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Collaborative Investigative Journalism in Southern Africa



Carolyn Mande Lunga

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of City, University of
London for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

Department of Journalism

October 2022

Declaration

I, **Carolyn Mande Lunga**, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.



Signature:



COVID-19 Impact Statement

This statement is provided for the aid and benefit of future readers to summarise the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the scope, methodology, and research activity associated with this thesis. The academic standards for a research degree awarded by City, University of London and for which this thesis is submitted remain the same regardless of this context.

Title of the research project: Collaborative investigative journalism (CIJ) in southern Africa.

1. Summary of how the research project, scope or methodology has been revised because of COVID-19 restrictions:

Interviews were done online instead of offline. Inability to do visit journalists within their settings and observe collaborative investigative journalists in practice due to inability to travel, lockdowns and social distancing rules because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

2. Summary of how research activity and/or data collection was impacted because of COVID-19 restrictions, and how any initially planned activity would have fitted within the thesis narrative:

Observing collaborative investigative journalism in practice would have shed light on power dynamics and how tensions are negotiated instead of relying only on actors' accounts of their experiences of collaborating. Doing interviews using video conferencing tools such as Zoom and Teams posed some challenges as it was not fully possible to analyse non-verbal cues. Where respondents chose to do interviews with cameras off meant that there was no opportunity to observe non-verbal communication. Poor internet bandwidth interfered with the flow of the interview and the tone of the voice which meant that it became difficult to pick up changes in voice tone and hesitations.

3. Summary of actions or decisions taken to mitigate for the impact of data collection or research activity that was prevented by COVID-19:

Doing individual in depth interviews via video conferencing tools such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams though this came with network challenges and interruptions during the interview process.

4. Summary of how any planned work might have changed the thesis narrative, including new research questions that have arisen from adjusting the scope of the research project:

No new research questions were developed.

Date of statement: 22/12/202

Abstract

The research analyses how collaborative investigative journalism (CIJ) is being practiced in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Eswatini. Drawing on Latour's (2005) Actor-Network Theory (ANT) and Shoemaker and Reese's (1996, 2014, 2016) Hierarchy of Influences model, the study traced the actors involved in the collaborations and how they influenced the collaborative process. It also explored the role of technology and how this shaped the collaborative process. The research is based on case studies and uses interviews with 40 respondents and narrative analysis of purposively selected stories, reports, editorial charters, membership codes, funding reports, grant calls and editorial policies to research these cases. The significance of the research is, first, that it generates important empirical data on a topic that has not been researched previously. Second, its use of ANT and the hierarchy of Influences theories in combination. The findings show that collaborations in the three countries are influenced by a convergence of macro-level factors such as political and economic factors (donor influence through funding and encouraging collaboration), and micro-level factors, professional/individual factors. These factors interact differently in the three countries. Individual factors were especially important in South Africa, which has a thriving investigative journalism culture. In Zimbabwe and Eswatini macro-level factors such as weaker economies, non-profit funding and politics, a restrictive media environment and overcoming censorship were more significant. Unlike in Western newsrooms where technology is considered to play a significant role in facilitating collaborations, it is not driving collaborations in the case study countries due to low adoption levels in newsrooms, infrastructural problems, and the digital divide, particularly in Zimbabwe and Eswatini. The thesis contributes to journalism studies by providing detailed analysis of journalists' understandings, experiences, and practices of doing collaborative investigative journalism in southern African countries and how macro, meso- and micro level factors converge in the process.

Keywords

Collaborative investigative journalism; interconnections; agency; technology; Actor-Network Theory; Hierarchy of Influences

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Acronyms

ANT	-Actor-Network Theory
CCIJ	-Centre for Collaborative Investigative Journalism
CIJ	- Collaborative Investigative Journalism
ICIJ	-International Consortium for Investigative Journalists
Inhlase	- Inhlase Centre for Investigative Journalism
MISA	-Media Institute of Southern Africa
OCCPR	-Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project
OCR app	-Optical Character Recognition
OSISA	-Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA)
VMCZ	-Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe

