229].

Also, as a member of ICIJ, I will use material as a participant observer from the ICIJ mailing list, without quoting or identifying people except where I was specifically granted permission to do so or where the messages have been circulated outside the privacy of ICIJ discussion groups.

During the time this research was being undertaken, different mailing lists existed for ICIJ members and for ICIJ partners, as well as dedicated lists for different project. I will not refer to any secret material exchanged during the project, since the journalistic information exchange pertaining to the Panama Papers documentation itself occurred on a platform called the I-Hub to which I, along with

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[229] The main website is now transferred at https://www.icij.org/investigations/panama-papers/ but still available using https://web.archive.org/web/*/panamapapers.icij.org Other details will be drawn from official blog posts published on the ICIJ website and conference presentations by the ICIJ project core team or collaborators who spoke in public about the project, mostly at industry conferences or in industry publications.

two thirds of ICIJ members, did not have access during the Panama Papers project.

4.1 Panama Papers: clarifying the process and challenges

This section will extract the public claims about Panama Papers, made by individuals involved in the process with the goal to bring details to the CBIJ six steps process structure (Alfter). Instead of using interviews as a research method, this section is extensively based on the Panama Papers book as an official account of the CBIJ project and adds clarifications using autoethnography, archival research and observing participant notes.

4.1.1 Rules of the game: centralised power configuration

Pre-project Legacy

The Panama Papers started with one member of the ICIJ (a journalist) deciding with his colleagues at a media partner of the ICIJ (a media organisation) to hand over leaked data to the ICIJ, in order for the latter to become the network agent of the leak and share access with a selected network of people and media organisations around the world.

First, I need to clarify what 'sharing data' means in the context of more journalists having access from remote locations to a given data set. There are different levels of 'sharing data' possible. The sharing of data in the case of the ICIJ is the handing over of all raw data, and is not the same as the ICIJ sharing access to the data with all other partners in the project. What is more, in this project, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* remains the 'owner' of the data, whereas the ICIJ is an administrator of access to the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* data.

It is necessary to briefly put the Panama Papers in the larger context of the ICIJ's long experience with international cross-border projects.

Fifteen years before the start of the Panama Papers project and only a few years after its establishment, the ICIJ's first international project was published in ten countries,[230] after analysing over a period of six months 11,000 corporate documents out of a cache of almost eight million pages that had been made public after the 1998 U.S. tobacco settlement involving British American Tobacco (BAT). The investigation and publication that started in the year of 2000 continued over a period of almost two years, building on the same collection of documents archived in print and stored in Guilford, UK[231].

Almost two decades after it was established, the ICIJ released in 2016 the project called Panama Papers, that was published in more than one hundred publications from eighty countries as a result of the cooperation of more than 370 journalists looking at 11.5 million documents over a period of more than a year.[232] The source documents were leaked by an unknown source from inside a

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[230]   https://web.archive.org/web/20160416094459/https://www.icij.org/node/460/global-reach-tobacco-companys-involvement-cigarette-smuggling-exposed-company-papers

[231]   https://web.archive.org/web/20160416100039/https://www.icij.org/node/460/uk-considering-formal-investigation-cigarette-smuggling

[232]   https://web.archive.org/web/20160416100606/https://panamapapers.icij.org/blog/20160411-NDR-video-behind-scenes.html moved here https://www.icij.org/blog/2016/04/ndr-video-behind-scenes/

Panama-based international law firm, Mossack Fonseca[233], specialised in the creation of shell companies.

The scale of ICIJ cross-border projects grew significantly during its twenty years of existence. More time was dedicated for research, more documents were analysed and more journalists became involved from more countries around the world: the time given to the project grew from six months to 18 months, the number of documents analyzed grew from 11.000 (out of a cache of 8 million) to 11.5 million documents, the number of countries where the ICIJ project stories were published grew from 10 to 80, and the number of journalists involved grew from 18 to 370[234].

Looking at the figures and the scale of the operation, it comes as a little surprise that the Panama Papers project was heralded as 'the culmination of a significant shift in the way journalism is now practiced', bringing into front the context of decades of non-profit investigative journalism, networking and conference organising[235]. People active in the field explained how it could be financed and replicated[236]: 'The world needs investigative journalism more than ever'. A book about how the project was carried out appeared at the same time as its publication[237]. The information revealed was clearly competing with the prominence of the packaging of the cooperation.

In order to describe the boundaries of a cross-border investigative project, I will focus on the Panama Papers cross-border investigation, labeled by the participants as 'the largest journalistic cooperation in history' (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p.267) or 'one of the […] largest collaborative investigations in journalism history' (ICIJ, 2016)[238].

It is necessary to note that the two forces driving this investigation, the commercial news operation *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and the non-profit journalistic operation ICIJ, make use of two different concepts to describe the same cross-border investigative project, namely cooperation (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*) and collaboration (ICIJ).

The different perspectives on the same project may emerge from different vantage points (commercial and non-profit), so in order to understand the process of the Panama Papers cross-border investigation, this chapter will focus on the work flow and extract for further review the main elements following existing theoretical support on cross-border journalism (Alfter, 2016) and on investigative reporting (Haller, 2004).

Alfter (2016) proposes a six step process for cross-border reporting that is an ongoing process thus creating new opportunities for collaboration, and continues in a loop, creating a virtuous cycle.

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[233]   http://web.archive.org/web/20160416101148/https://panamapapers.icij.org/blog/20160403-new-icij-investigation-exposes-rogue-offshore-industry.html

[234] the page of the first ICIJ project does not list the entire project team, and only the names of some of the authors and reporters involved are available

[235]   http://web.archive.org/web/20160417120618/http://gijn.org/2016/04/13/panama-papers-showcase-power-of-a-global-movement/

[236]   http://web.archive.org/web/20160417114913/https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/04/11/want-more-panama-papers-heres-how/

[237]   http://web.archive.org/web/20160418183735/http://www.panamapapers.com/

[238]   The site version from 2016, https://web.archive.org/web/20160409045034/https://panamapapers.icij.org/, when ICIJ was still under CPI, shows the text ''largest collaborative investigations in journalism history '' that is not to be found in the About page of the project here https://web.archive.org/web/20160410045619/https://panamapapers.icij.org/about.html

These steps are: 1. Networking; 2. Idea; 3. Research Team; 4. Research Plan; 5. Research; 6. Publication.

Alfter also makes the case that what follows publication usually means more networking by way of follow-up and that will become the **new step one** and start the entire process anew for a new idea or story. My practical observation shows that the last step in this process, publication, informs and influences analysis of all the previous steps, as well as decisions on the future steps, the strategic decisions on how to network further, who to involve in the team, how to organise the research.

In Panama Papers, the basis of the project is what has been called 'the biggest leak of inside information in history' (ICIJ, 2016). Accordingly, among several other possible journalistic investigative approaches, the Panama Papers fits under the category of leaks - leaked information from within an organisation (Haller, 2004).

What we have is a classic journalistic investigation based on a leak of documents, but a leak of unprecedented scale and form, as well as a classic cross-border reporting operation, which is also unprecedented in scale and form.

I will therefore extract the details of the Panama Papers investigation, and structure them to correspond the above-mentioned steps. However, due to the unprecedented scale and form of both the leak and the cross-border reporting operation, I do think there is one step missing from the process detailed by Alfter, a step that is becoming increasingly important in any cross-border investigation: the socio-technological choices that set ownership of the network as well as the conditions for similar investigations in the future by way of opportunities and limitations imposed by the technology used to support the collaborative work of journalists. This step also configures the ways of commodifying contributions to the network.

Legacy Networking: possibilities and limitations

In August 2016, the project page dedicated to Panama Papers listed 392 reporters as participants in the cross-border investigation. At that time, only fifty-seven were also ICIJ members – out of the total of 195 ICIJ members at that moment – leaving more than two thirds of the ICIJ members outside of the Panama Papers collaborative investigation and bringing 335 reporters[239] from outside of the ICIJ network. How exactly was this configuration achieved?

Like a social network, an investigative cross-border network is an ongoing and open-ended process. As such, any cross-border investigation starts based on previous networking efforts, usually previous information exchanges or encounters at conferences, group meetings, training sessions (network infrastructure). This is a different stage from the creation of the research team network itself, dedicated to specific projects, which I will treat in a separate section.

Alfter (2016) subdivides journalistic networking into five degrees of 'networking intensity': loose network, one-off assistance, lead or exclusive tip-off, limited cooperation (usually on shared data-sets) and close collaboration. Even if highly centralized, the Panama Papers cross-border investigation rested on all the levels of networking intensity identified by Alfter, either experienced first hand at *Süddeutsche Zeitung* or in the wider network of the ICIJ.

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[239] http://web.archive.org/web/20160814072504/https://panamapapers.icij.org/about.html
http://web.archive.org/web/20160814073532/https://www.icij.org/journalists/by-country

The Panama Papers began at the end of 2014, when Bastian Obermayer, a journalist of *Süddeutsche Zeitung* working with the investigative department and who was part of previous ICIJ projects, was contacted by an anonymous source nicknamed John Doe and asked if he was interested in data[240].

In the case of Panama Papers, the drive to start a cross-border collaborative investigation came straight from the source. The insurance that the data will be investigated in a wide network was a pre-condition in order to start leaking the material. From the first exchanges of messages, the source specifically asked the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* to collaborate with large English-speaking media organisations 'like *The New York Times* or similar'[241].

Even if it was unable to offer a partnership with the *The New York Times*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung's* networking experience was explained to the source. Obermayer mentioned past collaborations with *The Guardian*, *The Washington Post* and the BBC during cross-border investigative projects run by the ICIJ like Offshore-Leaks and Lux-Leaks (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016, p15) . Even if the ICIJ was established in the U.S. in the late 1990s, it never had among its media partners the biggest traditional U.S. print outlets as had been the case in Europe[242]. Actually, according to ICIJ deputy director, the ICIJ tried to collaborate with *The New York Times* before, but the attempt did not come to fruition.[243]

The background of the network available to *Süddeutsche Zeitung* through the involvement with the ICIJ started in 2012, when the German public television station NDR was offered the collaboration on the Offshore-Leaks investigation by data journalist Sebastian Mondial, an early member of the ICIJ Offshore-Leaks team[244]. NDR had engaged in previous collaborations with *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, and in this case they once again involved the private print media.

Since that moment, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* journalists were involved in ICIJ projects as a German team consisting of journalists working for the newspaper and regional public televisions NDR and WDR. Together, they have taken part in at least four published ICIJ projects to date[245]. Each project is a networking exercise, consisting of information exchange during the research phase, but also meetings during the project or at various conferences for investigative journalism, during or after publication. In between projects, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* journalists collaborated on their own terms on stories involving ICIJ members[246].

Since 2014 the German team was formalised into an Investigative Partnership between the three media outlets mentioned above. Both the two *Süddeutsche Zeitung* investigative journalists behind Panama Papers, Bastian Obermayer and Frederik Obermaier, as well as their editor running the

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[240]   (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p7) and http://web.archive.org/web/20160813055426/https://www.wired.com/2016/04/reporters-pulled-off-panama-papers-biggest-leak-whistleblower-history/

[241]   (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p15)

[242]   That will change soon after the publication both New York Times and Washington Post will ask permission to get on board and will get the permission: http://www.niemanlab.org/2016/05/a-few-weeks-after-the-panama-papers-release-the-new-york-times-and-washington-post-start-digging-in/

[243]   https://publiceditor.blogs.nytimes.com/2016/04/04/why-no-big-splash-for-panama-papers/

[244]   https://www.mediummagazin.de/archiv/2013-2/ausgabe-04052013/inside-offshore-leaks/

[245]   https://www.icij.org/projects

[246]   https://www.icij.org/blog/2014/08/tracking-cross-border-weapons-trade-youtube

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investigative department, Hans Leyendecker, are ICIJ members. The same goes for Georg Mascolo, who led the German investigative partnership of the three organisations, who are exclusive media partners of the ICIJ in Germany.

By the time this research was completed, the only other German members listed on the ICIJ site are Julia Stein and Jan Lukas Strozyk, working at the time of this research for NDR and Petra Blum working for WDR (these being added after the Panama Papers projects and more recently the Paradise Papers projects were released)[247]. This is a compact group and a national network in itself, a network that covers a mix of commercial print and online news outlets, including *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and publicly funded broadcasters (NDR and WDR are public regional broadcasters) from different locations in Germany (north, south-west, south-east) and on different platforms (radio, television, online).

But deciding to involve the ICIJ in the Panama leak, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* tapped into more than two decades of investigative journalism networking experience around the globe. I will come back in describing in detail the development of cross-border investigative journalism when describing the main actors in the Panama Papers project.

The network created to work on the Panama Papers would eventually reach 'around 500 journalists from 80 countries', sharing information over the course of several months and publishing at the same time, expanding on the previous large collaborations from Offshore-Leaks and Swiss-Leaks.

Tools stack ready from past projects

Before the start of a project, a tool stack remains from past projects and will be re-used or reconfigured based on the needs of the new project. In the case of the Panama Papers, when *Süddeutsche Zeitung* started to receive data, there was no in-house tool stack ready available from past projects, since the work for such network investigations was done by the ICIJ, who controlled the project infrastructure for data indexing, searching and communication exchange.

 But *Süddeutsche Zeitung* had the chance to see a 'fully featured high-end e-discovery software'[248] at work when during the Offshore Leaks project their team member Sebastian Mondial, who was involved with the ICIJ data team, obtained a copy of the original data-set as well as a free license to use a sponsored forensic tool called Nuix.

 On the ICIJ side, different tools were tested and implemented at different points in recent times, starting to be deployed with larger groups with the Offshore Leaks project[249] in 2012. Such tools covered the basic needs for communication and searching. For search purposes, the ICIJ settled on a Amazon cloud-hosted version of a librarian search tool called Project Blacklight[250]. For communication, another cloud-based version of an existing dating tool called Oxwall was customised into a 'private social network' for reporters (Cabra, M., 2016). Outside these cloud-based platforms made available for ICIJ users, the organisation obtained a few free-of-charge

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[247]   https://www.icij.org/journalists/

[248]   https://web.archive.org/web/20171107221521/https://www.icij.org/investigations/offshore/how-icijs-project-team-analyzed-offshore-files/

[249]   Previous to Offshore Leaks there where attempts at using information exchange and document collaboration software, but the software used was designed for very small teams, and would crash often (e.g. Microsoft Office Groove in the Tobacco Underground project, see Message Magazine 3/2009; p79)

[250]   https://web.archive.org/web/20170216072823/https://neo4j.com/blog/icij-neo4j-unravel-panama-papers/

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licenses for Nuix, a high-end forensic discovery software.

Review of documents to find the idea leading the investigative project

Before a project starts, in a small or bigger group there is an opportunity assessment going on. According to ICIJ rules introduced by director Gerard Ryle, such an assessment will look at three criterias: 'Is it an issue of global concern? Are the systems designed to protect people broken? Are we likely to get a result?'[251].

Idea

According to Alfter (2016) the existence of previous networking exercises and events are fertile ground where the seed of an idea can grow into a cross-border investigation. But many seeds are exchanged and discarded before one of them will grow into a project.

In the case of the Panama Papers, like the ICIJ's previous large cross-border investigations, journalists did not have to sit down and think of an investigative approach, build a hypothesis or chase different sources and leads to get to the idea behind the project.

The seed came from a source in the form of a collection of leaked documents that eventually reached more than 2.6 terabytes. All these documents belonged to the law firm Mossack Fonseca, headquartered in Panama and specialised in providing shell companies later used a range of people around the world in order to hide real ownership of various assets.

John Doe, the source, at first started by sending samples of documents[252] and then raw data-sets until the collection reached almost five million emails, three million database files and more than two million PDF files, which amounted to 'pretty much every document from this firm over a 40-year period' (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p7).

The approach for this investigation is clearly to signal, to raise an alarm (Halle, 2004) about the wide spread usage of offshore structures, the illegal aspects of this trade and the scandal that most of the offshore schemes available are still legal. This was the idea behind all recent ICIJ big network investigations since 2011 when Offshore Leaks started and it will continue to be the idea behind projects published by ICIJ after Panama Papers. By 2018 a total of five major projects deal with this topic.

The assessment of the source and material was first carried out by a very small team of *Süddeutsche Zeitung* journalists. They explain that *Süddeutsche Zeitung* was happy to receive leaks but that it would not pay informants in order not to create the incentive for others to try to supply fake documents to the paper. For the journalists, this was the very important sign that the source is for real (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p10) even if *Süddeutsche* Zeitung journalists knew nothing about the real identity of the person. More important, however was the cross-checking of the source material with outside data-sets, official documents and events. After the validity of sample data had been checked, the value of the information was then assessed. Data seemed to be very recent, and as the investigation proceeded, data remained fresh, which demonstrates that it was a continuing

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[251] https://web.archive.org/web/20201111185858/https://www.icij.org/inside-icij/2012/08/essential-elements-powerful-global-investigative-reporting/

[252]   [page 7,Panama PapersBook]

leak[253].

Also, importantly for *Süddeutsche Zeitung* the material has an immediate proximity value, since one of the founding partners of the company, Juergen Mossack, was German (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 pp30,31).

Moreover, in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* newsroom (as well as with other journalists joining the investigation later on) the secrecy of the project favoured a lone wolf attitude at the newsroom or national level (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p17) and at the same time it created global cross-border investigative cooperation. As Alfter notes: 'Journalism is a competitive craft. Being first with the news means survival and respect in news journalism. […] Surmounting the competitive attitude is one of the first obstacles to cross-border collaboration' (Alfter, 2016).

The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* methodology followed the lines of a traditional investigative research flow. It was a parallel process, with two different levels and timescales: being in contact with the source, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* started the entire investigative process early on, and was always more advanced than the rest of the growing international network of participants.

This is of little relevance, however, because when taking on projects with huge data sets one is exposed to a paradoxical tension: it takes a long time to publish findings. The fact that at times one holds off publishing a story for a year or more constitutes a key difference from traditional journalism.

Even before considering forming an investigative team, there is a need to verify if the leak is real. This was done by *Süddeutsche Zeitung* but for the investigation to become an ICIJ project, a similar review had to be observed by the ICIJ Core Team as well, especially by the management team sitting in Washington D.C.

At this point *Süddeutsche Zeitung* performed for the ICIJ the same role the source performed for *Süddeutsche Zeitung* in filtering the samples and selecting the best possible stories to persuade the ICIJ to become a partner and take over the international cross-border collaboration (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p57). The motivation and drive of the source were discussed, but the authenticity of the material seemed to be the key point as regarding validation: the trust lied not in the source but in the 'hundreds of cross-checks' (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p57) of documents that were carried out.

Before going further and turning this into an ICIJ project, there was even a first story published by *Süddeutsche Zeitung* about Mossack Fonseca in February 2015, in the context of police raids at the offices of the German bank Commerzbank[254]. The story was preceded by a detailed list of questions to Mossack Fonseca and also mentioned the fact that *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, in collaboration with NDR and WDR, had access to a large data set related to the case. I will come back to this in detail when mentioning the complex play between confrontation, publication embargoes and the news agenda. I will also examine the implication of this moment when discussing the differences between the perception of secrecy, the real level of secrecy obtained and the real need of secrecy when doing such an investigative project in a large network of people over a long period of time.

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[253]   The leaking of internal documents from the company continued well after the publication in April 2016 and generated follow-up stories during 2018 – See https://www.icij.org/investigations/panama-papers/new-panama-papers-leak-reveals-mossack-fonsecas-chaotic-scramble/

[254]   http://www.sueddeutsche.de/wirtschaft/luxemburg-steueraffaere-erschuettert-commerzbank-1.2366678

The process of verifying and refining the idea transmitted by the source, as well as collecting findings to help shape the new project, was first done entirely by a small group from *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. After that, it involved ICIJ management and a core team who needed to verify the authenticity of the data as well, consisting mainly on cross-checks of information on outside sources with existing official or verified data (e.g. official company records databases or media archives).

After the checks were carried out, the leak machinery of ICIJ became operational. This was the moment when *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and ICIJ formed a team, a network and implemented the tools and made them available to the team, established meetings and a workflow, set up deadlines for submitting findings, worked towards presenting drafts of stories and planned for a publication schedule. Very late into the project, after the ideas for the stories were shaped and important findings endorsed these ideas, only then other people were invited to join.

4.1.2 Centralised Access Control: ICIJ as an agent

Pre-Publication

At the pre-publication stage, a refining of the legacy network, tools and idea is taking place.

One important moment of a cross-border investigative project is when the legacy network and the legacy tools are evaluated and refined. No pre-existing configuration can be taken for granted - at least in theory. According to my long-time experience in core teams establishing CBIJ projects, such arrangements that worked well before tend to be taken for granted and improved, rather then being dismantled.

This is the foundation for the labour phase, the information exchange between journalists that will test, enforce or re-shape the main idea of the project before entering the production phase. At some point this will shift towards the next phase, the production phase that will deal with the preparation for publication and then the publication itself.

Refining the Legacy Network and the Idea

The leaking of internal documents outside an organisation is one of the five categories that trigger an investigation (Haller, 2004, p.253). A traditional leak of selected documents leaves little room for the journalists to decide what the story is all about, and gives the source a lot of power in steering the future publication. However, in the case of the Panama Papers, and other similar leaks of large internal data-sets, there is a possibility that publication takes a different direction from that envisioned by the source when leaking the data. After all, a big group of journalists from different countries and backgrounds can discover a large number of very different stories.

In the case of the Panama Papers, the source led the journalists to search for certain keywords in order to convince them of the value of the documents (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 pp12,13,57). The source was also heavily involved in discussing the implications of the revelations on the company Mossack Fonseca (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p159). Later on, after publication, the source would be given the press attention of the entire network to publish a 'leak manifesto'[255]. After that, the source began earning money by selling the data to at least two Western

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[255] https://www.icij.org/investigations/panama-papers/20160506-john-doe-statement/

governments to date.[256]

The assessment of the documents and possible stories was carried out by *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and the ICIJ, and the first meetings were again organised between the same two organisations. After the search tools were established, a first introductory meeting was set up in Washington D.C., at the ICIJ offices, where the idea was discussed in detail.

During the early exchanges, for each new batch of data the source also provided guidance on what to investigate or the biggest names connected to the leaked documents, like connections to Russia, to a specific German businessman and to Assad regime (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 pp12,57). Even if new stories would later be discovered, the main idea of the project remained unchanged between the initial contacts with the source and the granting of access to the larger network. Some of the early leads provided by the source to check the value of the data turned later into lead published stories. All this gave the source an influential position within the cross-border project.

Team

Being ready to go to the next step in the investigative process means to prepare for setting up an investigative team, both at local *Süddeutsche Zeitung* level and international level. The more the project advanced, the more people joined. But this is the moment when past network investigations as well as other rationales kick in and shape the legacy network into the project team. The importance of choosing the right team for a cross-border investigative project has been stated publicly on many occasions by both *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and the ICIJ.

This is the moment when boundaries were set since not all journalists could be part of such a project. Not all ICIJ members or *Süddeutsche Zeitung* journalists are even invited. At the time when the publication was announced, the proportion of ICIJ members not part of Panama Papers was more than two-thirds of all members: fifty-seven out of the total of 195 ICIJ members at that moment, were credited as participants in the Panama Papers project. An additional 335 outside reporters, at that moment not ICIJ members, were credited as participants in the Panama Papers investigation as shown by versions of the ICIJ websites from August 2016[257].

Firstly, it is necessary to observe who was unable to join the Panama Papers.

The first such group are those journalists belonging to media outlets in direct competition with the project initiator, in this case any German media, public or private, outside the SZ-NDR-WDR group. Secondly, there are ICIJ member journalists belonging to the competition of major media partners of the ICIJ in a given country, such as journalists working for media outlets other than *The Guardian* and the BBC in the UK. Then there are ICIJ members who are part of competing non-profit investigative networks that cover the same regions (i.e. in Eastern Europe the ICIJ's non-profit partner was the OCCRP, which excluded other non-profit actors[258] part of previous ICIJ

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256   Denmark https://web.archive.org/web/20160908205849/https://www.theguardian.com/news/2016/sep/07/panama-papers-denmark-becomes-first-country-to-buy-leaked-data and Germany https://web.archive.org/web/20200409201341/https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-40505300

257   See here archived 2016 versions of the ICIJ webpages showing the names of journalists involved up to August 2016 http://web.archive.org/web/20160814072504/https://panamapapers.icij.org/about.html and the names of all ICIJ members in July 2016 http://web.archive.org/web/20160714095149/https://www.icij.org/journalists

258   like for instance the Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism who was organizing the Eastern European research during Offshore Leaks, see https://www.icij.org/blog/2013/05/notes-long-distance-investigation/

projects) and there are ICIJ members who are freelancers and are made redundant in a given country if that country is covered by a media partnership involving staffers paid by the media partner. Then there are ICIJ members who may not be considered 'nice' by ICIJ[259]. Also, in case of the ICIJ partnering with non-profit networks, as in the case of OCCRP, the exclusion scenario is repeated at a lower level, meaning not all OCCRP members or partners can join the investigation (i.e. in Hungary there are two local OCCRP partners, both non-profit independent media Direkt36 and Atlatszo.hu, but only Direkt36 was part of the Panama Papers project).

The categories of journalists who *were* invited to take part in Panama Papers are manifold: there are paid staffers, usually with commercial news organisations and non-paid staffers, usually with non-profit news organisations. This last category is widespread when it comes to non-profit media outside the U.S. and Western Europe. Their organisations have direct access to the dataset. There was also a category of non-paid journalists searching for paid contracts as freelancers with media outlets that are not partners of the ICIJ or journalists sponsored by outside programs, like small grants for publishing specific stories in the non-profit realm. The organisations paying them had no direct access to the data-set.

It should be mentioned here that in a global network not all of those who are accepted or invited to take part in such a project could actually participate. For some there are financial barriers to keep with the research (nobody will pay for their research time), or to join meetings (they are unable to travel to face-to-face meetings in the US and Western Europe for high costs or for visa issues) or technical barriers (the internet and electricity in their location makes it impossible to perform searches and access the communication platforms of the ICIJ) or simply language barriers.

The Cross-border Research Team

In a cross-border investigative project, choosing the research team that will perform the investigation either directly or by way of contributing to tech development, data processing, editing, info-design, fact checking and legal screening is a very important step.

By the words of ICIJ deputy director in a message sent to all ICIJ members after the publication, it was said that like in the case of any newsroom, the decision on who to work with in a new project is the most important decision she and the director of ICIJ are making[260]. This implies that all the journalists working for an ICIJ project are considered to be in the same situation with journalists working for a newsroom, on assignment, as paid employees, which obviously is not the case, since ICIJ is paying none of the ICIJ members or non-members who are not in the ICIJ staff team. This is even worse as the situation of independent drivers working as contractors for Uber in the gig economy, since for all the non-paid journalists their free contributions are commodified by the ICIJ and by other media, for profit or non-profit alike.

Besides being asked by the source to forge an international partnership with important English speaking media outlets, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* was aware at the very beginning of the project that internally in their own newsroom only a small team was available to dedicate time for this research and felt the need to show the data to a wider network of specialised journalists.

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[259]   https://web.archive.org/web/20160314054535/http://www.icij.org/blog/2015/02/behind-scenes-icijs-biggest-ever-collaboration

[260]   Part of an email sent by Marina Walker to all ICIJ members just after the Panama Papers publication, on 08/04/16, as a reply to questions by ICIJ members on why they have not been invited to join the Panama Papers research nor shared access to the database after the publication.

The expectation was that 'more and better stories' will be produced (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p29). This expectation rested on the previous investigations done in partnership with ICIJ, especially in the Offshore Leaks project when both Obermayer and Obermeier were invited to become members of the ICIJ at the end of the project. That project became a model because it was a 'worldwide Scoop' (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p30). Even if at the moment of the first conversation the data set was only fifty gigabytes, Gerard Ryle was persuaded to make it an ICIJ project in a 15 minute call, mostly because the data was so fresh.

But the process of institutionalising the partnership with the ICIJ was slow during the early 2015. One reason for this may be the limited capacity of the ICIJ to take on only one big cooperation project at a time. February 2015 was the month when the ICIJ published the Swiss Leaks project, another large-scale cross-border investigation involving 140 journalists in forty-five countries[261].

Another reason was the need to discover in the data enough preliminary information relevant for future cross-border partners that would attract them to join a long-term project and keep them motivated to participate in the information exchange process. It is clear from the beginning that *Süddeutsche Zeitung* expected the ICIJ to take over most of the tasks related to configuring the Network Investigative Team, as well as running the project management team.

There was a parallel development of this step of establishing an Investigative Team between what *Süddeutsche Zeitung* was doing on its own and what it did in the context of ICIJ coordination of the cross-border project. *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, a strong German national newspaper with approximatively 600 journalists and a circulation of less then 400,000 copies in print[262], who is part of a larger publishing house with around 5,000 employees that makes around 900 million euro annual turnover according to German public sources[263], has a profit somewhere around five million per year. Even with these resources at its disposal, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* could only assign a small group of few people at the beginning of the Panama Papers project.

By February 2015 (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p71) the two reporters were assigned to work only on the 'secret project' and not spend time on daily newsroom work anymore. *Süddeutsche Zeitung* journalists claimed if the ICIJ did not take on the project, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* would find the right journalists on their own, but it came as a logical resource management decision to try involving the ICIJ to obtain free labour from a global network of journalists in different corners of the world, as well as the free labour required to coordinate such a number of people.

The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* team started slowly, with a few people involved. According to a public presentation of chief editor Wolgang Krach, the team of people involved with the project reached seven in April 2015, including editors-in-chief, authors, digital editors, then expanded to twenty-five in December of the same year adding designers, illustrators, coders, video and peaked at forty in March 2016, adding translators, lawyers, social media experts and a marketing team over the month before publication[264]. As for the people assigned directly to investigate, the account of the investigative journalists shows two people involved in daily investigative tasks for the first two

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[261] https://www.icij.org/investigations/swiss-leaks/about-project-swiss-leaks/

[262] https://web.archive.org/web/20160801211629/http://sz-media.sueddeutsche.de/de/service/files/sz_preisliste.pdf

[263] https://www.northdata.de/S%C3%BCdwestdeutsche+Medien+Holding+GmbH,+Stuttgart/HRB+233

[264]   According to a conference presentation slide posted on his twitter account by SZ editor in chief Wolfgang Krach in June 2016; https://blog.wan-ifra.org/2016/06/21/the-panama-papers-boost-trust-in-journalism

months, after which the team grew to four and then early 2016 to seven. The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* team was also helped by the commitment of the other close German partners, journalists from the public televisions NDR and WDR: 'we are happy every day that the German team is not only *Süddeutsche Zeitung* but also NDR and WDR' (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p252).

The first early big finding outside the leads sent by the source (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p40) is related to the prime minister of Iceland. Deciding not to publish this story constituted an exception from the working methods of traditional media. In the words of the authors, it represented a reaction against the 'daily newspaper reflex' to print an exclusive story. Another exception is to use such findings in order to formulate a strategy to hold back the exclusive material in order to attract members to join the research network.

The strategy paid off. Soon after presenting the findings to ICIJ director Ryle relating to the prime minister of Iceland, he booked a flight to München to visit the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* newsroom and have a look at the data during a three day visit in mid-March (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p41). The visit did not conclude with a deal and was followed by 'constant telephone, email or chat almost everyday with ICIJ chef Gerard Ryle' (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p67) to keep the ICIJ up to date with the growing amount of data and possible lead stories. An official partnership between ICIJ and *Süddeutsche Zeitung* was concluded at the end of April 2015 (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p57).

Only then was the investigative team set up, a team that had two components: a coordination team and the team of investigative reporters. On the coordination side, the authors announced that the 'Leak Machinery' (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p72) had been set in motion: the coordinators were Gerard Ryle and Marina Walker; the rest of the team included data, research, online and content editors; a data team; ICIJ reporters; fact checkers and researchers; web design and development. The entire ICIJ coordination team totalled twenty-eight, including the two *Süddeutsche Zeitung* reporters.[265]

It was then necessary to pose two key questions: which media outlets should become partners, and what is the *Süddeutsche Zeitung's* role in the project (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p72)? Before answering these questions, the ICIJ sent two of their staff to Germany to examine and understand the data and secure a copy to be shipped to the ICIJ in Washington D.C. (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p77). Shortly after that began the work on processing the data and prepare the communication tool for the cross-border group. At the end of May 2015 the cooperation with ICIJ had become institutionalised.

The drive to attract partners to this investigation first focused on large, established traditional media outlets: *The Guardian*, BBC, *Le Monde* and *La Nacion* in Argentina (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p88). The second priority was journalists who are experts on the main findings up until that point, namely Russia and China. *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and the ICIJ decided that in China was too dangerous to be able to work with people on the ground, so an ICIJ reporter would take the lead. Russia would be covered by ICIJ members who are hired by a US based non-profit, the OCCRP, financed mostly by the U.S. government[266].

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[265]   ICIJ (2016). The Panama Papers - About This Project. [online] ICIJ. Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20160409045034/https:// panamapapers.icij.org/about.html [Accessed 9 Apr. 2016]

[266]   It will turn out that the entire Eastern Europe will be covered by OCCRP, even after the publication in April 2016, creating a regional sub-monopoly on accessing the data.

'Our Data pile is the biggest Leak'[267] (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p76): by the end of May the leak amounted to more than 261 gigabytes, reaching a larger data volume than the previous biggest data leak, the Offshore Leaks. This was the main strategy for advertising the project both to reporters during research and to readers during publication – 'the biggest leak will bring us attention, when we will bring our research results in the public, sometimes in the future'(Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p76). The reasoning behind engaging with bigger leaks is that 'the bigger the leak, the higher the probability to find good national stories in the data' (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p77). The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* authors believed that the more journalists on board, more stories would be produced together.

Invitations to participate in the investigation were mostly made by deputy director Marina Walker at the ICIJ. It followed several tracks, first 'committed partners', then the rest of the media partners and some ICIJ members. After publication some members of the ICIJ did not appear to be content with the decision of the management related to who can and who cannot join Panama Papers, and there was no general notification on the members' email group that the project had started and a global research team was in the making[268]. This constituted a shift in ICIJ strategy during the previous years of 'mega leaks' since 2012. I will detail the reaction of the membership in the post-publication section of this chapter[269].

When detailing how the ICIJ chooses who to work with, its deputy director Marina Walker says ICIJ works with 'generally nice people'[270]. 'When you invite someone to collaborate, you have to look at the whole person and not only at their journalistic skills. It's like hiring someone for your newsroom. You want them to be self-aware and able to communicate with people. Not everybody has to have the same personality or has to be outgoing or 'huggish '; you can have people that are more shy, but you cannot have people who are egotistical. Some people are not cut out to collaborate. (…)You have to consider their personalities. ' (…) 'In the process of accomplishing our noble mission, let's have a good time. Honestly, life is too short!' (Cordia, 2015) [271].

The choosing of 'generally nice people' is a conflicting concept when talking about investigative journalists, who are specialized in uncovering uncomfortable hidden truths about powerful individuals and 'speaking truth to power ', which is certainly not considered 'nice', at least by those in power.

Bastian Obermayer, who initiated the Panama Papers project at *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, explains in more detail how the 'nice people' rule works: 'The answer to why strong collaborations work can be found in the realms of game theory, and especially in the construct of   'shadow of the future. '

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[267]   comparing with Offshore Leaks (250 GB), wikileaks cables (1,7 GB), Swiss Leaks (3,3 GB), LuxLeak (4 GB), Afghanistan Cables (1,4 GB)

[268]   This is different then how Offshore Leaks project was initiated where all ICIJ members where asked if they have interest in joining an investigation on the offshore industry (January 2012, email to all ICIJ members and partners)

[269]   See more here on choosing members:
https://web.archive.org/web/20160816082714/http://www.journalismfund.eu/news/key-give-journalists-story-they-can%E2%80%99t-refuse
'You also have to pick carefully who you work with. Ask yourself: 'Do I want to have dinner with this person?' ' [Marina Walker, 25.05.2015]

[270]   https://web.archive.org/web/20170904051605/www.icij.org/blog/2015/02/swiss-leaks-frequently-asked-questions-answered
https://web.archive.org/web/20160314054535/http://www.icij.org/blog/2015/02/behind-scenes-icijs-biggest-ever-collaboration
http://web.archive.org/web/20180111033935/https://www.icij.org/blog/2017/161/faqs/
https://web.archive.org/web/20171213230219/https://www.icij.org/blog/2017/11/frequently-asked-questions-about-the-paradise-papers/

[271] https://web.archive.org/web/20170318065556/http://www.journalismfund.eu:80/news/%E2%80%9Cinvestigative-journalism-not-something-only-reserved-enlightened%E2%80%9D

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Any reporter or news outlet that spoiled the party could be sure that was the last big party they would be invited to. And after the success of the first ICIJ investigations, no one wanted to be cast aside' (Obermayer, 2017). In other words, as per White (2008) 'membership presumes, as the norm, lack of questioning ' which translates in the world of journalism as suspending the core competency of a professional journalism, that of questioning power with uncomfortable questions.

