

Rebuilding investigative journalism. Collaborative journalism: sharing information, sharing risk

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Abstract

This article details the role of collaborative journalism during the process of rebuilding investigative journalism at its core thus assuring enduring investment in its quality.

We will start by characterizing the concepts of investigative journalism and collaborative journalism, using leading scholars in both of these complementary areas; we will, then, identify the pressures that constrains investigative journalism, and analyse how journalistic collaboration has a potential for resistance that can protect both investigative journalism and the journalists who practice it.

Our article path will be complemented with the case study of the "Daphne Project", the first project of the consortium "Forbidden Stories", the international platform created by Laurent Richard. This project will be characterized through a documentary analysis and with interviews we conducted with both its founder, Laurent Richard, and Mathew Caruana Galizia, the son of Daphne Caruana Galizia, the Maltese journalist murdered on October 16th 2017, during her investigations.

The Daphne Project was created for the purpose of keeping alive stories of journalists who have been killed, imprisoned or, for some reason, were unable to pursue their investigations.

Not only does collaborative journalism protect investigative journalism and investigative journalists, but cross-borders collaboration also allows "sharing the risk across a wide range of international players" (Sambrook, 2017).

If the absolute exposure of the lonely investigative journalist turns him/her into a target in territories where freedom of speech is threatened, the murder of this Maltese journalist, followed by the murder of Slovakian Ján Kuciak, in 2018, placed Europe as an unlikely set on the risk map.

While acknowledging the problems caused by international consortium of journalists, this research highlights, above all, how these partnerships, anchored in "radical sharing" (Guevara, 2016)¹, are contributing to enhance investigative journalism.

Keywords: Collaborative Journalism; Investigative Journalism; Sharing Risk; Daphne Project; Forbidden Stories.

Introduction: presenting and outlining the object of the study

The strains that make investigative journalism falter

High-quality journalism remains immune to the effects of the journalism crisis, standing out in the myriad of voices that assault the media space: some voices are false, others are guided by obscure interests, others are even incomplete, because they are not framed by journalistic investigation. All these voices emerging "in a world that often feels angrier and more partisan" (Newman, Fletcher, Kalogeropoulos, Levy, & Nielson,

¹Guevara, M. (2016). *Radical Sharing: Breaking paradigms to achieve change*. Retrieved from ICIJ blog: <https://www.icij.org/blog/2016/12/radical-sharing-breaking-paradigms-achieve-change/>

2018, p. 31) contribute, decisively, for the crisis of confidence that has settled in the media system and in journalism in particular.

In the meantime, journalism was trapped in a sustainability crisis, which was amplified by the digital revolution and the subprime mortgage crisis. In this "economic environment seeping with uncertainty", "many presume that journalism is currently at its point of exhaustion" (Zelizer, 2017, pp. 1, 115).

Investigative journalism exposes itself as the first and main victim of this sustainability crisis. "The constant cutbacks" that emerged from the "disintegration of the business media's financial underpinnings" had an effect "especially in investigative reporting (Starkman, 2014, p. 246), that is clearly 'under threat'" (Downie & Schudson, 2009). As Dean Starkman points out "journalists can describe the landscape, but they have less time to turn over rocks" (2014, p. 248).

Sitting at its desk, journalism lost touch with its core: on-the-ground Reporting. At the newsroom, the newcomers are, most times, engaged in web development. The backlash of journalism's sustainability crisis bestowed on them the power that journalism lost:

The high cost of creating websites compatible with a range of different devices has frequently been met by cutting the resources allocated to investigative reporting (Cagé, 2016, p. 32).

At newsrooms, investigative journalists are no longer "treated as rock stars" (Hoxha, 2019, p. 4) as they were in the last quarter of the 20th century, in the years after Watergate, the golden decades of investigative journalism. And as Starkman claims, the individual power of these journalists decreases, just as the managers' power increases. This cleavage, as the author concludes, has special effects in the investigative journalism:

time-consuming investigations were undertaken at the reporter's own risk ... your productive numbers took a hit, putting your career in peril" (2014, p. 245).

The signs that investigative journalism, and journalism itself, is threatened are evident. But as Barbie Zelizer suggests, "with journalism exhaustion comes the potential for journalism height and rebirth" (2017, p. 7). This potential seems to affirm itself through the investment in the quality of journalism, especially in its truly distinctive formula. Investigative journalism, which we can classify as a "superior form of journalism" (Coelho & Silva, 2018, p. 82) needs, as such, to be preserved.

Therefore, in this article we will detail the role of collaborative journalism as one of the means to reconstruct investigative journalism at its quality core thus ensuring its permanent funding. Drawing on the work of leading authors in both fields of collaborative and investigative journalism, this article will try to establish a correlation between investigative journalism and journalistic quality.

The challenge of journalistic quality

Recent studies show evident signals that confidence is being regained through quality journalism (Newman, 2017, pp. 9-10; Newman, Fletcher, Kalogeropoulos, Levy, & Nielson, 2017, p. 26; Newman, Fletcher, Kalogeropoulos, Levy, & Nielson, 2018, p. 31).

Several authors warn us about the complexity of defining the concept of journalistic quality as it carries a subjective dimension (Bogart, 2004; Rosenstiel & Mitchell, 2004). Therefore, this analysis does not intend to delve into the etymology of the concept, but only to evaluate the journalistic quality based on the "social and financial profit" that it manages to generate in society and in the debilitated business of news media (Coelho & Silva, 2018).

This investment that journalism ought to do on "sense-making news", where facts appear in context "so the audience can begin to derive some meaning from them" (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2010, p. 65), collides, however, with the ambition of media owners to generate immediate financial profit. Indifferent to the social profit this kind of journalism may bring and also to the potential it carries for financial profit, the media owners chose to cut resources thus impacting quality. And, as Bogart infers, "resources" are "a surrogate for quality" (2004).

Through several case studies, James T. Hamilton lays out the potential for financial profit associated with journalistic research:

each dollar invested by a newspaper in an investigative story can generate hundreds of dollars in benefits to society from changes in public policy (2016, p. 10).

But as the author acknowledges, the most challenging part is to translate this social profit into financial profit for media companies. To resolve this dilemma, while safeguarding the role of investigative journalists in democracy, Hamilton proposes "more attention to funding and facilitating innovations in investigative reporting" (*ibidem*: 11).