Chapter 1

Introduction

The practice of investigative journalism is undergoing transformation. Collaborative investigative journalism (CIJ) is an example of a new way of doing investigations. The Panama Papers (2016), Paradise Papers (2017) and Pandora Papers (2021) are some of the most prominent examples of these global collaborations. CIJ is characterised by a shift from highly competitive single to multiple newsrooms and journalists collaboratively sharing information, sources, documents, skills, and expertise (Sambrook 2018, Berglez and Gearing, 2018; Chacón and Saldaña, 2021). Collaboration can take place at multiple levels, be they local, national, or global - and it can involve numerous media organisations and journalists driven by a variety of professional, and economic factors. Collaborations also bring non-journalistic actors or “those who were once strangers to the profession” (Holton and Belair-Gagnon, 2018, 70) into the investigations, who are extending the journalistic boundaries, for example legal experts, mobile app designers, data specialists, programmers, statisticians, money laundering experts among others, who are involved in various stages of the news production process, idea sharing, story development and news distribution (Holton and Belair-Gagnon, 2018, 70). The entrance of these new actors may have an impact on traditional journalistic norms and values particularly objectivity and its associated values of impartiality and fairness - and may also blur the lines between journalists and non-journalists (Chua and Duffy, 2019; Holton and Belair-Gagnon, 2018). de Burgh and Lashmar (2021) note that journalism has become renewed with the entrance of new people and platforms while being characterised by new complexities.

Although CIJ is being practiced around the world, the existing research literature has mostly focused on the United States (US), Europe and Australia (Sambrook 2018, Jenkins and Graves 2019, Berglez and Gearing, 2018; Konow-Lund, 2019, Gearing, 2021). Yet, other regions such as Latin America, Africa among others have examples of collaborative projects. This includes research on cross-border collaboration that has identified several factors that make CIJ different from previous journalism traditions (Sambrook, 2018, Hunter 2012, Columbia Journalism Review 2009, Berglez and

Gearing, 2018) and research on cross-border journalism beyond the ICIJ led ones (Heft 2021; Stonbely, 2017). In addition, researchers have analysed The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ)-led collaborations such as the Panama (2016) and Paradise Papers (2017) (Sambrook, 2018; Berglez and Gearing, 2018) and used these cases to exemplify this new type of journalism. Mesquita and de-Lima-Santos (2021), Mesquita (2022) and Chacón and Saldaña (2021) have examined how collaborations in Latin America are being done, considering who is involved, how they are collaborating and the nature of collaborations. In Africa, Lublinsk et. al (2015) have analysed how collaborations are leading to successful investigations in sub-Saharan African. Meyer (2019) researched on social media usage within investigative networks in Africa. In the Arab world, Bebawi (2016), has analysed the state of investigative journalism in the region. However, there is little research or theorisation about CIJ in southern Africa which is the focus of this research. Since the time of the #GuptaLeaks investigation in 2017 and Chiadzwa investigation of 2017, there has been no other research on collaborative investigative journalism in the southern African context. This research is the first one to explore collaborations in the three countries. By focusing on CIJ in southern Africa, the thesis questions the usefulness of concepts and theories developed in the Global North. It also contributes to literature with context-specific understandings, insights, and practices of collaboration in the Global South. This is important with increasing calls for decolonising, dewesternising and diversifying journalism studies and considering how journalism practice differs in various contexts (Moyo, 2020; Mutsvairo et al., 2021, Curran and Park, 2005, Wasserman and de Beer, 2009). Furthermore, southern Africa provides an important case study because of its vast size, with more than 130 million people. It is home to a striking number of languages and ethnicities. It ranges from the industrial centres of South Africa to poorer, Portuguese-speaking Mozambique, to the small, landlocked kingdoms of Eswatini (formerly Swaziland) and Lesotho. Zimbabwe, previously known as the breadbasket of Africa, is also part of the region with Botswana and Zambia on its borders. It also includes Angola, Malawi, Mauritius, and Namibia. Although resource rich, the region faces persistent problems of drought, poverty, and corruption, and still has some interdependence with its former colonial masters, Britain, Portugal, and Germany which continue to influence the economic, political, and social contexts 'post-independence.' The practice of journalism and more specifically CIJ is thus

shaped by an interplay of quite different macro level factors relating to politics and economics, as well as meso and micro level factors including organisational/professional factors. The thesis argues that, in these contexts, technology may enable some journalistic practices – but it is certainly not driving collaboration, as has been argued in some Western literature on CIJ which adopt a technological deterministic approach to collaborative journalism (see de la Serna and Martinez, 2018). The research uses ‘Global North/South’ and West/non-Western distinctions to refer to the countries geographically located in the South vs those located in the North though these are open to debate (Mutsvairo, 2019a).