The technical and logistical issues related to face-to-face meetings, as well as the communication and research platforms, will be detailed in the following sections. It is important to note that the network research team grew between July and the end of October 2015 from zero to 320 journalists, from seventy countries and ninety media outlets. Another seventy journalists were added to the team by August 2016, before and during publication. The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* authors note that it was 'the biggest journalistic cooperation in history '[272]. The *thank you* note of the Panama PapersBook is a hint of the most valuable contributions to stories produced by the project. The note lists seventeen people working for *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, NDR and WDR and five for ICIJ, the organisations at the core of the project; three from Switzerland from *Tages Anzeiger*, two in Russia and one in Ukraine from the OCCRP (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 pp332,334), one in each Island, US and Ecuador. These all correspond to the lead stories and mostly to the first findings as well, findings recorded long before the group of journalists enlarged, at a time when only SZ and ICIJ where involved.

At the pre-publication stage, based on the refining of the legacy network, tools and idea, a decision on the workflow and tools is taking place, including a research plan, a publication plan, security issues and meetings.

Cross-border Research Plan

The research plan was the next step, and included all the logistical details and tasks needed to organise the investigation and its publication. It included the setting up of logistics for face-to-face meetings, network search tools for the data set, tools for communication and information exchange on findings, the deadline for publication and both the internal and public names for the project.

Publication plan

Early on in the project, in February 2015, the publication deadline was already being considered, because a lot of the logistics of such collaborations need to be scheduled backwards starting with the publication deadline.

An initial deadline of November 2015 was chosen, but because both the data and the investigative team would grow beyond any expectations continuously until the end of the year, the deadline for publication would ultimately be pushed almost half a year towards April 2016. The lead investigators at *Süddeutsche Zeitung* did expect a long term for the project to be completed, since they have the experience of taking part in the ICIJ's Offshore Leaks investigation. According to the authors, in the Offshore Leaks project three years elapsed between the leaking of the data and the publication of the first articles. The authors only hoped 'with us it will go faster' (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p54).

Security

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[272]   The word used in German is 'Kooperation ' (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p267)

From the beginning, a large number of important technical questions arose. In this first instance, these related to security in the communication and transfer of files, because the source John Doe requested complete anonymity. Then in April the security of the reporting team was considered and also questions about reporting or not on dangerouse people, people who 'ordered other people to get killed ': 'we are all potential surveillance targets of people who did business with Mosfon, and who won't like our coverage' (…) do we report on the dangerous people ? (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p77). The source, the source documents, the reporters and the stories needed to be secure. For each of these categories there were several threat scenarios at different levels (national, cross-border) and at different stages of the investigative project (pre-publication, publication). These scenarios inform not only the choice of the right people in the research team, but also the choice of the technology to be used for searching within the data and for sharing information.

Tools for Data and Communication

The work to assess the needs to process the data began at the beginning of May, when 'ICIJ Data experts' visit *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and analysed the data (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p81). Such large collections of data cannot be simply browsed as one would do in a library. Because there was no guide to what the data may have, a technical approach was taken: this consisted on the one hand in indexing and making the data collection available to keyword search queries, and on the other, in being able to extract statistics about the data relating to people, companies, countries, and other.

By the end of the month, ICIJ data experts made the tests and samples to prepare data for indexing and transform scanned images using OCR into searchable text. A dedicated version for a communication forum used in previous cross-border investigations was also set up.

The tools and expertise that the ICIJ offered, which were based on previous projects and on sponsored technology, had their limitations because they were available only as long as the investigative project existed. The ICIJ shared with *Süddeutsche Zeitung* a license to use a sponsored proprietary forensic tool, because *Süddeutsche Zeitung* wanted to assure that a data search tool would be available in its newsroom in the future. To make the forensic tool work, specific dedicated powerful hardware needed to be purchased. By mid-July, then, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* needed to buy a more expensive dedicated computer to be able to process the amount of data at hand and to work with the sponsored discovery tool.

Meetings

 Süddeutsche Zeitung and ICIJ coordinators including the data team meet online 'every other day' (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p88) even before the collaboration was institutionalised at the end of April. Early on the ICIJ wanted face-to-face meetings for every project as a lesson learned from Offshore Leaks: 'back then all important things were discussed per Mail and Telephone, a lot of project partners didn't meet each-other, and so the mutual trust and will to share information was not available with all in the same amount' (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p100).

For this project they decided on two meetings: a first that was planned for May but delayed until end of June, involving important media partners who had already committed to the project. This meeting was organized at the ICIJ in Washington D.C. for three days, one day only between SZ and

ICIJ and two more days for the larger group of journalists involved, in total 40 individuals (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p122-126).

The second was planned for the end of the summer but delayed until mid September, involving more media partners and some ICIJ members, organised at the newsroom of *Süddeutsche Zeitung* in München. The meeting had 104 participants (about a half from all journalists already onboarded in the electronic research platform iHub) and lasted two days, and at least four editors in chief where in attendance, the two top editors leading SZ and the two top editors leading *The Guardian* (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p173-177).

There are at least two more meetings where important project details are discussed, but they do not have such a large number of participants. One is in mid November 2015 in Lillehammer at the Global Investigative Journalism Conference and besides the ICIJ and *SZ* staff there are 30 more participants. At that time more than 300 journalists are onboard in the electronic research platform iHub (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p225-229).

The other meeting is in late December, in London, at the 'war room'[273] of *The Guardian* and it involves 11 people: the leaders of the project both from ICIJ and *SZ*, a journalist from *The Guardian*, two from BBC, and one from each NDR and WDR and one single Russian journalist. The meeting is supposed to be focused only on the topic related to Putin wealth and to the early findings on Russia (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p289-290).

Cross-border Research

'It is of course during the research period that the creative potential of working in multiple countries and on a well composed team can unfold' (Alfter, 2016, p308). This is indeed the most indeterminate phase of any cross-border investigative project, mostly because very different kinds of expertise, experiences, styles, access types, tools and traditions join to work on the same topics. As in detective work, sources and data interrogated separately will complement each other and the various facets will help shape a more accurate picture. In the research phase, traditional journalism follows six sub-steps from starting to search for information until writing the final text (Haller, 2004, p84).

First, the relevance of the information is assessed. Second, the information is checked against existing data-sets, databases or experts. Third, new data and information is linked to the data already obtained and verified so that the collection of information will expand. Fourth, a hypothesis is built, and fifth, this hypothesis is tested. The last step consists in writing up the conclusions in the form of a story, or part of a story. This is an ongoing cycle, repeated to refine or enrich the findings and ending only when the journalist or editor considers that there is a reasonable body of information that can be prepared for publication going through the editing, fact-checking and legal screening processes.

This is a cycle used on a shorter or longer term for each package of information related to a sub-story, a story or a collection of stories. It can be translated to the following step-by-step cycle: Direction to investigate -> Collection of relevant information -> Collage of existing information into categories -> Analysis and making sense -> Process the conclusions -> Dissemination Report.

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[273] War room is an isolated room in a newsroom, where only the very few people involved in an investigative project have access, where computers are not connected to the internet (or they are connected through secure connections that do not overlap with the network of the newsroom).

Again, this cycle will be ongoing and will start and refine the direction to investigate until the dissemination report has enough value to present relevant and verifiable information to the public.

The initial phase of the cross-border Panama Papers project started like any traditional investigative journalism project: during early 2015, two journalists at Süddeutsche Zeitung conducted research in secret inside their newsroom and presented conclusions to their editor (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p17). No special tools were used, the search method was that of reading page after page from 'a few thousand folders, each numbered and each corresponding to an offshore company' (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p18). The motivation to keep on looking at secret documents is described by the authors at Süddeutsche Zeitung as 'addictive' and like a 'fever': 'if we two had no families we would have spent every evening in front of the laptop. And click. And click. And click.' (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p19). The search cycle in these early stages relied only on the traditional workflow, not involving any cross-border teams. Information was cross-checked 'first online, and then in international press databases'. After this, official data bases were used (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p33). At the end of February, for reasons related to a possible loss of a story, the research team decided even to profile one of the owners of the investigated company, Jürgen Mossak. Even if the journalists used almost no information from the leaked data, they took the decision to include in the story the announcement that leaked data is in the possession of *Süddeutsche Zeitung, WDR and NDR* (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p49)[274].

Only in March was the data opened for searches to the director of the ICIJ who was visiting the newsroom in München and who spent the entire day clicking through the offshore documents. As with the two journalists from *Süddeutsche Zeitung* the initial searches are related to names from previous investigations, whom the journalists refer to as 'the usual suspects' (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p53).

In June, just when the ICIJ started to organise the cross-border collaboration, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* organised a confrontation with one of the German research targets (Werner Mauss), sending a list of questions based on the findings in the Panama Papers documents and organising a meeting (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016, p103).

The first steps to turn the investigation into a cross-border project were related to how to move the data securely to the ICIJ in Washington, and the decisions to have a centralised location for processing the data and make it available for searches in the future to the project participants (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p54). Even if the two named data specialists were located in Costa Rica and Spain, the way of working consisted in centralising data in one place - in the cloud.

The second step was to continue the verification process of the data, and this was done by comparing information from the leak with publicly accessible databases, official information, court documents (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 pp54,69). *Süddeutsche Zeitung* finds out that the German authorities acquired the Mossack Fonseca data. The freshness of the data is important and noted several times during the description of the Panama Papers. On one hand this was very important, giving access to new information over the entire year, even to internal discussions related to *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and project journalists (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016, p56). This was also important when attempting to attract research and publication partners.

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[274] On 25th February 2015 SZ published 'Neuer Schlag gegen Luxemburg ' and on page 3 a portrait of Mossack Fonseca https://www.sueddeutsche.de/wirtschaft/steuerhinterziehung-schlag-gegen-luxemburg-razzia-bei-commerzbank-1.2364989

On the other hand, later in the project, it became problematic to make the new batches of fresh data available to a growing number of journalists.

Performing searches

As seen above, most searches at early stages were the type of browsing and clicking to open various documents. As soon as the collection of leaked documents became larger, a new layer needed to be added, in order to search by keywords where to browse and open documents. Several digital tools were used to process the data and make it searchable by keywords. According to Duncan Campbell, who was part of setting up the first ever ICIJ investigative search engine in 2012: 'With this much data, relevant information, and good stories, cannot be found just 'going and looking', What's needed is to use 'free text retrieval ' (FTR) software systems' (Campbell, 2013).

When data is searchable, journalists have access to various types of searches, but mostly perform type and click searches by keywords. Some can also perform batch searches, which involves taking long lists of names and making the system show how many results, if any, are in the data for each of the keyword in the list. The first search terms are usually names resulting from previous investigations (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p53) and then from various existing official lists, for instance official lists of names under sanction or embargo by states like the U.S. or international organisations like the UN or the EU. A long list of such findings is presented (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 pp65-67).

In the early months of the research, even before the cross-border collaboration started, using traditional methods and resources, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* journalists already had a big part of what would later become the main stories.

Past ICIJ projects in which *Süddeutsche Zeitung* was involved institutionalised a search methodology based on creating lists of keywords, mostly of people, from various fields of activity such as politics and business. The reason presented was that several journalists in the team performed same searches several times on the same keyword and the solution to avoid wasting time was to produce centralised lists of entities (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p85). This way of work was introduced by ICIJ: 'Mar Cabra 'loves lists ' because 'with lists one can bring order in the Data chaos' (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p96).

The 'list system' functioned in two ways. First, at the moment when data was processed, the ICIJ tried to extract from the collection various lists using specific filters, for example filtering owners of companies by nationality, so that journalists joining the cross-border investigation can focus on the list of entities from their own country. Initially this was done by some research managers as a security measure in order not to give access to the entire data-set and potentially compromise its entire content. Later, during publication, this will give content for various statistics extracted from millions of documents. The other way was for researchers to compile long lists of 'usual suspects': politicians, business people, figures in organised crime, sanctioned companies, and so on. Such lists are cross-checked against the leaked data collection to find interesting matches (Lück, Schultz, 2019).

Apart from the results derived from extracted lists of entities and by matching usual suspects, there was another way to find interesting data: by chance. Several times across the Panama Papers book there are findings that come out by chance, either by observing a large folder or typing a random

word (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p114)[275].

Batch searches of lists of usual suspects or type and click searches made the investigative process very dependent on the investigator background, knowledge and interest. The journalist probably knew what she was searching for, and the possibility of discovering totally unsuspected new situations and names was very slim. The entire process was based on the luck to find what one is searching, making participants in the project refer to the process of searching as 'fishing' and 'digging'. Investigators wish each other 'happy fishing' (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p114).

By June 2015 the data set was approaching close to one terabyte and the feeling of fishing and having the chance to step into a finding was prevalent, turning the motivation to spend time with the data-set into an addiction (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p114). '[E]very now and again we take a quick half an hour before the laptop and through our net in the data ocean that becomes larger by the week. We are fishing. This is how our ICIJ colleagues call this and wish us happy fishing '. The approach is matching a very rich data set: 'every time we search something we find something if we search longer than 20 minutes by keywords '. But finding something interesting is only the first step in the investigative cycle and investigators complain that there is no time to complete the cycle for each finding. So they open a dedicated folder for each new finding and hope to return to it at a later point but 'then it lies there' (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p114). For this reason a cross-border team could help and pick up interesting findings that the person who made the discovery had no time to further investigate. But there was a need to find a way to share such findings in a cross-border team, over the internet because everybody is based in different places. The technical solution had to be secured in order to protect the story and the source.

For this purpose, at the beginning of June, the ICIJ opened a dedicated platform to share findings in a cross-border team. The platform, which was also used for the Swiss Leaks project, was called I-Hub, a customised version of an existing open source program called Oxwall and described as a 'sort of Facebook for investigative journalists, with discussion groups for separate topics, where one can even *like* other journalists posts' (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p107). During the first weeks it was only ICIJ staff and *Süddeutsche Zeitung* who had access to the platform, choosing to post findings first and later invite the cross-border team to sign in. The idea was to present the internationally growing group with a populated platform with discussions, information sharing and working groups (according to a top down model of organisation). Both ICIJ and *Süddeutsche Zeitung* monitored the discussions in order to have an overview of what stories were emerging. By the end of the year, in its six months of existence, the users posted 7,000 findings on the platform (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p294) that were sorted by Süddeutsche Zeitung team between Christmas and New Year.

Once the flow of research has started, another type of collaboration emerged for gathering information outside the collection. At some point during the investigation, when the research was advancing, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* team mentions that they had the need to fly to Geneva on a short notice to interview a source. Instead, they asked the Swiss partner to undertake the interview (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p280).

Until publication, this entire research process was meant to be secret, as well as the information sharing and search platforms. It was not only kept secret from competing media; there was a

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[275] For instance typing the search word *painting* led to one of the lead stories on the hidden Modigliani painting, stolen by the Nazi regime.

firewall inside the involved newsrooms. For instance at the partner publication based in Panama, *La Prensa*, only ten people know about the project even just before publication (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p325). But for the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* journalists, it was 'clear that something like this cannot be completely secret' and fellow journalists from within and outside *Süddeutsche Zeitung* started to ask the *SZ* journalists what they had been working on for so long, since they had not been publishing any stories (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p322).

The Panama Papers dealt with millions of emails and documents, each containing numerous pages. As such, the physical reading, sorting and further investigating of each document by humans would not be a viable way of processing the data. Accordingly, for each of the above steps, in the context of working in cross-border investigations and with large data-sets, digital tools were employed.

Drafting Stories

The very final stage of the PRE-PUBLICATION phase is to connect the dots, put the various pieces of information together and start shaping the story into drafts. The very first draft will be very different from journalist to journalist depending on the media outlet she works for. In a cross-border network, there are so many different types of media (digital only, daily or weekly in print, radio, TV) and different types of cultures (Anglo-saxon, Western European, Eastern European) each of which has very different ways of telling a story. Such early drafts are therefore very different from author to author. A draft mentions source documents from the data collection for each information presented, conclusions of searches outside of the data collection and a list of questions that can be answered by experts or by those accused of wrongdoing.

In the case of Panama Papers, the lead in gathering the information and grouping them into main topics is done by *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and ICIJ. At the end of 2015, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* journalists looked at a collection of 7,000 findings shared on the communication platform. Only a handful of these findings would make it into stories, and only a few would feature in the stories that ICIJ and *Süddeutsche Zeitung* published as the main editorial package[276]. Even if more findings were added by the network in the first months of 2016, a list of main stories to be published by April 2016 was starting to take shape – and so were the logistics of the publication phase growing the number of people involved, as well as certain tensions within the network.

At this time it is clear that the cross-border investigative journalism organisational model of ICIJ is not a network, but a 'highly structured organization with strict rules ' (Heft, 2019) centralised under the command of ICIJ. This is confirmed by and independent survey that questioned the Panama Papers journalists asking who were the most important people in the 500 strong network. 'The importance of the ICIJ as a central instance of coordination becomes even more obvious when people are asked for the most important contact partners they had during the investigation ' (Lück, Schultz, 2019). In that particular study, the top central person was Marina Walker (one more person from ICIJ and the two *SZ* journalists make the top 5 most connected persons). This indicates that the network potential of people interconnecting with each-other is not accomplished, and a few people centralise most of the information exchanges.

Put it in a few words, when summarising the role of ICIJ on Panama Papers, the back-then CEO of Center for Public Integrity (at that point the parent structure of ICIJ) said: 'Panama Papers was

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[276]   The main editorial package is a set of articles and info-graphics, in English, edited, fact-checked and legally screened for publication in the US by the ICIJ; these are stories that will appear on the ICIJ website but will also be translated and re-published by the network of ICIJ media partners.

owned by *SZ* and ICIJ was just an agent ' (Bale, 2017).

4.1.3 Publication: fitting the octopus in a jar

Going into the publication phase leaves all network niceties about ideal information sharing and no competition behind and brings up all the ugly aspects of the competitive 'media logic ', having to deal at an incredible high scale with legal issues across jurisdictions, embargoes and publication dates, confrontation questions, responses and possible spin-offs.

The publication phase is a phase of production: information gathered starts to be given the shape of media products. The scheduling of the publication follows strategic goals, aiming at creating a global echo chamber. It is also the phase where the content of the final products is fact checked and legally screened. Targets of the investigations are given the opportunity to respond to the claims made in the stories, a stage that is called confrontation. Publication embargoes are set for different media, such as online or print or TV and a clear publication schedule is agreed upon with all partners. Both drafts of media products and scheduling may change several times before publication.

During this production phase an extra protection need arises: the protection of stories. The mechanics of publication has to involve an extra number of people outside the original circle of trust created by the investigators (e.g. illustrators, designers, tech, experts, social media editors) and so the stories are more exposed to being outscooped by competing media. To complicate things, in certain jurisdictions there is the legal tool of injunction that can kick in and stop articles from being published.

This is usually also the only window of opportunity for targets of investigations and their legal and PR specialists to promote their own spin-versions of stories or to release public statements and information that would let them pre-empt the damage produced by the news and also weaken the expected breaking news effect.

Scheduling the publication will take into account a number of external factors: international agenda, national agenda (i.e. national elections), other networks plans – with the ICIJ it was decided and again moved last minute. The publication schedule needs to be kept tight – people may act rashly and prematurely. In some rare cases, publication is rescheduled at the last minute.

There is thus a constant tension between the news industry instinct (to beat the competition and be the first) and network obligations (to create an echo chamber by publishing together at the same time) (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p322)[277].

Legal issues: national and across jurisdictions

With any cross-border investigation there are different jurisdictions involved and so there are different legislative frameworks that journalists have to take into account at the same time.

That is why at the ICIJ and with other networks, each publishing partner is responsible for the final legal screening before publication so that stories do not become the subject of legal proceedings. The legal screening start with a fact-checked version of the draft story – that is a document where the story presents footnotes for any piece of information or for any claim made. Such footnotes should allow a fact-checker, a person who was not involved in researching the story, to

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[277]   For instance a brasilian journalist want to publish earlier, out of fear of loosing the story because of a big arrest of Mossfon employees in Brasil

independently check that the claims and information presented are true. Fact-checked drafts may look different from original drafts, because some of the claims may prove not to have sufficient basis in the source documents.

After the fact checking is done, a legal advisor[278] looks at the text and the proofs and will advise if something needs to be changed and how the confrontation should proceed. Even inside the European Union there is no common jurisdiction, so any network doing cross-border investigative journalism will not be able to have a version of a text that would be green-lighted for publication by legal advisors in all European countries at the same time. Legal screening is essentially a national process and while the publication of some details is not permitted in certain countries (e.g. full names of owners of companies accused of wrong doing in Germany) they are mandatory in others in order to avoid confusion (e.g. the United States). What the ICIJ did, therefore, is to present an editorial package, that is, a number of stories in English, that would be available to all publication partners well in advance, fact-checked and legally screened for the U.S.. Local partners then translate such texts and, depending on the existence of local angles or not, decide to 'localise' the stories and maybe add pieces of information that are relevant only in a given geographical area.

Legal screening and fact-checking is a luxury not available to all. For some media outlets, is simply not in the culture, fact-checking should be the responsibility of the reporter[279]. But for all media both fact-checking and legal screening are dependent on the available operational budget since it is very labour-intensive.

Embargoes and publication dates: first clash within network

At the moment of fact-checking and legal screening the embargoes and the publication schedule are more or less set. Nevertheless, because of the result of fact-checking or because of legal advice, stories' priorities can be reshuffled and the stories themselves can be broken into several parts. Investigative cross-border projects produce a number of stories, and in the case of Panama Papers the main editorial package offered by ICIJ was in the tens of main stories[280]. Everybody wants to be first in journalism either in a specific market (per country/language) or medium (online, print, radio, tv) so there is a lot of tension in setting up who is publishing when. To accommodate this, the schedule of publication and the final drafts of stories are still subject to changes when the legal screening is done.

With Panama Papers, the ICIJ choose the date for publication; the debate on when to publish required a negotiation, because each of the more then 100 media partners involved have the interest to place the stories at time when the media agenda is not over-saturated with planned events such as national elections or other major news. Such interests always come into conflict across national borders and not everybody will be satisfied with the date of publication.

Confrontation: second clash within network

After this comes the last push before the publication starts: that is the moment of confronting the targets of stories and giving people or institutions the chance to respond to questions.

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[278] legal screening effort described in Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p320.

[279] Detail mentioned by David Leigh in an interview with the author, in London, 2015, November 19.

[280] Main package during 2016 had around 35 stories; over a period of two years after Panama Papers started, 55 stories were published by ICIJ.

With Panama Papers the bulk of the confrontations came to ICIJ and *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, because they offered the main editorial package for everybody to use. At least for the highest targets of the stories published during the first weeks of April 2016, the questions were sent by the ICIJ. The confrontation phase needs to be very carefully planned. Such a plan will take into consideration who is responsible for collecting all relevant questions, if there is a translation needed, the language in which such questions are sent and the language of the expected replies, the exact time at which the questions are sent, whether they are sent as emails, letters, fax and the deadline for responses. The 'owners' who are assigned to send out questions have to collect questions pertinent to the stories from those who know the stories best, and wherever possible take into account the fact that all media partners may use the questions sent by the ICIJ. They also have to follow-up on the responses, if they receive any, and update the relevant parts of the stories if the responses change the story in any meaningful way. Since this part of the operation is very time-sensitive, it needs to be strategically designed. On one hand, there is the need to give a fair chance and enough time to respond to a large number of complicated questions. On the other hand, journalists do not want to give too much time before publication, because this may allow an injunction to stop the publication, or the target of the confrontation may try to spin the coming publication in their own advantage[281].

With the Panama Papers, some interviews and discussions happened in advance of the confrontation, in order to get the chance to ask for context and find details that would be used to illustrate the narrative. For instance, during the beginning of the project in 2015 important interviews were scheduled with one of the owners of the Mossack Fonseca company, albeit without indicating that the data-set is in the posession of journalists. Also, only a few weeks before publication, the German journalists from SZ organised a visit to Panama, in order to interview some key people, but they did not ask a full set of questions so there was no confrontation, 'for security reasons' (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p319). The visit that cost a lot of resources (time, money) and had no real value in terms of confrontation since questions will be sent later or questions could have been asked by the locally based media partner. It nevertheless played a role in the economy of the reports by SZ, since it provided color and drama to illustrate the articles and the book and introduced some tension: 'we will not come back here' (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p331).

In some cases, the decision was made that only one media (the ICIJ in this case) would send out questions for the main international stories, while in other cases some media outlets need to send extra questions themselves. Questions needed to have a clear deadline for responses and were usually sent in writing and required written responses, so that such responses could be used later in court by all partners publishing the stories.

There are situations when media are served with an injunction, a gag order to stop publishing before going with the stories to court. If that happens, media partners have to decide if they will fight the injunction in court, if they will counter the injunction, or if there are other strategies that can be used to keep the publication schedule unchanged. It happens that some of the partners are not able to break the news at the same time as the others, and will have to only re-publish stories by reporting on articles made public by the network.

To prevent the process of an injunction, one of the strategies used by the ICIJ is to ask other media

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[281]   In the case of Panama Papers, one of the main stories was about Putin entourage, and the Russian president office made the request public days before the publication https://web.archive.org/web/20170706081746/https://themoscowtimes.com/articles/kremlin-says-journalists-preparing-hatchet-job-on-putin-52287

partners to send out the same request from different jurisdictions, to send a clear message that the entire network cannot be served injunctions, since the injunction would work only in some jurisdictions but not everywhere[282]. The confrontation phase may change for the last time the content of the final drafts and the publication schedule.

Publication

Even if the publication phase comes as a last step in the process of the cross-border investigative project, important considerations related to publication influence all previous steps as well as subsequent cross-border projects carried out by the same network. Issues such as competition, the motivation to publish, the protection of stories, preparing for the biggest impact possible, choosing the name of the project and documenting the work done in a network setting, as well as preparing to use the description of the workflow for marketing purposes – all of this is considered during the project with an eye on the moment of publication. The first piece of information on the Panama Papers project was actually published when the project was in its infancy, at the beginning of 2015, when *SZ* had already access to eighty gigabytes of leaked material[283] and publicly announced that the German investigative consortium (together with NDR and WDR) had access to a large data set that they called Mossack Papers. One can see with the Panama Papers that reflections related to the future moment of publication are taken into consideration early on. Such reflections are driven by a sense of national competition, which seem to be very important for the initiators of Panama Papers project. Same, the unpleasant acceptance in having to deal with an anonymous source - the reason for doing this is the desire not to chase away the source towards other media players (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p8). The drive for the two *SZ* journalists to search day and night, the same drive that puts a light in the eyes of ICIJ's director, is the future possibility of publishing a story 'that can shake a country' (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 pp54,55) and success is when publication is making the topic, the authors and the organisations involved known by the entire world (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p55).

Besides the reason of publishing stories on leaked material, the form of the publication is also discussed early on and is defined in opposition to Wikileaks (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016 p9), preparing to publish only after using a 'journalistic filter'. The marketing behind publication drives and influences operational stages, for instance the careful naming and documentation of the investigative workflow, especially the naming of the project and platforms used. As with police operations, ICIJ gives code names to its projects. These names are different from the publication branding. For the Panama Papers, the name of the project was given at the end of May 2015 by the ICIJ coder behind the data work, who was a Star Trek fan and named the project after the Star Trek starship: Prometheus[284]. The name of the publication series, the Panama Papers, was carefully chosen and explained by the head of the ICIJ at the end of 2015, several months before publication. Unlike publication headlines for the news media, that are usually a product of last minute brainstorming, the need to have a name for the series well in advance is necessitated by publication and marketing logistics: online pages have to be created, domains reserved, logo and information design packages, as well as a book cover. The publication of Panama Papers was initially planed for November 2015 but had to be pushed further towards the spring of 2016. On 3rd April 2016 the

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[282]   A hint about this tactic used in the Swiss Leaks project after The Guardian received threats for getting a gag order on reporting on HSBC https://www.icij.org/blog/2019/10/how-global-collaboration-can-be-a-shield-against-litigation/ (Leigh, 2019).

[283]   https://web.archive.org/web/20150226064048/https://www.sueddeutsche.de/wirtschaft/luxemburg-steueraffaere-erschuettert-commerzbank-1.2366678

[284]   Swiss Leaks project was Enterprise, Lux-Leaks was Voyager, World Bank was Odyssee

stories started to come out and did not stop for several weeks. Some stories were published, now and then, for more than two years after the launch.

4.1.4 Network by being nice

Just after the publication rolls out, there is a new phase in the CBIJ structure, a time for evaluating the most important asset: the network configuration. It is the time to apply different metrics to decide how the network should be configured next. Does it need to kick out specific individuals, in the ICIJ case, those who are not 'nice' ? Does it need to attract new partners, individuals, media for further publication and research ? For different networks different dependencies are at play, and they such dependencies serve the network or they can serve a small central group interests.

The new Legacy Network

This is the moment when, according to Alfter (2016), new reporting starts and more networking will happen between the journalists involved in a successful cross-border project. This is true, after publishing the Panama Papers, the ICIJ and *Süddeutsche Zeitung* have published other projects together. But the network has not necessarily remained the same. After the publication of any given project, a new 'legacy network' is created. Opportunities arise, as well as rules and obligations on who to work with and who to avoid working with on future projects. Because of that, there are constraints on how the network can expand and even on the reason to expand or not the network. It is not the aim of this research to look into detail on how the network of reporters and media partners involved with Panama Papers evolved during the next major project published two years after, the Paradise Papers. It suffices to mention that comparing the public lists of partners shows that there are differences between the two projects[285] and some partners from Panama Papers do not show up as partners for the Paradise Papers[286]. It *is* in the scope of this research, however, to review the reasoning behind expanding a network.

First, after a successful project there are always forces that do push a network towards expansion. Based on my own assessment, there are two main driving forces: first, requests coming from media outlets or journalists interested in getting access to the data, who then stay as partners (compare how *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* were accepted as partners in Panama Papers post-publication[287] and how only *The New York Times* remained a partner during Paradise Papers). Second, the desire tor reach out to possible strategic partners, or interesting groups or countries that were not covered by the first wave of publication. Based on my own assessment of how networks change from one project to the next one, here a few main points that are mentioned when assessing partners to work with in the future.

Journalistic excellence: trust the reporting of partners will not bring liability and trust in resistance to legal threats and other difficulties.

Sharing skills: capacity to share back information in order to build up collaborative stories.

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[285]   For media partners compare https://www.icij.org/investigations/panama-papers/pages/media-partners/ with https://www.icij.org/investigations/paradise-papers/pages/paradise-papers-media-partners/ and for reporters involved compare https://www.icij.org/investigations/panama-papers/pages/panama-papers-about-the-investigation/ with https://www.icij.org/investigations/paradise-papers/about/

[286] check for instance the list of partners for both projects and compare the evolution of U.S. partners between Panama Papers and Paradise Papers.

[287]   https://www.icij.org/investigations/paradise-papers/pages/paradise-papers-media-partners/ is listing New York Times as a media partner after Arpil 2016; here is the list of partners at publication time https://web.archive.org/web/20160420213432/https://panamapapers.icij.org/pages/reporting_partners/

Echo-chamber skills: there is a need to 'feed the beast' that is to keep the stories on top of the media agenda world wide; first, a highly popular, global English language amplifier is wanted as a partner; and then similar partners are wanted in the different important language markets (Spanish, French and so on).

Looking at the above main points, I conclude that there are fewer and fewer possibilities for expanding a 'legacy network' such as the one of ICIJ with each publication and with each expansion, because blockage mounted by rising local media competitions. Comparing the number of media partners between the Panama Papers and the next big project of the ICIJ, Paradise Papers, the number of media partners is not growing, indeed quite the contrary: there were more than 100 for the Panama Papers compared to 95 media partners for the Paradise Papers.

Who is benefiting

Another important aspect after the publication is done is the question of who is benefiting from such cross-border investigative work. Because this should briefly introduce the discussion on who has ownership on such cross-border projects, the data generated by collaborating in a network as well as the possibility to commodify the network, I will not mention or develop vis-a-vis beneficiaries like ordinary people from underdeveloped countries who find out how corrupt elites siphon public funds into private offshore structures abroad; nor I will look at the impact on society at large, or the question of how much money is being recovered by fiscal authorities based on hints and leads provided by the reporting and the data published as part of the Panama Papers project. There is a wealth of literature on this topic published by the owners of the Panama Papers project[288].

For the unknown source that leaked the data, it was certainly a lucrative business. Media outlets reported that the source started to cash in on selling batches of the data to different governments[289]. The individual journalists and media organisations involved in this cross-border project also need to clearly state exactly what they gain from it individually, besides getting known world-wide. One important asset for any journalist are awards, which serve as capital in the field of journalism.There are almost twenty awards listed on the ICIJ page dedicated to the Panama Papers project and the most important is by far the Pulitzer Prize[290]. On the official Pulitzer Prize page[291] the listed winners are the ICIJ, McClatchy and the *Miami Herald*[292]; as well as a list of ten stories are listed as winning work, with eighteen different authors' names. Are all 400 ICIJ reporters and more than one hundred media partners listed under the project page entitled to call themselves winners of the Pulitzer Prize? All of them shared research, exchanged information, participated in creating a world-wide echo chamber on the topic, took legal and other types of risks and all worked for a long time without being paid for their work, work which benefited the ICIJ. They even had to turn work down in order to be able to focus on the Panama Papers project[293].

When joining such a project, every media outlet and every individual journalist sings an agreement

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288   https://www.icij.org/blog/2018/06/panama-papers-investigations-bring-700-million-back-onshore/

289   For example selling it in Germany http://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/bka-kauft-daten-der-panama-papers-a-1155938.html and Denmark https://www.theguardian.com/news/2016/sep/07/panama-papers-denmark-becomes-first-country-to-buy-leaked-data

290   https://web.archive.org/web/20180808222354/https://www.icij.org/investigations/panama-papers/pages/panama-papers-awards-and-recognitions/

291   https://www.pulitzer.org/winners/international-consortium-investigative-journalists-mcclatchy-and-miami-herald

292   Only US-based news organizations can apply for the Pulitzer prize.

293   https://gijn.org/2016/04/11/behind-the-panama-papers-a-qa-with-icij-director-gerard-ryle/

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with the ICIJ, a document which is mostly a list of obligations that the journalist has regarding the secure handling of data, information exchange, respecting the decision on publication deadlines and meeting the highest journalistic standards. But such a document says little about the rights enjoyed by journalists. These are only a few remarks that are introducing the need of a socio-technical reflection of such a large cross-border investigative project, in order to understand who owns the data, who is just permitted to work the data, who is benefiting from such cross-border investigative work. This will be the topic of the discussion in chapter six. Publication and consequences of a large CBIJ project takes months if not years, sometimes with legal complications related to the source or to challenges in court of stories that can come up years after the stories are made public. Journalists and media partners need post-publication long-term access to such data sets in case they need to prepare legal defence strategies or follow-up stories after authorities slowly investigate and react.

Processes and challenges: relevant findings

The relevant findings of this section are confirming that cross-border investigations thrive on data-sets and that the larger they are and the fresher the leaked data is, the more chances to find more partners and more stories. Furthermore, data leaks dependency of CBIJ creates also dependency on large sums of money, on complex technology and expensive hardware and on large number of people. The section finds that such dependencies enforce standardisation (platform ready) and the spread of the Atlantic journalism model (as opposed to other journalistic models). Data-sets are made searchable only by way of access to platforms, and the more data uploaded in such platforms, the more user dependence on keyword random searches. This section finds that CBIJ has yet to show stories discovered solely by employing data statistical techniques and that data-intensive work is done by software engineers to make the search as easy as possible (type and click). Finally, there are no rules and clarity on ownership of raw leaked data-sets and of raw search and information-exchange tools and the data they produce, as well as the non-profit structures that manage networks.

4.2. Uncovering contradictions to a positivist narrative

This section, using participant observation, autoethnography, archival research and interviews, will uncover unknown aspects related to Panama Papers and ICIJ, thus putting in context the official narrative of this project. Such aspects show that the concept of 'radical sharing ' in CBIJ has exactly the same practical consequences as it does in the sharing economy, meaning it only works one way: ICIJ journalists who shared labour in the project have been kicked off the search platform; more givers (philanthropy in this case) has a major influence; money makers (commercial and non-profit media) can use ICIJ as an agent for their own commercial competition interests.

4.2.1 CBIJ technology: a totalitarian governance system

A month and a half after Panama Papers started publication, on 20 May 2016, online access to the search and communication platforms of ICIJ was cut for the journalists working at *Politiken*, *Le Soir, The Guardian, Tages Anzeiger, Falter and L'Espresso*. No clear official reason was given and no breach of contract was invoked - and for some even without a warning.

