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## Transnational Cooperation in Journalism

### Summary

The journalism industry has used technology and cooperation to convey information around the world since the mid-1800s when six American newspapers aligned to form the Associated Press. The non-profit news agency was a business collaboration that allowed members to share content with one another. Cooperation in journalism was not always compatible with the industry's traditional business model, however, which valued exclusivity. As technology has progressed cooperation grew ever easier and more productive. The ultimate emergence of the internet has consummated this trend, facilitating collaborations among groups of reporters across the globe. These collaborations allow individual groups to retain and capitalize upon their geographical exclusivity whilst enhancing their collective ability to provide domestic stories with a transnational context, or to cover cross-border, or even global, issues.

In this article, collaboration is understood as shared effort towards a common end, whereas cooperation implies pooled resources and mutual assistance to reach individual ends. These terms have been used interchangeably by practitioners and academics to describe their evolving journalistic alignments and engagements across borders (see, for example, Sambrook 2018). Internet-enhanced cross-border collaboration is often initiated by reporters in different countries who are working on topics of shared interest. The reporters can pool their content and sources and then prepare to publish the content for their own audiences (Alfter 2019, forthcoming). Although, as mentioned, collaborative investigative journalism has a long tradition, its cross-border iteration has strong roots in the work of the seminal organisations including the Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE) and the Global Investigative Journalism

Network, GIJN<sup>1</sup>. In addition to reporting, these organisations also develop and present workshops, data boot camps, conferences, and create informal and formal networks of potential collaborators.

Academics are now turning their attention to the practice of cross-border collaboration, which the present article explores according to three main aspects: firstly, the organisation and control of the investigative work itself; secondly, the role of technology in facilitating collaboration; and thirdly, the diffusion of transnational collaborations and the content they generate around the globe. This article includes concrete examples from practitioners and relevant scholarly research about the topic, focusing on notable early successes of cross-border collaboration, including the global coverage of tax-haven leaks exposed by the Panama Papers in 2016<sup>2</sup>.

Despite the tendency towards homogenisation of journalistic practice due to the dynamic American influence upon this developing practice (Carson and Farhall 2018, Meyer 2019), cross-border collaboration brings with it a great potential to realise and implement a truly global perspective on the practice and products of journalism (Berglez 2013). It is in this context that the present article concludes with a call to both journalistic practitioners and academics to remain always open to the pluralism of voices that has arisen in the diffusion of cross-border collaborative networks.

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<sup>1</sup> The Global Investigative Journalism Network was established in 2003 as a way for members from the Global Investigative Journalist Conference to stay in touch. (<https://gijn.org/about/about-us/>, accessed 4 December 2018). Both IRE as well as other national centres or organizations of investigative journalism are members of GIJN. Several of these national organizations have been inspired by both IRE as well as GIJN to organize workshops, conferences and network opportunities.

<sup>2</sup> The Panama Papers (2016) is a unique transnational cooperation which not only involved 100 media partners, but where ICIJ, International Consortium of Investigative Journalism, organized and scrutinized 2.6 terabyte of data. Journalists from nearly 80 countries collaborated through various platforms. (<https://www.icij.org/investigations/panama-papers/pages/panama-papers-about-the-investigation/>)

Keywords:

Transnational cooperation in journalism, investigative journalism, journalistic practice, tax haven leaks, technology, organisation of collaboration, diffusion of network newsroom, global journalism

### Collaboration across borders: a historical background

The evolution of investigative journalism toward its present guise as global collaboration can be divided into three phases: firstly the muckraker period of activist-oriented exposés<sup>3</sup>; second, the marked re-emergence of investigative journalism in the 1960s (Feldstein 2006); and third, the rise of global networks of reporters (Kaplan 2013). These three phases share three aspects: changes in technology, changes in media competition and funding, and changes in media organisations (Aucoin 2005; van Eijk 2005). The implementation of collaborative methods and processes within investigative journalism arose with the founding of the Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE) organisation. This organisation enabled journalists to draw upon each other's practical knowledge and cultivate professional and personal relationships. The establishment of the IRE in 1976 represented an inspired gesture to the professional field and a remarkably practical platform for sharing experiences and methodology (Kaplan 2013, Aucoin 2005). James Aucoin notes how little has been written about the evolution of investigative journalism as a 'social practice', in the words of Alasdair MacIntyre. Aucoin (2005:5) describes a social