1.1 Actor- Network Theory

The study uses the Actor Network Theory in combination with the Hierarchy of Influences model to illuminate the actors, the influences on collaborative journalism and the role of technology. The combination of the two theories is relevant for CIJ as it allows the research to analyse the various actors in collaborative journalism, their agency and how they are collaborating. It also allows for consideration of the most important factors that influence the collaborations. The theoretical framework is also useful for assessing the role of technology in the collaborations and its agency in the news production and dissemination processes. Actor Network Theory (ANT) was developed by Bruno Latour and Michel Callon in the Science and Technology Studies (STS) field, and it draws attention to how technological tools or actants have agency and how this is exercised (Latour, 2005). It allows for the analysis of the heterogeneous human and non-human actors involved in CIJ, their agency, and the associations between them (Turner, 2005). The theory allows for the recognition of the role of journalists and non-journalistic actors such as donors, technologists, businesspeople among others and associations between them (Lewis and Westlund, 2015). The complex hybrid networks formed in these associations is considered an important contribution of the theory (Primo and Zago, 2015).

Although ANT is useful in identifying the various actors involved in collaborations and the associations between them, it has its own weaknesses. Scholars have queried the theory’s proposition that all actors should be considered equally (Müller, 2015). Furthermore, the theory’s relative silence on how unequal power relations may inform

interaction among actors has resulted in critics arguing that it neglects power dynamics (Müller 2015, Anderson and de Maeyer, 2015, Mabrook 2019). In this thesis, power dynamics were frequently observable in the associations between different actors who impact the journalistic process, norms, and values – and it is argued that these must occupy a prominent role in the analysis. Another criticism levelled at ANT is that it “discards social context, for example cultural or historical factors, for explanation, unless it can be traced in the formation of concrete networks” (Müller, 2015, 30). Yet the research finds that contextual factors such as history, politics, and economic issues, have a significant role in influencing the way CIJ is practiced in the three countries under study. In addition, ANT fails to explain how news products are reinterpreted by users (Couldry, 2008). Users belong to various networks and draw on their lived experiences in their interaction with texts. The theory is also considered insufficient in the study of culture (Anderson and Kreiss, 2013). Due to these omissions, the study also uses the Hierarchy of Influences theory, to capture further factors that influence journalistic collaboration.

1.2 The Hierarchy of Influences Theory

The Hierarchy of influences model (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996, 2014, 2016) can help address the omissions of ANT theory by forcing us to consider influences at five levels of analysis. It enables the research to capture factors overlooked by ANT. The five levels of analysis include individual characteristics of specific news workers, work routines, organisational-level concerns, institutional issues, and larger social systems (Reese and Shoemaker, 2016). The model demonstrates that these influences simultaneously impact the media and that various levels of influence may interact with one another in different contexts (Shoemaker and Reese, 2014). This approach is useful for this research, which seeks to understand the influences on collaborative investigative projects in three countries with diverse media, political, economic, and social contexts. By juxtaposing various levels within the same model, the Hierarchy of Influences theory encourages us to consider how structures in society affect journalistic agency (Reese and Shoemaker, 2016). Various structures around the journalists at the macro-level, political and economic, micro-level, individual and meso-level, organisational- enable and constrain what they can or cannot do within collaborations. The model is thus useful in the “sorting out of these micro-, meso-, and

macro- levels and provides a framework for analysing the operation of combined factors” (Reese and Shoemaker, 2016, 397) which gives the research illuminative power to understand the combination of factors shaping CIJ. In the three countries under study, political, economic, and professional factors are the more significant factors that are influencing journalistic collaborations. Who gets involved in the collaborations and the kinds of stories that they pursue is also a result of political and economic factors, particularly in Zimbabwe and Eswatini. Foreign donors (mostly Western), for example, are playing a key role in influencing the editorial agenda through funding investigative journalism which results in homogeneity in the media as some topics/themes are ignored. The donors encourage collaboration by bringing in partners to train and mentor journalists in the idea generation and story development processes. Restrictive media and political contexts drive journalists to collaborate with external actors who can publish their stories anonymously. Using the Hierarchy of Influences Theory only in this research would not have been able to capture the heterogenous actors involved in the collaborations and how they are collaborating.