At that time, Football Leaks blog, the online venue for publishing single leaked documents since the end of 2015 and the source of Football Leaks data-set handed over to Der Spiegel, had already announced in public that it takes a long break from publishing documents online. The information that Der Spiegel has privileged access to the data of Football Leaks was also public.

The technical capacity of ICIJ staff to monitor the search logs of ICIJ members that were also involved with EIC always existed but was neither informed nor confirmed so it is not clear if ICIJ staff found indicators that ICIJ members performed searches were to potentially cross-check or extend information that was found in the Football Leaks data with Panama Papers financial information. But even if *SZ* and the ICIJ knew about the ongoing project of EIC before the end of May, they acted abruptly to 'protect their data' from being used by another network who may benefit the direct competitor of *SZ* in Germany, *Der Spiegel*. So the request to suspend access came from SZ and targeted all media working both on Panama Papers and with EIC. ICIJ executed this request, in some cases without even giving advance notifications to the journalists involved (all Panama Papers journalists were in full production and publication mode).

So, with the access to the Panama Papers cut all of the sudden, in the middle of production of news stories and publication of already researched stories, six out of thirteen EIC project media partners had to choose: either being part of the Football Leaks project, or continuing working with the Panama Papers data (the publishing of Panama Papers stories by ICIJ and partners would continue for several months). It was a moment where the continuation of Football Leaks project and EIC was in doubt. The tension created came at a point shortly before the second face-to-face meeting of EIC was organised, in the first days of June at the conference DataHarvest. It was the meeting where people were prepared to start to exchange findings and discuss more in detail the project.

A process of negotiation and discussion was started between the various stake holders, both journalists and managers: myself as EIC coordinator and ICIJ member, *Der Spiegel, Süddeutsche Zeitung*, the ICIJ and the Center for Public Integrity (CPI) in the first place; but also discussions with individual journalists from the above-mentioned media. Some confused they feel being squeezed between a commercial conflict between two German media companies. And because of the pressure of ICIJ and *SZ*, almost half of the total number of EIC media partners were considering quitting the Football Leaks project to be able to access Panama Papers further and even possibly quitting EIC altogether.

On 27 of May I sent a letter detailing the conflict and requested mediation from both the CEO of CPI, Peter Bale, and the founder of CPI and the ICIJ, Charles Lewis. Bale was not aware of the conflict. By 29 May an agreement between *SZ* and Spiegel was drafted by ICIJ, and signed by *SZ* and Spiegel on the 1st of June, just a day before EIC face to face meeting at Data Harvest to discuss the practicalities of the project Football Leaks.

The agreement drafted by ICIJ and signed by editors in chief with both German media has five points, basically instituting the concept of a firewall inside the newsrooms working with two different networks, which was put into force immediately, for some small partners with great effort because of lack of human resources: 'assign different teams of reporters and data analysts ' to work on the Panama Papers and Football Leaks within each newsroom; 'enforce a firewall between the projects' and between the individual journalists and technologists; 'agree that no crosschecks ', meaning journalists at the same media working on Panama Papers could not ask their colleague working on Football Leaks to check if information on a specific person or company or topic is available in the data set she would not have access to.

It also enforced a complicated search scheme on top of the common sense obligation to ask permission to share data outside a given project (which was anyway a contractual obligation for any

media partner and journalists working with either ICIJ or EIC): 'as soon as it becomes clear to *Der Spiegel* and its media partners that there is overlap and the need to do research in the Panama Papers database arises, partners will communicate this to *Der Spiegel*, who will then communicate that need to *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. *Süddeutsche Zeitung* will conduct the research and share results with *Der Spiegel*, who will then share them with the partners '; if such a situation would occur, then the agreement stipulated that the partners in both networks would have to 'publish those stories simultaneously on a date they agree ' and credit each-other.

This search scheme was never used during the period of 2016 - 2017 when this thesis was documented and while stories based on Football Leaks and Panama Papers where published.

Journalists from *Politiken, Le Soir*, *Falter* and *L'Espresso* benefited from the agreement and could continue their work, so they continued the work on the Football Leaks project and on EIC and took part in the EIC meeting at Data Harvest on the 2nd of June.

Tages Anzeiger decided they cannot participate in Football Leaks and returned their copy of the raw data. On 8th of June the deputy editor-in-chief of *The Guardian,* Paul Johnson, announced *Der Spiegel* that they also decided to withdraw from FL even if he considered 'heroic' the attempt to have a deal for partners to work on both projects.

Almost two years onward, on March 2018, ICIJ deputy director Marina Walker sent an email to various ICIJ collaborators discussion lists, that was widely circulated, called 'What to do when investigative collaborations overlap '.

The content of the email was used a few days later as the background to prepare a Data Harvest 2018 panel in which I was involved, a discussion that started previous to the email being sent and that was about the topic of how to reconcile the need of exclusivity with the practical problems brought by overlapping networks[294]. The email was describing how ICIJ sees what should happen when 'working on two or more collaborations at the time, with different teams, and you want to use data from collaboration A in collaboration B and viceversa. Scenarios like this one will be increasingly common as collaborations and leaks continue to happen at a faster pace' (Walker, 2018). Walker recommends that basically journalists should ask for permission to use data and information from collaboration A or collaboration B directly to the 'owners of the data ' concluding that 'more collaborations and more data available to journalists is always great news '. Her recommendations do not include the complicated firewall scheme detailed in the Panama Papers - Football Leaks agreement above.

Such complicated scheme hinders the most valuable nodes in a network construct: the nodes that have the chance to overlap otherwise disconnected batches of information. If the firewall really works, then how could anybody realise that data could overlap ? Or even worse, how could anybody inside a newsroom know to alert the other fire-walled team about a possible duplication of efforts on a similar topic or about a possible outscoooping story, like in the recent case of New York Times and ICIJ[295] (Wemple, 2020) ? The reason for such rules must be laying somewhere else. As it is always in networks, it must be about control.

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[294] The panel took place https://eijc18dataharvest.sched.com/event/EZA7/uncharted-territory-how-to-solve-the-competition-problem-with-cross-border-networks

[295] https://web.archive.org/web/20200225101004/https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/02/12/new-york-times-scoops-its-own-collaboration-effort-then-apologizes-oversight/ The New York Times scoops its own collaboration effort, then apologizes for the 'oversight'

4.2.2 The fear of being replicated

As it later transpired from public sources, at the time when EIC started Football Leaks in April 2016, ICIJ was engaged in a complicated strategy to split from CPI, in order to establish a new organization and raise money and media partners for the new ICIJ. This could explain the escalation between ICIJ and EIC described in the previous sub-section.

The month after the agreement between ICIJ, SZ, EIC and Spiegel was signed, a news published in early June by The New York Times was announcing that ICIJ is 'constrained by finances'. As illustration to the story, the deputy director Walker is pictured rolling down an ICIJ branded world map[296] preparing to move to new smaller offices (Fandos, 2016). The article tells the story of ICIJ in need to cut expenses because of the financial problems of their parent organisation the CPI, therefore the need to move office and also cut the position of three staff journalists. 'It's not like I make huge dollars, but we don't have money to do it right now' is quoted one of the journalists being laid off saying and the head of ICIJ adds that hopping for new money for now they 'would have to make do with less' (Fandos, 2016). The article also reports about ICIJ possibly spinning off from CPI, a move that is opposed by the Board according to CPI's head, Peter Bale.

Only a week after publishing this favourable story to ICIJ, New York Times publishes its first Panama Papers story, having gained access to the data-leak[297]. 'The key for me was to recognise the Panama Papers was owned by SZ and ICIJ was just an agent'(Bale, 2017). By October ICIJ announces that it initiated the split from CPI to become an independent new organisation[298] and Peter Bale leaves the CEO position of the Center for Public Integrity. In an interview for this research with Peter Bale after he left CPI, he said that ICIJ was into splitting from CPI four times before, and that the organisation was going from crisis to crisis during the last years (Bale, 2017), which is a similar information with what Charles Lewis gave in an interview two years before, who said that basically all ICIJ directors wanted and tried to split from CPI (Lewis, 2015). 'They wanted to split before I've got there'(Bale, 2017). Bale also said that he was convinced in august 2016 that Gerard and Marina were so determined to split ICIJ that in the case they couldn't obtain separation they would 'tear apart' both organisations' so that he 'had to leave to allow ICIJ and CPI to exist' (Bale, 2017). He added that the New York Times article mentioned above, from June, was a result of an internal leak intended to damage CPI in the eyes of the donors[299].

Indeed, donors in general do not like to see organisations who show signs of not being stable or organised as it comes out from the interview with Adessium, one of the financial supporters of ICIJ for many years - and they also appreciate those organisations working in networks, it's a sign of validation (Borger, 2016); for others, like OSI, another important supporter of ICIJ, when conflicts

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[296] https://web.archive.org/web/20160618032146/https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/06/us/panama-papers.html

[297] https://web.archive.org/web/20160618032146/https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/06/us/panama-papers.html

[298] https://web.archive.org/web/20200410191704/https://www.icij.org/blog/2016/10/center-public-integrity-spin-icij/

[299] Independent from the interview with Bale, off-the-record leaked copies of emails between ICIJ director Ryle, deputy director Walker with the New York Times author show that a conversation about CPI financial difficulties that affect ICIJ was taking place in May, briefly before the EIC conflict over Panama Papers access, where Gerard offered to show financial documents related to CPI situation. Similar off-the-record leaked copies of emails show that a few days after the NY Times story about ICIJ financial hardship, Omydiar Networks head Stephen King wrote to the director of ICIJ asking if Omydiar Network should fund ICIJ sending their grant to CPI, at which Gerard is trying to delay a response. The back and forth continues until August 2016 and Omydiar money for ICIJ is not sent to CPI (public records show the grant only comes in next year in 2017 when ICIJ was established as a new organisation). Due to research constraints I could not verify with the senders and recipients the veracity of these emails, but I cross-checked details in the emails (such as locations in time of Gerard Ryle, Peter Bale) and they correspond with my own archival notes from that year.

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arise inside or between such organisations they become 'sad ' (Lipstas, 2015). It is therefore crucial that donors know nothing about the skeletons in the closet because they not only dislike it, but the word spreads fast. Based on a recent study[300] by Hewlett Foundation, there is only one source of due diligence information that the managing bureaucracy of large donors are using about their grantees: 'their peers ' (Hewlett, 2017) 92% of the respondents working for the philanthropy industry mentioned their peers from other foundations when in need 'to solve a problem or learn about a topic '. This can only enforce an oligarchy on both sides of the non-profit money coffers for investigative journalism.

The testimony of Bale clarifies that there was more background to the reaction of ICIJ to shut down Panama Papers access to EIC journalists at the end of May, since most likely ICIJ was in advanced discussions to spin off from CPI and get funded by large donors and get supported by large media organisations. Bale also confirmed that ICIJ felt threatened by the appearance of EIC since they had funding and plans to expand to Europe and EIC would only show that a European alternative already exists. On top of *SZ* fearing the competition of *Der Spiegel* in Germany, ICIJ 'fear the replication of the model will erode the ability to do their projects ' taking away people and talent from ICIJ, making them lose brands and eventually funding (Bale, 2017).

In February 2017 ICIJ is a brand new organisation[301], pending a 501c3 tax exempt status and with a fiscal sponsor (INN) in good shape to receive donations and grants. Media reports that ICIJ is being in talks to get an important grant from a major foundation funder and that two of the journalist laid off have been hired back. In April, ICIJ is awarded the Pulitzer Prize for the Panama Papers. Short before, ICIJI announces a 4.5 million USD donation from Omidyar Networks[302], the philanthropic arm of eBay founder, billionaire Pierre Omidyar, Before the year ends, the head of the Omydiar Networks (now turned into Luminate) has joined the new board of the new ICIJ organization[303].

While *SZ* reacted in a 'media logic ' of commercial competition, it could act like this only because it could use a global organisation like ICIJ to be its agent and enforce national competition to propagate at a world level (basically any partner of *Der Spiegel* would land in a competition with *SZ*). These facts also show that a major media donor can make or break an investigative non-profit, also obtaining something that has no precedence to the best of my knowledge in the commercial news industry: a board seat in the media organisation that they sponsor (would be similar for a major advertiser to gain a board seat based on their commercial contract with a major independent news outlet).

Last but not least, the drive for control for the ICIJ management looks like being more important than the ICIJ membership (those cut off from Panama Papers, among them long time members of ICIJ), more important than ICIJ and CPI journalistic staff (delaying the grant from Omidyar also meant journalists being laid off - see footnote 299 above) and also more important than the public claim that the future is non-profit cross-border investigative journalistic collaborations.

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[300] https://web.archive.org/web/20200411002643/https://hewlett.org/peer-to-peer-at-the-heart-of-influencing-more-effective-philanthropy/

[301] https://web.archive.org/web/20200410191733/https://www.icij.org/blog/2017/02/after-panama-papers-success-icij-goes-independent/

[302] https://web.archive.org/web/20170703180319/https://www.icij.org/blog/2017/04/omidyar-network-grants-45m-support-icij-projects/

[303] Steven King misspelled https://web.archive.org/web/20171215054656/https://www.icij.org/about/ , later corrected to Stephen King https://web.archive.org/web/20180614020002/https://www.icij.org/about/icijs-story/

This section also shows that technology surveillance capacity in CBIJ is as important as in other professional areas and that journalists should participate more in discussing governance agreements that could avoid journalists being abused in the network realm. It also shows how big of an influence philanthropy has, if by way of a grant of several millions a representative of a tech billionaire can help spin-off an organisation such as ICIJ and secure a seat on its board.

Uncovering contradictions: relevant findings

This section finds that CBIJ is requiring the building up of internal walls in investigative departments at newsroom level because some media are part of several networks and the current practice pioneered by ICIJ and *SZ* is to keep a fire-wall between their own journalists so that access to different data platforms do not overlap. Such construct is nullifying the possibility of existence for the most valuable nodes, that is the nodes that should overlap otherwise unconnected networks and information. Furthermore, the findings indicate that without proper technology design and without governance documents, technology platforms in use by CBIJ journalists remain totalitarian governance systems (surveillance and control build in) in the hand of a very few unaccountable people. The section also finds that the non-profit ICIJ is acting as an agent for a commercial media enterprise, using the CBIJ network and platform to help enforce and propagate a commercial competition from national to network level, while also attracting journalists as participant members of this given CBIJ network and platform to work for free in the platform realm. Another relevant finding is that the larger such a CBIJ network, the smaller the chance not to amplify and propagate national-based competition at a global level, especially on behalf of large legacy media players. Furthermore, this section finds that CBIJ are long-term and expensive operations: developing, maintaining, running, and the hardware infrastructure needed are raising the financial bar. Last but not least this section finds proof that the large costly operation of ICIJ is financially endorsed by tech philanthropy and in return offers a seat in the ICIJ board. Even if advertised as a universal model, it produces fear when others try to replicate it.

So if we agree that ICIJ can be labeled as a 'digital intermediary ' between a large number of independent media and journalists, and we also agree that at least in the example given above it has a direct influence over the environment in which other media operate, then the following observations can easily apply to the CBIJ field and to ICIJ: first, 'the relationship is characterized by a tension between short term operational considerations and longer-term strategic worries, and argued that it is shaped by the combination of a fear of missing out, the difficulties of evaluating risks and rewards, and a deep sense of asymmetry ' (Kleis Nielsen, Ganter 2018); second, 'significant strategic risk of losing control over editorial identity (…), access to data (…), and revenue (..) ' (Kleis Nielsen, Ganter 2018). These finding were not directed towards CBIJ, but they were part of a study investigating the dependency between news publishers and search engines and social media platforms such as Google and Facebook. They are nevertheless relevant, because the study independently concludes that otherwise highly independent news media organisations become dependent upon digital intermediaries, which raises concerns on 'how they handle their increasing dependence on these technologies and the few, large, and powerful technology companies' (Kleis Nielsen, Ganter 2018).

Chapter 5. THE BACKSTAGE OF FOOTBALL LEAKS

This chapter reviews how European Investigative Collaborations (EIC), emerged as a new investigative network in Europe, a chance to look at the power relationships in the CBIJ field when a new comer appears. Worth mentioning that some participants in this new network were ICIJ members and had an active role in different ICIJ investigative projects, so a secondary goal of this observatory exercise is to compare structure and project workflow between the two. To this end, the chapter describes EIC's first large data leak project called Football Leaks (FL), from an observation point of view of an active participant in setting up the network structure and tools, and co-designing and coordinating the project's workflow. In the previous chapter on Panama Papers it was shown that a current gap in knowledge about the power relationships of CBIJ is related to the lack of access to meeting infrastructures (offline and mediate) for a detailed research. This second case study should fill in this gap, focusing participatory observation on the configuration of a network by agreement and on its landmark cross-border project, Football Leaks.

Research process

In this case study of EIC and Football Leaks, my participant observer position was of full access and immersion, from the privileged position of a co-founder and manager of this European CBIJ network for more than four years. To the best of my knowledge this is a unique position in the CBIJ academic research and before proceeding to describing the findings of this chapter, let me describe the research process that led to these findings.

Involved in the co-establishing of EIC since mid 2015, at the beginning of this thesis research, and involved in the management and coordination of the EIC network, the journalistic collaboration as well as the technology tools realisation, and involved in the drafting of the governance documents, as well as in preparing, documenting and reporting on network meetings, I was behind collecting and generating the institutional memory of EIC before, during and after Football Leaks (I continue to be in this role to these present days).

As a participant observer, my principal objective was to immerse myself in the CBIJ social world: to observe from the inside how communication unfolds, mediated or face to face, how technology tools and governance rules shape the CBIJ project of Football Leaks and the EIC network, and how the research process in CBIJ works, with a focus on exclusion mechanisms, be it from the governance of the early network or from technology limitations. In some cases even trying to prevent or mitigate possible power imbalances by open intervention, based on my own critical reflection steaming from my long-time experience with previous networks, as well as based on my critical parallel research on Panama Papers and Football Leaks (e.g. making a conscious decision to request that EIC search technology is build without a surveillance capacity built in; or trying to obtain financial resources for freelancers in Eastern Europe). Over this study years I attended all EIC editorial meetings, was involved in group and private chats with EIC journalists, and joined casual conversations in newsrooms, at conferences, restaurants, cafés or bars. Since this research fieldwork was embedded with my EIC network management role, during the time of the fieldwork (June 2015 to June 2017) I spent each week day working more then 10 hours in the network online realm, the work being dedicated to coordinate specific daily activities like information exchanges on specific topics and stories, to coordinate and advise on the usage of EIC tools for search and information sharing, to assist and advance in the wider research plan. Also, I was involved in the network management related to resource allocation (both EIC journalists teams as well as freelance commissioned work) and had a mediator role for person-to-person conflicts as well as partner-to-partner conflicts. Closer to publication of Football Leaks the team of journalists and technologists

was enlarged with teams dedicated to information design (logo work, graphics), to social media (social media editors) and to legal issues (legal advisers). Since I was aware that my participant coordinator management position may bring me in conflict of interest or bias my researcher observer position, I kept a detailed research log of daily events and information from the point of view of the CBIJ six steps process, as well as the life of the EIC network. At the stage of writing up the thesis, I engaged in a content analysis on the data gathered chronologically in the research log and I grouped them in this chapter by topic.

But there is more documented archival evidence that I build upon my findings. Before first EIC meeting as a network, I authored a concept paper describing EIC network, road map, workflow, needed tools and desired partners. Through participative design involving EIC journalists, this became the basis of the EIC governance documents, which was later (end of 2016) enriched by an open-ended workflow document (it is amended/edited after each major EIC project if needed), a Letter of Understanding and Article of Incorporation. Such documents were opened to media partners to comment, add or edit.

Each EIC face-to-face meeting during this research period (one in 2015, five in 2016, two in 2017) was protocolled in two ways: one document with meeting notes based on the EIC Agenda, and a second researcher log documenting observations pertinent for the CBIJ six step process and other research observations related to the meeting venue, participants and other input. Ever since the EIC official operational kick-off meeting (December 2015) I protocolled all online meetings of EIC, be it routine weekly meeting or special meetings dedicated to publication, post-mortems or other rare events (2 meetings in 2015, 51 in 2016 and 25 in 2017, a total of 78 online meetings). I engaged in a content analysis on the data gathered chronologically in the meeting notes and the meeting logs and I extracted relevant information and grouped it in this chapter by topic.

The meetings of EIC, online or face to face, are organised as follows: as the coordinator, I compile a document with the agenda of the meeting, usually structured around the ongoing research, newsroom contributions or requests and network progress, be it technological, or related to EIC finances, technology, face to face meetings or partnership requests or needs. Such a document is shared in advance, online, in a secure environment and EIC journalists are invited to edit or add to the agenda as they see fit (the system also can show all participants who, when and what modifications were made). During the meeting I take notes on top of the agenda document, and the resulting document, agenda and notes, is shared again with the network, asking for EIC journalists to edit or add as they see fit.

Another source of data for this research is my involvement with the technology used and produced by EIC during and after the study period. As per EIC governance documents, it is my role to coordinate the development of EIC tech tools, working with technologists from within EIC newsrooms as well as with freelance technologists (contractors), to make sure EIC produces free and open source software and that such software and other data products (e.g. scrapped data sets) is being made public. My role is a bridge between the technology needs of EIC journalists (e.g. for indexing and searching data and for secure exchanging communication and documents) and EIC technologists, which are computer engineers (not data journalists). This work was done on separate discussion channels and I was involved in preparing technical specifications for journalistic needs, take notes on the developments, test implementation, work with EIC journalists for future testing, gather and document user feedback and suggestions (70 tech weekly online meetings have been documented in writing as well). Four from five face to face meetings of EIC during 2016 and one

out of two in 2017 had among the participants a small tech team, not doing data journalism but developing technology and getting feedback from EIC journalists.

Besides participant observation as a strategy for collection of data, I also use short post-mortem surveys. Within the EIC network I ask for feedback after each project is over and I cross-reference these observations with data originating from archival research. Post-mortem feedback is asking two questions: 1.) what works? and 2.) what doesn't work?

The process of making use of archival research, content analysis and user analysis on technology, and feedback content consisted in digesting the network log, the meeting notes and meeting logs for themes, extracting relevant content and then placing this into categories in a chronological order. I decided to focus on facts and not on direct quotes because of the important legal aspects still ongoing related to Football Leaks[304] that could harm both the source and the journalists working on Football Leaks. This is also the reason in not publishing the exact names of the participants in each face to face meeting, but instead the number of participants per media and the gender distribution.

Informed by limitations of already published research based interviews or surveys (see Chapter 2, Section 2.3.), I specifically choose not to focus on quotes from interviews made with participants. I focused instead on the substance of statements and inputs in the meetings (electronically mediated or face to face). Another strong reason to not use quotes in this chapter is related not only to the secrecy of such work but also to the fact that the source of the Football Leaks data leak is currently prosecuted in Portugal, and there could be unforeseen legal implications for both Football Leaks participants and the source if going into detailed quotes about the work with such a data-set[305].

Also, since my administrator role on technologies gives me access to data generated by the tools and platforms EIC is using, I add in detail the technical descriptions of such tools and platforms where available and possible to the best of my knowledge, or statistical data produced by the platforms (e.g. statistics on user interactions produced by sandstorm.io, the platform used by EIC during the studied period of time, related to the list of users, their usage metrics on content input like number of wiki pages created, numbers of chat messages).

Finally, where relevant, additional research is being added from public and private archival records making use of the internet archive and my autoethnography collection of conference documents, publications, websites, conference descriptions, media descriptions in general but also news industry publications and mailing lists, both as an ICIJ member as well as a GIJN member, which is then analysed by content and added in relevant sections of this chapter.

5.1. Football Leaks: process and challenges

It is first necessary to establish some background and context: EIC.network started as a result of a blockage on several levels within the ICIJ. In 2012 ICIJ new director Gerard Ryle introduced the three criteria that any proposal has to satisfy in order to become an ICIJ project, the first of which

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[304] Currently the source of Football Leaks, Rui Pinto, is in detention awaiting for a trial in Portugal, on criminal charges for, among other things, attempted extortion; similar, an ongoing court case is advancing in Romania against the Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism for stories published based on Football Leaks material https://web.archive.org/web/20200410155441/http://portal.just.ro/302/SitePages/Dosar.aspx?id_dosar=30200000000369838&id_inst=302 and https://web.archive.org/web/20200410154954/http://portal.just.ro/302/SitePages/Dosar.aspx?id_dosar=30200000000400001&id_inst=302

[305] https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-portugal-footballleaks-crime-idUKKCN2570YX

is: 'Is it an issue of global concern?' (Ryle, 2012) So the first of these blockages arose as a result of the ICIJ network being a growing successful global organisation who aimed at doing investigative projects of global concern, meaning that there were more people involved in projects which needed to be relevant for a range of audiences of different media (print, online, radio, TV) around the world, and so which were taking longer to complete. This blockage comes from the fact that some members felt the need to do network investigative projects which are relevant for a regional audience only (Europe in this case) and also have a faster turnaround time, and such projects wouldn't qualify to be ICIJ projects. The second blockage is that a journalist member of ICIJ (myself) has not been able to take part in recent ICIJ projects because the ICIJ has chosen to hand out the investigative work in Eastern Europe to another US based non-profit (OCCRP) that is in competition with the organisation that the journalist member represents (I am co-founder and director of The Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism and OCCRP has established another Romanian investigative non-profit called the Rise Project). Finally, the third blockage is that a for-profit media outlet in a given country (Germany), was refused to take part in ICIJ projects because it was in commercial competition with the media partner of the ICIJ in that given country (*Süddeutsche Zeitung* and *Der Spiegel*).

   This case study will also inquire into the tensions and consequences of mainstreaming the methods of cross-border collaborative journalism. This case study is based on an analysis of the detailed logs of regular meetings of EIC.network over a given period of time (2016 and first six months of 2017). For the purpose of this research, names of participants are not relevant, so I will assign pseudonyms to colleagues, in case I need to mention them. Also, some relevant data will come from general statistics provided by EIC technological systems that endorse communication among members. Such data will show the number of users, the number of applications used and the usage of systems, but do not have access to register or analyse content and interactions.

5.1.1 EIC federated power configuration

The pre-project legacy of Football Leaks is different then that of Panama Papers, since EIC was just starting to exist and before it started Football Leaks only had one published project, a project that did not rely on large data or secret documents, but that tested components of the network partners, publication issues and technological needs. In that respect, Football Leaks was starting almost from scratch with very few constraints and a lot of drive from partners new to CBIJ and eager to work on such a projects.

Legacy Networking: possibilities and limitations

   Since I am analysing the first major investigative project of EIC.network as an observing participant, it is necessary to outline some relevant background. Prior to the discussion on establishment of EIC in 2015, a few other relevant contacts were made. I describe these in detail here and I will come back to discuss their relevance in Chapter 6. Being a regular presence at the GIJC as a speaker, in 2010 I came in contact with one of the few German participants in such conferences, the data and security journalist Sebastian Mondial. Following the interactions initiated at the conference, a year and a half later I found myself in the position of assisting the project management of ICIJ Offshore Leaks and suggested that Mondial become part of the ICIJ Offshore Leaks small data team early 2012. He was involved in data work, processing, as well as setting up an information exchange platform for the growing team of journalists involved in the Offshore Leaks project, the first genuinely global platform for the ICIJ. While working on the ICIJ project,

Mondial was tasked with finding the first German media partner for the ICIJ project – which would end up be the consortium of NDR, WDR and *SZ*. Since Offshore Leaks had ended, Mondial moved on to work for *Die Zeit* and when a cross-border story I was researching had a connection to Germany, he put me in touch with *Die Zeit's* investigative team in order to publish with them as a freelance journalist. Such work expanded and I did several stories with different *Die Zeit* journalists, working on a specific investigation into corrupt practices of EADS in Romania. In May 2015, half a year after I started this PhD research and moved to Germany, and more than a year after the investigative research on EADS, a request from a former *Die Zeit* journalist came to reconnect and continue the EADS research, this time with his new newsroom, *Der Spiegel*. The contact was also re-made in the context of this journalist reading about my participation in Data Harvest, the most important gathering of investigative journalists in Europe. After finding out that I was based in Germany, an invitation came to present my ongoing research at *Der Spiegel*. The presentation was arranged for early July, during a special session at *Der Spiegel* where outsiders are invited to talk about different projects related to journalism. During the meeting, the topic of cross-border networks of investigative journalism was discussed, in the context of various networks, projects and publications. I launched the observation that a European network is needed and this was followed up by a discussion with the senior investigative journalists Jörg Schmitt, Jürgen Dahlkampf and with one of the members of the editorial management, Alfred Weinzierl. Within a month, in early August, I filed a concept paper about how such a network can be established together with *Der Spiegel*, its configuration and process, how it would be different from existing initiatives and who might be a good start-up partner. I proposed a name for the network, focusing on the idea of collaboration: European Investigative Collaborations - EIC.network.

  The paper was discussed and improved and at the end of September I again met with the same group, as well as the editor-in-chief of *Der Spiegel*, Klaus Brinkbäumer. Since a new event of the GIJC was coming up, where I was going to be present for the purpose of collecting information related to this current research, we decided to officially approach a number of journalists participating at GIJC 2015 and discuss their organisations' possible involvement in establishing such a network. At the GIJC in early October, together with Jörg Schmitt or alone, we met and discussed the possibility of starting EIC with a number of journalists from *Le Soir*, *Tages Anzeiger*, *The Guardian*, *Newsweek Serbia* and *Falter*; there were also previous discussion by telephone and email exchanged with *Politiken*. ICIJ members and partners were present in a big number since that specific GIJC was used as a coordination meeting for the then-secret ongoing project, *Panama Papers*. Since some of the journalists who we aimed to involve with EIC.network were already part of ICIJ projects, and since some mentioned possible tensions with ICIJ German partner *SZ*, I also met, discussed and presented the intention for such a network to be created to Gerard Ryle, the head of the ICIJ. Even if not involved in the running of ICIJ and CPI anymore, I presented the general plan of establishing EIC to the founder of the ICIJ, Charles Lewis. At the end of October, following up the GIJC meetings, I filed a document to turn the concept paper into a strategy including next steps and a list of people to invite to a first meeting of EIC at *Der Spiegel* in Hamburg. During the next weeks the list is discussed and the date for the first EIC meeting is agreed for early December.

  Journalists from the following organisations were invited: *Der Spiegel*, RCIJ/TBS, *Le Soir*, *Politiken*, *Falter*, *El Mundo*, *Newsweek Serbia*, *Tages Anzeiger*, *Vedomosti*, *Mediapart* and *L'Espresso*. *The Guardian* was also invited, and expressed interest to join, but the newspaper was in the process of installing a new investigative editor and would not commit to join until the new

editor was involved in the decision making, which would happen at the beginning of 2016[306].

Ever since the drafting of the concept paper in August, the process to invite people into the EIC network was defined in the first place by the personal trust the journalists involved in starting the network placed in their colleagues from other media outlets. Such a trust-based relationship would rest on the previous personal experience in dealing with these journalists either after working on concrete stories, exchanging information or simply meeting and discussing at industry conferences.

The first item on the agenda of the meeting was the presentation of the initiative and the work done by *Der Spiegel* and the RCIJ; then followed the presentation of each participant, his background (the first group was actually entirely made up of men) and the relevant background of their media organisations related to investigative journalism and to cross-border investigative projects. Then came the question of whether the group agreed that I take the position of EIC coordinator, a part-time freelance position paid by *Der Spiegel* during the first year of EIC's existence. The discussion also touched on the goal of creating a dedicated EIC budget to which all partners would contribute, to cover the coordination costs as well as financial resources for freelance research and software engineering. Other logistical questions were discussed regarding the EIC's future workflow, the most important being the agreement that the group would meet online once every week and face-to-face at least once per year at Data Harvest. The group discussed the approaches and knowledge levels of each person and media towards communication tools and electronic security. Most of the discussions were based on the draft of a document showing how the work should be organised, and amendments were made by all after each project done by EIC, or with each situation that arose for which there was no pre-existing protocol. The documents would not, however, be changed significantly over the following three years, until the point of writing the present thesis[307].

 The discussion revolved around stories, and each partner brought proposals for possible investigative projects that the network could turn into European stories. There were theoretical discussions relating to the possibility that one or the other partner would obtain some data-set as a leak and how the collaboration work-flow and decision-making process would work. Also, it was decided that the network should also facilitate bilateral collaborations, or collaborations involving smaller teams, and not only large projects that take a long time to publish. Ideally, partners want projects that take under three months to complete. At the end of the day, action items that were listed related to the further efforts to get *Mediapart* and *The Guardian* on board; to gather all contacts of participants and initiate the weekly calls (via Skype, until other technologies became available); to start building an IT or technology team that would implement the right secure tools for communication, file sharing and search; and the text of a letter of understanding was drafted by the coordinator, with feedback from all participants, to be presented for signing to editors-in-chief.

The group decided that each member could be part of other networks, so the partnership was not exclusive; but they wanted the EIC to work with only one exclusive partner in each country, unless that partner specifically agrees to bring in another media organisation from that specific country. From more than two dozen possible investigations discussed, the groups settled on the first investigative project: to look into the European black market of the small arms trade, a possibility proposed by *Der Spiegel* and *Le Soir*. The research was not to be based on existing documents or leaks, in the sense of the reporter framework, the muckraking tradition (Meyer, 2018). Rather, it

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[306]   https://www.theguardian.com/media/2016/jan/06/newsnights-nick-hopkins-returns-guardian-head-investigations

[307] here you can read the Letter of Understanding and the Articles of Incorporation for EIC https://web.archive.org/web/20200409220103/https://eic.network/blog/about-us

The backstage of Football Leaks

started by looking critically at a collection of legislation around Europe and at their lack of effectiveness in the context of the European Union. The approach was therefore closer to the 'publizist framework ' described by Meyer and Lund (2008). The first EIC routine meetings started during the second part of December and have continued ever since. In January, a letter of understanding was drafted, discussed and developed by partners, and eventually signed by editors-in-chief of the project's media partners[308].

The contact with *Mediapart* was also established in January, and one of their journalists joined the weekly meetings. In February the relationship with *Mediapart* was strengthened thanks to a short face-to-face visit to Paris by myself together with two journalists, one from *Der Spiegel* and one from *Le Soir*. The meeting in Paris opened access to a lot of relevant information and secret official documents relevant to the first EIC projects on arms. *Mediapart* shared all the information they had on the weapons used in terrorist attacks in Paris in 2015. Based on these documents and adding outside research by EIC, the period between mid-February and mid-March saw intensive work on one story that would be published. In parallel, the Eic.network website and EIC logo were designed by *Der Spiegel*. In March, a parallel team of illustrators and graphic designers met for fifteen minutes each day to discuss the information design package of the first EIC story.

 Last minute discussions were organized about when exactly to publish in print, when to publish online behind pay-wall and when to publish online without a pay-wall. For those not involved in the research and writing of the arms stories, an English version was made available by one of the partners (theblacksea.eu) which included an information design package. In this case, the package was made ready and offered to partners one week before publication, so that each had the time to translate into their own language. A press-release (teaser) was discussed, but in the end was decided against, because some newsrooms could not be contacted because the people in touch with EIC were on vacation. There arose tensions and possible conflicts regarding dates and hours of publication, the work on information design, the plan on marketing and also on last minute scheduling issues – but such tensions were discussed and partners were able to reach a compromise. The last issues arose on the afternoon of publication day. Firstly, the paid-for digital version of *Der Spiegel* was made available one hour before the deadline of the publication (6pm instead of 7pm) and this was announced in a marketing blog teaser that day[309] at 3pm, which provoked confusion with the rest of the partners, especially those who publish online; I asked all partners to stay with the deadline until clarifications came about the different publication times between online, digital pay-wall and print. Secondly, at 5.30 pm that day, the news from our Belgian partner *Le Soir* came that a fugitive suspect from Bataclan terrorist attack in Paris has been arrested in Brussels, meaning that they had to change the priority of stories to cover the news; other partners asked if we should postpone the stories altogether. As this was the first project of EIC, tensions were discussed only between those involved, mediated by myself as the coordinator. This would evolve into a broader group discussing such issues, and some of the solutions would be documented and become part of EIC rules. After the publication, the Eic.network website went live and listed the URLs to the stories published by EIC partners. The goal of the website was to let the outside world know about the new network and its story. It was not that of becoming a publishing website and cannibalising the partners by publishing the content of the stories in eleven languages, and instead directed the readers to the ten different media partners. By choice no social media channel was opened, instead

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[308]   The process of signing the LoU started on the 30 of January 2016 and continued until April; most of the partners signed the LoU during February, and a few joined later during April; at that point EIC partners were: *Der Spiegel, RCIJ/TBS, El Mundo, Politiken, Newsweek Serbia, Le Soir, Mediapart, Falter, L'Espresso* and *The Guardian*.