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<sup>3</sup> It was President Theodore Roosevelt who coined the term 'Muckraking', which became a term for investigative journalism and 'adversarial journalism, advocacy reporting, public service journalism and exposé reporting', with various practitioners offering different understandings. (Feldstein 2006:2) The Muckraker-phase had its peak during 1902 until 1912 (Ibid.:5), while Mark Feldstein considered the years from 1920 to 1960 as the 'dark-ages' of investigative reporting. This article agrees with David Kaplan (2013) that global investigative reporting emerged around the Millenium.

practice as “sustained and, indeed, [it] progresses through the efforts of practitioners to meet and extend the practice’s standards of excellence”. Investigative journalism is not readily framed as such (Protruss et al. 1991, Stetka and Örnebring 2013). The IRE defines it as “the reporting, through one’s own initiative and work product, of matters of importance to readers, viewers or listeners. In many cases, the subjects of the reporting wish the matters under scrutiny to remain undisclosed” (Houston 2009: v).

As a pioneering model, the IRE (and especially its focus on sharing practices and expertise) has seen its influence grow. Since 2000, collaborative initiatives similar to those pioneered by the IRE have spread throughout Europe and elsewhere around the world<sup>4</sup>. While Investigative Reporters and Editors as well as similar organizations support members who share ideas about journalism methods, provide training, and networking opportunities, the networking also resulted in a different type of network where journalists come together and collaborate on journalistic projects together. One of the first of these was Farmsubsidy.org, in which a core team of three reporters collaborated with reporters from almost all the EU countries. (B. Alfter, personal communication, February 3, 2019).<sup>5</sup> They obtained information for the first time on European Union farm subsidies worth €59 billion/year in 2005. Three journalists worked together to demand more transparency and access to data regarding farm subsidy beneficiaries. The journalists created a network which filed freedom of information requests to generate content for its audiences on a webpage. The project is continuing via the Farmsubsidy.org website. Ultimately, the project was so successful in gathering data that it has handed the data

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<sup>4</sup> The IRE inspired the foundation of four European organizations as early as 1989 to 1991. These four were the Danish Association for Investigative Journalism (FUJ) in 1989; the Swedish Association for Investigative Journalism (FGJ) in 1990; the Association for Investigative Journalists in Norway (SKUP) in 1990; Tutkiva in 1992 and the Association for Investigative Journalism Finland also in 1992. (Retrieved 3 February 2019 from <https://web.archive.org/web/20180211081008/http://journalismfund.eu/investigative-journalism-europe>)

to a specialist in the Open Knowledge Foundation. The Foundation advocates for transparency in data and competent of hosting of large data sets.

The IRE has had a far greater impact than generally recognised within collaboration across borders, not only in the USA but also in Europe and, more recently elsewhere, through the Global Investigative Journalist Conference and the Global Investigative Journalist Network. Both the conference and the network were partly founded by the IRE. When it was established in June 1976, the IRE consisted of more than 300 reporters from 30 news organisations (Konieczna 2018:147) who shared their tips and techniques on reporting (Houston 2009: vi). When investigative reporter Don Bolles was killed by a car bomb just before the first IRE conference, his death inspired an unprecedented display of solidarity amongst reporters in the network (Konieczna 2018:147, Baggi 2011). Seeking to deliver a message to the killers that “you can kill the messenger but never the message”, 36 reporters from 28 different media outlets gathered in Arizona to continue Bolles’s work (Baggi 2011:21). The collaboration demonstrated that if one reporter is killed, their colleagues in other countries would continue reporting the story. Thus security is seen as a strong reason for investigative collaboration. When the methodology behind transnational collaboration is explained, the ‘Arizona Project’ is often a leading example (see Alfter 2015:23, among others).<sup>6</sup> Since that time, not only stories but also practices, experiences, norms and cultural mindsets have been informed by the IRE model.

A more recent assessment of the Global Investigative Journalism Network<sup>7</sup> (Hume and Abbot 2017) states that investigative journalism is about “public records, computer-assisted data

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<sup>6</sup> For a recent example of a cross-border initiative inspired by the Arizona Project, see ‘Forbidden Stories’ at <https://forbiddenstories.org/case/the-daphne-project/> (accessed 17 November 2018).

crunching, and a focus on social justice and accountability”. This definition highlights the use of data and information analysis and ethical and safety concerns, dealing with sources, gaining access to information, and fact checking. By 2013, over the course of seven global conferences on investigative journalism, 3500 journalists from 100 countries were acknowledged to be practicing data journalism on a global scale and had also trained hundreds of reporters from developing countries in state-of-the-art methodologies (Kaplan 2013: 11). This overview demonstrates how collaboration across borders evolved from an initial phase of localised information-sharing which was accelerated and enhanced by the arrival of digital technology, allowing its diffusion around the globe.