The challenge of collaboration

Collaborative journalism can, in our view, rise to the challenge placed by Hamilton. To this intent, we will characterize the concept of collaborative journalism as it was framed by several authors, but also, from the analysis of various cases that, relying on the collaboration between journalists and media from different countries, have proved to be successful on helping investigative journalism to overcome constraints that otherwise would have made it falter. Our research will conclude by presenting a case study - the Daphne Project, the first project of the Forbidden Stories consortium.

This project will be characterized through an extensive documentary analysis and two interviews with the founder of Forbidden Stories consortium, Laurent Richard, and Mathew Caruana Galizia, investigative journalist and son of the Maltese journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia, who started the investigation that nourishes this project. Through this case study we will note how, over five months, cross-border collaboration and sharing information between more than 40 journalists from more than a dozen news outlets has led to

restoring a journalistic investigation that had had a tragic outcome with the death of the Maltese journalist. The murder of Caruana Galizia exposes another restraint that investigative journalism faces: the risks for those who, all alone, accept its greatest challenge: "hold the powerful to account" (Starkman, 2014, p. 9). In this article, using the book where Anna Politkovskaya's last dispatches were published, we will also recall the circumstances of the death of this Russian journalist while she was investigating the Russian intelligence service. The resemblances between Politkovskaya and Caruana Galizia prompt us to value the importance of the collaboration shield.

In the case of Daphne Caruana Galizia, the social profit generated by cross-border journalistic collaboration can be measured by the political and judicial effects of such revelations, with several resignations and the appearance before court of key figures both political and economic that fed the Maltese regime.

For the media involved in this investigation, sharing resources and information resulted in a direct cost reduction. Furthermore, financial profit earned from the prestige gathered by the media, who published this investigation, should be added to the cost savings. In this sense, we can observe a chain effect identified by Philippe Meyer as "a reinforcing loop, where quality produces business success which enables more quality" (2004, p. 79).

Michael Rezendes, journalist for the Boston Globe's Spotlight team, presents us with concrete data that measure the financial profit associated with investigative journalism: Boston Globe readers spend a lot of time reading investigation reports and the number of newspaper subscribers usually increases after this kind of publication².

A study by the American Press Institute, coordinated by Tom Rosenstiel and involving 55 news outlets, also proves that major journalistic investigations have better metrics than other news. As the author concludes, "people like quality and depth, and will stick with a well-told story" (Rosenstiel, 2016, pp. 8,10).

The same phenomenon happens on broadcast news. The TV news "60 Minutes" made quality journalism profitable. Once again, the strategy is to ally quality and resources: "[we] commit significant resources to serious investigative reporting" (Fager, 2017, p. 9).

The specificity of investigative journalism

We have classified investigative journalism as a superior form of journalism because it requires from the journalist another rhythm, another involvement, another degree of care. David Randall and Dean Starkman easily draw the line between investigative journalism and everyday journalism:

investigative reporting starts at the point where day-to-day work stops. It does not accept the secrecy or the refusal of officials to give the information. It finds out for itself (Randall, 1996/2016, p. 128).

² <https://www.publico.pt/2017/01/12/sociedade/noticia/o-jornalismo-de-investigacao-compensa-em-terminos-economicos-1758130>

Likewise, Starkman uses the concepts of “access journalism” and “accountability journalism” to pinpoint the differences between them: “accountability reporting – the watchdog – got the story that access reporting missed” (2014, p. 11).

What distinguishes investigative journalists is the way they query, using a “personal method” and “disciplining their curiosity”. This method, based on “sceptical knowing”, is a way for them “to go deeper in their questioning” (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2010, p. 153).

The beacon that illuminates investigation journalism is the hidden truth, “particularly information that has been deliberately concealed”. Unveiling truths that are not on the surface requires, therefore, a journalist with “a certain type of personality”, based on an “extraordinary patience” (Anderson, D. & Benjaminson, P., 1976, p. 3), “inclination to sacrifice” (Kapusinski, 2002, p. 32), “determination” (Randall, 1996/2016, p. 131), “willingness to dig” (Anderson, D. & Benjaminson, P., 1976, p. 4), a “portable ignorance” (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2010, p. 27). Above all, he/she shows the courage to fight against the powerful, the dissatisfaction with incomplete answers, the willingness to find what is a secret. Those journalists speak with the dissidents, not with the elites, publish heterodox views, build stories forever marginal; they make enemies instead of friends (Starkman, 2014, pp. 10-11). Hunter classifies this marginal angle of investigative journalism as “reporting not as usual” (*apud* Hoxha, 2019, p. 1), as the journalist on the journey towards journalistic truth is induced to seek “how” instead of “why”, thus changing the string of forces - built on the five Ws – that structure daily journalism (Hoxha, 2019, p. 1).

This mission often demands courage but, above all, it requires a hard work of factchecking that produces a consistent journalistic evidence that may respond to the need of “high levels of transparency and greater detail about sources and methods to demonstrate its independence” (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2010, p. 72).

The consistency of the journalistic evidence becomes the protective shield that allows the journalist to resist the pressure of the *status quo* that the investigations usually compromise. Such pressure can become harder to overcome when the interests stricken by the investigation have the ability to restrain the organization where the journalist works. Therefore, James Breiner warns us:

investigative journalism focuses on the demands of the public and will often reveal information that could be embarrassing to an advertiser or, in the case of publicly subsidized media, the political leaders who control media budgets (2016).

Overcoming internal and external pressures is the greatest challenge for the investigative journalist who must thrive in the name of a greater good: “to have impact on the public” (Hoxha, 2019, p. 1). The best journalistic works produce a direct social effect. We observe it whenever a journalistic investigation annuls obsolete laws, detects outbreaks of previously invisible crime, unravels webs of corruption, exposes corrupt politicians and businessmen and protects the most disadvantaged, giving them the voice denied by the *status quo*...

Investigative journalism is “highly praised” for the service it provides to democracy (Neveu, 2005, p. 129), but the number of journalists who, alone, can overcome internal and external pressures is extremely low (Hamilton, 2016, p. 8). Though few in number, these journalists achieve much – “investigative reports have

outsized influence" (*ibidem*, p. 9) – but the signals that threaten journalism and investigation journalists should not leave us indifferent.

Associated with investigative journalism, journalistic collaboration, made possible by technology, carries the potential for the reconstruction of investigative journalism. Though it can be stated that technology has played an important role in the evolution of journalism at large and investigative journalism in particular, it is no less true that its impact does not change the essential:

verification and deeper understanding of particular issues... will always remain at the core of investigative journalism" (Hoxha, 2019, p. 1).