[309]   http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/spiegelblog/eic-european-investigative-collaboration-netzwerk-fuer-journalisten-gegruendet-a-1083078.html

journalists and social media editors at partner media were asked to use a common hashtag[310] when promoting their stories or reactions.

There were requests to re-print the articles and requests for interviews to describe the project – such requests were made to the coordinator, but were re-directed to the initiators of the project. There were also questions from media about what EIC is and requests to become involved as partners in future investigations – such requests were centrally collected and discussed with all the partners.

Tools stack ready from past projects

Before the start of a project, a tool stack is ready from past projects and it will be used or scraped based on the new needs. In the case of EIC we talk about a brand new informal organization, so at the beginning of 2016 there was simply no tool stack available for journalists to work with in this network. Some members of the group, including myself, had experience in working with tools made available to them as users in the context of other networks, or with tools used internally within the newsroom. Some of these tools were paid for[311], while others were openly available and free to use but owned by big technology companies[312].

EIC members agreed that one of the tasks of the network was that of developing free software-independent tools[313] that investigative journalists could use in the context of collaborations between people who did not share the same office and who needed a higher degree of security compared to conventional news gathering operations. It was also agreed that the first project would be a test project working with whichever tools were available without any investment, to inform the future needs. Since the project was not based on a large data-set, a search machine was not needed. The rest of the tools used for communication were Skype and later Google Hangout for conferences, DropBox for loading non-sensitive documents; and Intertwinkles for agenda-keeping and sharing and editing meeting notes[314].

Discussions relating to technology development were initially very slow and involved a constellation of freelance technologists and the IT department of *Der Spiegel* under my coordination[315]. The large newsrooms in Europe, like *Der Spiegel*, have their own infrastructure software available for their own newsroom, but these solutions couldn't be used by external journalists without risking the exposure of internal work. The same software being used in different settings would have raised licensing costs to prohibitive sums, and since EIC was not even established as an organisation, it did not have its own budget. It must be also said that in the EIC network only one large partner had internal software dedicated to processing large data-sets;[316] and another large partner started to test several proprietary solutions[317] one of them being advertised by

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[310]   #EICArms , see https://twitter.com/search?f=tweets&q=%23EICArms&src=typd

[311]   Such as Atlassian products https://marketplace.atlassian.com/

[312]   Google products, such as Google documents, Google Hangouts and so on https://www.google.com/intl/en/about/products/

[313]   https://eic.network/blog/about-us

[314]   https://web.archive.org/web/20160508043846/https://intertwinkles.org/about/more/ a PhD project made and maintained by an M.I.T. student in the U.S.

[315]   I had fiften years of experience of various technological solutions related to cross-border collaborations, including the participation in the core team of ICIJ Offshore Leaks; I had also been running a media laboratory in Romania, who's focus was the hands-on collaboration between coders, journalists, activists

[316]   The cost for just setting the tool was at seven figures.

[317]   The cost of these ranged from five to six figures;

the several large ICIJ investigative projects, in exchange for using it for free[318]. But at the moment when EIC network started there was no production-ready in-house search tool available to look through data-sets and host journalists from different places, allowing them to run their own searches. So even if internally a company like *Der Spiegel* would buy such software for searching and information exchange, they could not deploy such a solution to serve the growing network for security and financial reasons. At the end of March there was no solution in sight.

Review of documents to find the idea leading the investigative project

Before a project starts, whether it involves a small or large group, an assessment takes place. It takes into consideration a project review of the previous project (work-flow, stories, partners, and so on). At the end of March, I initiated a post-mortem of the first EIC project – we looked at the lessons learned in order to amend our work-flow and prepare for the next project. I sent out requests for feedback to all involved, and gathered feedback from *Le Soir, Politiken, El Mundo, Newsweek Serbia, RCIJ/TBS and Der Spiegel*[319]. What worked, as it was signalled by respondents to the project review, was the great enthusiasm involved, the building of other teams, not only journalism (e.g. graphic), the weekly general meetings that keep the network alive; the separate meetings before publication. Having clear deadlines for products and having the people involved playing to their strengths was also mentioned as crucial. It was signalled that the network investigative focus was drifting away without an infusion of documents from Mediapart[320] which showed the need of a set of data to be shared in a group in order to be used as a glue. What did not work, as it was signalled by respondents to the project review, it was the high workload for those active at the same time in other networks (ICIJ publication of Panama Papers was coming up at the beginning of April). Also the lacking of a procedure manual to avoid misunderstandings as well as the lack of standardization of design styles. It was considered that publication should have one simple deadline and only one teaser the day before, instead of having different deadlines for different medium. Discussing the byline it was agreed that only the author should have a byline, and in case the work of a journalist from one media partner will land as a translation in another media partner publication, then it should mentioned it is a translation (some media have rules against hosting bylines of journalists who are not in a contractual relationship with them). One criticism was that there was no overview at the network level of the documents available and so everybody agreed EIC needed some technical tools for searching and sharing information. On the production side most signalled that there was a clear need for more participation from existing partners and more time for translation and production (as opposed to research). Since more projects were tried in parallel, it was acknowledged by participants that it is not possible to do more than three projects at the same time, otherwise everybody is loosing focus. Also, having only one main story to offer as a result of a project is a dangerous situation, since such story is exposed to international breaking news agenda. Discussions about publication time did not reach an agreement – different participants seemed to think that stories were best published at different times and on different week days.

This was the foundation of the next project, where the last step of an investigative project – the publication – becomes the first step of the next cross-border investigation (Alfter, 2016). And the very next EIC cross-border project was Football Leaks. Football Leaks started with a media partner

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[318]   Nuix, see https://www.icij.org/investigations/offshore/about-project-secrecy-sale/

[319]   I have gathered written feedback from six out of ten, including the permission to use such feedback for this research;

[320] The network started following a publizist framework, looking at the system and the legislation in Europe, but that was not enough to glue a story together; the story really took off when Mediapart shared a collection of police documents that helped track the route of some concrete weapons and showed how the European system was broken, this being the muckraker framework

node, *Der Spiegel*, bringing the story to the network, distributing the data to media members equally[321].

5.1.2 Who get's to join Football Leaks

Pre-Publication

At the pre-publication stage, a refining of the legacy network, tools and idea is taking place. The most important ingredients for a cross-border investigative project are: the network available that will provide or not the right team for research and publication; the tools for collaboration made available; and of course the idea of what exactly to investigate. In the case of Football Leaks, since the EIC network was already created and had already completed one project, a network and some tools where there to be reassessed, dependent on the next idea to be investigated. Some ideas for the next project were floating around, but the Football Leaks collective source passed a large data-set, to a journalist at *Der Spiegel* (Buschmann, Wulzinger, 2016), the perfect data for analysis within a network.

At the end of March, *Der Spiegel* decided to share the leaked data-set with the EIC network and called for a meeting for the end of April in their own newsroom. The goal of the meeting was to share copies of the data for those partners who wanted it, and for the others to discuss other ways of making the data available. It was clear that the data-set to be investigated was related to football, but it was not clear what stories the investigation would bring, and what the main idea behind it would be. The network of media partners that accepted to join the meeting and signed agreements on how to deal with the data and with the information related to the project was also established. For a sample of the template used for such agreements see **Annex 5.1.1. Football leaks template agreement.** Such agreements evolved over time to include more details about how to credit the project and how to contribute, among other things. The meeting was to clarify the team of journalists who would participate in the actual investigation.

The need for the right technology to support processing and indexing the data-set in order to offer free text retrieval become more urgent, and so too did the need for a place to exchange information, findings and coordinate the organisation of research. This is the moment when the idea and networks are getting refined and when there is a decision regarding what tools to use.

Idea and Network

In order to participate in the shaping of the new project, all journalists involved needed to be able to access the same set of documents, have the resources and the freedom to participate online as well as in face-to-face meetings, and be in the position to exchange information[322]. As a first step, during the opening meeting at the end of April, encrypted raw clones of the data-set were handed over to the partners who expressed the wish to take back home a hard copy of the leaked material[323]. Thirty journalists participated and some basic details about the contents of the Football Leaks data were

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[321] Before this step, the journalist Rafael Buschmann secured the data at the end of 2015; there then followed an internal process at *Der Spiegel* to discuss if the data should be bought into EIC.nework during first months of 2016.

[322] This includes the technological knowledge regarding the sharing of information using encryption, accessing online systems and using them correctly, and also to having enough knowledge of English to be understood by the rest of the journalists.

[323] Such repositories of data-sets serve the partners who maybe want to try different software solutions to process the data and search it in different ways; also they serve for possible future court trials, that could come long after the publication;

presented. The internal project name was chosen randomly: Maldini. Two distinct groups were part of the discussion of the project framework: journalists and software engineers. The journalists set deadlines for the investigative process, discussed when the next meeting should take place and agreed to aim to publishing the first stories before mid-July[324]. The software engineers in attendance[325] started discussing the processing of the data to make it available for searches in the network, and especially the strategy to apply optical character recognition software (OCR) to the documents that showed text in an image format, in order to make such documents searchable. In search for a communication infrastructure, different software solutions were discussed. For any electronic solution taken into consideration, much emphasis was placed on how secure the system would be.

Team

By the end of April, shortly before the second face-to-face EIC meeting[326], the media partners lined up with the new EIC project who were also EIC members: *Le Soir, Der Spiegel, Mediapart, Falter, Politiken, Newsweek Serbia, RCIJ/TBS, El Mundo, Falter, L'Espresso, The Guardian*; two extra project based partners joined (without becoming yet EIC members): *Tages Anzeiger and Expresso*[327]. Based on this line-up, the type of journalists unable to take part in this project were the journalists who belonged to media outlets in direct competition with the partners of EIC in a specific country (competition here ranges from the for-profit media to non-profit organisations, who were not necessarily competing on readership, but rather on access to sponsorships and donations) and also journalists who published with media that had different journalistic values from the media partners of the network (for instance journalists that would serve as covered PR vehicles for the sport industry).

Based on this line-up, the journalists working with these media partners fell into several categories:
• Paid Staff
• Non-paid Staff[328]
• Project-based freelancers, paid by media organisations outside the project network[329]

Building the team with EIC's first major leak project was the first step; maintaining the initial team proved to be harder than estimated. Journalists started to have online access to the network search tool by mid-May (I will describe this in detail during the next section). Since EIC from its beginnings recognised the non-exclusive character of the network and endorsing journalists or media to be part of different networks, some of the journalists and their media starting work on Football Leaks were also involved with the ICIJ project Panama Papers that started research a year before and was still publishing stories.

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[324]   The desired date of publication, 9 July 2016, was chosen to coincide with the final of the UEFA European Championship; but the publication date was delayed until 28 October; and in the end began on the 1ˢ December, almost five months later than initially planed;

[325]   From *Der Spiegel, The Guardian*, and The Sponge media lab of RCJI/TBS.

[326]   In Hamburg at *Der Spiegel's* newsroom.

[327]   Later during the project, by July, two new project partners will join, NRC and *The Sunday Times*; in 2017 NRC became an EIC partner, The Sunday Times was refused membership in EIC.

[328]   This was the case of non-profit organisations like the Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism and The Black Sea who do not have paid staff reporters and editors;

[329]   This was the case of at least one journalist working for *Newsweek Serbia*; the Serbian newspaper could not afford him, so in exchange for intermediate access to the data-set he had to find on his own media that would run the resulting stories; other Eastern European journalists successfully applied for small grants from Journalismfund.eu.

As shown in the previous chapter, at the end of May, online access to the search and communication platforms of ICIJ into Panama Papers data-set was cut for the journalists working at *Politiken*, *Le Soir, The Guardian, Tages Anzeiger, Falter and L'Espresso* (read Section 4.2 for a more detailed description of the event). Over night, six out of thirteen EIC project media partners had to choose between being part of the Football Leaks project and continuing working with the Panama Papers data. The tension created came at a point shortly before the second face-to-face meeting was organised, in the first days of June at Data Harvest in Mechelen, near Brussles. It was the meeting where people started to exchange findings and discuss more in detail the project. At that point, almost half of the media partners were considering quitting the emerging Football Leaks project in order to be able to access Panama Papers further to finish their stories, and even possibly quitting EIC. In the end an agreement was negotiated involving ICIJ and EIC but signed between *Der Spiegel* and *Süddeutsche Zeitung* on the last day of May and sent to the partners two days before the EIC face to face meeting in Mechelen, at Data Harvest. Since the agreement stipulated that media organisations who are part both of Panama Papers and of Football Leaks should assign different people to the two projects and 'enforce a firewall' within the newsroom between these two teams journalists from *Politiken*, *Le Soir*, *Falter* and *L'Espresso* benefited from the agreement and could continue their work, so they showed up at the EIC meeting and continued the work on the Football Leaks project and on EIC. However, *The Guardian* and *Tages Anzeiger* decided they could not go further with EIC and had to return the clone of the data-set they had already received for processing.

The meeting at Data Harvest in the first days of June and another later meeting at Mediapart office in Paris at the end of July aimed to advance research and information exchange and also turn the loose network into a team. The coordination model refined during the first EIC project was applied during the early stages of Football Leaks and encouraged the personal involvement of the different individual journalists. Once the boundaries of who can be part of the project were clarified, there was scope for decentralised interaction among the participants. Everybody was free to research in different directions, explore different hypotheses and take initiatives to propose a structure of possible stories. The others were free to confirm them or not, follow-up and contribute.

Offline gatherings are the network infrastructure that provided a space to communicate and plan. But since the growing number of journalists involved were located in a lot of different physical spaces across Europe, the daily investigative workflow needed electronic infrastructure as well as tools.

Meetings

Football Leaks had five face to face EIC network dedicated meetings during the year of 2016, from the moment when the first batch of data was made available until publication. Such meetings were located at newsrooms of media partners (*Der Spiegel*, *Mediapart*, *Expresso*) and at the Data Harvest conference for investigative journalism.

The first meeting was on 29th April in Hamburg, Germany at Der Spiegel. 26 individuals participated, out of this total 7 technologists and 19 journalists. Out of the entire group, only two female (journalists at El Mundo and The Guardian). For more details see Annex 5.1 on participants and agenda. The meeting focused on introducing the project and, in some cases, on introducing new colleagues. The technologists joined the journalists and then took separate sessions, coming back at the end of the day for a wrap up.

The second meeting took place at Data Harvest on the 2nd of June in Mechelen, Belgium. 19 participants in person (there are 21 participants on the list but the two from *The Guardian* did not participate in the end for reasons that I explain above), and four of the 19 were technologists. Only two female participate (both journalists at El Mundo). For more details see Annex 5.2 on participants and the agenda.The meeting focused on preliminary findings so far and on introducing the search tool and other information exchange options. Also, an important part of the discussion was related to the conflict and then agreement with ICIJ. The technologists joined the large group and then went for separate sessions and come back at the end of the day for a wrap up.

The third meeting on the 28th and 29th of July in Paris, France took place at Mediapart newsroom. 26 participants, out of them six are technologists. Out of the total of 26 participants, two are female (journalists for El Mundo and The Black Sea). At that point the online system to make searches and to share information was already functioning since more then a month with 47 journalists onboarded. For more details see Annex 5.3 on participants and agenda. The meeting focused largely on the main investigative topics that are promising to generate specific cross-border stories. As usual the technologists joined the entire group at first and then split for separate sessions and came back at the end of the day for a wrap up.

The forth meeting, between 28th and 29th of September was in Lisbon, Portugal, at the newsroom of EIC partner Expresso, with 33 participants, 5 of them technologists. From the total group, four are female (one technologist with RCIJ, one journalist with El Mundo, one with NRC and one with Expresso). At that point 58 journalists were using the information exchange platform. For more details see Annex 5.4 on participants and agenda. The technologists started with the entire group and then met separately, coming back at the end of the day for a wrap up; in the breaks they offered short tech tutorials on how to solve tech problems with the information exchange tools, or with search terms. They also gathered feedback on the usability of the *Hoover* search tool in order to implement changes and add functionalities. The two days meeting focused on the exact stories that will be published, what research tasks need to be completed, making sure that information is exchanged in the various teams that are developing topics and cross-border stories. It was also a logistical preparation for the roadmap ahead. Negotiations started about publishing dates, hours, formats, lengths, details and also about when to send confrontation questions, by who and in what format.

The fifth and last meeting for Football Leaks was on 14 November in Hamburg, back at the newsroom of *Der Spiegel*, where the project started in April. The meeting was only for one day long and it focused only on confrontation questions and timing. There were 26 participants (only one technologist), three female participants (journalists at *El Mundo*, *NRC* and *Der Spiegel*). Almost the same number of journalists were using the online system at that point, no changes from the Lisbon meeting a month and a half before. For more details see Annex 5.5 on participants and agenda. This meeting had no technology discussions, since it was dedicated to the logistics of publication, namely to the coordinated sending of questions to several hundred targets of investigative stories (people and companies or institutions that are mentioned in all Football Leaks articles).

There was a strategy discussed about when best to send the questions in order to give a fair time for responses but also to not let some abuse this time and prepare gag orders or the publishing of spin stories. Using the online information-exchange platform (a pad) the self-assigning of reporters to send out questions (and the update of the group with responses) went way faster then imagined.

To compare face to face participation numbers with online usage at the specific times of the meetings, see the numbers of users on the dedicated information exchange platform in the Figure 5.1. below.

DATE	USERS				GRAINS
Date (one per month plus meeting and publication)	Number of daily users	Number of weekly users	Number of monthly users	Number of all registered users	Number of grains used daily
7/31/17	12	26	37	79	4
6/30/17	16	28	40	74	9
5/31/17	22	38	46	74	13
5/30/17	21	40	46	74	13
4/30/17	12	32	42	73	11
3/31/17	27	36	45	71	19
2/28/17	25	30	43	65	12
1/31/17	20	28	39	65	16
12/31/16	5	17	51	64	3
11/30/16	44	51	54	64	28
11/14/16	33	46	48	59	17
10/31/16	31	44	49	59	13
9/30/16	25	44	49	58	11
9/29/16	26	43	49	58	18
9/28/16	27	43	49	58	16
8/31/16	27	37	46	57	23
7/31/16	7	31	45	48	12
7/30/16	17	31	45	48	20
7/29/16	24	32	44	47	28
7/28/16	24	33	44	47	21
6/30/16	20	31	38	38	29
6/6/16	1	1	1	1	6

Figure 5.1 represents the statistical usage numbers for all users of Sandstorm, the information exchange tool hosted at Der Spiegel during Football Leaks. The numbers are give for the period since the system was installed (June 2016) until the end of this field research (July 2017). Green indicates days of face to face meetings. Red indicates the day before first stories were published. Grains stands for application instances (chat, wiki, wekan, file sharing). These numbers only indicate users of the information exchange platform. Some reporters working on Football Leaks did not have access to this platform, instead using only to the online search tool Hoover, so this is not representing all Football Leaks participants.

Workflow, Tools and Research Plan

In the case of Football Leaks, the work-flow and tools of EIC shaped each other and formed the backbone of the investigative project and the growing network. Together they were used to draft a research plan that was fine-tuned several times. Within that given research plan, the journalists involved self-managed their search strategy, focusing on different findings and following different leads, specific to their media, geographic area and skill-set (e.g. sport or finances).

During the first part of Football Leaks, between the first project meeting in April and the second in early June, there was an agreement that journalists would look at the data, log findings and share them during a weekly meeting. Journalists were to share findings so that the others would stay informed about the progress, but also with the intent to identify cross-border trends and topics and discuss the meaning of new discoveries in an international context. Between the meeting in early June and the next one at the end of July, the bulk of research was carried out. The conflict with the ICIJ was resolved and the team was not subject to possible pressures coming from the outside. During these two months almost 200 findings were uploaded in the information-exchange system. The meeting at the end of July put together the Research Plan, which included a clear overview of how many journalists were involved at each stage of the project from each media organisation; a Security Plan relating to the protection of documents, sources and stories; and an explanation of the network tools, using feedback to make changes where possible to make the system more user-friendly. At that stage, the Research Plan already contained a list of topics where the main stories would fit in.

In the very first stage of Football Leaks, each media partner assigned one or more journalists to search the data, assess its content, connect to the rest of the network and ascertain whether the data available for investigation would produce a promising future publication line-up. Based on such assessments, some media organisations would need to increase the number of investigative journalists involved, some would have little to research, but would keep their involvement to minimum in order to remain informed of the details of the publication. This was ultimately a business decision: such projects tend to continue over many months so the time dedicated by one or several journalists from one single media organisation was time taken away from other ongoing investigative projects related to the daily activity of each media partner. Calculations can be made on how high the costs with journalistic research are, taking into account the total of months and the total number of journalists involved on a near full time basis, but such was not the purpose of this research. It suffices a gross estimate that the total cost with human resources for the twelve media partners involved with Football Leaks amount to a sum between €500,000 and several million Euros[330].

The publication plan, which was related to preparation of the media products and packages, began to be shaped at the end of July but it was only discussed in detail when the research phase had come to an end, during and immediately after the fourth meeting of the project[331]. At that point the security plan was relatively straightforward: communication would take place only via PGP, storing and transportation of documents would be encrypted, sharing of documents and information about the project would occur only on strictly need to know basis, there would be no discussion with anybody outside the newsroom about the project and no showing of documents to anybody, especially not to authorities. The security plan was to be reassessed at the start of the production phase in order to deal with the outside colleagues who would come to assist with publication: information designers, translators, fact checkers, web, legal council and so on; also, the security plan contained some information as to the content of stories, especially on how many details relating to the source could be provided in public, as well as how much of the source material can be published. Also, as part of the security plan, there was an agreement on how to deal with confrontation questions that could trigger injunctions, handing over the data requests or even criminal investigations aiming at involving the journalists (I will return to this in the following section dedicated to publication). Everybody in the network, but especially the initiator media organization, have clear obligations towards the source and indirectly towards their own image within the industry and with the public at large on how safe are sources when they choose to leak secret documents to journalists; all the journalists involved also have obligations towards their own stories (the media products) that they produce not get leaked so they can create and bring an exclusive scoop to market.

Search, enriching data and sharing of information

The tools chosen by EIC network were geared toward the search of documents. The manner in which such searches were made available was of central importance, and since the first focus was on making raw data available, journalists could sit in frustration watching a computer screen that

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[330]   To calculate the financial burden on each media partner in assigning one journalist to work on Football Leaks for more then eight months, this was dependent on how high salaries are within each media partner within each country, as well as how the taxes paid by a company for such salaries; but since we are talking usually about senior journalists with experience in investigative journalism who have staff positions, we are looking at the higher end of the journalistic salaries in each European country – FL had about 60 journalists involved in the project, not all full time and not all the entire eight months.

[331]   At the end of September, in Lisbon, at the offices of *Expresso* news organisation.

shows an incomprehensible mass of documents, with little possibility of exploiting the data-set effectively. EIC worked with a tool developed from scratch by The Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism (CRJI) and customised and enhanced by a programmer in Romania as soon the data-set was made available[332]. The tool was called Hoover, and was published under an open source licence, and further developed long after Football Leaks project was finished[333]. The tool, self-hosted under different obscure URLs, was protected by a 2-Factor-Authentication (2FA) system. The tool could be used for keyword (and batch) searches, and information queries could include search operators[334]. Unlike other paid-for tools, Hoover did not serve data by visual representation (e.g. one could not click on a network diagram and jump from one connection to another). One of the reason for this was the highly unstructured data that was leaked, a collection of emails and documents that were not coming from the same company as in the case of Panama Papers, but from hundreds of different sources like persons and companies.

This was the only application developed especially for the EIC network. The *Der Spiegel* journalists, who were the initiators of the project, also used an off-line proprietary tool to perform searches[335]. Since this was a network project, and not an investigation undertaken by a single reporter, the key was to offer the network an electronic infrastructure. There was, and still is, no bundle of Free Software of tools available that integrates index and search, chat communication, file sharing and knowledge base creation.

Sharing Findings, Meeting Notes and information pages

During the early months of the project, EIC was still using online pads that could be edited by all participants, through a tool called Intertwinkles in order to share meeting notes and findings (legacy tools). Then, during mid June, the tech team working with the journalists installed a self-hosted service called Sandstorm[336] that would be a platform for running all required applications. This was also packaged behind a 2FA.

Findings started to be filed within an application called GitLab, usually used by coders to collaboratively develop code in remote teams; meeting notes were also hosted by the same application.

The same system hosted a Wiki application that itself hosted more elaborate information pages such as reporter notes. During the research phase, the Wiki application developed into an internal knowledge base.

Sharing Files

Another important application was Davros, a file sharing system, where everybody could create folders and sub-folders and dump documents outside the leaked data-set.

Coordinating communication and logistics

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[332]   https://web.archive.org/web/20180824140849/https://eic.network/blog/how-to-investigate-football-leaks

[333]   https://github.com/hoover

[334]   https://github.com/hoover/search/wiki/Guide-to-search-terms

[335]   https://www.vound-software.com/resources/files/Der%20Spiegel%20Case%20Study.pdf

[336]   https://web.archive.org/web/20170117120937/https://eic.network/blog/making-a-network

The backstage of Football Leaks

Lastly, on the same Sandstorm self-hosted instance, a chat was used, with chat rooms for each topic developed during the investigative process. Chat rooms were also used for logistical discussions, and later on for production (e.g. publication coordination).

Each journalist had a different search routine, but with Football Leaks it mostly followed these steps: direction → collection → collage → process → analyze → report → new or refined direction.

Direction: The moment journalists were able to search documents by keywords, they start with the low hanging fruits, searching for names of known actors in the field: big name players, clubs and agents. People searched for what they thought they could find, and in most of the cases there is a priority to focus on well-known names.

Collection: All information that was found and that could be useful to build a case was saved. Each journalist had a different system for archiving information and different tools, but such information was archived in order to be found easily later on.

Collage: All information collected was sorted by different criteria.

Process: All information was digested and usually arranged on a timeline; some of the information, such as quotes on specific topics, was arranged in a master file, usually a spreadsheet that gave an overview on where to find what.

Analyse: the meaning of all the information was analysed; at this stage, outside sources of information were interrogated (e.g. company records or data bases) and at times outside experts were asked about technical details (e.g. relating to the Spanish taxation system at a specific date in time).

Report: the conclusions drawn from the information collected, processed and analysed were written up into a report; in the case of Football Leaks, it was put as a Wiki page in the system, so that other journalists could develop it, pose questions about it and suggest changes[337].

New or refined direction: at that moment, the journalist or the team involved or the editor and coordinator asked additional questions and a more refined direction started the research cycle again. New data was also made available, so the same search terms were used for a larger data-base with the possibility of adding new findings and leads. When the research came to an end in one direction, the information put together will contain direct references to source documents.

To wrap up: the EIC group started with free of charge proprietary tools made available by big technology companies (Skype, Google Hangout, Drop Box) at first, then used free of charge free software tools made available in the cloud (Intertwinkles, Jit.si), and when the Football Leaks came in transitioned towards self-hosted, customised free of charge free software tools (Sandstorm), self-developed free software tools (Hoover) and proprietary tools (Nuix, Intella).

Drafting Stories

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[337] the wiki system also maintains a history of the page and changes, showing who did what.

The last stage before moving towards production was the drafting of stories based on a meeting to discuss who wished to publish which stories and when. The drafting of stories was built on top of the Wiki pages with raw information, that had already sourced been and has the appearance of a dry report. Such pages were in English, so that everybody in the network could understand the content, and had no narrative dressing. Slowly, the information pages grew towards drafts of stories with the addition of research from outside the data-set, interviews and extra sources. What was at first a short finding was slowly shaped into a pre-story format, with headers and sub-headers as well as a summary presenting an overview. Such drafts would take different shapes with different media outlets, and also would have to be re-drafted and perhaps sliced into more stories appearing at different times or would be dropped altogether for different reasons: because of the legal screening, fact checking, confrontation, or because of conflicting publication schedules.

All these details started to be discussed at the end of September, in a large face to face meeting in Lisbon, in the *Expresso* newsroom. The meeting lasted two and a half days and initiated the publication stage. Drafts were to be finished two weeks after the meeting, when the publication calendar was pinned down.

In the case of Football Leaks, the network research phase took five full months. Even if small details were researched during the last two months of the project, they were mostly for fine-tuning the existing drafts of stories. Also, even if some tech fine-tunes were applied, the tools, workflow and data available did not change after the research phase had come to an end.

By the end of the research phase, a total of more than 300 findings had been uploaded onto the information exchange platform and there were sixty users logged in the search and information exchange systems. The research phase produced drafts of stories and a list of people who needed to be confronted with questions, as well as a catalogue of questions – together they would form the basis of stories and a publication schedule. The publication phase that follows was solely focused on production and completed the investigative cycle.

5.1.3 Publication schedule: intensive negotiations

Discussions about publication dates took place as soon as the project began. After a brief evaluation of the data, a publication agenda was taken into consideration and then such dates were subject to re-evaluation several times. The same went for the discussions related to confrontations and interviews, which started as soon as concrete stories were discovered. Publication deadlines, embargoes, confrontations were all fluid and continuously influencing each other.

Publication deadlines, embargoes, confrontations were then pinned down as the research advanced to a stage and stories started being written up. The confrontation work and embargo dates influenced each other more intensively after the stories had been drafted. Publication dates were subject to last minute attempts to change. The initial publication deadline for Football Leaks was the beginning of July; this was then pushed towards the end of October; and it was finally settled for the first days of December, maintaining a possibility to decide at the end of October to postpone it until January 2017.

The original publication date was established in a meeting in which forty EIC journalists and coders participated, hosted in the newsroom of *Expresso* in Lisbon. During the two-and-a-half day meeting possible stories were listed by each partner and publication dates and hours were discussed, though nothing was ultimately settled upon. Two more weeks after the face-to-face meeting, concrete dates

were assigned to advance with the drafts on the stories lined up during the meeting. Finally, in mid October, a calendar for publication was established, covering the first three weeks of December. In the planning, stories in the various languages were to be written within two weeks and uploaded as Wiki pages; the international stories or those that were potentially interesting for partners in EIC would have another two weeks to be translated.

A final project meeting was arranged in November for the group to plan in detail the confrontation stage, since the last two weeks in November would be dedicated for sending out confrontation questions, in three different waves, each wave corresponding to each of the three different publication weeks.

Embargoes and publication dates: clashes within network

From mid-October onwards, drafts of stories began to be shared in the group of journalists reporting on the Football Leaks documents. These confirmed the publication dates and embargoes on different pieces of information. The embargoes were put in place so that partners do not 'outscoop' the others by accident when publishing at different days in different time zones and through different media.

A publication plan is like a puzzle where small pieces of information have to fit and not overlap. For example, information published by *Der Spiegel* in Germany in print on Saturday is already available to news wires and other journalists from Friday evening[338]; if it is breaking news, then it is quite possible that other media will have reported on it during the evening, making it very likely to reach the print editions of newspapers who are competing with EIC partners in different countries, before it lands on the pages of EIC partners (for instance in the UK where the Football Leaks partner was *The Sunday Times*, which only reaches news stands on Sunday).

Similarly, in this case, the publication plan and embargoes on different pieces of information were formulated in order to prevent publishing specific details that may become complementary to news appearing on the national or international agenda, independently of the Football Leaks project. It even went further than that. For instance, even national news obtained by the Spanish partner *El Mundo* outside the Football Leaks data, but related to the publication plan, that was intended for publication on 7 November, was delayed for publication at the request of several EIC partners. This was the first clash within the network, where an extraordinary online meeting was called in order to discuss the request that a media partner not publish the story as front-page news. The partners feared that publishing the news will alert the competition to look into the details of the topic and discover some stories that EIC was preparing to publish as part of the Football Leaks project. *El Mundo* agreed to refrain from publishing the story after being presented with the arguments during an online call with the majority of EIC partners. *El Mundo* journalists were not convinced by the arguments that EIC future stories will be exposed, but agreed to listen to the majority that was in favour of not publishing.

During the last weeks before publication, every day was a tensed day within the network because of such possible stories or of individual journalists with different EIC media partners discovering a conflict in the publication schedule. Everybody wanted to publish their information exclusively, but at the same time everybody also had to abide by the rules of the network.

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[338]   This publication is either available in the reader of the print publication, used for advertising content for other media outlets; or is available as a digital package for digital subscribers.

These tense moments are the reason why the list of publication partners was not enlarged just before publication to include media organisations that did not participate in the Football Leaks research, but who could help with gaining more impact if re-publishing stories in countries and languages that were not part of EIC. The tension level grew higher after the confrontation questions were sent out two weeks before the publication was planed to start (the confrontation process will be detailed in the next subsection).

Just three days before the publication was to begin, news came from the newsroom of *Expresso*, the Portuguese partner, which had heard from a lawyer defending one of Football Leaks biggest targets, football player Cristiano Ronaldo, that the same stories would start appearing in the pages of *El Confidential*, a Spanish competitor to EIC partner *El Mundo*. The news was confirmed by *El Mundo* journalists who checked with colleagues from *El Confidential* newsroom that something big relating to football was set to be published. This was damage control and formed part of the defence strategy for public relation specialists: if it was not possible to stop an imminent publication, then planting part of the story with a controlled spin in other media outlets would act like a controlled explosion.

Another extraordinary meeting was organised for the evening of 29 of November, in which *Expresso* and *El Mundo* asked to change the publication deadlines and start publishing the next day. Sixteen journalists participated in the meeting online – almost everybody else besides the Spanish and Portuguese journalists started the meeting convinced that the publication plan should not change. Those who were not convinced at the beginning became convinced by the majority. The decision of the group was to wait and see what would be published and in the future to send confrontation questions granting a shorter period to collect responses[339].

On the morning of December first, a day before the publication of Football Leaks, *El Confidencial* did indeed publish a story – based mostly on old documents – which broke the news regarding the name of a secret company belonging to Cristiano Ronaldo. In doing so, however, they gave a platform to the football player's lawyers to say in public that he has never done anything wrong regarding taxes[340] [341]. The group of EIC journalists became less anxious, but some feared that something more would come.

At midnight, a robot twitter account exposed some headlines from *The Black Sea* future articles which were picked up by the website's RSS feed and made available to robots monitoring the website's feed. The same happened with a number of future *Spiegel* online titles of articles that were not yet published, but crawled[342] by Google robots and made available in searches. Everybody expected to break exclusive stories after a long intensive and exhausting time invested in research and writing. These were technical glitches that did expose the project but not the content, but added to the tensions within the project team.

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[339]   For unrelated reasons, *Le Soir* also lost a breaking news story two days before publication. http://www.rtl.be/sport/football/football-belgique/luciano-d-onofrio-interdit-d-exercer-son-metier-d-agent-aurait-empoche-des-millions-via-des-societes-ecrans-871244.aspx

[340]   http://archive.fo/2016.12.01-094243/http://www.elconfidencial.com/espana/2016-12-01/cristiano-ronaldo-football-leaks-derechos-imagen-mim-limited-irlanda_1297213/

[341]   Almost three years after FL revelations on this case, Ronaldo admitted guilt, accepted to pay a 19 million fine and to be served a suspended prison sentence https://www.theguardian.com/football/2019/jan/22/ronaldo-fine-tax-fraud-case-madrid

[342] This is a technical term describing the automatic Internet robot build to navigate all pages of specific websites in order to index the content, the urls and the hyperlinks and make them available in search engines.

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On the morning of the publication day, 2nd December, a few more stories were made available in the Spanish and Portuguese media in an attempt to control the discussion on the Football Leaks upcoming publications; such stories now included direct references and denials related to the upcoming EIC publication[343].

Even if publication was about to start in the evening, in the morning EIC meeting there were requests from the project partner in the UK, *The Sunday Times*, not to start publishing before 10 pm. The newspaper feared that details of the publication would become available in the print media in UK on Saturday, a day before *The Sunday Times* is available on newsstands. EIC partners started publishing at 9 pm but some details were hold back until midnight; before 9 pm a teaser was sent out by *Der Spiegel*, as the initiator of Football Leaks project within EIC.

Over the next twenty-one days all thirteen partners had multiple stories planned for publication at different times and in different formats and languages. Because the 4th December issue of *The Sunday Times* broke information on a player that should not have become public, the French partner Mediapart asked for a new online meeting dedicated to discussing and clarifying once again the long detail list of embargoes. On 6th December, I started publishing a short internal daily newsletter detailing the embargoes of the day[344] aimed at the journalists participating in publication.

Very few issues on embargoes changed during publication: for instance *Der Spiegel*, which changed the usual deadline for their Friday evening digital product from 6 pm to 9 pm during the first day of publication to accommodate *The Sunday Times*, had decided that for costs and marketing reasons they couldn't do it anymore, so from then on the Friday deadlines were switched back from 9 pm to 6 pm.

Changes for the publication schedule could also come at the last minute, during the publication of the project, also because of legal issues. A series of stories about David Beckham, that was supposed to be published on 18th of December, were put on hold because an injunction request against *The Sunday Times* was filed on a Friday, and accepted, two days before publication. Even if not a target of the injunction, all EIC partners postponed the publication several times after 18 December, in the hope that *The Sunday Times* would fight and revert the injunction, but since nothing new happened the stories were published on the 3rd of February 2017.