### The role of organisation and the control of work

How journalistic work is organised and coordinated is especially crucial to the success of transnational collaborations, which clearly break with the legacy investigative tradition of ‘lone wolf’ journalism (Baack 2016). This work relies on a “collaborative spirit and a culture of sharing” (ibid.), and its methods have occupied attendees at traditional journalist conferences, the seminars and boot camps of IRE, and the meetings of recent organizations such as the Global Investigative Journalism Conference (GIJC). There is little research into the practices related to pooling not only news stories but also journalistic ideas, sources and working methods across borders (Graves and Konieczna 2015). Sharing content has been particularly important in the midst of the financial crises and faltering business models of traditional investigative journalism (Carson and Farhall 2018). Lately, scholars have begun to find that the newer iterations of investigative journalism can be far more economical than previously thought (Hamilton 2016; Gearing 2016)

The need to communicate within virtual global newsrooms has spurred journalistic interest in Online Collaborative Software (OCS) platforms such as Slack, through which



journalists do not need to physically meet up but can get to know each other online in the virtual space. According to Bunce and colleagues (2018<sup>8</sup>), there is also little empirical research into how virtual newsrooms might affect international work relations (eg. in the case of the Panama Papers); how journalists can learn to trust one another when they are not working in the same physical space; and the how newsroom culture is affected by the use of OCS. The study found that the virtual platform had two effects. It deepened relationships and enabled new creative practices (Bunce et. al. 2018: 3381). However it also introduced challenges such as undermining boundaries between professional lives and private lives of the newswriters. While such platforms clearly facilitate horizontal collaboration, they also introduce possibilities for managers to influence the organization to their benefit. Collaborative practices can range from loose cooperation with a limited exchange of information or effort, to close and intense collaboration in which methods, findings and theories are all shared collectively (Heft et al. 2017:6). Decisions regarding how a cross-border network should operate and function, and how the work within it should be controlled are vital to its success. Journalist and experienced cross-border coordinator Nicolas Kayser-Brill (2018: 59) describes, for example, how some of his collaborations failed due to the passivity of the project partners, a lack of motivation or even faltering communication skills. He finds cross-border collaboration to be a tool with potential but also with challenges which need to be carefully considered. In order to mitigate the potential tensions of organising work across borders, a 'neutral' platform or institution can be useful, particularly during large-scale collaborations (Sambrook 2018).

In the case of the Panama Papers, Bastian Obermayer and Frederik Obermaier (2017) - the journalists who first received a tip from an anonymous source - said their ICIJ peers offered

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<sup>8</sup> While Bunce et. Al. (2018) specifically writes about Slack (<https://slack.com>, accessed 3 February 2019), several collaborative investigative networks handpick online collaborative software which has the lowest risk for being hacked. During the ICIJ Panama Papers for example the ICIJ built their own social network for the collaborative journalists, similarly to Facebook (Baack 2016).



them a range of tips on how to organise a collaboration across borders and to manage the workload. Colleagues also provided advice on data technology, ethics, decision making, communication and management. At the same time, the many reporters involved in the story were quick to note that the project's transnational newsroom network functioned as a supplement to their home newsrooms, in which they had to work on other investigations in addition to the special project (Obermayer and Obermaier 2017:84). Organising all of this work involved creating routines which included regular meetings for planning, discussing, allocating tasks and pooling resources (Obermayer and Obermaier 2017:85). Executive Director Gerard Ryle distanced the ICIJ's methods from the Panama Papers' questionable practice of leaking raw data, saying, "We're not WikiLeaks. We're trying to show that journalism can be done responsibly" (Greenberg 2016). The safety of the participants was also a concern. According to Richard Sambrook (2016:29), technology which aids and facilitates journalism can also endanger the journalist '...there is no question that online journalism has increased threats and intimidation towards journalists, placed bloggers and citizen journalists at greater physical risk, and the technology behind digital news allows the identification and targeting of journalists in ways which most are still too inexperienced to recognise'. Ultimately Sambrook concludes: '...the technology which supports modern reporting also endangers it'. (Ibid.:30).