Collaborative Journalism

Edward Snowden: where everything started

For years, investigative journalism and collaborative journalism could not go together in the same sentence without risking an oxymoron. By nature, investigation is a solitary work which requires journalists who "dig deeper for a greater cause" (Hoxha, 2019, p. 3) competing for the scoop. Competition between organisations and individual journalists has always been "a cornerstone of the field"³. We have witnessed the result of that competition mainly in Watergate and during the seventies, after The Post's scoop. As Anderson and Benjaminson have put it referring to the effects of investigative journalism in the widespread idea of Chicago's corruption:

Chicago has a reputation for corruption ... because it supported four fairly independent newspapers with large numbers of competing investigative reporters (1976, p. 20).

For those who have worked in a solitary way, fearless and without a protective shield, collaboration is an "anathema"⁴.

In their 2009's report, Downie Jr. and Shudson anticipated the path of the future to come: "Reporting is becoming more participatory and collaborative". In that report, Alan Rusbridger saw "a collaborative journalism emerging", in what he then called a "mutualized newspaper" (*apud* Downie Jr. and Michael Schudson, 2009).

In 2013, Alan Rusbridger would be at the center of the first serious case of journalistic collaboration. Collaborative journalistic investigation manifests itself in two different ways; both depend on our view of journalism and traditional media. The Panama Papers, for the unprecedented success of a global investigation, gave the concept of collaborative journalism the strength it needed to assert itself. But even

³<https://collaborativejournalism.org/what-is-collaborativejournalism/>

⁴<https://collaborativejournalism.org/what-is-collaborativejournalism/>

before, Edward Snowden's revelations and those of WikiLeaks had brought to journalism the paramount challenge of collaboration.

There are, however, huge differences between these two models of collaboration.

While Snowden trusted in the journalistic evaluation made first by Glenn Greenwald (contributor for The Guardian), investigative journalist Ewen MacAskill and editor Alan Rusbridger (both from The Guardian), filmmaker Laura Poitras and later, Barton Gellman, from The Washington Post, Julian Assange did not believe that journalism would have the power to deal with it:

traditional news producers would be neither technically competent nor sufficiently bold in their publishing strategies (Bell, Owen, & Khorana, 2017, p. 2).

While Snowden's revelations were filtered by journalism, those of WikiLeaks were fully disclosed.

Charles Lewis cultivates Assange's distrust of traditional media. The founder of the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) points out "overweening individual pride, arrogance, competitiveness" that would have made impossible to create a collaborative net (2017, p. 18).

But much more than the "arrogance" or the "individual pride", what will, above all, condition the traditional media options is the market pressure. As Snowden recognises, "media has never been stronger than it is now" but journalism is also "less willing to use that sort of power and influence because of its increasing commercialization" (*apud* Bell, 2017, p. 53). What drives traditional media to flee from collaboration is the same thing that makes them avoid covering matters that call into question powerful interests. Drone Papers are a clear demonstration: no traditional media agreed to work on the matter. The leak coordinated by the ICIJ was exclusively treated by The Intercept, the investigative journalism outlet co-founded by Glenn Greenwald, Laura Poitras and Jeremy Scahill.

Eduard Snowden faced the same hurdles when he chose The New York Times to reveal the full extent of the power of the NSA. The paper retained the story for over a year. Desperate, Snowden spoke to The Guardian and to The Washington Post and the case finally advanced. The New York Times only returned to the story when The Guardian's editor, Alan Rusbridger, asked them for help.

In this market driven environment, fearful of hurting the established power, public interest has become a secondary element. As Emily Bell concludes: "the economic dynamics has actually produced bad journalism" (2017, p. 55).

However, NSA's leak was one of the stories that forces us to believe that journalism still matters. The team involved managed to build a solid story, strong enough to stand up to commercial pressures. It also showed us the power of collaboration.

Panama Papers: the consolidation of the concept of collaborative journalism

The same apparatus that created a hostile environment also gave journalism a solution: The Internet has made that collaboration possible. In the year 2000, at the beginning of digital revolution, Jeff Bezos traced the future: "What technology has taken away, technology can return" (*apud* Huffington, 2013). Technology has allowed investigative journalists to dive into previously unattainable complex universes, such as

offshores, jurisdictions regulated by legal statutes that favor tax evasion and enable the concealment of the identity of the money owners. Technology made it possible to penetrate this invisible universe:

Analysing data of large capacity proves to be resourceful to expose wrongdoing of offshore companies, tax evasion, illegal business practices, and political corruption (Hoxha, 2019, p. 3).

Panama Papers used all this technological might to affirm a collaborative journalism network that stands out as the huge one so far: 2.6 terabytes of data, 400 journalists from 100 outlets, working for a year, in 25 languages, in nearly 80 countries, without a single leak. ICIJ took 20 years to build a virtual collaborative space where the story was what really mattered - "too complex and too global for any individual journalist or media organization to tackle on their own" (Guevara, 2016)⁵. Every journalist acting in this virtual space communicated his/her findings while he/she was working on it. At ICIJ they call it "radical sharing" (Gallego & Romera, 2018)⁶.

Panama Papers were by that time the biggest leak in the history of the whistle-blowers. The information was delivered in 2014 to Bastian Obermayer, a reporter for the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, a German newspaper. In a market-driven environment where the scoop is paramount, Obermayer had to convince his organisation that collaboration would not only be good for their story but also profitable for their business: "Sure, from the cake of attention, we will have a smaller piece but the whole cake will be much bigger" (Obermayer, 2018, apud Nakhlawi, 2018)⁷.

The story would surely have fled the German newspaper if the top decision group had refused to share it. Obermayer asked the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists for support and the concept of collaborative journalism was fully embodied:

First, it's network journalism, it's flat, it's horizontal it's not vertical. The second difference is it's collaborative, it's not competitive. Thirdly, it's truly global. There were foreign correspondents but nothing like true cross-border global journalism. And, fourth, the use of technology for secure communication and sharing massive amounts of data (Coronel, apud Nakhlawi, 2018).