Confrontation: clashes within the network, again and again

The process of drafting Football Leaks stories culminated with a meeting in mid-November, at *Der Spiegel's* newsroom in Hamburg. The meeting was dedicated solely to the planning and execution of the confrontation stage. This was a totally different meeting then all other EIC meetings, where no new findings or leads were exchanged in an organized way, since all stories were drafted and lined up for publication. The entire focus, when negotiating the confrontation calendar, was placed on scheduling premium media products, breaking news and exclusive stories. By that time, most stories had been drafted and English versions of the drafts were available for all EIC journalists to read.

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[343]   http://archive.fo/2016.12.02-091606/http://gestifute.com/public-statement-from-gestifute/?lang=en quoted by the Portugese press agency; http://archive.fo/2016.12.02-091827/http://www.elconfidencial.com/espana/2016-12-02/carvalho-falcao-hacienda-juicio-fraude-derechos-imagen_1298426/ ; and unrelated to any spinning attempt, by luck, other journalists break similar stories http://archive.fo/2016.12.01-095314/http://www.voetbalbelgie.be/nl/article.php?id=116189

[344]   Since Football Leaks project had the internal code name Maldini, the daily internal bulletin was called Maldini Confidential (sic)

The confrontation plan was prepared in order to give fair time to those who were to be exposed in the stories to respond and explain their actions or invalidate EIC stories; but it was written with an eye on the possibility that some of the questions would alert leaders in the football industry and might have a chilling effect on the high number of people involved in football who could be interviewed or asked to provide expert comments. During the time of a single work day, thirty people discussed the confrontation plan for more than fifty stories. Everybody simultaneously uploaded onto a pad hosted online their list of names that were to receive questions, and then each media partner was assigned responsibility or took ownership for sending out questions on a specific date. As a result, almost 500 names were listed. During the following days each name would become a Wiki page where questions would be gathered from all journalists interested in sending out questions. The questions were to be sent in writing, by one media organisation only, but on behalf of all EIC partners so that responses could be used by anybody in the network. All questions and responses were to be uploaded onto the Wiki pages. Clear deadlines were assigned for this operation, including when questions should be sent and what deadline for answers should be requested. The sending of questions was planned in waves following each week of publication, meaning that during the first week of publication responses for the second week of publication would come back to the partners, and so on.

One aspect about the questions was not discussed in the meeting and would cause a major tension during the following week: which language should be used. There are many international stories involving international structures with people of several nationalities and languages that had to respond to questions. Some of the media organisations which had a leading research role in such international stories, like *Der Spiegel*, needed to send questions in English to their targets in other countries, like Spain. Also, all journalists who participated with questions in the Wiki pages needed to use one language, namely English. In order to avoid a huge amount of translation work and misunderstandings, the questions were all collected in English and in the first instance responses were also requested in English. However, this led to a situation in which, for instance, a Spanish journalist would send questions in English to a Spanish company and all EIC partners expected the responses to come back in English. Just over a week after the meeting in Hamburg dedicated to confrontations there was an important clash within the network.

For most journalists in the network, the request to send questions in writing and only to take responses in writing represented a departure from business as usual – usually they would go out and talk to people and take notes. The second cause of tension was the fact that questions were sent out in a foreign language and responses were expected in that same foreign language. Lawyers with at least one partner made this objection and claimed they could be sued for not giving the real right to reply when addressing the questions in a foreign language. Lawyers with at least one other partner made the reverse objection that they could not use the responses if they did not understand the exact language and wording of the questions. For the most sensitive stories there was a compromise whereby questions were sent both in the local language as well as English, and responses were accepted in the local languages and translated to English by the journalists, where needed.

Another point of tension was that following the sending off the questions in writing, a lot of the targets started to call the journalists directly, instead of responding in writing. In some cases, important names in football and representatives of important companies started to find ways of bypassing the journalists and tried to talk directly to the managers of media partners (e.g. Spain, Portugal). The confrontation rule was to only accept responses in writing so that all partners could legally use them. Most journalists asked to change the rule and started accepting responses in direct

conversations. The compromise was that direct conversations were to be accepted only after the deadline for responses expires. This proved to be useful even years after publication, since four years after the publication there are still court trials against journalists involved in Football Leaks and criminal procedures against the companies and individuals exposed, as well as against the source of Football Leaks data.

At the end of November 300 Wiki pages were ready to host responses from various Football Leaks targets. The responses were not expected in one batch, since the questions were sent in three different batches, before each of the three publication weeks. During the first wave of questions, the journalists had to send questions ten days before the publication day. Also the questions included a large number of explanatory details about the stories' content. After the first wave of questions was sent, and just a day before the publication was to start, journalists asked to change the strategy and the joint decision was made that next batches of questions were to be sent only five days in advance of publication and would include less details. This was an attempt to stop the strategy of some PR advisers of spinning the stories with the help of competing media. Before sending out the questions and while waiting for the responses, most stories went through a process of fact-checking and legal screening (his legal process will be detailed in the next sub-section). After responses arrived, if they had enough substance, they had to be evaluated by the authors and included in the final drafts. For some stories, there was a final fact-check and legal screening. In some cases, responses were likely to change the stories in significant ways, which was expected to maybe have implications on the publication schedule.

Legal issues: national and across jurisdictions

The legal aspects can make or break a network investigative project. There are several issues at play: each country has different legislation pertaining to media and journalism and stronger or weaker mechanisms to protect journalists; the injunction system in particular works very differently from one country to another, but it is sufficient that one media partner be served an injunction for the entire network publication plan to be altered. Accordingly, for the Football Leak project there was a need for legal screening for each article, a process that not all media partners could afford to undertake. Equally important is the protection of the source, and one way to expose a source is by presenting source documents when publishing stories. With Football Leaks there was an agreement whereby the *Der Spiegel* journalist who brought the data to EIC would review and advise with the source which documents, if any, could be made public without endangering the source. More than 1,200 documents were listed by partners on a publication wish-list and only very few of them could be shown entirely. This was not a decision taken lightly by the different journalists who were used to show entire documents. A debate was organised around this question, with everyone ultimately accepting the decision, with the ultimate goal to protect the sources. Since there were many legal aspects of an investigative project working with a collection of very different leaked documents, and since everybody was already facing or expecting legal challenges after the confrontation questions were sent, EIC media partners asked their lawyers to meet online and discuss the different points of view and strategies[345]. The point of the meeting was also to create a bridge between the lawyers of the different media organisations and make available for all EIC partners their direct contacts. At that point, an injunction was issued against *El Mundo* to not use some of the data. The newspaper decided to ignore it and publish the stories regardless[346]. Just after the publication, a

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[345]   As a coordinator of EIC, I organised the meeting at the very end of November.

[346]   The injunction sparked protests from different organisations that defend journalists (https://rsf.org/en/news/spain-rsf-condemns-european-gag-order-football-leaks); criminal proceedings are started against El Mundo journalists, but the case is dropped more then a year later; different criminal investigations are brought against

Spanish judge tried to gag all other EIC media partners, even though such media partners were outside Spanish jurisdiction.

While a Spanish magistrate forbade the usage of the documents in Football Leaks, in the middle of the publication process the fiscal authorities in Spain asked *El Mundo* to share with the authorities these same source documents that formed the basis of reporting on illegal tax schemes by some of the well known names in the football industry, including players and managers. The agreement that EIC members had to sign in order to gain access to such documents stipulated that it was forbidden for any EIC member or journalist to provide documents to authorities[347]. Some journalistic cultures (Germany, Denmark) have very strong opinions in not sharing any documents with authorities, while some other journalistic cultures (UK, France, Spain) see no problem with this. EIC made the decision to not share any source documents with authorities[348].

As the publication continued, new legal threats from legal offices were made to EIC partners in Germany and the UK, and in mid-December a partial injunction was granted against *Der Spiegel* and a full prepublication gag-order against *The Sunday Times*. The injunction in the UK changed the publication plan for the entire network for the last week of Football Leaks; this gag order also prevented the journalists of *The Sunday Times* from communicating with EIC journalists, so their journalists asked that their access to our search and communication tools be suspended, leaving EIC in the situation to not be able to communicate with *The Sunday Times* journalists.

The publication of stories that fell under the injunction was delayed from the end of December to 3 February 2017. The legal pressures and legal threats continued outside the UK, and were focused on *Der Spiegel*, but went after other EIC partners as well. Not all EIC partners published the stories, but enough partners did publish so the unwanted effect was that the stories were reprinted by UK-based media the following day[349]. Parts of the injunction relating to what was already published in Europe, were successfully lifted by *The Sunday Times's* lawyers[350]. The UK media also reported on the injunction, noting that it only applied to England and Wales[351].

Even after the publication wave was done, more gag orders followed. During early March 2017, an injunction in Hamburg against *Der Spiegel* put in danger the entire Football Leaks book that was planned to appear (this was later overturned and the book was published). And finally in December 2018 a gag order in Bucharest against the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism* and *The Black Sea* ordered the takedown of a number of online stories (this gag order was nullified at the beginning of 2021[352]).

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[347]   The argument was that journalists have a high obligation towards protecting the source and they make all the details public and that such details can be used by authorities, which have a power of subpoena, to obtain all the documents they need to conduct an official investigation and to go with them in court.

[348]   *El Mundo* published that such a request has been made and mentions the obligation to the source and to EIC http://www.elmundo.es/deportes/football-leaks/2016/12/13/584eefbfca47416c388b4681.html

[349]   http://web.archive.org/web/20170204082931/https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/2781167/david-beckham-emails-space/ (later taken out); http://archive.fo/2017.02.06-123133/http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/david-beckham-raged-being-denied-9754262 ; http://archive.fo/2017.02.05-191344/http://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/celebrity-injunction-w0vgprpfc

[350]   http://www.pressgazette.co.uk/football-leaks-injunction-lifted-after-sun-and-other-titles-reveal-david-beckham-cnts-response-to-knighthood-snub/

[351]   http://archive.fo/2017.02.06-113254/https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/2789724/a-lister-gets-gagging-order-against-the-press-to-ban-reporting-on-their-personal-and-professional-life/

[352]   http://portal.just.ro/302/SitePages/Dosar.aspx?id_dosar=30200000000369837&id_inst=302

The backstage of Football Leaks

5.1.4 Network by agreement emerges

The new Legacy Network

After each publication, for some participants in a given journalistic network new opportunities arise for new partnerships and projects; for others, there are only dead ends. Depending on how each network is configured and its formal and informal power configuration, the moment after publication is presenting a 'new legacy network ', which will be different from the legacy network existing at the time the project started. The new legacy network would decide to stay the same, shrink, expand or change membership for future work. Also, the new legacy network would decide how investigative projects inside the network would function, between one or several partners, but not all network partners[353].

In the case of EIC, the Football Leaks project started with members *Der Spiegel*, RCIJ/TBS, *El Mundo, Politiken, Newsweek Serbia, Le Soir, Mediapart, Falter, L'Espresso, The Guardian*; during the early months of Football Leaks, project based partners were added: NRC, *Tages Anzeiger*, *The Sunday Times* and *Expresso*. Not all of them would go on to form the new legacy network, for different reasons. *The Guardian* and *Tages Anzeiger* started work on the EIC data but after the clash with the ICIJ in May and even after the agreement signed between *Der Spiegel* and *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, they did not come back, so they had no role in the publication of Football Leaks[354]. Both NRC and *Expresso* were offered an EIC membership, but *The Sunday Times* was not.

In the case of EIC, the end of Football Leaks was also the moment when an informal collaboration between different media and journalists started to take a more formal shape. The partners in EIC decided to form a 'non-registered association' according to German law, with the address at the newsroom of *Der Spiegel*. The 'new legacy network' which contributed both to establishing EIC and making Football Leaks happen, would have to take the decision on how to shape the partnership further. The network would enlarge or reduce the size of EIC based on such decisions and based on requests for partnerships or strategic needs. The new legacy network would mean that all future projects and all requests for partnerships would have to meet the EIC basic rule that each country would have only one media partner in the network. This is the basic condition that can be changed only by the partner in that specific country and this was indeed changed in some cases over the years (e.g. Belgium, Switzerland).

So after Football Leaks is published, there are actually fewer possibilities for expanding the EIC network, at least in certain countries, as is the case after each publication for any current investigative network. Just after the first day of publication of Football Leaks, requests for collaboration started to come from Norway, India, Mexico, Switzerland, the UK and US. After each thematic wave of publications, EIC received requests for partnerships and for sharing the data from publication specialised in those topics or genres (e.g. sport, financial, tabloid[355]) and from other countries and continents. One of the tabloids requesting a partnership actually developed arguments about why they were interested in a partnership and what they could bring to EIC. The newspaper was interested because the Beckham stories had significant impact for their type of audience; they

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[353]   For instance, at the end of October 2016, Mediapart and Le Soir publish an investigative project together, initiated during EIC meetings and information exchange, but not branded as an EIC project.

[354]   At the beginning of February 2017 *The Guardian* was asked by EIC if they wished to stay in the network – they did not respond.

[355]   Requests for partnerships came from *The Sun, Sunday Mirror* and other tabloids, especially after the stories on David Beckham were published in February 2017.

offered to share information (especially on sex crimes), to help EIC journalists with their connections and network of contacts in their specific geographic area; help with highly skilled and knowledgeable journalists, as invest time and budget to pursue leads that other newspapers let go.

After the heat of publication had dissipated, more such requests came, either direct by email or during industry events where EIC participants were present. Such requests were more focused, however, and requested access to specific data or documents. Reaching out to possible partners by EIC was discussed in the group. And here came certain surprises, because some media partners of EIC were ready to give up the competitive advantage for exclusivity in their own country[356].

Since a lot of data from South America was not being investigated because of lack of contextual knowledge, EIC tested a partnership, with The Intercept in Brazil. The same happened for work related to countries in Africa, EIC tested a partnership with ANCIR. The thinking behind these moves was that instead of increasing the number of EIC partners, especially outside its geographical focus in Europe, it would be wise to test connecting with existing networks from other continents.

Further on, a lot of effort was also put into identifying the right partner in the UK who could both contribute with investigative research and help in spreading the EIC stories to English speaking audiences[357]. This was a long process, lasting more than a year, and it was very dependent on EIC data and stories at a specific point in time; it also involved a lot of resources and travel in order to explore such strategic partnerships.

When discussing such partnerships, EIC members focused on several issues. First, there was the question of what need such a partnership would satisfy. There were effectively two main points that recurred in the discussions: the need for investigative power, meaning that the partner should be able to contribute with relevant information that other partners were unable to provide; and the need for promoting the stories and keeping the projects on the international media agenda (some refer to this as 'the echo chamber'). Second, the focus was on possible problems. Here too there were two main pain points: the partner should be significant enough to help make the EIC stories known to a wider audience, but should not take over the branding of the project or the network; and second, the network should not grow too large. Corporate media feared on their side that working with a network of journalists would make it hard to determine who has the legal responsibility for each piece of information contributed to the research that would ultimately be used by everyone.

EIC takes an institutional form

The successful delivery of the Football Leaks cross-border project led an informal group of media to take steps towards the institutionalisation of the boundaries of the EIC network. This formalised even further the new legacy network post-Football Leaks. The process of strengthening EIC's organisational form and turning it into a partnership endorsed equally by the participants was discussed in principle at the founding of EIC at the end of 2015. More than 80% of the financial burden of running EIC during 2016 was born by *Der Spiegel*. The best-known project of EIC, Football Leaks, was also initiated by *Der Spiegel*. However, the workflow, decisions and information exchanges came as contributions from all partners.

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[356]   For example, Mediapart was sharing data and working with the local https://www.mediacites.fr/ and later on *Le Soir* is bringing in EIC the Belgian paper *De Standaard*.

[357]   Partnerships with *Financial Times*, BuzzFeed and Channel 4 were explored.

At the end of 2016, during a meeting between the editors-in-chief of EIC media partners, the first request was that each media would make a financial contribution (between €5,000 and €15,000) in order to share the financial burden. Because such financial contributions could not be cashed by just one of the media partners, EIC needed a bank account. So the second request to EIC partners was to form a non-registered association, based on the existing Letter of Understanding that was the functioning document of EIC, and open a dedicated bank account for gathering membership fees and for making payments. The non-registered association would be run by a three-person board together with the coordinator[358]. The budget of EIC would be used for paying for the coordination work, as well as freelance research and IT development; this budget would not pay the journalists working for each media partner.

The Articles of Incorporation were translated and sent to all editors-in-chief by **February 2017** to be signed and sent back. The EIC's LoU was also to be signed each year and had to reflect the financial contribution for each partner. The process of gathering the signed documents from all EIC partners, documents written in English, lasted until the beginning of March 2017. It then had to be confirmed by signatures on the same documents, this time in German. This was completed only by mid June 2017. The gathering of financial contributions was dependent on establishing a bank account for EIC, but progress made was very slow and finally it was suspended in October 2017 because of bureaucratic barriers. A dedicated EIC account at *Der Spiegel* was to be used instead. The gathering of all financial contributions for EIC, for the year 2017, was to be complete only in October 2017.

During the year-long process of institutionalisation of EIC that started at the end of 2016, discussions were held with the aim of diversifying EIC and trying to involve more journalists from Eastern Europe in the network. Because the media landscape in Eastern Europe did not provide EIC partner candidates that would be both independent and financially strong enough to contribute with financial and specialised human resources matching the Western European partners, it was decided to explore the non-profit fundraising to pay for research and stories in Eastern Europe. Financial resources attracted by way of non-profit fundraising would cover a core team of independent journalists specialised in Eastern Europe. It took a year to be able to attract a first grant that would cover the work of three part-time journalists[359].

Who's benefiting from such a project

Any cross-border investigative project involving several media partners and continuing for almost a year, and publishing over a period of more than three weeks, is an important investment for everyone involved. Football Leaks is no exception. The entire production investment, be it content-related or legal work, added to the costs, and in the case of the legal fees this could have dragged on for months or even years, adding significantly to the bill.

Who benefited from this investment, and in what ways ?

To respond to this question, it must be said first that the international impact on the media agenda for any EIC network project is dependent on the national impact in each of the countries where EIC

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[358] The Board of three was composed of journalists at *Der Spiegel*, *Le Soir* and NRC; the coordinator was from RCIJ/TBS; since the non-registered association had a corresponding address at *Der Spiegel*, the magazine's financial department would accept to provide the treasurer role and prepare monthly financial reports, ready on request for EIC partners; see also https://eic.network/blog/about-us

[359] it was a grant from Adessium Foundation in Netherlands, that was paid to a fiscal sponsor of EIC, the JournalismFund NGO based in Belgium. During 2020 the fundraising efforts were discontinued.

partners are active. For some countries, especially where other important events were unfolding (e.g. a referendum in Italy, presidential elections in Austria) and where the EIC-generated stories did not have such a strong local angle, the impact was not very high. Also, EIC had no centralised communication strategy, no social media team, in fact no social media channels[360]. The website of EIC is only a listing of where each partner published what story and in what language. The thinking behind it was that EIC should channel attention towards the media partners, and not try to become a landing page for stories[361]. What is more, in the case of Football Leaks, no major English language publication ran the project's stories[362]. All of these demonstrate the intentional lack of coordination to try and create an international echo-chamber to carry the brand of EIC and its partners.

Most benefits were reaped at national level

There is the clear image benefit for the initiator of the project, who were credited in any publication related to the revelations, either by the partners in EIC or by any other media organisations – in this case *Der Spiegel*. There is also the benefit for *Der Spiegel* journalists who brought the data to *Der Spiegel* and EIC – in this case Rafael Buschmann and Michael Wulzinger – who would gain in professional capital by being able to speak in public about the project, or by publishing the book about it[363]. Unlike the case of Panama Papers, there was no known information so far from which the sources for the Football Leaks documents would benefit financially by selling data after the stories were published. On the contrary, at the time of submitting this thesis, the source of Football Leaks is awaiting trial, in jail, for a criminal investigation alleging attempt of extortion.

To date, Football Leaks stories have won no major international awards, but journalists and media involved have won national awards with stories published within the frameworks of the project. Some of those involved with the Football Leaks project also receive invitations to industry conferences to talk about the work. Again, it is difficult to track all such events since EIC has the rule that no single person or no group of persons may speak on behalf of EIC, but each journalist will speak about such work in her own country and each project initiator should speak about the specifics of that given project. Also, each media partner in EIC benefits differently from the project and all benefit together as a network. Some media partners reported receiving information or even leaked data-sets thanks to the coverage their work received during Football Leaks. Some of these turned into EIC projects. Some EIC media partners, convinced about the way of working within EIC, shared data-sets with EIC that they had before Football Leaks started, but that were not being investigated by an international group of journalists. Some of these did not go any further, but some turned into published projects[364].

There is a reverse side of this type of network publication. After the long lists of stories have run and the publication phase is completed, the network team will start other projects. In the case of EIC, some media organisations assigned other journalists to participate in projects that followed

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[360]   The @eicnetwork twitter and Facebook accounts were established only on 5th of April 2017

[361]   https://eic.network/projects/football-leaks

[362]   English language stories were published on the The Black Sea site without a pay-wall, but this constitutes a very tiny niche site: https:// theblacksea.eu/football-leaks/ ; the other publication was *The Sunday Times*, publishing only behind a pay-wall and only on two days (Sundays) out of the twenty-one publication days;

[363]   The agreement with EIC was that only Der Spiegel journalist Rafael Buschmann and his colleague Michael Wulzinger can publish a book about the project and all other partners, if they want to, can make a deal with the publisher of the book and publish national versions where they can add a local chapter

[364]   For example the COURT SECRETS project: https://eic.network/projects/court-secrets

Football Leaks, because such projects had nothing to do with sport. Accordingly, when after several months there were follow-ups or consequences based on EIC revelations (e.g. criminal indictments, investigations) it was possible that each partner media would assign beat reporters to cover them and such reporters were not necessarily aligned with EIC network goals and methodology and were perhaps unaware of the rules for crediting or dealing with information about the source. Occasionally, some media partners simply forget to credit the EIC project when they published follow-up stories. In mid-2017, one partner even published a story about a Football Leaks source and the reporter involved didn't contact the source, EIC, or *Der Spiegel*. Such events created enough tensions within EIC in order to bring about changes to the network LoU and call into question the membership of such journalists or even of media partners.

5.2. Beyond Football Leaks: limitations of the CBIJ model

The starting of EIC

The financial resources for commissioning the concept paper that would be used to create EIC and form the basis of discussion for new members, as well as the meeting trips to Hamburg in 2015 were paid for by Der Spiegel. The decision and endorsement to go with the proposed plan was taken after a joint discussion with the coordinators of investigative stories and the editor-in-chief and his deputy, in other words at the highest level of the media organisation. It was also an important step to be able to present face-to-face the idea of the EIC to selected future partners at the most important investigative journalism conferences, the Global Investigative Journalism Conference (GIJC) in 2015 and Data Harvest in 2015 and 2016[365]. It was also important to be able to arrange and attend short-term meetings to meet new partners and discuss ongoing stories. Equally important were the funds to travel to such face-to face-meetings, being free of visa restrictions and the ability to speak the languages of the group (English, German, French). The network was established by building on existent trust between journalists who previously collaborated. This inevitably led to inviting journalists and media that overlap with other networks, instead of building everything from scratch, especially because of the post-Offshore Leaks enlarged ICIJ where one of the co-founders of EIC played a coordinating role[366].

As soon as EIC started to take shape, there was an important decision to be made: EIC network boundaries were defined by a Letter of Understanding as a partnership among media partners, but within this closed field of participating media all their journalists could collaborate on all kinds of stories. A simple network project will still require significant effort from some participants. With the first EIC project, the writing of the stories took about twenty-five per cent of the project time, with at least ten per cent dedicated to fact checking and editing. Weekly calls during the project and possible daily calls during the last days of publication add to the effort as well as the need to have English drafts of stories that all partners can use, if needed.

Tensions shape networks. With EIC, the first tensions that appeared were related to publication times before publishing the first project. Publication times are set by a larger machinery, including

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[365] To attend Data Harvest my travel cost was sponsored in exchange of being a speaker; for GIJC my university sponsored my research travel allowance

[366] https://www.icij.org/investigations/offshore/about-project-secrecy-sale/ The explanation of the ICIJ overlaps is that being an ICIJ member I was either able to witness some collaboration skills and level of professionalism during ICIJ projects, or because trusted journalists were recommended to become ICIJ members by myself.

more departments than just the journalists involved in research: marketing, IT, legal. Publication deadlines are hard to change to accommodate the distinctive wishes of each of the partners. Previous experiences in other networks show usually that the larger the partner is, the most likely it is to set the rules. So having this previous experience, the agreed rule with EIC was to just listen to the initiator of the project who would have the final word on the publication schedule.

The second tension, that could have even stopped EIC and Football Leaks, was the conflict with ICIJ and *Süddeutsche Zeitung* that began in May 2016. At that point, almost half of the EIC partners faced choosing between ongoing work with the Panama Papers and the ICIJ or starting to work with the unknown project Football Leaks and the newly-established EIC. The conflict was resolved with an agreement in June and informed future decisions within EIC relating to the growing of the network, the design of its own technological tools and communication with journalists and media partners.

The work on Football Leaks

The economics of the time spent at different stages of the cross-border investigative project remains consistent from a small project like the investigation into the arms trade (three months in total) to a large project like Football Leaks (eight months in total). More than seventy per cent is spent on research, where raw information (leaked source documents) is enriched by the participants with background, context and outside information. With Football Leaks, journalists were given total freedom to find their leads and stories and refine the direction of the investigation based on their own interests and knowledge. The source of the leak did not present to the group any leads or hypotheses, and neither did the initiators of the project. Research topics grew organically and tasks were not assigned; help was requested from time to time on specific leads from specific partners, but participation to research was mostly volunteered by those who felt they are the best fit to assist. For this project, self-hosted and self-built or customised tools were used to perform searches and information exchanges.

A few journalists, especially in Eastern Europe worked for free, a few had some part-time agreements to participate with EIC, and most of the other participants were overworked staffers, some with resource conflicts within their own company, some with parallel beats to cover; all had to choose to focus on specific stories but some stayed so focused that they did not share much with the others in the network (especially in the context of the Anglo-Saxon press).

Publication: embargoes and confrontation

The production phase of Football Leaks was much shorter than the research phase, only about twenty-five per cent including planning and executing research outside the data-set, as well as confronting targets of stories, drafting and writing stories. This production phase was a much more intense phase, however, with more energy invested in negotiating and reaching agreements related to the perfect publication schedule. Publication dates are hard to agree upon and each story may have to leave some details for another day so as not to clash with the publication plans of others. Also, the publication timing is exposed to the international agenda, or to unforeseen breaking news stories, and to the spin stories prepared by PR advisors of investigative targets. With a fresh network and with journalists and media involved for the first time (zero network experience), there are more calls from the daily news operations to change the publication date. A lot of energy and effort goes towards convincing them not to publish a national scoop for the greater good of the project, but

practice shows that single breaking news stories from the competition do not actually have any effect on the network publication of tens of stories over a period of several weeks. Discussion around publication shows that traditional media logic based on breaking news (scoop) will always clash with the network logic (publish over a longer period of time, i.e. several weeks). However, experience with Football Leaks also shows that publishing tens of stories in a dozen of languages in a network over a long period of time creates an echo-chamber effect that makes irrelevant the breaking of individual stories by individual competing media outlets. There is a lot of room for exposure to being out-scooped as one media partner in one single media market when joining a network publication plan stretching over several weeks. But then in the existing media landscape of active investigative networks, there is no possibility of being out-scooped as an international network publishing in a dozen of countries over several weeks. EIC's project had problems with secrecy from day one; but looks like spinned articles are not gaining readership in the middle of the storm. There are strategies developing for PR specialists advising targets of such cross-border investigations, especially in provoking news that would spin the main breaking story, but such strategies cannot deal with an entire network. If competing media have encouraged EIC partners to discuss publishing in advance, legal issues have pushed back the publication of stories, sometimes to the point that stories will never come out. The ethical and professional obligation to confront future targets of revelations in due time, with a detailed account of what is set to be published, and the complexity of some football related stories, make journalists send questions well in advance of publication. This has led to serious legal harassment, threats, attempts to intervene and stop publication at senior editorial level, as well as injunctions.

A Spanish judge tried to stop these stories from be published, first in Spain and then across the whole of Europe, in a move seen by Reporters Without Borders as 'an attempt to censor on a continental scale' (RSF, 2016). Legal steps like injunctions can be ignored or can delay the publication of stories by a specific media outlet in a specific context. However, in the context of a network such legal steps cannot prevent a story from being published entirely, even if it will only be published at a later stage or with different media outlets in different countries. They nevertheless still have an impact in the jurisdiction where the publication of the story was prevented in the first place[367].

One observation is that if the injunction is not contested immediately, everybody is better off publishing according to the existing plan instead of delaying. Moreover, the strategy in Football Leaks was to delay the threat of the injunction through different tactics, but it turned out that injunctions should have been tested earlier to have enough time to prepare for fighting them in court.

Operational secrecy

Football Leaks seem to have had a bad start in terms of secrecy: the conflict with ICIJ meant that many more journalists outside of EIC had to find out about the project. Some data from the Football Leaks source was in print or online at the beginning of 2016, before the project was discussed with EIC. For certain reasons, and it seems that this is indeed the case, there needs to be discipline concerning keeping publication plans secret. At the end of the project, public declarations from some media organisations involved in the project, trying to promote what was coming out soon,

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[367] *The Guardian* makes the connection between ST and EIC stories, saying this made the injunction useless: http://web.archive.org/web/20170206215129/https://www.theguardian.com/football/2017/feb/06/hacked-david-beckham-emails-renders-injunction-worthless

made it easy for competitors to publish a little bit in advance[368]. Also, EIC partners' publishing of stories subject to the injunction filed by David Beckham in non-English languages early on a Friday evening landed these stories in print in the UK media on the Saturday morning.

After publication

There are a lot of expectations from those who invest trust, effort and considerable resources in a CBIJ project. Not communicating and managing such expectations can lead to crises, especially after the project is at its end, and can influence subsequent networking projects, exclude partners or even dismantle a network. Lack of internal communication within the partner organisations can have the same outcomes. When assessing Football Leaks, media partners focus on impact and on how expectations of success were met. Through this evaluation, two categories of strengths are sought in partners: on one hand, the power to investigate and contribute to the network; on the other hand, the power to create an echo-chamber for the network's output (thus creating an international echo-chamber). Participants in Football Leaks evaluate impact based on the national media echo-chamber (if other media outlets pick up the story or not), based on how well it was situated in the media agenda compared to important political events (such as elections) or with unforeseen breaking news (attacks, accidents, etc). However, they also evaluate impact based on the number of stories and their availability – effectively based on the work published in English by the English language partner. If there is no important English language partner that is publishing daily on the project, the project has no traction on the international media scene.

A problem specific to one part of Europe is that the media in Eastern Europe only quotes the established media names in the network – they are unwilling to promote local or regional media partners or journalists.

Observing Football Leaks almost two years after publication shows that the rules of the game are forgotten by partners after publication, especially those relating to crediting the project work when publishing follow-up stories or news related to reactions by authorities.

The existence of the network depends on financial resources from between eight and fifteen partners. With each publication there are fewer possibilities for expanding a network, but more possibilities for expanding the network within the existing boundaries, meaning within partner newsrooms, on more bilateral stories or technological tools or marketing the network. After publication, there is no system in place to expand EIC based on requests from other media.

But if the situation seems to get blocked, there are unexpected de-blocking decisions to be made. A year after Football Leaks was over, at the end of 2017, not all EIC partners could keep up with the network: either due to a lack of human resources or too many international stories. Some had to quit their membership in EIC, leaving room for EIC to explore new partnerships.

Sum up roles for communication platforms

Football Leaks or EIC would not have existed without the two support tools and a technology team dedicated to the group: the search tool and the information exchange platform. The tools used by EIC under Football Leaks were (and are) not enterprise IT tools offered by the media partners. They

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[368]   On 16 December, *El Confidential* broke a story about Doyen, possibly because the director of *El Mundo* talked in public about our publication
         plans in a radio interview in Portugal; the story was due the next day.

were self-hosted, self-developed or customised. At first the group was offered the possibility to just have a clone of the raw data-set so everybody could have a copy and perhaps use it to perform searches with different tools. It was a significant display of trust for *Der Spiegel* to make the data available in such a way. Not everybody embraced this opportunity, however: a number of partners just wished to gain access to an online search engine where data is already processed and ready to search by keywords. Data was processed in waves and new revisions of the processed data were offered on a monthly basis. This was due to the fact that the search tool was being developed while Football Leaks project was still ongoing, and some file types were not recognised for indexing, and were thus not available for free search retrieval. Accordingly, even if the data-set was the same and available for browsing, the quantity of searchable material was growing.

Both tools therefore needed to be running continuously in order to satisfy the need to search and share findings, and later sharing the organisation of work. Both required maintenance and further development, and both tools proved to be something of an addiction for the journalists: the more data was offered for analyses, the more findings were produced and the more information exchange is happened, thus increasing the appetite for more data and more searching (which could also have an anxiety effect on participating journalists and create an addictive pattern). Both tools had huge limitations or tradeoffs (for instance making the system keep less data about users also makes the system less capable of offering user-friendly features, like search history and bookmarking results). It suffices to mention here that the architecture of the tools was informed by analysing what was available with other existing networks, including the ICIJ. The decision on how to make the technological architecture support the journalists collaborating within a decentralised structure was informed by the early conflict with the ICIJ in May 2016, when some journalists found out about the possibility that their search history logs may have been archived and consulted by the administrators of the system they were using for free, and the possibility of being locked out of a production system based on unilateral and un-transparent decisions in the middle of their contribution to the Panama Papers cross-border project.

The network-dedicated tools were used in combination with classic communication tools: email with PGP, newsletter, voice conference.

CBIJ - a difficult model to follow

The pre-Football Leaks assessment showed that a purely synthetic investigative project (Weapons of Terror) did not work unless there was a high motivation from at least one participant in the team who could also provide documents on top of the network research. This is an important phase during people get to know each other and everybody is positioning and defining herself (as active, passive, fast, slow, as coming late to meeting, contributing good documents, and so on).

The EIC Network grows and lives on a constant feed of new documents, databases and data collections. The journalistic networks digests such documents step by step (not too many at a time, allowing it to grow organically, not before each knows who can do what, with no 'dumping' of documents); it cannot integrate such a feed without proper tools that grow together with the document feed, focused on specific real-life needs. The economy of the Football Leaks project from the point of view of the EIC network (not discussing here the point of view of a given media partner) was as follows: seventy-five per cent of the thirty four weeks of the project are dedicated to research the data and developing the tools; twenty per cent on production (drafting stories, confrontation, publication); five per cent on meetings and marketing; sixty people were involved in the core team and among them lead reporters wishes to have their own story and share documents;

reporters who did not contribute with information wishes to have access to a central package in English. Another conclusion is that when creating the network around Football Leaks and when expanding the network after Football Leaks, unexpected limitations apply.

Based on my observation as an acting coordinator of this network before, during and after Football Leaks, there are two ways of expanding EIC. One is by requests coming from media organisation or journalists outside EIC who are interested in the data. Two, is by EIC reaching out to possible strategic partners, or interesting groups or countries; the reaching out can be either for specific projects (project-based partnerships) or for becoming a full EIC member. Based on my observation as an acting coordinator of this network, the requirements when discussing the expanding of EIC are as follows: trust in reporting, trust that the reporting of partners will not bring liability and trust in resistance to legal threats, legal harassment and the capacity to fight in court; the capacity to share information back to the network; the capacity to keep the story in the headlines with follow-ups; English language partners are needed as global amplifiers, but they may conflict with the wish of each media partner to be the media outlet of reference in their respective national markets (if there is one single opportunity for the national competition to quote anybody else but the national member of a network, they will do it); the capacity to respect the embargoes and the branding of the project and give clear credit to the project name, the initiator and the EIC.network (as opposed to publishing earlier than agreed or not using the project name and credit, like it happened in the case of Football Leaks with The Sunday Times who named the project 'Football Files ' and later with Reuters who named the project 'The Soccer Files '). Such a bundle of requirements live little options for expand ing an investigative network.

The conflict with the ICIJ in May 2016 is a clear case in point for how limited options for building cross-border networks for investigative journalism are. The same goes for the agreement made in order to get out of the blockage: according to the agreement brokered by the ICIJ, each media partner that is part of two different cross-border investigative projects with two different networks has to assign different people to the projects and keep a firewall between these people and the data their knowledge.