Trust is basic to collaboration amongst journalists and their news outlets. The choice of collaborators for investigations is based on a combination of trust and safety, according to Sambrook (2016). Alfter (2018) adds that this trust can take years to arise. ICIJ, deputy director Marina Walker, describes how participating countries were individually selected to be part of the offshore leaks story. She and an ICIJ member "scrolled down the list of 160 ICIJ journalists in more than 60 countries and began to make some choices". She noted that having a network of trusted reporters and relationships built up over time made a huge difference to the

investigation (Marina Walker, April 12, 2013). ICIJ Director Gerard Ryle describes the organisation as an “international club of investigative journalists that you can only join by nomination and invitation” (2017:23). In this sense, the organisation and control of work across borders comes with the need to protect both participants and sources. Similarly to the work in investigative journalism in general, newsroom networks require confidentiality and sensitivity when it comes to information that can put everyone at risk. Understanding how to organize work across borders; how to find a appropriate balance between an organization’s need for transparency on one hand and a need for secrecy has scarcely been addressed as an academic research topic.

When safety trumps accessibility and openness, it is important that participants have shared previous experiences and can draw upon mutually-derived insights. Bastian Obermayer and Frederik Obermaier, for example, had already worked on another ICIJ project, ‘Offshore Secrets’ (2013). In this investigation, nearly 100 journalists from 50 countries collaborated to expose how wealthy people used offshore companies to hide assets (ibid.:24). Other networks have more easily collaborated if they have been through mutual experiences (Heft. et. al. 2017). In this sense journalistic practices are built up over time by individuals and organisations: knowing how to organize a large-scale collaboration; organising a loose collaboration with few resources; knowing who to select for a particular task; knowing how to pool expertise. In the case of the ICIJ and the Panama Papers, the organization and control of work was based on connections made in the 1990s and the work of the IRE. The technologies adopted were also partially inherited from previous projects but also invented for specific purposes.

## The role of technology

The internet and its associated digital technologies make transnational collaboration possible for journalists. The journalistic ability to quickly and cheaply make connections anywhere in the world was revolutionised in the early 2000s by the universal adoption of home computing, the connectivity of the Internet and the advent of social media platforms. The IRE pioneered the ways in which journalists could share methods, findings, sources and create networks. Computer-assisted reporting (CAR), was pioneered by journalist Philip Meyer in the 1960s (Gynnild 2013, Lewis 2018). Meyer argued that journalists needed to look to science to improve their technological skills and lamented the division between ‘computer journalist’ and regular journalists (Meyer 2002/1973). CAR seminars arranged by NICAR as early as 1989 offered training courses up improve journalists’ computer skills and were attended by thousands of reporters from the USA and 30 other countries (Lewis 2018:14). Journalists have learned how to build their own quantitative databases, among other things. (Gynnild 2013).

The use of technology in collaborative transnational networks depends upon who participates, what resources and funding they have, and what access they have to technical and other expertise. As pointed out by Bunce and colleagues (2018), technology is not objective or neutral but is socially shaped (see also Boczkowski 2001, 2004, Singer 2004, Domingo 2006). Research suggests that normative notions of journalistic professionalism can be negotiated across cultures with the help of technology. In virtual newsrooms, as described by Bunce and colleagues (2018), journalists working with online collaborative software such as Slack tend to revert to norms learned in physical newsrooms.

Technology obviously accommodates communications needs, either among collaborating reporters or between reporters and sources, which might include encrypted messaging, drop

boxes for sources, data analysis tools or shared private platforms (Sambrook 2018:37). Collaborators must also identify the best ways for various types of projects to be organised in time and space (Alfter 2015, Alfter 2019, Bunce 2018). The adoption of new technologies by newsrooms has long been controlled by parent media organisations. This control has limited the degree to which reporters could apply connective technologies to transnational collaboration. Another barrier has been a cultural barrier. Even if new technology potentially dissolves borders and distances, the very use of it requires a cosmopolitan and transnational mind-set, rather than a domestic mind-set, among media practitioners. The news media has been generally slow to inject new technologies into work practices and thus reconceptualise itself as part of a networked society and global world (Berglez 2013, Reich 2005, Nicholas et al. 1998). Heinrich (2012:65) believes that the media industry's reticence about the internet hampered its later ability to define what makes 'news'. Given that content now arises within a worldwide network of people who can write and publish stories online alongside the journalistic gatekeepers, who once determined what was news and what was not. Heinrich urges journalists to reclaim their role in leading the news agenda and foresees cross-border collaboration as a means to this end (Heinrich 2012). She also encourages journalists to explore the potential of digital networks, to engage with social media, to collaborate with experts and media outlets and to crowd-source information (Heinrich 2011). In the case of the Panama Papers, for example, the two journalists from *Süddeutsche Zeitung* obtained technical support from the ICIJ, which connected them with the head of the data team and head programmer (Obermayer and Obermaier 2017:71). These experts went to Germany, evaluated the data, suggested how to proceed with a technical analysis, and supported the reporters with a program which would facilitate searches of the data (ibid.). The experts then returned to the USA with the hard drive, to encrypt the data and also to conceal it in case they were stopped by security at the airport. The encryption program included TrueCrypt and VeraCrypt (ibid.). Later, the data team set up