When journalism is under pressure, facing a credibility crisis, collaboration across countries, across organisations and between journalists "strengthens accountability journalism" (Sambrook, 2017). It is "an opportunity to do better work, more in depth... and to be transparent about how we got the story" (Coronel, apud Nakhlawi, 2018). Co-ordinating publication to "maximise impact" collaboration still increases "the scale

⁵Guevara, M. (2016). *Radical Sharing: Breaking paradigms to achieve change*. Retrieved from ICIJ blog: <https://www.icij.org/blog/2016/12/radical-sharing-breaking-paradigms-achieve-change/>

⁶Gallego, C., & Romera, P. (2018). *How ICIJ deals with massive data leaks like Panama Papers and Paradise Papers*. Retrieved from ICIJ blog Innovative Technology: <https://www.icij.org/blog/2018/07/how-icij-deals-with-massive-data-leaks-like-the-panama-papers-and-paradise-papers/>

⁷Nakhlawi, R. (2018). *Dangerous Situations, Collaboration And Humility: Highlights From 'Safeguarding The Truth'*. Retrieved from ICIJ Blog: <https://www.icij.org/blog/2018/10/dangerous-situations-collaboration-and-humility-highlights-from-safeguarding-the-truth/>

on the investigation" (Sambrook, 2017). The results of a cross border investigation, sharing expertise and resources, cannot be compared to the ones available in any single newsroom. "There are no borders for cross-border investigation", concludes Laurent Richard, founder of Forbidden Stories' journalism consortium⁸.

Out of many, one: how to overcome the tensions and get the story done

Collaboration, however, carries a potential for tension. Different platforms, different rhythms of work, different countries, and different editorial guidelines require greater effort both from journalists and the organisations they work for. Underlying this vast spectrum of tensions is the natural aspiration of journalism - the struggle for the scoop. As Sambrook acknowledges, the clearest expression of this struggle is defining when the publication should be released: "This part involved a lot of discussions and compromises on all sides, since everybody wants to host the stories exclusively" (2017). Alan Rusbridger agrees. The Guardian's editor for more than twenty years has called upon his WikiLeaks' and Snowden's experience to recognise the "horrible" logistic he dealt with "trying to collaborate with a German weekly, a French afternoon paper, a New York morning paper". But at the end, it was a true learning experience for all:

We learned from the New York Times and from Der Spiegel. It established a network of people who knew each other (*apud* Sambrook, 2017, p. 29).

The key to overcome these differences lays in the importance of the investigation.

The success of the Panama Papers is due not only to the desire of traditional journalists to collaborate, but also to the availability of their organisations which were driven to break the rigidity that prevented them from sharing exclusives.

The greater the journalist's motivation is, the greater his/her desire to collaborate will be, following the rules imposed by the group.

In operational terms, however, we have identified two decisive situations to help reduce tensions. On the one hand, the degree of planning must be precise and the process of discussion broad and permanent (Project Facet, 2015). On the other hand, a transnational investigation requires a new emerging role, the "neutral intermediary or host" (Sambrook, 2017), the "neutral" editorial coordinator" (Alfter, *apud* Sambrook, 2017).

The potential of journalistic collaboration in protecting whistle-blowers

Investigative journalism in its collaborative mode must deal with a technology dilemma: it needs technology to feed its network and to encrypt communications between journalists and sources inside the grid, but the technology available can hardly be secure enough to surpass state secrecy which is also anchored in the

⁸Phone interview with the founder of the Forbidden Stories' journalism consortium, 15th May 2019.

technology field. The same need presides over the journalistic protection of whistle-blowers and the state's desire to know who these are.

The very reasons why the state wants to tame, penetrate, and control the digital universe are the same reasons that make it an instrument of liberty (Bell, Owen, & Khorana, 2017, p. 8).

For a long period, Snowden used encrypted messages to communicate with the journalists he chose to build the story. After the leak everything changed. The whistle-blowers were no longer protected. Keeping sources safe is difficult even to journalists who are aware of the technology's risks.

With his courageous decision, Snowden started a global debate about digital privacy, national security and the powers of the state. It became general knowledge that our governments could "collect, store, share and analyse" our electronic communications every time they wish, without a purpose (Bell, Owen, & Khorana, 2017, p. 8).

The allegations of national security and the fight against terrorism can ultimately be a false excuse. In fact, as Glenn Greenwald points out:

spying ... Dilma Rousseff or ... Angela Merkel... or subjecting entire populations to indiscriminate surveillance on the grounds of absolutely no suspicion... has nothing to do with terrorism (2017, p. 44).

At the end, such *modus operandi* is useless. As Snowden puts it, "when you collect everything, you understand nothing" (*apud* Bell, 2017, p. 76).

In a conscience driven act, Snowden decided to sacrifice his own way of living just to protect his principles. But America's elite rewrote the script. Politicians from all the ranks and journalists from all media outlets quickly produced and reproduced the same message: "Snowden is a fame-seeking narcissist" (Greenwald, 2017, pp. 38-39).

Like other whistle-blowers, or journalists, who put their lives at risk defending something bigger than themselves - Chelsea Manning, Daniel Ellsberg, Daphne Caruana Galizia, Anna Politkovskaya, Ján Kuciak among others - Snowden was demonized: the only effective way to kill the message is killing the messenger first; and sometimes, that is literally what happens, as we will see.

Journalism needs whistle-blowers; but journalism must protect its sources. A transnational investigative story, involving investigative journalists and media organizations from all over could be a way to increase the protection of whistle-blowers. For every media organization or a sole journalist, even if he or she is courageous enough to deal with state pressures, it is not easy to fight against the anti-terrorist's paranoia which rules our way of living, mainly in the west, after 9/11.

Jill Abramson, former journalist in the most senior editorial positions at The New York Times, recognizes that "in the Age of Snowden, any editor ... has to have the stomach to fight the White House". In that period, when The New York Times, the first to receive Snowden's data, was working on its disclosure, both the Bush Administration and the Democrats asked them not to:

"Bill Keller, my predecessor as executive editor, had gone to The White House to hear President Bush warn that the Times would have blood on its hands if it published the original story about NSA's warrantless and then-illegal eavesdropping" (2017, p. 31).

As we wrote: at The New York Times, the pressure succeeded.

The effects of the globalization of the risk in investigative journalism

Some journalists love flirting with risk, for a sort of reasons: the need to live on the edge; the search for adrenaline to keep them alive; or the joy that comes out of fighting injustices...

In her almost autobiographic book, Siobhan Darrow, a war reporter, explains that the comfort she felt "living on the edge" was an heritage of her own past, dealing with a divided family: "I learned that it works the same way in any war: those who can see both sides eventually learn to keep quiet" (2000, p. 11).

The same link with risk is found when defining that "certain type of personality", we have mentioned earlier, characterizing the investigative reporter.

In both cases, this "certain type of personality" easily becomes a magnet which attracts danger. In autocratic regimes, freedom of speech is always threatened, but disclosing inconvenient truths constitutes a problem in every regime. Even in western countries freedom is less important than protecting state's secrecy. The direct victims, as we wrote, are whistle-blowers, but also journalists:

In the national context, no country really wants to pass a law that allows individuals ... to embarrass the government (Snowden, *apud* Bell, 2017, pp. 70-71).