1.3 Research Questions

The study analyses CIJ in the southern African region through purposively selected case studies of major investigative projects and media organisations in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Eswatini. Collaboration is used broadly in this thesis to refer to the ‘partnerships’ or ‘alliances’ that journalists are forming with other journalists and media organisations, funders, whistle-blowers, IT specialists, NGOs, and ordinary citizens. The project draws on a combination of the Actor Network Theory (ANT) and the Hierarchy of Influences theory and analyses their relevancy to CIJ. A combination of the theories enables the researcher to focus on the heterogeneous actors involved and their associations and to explore in depth the factors that influence collaborations. Guided by these theories, the thesis asks the following research questions:

RQ1: How is CIJ practiced in southern Africa? Who / what are the key human and non-human actors involved?

RQ2: What are the most important factors that are influencing CIJ and shaping journalistic agency, and the interconnections between various actors?

RQ3: How do Actor-Network Theory and Hierarchy of Influences theories

help us understand how collaboration is practiced in these settings?

1.4 Methodology

To answer these questions, the research analyses examples of prominent and award-winning CIJ projects and selected news organisations in three countries namely South Africa, Zimbabwe and Eswatini. Research about the three countries is important to provide insights from understudied regions (Hanitzsch 2009; Kohn 1989) and shed light on journalism cultures from the Global South (Mutsvairo et al., 2021). The three countries, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Eswatini have been chosen purposively because they have different media systems, journalistic cultures and levels of press freedom and investigative journalism is practiced differently despite all belonging to the same region. Within these case studies, I triangulate data from individual in-depth interviews, and narrative analysis of stories, reports, editorial charters, grant documents, and press codes. Triangulation is valuable for this research to increase rigour and in-depth understanding (Brennen, 2017). In depth semi-structured interviewing, which is the main method of the research, enables acquisition of the experiences of the actors based on their lived experiences, opinions, and activities (Kvale, 2007; McNamara 2009). Purposive sampling was used to recruit 41 investigative journalists, editors and non-journalistic actors including, a government official, IT specialists and funders involved in the CIJ projects done by *amaBhungane*, *Daily Maverick*, *News24*, (South Africa), *Zimbabwe Independent* and *Newsday* (Zimbabwe), *Inhlase Centre for Investigative Journalism* (Inhlase) and *Swaziland News* (Eswatini). Narrative analysis allowed for the examination of selected stories, editorial codes, member charters, grant documents, invoices, and reports to understand what actors said about how they work, collaborations, values guiding their work and the kinds of stories they wrote. The thesis is not a comparison of the ways in which CIJ is being done in the three countries though it does have a comparative aspect to it. Rather, it can be defined as multiple ‘revelatory case studies’ (Yin, 2003).

1.5 Summary of findings

The findings show that CIJ in the three countries in southern Africa is influenced by a convergence of macro level-economic, political, and micro-level,

professional/organisational factors which both enable and constrain journalistic agency. Technology is more of an enabler than a key driving factor for those who are collaborating, and it enables those involved to do activities they would not be able to do without the existing tools and software. The research established that CIJ is not practiced in the same way in the three countries. There are diverse models of collaborations, involving journalists and non-journalistic actors such as, technologists, money laundering experts, NGOs, ordinary citizens, among others. These non-journalistic actors' exercise agency at distinct stages of the news production process and impact journalistic norms and values. The actors identify their associations in a range of diverse ways, using diverse terms like, "*collaborations*," "*partnerships*," "*alliances*" or "*our supporters*." These terms are linked to actors' varying perceptions of those involved in the collaboration, and relationships between them. IT specialists, for example, are playing the roles that journalists are unable to do such as making documents searchable, structuring data, and finding patterns of wrongdoing, thus driving the editorial agenda, as seen in the South African *#GuptaLeaks* case study. By contrast, journalists tend to see themselves as the ones doing the 'journalism' and therefore having more control over how the stories are produced and disseminated.

In Eswatini, the two case studies, *Inhlase* and *Swaziland News* media organisations show that individual and socio-institutional (political and economic factors) have a significant influence on who the publications collaborate with. For *Inhlase*, individual and economic factors are important in shaping who the publication collaborates with. Technologists are contracted to manage and optimise the website for audiences to engage easily with the stories and provide analytics which journalists use to measure impact and use the information to justify funding support from donors. These technologists thus impact the way the journalists do their investigative work as they influence what the journalists consider the most important topics to focus on and how the media organisation interacts with audiences. *Swaziland News* which operates from exile in South Africa, is influenced by macro-level, political, economic, and individual factors and takes advantage of the technological affordances in news production and distribution to form relationships with users and various political and economic actors dispersed across the globe. The publication takes advantage of the media freedoms to engage in critical reporting of King Mswati 111, royal family members and the

government which publications within Eswatini are unable to do. The publication's anti King Mswati stance and close association with political actors demonstrates a strong political parallelism between the publication and political actors thus limiting the diversity of investigative stories.