a multi-encrypted forum, iHub, to enable the transnational collaboration to proceed. On the forum, reporters could access each other's work and discuss practicalities. In fact, according to Obermayer and Obermaier (2017:87), the iHub resembled an encrypted version of Facebook for investigative reporters (ibid.). The professional way in which technology was handled during the Panama Papers investigation was enabled by the ICIJ's long experience with transnational collaboration. The two *Süddeutsche Zeitung* journalists wrote that,

We sit in a small conference room surrounded by data journalism experts—what the ICIJ agenda called a 'Geeky data meeting (...) We sit on the sidelines smiling amiably. The one thing we grasp is that a large number of research paths are closed to us as long as we search the data using conventional approaches. We need a real expert. (ibid.:108).

In a recent ethnographic study which included the ICIJ, Magda Konieczna (2018:148) found that “structures change as journalists involved in them learn from past experiences”. She added that for the ICIJ, “a key component of collaboration is the fact that the network becomes larger than the sum of its parts because it relies on trust between reporters” (ibid.: 149).

At the same time, encryption technology plays an important part in how the networks can work together on specific projects. Individuals can also tap the power of the masses to call the powerful to account. John Doe, for example, who shared a large volume of financial data with *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and the ICIJ. This precipitated the first reporting of world-wide taxation fraud which became known as *Secrecy for Sale* and later, the *Panama Papers* and *Paradise Papers*. The anonymous whistle-blower source had tried to obtain news coverage from individual news outlets, but it was not until the data was shared among reporters collaborating via the ICIJ that the investigation was able to proceed to publication. John Doe at first had

offered the data to several individual mainstream outlets and to Wikileaks, all without success. In a statement John Doe (Obermayer and Obermaier 2017) said he was disappointed with the mainstream media because “several major media outlets did have editors review documents from the Panama Papers” but “chose not to cover them”. He concluded, “The sad truth is that among the most prominent and capable media organizations in the world there was not a single one interested in reporting on the story. Even WikiLeaks didn’t answer its tip line repeatedly” (John Doe, 6 May 2016; Obermayer and Obermaier 2017:349). John Doe said the digitisation of data storage and transfer were keys to the success of the coverage (Ibid.) have predicted that living in a “time of inexpensive, limitless digital storage and fast Internet connections that transcend from start to finish, inception to global media distribution, the next revolution will be digitized” (Ibid).

The internet enables the many-to-many connections which Manuel Castells foresaw in the networked society—a ‘power of flows’ of communication that can forge socio-political change (Gearing 2019). The ability of the masses to communicate and organise themselves is suddenly undermining the authority of elite power structures which have traditionally controlled ‘the flow of power’ (Gearing 2016, Castells 2009, Castells 1996,). Castells’s vision of the power of flows is illustrated by the public use of social media platforms to instigate and popularise socio-political campaigns such as the #BringBackOurGirls campaign to free hundreds of girls who were abducted in Nigeria, and the #MeToo campaign protesting sexual assault and harassment (Khomami 2017). To summarise, while the organisation and control of work in cross-border collaboration benefits from the historical experience of American organisations such as the ICIJ, GIJC and GIJN, technology is socially-shaped according to emerging collaborative needs. As traditional business models falter in journalism, the combination of a collaborative attitude and innovative technology have fostered virtual and transnational newsrooms on a global scale.

### Global diffusion of transnational newsroom networks: Some benefits and challenges

The establishment of the first Global Investigative Journalism Conference in 2001 coincided with the development of the “Internet, mobile phones, and the end of the Cold War” (Kaplan 2013). Following the first conference in Copenhagen, a Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN) was formed in 2003 so that participants could keep in touch with each other between conferences (see footnote 1).