The Football Leaks project was running as EIC was developing as an organisation. It takes a long time to set up such a new institutional form, even with the involvement and backing from the top management at all media partners involved. Even if the work done to build EIC as an organisation from scratch while doing a project like Football Leaks was done with minimum investment, because the institutionalisation process takes requires so many different steps over a long time frame, important financial resources are still needed. All these ingredients for doing a cross-border project like Football Leaks add to the costs: tools, applications, code and maintenance, hardware for self-hosting, staff costs and the cost of travel for meetings. For most media it is a very expensive effort to be part of such a network; for others it is simply prohibitive.

Football Leaks' publication problems with legal injunctions show that if it was not a cross-border network publishing in several independent jurisdictions, then one single paper would not have managed to do it. However, this case proves also that even if network cross-border investigative journalism is a powerful tool, it is simply not affordable or accessible for everybody.

Chapter 6. DISCUSSING CBIJ

I use the definition of cross-border investigative journalism (CBIJ) as a critical and in-depth journalistic process where the producers, users and subjects do not share a common national orientation, language, culture, discipline, socio-political background and similar frameworks of journalism. This is based on my theoretical framework and drawing on Reese (2007) who is pointing towards the levels of analysis needed in the case of global journalism. To understand where to look for CBIJ power relationships and to help clarify and address questions related to exclusion, I use the proposed 'hierarchy of influences' levels-of-analysis model and follow narratives and claims that tie networks together (White, 2008). Rees's conceptualisation of levels of analysis, from the micro to macro level, deals with the individual, routines and organisational, extra-media and ideological levels, with 'each successive level viewed as subsuming the one(s) prior'. The claims, actions and limitations of CBIJ participants - the main units of analysis in this study - were collected with regard to their interaction with, first, CBIJ issues of access control and exclusion, and second, the six steps of CBIJ processes. So this chapter will discuss findings relevant to the initial research questions around the power relationships of CBIJ, making use of the concepts reviewed in chapter one.

Chapter three showed what are the most prominent voices, the conventional narratives, as well as the practices and tools of CBIJ.Such findings and their implications are discussed here, focusing on the voices and narratives of CBIJ that are pushed out of the conventional positivist picture of the field. Chapter four showed that behind the public account of a landmark CBIJ project delivered by a notorious global investigative network and praised for culminating a shift in journalism, there is a gap in knowledge, and the implications of this gap are discussed here. The unknown aspects uncovered and implications related to the exclusion process involved in such projects highlight the boundaries of this field. This includes the power struggle shaped by the race for exclusivity and media competition and the capture by digital infrastructures and by the non-profit industry. Chapter five showed a further dive towards filling in the knowledge gap related to communication infrastructures configuring a CBIJ project from start to publication. The findings show the importance and limitations of meeting arenas and infrastructures in the realm of governance and technological possibilities. Among other things, the chapter focuses on the differences between traditional investigative journalism and its spin-off, the cross-border investigative journalism. The discussion focuses also on how practices differ between network-based collaborations and the traditional news industry.

Journalism is considered an ideology, with its 'five ideal-typical core values, namely, public service, objectivity, autonomy, immediacy and ethics ' (Deuze, 2014, p285) so the sub-field of CBIJ is an ideology as well, with its Atlantic values of objectivity standards and claim of truth telling, speaking true to power and exposing wrongdoing through data work and information exchange across borders. Power analysis should focus on both political economy but also on ideology (set of standards, real or propagandistic). Having access in a network is gaining a position of power, since a network builds around a secret data-set, a super collection of myriads of data sources. Maintaining such access is to submit to the power of those controlling the access. Simply transferring the Atlantic model of investigative journalism at a global level of interactions between journalists who do not share the same nationality or location would be the easy way to explain networked investigative journalism. Some predicted this type of journalism will emerge and will require reporters the same core competencies as those used in the legacy media framework (Bardoel and Deuze, 2001). So the aim of this discussion is to help advance future research directions towards what is possible beyond the Atlantic journalistic model, the possibility of other such models to

become networked and different networks to complement each-other. Furthermore, this discussion is looking at the core journalistic competencies needed, especially considering the extra challenges caused by technology taking a role of governance, as well as the many implications of putting different models, organizations and groups to work together at large international scale.

6.1. The 'leak capture '

Before diving into applying the theoretical concepts reviewed to this discussion (chapter one), the need of this type of work should be discussed first. There is a growing significance and prominence at global level of cross-border investigative journalism. Panama Papers and Football Leaks are just two of such projects, involving hundreds of journalists and media, with Panama Papers wining the Pulitzer Prize in 2017. Such projects inspire journalists who gather in high numbers at international conferences[369] to hear about this practice of cross-border investigative journalism done by various networks in size and scope.

So why is this type of critical discussion needed ? A growing body of literature, authored mostly by practitioners in this field, is describing the development of the methods for this journalistic practice. What is missing is the contextualization, conceptualization and deeper understanding of cross-border investigative journalism. The positivist approach of the existing public accounts, including academic research, are overwhelming and they do not match my own experience as a long-time practitioner. There has been little attempt for a critical approach and deeper understanding of power inequalities and limitations of cross-border investigative networks (Alfter, Candea, 2019). The claims of stakeholders in this field are grand. It can be resumed to no less than a shift in the way journalism is done. Networking, radical sharing, collaboration, innovation, philanthropy, data journalism and now artificial intelligence (AI) - all these buzzwords are ingested by an emerging field without proper considerations related to unintended consequences of their use. CBIJ and data are praised as the new thing that is shifting journalism. As an early adopter and a long time practitioner, while recognising the potential, I cannot ignore the tensions that I witness, which currently are kept at the level of gossip material among practicing journalists, but for sure not publicly discussed, well documented or thoroughly researched.

A concept named 'design justice ', a concept that deals with a way 'out of the matrix of domination ' (Costanza-Chock, 2020), shows how important is to acknowledge that when building socio-technical systems the process comes with a build-in bias from the people who are involved in decision making, and those people are coming from a status of privilege, are in the power position of distributing penalty and privileges to other individuals and groups, and therefor will design systems to perpetuate their position of privilege. The issues related to the 'matrix of domination ' becomes highly visible when looking closer at the CBIJ with a different standpoint than the conventional positivist view. Telling it how it is in this field, from a practitioner point of view, depends on the position one has: that of privilege (e.g. a white male working with a large non-profit having a successful fundraising operation, in a dependency relationship with the very few large donors out there; a trainer, consultant, expert, conference or network organiser professional; a journalist staffer for a US or Western European media) or that of lack of privilege (freelancer, 'fixer', small NGO operator, non-white, non-US or non-Western European). Practitioners in this field do not come from nowhere and start from a clean slate, instead they do have a background and

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for the most privileged ones that background has been preconfigured during the last century by traditional mainstream media operations and refined in the last five or six decades by an Atlantic model of journalism. Such privileged and influential practitioners also do not enjoy the freedom to re-invent journalism from scratch, but they are predetermined by a various number of dependencies and internal and external forces at play, beyond their reach and sometimes beyond their knowledge. Critical inquiry is what is missing from the existing public discussion on understanding cross-border investigative journalism.

As a practitioner and participant in this emerging field, I had a hard time to understand and describe the power relationships of CBIJ. It looked like informal networks build bottom-up two decades ago have been forced-pushed into hierarchical organizations and hierarchical tech platforms (usually US based and conceived) and I realise that beyond the niceties of conferences and projects, in the backstage two important forces where at play. First, there was still a fierce battle over exclusive stories. Second, a class of privilege has emerged: on top are the bureaucrats being employed in the non-profit supporting industry as well as the staffers for the Global North media, and at the bottom are the CBIJ practitioners who are part of the gig economy, doing freelancing or working as local 'fixers ' for the Global North media or non-profit industry.

Exclusivity: old habits die hard

One thing to recognise with any CBIJ publication is that competing on exclusivity did not go away. Scoops and exclusivity are still the rules of the game and the publication of cross-border investigations still follows a traditional media 'scoop' approach. In this sense, 'cross-border' does not mean transnational or global facets of a story put together, but rather that any given media partner looks to be the first to break the news in a given market across-borders and joining a 'cross-border' project simply means to break the news simultaneously in several different markets. Since in cross-border investigations multiple participants work together, it means that more media partners want simultaneously to be the first to publish stories, and thus conflicting publishing schedules arise and compromises are discussed.

It is interesting to observe in the cross-border investigation case studies how deeply ingrained in the reflexes of journalists themselves this exclusivity model is. When, after the early stages of an investigative project, during which everybody shares and exchanges information freely within the network, the network moves on to the next phase and starts producing stories, the media companies' need for exclusivity becomes a central preoccupation (EIC, 2016). The early stages of cross-border information exchange are continuous. During the next stage of preparing for production the work flow changes due to the fact that publication, even in cross-border investigative projects, is scoop-based. For both commercial and non-profit media, information want's to be first. In this sense, geopolitical changes during the last decades have actually had little effect on the logic of publication. Even if empires such as the Soviet Union have collapsed, borders have been lifted, as in the expansion of European Union, and publication markets have been disrupted by technology, CBIJ media partners still have the same desire to be the first to publish given stories. The need for exclusivity follows the logic of selling advertisement and copies or gaining online subscribers and followers – or in the non-profit realm, it is about gaining more metrics to report to donors and winning more financial support from them – is a pure media industry business need. However, there are no clear data points showing that this is still a rational decision in terms of business strategy. But it could serve other reasons, such as the concern to maintain or build up a brand and grow in credibility so it can fight with other powerful institutions.

In practice this leads to unsolvable situations where compromise is needed. And one of such compromise is to become more niche and local in reporting, instead of regional and transnational (e.g. to be the first in a specific language, or medium, or geographical area) a counter intuitive result of the cross-border intention.

Disrupting journalists and their practices, not media organisations

As chapter three showed, access to meaningful labour was one of the big early promises of the emerging CBIJ, a labour market for solid investigators open for collaborations who had no media to work with. But the idea of labour in the CBIJ realm has changed. Today cross-border investigative journalism networks rely on work done by very different actors in terms of their employment status, from very different locations in terms of their social protection or access to paid work. 'During the 1980s and 1990s, news media companies were among the most profitable companies in the United States, regularly earning 20 to 30 percent profit margins (O'Shea, 2011). The explosion of the number of non-profit investigative organizations, especially in the U.S. and Europe, has coincided with the collapse of the number of jobs available in the media industry: 'over the past decade, full-time newspapers journalism jobs in the United States have been reduced from 60,000 to 40,000' (Downie and Schudson, 2009). There is a limited number of jobs created by non-profit organisations but this is insignificant compared to the total number of job losses. And such new jobs are either in the management realm (organising journalists or grants) or they are limited to freelance positions (not staffer positions).

This implies a number of significant dependencies. For instance, a given journalist in a given country is the intermediary between her media and a given global network for investigative journalism, such as the ICIJ. She cannot afford to lose that privileged bridging position, so she is in a relationship of dependency. When one considers labour in journalism, there is a blur between the journalistic profession and the media business, or between labour and production. Journalists part of such networks are also trying to replicate the US non-profit model at their national level, running very small non-profit operations and are expected by media donors to become 'self-sustainable', and they seem to be trying to behave as entrepreneurs or micro-businesses, internalising at the individual level a mixture of both the craft of the profession and the reflexes of the media business (e.g. scoop obsession). Because nobody at network level takes the responsibility for the payment, social benefits, insurance and protection of journalists entering this collaboration schemes, such journalists need to focus on ways of monetizing their position, experimenting with entrepreneurship, pushing for personal branding. Their free labour is used not only by the paid network managers, but also by the paid journalist staffers active in the network - so a large number of participants in cross-border journalistic networks seem simply to be contributing to the global gig economy, letting commercial media and non-profit structures to commodify their free labour[370]. These two important aspects of competition on exclusivity and the gig economy type of journalistic work and how they play out in CBIJ have been both illustrated in the case studies described in chapters four and five.

The hypes

The methodology of cross-border investigative journalism shows that publication is happening through already existing outlets, but it hints that networking and the joint investigation both rely

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[370] Further readings from other fields outside CBIJ do apply and may be relevant: Facebook should pay all of us , http://web.archive.org/web/20150816101037/http://newyorker.com/business/currency/facebook-should-pay-all-of-us (Wu, 2015) and 'pay with data, attention instead of money' 'we are their customers, but we are also their products, ultimately resold to others' (Tufekci, 2015) and Inventing the Future – Postcapitalism and a World Without Work (Srnicek, Williams, 2015)

heavily on communication in small or large groups across different countries, languages and backgrounds. Such communication happens via face-to-face (conferences, projects meetings) or mediated (virtual newsrooms that allow one to look for and share findings) infrastructures. Such infrastructures pertain high costs to organize, develop, secure, attend and maintain. This means that cross-border investigative projects are costly enterprises, and the barriers to build such enterprises are high, even if in theory anybody can do it. With the news industry's ever shrinking budgets, the bill for meetings, communication and information sharing is offloaded onto the non-profits. The non-profit investigative industry, in order to attract funds to be able to offer networking services free of charge to commercial media, has to report metrics of audience and lacking the mainstream publication amplifiers push the results of the investigations into the news industry, targeting the largest news actors.

Network hype

A hype around mathematical models of network theory and the social network analysis and the related impressive graphs showing hairballs of connections has taken over both CBIJ practice and CBIJ analysis. In his discussion about the ICIJ Swiss Leaks investigation, former CPI director Bill Buzenberg brings up the Metcalf's Law claiming that the value of a journalistic network is proportional to the square of the number of users because of number of possible communications: 'The Swiss Leaks collaboration, with some 170 reporters, had the potential for nearly 29,000 communication combinations in the unlikely event that everyone made use of every connection. But using even a fraction of that network power proved itself many times during the complex investigation '. But this is not the real value, since in the CBIJ realm we are looking at different people and organisations that overlap in different networks because 'individuals generally have cross-cutting relationships to a multitude of groups ' (Lazer and Katz, 2004). So what this thesis is retaining from the networks literature and the Metcalf Law, however, is actually the power of the network effect, not something to do with massive information exchanges, but something to do with a few CBIJ structures growing bigger then most of small CBIJ structures out there. This network effect manifests itself when no major disruption arises, meaning that CBIJ networks will continue to be based on the 'rich get richer principle'. Accordingly, they will move towards a star network architecture and in the best case having a few different strong hubs (in which a lower per cent of the nodes hold a higher per cent of the connections). This partially explains why certain networks become bigger in terms of participants after each publication project – that is, if such networks choose to grow bigger.

Awards and stage celebrity

Equally important in CBIJ is the journalistic capital represented by the membership in networks, reflected in awards and participation in industry events like the Global Investigative Journalism Conference. This is a further overlap between the journalistic field and the field of donors, since attending such conferences and being awarded a prize is again in the hands of the same very few people.

The impact of cross-border investigative journalism also has correlatives in the industry created around journalistic awards. One only needs to look at the websites of major non-profit investigative organisations and read the long list of awards that is carefully kept up to date. Any journalist would post their most important awards on their profile page so they are at least as visible as their biggest published stories. This is giving rise to a 'celebrity cult', not unlike the one present in the world of computer hacking, and mostly visible at international conferences. 'Making the rise of celebrities

possible inevitably ensures the creation of a celebrity cult' (Riemens, 2016)[371]. Reviewing recent developments and crises in the world of computer hacking may shed light on how such a trend is impacting upon the cross-border networks created around investigative projects, since a celebrity cult is also dependent on some existent power relationship. One place where this celebrity cult is visible is at the Global Investigative Journalism Conferences (GIJC) where highly decorated journalists are speakers and several awards are handed out on a central stage. The celebrity cult starts from top down; for instance, the director of the GIJN, who is the co-organiser of the GIJN, took over the stage literally by forming a music band (The Muckrackers) and playing as one of the main events during the global conferences. There is a whole body of work on awards and their importance, how they influence publication schedules and how the growing number of awards is showing a 'sustained willingness, even as intensified obligation, on the part of journalists and others to accept the purported equivalency between cultural prizes and cultural value' (English, 2005)[372].

Non-profit buzz

Historically, the early biggest players in philanthropic engagement towards non-profit investigative journalism have been various U.S. governmental agencies (USAID, US State Department) and the private US Open Society Foundations. Various initiatives have access to a wide range of different resources coming from private philanthropy or governmental developing programs, to work within a specific country or international, in order to advance the model of Western democracy by way of supporting a single Western style of journalism. However, in recent years, with the rise of new wealth coming from the technological industry in Silicon Valley, the top tech companies or entrepreneurs behind successful platforms are starting to invest or donate in the field of investigative journalism as well (Amazon, eBay, Google, Facebook). Donors in the CBIJ field create an important 'extra pressure' (Reese) that has a very important role in the analysis of cross-border journalism. As a practitioner of non-profit CBIJ and a participant observer in the overlapping cases detailed in chapter four and five and beyond, I can attest to the fact that the principal source of pressure on any non-profit initiative are the donors. The smaller in number they are and the more money they give, the more influence they can exert on how the organisation is shaped or the topics it reports on. Even 'hands-free' grants still have a structure to follow when applying for funds and when reporting how money is spent. And all donors employ strategies to evaluate success and measure impact, so if an organisation aims at being further funded, it needs to gear their work towards the success metrics of a given sponsor. Among the conclusions of a recent paper that asks whether charitable foundations can solve the journalism crisis is that 'media organizations dependent on foundation project-based funding risk being captured by foundation agendas and thus less able to investigate the issues they deem most important' (Benson, 2017). Private funding is simply mimicking what the most powerful state actors are trying to do in the field of agenda capturing by means of grantmaking[373]. One of the case studies presented here showed unprecedent direct influence in the case of one major donor organization in this field of CBIJ, The Omydiar Network (now Luminate), which was set up as a 'philanthropic investment firm' by e-Bay tech founder Pierre Omydiar. The organisation donated four and a half million dollars to the ICIJ in 2017. Soon after that, one of Omydiar Network's managing partners was given a seat on the new

371   http://archive.fo/2017.03.31-194254/https://cryptome.org/2016/06/appelbaum-rise-fall-celebrities.pdf

372   The Economy of Prestige, James F. English for more background on the prize frenzy in the larger sociohistorical scheme and how awards become a capital in a given field, something to exchange.

373 http://web.archive.org/web/20150819110149/http://gijn.org/2015/08/19/journalism-or-propaganda-lets-help-russian-media-the-right-way/ This criticism comes from the editor of OCCRP, the majority of whose funding comes from the U.S. government by way of USAid or US State Department

ICIJ Board of Directors[374]. Evaluation and metrics of impact are the leverage tools for an 'extra pressure ' on CBIJ. The importance of metrics when evaluating the work of investigative non-profits is pushing the actors in the field towards seeking an audience as big as possible. In the current media landscape, this fact implies two directions for non-profits: first, seeking partnership with big media organisations in order to reach their audience and second, using existing social media platforms. Worth mentioning that partnerships with traditional media organisations come in a context of traditional news operations becoming more dependent on the large social media platforms in order to survive (Bell and Owen, 2017). Both directions mean only a growing dependency for nonprofits on platforms. On the other hand, the economics of the traditional news industry makes cross-border investigative journalism prohibitive (Hamilton, 2004) and creates a second layer of dependency on non-profit actors who provide for free the cross-border research power, as well as edited and legally screened editorial packages. This leads to even more cross-dependency and concentration.

Face to face meetings and CBIJ power structures

Besides comparing online tools and platforms for CBIJ interactions, this research looked at a few details related to face to face meetings in CBIJ projects. All relevant descriptive literature by practitioners mentions the crucial importance for face to face meetings in CBIJ projects (Walker, Obermayer, Buzenberg). They speak about building trust and discussing relevant issues in a different way than just online. Indeed, research shows that face-to-face meetings, especially outside organisations such is the case with CBIJ projects, is not redundant to new communication technologies, because each does something else, where face-to-face is important for solidarity at distance and unity, while online communication can be important for divergence and diversity (Kavada, 2010). So even if not a central piece of this research, I will briefly discuss and compare the details on face to face meetings of Panama Papers (some details in section 4.1.2) and Football Leaks (some details in section 5.1.2) to help add some aspects of understanding to CBIJ power relationships.

What is the setup of CBIJ meetings telling us ?

Haug (2013) is drawing on Ahrne and Brunson's (2011) distinction between organization, institution and network looking at how such social orders stay in tension shaping partial organization through the decision process (instead that of hierarchy), distinguishing between a meeting as event and a meeting arena as the underlying structure for the event to take place: which has it's own purpose, duration, range of topics to discuss, type of participants, rules of conduct, style, specific meeting place, setting arrangements. Another useful lens is the 4 flows analytical tool, which is looking at communicative constitution of organisation and involves the stages of 'membership negotiation, self-structuring, activity coordination, and institutional positioning '. Organizational texts and communication flows are created and recreated. It is noted that such approaches sometimes may not see the larger issues of power structures and control (Miller, 2015) but the approach is nevertheless useful providing structure to observations and data collected. Looking at the meeting arenas of Panama Papers and Football Leaks as partial organisations using the lens of the 4 flows, we see that they can explain historically the future evolutions towards full organizations of both ICIJ and EIC, and they can predict what different shapes each would take. Remember, at the time of both Panama Papers (2015-2016) and Football Leakst (2016) none of the two was an organisation

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yet. ICIJ was just a program of the parent organisation Center for Public Integrity (CPI), and EIC was an emerging informal collaboration between several media.

Membership negotiation for Panama Papers is a highly centralised affair: outside the commercial interests of *SZ* in the case of Panama Papers, one single person (deputy director Marina Walker) is the gatekeeper to ICIJ projects, and this is made clear in numerous public occasions that I quoted in previous chapters. The membership bar is to be'nice ' - a vague enough term to let the decision be unaccountable for. Nothing in the life of Panama Papers is left at the control of others but ICIJ central command to coordinate the structure, the activities and the institutional positioning inside and outside of participating journalists and media. Offering to a private media institution like *SZ* for free and without conditions the entire network of ICIJ, the previous networking know-how, tools and the brand name - all of which was build in 20 years by a large number of various contributors - shows that Panama Papers was something else then the usual ICIJ projects. The documented conflict with EIC and information revealed in chapter four also showed that ICIJ central command would sacrifice ICIJ members and staff, other media and the parent organisation CPI over total control, which then was translated into the power of spinning off from CPI, capturing the data-bases and brand name of ICIJ, the network and establishing a new organizaiton from scratch. The central communication flow and the lack of openly involvement of the ICIJ larger membership in discussing the creation of the spin off, as well as the future organisational texts (bylaws, boards, membership rules) continued to be a closed business.

EIC Football Leaks shows a configuration of wide involvement in decision making about membership (any media was free to bring the journalists of their choice as long as they follow the rules of engagement; new media partners would need to be recommended by EIC members and accepted first by the initiator of a specific project, and then by the other partners) and about the communication processes (open agenda, planning, research) and tools (wikis and pads, open chat rooms, raw data access, possibility of migrating data to other systems as long they were secure etc). Also, coordination on my side was more of a guiding activity, showing different possibilities based on experience with other networks and taking informed decisions in a group, following written guidelines and governance documents that were open for modifications post-project. Last but not least, EIC was not owning a publication platform of stories, thus not cannibalising attention to stories of others, but simply centralise on the organisational website the links towards original content published by partners. Last but not least, each initiator could speak on behalf of the project at conferences, in other words there was no central voice and representation on the inside and outside in terms of institution. Such configurations led EIC at the end of 2017 to become a non-registered association and a network by agreement. Even if governance documents (workflow, letter of agreement) are not heavily and often redacted, they did evolve and changed, including phrasing contributed by individual EIC journalist. At the end of each year, such modifications are presented to the editors-in-chief of media partners and they sign the new network by agreement for the year that follows.

Even if meetings face to face supposed to built trust, I find that in the realm of CBIJ they actually reinforce a system: either one of trust, or one of subordination to a central command. Such meetings rather work to produce solidarity between participants under whatever type of flag was raised in the first place, enforcing the type of the CBIJ structure and style.

Network relationships to other arenas and networks

Organization is a result of the communication process. Blaschke, Schoeneborn, and Seidl (2012) argue to study 'organizations as networks of communication episodes ' and see communication as network nodes with individuals to be treated as links. Haug is proposing that individuals are linking meeting nodes by participating in different meetings and of course other arenas. Both ICIJ and EIC have used international conferences to organise project meetings. ICIJ had an important, even if small, meeting on Panama Papers at the Global Conference in 2015, where EIC was just taking shape and was enlisting partners. Football Leaks had a project meeting at Data Harvest in 2016, which is the most important investigative journalism event in Europe. Some people are part of both networks and conferences. The overlapping of ICIJ and EIC meetings with the conferences at GIJC and Data Harvest show the boundaries of the CBIJ field and informs about the bigger field, the calendar and geography of inter-organizational collaborations or lack of such collaborations. The fact that EIC is not invited to present its projects at the GIJC conferences, and that it has been rejected the request to become a member of GIJN, shows more proofs of the blockage in CBIJ at international level. Further studies in the realm of CBIJ meeting arenas (instead of newsrooms) looking at how tensions are solved when they arise, such meetings can give new perspectives on leadership, hierarchy and control, democracy and inter-organizational collaboration.

The tech buzz and the leak capture

The early advise two decades ago for caution related to the impact of digital tools and the effect of combining old and new journalism competencies (Bardoel, Deuze 2001) evolved after two decades into the question on how new journalism has dig itself its digital own grave, by way of the digital infrastructure used (Bell, 2017; Nechushtai,2017). The point is that a lack of reflection on the wording and their theoretical frameworks in the realm of digital tools and platforms adopted by journalists, has obscured the otherwise very critical mind as a core competency of journalism and has pushed a journalistic band wagon towards techno-positivist interpretations of society and the journalistic profession. Same pattern apply to CBIJ, currently operating under a technical positivist framework, praising the marriage between networks, non-profit and data.

The tech buzz around data work in journalism, especially related to data leaks, brings an important realisation: since journalism is an act of exclusion (exclusion of sources, information, stories etc) in order to be able to compile the final product that has limited space and time and resources, then authoritative voices are the fast and easy choice for the newsroom to meet deadlines. That leads to the journalistic competition game on who get's an authoritative source to speak first, thus breaking a news before other reporters interested in the same topic or covering the same beat. It is argued that journalists become dependent to such authoritative sources to the point of 'media capture' (Woodall, 2017) with the side effect of being less inclined to report critically when by doing so they could fall out with a source. In that respect, CBIJ based on data leaks has been viewed as a way to disrupt such 'media capture '. But based on the same logic, the data-leak represents the easiest way to get access to an authoritative source by simply configuring the data leak as the authoritative source (e.g. The Panama Papers or Football Leaks data sets) and gating the access to the source documents, turning such data sets into elite authoritative sources. This loops back to the media capture phenomenon initiated by the process of selecting sources, even if the sources here are data-sets, the process is similar to that of using elite news sources that is perpetuating a systematic bias (Tuchman 1978). Data leaks are shown as the engine for efficient cross-border collaborations among ever larger groups of journalists world wide, groups that have access to ever larger data-leaks, and who are hocked by the efficiency of the leak 'refinery ' to an addiction point. This could be one unintended consequence of the type of scaling up pushed by the non-profit hunger for measurable outcomes and impact.

No transnational public spheres

Looking at how transnational collaboration between investigative journalists could translate into transnationally networked public sphere, an analysis of attention and debate on Twitter related to Panama Papers (Heft 2019) shows that language boundaries have not been crossed between digital public spheres; that attention levels are unequally distributed across regions, with Africa at the lower end and Latin America at the higher end (it is not enough to be involved in cross-border collaborations to also create public debates); and that the same attention and power structures as in traditional media environments can be observed. Conclusion of the author is that no transnational networked public spheres emerged during Panama Papers – and if not in this prominent case then 'they should not be expected in less favourable environments ' (Heft, 2019).

To sum up, this section discusses findings that show how investigative journalism, following a truth-teller Atlantic model, has realised the limitation of the news business model and as a result evolved towards the practicing of CBIJ using a non-profit model and focusing on data journalism and technology. Doing investigative journalism in a cross-border network context at a global level, complicates processes that are simply assumed and taken for granted. Not only individuals are in constant re-shape, but also entities involved - and all practitioners come from different backgrounds and with different dependencies. Today the data aspect is showing how one of the most important coagulant for CBIJ is the old investigative journalism practice of working with leaks, but on a large data scale and on a global scope. While today CBIJ exists thanks to past realisations of the limitations of the news industry it has stop short to discuss and approach embedded limitations with the investigative journalists themselves. That is why there is a gap in knowledge about how exactly power mechanisms work in the process of establishing CBIJ practices and structures, especially when dealing with massive amounts of data.

This analysis of findings show that CBIJ can be understood as highly dependent on secret, exclusive data-sets, which are a form of continuation off the media industry reliance on authoritative sources, instead now building its own highest authoritative source thus creating a leak capture phenomenon. Exclusive and expensive conferences participations are an integral part of CBIJ, building an elitist identity which is marketed by gatekeeping stories at international level and publishing in a large group across borders at the same time, as a recipe for impact. Thus current CBIJ systems re-create the past pain points of commercial news industry but with even less gatekeepers (those who own such systems and make decisions over inclusion or exclusion of people, topics, stories). A high level of standardisation and control is needed, thus paving the way for the colonisation of CBIJ.

6.2. CBIJ and its perpetual promise

CBIJ growing structures are dependent on a handful of people, rely on trust among peers and have no standard governance in place that can solve trust issues; when such issues appear, they are causing blocking or splitting since such networks are like archaic trading networks based on kinship and trust and not on contractual agreements. A collection of data feuds, most of the CBIJ today is highly dependent on financial subsidies, both private and governmental. At the same time, the field is pushed to explore heavily with the visualisation and narrative styles, putting a bonus on narrative literacy (deriving from the Anglo-Saxon culture and language) even while pretending to be data intensive. Today these two ingredients, financial and narrative dependencies, are considered the new

business model, a new dawn for journalism. A century ago these were precisely the reasons why journalism in Europe was considered a corrupt model and why it has reinvented itself in the US to become financially independent and geared towards facts and scientific methods. Indeed it is a new dawn, but just another dawn in a continous loop.

Since almost two decades ago, the cross-border investigative journalism is a rising star in the field of journalism and was promoted by the actors in this new field as a big global promise. Its universal and collaborative character and its data approach were hailed as solutions to the limitations of the news industry and its nonprofit character was hailed as a tool for independence. But especially its heavy dependence on data and technology are pushing CBIJ on a different path. In order to understand what is this sub-field of journalism made from, this research traveled from the history of investigative journalism, deeply rooted in the Atlantic political (and religious) system and showed how the current framework rests on the more specific U.S. (muckraker) reporter journalist framework, that got an edge of credibility with the rise of computers by using statistical methods that evolved into Computer Assisted Reporting and later data-journalism. Then it showed the evolution and the institutionalisation of the field of cross-border investigative journalism, and found that most important institutional actors are still coming from the U.S. and are in control and shaping this global field for at least two decades (IRE, NICAR, now ICIJ, OCCRP, GIJN). The practices were described using the wealth of scholarly texts available on investigative journalism and the very little scholarly research available on cross-border investigative journalism. It found a U.S. centric model applied to the entire world, one model fits all type of approach.

This research started by looking at the global phenomenon of cross-border investigative journalism networks from the practitioner standpoint, and continued by using the lenses of computer science and the recent advances in network analysis (small world networks) and SNA. It landed on CBIJ events and organisations, on offline and online infrastructures for networking, on fight for control between identities and on the CBIJ Arena (GIJC), Interfaces (ICIJ and EIC) and Council (GIJN Board). It became clear that field boundaries can be drawn by looking closer to the rise of platforms for investigative networks in the context of production, in order to accomplish investigative projects. The field of cross-border investigative networks has shifted towards a platform logic, so much present in our todays world in a lot of other areas. So the discussion of my findings lead to understanding the cross-border investigative networks from the point of view of platform model and platform paradox.

Discussing the CBIJ claims

The initial research questions for this thesis were asking how cross-border investigative networks function and were aimed at mapping the environment, as well as understanding how members of such networks actually interact, in an attempt to formulate the description that will help interpret the power relationships of the mapped environment. Centralization was part of the initial observation when starting this research, but open questions were directed to the *how* and the *why* and the consequences. Focusing on the ICIJ and Panama Papers, and later on the overlaps and conflicts with the EIC and Football Leaks, as well as the history and development of the field, this research does touch organizations that are considered 'most important ' in this field (Hume 2017) without claiming to be exhaustive, but representative of the claims in the CBIJ field today.

The way prominent CBIJ organizations claim the field works, is very different from the way the field is actually working. The evolution of this research indicates contradictions to most of these

conventional claims. Such claims made by the long time director of IRE (an organization behind this emerging field since the 70's) Brant Houston – considered a founding father of the Global Network for Investigative Journalism - indicate that the ingredients of this new journalism are: 'collaboration, both on small and large scales; increased sophistication in data analysis and ability to handle large datasets; the rise of nonprofit journalism allowing journalists to focus on in-depth investigations; the advent of the Internet, which has led to easier communication and collaboration; rapid globalization spurred by the communications and information revolutions; the end of the Cold War and increased global mobility; and the global spread of investigative journalism, spurred by professional groups and conferences, commercial media, international aid programs, and universities'.

On the contrary, this research shows that networks of cross-border investigative journalism are in fact a premium product done by elite groups, a product that is simply not available to large categories of journalists. Collaborating happens on some levels across specific media actors, and at specific stages, but is also creating firewalls on other levels, even within the newsrooms part of collaborations, thus showing that collaboration is not aiming for the most information and knowledge exchange possible, but targets the highest echo chamber possible. It results a heavy standardized work, using a specific U.S. standard of doing journalism. Handling large datasets is incurring huge costs for hardware, software and coding hours, but on the other hand is still heavy relying on *type and click* searches and thus not presenting any increased sophistication in providing relevant data analysis. CBIJ is resting on the rise of nonprofit structures involved in the field, which creates elites and provide the chance to accumulate resources for a very few, showing no path to diversify revenue models and strategies that could be transferable to other groups and areas. Focusing on in-depth investigations seem to rely more on the traditional media and on the marketing role of such focus. Using internet based tools for communication and collaboration is actually introducing new opportunities for information control and data feudalism. CBIJ structures are advancing a 'one model fits all ' approach that is ignoring the wealth of political and cultural models out there and are resting on the possibility of a very few privileged nations to be highly mobile and which ends up reconstructing Cold War views of the world (e.g. Russia, China are the enemies, U.S. and Western Europe are the good guys). The field is also resting on a small global elite, a highly interconnected global oligarchy, mixing nonprofit and for profit media, experts, state and private donors and academics.

The main conventional claims related to cross-border investigative journalism are actually resting on several main assumptions made by the stakeholders promoting CBIJ from both donors and beneficiary sides. One of such assumptions is that a specific U.S. model of doing journalism, if exported to other countries, will bring about transparent and democratic societies. The nonprofit industry pushed for the creation of local or regional institutions that would adopt such a journalistic model and believe in a democratic society. Metrics were reported to keep an eye on outputs and prove such is the case. But today political reality in geographic areas where such interventions have been made for decades following the ending of the Cold War are showing a totally different reality: Eastern Europe countries have a highly corrupt and right-wing nationalistic political establishment and are on route towards a come back towards nativist nationalistic totalitarian political systems and denial of basic democratic values; after decades of exposing local media to the U.S. journalism model, and investing in institutional organizations, the media landscape is still highly corrupt, with a very few and fragile independent media groups. Such organisations are most of the times 'one man shows ' or small fragile groups struggling to get small grants to make a living from a month to another.

There are a lot of assumptions at work when the cross-border investigative journalism is so strongly connected to data (driven) journalism. The data driven positive bias can be traced back to the emerging of IRE as an organization in the U.S., when computer assisted statistics and the CAR trainings and related structures (NICAR) have evolved. It is also resting on assumptions that data is similarly collected and available in similar format around the world which is definitely not the case. Another assumption at work is that of objectivity in journalism and the need of scientific approach to prove the truth; but recent research show that data-journalism done by journalists is actually marginal to the investigative process (Loosen, Reimer, Silva-Schmidt, 2017) and both Panama Papers and Football Leaks projects show that most of the journalists use a *type and click* process to search vast troves of cleaned and processed data, and rely on 'being lucky' when fishing. In fact the lack of widely available competence and sophistication in data analyzing is the reason why investigative platforms started to appear: a critical mass of journalists who needs this tech efficiency ('leak refinery ') that is offering the *type and click* option for free, this is the reason the platform buffer is accepted. This shows the lack of innovative tools in production with journalists and media involved with cross-border investigative journalism. Besides making data available for others to search, when statistical analysis is applied to large data sets like the Panama Papers, they do not seem to bring any new major finding or flag any new major story that the manual keyword ('type and click ' or batch) search wouldn't reveal. In fact as the Panama Papers analyze is showing, most of the main stories run by ICIJ are based on very early discoveries done by a small group of people, before even the hundreds of journalists started to work together.