Journalists can no longer think that they are safe, even in democratic regimes. We are living, again, in a divided world. Trump's election, in 2016, has built up walls in unexpected places.

Around Europe, in the years after Brexit, we have been witnessing the same: a divided continent, not only by the ancient divisions between north and south, which have increased, but also by rising influence of extremism with its signs of racism, xenophobia, homophobia... At the basis we have populism, which integrates all these signs of extremism. As Cas Mudde defines it: "a battery of policies that restrict the rights of 'alien others' – most notably immigrants, Muslims and refugees – not of 'native elites'"⁹. We cannot discard the possibility that all these walls may soon become the 'new normal'.

In a divided world fed by populism, free press is the enemy. Every day, in his tweets, Donald Trump tries to discredit journalism – "the crooked media" – mainly its *darker* expression: investigative journalism. Around the world investigative reporters who dig corruption and financial scandals involving powerful people are easy targets, facing threats, intimidation, retaliation, legal harassment, jail:

The number of reporters jailed under 'false news' charges have more than doubled since U.S. President Donald Trump was elected in 2016... There are 267 journalists in prison around the

⁹<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/nov/22/populism-concept-defines-our-age>

world, which represents the highest number CPJ has ever recorded (Simon, *apud* Nakhlawi, 2018)¹⁰.

In the worst-case scenarios investigative journalists have an ultimate price: death. Between 2017 and 2020 - 64 journalists were murdered during their work. As the following table shows, most of them died in hostile territories dominated by regional conflicts, like Afghanistan, Mexico or India.

Table 1: Journalists killed since 16th october 2017

PLACE OF DEATH	NUMBER OF DEATHS BY COUNTRY
Mexico	13
Afghanistan	12
India	7
Philippines	6
USA	4
Syria	3
Somalia	2
Honduras	2
Colombia	2
Brazil	2
Libya	1
Slovakia	1
Malta	1
Ghana	1
Iraq	1
Paraguay	1
Ukraine	1
Haiti	1
Yemen	1
Saudi Arabia	1
Pakistan	1
Total	64

Source CPJ

¹⁰Nakhlawi, R. (2018). *Dangerous Situations, Collaboration And Humility: Highlights From 'Safeguarding The Truth'*. Retrieved from ICIJ Blog: <https://www.icij.org/blog/2018/10/dangerous-situations-collaboration-and-humility-highlights-from-safeguarding-the-truth/>

On October 16th 2017 we witnessed the same shadows in an unexpected place: Europe. The Maltese Daphne Caruana Galizia was the 14th journalist killed in 2017. Four months after, with the assassination of Ján Kuciak on 25th February in Slovakia, Europe achieved a new position in the risk's map. Kuciak was killed in his own country. The perpetrators also killed his girlfriend.

Ján was 27 years old and local investigators believed his murder to be a retaliation to one of his stories about the links between members of the Slovak Government and organized crime. Prior to his death, Kuciak was working for the Aktuality news site and he was investigating alleged links between Slovak businessmen, politicians and Ndrangheta, one of Italian Mafia's most powerful branch. The killing sparked huge waves of protest which eventually led to the resignation of Prime Minister Robert Fico.

The murders of Daphne Caruana Galizia, in Malta, and of Ján Kuciak, in Slovakia, both within the European Union borders, globalised the risk for investigative journalists and added this region to the list of territories where being an investigative journalist represents danger. As Bastian Obermayer states reacting to the deaths of his EU colleagues: "This is a traumatic change in my life and how I see the world of journalism" (*apud* Nakhlawi, 2018)¹¹.

Case Study: The Daphne Project and the potential of collaborative journalism in defending journalism and investigative journalists - the cases of Daphne Caruana Galizia and Anna Politkovskaya

*Daphne Caruana Galizia*¹²

On October 16th 2017, Daphne was at home with her eldest son when she was called in a hurry to a meeting at the bank. The journalist's account had been blocked. As soon as Daphne started her car, a first bomb exploded. A second blast immediately afterwards projected the car off the road. In the course of this research we interviewed Daphne's son, Mathew Caruana Galizia, who is also an investigative journalist, and who described an horrific scenario where the journalist's body lay scattered in pieces amidst burning trees, pieces of glass, plastic and smoke.

Few hours before dying, Caruana Galizia had written in her blog: "There are crooks everywhere you look now. The situation is desperate". That was a clear sign that the journalist was aware of the risks she was taking by daring to reveal what some representatives of Maltese power wanted to cover up.

¹¹Nakhlawi, R. (2018). *Dangerous Situations, Collaboration And Humility: Highlights From 'Safeguarding The Truth'*. Retrieved from ICIJ Blog: <https://www.icij.org/blog/2018/10/dangerous-situations-collaboration-and-humility-highlights-from-safeguarding-the-truth/>

¹² The information about Daphne's murder and the description of her position on the political and journalistic Maltese context was written with data gathered from *Reuteurs* (April, 2018) [<https://www.reuters.com/investigates/specialreport/malta-daphne/>], *TheGuardian* (April, 2018) [<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/17/daphne-caruana-galizia-malta-has-made-me-a-scapegoat>], and also *The Economist 1843* magazine (November, 2018) [<https://www.1843magazine.com/features/murder-in-malta>]. This was complemented with Daphne's son interview, Mathew Caruana Galizia, on May 3rd, 2018, and the phone interview with the founder of Journalism Consortium, Laurent Richard, on May 15th, 2019.

The 53-year-old journalist was born in Malta and she had always assumed herself as a dissenting voice. Unlike other Maltese journalists, she never hid behind a pseudonym to write about domestic politics, despite knowing that it could cost her life. Daphne had a lot of enemies, but she could not be deterred.

The journalist known as the "Witch of Bidnija," described Malta as a primitive country living in the shadow of Medieval Times. Daphne believed that there was a dark and disgusting reality behind Malta's success. In her own words, the island was a "nest of thieves" and "a shelter of tricksters", involved in "violence and corruption."

Seen as a national symbol of the struggle for freedom of speech and investigative journalism, Daphne rejected the restrictions imposed by Maltese newspapers. Her voice was heard through her blog "Running Commentary"¹³, which turned her into a kind of celebrity. In 2008, after 20 years as a columnist for The Malta Independent, the journalist started using "Running Commentary" as the means to scrutinize Maltese political and economic scenes.