Researchers have established that collaboration across borders can yield many journalistic benefits, such as “sharing costs and information, increased story reach and a strengthened ability to set the news agenda” (Carson and Farhall 2018:1909). The same study also notes that collaboration can also lead to less diversity in ‘story targets’ (ibid.), but this has not proven to be a consideration as yet because of the large number of networks that have arisen.

The GIJN catalogues global investigative organisations whose main mission is to support investigative journalism, including non-profit newsrooms, online publishers, professional associations, non-government organisations, training institutes and academic centres in almost 50 countries. The organisations include 33 investigative reporting bodies in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, 27 organisations in Western Europe, 25 local and regional groups in the United States of America, and 21 national and international organisations based in North America, 15 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 13 in the Asia-Pacific region, 12 in Africa and 3 in the Middle East and Turkey (GIJNet; URL <https://gijn.org/investigative-journalism-organizations/>). Connectas in Columbia is another important non-profit organization and network in Latin America. Founded in 2012, it offers training, collaborates on projects and aims



to cooperate transnationally on specific stories which are vital to the Americas (URL <https://gijn.org/member/connectas-colombia/>).

Organisations in Africa include the African Network of Centers for Investigative Reporting (ANCIR), which collaborates on cross-border investigations and pools resources to build technologies and expertise to beat organized crime and corruption (URL <https://investigativecenters.org/>). The ANCIR has partnership agreements with organisations in Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and North America.

The global diffusion of newsroom networks also coincided with the establishment of non-profit investigative groups that have benefits and challenges. David E. Kaplan wrote in a seminal report (2013/2007) that since the 1980s the number of non-profit groups had jumped from only three to ‘more than 100’ and now counted among their number reporting centres, training institutes, professional associations, grant-making groups and online networks. Such investigative journalism groups had appeared, for example, in Romania, the Philippines, Jordan and South Africa and demonstrated an emerging global potential for cross border collaboration. Kaplan (2013: 11) states that the emerging globalisation of investigative journalism was also due to funding totalling, “millions of dollars from international aid agencies (particularly from the USA and Northern Europe) and a handful of private foundations (led by the Open Society Foundations), as well as to the efforts of professional journalism associations and NGOs that have run trainings and spread expertise around the world”.

The US government, the Danish government (Konieczna 2018:100) and private foundations, for example, support investigative journalism because it is a useful tool in the fight against corruption, lack of transparency and the undermining of democratic values (Kaplan 2013, Smit

et al. 2012). While the philanthropic funding of journalism represents a long tradition in the USA, it is much less common in the rest of the world (Konieczna 2018:100). Kaplan (2013: 6) found that strategic “investments into investigative journalism can have a significant positive impact in a wide range of countries”, including countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Simultaneously, ‘many of the non-profit newsrooms’ in other countries do depend upon government funding, and USAID is the main source for media development funds (Konieczna 2018: 100). USAID funded the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) (<https://www.occrp.org/en/about-us>). The OCCRP was established in 2006 by 40 non-profit centres across Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America, and the International Center for Journalists. These organisations received three million dollars from USAID over a three-year period to aid in the establishment of investigative journalism in fourteen countries in Eastern Europe (Konieczna 2018:100). Likewise, the World Bank Institute funded training for investigative journalists specifically in order to fight corruption (Kaplan 2013). In addition, several private funders, particularly the Open Society Foundations, have supported the Baltic Center for Investigative Journalism, Publica in Brazil, the OCCRP, the ICIJ, and the European Fund for Investigative Journalism (for an overview, see Konieczna 2018:100–102).

Ultimately, Konieczna (2018) agrees that the increasing amount of non-profit journalism activity, which frequently overlaps with cooperation both domestically and transnationally, brings with it certain dilemmas. First of all, she? Questions whether funding from philanthropists or actors come with an agenda to serve the funders’ self-interest rather than the fourth estate of the country in which they operate? Secondly, she questions to what degree are there control mechanisms in place to enforce the rules? And third, does such funding undermine creativity and innovation? Konieczna (2018:110–16) calls for structures to protect the independence of journalism and concludes that, despite many uncertainties, ‘good journalism’ needs to be helped by scholars and activists to “establish a set of reasonable norms” (ibid.:116).