Beside the point of data journalism invalid claim, this brings attention to another claim, that of collaboration that is central to cross-border networks, where journalists leave competition logic at the door when they enter such a project, in order to share as much information as possible in order to enrich the findings and stories produced. There is some true in this, but only at the stage when research for discovery is conducted, and as it turns out with Panama Papers, again an important number of the main stories run by ICIJ are based on discoveries made before the hundreds of journalists even started to work together so that stage of genuine sharing has little importance in the resulting content of stories, but rather has a big impact in the resulting echo-chamber. Otherwise the media competition logic is present early on, when the network team is assembled, and local competitors for media partners have to be kept out of the Panama Papers project even if they have journalists who are part of the ICIJ network. There is a national competition logic that drives the international collaboration stage, and that competition is geared towards national markets where more power comes with being part of a cross-border investigative project. The research shows that the large number of journalists involved is not actually bringing more cross-border stories, but with more participants comes a much stronger echo-chamber effect and more notoriety for a specific project. Same goes for the publication logic – it is not an effect of lack of competition or kindness from the journalists involved to wait for a joint embargo publication deadline when stories will start to be published and it is not necessary making stories stronger, but having hundreds of journalists publishing at the same time in tens of countries is pushing the project on the international media agenda, thus serving again the echo-chamber effect.

The 'radical sharing ' label used by ICIJ on Panama Papers and similar cross-border investigative projects is misleading. Because of the competition between media partners who are part of different networks (e.g. ICIJ and EIC) there are firewalls installed inside newsrooms who are part of different projects and inside the ICIJ membership, so sharing is actually prohibited between certain categories of journalists who would otherwise be sharing more knowledge either inside their own

newsroom or inside the ICIJ network. But the majority of ICIJ members only find out about Panama Papers the day of the publication and some react with fury on internal membership lists. This again is showing that the interest of knowledge exchange is lower then the interest of protecting competitive advantages of those who initiate such projects and who own the data, both for-profit (*Sueddeutsche Zeitung*) and nonprofit (ICIJ). The fact that the agreement brokered by ICIJ between *Der Spiegel* and *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* pushed for firewalls inside newsrooms, between journalists participating in possible overlapping cross-border investigative projects also shows the need to have full access to free labour from such media partners, so that one project (Panama Papers) wouldn't suffer from the lack of participation because of another project (Football Leaks). The 'radical sharing ' is false also because the lack of sharing of the raw leaked data, the raw information-exchange data and lack of revenue sharing even if that revenue is not for profit, but only in the form of a grant.

Another main claim is that such collaborations are changing the journalism game because of lowering the access barrier in key areas that were preventing cross-border investigative journalism to happen decades ago, especially when it comes to travel and communication, while attending face to face meetings are considered by all participants in cross-border investigative networks as crucial for such projects to go well. But this is partially valid only for a few privileged nations and travel to such meetings, usually in the Global North, is highly limited for a large number of people around the world first because of visa issues and second because of prohibitive costs compared to local incomes. And in terms of electronic communication, indeed the participation costs are much slower, provided the participants have access to internet, electricity and computing power and have the necessary tech literacy. And even if such lesser costs open the gate for hundreds of journalists to simultaneously stay in touch in real time across the globe, how is that helpful when these hundreds of people face rather huge costs in order to be able to make data available for search ? Again, only a few have the knowledge and funds and tools to perform such operations and make them available, and only a few are permitted to use such tools.

And finally, the claim of stakeholders in this field that cross-border investigative journalism is part of a new global movement that is shifting the way journalism is done, is proven wrong by the episode of ICIJ cutting access to Panama Papers and brokering a deal between *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* and *Der Spiegel*. That episode shows in fact that when the cross-border investigative journalism modus operandi advertised by ICIJ is implemented by new actors (in this case EIC) then negative consequences are appearing for the new actors in the field occupied by strong incumbents (in this case ICIJ).

Investigative Oligarchy

Checking the claims and promises of cross-border investigative journalism made by the stakeholders in the field is bringing into the foreground the realization that this type of journalism is in no way a universal solution available for any random group of investigative journalists with skills, knowledge and good intentions. On the contrary, since access and ownership are key issues to this field, then tensions over control will arise (White, 2008) as well as competition for various forms of capitals in this specific sphere of action (as per Bourdieu model). Specifically for the 'journalistic field' (Meyen, 2009, p329) such struggle for 'journalistic capital ' - 'the sum of (…) cultural capital (journalistic skills), social capital (networks) and symbolic capital (professional reputation)' - will interact with the interests of private media as well as with the interests of donors (governmental, corporate, private foundations) participating in the institutionalization of this field.

Emerging elites are easy to identify as a natural consequence of the institutionalization of this field that was led by a very few, highly connected stakeholders (Krueger, Candea 2018). 'If elites are favored, then those elites will circulate actively enough to minimize any concerns about concentrated power (Reese, 1991) '; such a construct will generate 'a process of hegemony defined as the 'systematic engineering of mass consent to the established order ' (Gitlin, 1980, p 253). Such hegemony has already fuelled an oligarchy, where non-profit donors and non-profit investigative practitioners mingle, which 'is a concentration of entrenched illegitimate authority and/or influence in the hands of a minority, such that de facto what that minority wants is generally what comes to pass, even when it goes against the wishes (whether actively or passively expressed) of the majority ' (Leach 2005). The majority of ICIJ members would want to be part of all ICIJ projects, but a small minority decides against it. A majority of GIJN journalists world-wide would like to be sponsored to participate at GIJC conferences, but a minority decides who will be part of the 10% of applicants to get sponsored. Other examples abound.

Current research shows that nonprofit journalism is done by organizations who tend to be run by privileged members of society, who are sponsored by foundations established and run by privileged members of society, and such journalism also tends to publish stories destined for the 'quality audience ', which is again the society's elite (Benson, 2017). Same research indicates the great influence such donors agenda has on nonprofit journalism. So the field of cross-border investigative journalism conventionally, described as 'radical sharing ' and collaborative between 'nice people ' is actually run by an oligarchy and bankrolled by another, is made possible by platforms and data owned and controlled by a few, that farm journalists interactions and cash profit from donors. Since the ownership is not shared back with all those involved in such networks, then such information-exchange is also subject to privatization and accumulation.

No regulations, no reform

At the end of the 90's networks of cross-border investigative journalism started as a series of off-stream and experimental initiatives to fill the gaps of the news industry in various geographical locations, with the approach of a global journalistic collective actor. It was the perfect timing in terms of rising new technologies and collapsing of the legacy media business models, but because among many other things of the way the same technologies evolved, especially on access and communication, it missed the chance to be a truly international distributed network. The nonprofit path pushed informal initiatives to get a structure and to focus on production, with almost no consideration about real governance and distributed rules of engagement, thus establishing an investigative oligarchy. Informal networks freely exchanging non-exclusive information changed fast into buffer platforms. The belonging to a mainstream media become more important then the expertise based on locality, because it will help create a bigger eco-chamber for the project and help outsource the pay for journalistic labour, letting the platform owners to focus on cashing all the money raised.

The current symbiosis with traditional news industry makes things even harder because old media industry pillars like exclusivity and advertisement are still part of the game. There is no new revenue model in sight, and what the nonprofit strategy in such operations is, it is representing actually a cutting costs approach. Even if the yearly bill of a non-profit like ICIJ is a few USD million high and that pays for an average of one single large project per year (like in the case of Panama Papers), that is not all the cost since it is not accounting for all the journalistic labour of all

contributors involved. But it is hard to try and quantify the total investment in money and working time in a project like Panama Papers for all 500+ journalists and media involved. So this is yet another aspect of such collaborations: depending from which side one will look at the issue, one may see radical sharing or may see a few benefiting from the free labour of many.

Süddeutsche Zeitung journalists claim in their book that if ICIJ wouldn't accept to take the Panama Papers project, *SZ* would find the right journalists on their own. But this is clearly not a realistic claim, taking into consideration the book reporting on their lack of technical expertise to work a data leak and share it, and the small team that the newspaper could assign to work full time on the Panama Papers. After all, the journalists complained that their travel budget was tested because of a trip of two journalists to Washington D.C. Such an approach becomes realistic in the case of EIC, where indeed the financial burden to pay for coordinating the network is split among media partners, but still with a much smaller scale in terms of the number of journalists involved (and with significant less costs).

CBIJ was a rising promise between 2005 and 2010 but reached a pick during the last years and now built-in limitations become visible. Just one type of journalism, available to a few under certain circumstances. The globalized nature of CBIJ forces main actors to go back towards mainstream traditional media and to the exclusivity paradigm, which is actually leading to less investigative journalism, an analysis direction mentioned by other researchers publishing during the realisation of this thesis. For instance the work of Carson & Farhall (2018) is mentioning in this context the possibility of less diversity in 'story targets'.

So there is a need of discussing regulations related to ownerships of network and network plurality, same as media pluralism and platform conglomerates are critically approached. Who shale regulate what ? Who is looking after the rights of the individual journalists involved ? And what if the power of the echo-chamber created by such networks would just 'radical share ' misinformation ? The emerging organizations will not be keen to self-regulate, as each network will want to strengthen their competitive advantages. As it was shown by this research, both EIC and ICIJ become organizations in the making during their large projects Football Leaks and Panama Papers. ICIJ has split from the parent organization CPI, a move that took more than a year of backstage fights and had to secure support and funds. For ICIJ, during such a time of organization creation, the ICIJ member journalists and indeed journalism itself were not the top priority. When deciding to cut access to Panama Papers to journalists also working with EIC, ICIJ had only the interest of a private media in sight, that of *SZ*, and their local competition with *Der Spiegel*. The crisis almost killed an emerging network (EIC) and an emerging investigative project (Football Leaks). Same with EIC, the institutionalization of the network is observing the primary interest of the EIC media members as well as their journalists and their journalistic stories.

The conflict that was escalated by ICIJ shows that there is very little room for a number of cross-border investigative networks to grow and function at the same time. The number of media partners and journalists who can do such work are limited. Also, the need to constantly fundraise for ICIJ and to have solid large media partners who will pick up research and will contribute to the creation of an echo-chamber, this will put in a competition position any new comer, with ICIJ enjoying the first to market advantage as well as the network effect. Such development means that the window to develop networks of investigative journalism on different premises then the traditional news industry and outside the mainstream have passed and now the opportunity to innovate outside the media industry seem to have been closed. Now is the time for platform consolidation, accumulation of data leaks and users, and for colonisation.

Projects after projects are building a larger number of leaked datasets and that is attracting a larger critical mass of users. As seen in this research, their motivation of being part of such network is also resting on a growing addiction: the more is leaked the more it is expected to dig and to find, and the more journalist dig the more they find and the more is found the more exchange is expected. Very different journalists speak about the process in terms of addiction, of being hooked to searching and finding more and more. For some, there is even more into the game: financial gains, notoriety gains and for a few even stage celebrity. This is pure platform logic that is getting users hooked and creates network effects empowering the platform owners at the expense of user interactions.

Cross-border investigative journalism networks are not revolutionizing journalism by replacing traditional discovering and reporting methods; some of the advertised methods are overstated (like data analyses called data journalism) and some have different names for older methods (like mind mapping for visualization; hypothesis based investigations). Cross-border investigative journalism is evolving in spikes: first there was the buzz of 2010's growing number of nonprofit organizations; then the mid 2010's   'mega ' and 'mammouth ' cooperations; recently this has reached a limit and nothing new seem to happen. Projects similar to the 2011 Offshorleaks, like Panama Papers, are following the same methodology only with more people and more data involved. It is a hugely resources and human-intensive endeavour, reliant on big institutions from both traditional commercial operations and donors (private and governmental); it is also heavy dependent on already available data (cleaned or leaked governmental and corporate data), limiting the focus to the patterns of interpretation of those who decided what to collect and record in such databases that ended up being leaked - inheriting the original limited interest, by ignorance or by design, of governments or corporations.

The CBIJ field today seem to have reached its innovative limit. All of these developments are happening without inclusive discussions on governance, on regulation, so that such new cross-border investigative networks of journalists are following the same path media industry took years before: at first more diversity, then more coagulation and consolidation, then more niche focuses as part of conglomerates and corporate empires, inadvertently generating information deserts outside a few corporate hubs. The cultural framework that put CBIJ networks in motion decades ago remains the same at a declarative level (all stakeholders involved pretend to value network activity, praise sharing, preach limitations by legacy media industry etc) but the actions fueled by the nonprofit industry show oligarhization, data feudalism and rising platform capitalism.

The platformization and the platform ready standardization invite several important aspects for discussion. The case of platform ready standardisation indicates among other things that not only media become dependent on distribution and production platforms, but they become dependent on companies that they supposed to critically cover. This could become a problem with organizations like ICIJ because they do get covered by media partners they accepted to work with during Panama Papers (see New York Times), media that is dependent on ICIJ data-sets and infrastructures. Same goes for all media partners, especially in the non-profit realm, who are dependent on the Global Investigative Journalism Network to participate at the most important industry event (GIJC).

Discussion on how to handle control over the enriched data-set (knowledge base created based on journalistic findings and shared information, docs etc) and information exchange is an ongoing debate within networks, but not in the public. It is not a discussion about journalism, but a discussion about governance, control and ownership because 'digital platforms enact a twofold logic

of micro-level technocentric control and macro-level geopolitical domination, while at the same time having a range of generative outcomes, arising between these two levels ' (Schwarz, 2017). Also, it is not only a discussion about technology, but one about ownership and control: 'By simply emphasizing the technical, one will observe modularity, compatibility, compliance, flexibility, mutual subsistence, and cross- subsidization. By emphasizing ownership and organizational control, on the other hand, one will see consolidation, privatization, enclosure, financialization, and protectionism '(Schwarz, 2017).

6.3. Data Feudalism

This leads us to the final point of this discussion chapter, which is the wider effects of platformization of CBIJ practices, tools and institutions. You cannot escape onboarding an investigative platform if you want to get to your investigative stories today, the same as you cannot escape passing through an airport duty free shop if you want to catch your flight. Platformization of cross-border investigative journalism is a growing phenomenon, endorsed by the same techno-positivism as the current trend of platformization of society.

A critical understanding of the unintended consequences of this phenomenon in the highly clustered small world of investigative journalism is yet to be developed especially when looking at access control, that is where tensions surface in relationship to control of accessing the secret places where all data and journalistic interactions are hosted. Placing total control of user's data and interactions in the hands of a few big tech companies has invited critics to talk about data feudalism. I discuss signs of data feudalism in investigative network platforms and point to the role of data in my findings. Such a development is hardly surprising if viewed in relation to the 'platform logic ' of efficiently recentralizing data through decentralized features.

Investigative Serfs ?

Imagine a serf in the middle ages, working (without pay) the land of his lord, having to pay the access to the land with a large part of his produce (which is later sold for profit by the lord) and who at any time can be kicked out from the land. Now picture a modern days investigative journalist, working (without pay) the data-leak owned by a media organization, having to pay the access to the data with all his digital input and produce (which is later sold by the media organization in exchange of grants), and who at any time can be kicked out. Do you sense any similarities ?

A virtual place for exchanges as well as a tool that makes different applications share data, this is platformization, 'the rise of the platform as the dominant infrastructural and economic model of the social web ' (Helmond, 2015) and this has led current developments in cross-border investigative journalism as well. The CBIJ field has been thriving on the platformization phenomenon for reasons of efficiency and scale when working with data across borders, but doing so introduced new problems: the precariat specific to the rest of the 'sharing economy ' and new gatekeepers that can be described as creating a data feudalism system in the cross-border investigative networks realm.

Indeed, what can be a better fuel for cross-border collaborations than data, especially for investigative journalism? Or is this an offer disguised as a tool for liberation (from national boundaries, from commercial media limitations, etc) that is 'satisfying the needs which make servitude palatable and perhaps even unnoticeable ' (Marcuse, 1964) ? When an organization will

offer a hand-picked hundred of journalists around the world, (subsidized) free access to such an exclusive data collection available for search on an electronic platform locked to the outside world, and then will also offer to publish and advertise the stories produced based on such data - can any journalist afford to refuse to take up such an offer ? What if the competition will take it ?

Platforms to host such data for cross-border collaborations have been showing up in production since the early 2010s, in the context of investigating leaks across borders. Maybe the most prominent result of a large number of journalists working on such a platform is the Pulitzer Prize winner Panama Papers. For OCCRP, another cross-border investigative journalism organization, a different search infrastructure has been built to organize the searches for cross-border projects. The platform tool is called Aleph and it empowers OCCRP to be 'the Uber or AirBnB of journalism – we don't have our own reporters, but we've built the infrastructure that lets them reach new heights.' (OCCRP, 2016)

Being involved in the emergence of the first such platforms for journalists at the beginning of this past decade[375] I witnessed how the combination of self-developed, FOSS and/or proprietary tools are in use now with the few different networks that can afford building, running or maintaining such systems. But many do not afford this, and so for an independent journalist or a journalist with a media that cannot afford maintaining such systems, there are only a few alternatives to go to with a data-set, organisations that are doing cross-border investigative production at a larger scale: ICIJ, OCCRP and EIC.network.

There is an important gap in critical research on how such investigative platforms are shaping the work of journalists who are using them and the networks they are part of. They surely do not take the heat of criticism aimed at Google and Facebook, and most of the data about such systems available out there is in the realm of a techno-positivist descriptive approach by the very stakeholders who run such systems (including myself). But access to such platforms is for many good reasons behind various layers of security and not every journalist can get in. So who decides on this process of exclusion, who decides who gets in or out and what are the rules to stay in ? Responding to this means dealing with a huge tension hidden in plain sight, a tension about access control.

Facets of platforms

One of the unintended consequences of a very few actors running such platforms at international level in the cross-border journalism realm is the creation of what has been already framed as data or digital feudalism in the context of the current landscape of big tech (Morozov, 2016). Cross-border investigative journalism intermediaries offer today data services and data goods for free (being highly subsidized by non-profit grants). Such data services are producing more data, more services and attract more users. With that we are witnessing the creation of a network effect, that means only a very few such intermediaries exist out there, and a very large number of journalists and media organizations dependent on their platforms, their data and their subsidized services when doing cross-border investigative work.

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[375] First as a user, in the context of Wikileaks (CableGate). Then as part of the project managing team, not much later, in the context of ICIJ Offshore Leaks where online searching indexed source documents and a bulletin board were hosted on two different platforms (Campbell, 2013, Candea, 2013). And finally I was involved in running the development of a search platform (Hoover) and later an integrated search and information-exchange bundle (Liquid Investigations) in the context of EIC.network.

In the cross-border investigative journalism realm, things get even more complicated if such platforms are playing both a role of digital intermediary for the research work of journalists with total access control, as well as the role of a media actor publishing the best information produced as a result of the search and information exchange on their platform (like in the case of ICIJ and OCCRP for instance).

'People's NSA '

A trend in the realm of online investigative infrastructures is described by a leading organization in the field. OCCRP is describing itself as 'AirBnb or Uber of investigative journalists ' This is a hint at the gig economy type of activity being present on the cross-border investigative journalism platforms, where increasingly journalists have to be active on such platforms to stay in the game, even if they do not make a living out of such activities by being paid by the platform owners. In order to have access, you have to share findings, information, content. ICIJ is hitting home on this front, describing its new vision of doing investigative journalism as 'radical sharing ' but within the boundaries of its digital virtual office, the 'private Facebook for journalists '. That is exactly the point of Silicon Valley platform based 'sharing economy ' (so it shouldn't come as a surprise that some of this investigative platform building work is financed by techno-positivist philanthropy).

Owners of such investigative intermediary platforms have developed three strategies, sometimes overlapping. First, to cut costs by not hiring the best equipped journalists, but instead outsource unpaid work to media partners who have to deal with this problem on their own and offer a working team to the platform in exchange for free access. Second, to choose media partners not only based on unpaid outsource potential, but also on free re-amplifying capability during publication times (circulation, unique users, social media followers etc). Third, to sell user's numbers to donors in order to subsidize the free platform access and its management. This is how commercial media has (re)enter cross-border investigative journalism. Even if having to pay with work done by your employee to secure access to a network intermediary's platform, it is still lucrative to be able to use research done for free by hundreds of other journalists on the same platform. But here is another aspect: in large networks, the possibility of having freelance journalists who are working for free is high (especially journalists running small non-profit investigative centers). Their work for free will be thus monetised by the intermediary platforms as well as by the commercial media re-using it for profit.

Since the prime asset for cross-border investigations is data, then ownership of that data as well ownership and access control to the tools and outputs interacting with such data is crucial. In practice access to such material is given in exchange for a basic non-disclosure agreement or a partnership agreement, where the duties of the journalist and the media getting access are listed (the rights of the participant journalists are usually not very detailed). Usually such systems are not designed with a co-ownership scheme in mind, but rather as central owned structures that should be able to police breaches of such agreements. So the potential for surveillance of all user activities is a built-in feature for administrative purposes.

Platform logic is built around total control – and if this control in the investigative journalism realm is exercised by a handful of people and institutions then data, and information-exchanged based on such data, becomes a means for a race towards monopolistic ownership of data-sets, search results, even investigative ideas.

If the critical approach towards today tech data giants would be applied to the current data role in the non-profit cross-border investigative journalism realm, then the real description of the current state of affairs would sound very different then the current conventional narrative. In fact, a media organization is offering you the chance to join a place where you can work with data, but your work is not paid by that organization, and where your search activity, your findings, your information exchange, your stories produced can be read and used by the administrators and owners of the digital platform at will for further financing the existence of the platform. On top of that, your access to this place of production and its tools can be unilaterally revoked at any time and you have no rights to migrate your research, communication nor to use the source documents in the future. This is textbook data feudalism. If Google would offer journalists such an access to perform a cross-border project on their platform journalists would be offended. But since the offer comes from within the profession, especially from the non-profit sector, it is considered a privilege.

And more to the point of what could come next: OCCRP is not only branding itself as the 'AirBnb and Uber of investigative journalism ', but also as the 'People's NSA '. Good to remember that the Soviet Union NKVD was called the People's Secret Services (in translation, the 'People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs '). It is not wild to think that the appeal to create popular investigative mobs can go beyond investigative journalists and be adopted by the revived nationalistic right-wing groups.

Praxis and participatory approaches

Platformization of distribution channels (Bell and Owen, 2017) and the capture by intermediaries using digital infrastructure (Nielsen and Ganter, 2018; Nechushtai, 2017) is already a big topic of concern and discussion in journalism. But not so much the digital platformization of the exclusive investigative research process where journalists are finding themselves having no choice but participating with free labour in such platforms. Future independent research and forums for sharing independent findings are needed, perhaps drawing more from Critical Theory of Technology and Science and Technology Studies. Independent researchers would need to have access to operational data and to participatory observation during secret data-leaks projects.

Technological, ethical and legal discussions on this topic should inform policy and legislation because leaving self-government to large stakeholders will not work. What should be technically permitted and what not ? Without any rules implemented, investigative journalist's data can be used for surveillance or re-used by third parties for machine learning. Are there different technological solutions possible ? Last but not least, leaks contain a wealth of personal data – so what happens with such large data collections if a network intermediary ceases to exist, especially in case such data is loaded on a cloud infrastructure owned by a large tech company?

In my research I find that answers to these problems are sociotechnical affairs: not only the technology should allow a co-ownership of the means of production and of data, but self-governance will need to be put on paper and agreed upon. These are both praxis as well as participatory approaches, informed by critical theory - and they are needed because without it, the positive effects of cross-border investigative networks will remain promises that never arrive.

Chapter 7. CONCLUSIONS: Colonisation of CBIJ

This chapter draws conclusions, focusing on the limitations in scaling the current approaches to Cross-Border Investigative Journalism. Not only is CBIJ not the promised game changer but the powers at play produced by the access, search and communication tools in CBIJ networks bring about more control and a clear path towards the colonisation of this emerging field.

Alternative futures are possible. Showing the limitations of such a research and indicating future research directions, this thesis should not be viewed only as contributing to a critical view of CBIJ, but also as an attempt to identify where possible corrections to a niche subfield of global knowledge production can be made.

So far, the literature review of the process of cross-border investigative journalism is showing that it has a very narrow definition, based mostly on a standardised view of journalism and society, and built on the Atlantic language and vocabulary of politics, democracy and journalism (Meyer; Brink-Lund 2006). As a product of the global 'cultural hegemony ' (Gramsci, 1995), investigative journalism is regarded as the objective watchdog that is necessary to keep democracy in check and expose abuses of power. It has a narrow cultural interpretation[376] and a strong footing in the United States's religious society, and, much like its political system, is based on the dichotomy of bad versus good and on the quest for the 'truth'[377].

The model is heavily rooted in the U.S. interpretation, literature and practice that provides a standardised view on work-flows, tools, ways of packaging information and ways of looking at the 'consumers' of journalism as 'rational ignorants' (Hamilton, 2004). All this suggests that what informs this investigative journalism is the conviction that there is one truth and therefore the world is black and white, which makes collaboration across borders into something like a cooperation in order to advance one version of the world that would apply to everything everywhere, and not a process to bring agonistic views together. This is the background that determines the state of cross-border investigative journalism today.

Viewed through the critical lens of political economy, using large data leaks as the basis of CBIJ, is just a continuation of an older model of journalism dependent on authoritative sources, accessible through a very few gatekeepers, standardised in order to fit platform infrastructures (digital and offline). Doing so is also disadvantaging practitioners, while having a few stakeholders on the winning side. Subsidized by the non-profit industry, whose bureaucrats gain a huge leverage on the field, and prone to platform ready standardization, it causes 'leak capture ' and therefore infrastructure capture.

Global CBIJ is argued to shape a global audience and a vigilant transnational public sphere, but no evidence shows this is happening. On the contrary, evidence show that a large number of journalists working on the same project fall back on national angles and groups (and their stories may inadvertently fuel populism).

Cross-border investigative journalism networks started with a declarative ideology of building an international alternative to news industry limitations, by building independent structures, with no centralized core. The pioneers in this domain started in the U.S. by combining the nonprofit structures of funding with the coverage of core expenses by being hosted at universities. Computer Assisted Reporting (CAR) was added to the mix, which at that time was spectacular because it

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[376] More on this cultural issue in Tange (2009) – Intercultural Alternatives – two Nordic Books on Intercultural Communication; intercultural communication has huge potential but also built in power conflict / prone to open ended critical engagement with more perspectives on the same issue

[377] (Underwood, 2002) From Yahweh to Yahoo!

Conclusions: Colonisation of CBIJ

would replace the usual list of sources with a wealth of possible electronic resources, especially for research done across borders. That propagated around the world. But the nonprofit industry, which was growing in parallel, and its hunger for metrics and reports, outputs and impact, led the CBIJ field back to traditional media for impact and measurable vanity numbers. Both the number of investigated documents as well as the number of journalists involved became success metrics for donors and in order to scale up such metrics, platforms were introduced. This led to total control at the local level, efficiency in the middle and accumulation of users, datasets and projects by a very few very big actors at a global level.

Branded as innovative and disruptive, the cross-border investigative journalism field is not inclined to self reflection, thus ignoring the creation of new problems when trying to fix the old ones. A global ecosystem, fueled by non-profit and data-journalism, that creates a far more powerful oligarchy then that of the legacy media it was trying to fix in the first place, deserves further critical research and suggested avenues for corrections.

I argue that such need to explore further should follow the elements of the platform logic implications and should highlight where to observe and test corrections, at two levels: the local control and the geopolitical implications.

7.1. Local control

In order to understand why it is so important to recognize the platform logic and deal with the platform paradox when we talk about cross-border investigative journalism dealing with big data supported by nonprofit money, I will draw on the interdisciplinary approach proposed by Schwarz (2017). He observes that 'digital platforms are not just software-based media, they are governing systems that control, interact, and accumulate' (p374). The micro level is where control takes place, the macro level is where accumulation shows consequences; in between there is convenient interaction that justifies the acceptance of the other two.

The argument is that 'digital platforms enact a twofold logic of micro-level technocentric control and macro-level geopolitical domination, while at the same time having a range of generative outcomes, arising between these two levels' (Schwarz, 2017). These in-between outcomes are the key points of why such arrangements are so easily accepted. They are the result of scaling up, pushed by the nonprofit hunger for measurable outcomes. These are the efficient collaboration among a larger and larger group of journalists world wide, who have access to larger and larger data-sets, and who are captured by the efficiency of the 'leak refinery' to an addiction point.

Further on, the argument of Schwarz is that platform logic has both the 'technical capacity of unyielding local control' (micro level) and the 'consequential concentrations of global dominance by a handful of corporate actors' (macro level). He is arguing that in between these levels there is a intermediary link that produces 'efficacy, convenience and generativity' (the meso level). And this is the platform paradox: in order to efficiently foster collaboration and participation among journalists, organizations like ICIJ develop platforms under total control. Such platforms benefit from network effects and the more people use them the more valuable is to get in. But with investigative journalists and media partners, the number of users is limited, both by the fact that there are only a limited number of people and companies doing this kind of work, but also because having one media company involved in a specific country would exclude the possibility of having other companies involved (for example having both Sueddeutsche Zeitung and Der Spiegel in ICIJ

or in EIC). Looking at the growing investigative platforms who are operating in todays 'platform society ' (van Dijck, 2017), being online (the centralized I-Hub of ICIJ or the platform of OCCRP, the distributed platforms of EIC) or offline (the Global Investigative Journalism Conference) I argue that all ingredients sum up to indicate the existence of a platform logic and its consequences: platform paradox, platform-ready data, platform capitalism development.

What are these ingredients that can be observed with any other network/platform active in investigative journalism, in order to test changes ? While using Schwartz's description as pattern recognition, I explore where corrections, social or tech or socio-tech, are possible. Schwarz notes: 'individuals are not only users but also `inputs` since their participation creates value for other users' (p377). So when such a platform is owned by someone, that value is captured by the owner. In the case of the Panama Papers, the value is captured by ICIJ as an agent for *SZ*; in the case of Football Leaks, the value is captured by EIC, by the cooperative of media companies who own it. So to study the different ownership structures is a good avenue to observe shifting the power from the hands of the owners to the hands of those using the system. Since the platform role goes beyond the computing capabilities and provides among other things a foundation for actions to take place, where opportunities and insight appear, in the news industry business where there is a premium on speed and insight, this is a lot of competitive advantage. No wonder that platforms are being used not only to connect people for collaboration, but also to specifically keep the competition outside, like in the case of the ICIJ – EIC conflict when Sueddeutsche Zeitung and ICIJ suspended the access to the Panama Papers data-set to journalists belonging to media partners of EIC, in order not to bring insight indirectly from the Panama Papers platform to Der Spiegel, a competitor on the German national media market.

Platform means 'exclusive control over the surface on which the exchange takes place ' (Schwarz, 2017, p381) - as it was seen with ICIJ in Panama Papers, users can be excluded without even breaking their agreements, but just on a suspicion that agreements may get broken. This is total control enforced by technology. The outside world cannot know what is happening because such dramatic events are kept under wraps – and this is the reason why such research needs a participatory observation approach instead of the interview based methodology.

There are possible corrections here. For instance, when joining access to networks and search tools, both individual journalists and media partners sign agreements that stipulate the rules of the game and the duties of the parties. Such agreements usually do not give many rights to the journalists and this is a topic for further research where corrections are easy to formulate, in order to recommend best practices.

Schwarz observes that 'platforms that are intend to enable user-based sharing and creation also have a dual nature: they enable user-based creativity, but their ultimate profit motive also means that considerable user participation is harnessed and delimited' (p377). This is the case with nonprofit organizations who have to compete with other nonprofits in fundraising. So when the boundaries of the cross-border investigative journalism field are drawn, it is by creating networking platforms, and there is a delimitation of access and user participation that comes along, which is done under some type of ownership (ICIJ, GIJN, EIC). It is relevant to discuss the type of ownership because in the hands of a few that ownership will bring both control and accumulation. If it is on a global scale (ICIJ, GIJN) then it will fast turn into a system that users are not only 'forced to approve in order to participate ', but can spread so widely that it will 'dominate the global landscape' (p378), in this case the cross-border investigative journalism landscape. To correct this

one can either research new ownership structures, similar to cooperatives, or maybe design regulations following the same policies that governments recently want to apply to big tech monopoly corporations.

7.2. Global consequences

It is quite clear that network infrastructures are enforcing the politics of CBIJ. The question is now, what changes from the micro level would bring a different macro level in cross-border investigative journalism networks?

First let's stop at the intermediary level between micro and macro, where the phenomenon of 'platform envelopment' appears (Eisenmann, Parker & Van Alstyne, 2010) where platforms build on each-other or within each-other and lead eventually to single companies to dominate each layer. That process is fully ongoing in the investigative journalism field on several levels. Organizational wise, turfs have been assigned, and they interoperate: GIJN is the networking, awards and training platform, ICIJ is the production platform in global investigative journalism. They envelope each-other: see how GIJN is member of INN and how INN is member of GIJN, and ICIJ is a member of both[378].

On the technological infrastructure side, a limited number of tools and technologies are used for search and communication, and a limited number of cloud solutions are chosen. Think about Sueddeutsche Zeitung bringing the leaked data-set to ICIJ to start Panama Papers (2015), as Le Monde did with the Swiss Leaks project (2014). As independent large traditional mainstream media located in two wealthy media markets, they did not have their own platforms set up, so they had to go where the expertise existed from the project of Offshore Leaks (2012). From one project to another, those who own platforms consolidate and try to scale up and are seeking to cash in more for the same thing.

Investigative platforms operating under the ownership of nonprofit structures are operations that are hevy subsidised and thus directly dependent on donors. There is a very strong dependency between this financial capital and the platforms build by cross-border investigative journalism nonprofit structures. Networks can function, and do function, also without having an institutional framework. But it is donors who really need such institutionalization in order to at least have a formal place to send the cheque to, in order to get tax exempt or to get public recognition, and also to get an institutional partner that can provide reports to account for how the money was spent and be held responsible if need be. This is opening the avenue for donors various ways of being able to try and influence the agenda of investigative nonprofits. But there is a limit: such influence is not accepted, at least officially, in the editorial content and coverage of investigative stories published by networks like ICIJ. However, according to developments in this field of extra-media influence on networks, ICIJ has opened a board position for a representative of their biggest donor to date (Omidyar Network). Even if this is for sure not intended to gain editorial control, it can be seen as a donor foot in the door, an attempt to steer the business model side and even a precedent to be used with less prominent investigative journalism networks.

The main business of ICIJ is based on investigative journalists' interactions. Platform businesses

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[378] https://web.archive.org/web/20200924104353/https://inn.org/members/ ; https://web.archive.org/web/20200924104703/https://gijn.org/member/?letter=I

thrive on user interactions – the ethical and legal limitations for what can the owner of such data do with it are not publicly discussed. It is not known how data generated by I-Hub investigative platform is used[379]. But for any investigative platform there are possible data products derived from journalists' interactions. For instance, search patterns of the most successful investigative 'finders ' are a possible successful product, but what would be the implications of monetising this type of data? Further research is needed here and for sure corrections should come if the journalists participating in the platform have full control and understanding on what happens to the data they generate.

What is more evident from observing the accumulation effect of investigative platforms are the insights that appear behind the scenes. More than 120 media companies, private and public, are connected to each-other in the ICIJ hub and that generates a lot of information that can be used to gain competitive advantage in a specific national media market or in a specific global media niche. Schwarz observes that platform entities tend to 'colonize and converge into ever-new markets ' and it is what is happening with ICIJ, OCCRP and GIJN. ICIJ spread around the entire globe in 20 years, with over 200 members to date and over 100 media partners, while GIJN started to open communication channels translating in at least seven languages[380] and replicate the GIJC in at least one continent[381] using the same conference template, speakers and even website template; and OCCRP, a network which originate in Eastern Europe, to help Eastern European investigative journalism, has extended globally towards programs in South America, Africa and Eurasia.

The reasons why this is acceptable for users are two-fold (drawing on Schwarz): technical (conveniency) and social (critical mass of users) which both hold true for the investigative journalism platforms observed so far. According to Schwarz, global platform power in terms of digital platform businesses has been accumulated in the U.S. because of its lax legislation on antitrust and data protection. This holds true for cross-border investigative journalism, where ICIJ, GIJN and OCCRP are US based. Regulations in some countries would not be enough, because other countries will become alternatively safe havens – but there are solutions to this, including future best practices imposed by the donors.

Platform logic, with its business model platform capitalism (Snierchek, 2017), spread platform imperialism, because with the accumulation of capital, ideologies and cultures are also spread. This is visible in the investigative journalism platform where the data journalism and nonprofit ideologies spread around the globe, and words like *sharing, collaborate, disrupt, innovate*, that are part of the platform culture from Silicon Valley, took over the discourse. There is little room for other cultural frameworks to do journalism or to get organized.

Are corrections possible at this macro level? This is what I explored when taking decisions on technologies used with EIC as well on organizational forms and workflows. There is room for improvement, but critical reflection and transparent publication are needed, especially on the conflicts and tension points, which are kept most of the time under the carpet.