Caruana Galizia was convinced that the Prime Minister Joseph Muscat ran the country as a family business. These suspicions took shape in 2014, when the government signed a series of agreements opening the country to investment coming from the autocratic state of Azerbaijan.

In 2016, Daphne was able to access the Panama Papers, one month before they were published. The Maltese journalist was helped by her son, Matthew Caruana Galizia, an investigative journalist associated with the consortium who was investigating the Mossack Fonseca's leak. After consulting thousands of documents, Daphne found out that only a few days after coming into office, two prominent Maltese government figures used this law firm to set up companies in Panama.

My mother wasn't officially a partner of the Panama Papers investigation. What happened was that ICIJ was working with a partner: The Times of Malta. The problem was that the Times fully compromised the result of the investigation because we discovered that its managing director had a company in the British Virgin Islands which he used to receive bribes from the Prime Minister's chief of staff. The other problem was the lack of journalists skilled to cover financial crime and corruption issues. My mother was the only investigative journalist in Malta and the only who understood financial crime or who was a financial journalist of any kind, so she ended up leading it¹⁴.

In 2017, Caruana Galizia discovered that the Prime Minister's wife was directly involved with key members of the Azerbaijan regime. Michelle Muscat was a direct beneficiary of an account managed by Mossack Fonseca, held by the daughter of the President of Azerbaijan. The Maltese Prime Minister has never confirmed Daphne's version accusing it of being false and defamatory.

The political opposition in Malta used the journalist's investigation to attack Muscat, but the Prime Minister called an early election and saw his power legitimized. For Caruana Galizia's family, Muscat's victory

¹³"Running Commentary" was viewed as a partisan blog, it portrayed Malta as a more corrupt country than Italy and it was written in English, a language that many lower-class Maltese did not understand.

¹⁴Mathew Caruana Galizia. Interview granted on May 3rd 2018

reinforced the prevailing “culture of impunity”. The police did not investigate the alleged ties between the Maltese powers and the Azerbaijan regime.

Every single institution is compromised. The institution of the Police is in the Prime Minister's pocket. Looking at the numbers, we realised that we have had five police commissioners, in the last five years, and all of them had been fired. Every time they got close to something, they were fired and replaced. The problem is that they cannot operate independently, and they cannot operate with the full backing of the institution. There are other policemen, other people within the government, who are working hard to compromise the investigation by leaking information, by tipping off the suspects before they are arrested¹⁵.

Ten days before being murdered, Daphne described her life as an investigative journalist in adverse conditions. She cited the fires of criminal origin set at her home, the blocking of bank accounts, and the lawsuits filed by ministers and businessmen, as well as online and direct attacks she permanently received. Daphne considered herself to be a national scapegoat for the 30 years she had worked as an investigative journalist.

Attempts to silence Daphne began in 1995. After reporting on a drug trafficker, Daphne's dog was slain and left at her door. In 2006, the flaming tires of a lorry were thrown against the back door of Daphne's house during the night. In 2013, the Mayor of a Maltese town incited a crowd to follow the journalist. Those insults and slanderous slogans led her to seek refuge in a convent.

After 2013, when Muscat came into power, threats rose. Daphne feared that what was happening to her might discourage other journalists, notably women, as a climate of fear was set in Maltese society.

Daphne's biggest problems were loneliness, isolation and the insecurity brought by the delicate issues she worked on. Before she was murdered, Daphne had 47 defamation lawsuits against her, but, as her son told us, that never stopped her from investigating:

A journalist should never consider pain, suffering, harassment, abuse to be a fact of life. Never shrug his/her shoulders and say: ‘Oh well, it’s part of my job’. The response to that is not to leave your job, not to leave journalism, the correct response to it is to speak up about it and fight it. You must have a fighter’s personality to be in journalism¹⁶.

Impunity imposes itself as a watermark of the Maltese regime. Laurent Richard, founder of the journalism consortium “Forbidden Stories” criticises the way the Muscat regime has handled Daphne's death investigations: “The authorities of Malta are not doing enough to find who is the mastermind”¹⁷.

In the international community it is believed that those behind Daphne's murder are being protected. The European Parliament fears that the authorities may have had prior knowledge of the scheme to kill the journalist. In a report written in June 2019, MEP Ana Gomes admits that the investigation may have been

¹⁵Mathew Caruana Galizia. Interview granted on May 3rd 2018

¹⁶Mathew Caruana Galizia. Interview granted on May 3rd 2018

¹⁷Phone Interview with the founder of Forbidden Stories on May 15th 2019

blocked by the fact that the police did not investigate all the clues to find out who ordered the murder. The Maltese authorities have also not thoroughly investigated the witness reports published by the international media.

Between October 2017 and November 2019 Muscat's regime dealt with Daphne's murder with extreme indifference: nobody was found guilty, only three men suspected of having committed the crime were held in custody, claiming to be innocent. During those two years, Daphne's family was not kept up to date with the progress of the investigations. They still face defamation lawsuits against the journalist that were not withdrawn even after her murder.

We will later show how in November 2019 collaborative journalism and Daphne's Project decisively contributed to change this scenario.

*Anna Politkovskaya*¹⁸

Like Daphne Caruana Galizia, for most of her entire professional life Anna Politkovskaya worked alone. Politkovskaya had the support of Novaya Gazeta, the paper where she published her stories, but an alternative paper in a country scrutinized by journalists who acted like "clowns", "whose job is to keep the public entertained" (Politkovskaya, 2011, p. 3) cannot be more than this: an alternative paper. The way Politkovskaya defined Russian's journalists confronting them with the "Pyramid of Power", which had Putin on top, was particularly harsh:

Act as servants of the Presidential Administration... not greatly troubled by this reversion from journalism to propaganda...Dancing to the tune of the state authorities... they are... prepared to do anything required of them (*ibidem*, p. 4).

The ones, like Politkovskaya, who did not perform this role were, to use her own expression, "pariahs" (2011, p. 17). And as a pariah she lost her shield.

She knew, as Alan Rusbridger states, that "standing aside from power in order to scrutinize it" is the contract journalists must have with public (2017, p. 24), but in Russia the choice to "stand aside" took her life on 7th October 2006. She was shot as she entered the lift of the building where she lived in Moscow.