So far, there is little research on (1) the way in which the diffusion of global newsroom networks depends upon an American investigative tradition; (2) the possible benefits of leadership by important actors within the field; and (3) the fact that the funding of these initiatives comes primarily from the US government and private sources. Further research might explore whether the America-centric tradition presently being spread around the world via these organisations lacks sensitivity for other countries' traditions. Or whether democracy is being interpreted in line with an exclusively Western understanding (Joseph 2017). Another useful research question might explore how cross-border journalism would change were it more in line with publicist journalism <sup>9</sup> with "its affinity for intellectually challenging political debate and its capacity for scrutinizing stereotypes" (Meyer 2019 forthcoming).

Magda Konieczna (2018:63) believes that the increasing number of non-profit investigative journalist organisations, whether privately funded or the product of collaborations with universities and so forth, signifies an interest among journalists to 'repair their field' from within. She argues (2018:66) that this repair necessarily involves 'news sharing', whereby non-profit news organisations offer their stories for free while trying to improve the quality of journalism in commercial media.

The diffusion of newsroom networks is presently happening at great speed due to the way in which journalists can draw upon their experiences within investigative journalism to develop a

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<sup>9</sup> Gitte Meyer and Anker Brink Lund (2008) distinguish between two frameworks. While the first framework refers to journalism understood in line with an Atlantic model, the other refers in line with Hallin and Mancini's (2004) work to a North and Central understanding of media model (Ibid.:75). Furthermore, the Atlantic model, the Anglo-American reporter tradition where journalists report on facts from what happens (events, incidents) and do so in a detached and objective manner. The other framework, the publicist model aims to 'facilitate public discussion on public affairs' (Ibid.:75) and is more focused on critical analyses and create a basis for raising critical discussion of society.

sharable social practice that capitalizes on technological developments which are themselves socially-shaped and innovated. What is often forgotten within academic research is how journalism in general is influenced by the work of these larger networks.

Finally, globalization generates cross-border interdependencies and cross-border challenges (in the case of environment, crime, energy supply, financial meltdowns, climate change etc.). As a consequence, new forms of cross-border journalism and collaboration are likely to emerge in many countries (see Gearing & Berglez, 2019), developing outside the above-mentioned established organizations. For example, in contrast to the ICIJ and major projects such as the Panama Papers, what might be further developed worldwide are low-cost and thus ‘micro-oriented’ versions of global investigative reporting. In these cases, small teams with staff from only a few domestic media companies in different countries may occasionally collaborate on a journalistic story that is relevant for all parties.

## Conclusion

This article focuses on the emergence of the practice of transnational cooperation in journalism and particularly on its work organisation and use of technology. The diffusion of transnational cooperation has been pronounced, due to the fact that investigative journalists have a tradition of sharing practices, methods, findings and experiences, and the fact that investigative journalism is in most cases very expensive and journalists have been forced to team up to save time and money (Carson and Farhall 2018). This global phenomenon boasts great potential for revitalising the authority, credibility and professionalism of journalism, but it involves certain tensions as well. Given its strong affiliation with the US tradition of investigative journalism there is a risk that transnational cooperation in journalism might align itself too closely with American investigative journalism, at the expense of multicultural practices. Recent research

(Carson and Farhall 2018, Meyer 2019), has found that with collaboration, there is an unfortunate tendency towards homogenization of topic and story coverage, as well as practices, communication and newsroom decision-making. On balance, however, the potential offered by transnational cooperation outweighs its risks, and journalists appear poised to cultivate a greater awareness of other cultures; an improved ability to communicate across borders; and a global outlook (Berglez, 2008; 2013) on the stories they create.

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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Overview of useful networks for funding in Europe: <https://www.journalismfund.eu>

Overview of investigative journalists working for ICIJ: <https://www.icij.org/journalists/>

Global Investigative Journalist Networks Helpdesk, practical resources for journalists:  
<https://helpdesk.gijn.org/support/home>

Global Investigative Journalist Newtwork overview of fund and grants:  
<https://helpdesk.gijn.org/support/solutions/articles/14000036514-fellowships>

Overview of various organizations for investigative journalists: <https://gijn.org/investigative-journalism-organizations/>

Global Investigative Journalist Networks Resources to find Experts:  
<https://gijn.org/2016/05/23/resources-guides-to-finding-expert-sources/>

Global Investigative Journalists overview of whistleblowing networks:  
<https://gijn.org/whistleblowing/>