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[379] because human generated data on i-Hub is being used https://web.archive.org/save/https://qz.com/1670632/how-quartz-used-ai-to-help-reporters-search-the-mauritius-leaks/

[380]   https://www.facebook.com/GlobalInvestigativeJournalismNetwork ; https://www.facebook.com/gijnAfrica/ ; https://www.facebook.com/gijnfrancais/ ; https://www.facebook.com/gijnArabic/ ; https://www.facebook.com/gijnInRussian/?ref=br_rs ;
        https://www.facebook.com/gijnEs/?ref=br_rs ; https://twitter.com/gijnCh ; https://twitter.com/gijnPortugues ; https://twitter.com/gijnAfrica ; https://twitter.com/gijnRu ;
        https://twitter.com/gijnArabic ; https://twitter.com/gijnEs ; https://twitter.com/gijnFr; https://twitter.com/gijn

[381]   https://2016.uncoveringasia.org

Conclusions: Colonisation of CBIJ

Sharing ownership and control; make it transferable; rotate coordination – such things can correct platform accumulation even if the technological architecture behind such solutions is following only the platform logic.

There is a wealth of dangerous aspects deriving from the current investigative platform trend, and that should be the focus of future research. But such research can only be done with a skeptical and critical view and with an interdisciplinary perspective. Such research, like I hope is the case with this thesis, should not only expose power structures but also explore possible corrections.

And of course we cannot look at such investigative networks in a laboratory environment, without looking at the world around us. Access to money is a key issue and it cannot be solved even with the best network architecture. These are larger issues for debate. If money were not an issue for all CBIJ participants, then the financial pressure over such networks would partially disappear and people would be able to freely associate themselves without the need of institutions and without the need of donors. If the pressure to make a profit or fundraise would be gone, then the profession of investigative journalism would be split from the institutions making such work possible, and would split production from research labour as well as production from action. In such a scenario the focus would be to transparently distribute labour and to share information within a collective.

7.3. Limitations and further research

Cross-border networks for investigative journalism participate in shaping global knowledge-exchange and so it is an important field that deserves an interdisciplinary approach, with more empirical data on a long term that would check claims and follow up on them and engage in a multi-perspective critical view, signalling possible dangerous aspects and consequences and explore corrections. After all, this research focuses on a limited number of actors and a limited number of data, with a very specific methodological approach.

This is the reason why this research has mentioned more details than necessary in some areas, especially related to technology, in order to provide clear paths on where the information is if anybody decides to follow it up. For instance, if the technical solutions for offering a virtual office for investigative collaborations are limited to platform architectures, this could be corrected by co-ownership and co-administration which is both a social and political compromise that needs more research.

Such research can be only done by allowing independent researchers access to data. For this research I was met with hostility by the managers of the critical analysed networks and platforms (ICIJ, GIJN) critiqued here and data that was public and in the open before was suddenly closed overnight so it became unavailable for this thesis. Most academics and experts who are stakeholders within this sub-field of journalism, that produce analytical studies seem to suffer from a positive bias; there is little critical scholarship from within this sub-field of journalism, and that is my own contribution to knowledge, even if I realise such a critical approach has other types of limitations.

It needs to be said here that so far most of the existing literature on the topic of cross-border investigative journalism is usually written by (or based on) accounts of people who are heavily invested and involved and personally benefiting from the positive approach and the existent status quo, such as experts, consultants, members of the academia, and owners of such structures – or stakeholders who sometimes check all these boxes at the same time. They all have a positive bias

and do not really explore the field with a skeptical and critical lens. I am also a stakeholder, deeply involved in this field as a practitioner for almost two decades, but I started voicing my critical views in public before starting this research. Also, in order to avoid the influence of my bias I brought my analytical process in the academic field, focusing on a critical assessment of data gathered using participatory observation.

Further directions to research

This thesis should be used as a map for what kind of information may be found, and where, for further researchers interested in the emerging field of CBIJ. More research is needed, and I list a few main directions that would benefit from scholarly attention.

Collaboration is free labour. This is a clear direction for further research, what is the amount of actual labour involved with such projects, the real monetary value, and how much of it is not actually paid for.

The exact economic burden of a cross-border project. The total costs (adding in-kind working hours including face-to-face meetings, direct cash investments, indirect investments in software, hardware, costs of travels to meeting, the production packages (fact-check, legal screen, information design, marketing etc).

Accountability for nonprofit. Money that goes into such networks for nonprofit structures comes from taxes that are not paid in a specific location or from governments decisions. It would be useful to investigate if what is lost for the community in that specific place is worth the gain for society at large, or for other governments worldwide, and to check the concept of 'return on investment '[382] and proofs to back up figures when international investigative stories and structures are involved. There is also a complete lack of accountability for decision making in grant giving and the claims made in grant reporting; investigation into this aspect over a long period of time may inform donors about new skills needed and new ways to make a difference in the non-profit realm of cross-border journalism. A discussion on how 'aid ' should be treated as 'reparations' is also highly relevant and would impact the administrative bureaucracy involved in 'grant making '.

Intersectionality and matrix of dominance. Checking for privilege, looking into social considerations and chart the privilege of participants in projects, conferences, panels, expert groups, consultancy contracts, decision making related both to journalism as well as management; checking how the rest of the world is used to justify the existence of the Global North organisations. Applying the already growing body of literature available under the concept of 'design justice ' (Constanza-Chock, 2020).

The Role of journalism. Compare the views on the role of journalism in society, outside the mainstream reporter framework (US) and identify how other frameworks (e.g. publizist framework) can be working in the investigative realm and, for that matter, what other cultural frameworks are supplementing in different parts of the world the same functions fulfilled by the reporter framework in the US.

Roles in journalism. New roles should be analysed and defined: network editor, network coordinator, data curator/trustee and source curator/trustee (outside or inside of a news organization) as person or as an institution; data officer (what kind of data is being retained, how, where, for how long; for both the personal data gathered in leaks but also for data of participants).

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[382] For instance, OCCRP is making up a ROI figure of USD 2.8 billion 56.000 % without providing any proof: https://web.archive.org/web/20200924105916/https://ijnet.org/en/story/investigative-journalism-great-investment

Data points. Review the many different ways to collect and make data available outside open data and leaks, including reviewing models of data commons for information of public interests.

Technology politics. Review the technical solutions and their governance systems at play in networks, dumb down to a few categories of what is out there, what is in use and what is not in the mainstream but it could be useful and how.

7.4. Colonisation of cross-border investigative journalism

In order 'to keep up with the process of globalisation ' CBIJ platforms (e.g. ICIJ) are perceived to offer a solution by 'building an international infrastructure ' (Lück, Schultz, 2019). In the context of today's acceleration of remote work in general, the platformization of cross-border investigative journalism represents a growing phenomenon of interest, endorsed by the same techno-positivism as the current trend of the platformization of society (see e.g., Van Dijck, Poell, & De Waal, 2018). For organisations, using such platforms enables achieving scale and efficiency. For individual journalists, having exclusive and secure access in a single place to data troves of leaks, scraped company records, results of FOIA requests, archives, reporter notes, past stories, digitized prosecution files and court records is a nirvana, especially for those working in isolation and lacking the resources to travel and to store and process data. While acknowledging these short-term benefits, critical research into how such investigative platforms are shaping the position and work of individual journalists who are using them and the networks they are part of, is yet to be developed.

One of the consequences of very few actors running such platforms and large numbers of journalists depending on them in the cross-border journalism realm, could be understood as what in the landscape of 'big tech ' has been called a 'hyper-modern form of feudalism ' based on data ownership (Morozov, 2016). These terms are used to draw attention to the placing of total control of user's data and interactions in the hands of a few companies who face no competition. Moreover, adopting this platform model in investigative journalism - just as in the rest of the 'sharing economy ' - runs the risk of generating a precariat within the realm of investigative journalism. What can be done to remedy this current trend in the investigative journalism world?

As this research shows, a key first step is to acknowledge that platform-based data sharing in investigative journalism networks needs to be accompanied by discussions of governance rules and technology design, as well as co-ownership of data and digital tools. These networks need to develop and adopt public codes of conduct and to have accountability mechanisms in place to deal with abuses of any kind. The absence of these may amplify the precarious work conditions of individual journalists, instead of disrupting legacy media actors.

Secondly, the goal should not be to scale up a small number of cross-border investigative networks to thousands of people each. Rather, the goal should be to find a good model that can be applied to a multitude of independent networks that may collaborate with each other. My own EIC praxis showed me that things can improve in smaller networks and by aiming to change habits only in the long run, since systems have been so ossified. So instead of a single network of 150 media partners, a more desirable approach would be to have 10 networks of 15 partners each working independently in parallel and creating case-by-case federations. The latter would be commensurate with the principles of a healthy media system, including fair competition and media pluralism, but

would only happen if fire-walls between projects are taken down and if journalism commons are formulated and implemented. Without such approaches, the participatory potential of cross-border investigative networks will fail to materialize and, fuelled by a network effect, a few platform owners will consolidate instead a global investigative data-feudalism system, ready to be colonised.

Facebook is good for keeping in touch with family but it also provides a platform to the wrong people connecting them at high speed for the wrong purposes; AirBnb is good in landing you on a incredible location for a good price, but doing so it is wiping out local communities in the most touristic places. So it is with cross-border investigative journalism infrastructures: they could be good tools in specific cases, but may also have unintended negative consequences. To understand those a praxis approach is needed, integrating continued experimentation, critical research and publication.

Last but not least, the intersection between network effect, data feudalism and platformization, and the fact that non-profit funds come mostly from the US along with the muckraking model of journalism, all converge towards the colonisation of CBIJ. Decades of pushing the Atlantic model of journalism in the Eastern European post-communist countries didn't change the media nor the political systems - on the contrary, nationalists and former nomenklatura are on the rise. Also, recent political events in the US and the UK exposed the limitations and even dangers of traditional Global North media systems towards democratic societies - and there is no other place where more robust, financially sound, independent and professional Atlantic journalism takes place today. So how come the attitudes in the Global North to other people's journalism has persisted, how come it is still taken for granted that the world democracy relies on the Atlantic journalistic model and more specific on the muckraking US model ?

As a long time Eastern European investigative journalist, reading a discussion of Edward Said's'orientalism ' by Grzeszyk (2019) in the context of post-colonialism studies applied to cross-border journalism, I recognize so many stereotypes I have heard from US and Western Europeans in the context of media development work, training and lecturing in journalism, especially in the field of cross-border investigative journalism in Eastern Europe and beyond.

Outside the Global North space, both those involved in journalism-related activities as well as those in power who become targets of cross-border investigative journalism have been labeled so many times as incapable of governance and management, lazy, irrational, but at the same time surrounded by an aura of mystery and power, making any endeavour in the region sound exotically rewarding and fit only for a white saviour. It has over the years consolidated a strong feeling that the US and Western Europeans are the superior experts in journalism, journalism techniques, a feeling that is being enforced by decades of professional conferences dedicated to journalism where the journalists foreign to the Western world are on stage invited to speak about their 'otherness ' instead of their skills and expertise, contributes to building an imaginary world that needs the saving intervention of the skilled and civilized from the US/Western Europe. The same thing applies when building up a cross-border investigative team with the same people from foreign countries, their only expertise being not a specific topic for investigation but instead their nationality (still a happy alternative to having expats on such teams only because they happen to temporary live in a foreign geographical space).

Consider the GIJN 2015 official publication showing an imprisoned Azerbaijani female journalist as the face of the conference publication, a clear projection of the 'other ', a reflection of the strategy to use 'the other ' journalists as tokens for metrics and to assign them a given role, the role to

illustrate a story invented by the western world for the 'other' in journalism, a role of a preselected story to illustrate the conventional narrative, while a US white male is the face put on the conference currency ('ten kaplans'), projecting power through the thousands of vouchers gifted to all participants to get free drinks.

This status quo in CBIJ seems to only have been accelerated by the introduction of data and data platforms into the mix of CBIJ. Because of the network effect, this research indicates that the increasing cross-border connections during the last decades produce more 'conversations' happening in the new field of cross-border investigative journalism, and such conversations fuel the creation of CBIJ data feudalists, where a few big organizations control the access to such conversation places and can scale up to the extent that such organizations start to colonize electronic places for conversations (e.g. secure platforms) and have more and more impact in the real-life and the real-geography of journalists, whistleblowers, communities).

Data feudalism and digital colonisation is happening in various fields of society: 'decisions made by dominant digital intermediaries can restructure the environment in which other media organizations operate' (Kleis Nielsen, Ganter 2018).

The control media had over the means of mass communication has vanished: now they depend on other channels and they have little control over such channels (Bell, Owen, 2017), while still controlling their own content. But for how long will they be in control of their own content creation, since content is dependent on other growing platforms that host information-exchanges, source documents, contacts, especially in the CBIJ realm?

Networks can scale up individual efforts, but by doing so they can also have unintended effects. For instance in investigative journalism, they can scale up investigative research and amplify a given topic, but at the same time they can also propagate media blind spots, like for instance objective stereotypes.

Depending on the background of those running such collaborations, networks can propagate their approach towards journalism – like for instance looking at the cross-border tool not as a way to understand different cultures but as a way to spread a certain view globally, aiming at pushing the frontiers the same way colonizers did. And this could be possible if we identify the 'media capture' effect (Woodall, 2017) translated into the 'leak capture', to the point where CBIJ journalists are dependent on access to data and resources locked in a platform (online or offline) where access control is owned and managed by an organisation that is both an intermediary and a media player.

'It is not surprising that the leading platform companies are characterized by an avid tendency to colonize and converge into ever-new markets' (Schwarz, 2017, p384). So it comes as no surprise that technology is just a reflection of the values of those shipping the needs (tech code) and so a continuation of the colonisation drive of sponsors and their ex-mainstream media and bureaucratic agents. In the middle, these agents are simply offering stuff for free (financial grants or privileged access to data) just to capture and sell it to other groups (governments and wealthy philantropists in need of a public profile and a tax break). This mechanism crashes and churns journalists, especially the non-white, non-English speaking , those under the matrix of dominance.

In the same way as a facet of the history of capitalism tells the story of 'colonisation of societies and human spaces' in order to create new market spaces for existent services (Fuchs, 2014, p62), so does a facet of the history of cross-border journalism showing the colonisation of 'virtual spaces' growing a business around expert services related to journalism, based in the US and Western

Europe, such as training, management of non-profit, fundraising, communication[383]. Originally presented as an alternative approach to the constraints and limitations of commercial media has itself been turned into a monopolistic business. This is in line with the observation that 'the achievement cancels the premises' (Marcuse 1964: 4), so formerly critical ideas and tools became supportive of power structures that they originally criticized, once they were institutionalized.

Based on my own experience, I can only guess that hard hitting investigative journalists outside the Global North, used to dealing with mobsters, thugs, authoritarian politicians and regimes, have not been prepared to recognise and resist this specific type of control and dependency, directed from institutions enjoying great trust.

Recognising and acknowledging this state of affairs in the CBIJ realm is a first big step because the infrastructures and languages of control once recognised as such, can be reused, reshaped, even occupied, or can simply be the ignition point for counter actions happening in other realms.

Strategies of resistance will take shape. How ? This remains to be seen.

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[383] relevant is for instance that the GIJN website has several languages and several social media channels of different languages only translating centralised communication packages originating under the US based coordination; GIJC use the same platform over the world to organise the bi-anual conference as well as other confernces, such as one focused on Asia https://2018.uncoveringasia.org/; GIJN email server is hosted and run from the US

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APPENDIX A

Appendix A.5.1.1. Football leaks template agreement

This is a template version of the agreement signed by all media that had access to Football Leaks source documents.

AGREEMENT

between DER SPIEGEL and EIC partner [INSERT NAME OF MEDIA]

This is a secret project, please be discrete when talking to colleagues, etc. The control and decision over the data-set and publication schedule keeps DER SPIEGEL as the initiator of this project, who will consult with EIC partners but has the responsibility over the Source.

[INSERT NAME OF JOURNALIST] understands and agrees that the present data-set will not be shared with or copied to any third party; please let EIC coordinator know how many copies you are using for internal searches.

[INSERT NAME OF JOURNALIST] understands and agrees that personal information (passwords, credit card numbers etc) found in this data-set will not be accessed, shared with or copied to any third party.

[INSERT NAME OF JOURNALIST] understands and agrees that data will be stored and/or transported offline and encrypted.

[INSERT NAME OF JOURNALIST] agrees to follow the Security, Publication and Emergency Plan that EIC will put in place during the kick-off meeting as well as ask for help to implement security measures, notify immediately of any possible unauthorized access to the data-set, including possible electronic attacks, police or prosecution requests.

The breach of this agreement will lead to the exclusion of [INSERT NAME OF JOURNALIST] from this collaborative project and/or from EIC.

[INSERT NAME OF JOURNALIST] agrees that all collaborators working in her/his team are bound to the same terms and should sign a similar agreement.

Signature, Date: [insert date]
Name, position, organization: [insert name of media]
Mobile: [insert number]
Secure email: [insert email]
PGP Fingerprint: [insert number]
Secure chat: -

APPENDIX B

Appendix B.5.1.2.1.EIC meeting agenda and participants

This is an anonymised version of the Agenda and Participants for the first EIC Football Leaks meeting. Instead of names of participants I replaced with gender and speciality where content stands for journalism and tech stands for technologist (e.g. Male tech Spiegel).

AGENDA // 29th April, 2016, Hamburg

10 – 11 //
\# short intro male Spiegel, male Spiegel, Stefan EIC coordination
\# intro of each participant, expertise, experience (problems, solutions, needs)
2 min each since we are about 25 people
\#intro by Spiegel into the present project (content) and Spiegel (tech); threats

11.30 – 12 //
\#technology, security needs and user experiences (for this topic & in general, software & hardware)
\# bring up your lessons learned from other projects: social engineering, problems, mistakes, solutions, ideas

12 – 13 //
\#process, workflow (for this topic & in general, including your local partnering needs and ideas)

13 – 14 //
\#possible stories and directions for this topic
\#and possible stories in general that EIC could develop

14.30 – 15 //
\#tech group is coming back / update on conclusions and directions

15 – 17 //
\#set up next meetings and communication flow, on content/tech/info-design
\#process phase / production phase
\#draft a Plan for Security; Emergency Scenarios (tech, legal)

TECH PARALLEL SESSION, 12 – 14.30 //
Tech group is running a separate meeting on the following
\# web based security for communication, info & discovery
\# process phase and production phase
\# search tool, what tech parameters for indexing, uploading
\# server based?
\# internal wikimedia to detail names, themes, associations etc
\# search interface ?
\# message stream on data – annotation?
\# new data uploads

different containers for: communication tools; general file-sharing; extracted data repo+annotations; wikimedia
other data analyses
tech products based on the data (database, stats, communication flows)

NEXT STEPS //

EIC meeting the 2nd of JUNE at DataHarvest (Mechelen) to exchange discoveries
maybe more new data

first publication date **9th of JULY** for the day before the Final

PARTICIPANTS // 29th April, 2016, Hamburg

1. Male, content, Le Soir
2. Male, tech, RCIJ/Sponge
3. Male, content, Der Spiegel
4. Male, tech, The Guardian
5. Male, content, Mediapart
6. Male, content, Falter
7. Male, tech, Der Spiegel
8. Male, content, Politiken
9. Male, content, Der Spiegel
10. Male, content, Der Spiegel
11. Female, content, The Guardian
12. Male, content, Falter
13. Male, content, TheBlackSea
14. Male, tech, RCIJ/Sponge
15. Male, content, Newsweek Serbia
16. Male, tech, Der Spiegel
17. Male, content, The Guardian
18. Male, tech, Mediapart
19. Male, content, Tages Anzeiger
20. Female, content, El Mundo
21. Male, content, Expresso
22. Male, content, Der Spiegel
23. Stefan Candea, content, coordination EIC
24. Male, content, L'Espresso
25. Male, tech, Le Soir
26. Male, content, Mediapart

Appendix B.5.1.2.2.EIC meeting agenda and participants

This is an anonymised version of the Agenda and Participants for the second EIC Football Leaks meeting. Instead of names of participants I replaced with gender and speciality, where content stands for journalism (e.g. Male content RCIJ) and tech stands for technologist (e.g. Male tech Spiegel).

AGENDA
2nd June, 2016, Mechelen, Flanders
LOCATION:
Anonymised Room **at Thomas More Hogeschool,**
Campus De Ham, Raghenoplein 21
MEETING FOR DRINKS: see at the end

9 – 10 //
arriving, setting up the place, annotate this agenda
registering needs for on-boarding on the online search tool
10 – 12.30 // findings
Stefan Candea short intro on the ICIJ / EIC problem and agreement **10 min**
Male, content, Der Spiegel: **10 min** presentation on main findings from Spiegel so far and on tech issues / findings / new batch Male, tech, Der Spiegel **5 min**
who has findings to share, a round from EIC: max 5 min each partner, national and international themes **60 min**
12.30 – 13.30 // search
presenting the different tools used, different approaches to Data Processing, work in progress (Male, tech, Der Spiegel; Male, tech, Mediapart**;** Male, tech, Mediapart)
hoover web-based search tool (Male, tech, RCIJ)
what has been done – road map – needs
on-boarding and testing

13.30 – 14 // lunch in the cafetaria

14 – 15 // small teams
divide in known findings in the main themes / stories + tech
divide everybody in working-groups interested in the same possible themes / stories / directions + tech (4 people per group)
discuss strategies, who has what, **partners** needed in what **countries** or **niche**

15.00 – 15.30 // entire group
re-group and present conclusions on each group
draft a workflow, who's taking what, process phase, production phase, possible publication deadline
draft a list of Security Threats; Emergency Scenarios (tech, legal)

15.30 – 16.30 // entire group
ideas on parallel stories, or possible stories in the pipeline
or just expand the current project stories

16 – 16.30 // communication tools
what has been tested, done, directions (Male, tech, Der Spiegel; Male, tech, Mediapart**;** Male, tech, Mediapart; Male, tech, RCIJ; Stefan Candea)
present what is available, how we'll use it

16.30 – 17.30 // separate groups
- looking at the visualization tool of Spiegel to integrate over hoover
- eic.network website migration to wordpress
- OCR & the new batch
- presenting EIC at DH on podium and among colleagues

17.30 // closing
19.30 // meeting for drinks
Mechelen anonymised location

PARTICIPANTS //
2nd of June, 2016, Mechelen, Flanders

1. Male, content, Le Soir (anonymized contacts tel and email)
2. Male, content, Le Soir (anonymized contacts tel and email)
3. Male, tech, RCIJ/Sponge (anonymized contacts tel and email)
4. Male, tech, Mediapart (anonymized contacts tel and email)
5. Male, tech, Der Spiegel (anonymized contacts tel and email)
6. Female, content, El Mundo (anonymized contacts tel and email)
7. Male, content, Politiken (anonymized contacts tel and email)
8. Male, content, Der Spiegel (anonymized contacts tel and email)
9. Male, content, Politiken (anonymized contacts tel and email)
10.Male, content,, Der Spiegel (anonymized contacts tel and email)
11.Female, content, The Guardian (anonymized contacts tel and email)
12.Male, content, The Guardian (anonymized contacts tel and email)
13.Male, content, Falter (anonymized contacts tel and email)
14.Male, content, Newsweek Serbia (anonymized contacts tel and email)
15.Male, tech, Mediapart (anonymized contacts tel and email)
16.Female, content, El Mundo (anonymized contacts tel and email)
17.Stefan Candea, RCIJ/Sponge (anonymized contacts tel and email)
18.Male, content, L'Espresso (anonymized contacts tel and email)
19.Male, content, RCIJ (anonymized contacts tel and email)
20.Male, content, L'Espresso (anonymized contacts tel and email)
21.Male, content, Mediapart (anonymized contacts tel and email)
Not coming, some maybe per skype:
22.Male, content, RCIJ (anonymized contacts tel and email)
23.Male, content, Tages Anzeiger (anonymized contacts tel and email)
24.Male, content, TheBlackSea (anonymized contacts tel and email)
25.Male, content, Expresso (anonymized contacts tel and email)

Appendix B.5.1.2.3.EIC meeting agenda and participants

This is an anonymised version of the Agenda and Participants for the third EIC Football Leaks meeting. Instead of names of participants I replaced with gender and speciality, where content stands for journalism (e.g. Male content RCIJ) and tech stands for technologist (e.g. Male tech Spiegel).

AGENDA
28th and 29th of July, 2016, Paris

LOCATION:
Mediapart office, Paris, France
MEETING FOR drinks, dinner: see at the end

DRAFT AGENDA

Day 1, Thursday, 28th of July

12 - 12.30 //
Starts, highlights

12.30 – 13 // Tech
communication platform (Stefan, 5 min)
research, posting and sharing, using DokuWiki (Male content, The Black Sea, 10 min)
search + bring your own collections to be indexed (Male tech, RCIJ, 20 min)

13 – 14 // LUNCH at Mediapart

14 – 17 //
work as a group and post on the whiteboard the most important topics that need further cross-border investigation and the most important tools

breaking in 4 small groups each of 5 people, unconference style, changing groups each 30 min. & changing topics
we'll offer both tech & content: participants either post on the board the topic they want to talk about or they read posted topics and join the working group
work groups: research and upload content for internal wiki together [working in 4 small groups each of 5 people, unconference style, each 30 min. changing groups & topics]

ongoing:
compile a **MasterList of Experts** available by topic, location (that can be shared within EIC)
break each crossborder investigation into tasks, deadlines and owners and document in a Wekan grain

18 //
meeting for drinks/dinner [**TBC**]

Day 2, Friday, 29th of July

9 – 12 //

participants either post on the board the topic they want to talk about or they read posted topics and join the working group //
work groups: research and upload content for internal wiki together [working in 4 small groups each of 5 people, unconference style, each 30 min. changing groups & topics]

ongoing:
compile a **MasterList of Experts** available by topic, location (that can be shared within EIC)
break each crossborder investigation into tasks, deadlines and owners and document in a Wekan grain

12 – 13 // LUNCH

13 – 15.00 //

regroup and recap key tasks, owners and deadlines
establish headlines for cross-border stories, teams, schedules
see bellow existing TOPICS, they need tasks, locations, ownerships, deadlines (e.g. who's leading the Turkish investigation, who's leading the minerals)

CROSSBORDER TOPICS so far (tasks, locations, ownership, deadlines)**:**
1. Doyen + The business of ARIF fam
2. Tax avoidance and offshore constructions
3. TPO / TPI / financing Clubs / new models
4. Player Advisers
5. VIP's (Beckham) – money making machine
6. Image rights / Third rights

ongoing:
compile a **MasterList of Experts** available by topic, location (that can be shared within EIC)
break each crossborder investigation into tasks, deadlines and owners and document in a Wekan grain

15.00 - 15.30 //

a joint workflow: can you dedicate 1.30 h per day for reading the chat, research, post findings and feed the wiki?
what partners do we need outside EIC, from what countries? organizations or freelancers ?
are we going to produce a public database of companies, names etc ?

ENDS.

PARTICIPANTS //
28th and 29th of July, 2016, Paris at Mediapart office

[PLEASE UPDATE YOUR DETAILS IN EIC AdressBook]

1. Male, content, Le Soir (anonymized contacts tel and email)
2. Male, content, Le Soir (anonymized contacts tel and email)
3. Male, tech, RCIJ/Sponge (anonymized contacts tel and email)
4. Male, tech, Mediapart (anonymized contacts tel and email)
5. Male, tech, Der Spiegel (anonymized contacts tel and email)
6. Male, content, Politiken (anonymized contacts tel and email)
7. Male, tech, Le Soir (anonymized contacts tel and email)
8. Male, content, TheBlackSea (anonymized contacts tel and email)
9. Male, content, TheBlackSea (anonymized contacts tel and email)
10. Female, content, TheBlackSea (anonymized contacts tel and email)
11. Male, content, The Sunday Times (anonymized contacts tel and email)
12. Male, content, The Sunday Times (anonymized contacts tel and email)
13. Male, content, The Sunday Times (anonymized contacts tel and email)
14. Male, content, El Mundo (anonymized contacts tel and email)
15. Male, content, Der Spiegel (anonymized contacts tel and email)
16. Male, content, Der Spiegel (anonymized contacts tel and email)
17. Male, content, Der Spiegel (anonymized contacts tel and email)
18. Male, content, Falter (anonymized contacts tel and email)
19. Male, content, Newsweek Serbia (anonymized contacts tel and email)
20. Male, tech, Mediapart (anonymized contacts tel and email)
21. Female, content, El Mundo (anonymized contacts tel and email)
22. Stefan Candea, RCIJ and EIC coordination (anonymized contacts tel and email)
23. Male, content, L'Espresso (anonymized contacts tel and email)
24. Male, content, Mediapart (anonymized contacts tel and email)
25. Male, tech, RCIJ/Sponge (anonymized contacts tel and email)
26. Male, content, NRC Handelsblad (anonymized contacts tel and email)

Not coming (but some maybe per skype):
1. Male, content, NewsWeek Serbia, from Albania (anonymized contacts tel and email)
2. Male, content, RCIJ (anonymized contacts tel and email)
3. Male, content, Expresso (anonymized contacts tel and email)

Appendix B.5.1.2.4.EIC meeting agenda and participants

This is an anonymised version of the Agenda and Participants for the fourth EIC Football Leaks meeting. Instead of names of participants I replaced with gender and speciality, where content stands for journalism (e.g. Male content RCIJ) and tech stands for technologist (e.g. Male tech Spiegel).

AGENDA
28th and 29th of September, 2016, Lisbon

LOCATION:
Expresso office, near Lisbon, Portugal

MEETING FOR drinks, dinner on the 28th, at 8 pm, downtown Lisbon

DRAFT

**ROOMS: We will have 3 content Rooms and one IT/tech room
ROOM NAMES: Auditorium (DOYEN), Tutumlu (AGENTS), Maradona (PLAYERS), Sue Ellen (TECH)**

Please check the LISBON MEETING BOARD posted in Sandstorm, here the invite: anonymised url

Day 1, Wednesday, 28th of September – CONTENT

10. - 11.00 //
Short Teaser on Tools; Review of Logistics related to content
 # Please add content to Wikis and/or Findings during your group work , including tasks, owners and ETA

11.00 – 12.45 //
#Parallel sub-group sessions, put your name in the LISBON MEETING board

11.00 – 12.45 //
hackathon

12:45 – 13 //
Greetings from EXPRESSO Editor-in-chief

13 – 14 // LUNCH at EXPRESSO

14 – 18 //
Parallel sub-group sessions, put your name in the LISBON MEETING board

14 – 17 //
Assistance and tutorial for Journalists (tokens, grains, wikis, search tricks, annotation), including installing yubikey

20 // back to town, meeting at anonymised location.

Day 2, Thursday, 29th of September - Rest of Content; Logistics of Publication

10. - 11.00 //
Short Teaser on Tools; Review of Logistics related to content
 # Please add content to Wikis and/or Findings during your group work, including tasks, owners and ETA

11.00 – 12.45 //
#Parallel sub-group sessions, put your name in the LISBON MEETING board

13 – 14 // LUNCH at EXPRESSO

14 – 17 //
Parallel sub-group sessions, put your name in the LISBON MEETING board

14 – 17 //
Assistance and tutorial for Journalists (tokens, grains, wikis, search tricks, annotation), including installing yubikey

17 – 18 //
WRAP up [AUDITORIUM]

PARTICIPANTS //
28th and 29th of September, 2016, Lisbon, at EXPRESSO

1. Male, content, Le Soir (anonymized contacts tel and email)
2. Male, content, Le Soir (anonymized contacts tel and email)
3. Male, tech, RCIJ/Sponge (anonymized contacts tel and email)
4. Female, tech, RCIJ/Sponge (anonymized contacts tel and email)
5. Male, tech, Der Spiegel (anonymized contacts tel and email)
6. Male, tech, Le Soir (anonymized contacts tel and email)
7. Male, content, TheBlackSea (anonymized contacts tel and email)
8. Male, content, The Sunday Times (anonymized contacts tel and email)
9. Male, content, The Sunday Times (anonymized contacts tel and email)
10. Male, content, The Sunday Times (anonymized contacts tel and email)
11. Male, content, El Mundo (anonymized contacts tel and email)
12. Male, content, Der Spiegel (anonymized contacts tel and email)
13. Male, content, Der Spiegel (anonymized contacts tel and email)
14. Male, content, Der Spiegel (anonymized contacts tel and email)
15. Male, content, Falter (anonymized contacts tel and email)

16. Male, content, Newsweek Serbia (anonymized contacts tel and email)
17. Male, tech, Mediapart (anonymized contacts tel and email)
18. Female, content, El Mundo (anonymized contacts tel and email)
19. Stefan Candea, RCIJ and EIC coordination (anonymized contacts tel and email)
20. Male, content, L'Espresso (anonymized contacts tel and email)
21. Male, content, Mediapart (anonymized contacts tel and email)
22. Male, content, NRC Handelsblad (anonymized contacts tel and email)
23. Male, content, Expresso (anonymized contacts tel and email)
24. Male, content, RCIJ (anonymized contacts tel and email)
25. Male, content, Politiken (anonymized contacts tel and email)
26. Male, content, L'Espresso (anonymized contacts tel and email)
27. Male, content, Spiegel (anonymized contacts tel and email)
28. Male, content, Spiegel (anonymized contacts tel and email)
29. Male, content, El Mundo (anonymized contacts tel and email)
30. Female, content, NRC Handelsblad (anonymized contacts tel and email)
31. Female, content, Expresso (anonymized contacts tel and email)
32. Male, content, Expresso (anonymized contacts tel and email)
33. Male, content, Expresso (anonymized contacts tel and email)

Appendix B.5.1.2.5.EIC meeting agenda and participants

This is an anonymised version of the Agenda and Participants for the fifth EIC Football Leaks meeting. Instead of names of participants I replaced with gender and speciality, where content stands for journalism (e.g. Male content RCIJ) and tech stands for technologist (e.g. Male tech Spiegel).

AGENDA
14th November, 2016, Hamburg
LOCATION:
Der Spiegel Newsroom, Hamburg
MEETING FOR dinner on the 13th, at 7.30 pm
Anonymised
DRAFT
CONFRONTATION MASTER PLAN:
anonymised url

08. - 10.00 //
first week stories
 # CREDIT: discuss a text crediting the work on EIC and leading to the website
10.15 – 12.15 //
second week stories
Discuss **PUBLICATION OF DOCUMENTS**: only contracts; please re-construct emails, don't publish as found in hoover

12.15 – 13.00 // LUNCH

13:00 – 15 //
third week stories
LEGAL DISCUSION – input your legal adviser contact here anonymised url
15 – 16.30 //
#Uzbek data (Male, content, Mediapart)
other issues

PARTICIPANTS //
14th of November, 2016, Hamburg
1. Male, content, Le Soir (anonymized contacts tel and email)
2. Male, content, Le Soir (anonymized contacts tel and email)
3. Male, tech, Der Spiegel (anonymized contacts tel and email)
4. Male, content, TheBlackSea (anonymized contacts tel and email)
5. Male, content, The Sunday Times (anonymized contacts tel and email)
6. Male, content, The Sunday Times (anonymized contacts tel and email)
7. Male, content, El Mundo (anonymized contacts tel and email)
8. Male, content, Der Spiegel (anonymized contacts tel and email)
9. Male, content, Der Spiegel (anonymized contacts tel and email)
10. Male, content, Der Spiegel (anonymized contacts tel and email)
11. Male, content, Falter (anonymized contacts tel and email)
12. Male, content, Newsweek Serbia (anonymized contacts tel and email)

13. Female, content, El Mundo (anonymized contacts tel and email)
14. Stefan Candea, RCIJ and EIC coordination (anonymized contacts tel and email)
15. Male, content, L'Espresso (anonymized contacts tel and email)
16. Male, content, Mediapart (anonymized contacts tel and email)
17. Male, content, Expresso (anonymized contacts tel and email)
18. Male, content, Politiken (anonymized contacts tel and email)
19. Male, content, L'Espresso (anonymized contacts tel and email)
20. Male, content, Spiegel (anonymized contacts tel and email)
21. Male, content, Spiegel (anonymized contacts tel and email)
22. Female, content, NRC Handelsblad (anonymized contacts tel and email)
23. Male, content, RCIJ (anonymized contacts tel and email)
24. Male, content, Politiken (anonymized contacts tel and email)
25. Female, content, Der Spiegel (anonymized contacts tel and email)
26. Male, content, Expresso, (anonymized contacts tel and email)

APPENDIX C

Book chapter:

Cândea, Ș. (forthcoming). Data Feudalism: How platforms shape cross-border investigative networks. In: Gray, J., Bounegru, L (ed.) The Data Journalism Handbook. *Towards A Critical Data Practice*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Journal article:

Alfter, B. and Cândea, Ș. (2019). '*Cross-border collaborative journalism: New practice, new questions*', Journal of Applied Journalism & Media Studies, 8:2, pp. 141–49, doi: 10.1386/ajms.8.2.141_1

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