In 2002 Anna Politkovskaya investigated a massacre of six civilians in Chechnya, perpetrated by soldiers from Central Intelligence Directorate (GRU), Russian Secret Services. During that investigation process, Politkovskaya was first slandered, and then threatened. Following her 2002's assignment, her own journalist colleagues helped Secret Services to create a narrative. When she understood that her life was in danger, she "had to dissolve in time and space", looking for a hidden place where no one could find her. But her colleagues reported that she "had been detained, and had escaped" (2011, pp. 15, 16). By then she was completely aware that she was in danger:

¹⁸ The account of Anna Politkovskaya's death and the description of the investigative journalist's position in the Russian political and journalistic context were written based on information published in her final dispatches published on a posthumous book, quoted on the references.

it is so disgusting; it makes me sick; a situation where a journalist's legitimate wish to be in possession of the full facts about an event results in direct threats to her life (*ibidem*, p. 18).

In 2003, after an attempt made on the life of a Russian's investigative reporter who denounced some local oligarchs, Politkovskaya launched a desperate public alert:

in Russia attempts to kill journalists are no rarity... nobody ever gets caught (...) The risks are very great (...) is it worth sacrificing your life for journalism? (...) Is journalism worth dying for? (*ibidem*, p. 24).

Three years later, Politkovskaya was assassinated. Two days before her death, she announced on a radio station that she was working on an article about torture. The torturers appear to belong to one of the Chechen security agencies¹⁹.

The criminals who murdered Politkovskaya are still to be caught.

In 2016, ten years after her death, The Guardian published a story following Politkovskaya's track. The paper just discovered some isolated voices, all of them in Novaya Gazeta. Those voices had kept working in the North Caucasus, still the most dangerous region. They had been receiving the same kind of threats and intimidations as Politkovskaya had received when she worked in this region. The Guardian's story ended up with an expected conclusion: "In the decade after Politkovskaya's death, the space for independent journalism in Russia has narrowed further"²⁰. Three years before, in 2003, Politkovskaya had anticipated the same:

Every successive attack on a journalist in Russia... relentlessly reduces the number of journalists working ... As the numbers of one kind of journalist fall, so there is an increase in the number of those who prefer undemanding journalism (2011, p. 24).

Anna Politkovskaya was murdered. Her assassination also killed her story.

*Daphne Project - you can kill the journalist; you can't kill his/her story*²¹

"Keep the stories alive" is the mission of the journalism consortium Forbidden Stories. The international platform created by Laurent Richard, completes and publishes investigations of journalists who have been killed, imprisoned or are unable to continue investigating complex issues they first began digging.

¹⁹Published in an Editorial note from Novaya Gazeta, October 2006, in Politkovskaya, Anna, 2011 (quoted on references).

²⁰<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/oct/05/ten-years-putin-press-kremlin-grip-russia-media-tightens>

²¹ The Daphne Project was characterized from the collection of information published on *Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project* [<https://www.occrp.org/en/thedaphneproject/>] from April 17th 2017 to November 9th 2018, and from the *Forbidden Stories* website [<https://forbiddenstories.org/case/the-daphne-project-one-year-after/>]

We also made an interview with Daphne's son, Mathew Caruana Galizia, on May 3rd 2018, and an interview with the founder of *Journalism Consortium*, Laurent Richard, on May 15th 2019.

The first “forbidden story” to be worked on was that of Daphne Caruana Galizia. That first Forbidden Stories cross-border investigation brought together 45 journalists from 15 countries and 18 news organizations over five months.

In the Daphne Project, 750,000 documents were analyzed with the sole purpose of completing her 30-year investigation of uncovering corruption and money laundering in Malta. According to Laurent Richard, the Daphne Project also aims to uncover the circumstances behind Daphne’s murder:

What we did with a group of journalists working on the Daphne Project, was to continue her work that was spread over so many stories. So, Stephen Grey and Jacob Borg, Maltese journalists, investigated that lead a lot.²²

In April 2018, exactly six months after the murder, Forbidden Stories disclosed the Daphne Project publishing the first of a series of investigations in newspapers, news agencies and on televisions around the world. The second one began to be published in October 2018.

In Daphne Caruana Galizia's investigations, the Maltese economy minister Chris Cardona stands out as the prime suspect in a network of influence peddling, which allegedly involves several top politicians in Malta, including Prime Minister Joseph Muscat. When Daphne was murdered, she was investigating the alleged involvement of Muscat, his chief of staff, Schembri, former EU Commissioner Dalli and former tourism minister Mizzi with 17 Black, a mysterious Dubai-based company linked to the energy business. The four of them have allegedly received bribes from 17 Black in exchange for protecting its business in Malta.

Following Daphne’s case, Laurent Richard views cooperation as the shield which, at the same time, protects investigative journalism and sends out an alert to the ones who think that they can kill the story when they kill the journalist:

What good is killing a journalist if the investigations are all around the world? I only hope that today, Daphne’s killers will maybe think that because of her murder we have exposed much more than before. I think about what’s going on in Malta: corruption, the issue of money laundering and so. By killing her and by trying to silence her, they eventually exposed the crimes that they wanted to hide in the first place.²³

For months after the journalist's death, news kept circulating worldwide disclosing the legacy of the woman who died investigating. Over the course of several weeks, Daphne's death made headlines in various newspapers such as La Repubblica, Le Monde, The Guardian or The New York Times.

The lack of protection both from the state and from her co-workers left Daphne at the mercy of any threat, unprotected and without any support. That situation eventually led to her death:

²²Phone Interview with the founder of Forbidden Stories on May 15th 2019

²³Phone Interview with the founder of Forbidden Stories on May 15th 2019

It's not up to you to ensure that you survive. It's up to the people who have the duty to protect you. When they stop doing their job, your life is immediately at risk. When you investigate corruption issues it is most likely you will get killed or that you will be imprisoned even in the European Union.²⁴

Collaborative journalism: sharing the risk

Daphne Caruana Galizia and Anna Politkovskaya worked using the same methods. Both were courageous women who acted with a sole purpose: to protect the principles and values of journalism. At the end, for both, journalism was worth dying for.

Collaborative journalism can be, however, the shield which, at the same time, keeps the values of journalism intact and protects journalists who must work in dangerous places dealing with sensitive issues.

Richard Sambrook, who theorises about collaborative journalism, prescribes the solution to dilute the risk:

Freedom of speech is under threat in many countries, leading to collaboration as a means of managing exposure and risk. Legal protection unavailable at home may be obtained by running the investigation at arm's length or sharing the risk across a wide range of international players. The case for the value and benefits of accountability journalism has continually to be made most powerfully by organisations working in concert (2017, p. 2).

Daphne Caruana Galizia and Anna Politkovskaya published their investigations in alternative media organizations. They worked alone and did not share their colleagues' inclination to what John Pilger calls a "subtle collaboration ... with power" (2005, p. 15). Pilger highlights, however, a quite different group of journalists where he finds "a common element" - which is - "journalist's 'insurrection' against the rules of the game"; it is in that very list that the former war correspondent and filmmaker places Anna Politkovskaya (*ibidem*, p. 16). We find the same degree of insurrection in Daphne Caruana Galizia.

The powers that both faced would have required a much larger shield than plain courage:

I think collaboration among all journalists in any society is necessary. This is one of the last things I remember my mother saying to me: she was lamenting that some journalists wouldn't accept collaborations. There would be a certain amount of envy. And I remember her saying to me: 'You know this is ridiculous, after all, we should be on the same side, journalists tend to have the same beliefs, the same guiding spirit, they're fighting for the same fights, so we have all the reasons in the world to collaborate.' Very often the politicians or the corrupt businesspeople that we are investigating take advantage of the fact that we don't collaborate. So, our best response should be working better with each other, to share information, to work

²⁴Mathew Caruana Galizia. Interview granted on May 3rd 2018

together on stories, I think it really sends out a strong message when we do that. It's a powerful response when we say that we can annihilate the power with our partnership.²⁵

Conclusion

The Daphne Project's journalistic investigation prompted external pressure, namely from the Council of Europe and it forced Malta to act: in December 2019, Malta's PM Joseph Muscat resigned. His party, the Labour party, is still (October 2020) in power and has chosen Robert Abela to lead the government until the general election schedule to September 2022.

A month before Muscat's resignation other three key allies also stepped down: Keith Schembri, Muscat's chief of staff, the tourism minister, Konrad Mizzi, and the economy minister, Chris Cardona. Schembri handed out his resignation on 26th November night and he was taken into police custody the following morning, being released some days after.

The authorities had previously arrested the 17 Black's leader, Yorgen Fenech. He is still (October 2020) under police custody.

This outcome is a clear result of a collaborative investigation that carried out the work of Daphne Caruana Galizia. Working alone, without the shield of collaboration, the unprotected journalist had made some powerful enemies that eventually led to her death.

In this article, we also highlighted the collaborative journalism's hallmarks that we found in Edward Snowden's leak. That leak has also showed us that collaboration is the right option even in democratic regimes dominated by secrecy's paranoia. British Secret Services forced The Guardian to smash their hard disks where all the data were kept (Rusbridger, 2017, p. 27). But as The Guardian was working in a consortium involving journalists from ProPublica, Washington Post and The New York Times, they had already sent them backup copies. So, publishing was not halted. And, in the end, when journalists share information and data "what is unpublishable in Britain was publishable elsewhere" (*ibidem*, p. 28).

Panama Papers, the major collaborative investigation in the history of journalism, with the disclosure of over 200,000 offshore accounts, in 200 countries and territories, has created a domino effect that exposed 140 political leaders and senior state officials from over 50 countries, major banks, multinational companies and multimillionaires...²⁶ The wide extent of these effects is obviously linked to the breadth of the leak.

The true potential of collaborative journalism is easily spotted in a case like Panama Papers since the global dimension of the investigation would always require a global collaborative team; but the role of collaborative journalism, in protecting investigative journalists and journalists who practice it, has been reinforced in countries where freedom of expression is permanently threatened. The Forbidden Stories keep the Daphne Project alive in an effort to follow the investigations of Caruana Galizia, just as in Azerbaijan, Hungary and Russia, three other geographies where the influence of political power strongly limits freedom of speech, "independent outlets ... stand out", using, with creativity, "new production and distribution methods" to

²⁵Interview granted on May 3rd 2018

²⁶ <https://www.icij.org/investigations/panama-papers/>

preserve “quality journalism”²⁷. At the Prague Media Point Conference (December 2019), Azerbaijani journalist, Arzu Geybulla, Budapest Metropolitan University’s Professor, Györgyi Rétfalvi, and the Russian journalist Vladimir Shvedov presented three investigation projects where the collaboration of investigative journalists, from neighbouring territories, made possible to reveal the truths that local authorities had tried to keep hidden.

In 2019, we witnessed the chain effect of the Luanda Leaks, another disclosure from the same consortium that revealed Panama Papers, the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, ICIJ. A cross border investigative team with 120 journalists from 20 countries analysed over 700,000 documents, containing confidential emails, videos of closed-door meetings, audio recordings, travel records and business negotiations. The investigation disclosed the business of Isabel dos Santos, the daughter of Angola’s former president, revealing evidence of insider deals and the alleged use of government funds which raised doubts about the path that led Isabel dos Santos to become the richest woman in Africa. The consortium identified Isabel dos Santos’ and her husband Sindika Dokolo’s investments in more than 400 companies in 41 countries, exposing not only the couple but also bankers, lawyers, accountants and consultants²⁸.

It is certain that the new Angolan regime, led by President João Lourenço (who in 2017 replaced 38 consecutive years in power of José Eduardo dos Santos), did not create any resistance to the consortium’s investigation; but it is also true that the strength of the evidence gathered by the journalistic work and the relevance of the global brands that published the articles would make any obstruction impracticable.

Angolan journalism alone would never be able to achieve such results. Angola has no tradition of investigative journalism. The lone voice of Rafael Marques de Morais, an investigative journalist and political activist, despite international recognition for his investigative work on corruption cases in Angola²⁹, never reached the repercussion the journalist would have wished for and that Angola, one of the world’s poorest countries, needed.

The involvement of 120 journalists from 36 media outlets imposed not only the strength of this alliance but also the weight and credibility of the brands who published the story.

The future of journalism is thus heavily dependent on how it addresses the question of quality, asserting itself as distinctive. We have selected investigative journalism as the maximum expression of journalistic quality, which can only be measured by the social effects it generates.

In this article we advocate that investigative journalism is the engine at the process of reconstructing journalism. To achieve this goal, it is paramount, as we have pointed out, to create conditions so that investigative journalism and the journalists who practice it can resist. Collaborative journalism has the weapons to meet the challenge of resistance. Asserting itself at the intersection between credibility (of investigative journalists and reference brands) and technology, collaborative journalism will continue to protect the immutable values which hold the journalism edifice (Kovach & Rosentiel, 2007, pp. 11, 12).

²⁷ <https://www.praguemediapoint.com/dec-6>

²⁸ <https://www.icij.org/investigations/luanda-leaks/reporting-beyond-the-luanda-leaks-documents/>

²⁹ <https://www.makaangola.org/sobre/>

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