In Zimbabwe, the *Chiadzwa* and *Electoral malpractices* investigations show that there is an interplay of socio-institutional, organisational, and individual factors impacting on the practice. Macro-level political and economic factors can have a profound influence on how CIJ is done in some contexts. In addition, the values and perceptions of journalists can be particularly important, such as a strong belief in the watchdog role, promoting transparency and accountability (individual and social system factors), albeit in a context of press freedom limitations, difficulties in accessing information and fear of persecution. In the *Chiadzwa* investigation, experienced investigative journalists from mainstream media organisations collaborated to promote accountability and expose abuses on villagers by the state and army. In the *Electoral malpractices* investigation, the journalist formed partnerships with actors outside newsrooms such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) made up of data specialists, actuarial scientists, and statisticians. The journalist's individual belief in transparency, accountability, and ability to acquire a grant drove him to collaborate with non-journalistic actors, whose ideology is against the ruling party ZANU PF, who also wanted to see elections conducted in a transparent manner. The impact of Western ideals on investigative journalism in Zimbabwe is reinforced through reliance on donor funding from the West and provision of international investigative journalism 'mentors' who provide 'mentorship' on how to produce investigative journalism stories. Additionally, to bypass censorship, Zimbabwean journalists sometimes partner with South African based media organisations and the Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCPR) where sensitive stories are published anonymously. Unlike in Western newsrooms where technology is considered to play a significant role in facilitating collaborations, technology is not driving collaborations in the countries under study due to low adoption levels in newsrooms, infrastructural problems, and the digital divide. However, actors do take advantage of its capabilities to undertake various tasks in the news production and dissemination processes which help them connect with other actors and their audiences who are dispersed geographically and

circumvent political and economic constraints. It is only in South Africa where a huge leak became the basis of the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation.

1.6 Thesis Outline

The thesis has nine chapters, starting with the introduction, followed by the background chapter which introduces the case study countries, and discusses the media, political, economic, and social contexts of South Africa, Zimbabwe and Eswatini. Next is a literature review which synthesises existing research on CIJ exploring the rise, developments, benefits, and popular examples of CIJ projects and various models. The chapter also considers the history of investigative journalism and how it has continued to evolve due to various economic, technological, and political factors. The impact of Covid-19 on journalism is also considered.

The fourth, theoretical chapter provides a detailed discussion of Actor-Network Theory (ANT) and Hierarchy of Influences Theory. This chapter starts with a general discussion of theories of technology and journalism, including technological determinism, social constructivism, and network theory, explaining why I have not used them in this research. The fifth chapter discusses the methodology, providing the rationale for qualitative research, and discusses case studies, in-depth interviewing, narrative analysis, and purposive sampling. The research questions guiding this study are included. The sixth chapter is devoted to discussing CIJ in South Africa through analysing the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation. The seventh chapter details the findings of collaboration in Zimbabwe through two case studies, the *Chiadzwa* and *Electoral malpractices* investigations done by the *Zimbabwe Independent* in collaboration with a *Newsday* journalist and *Standard* newspapers respectively while the eighth chapter discusses collaboration in Eswatini through the viewpoint of *Inhlase* and *Swaziland News*. The latter operates from exile, in South Africa. The findings in the three country chapters are organised according to the research questions and discussed in the light of the research literature and the theoretical framework.

The last chapter draws some comparisons between the three countries and identifies trends across CIJ projects in southern Africa. It starts with the collaboration models

and then identifies how unique the investigations and countries are from each other, focusing on the role of technology and the way in which contextual factors shape collaborative work. This chapter concludes with some of the broader implications of the study's findings. The next chapter of the thesis introduces the three case study countries. It focuses on the nature of the news industry in each country. Discussion on the three case study countries will focus on how big the news industry is, how free journalism in the country is, the state of investigative journalism and the state of CIJ – and some key examples of this practice.

Chapter 2

Political, social, economic and media contexts of South Africa, Zimbabwe and Eswatini

Introduction

This section of the thesis introduces the three case study countries, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Eswatini. It provides a brief history of the countries and focuses on the nature of the news industry in each country, how big the news industry is, how free journalism in the country is, the state of investigative journalism and the state of CIJ – and some key examples of this practice. The three countries under investigation have been selected as case studies because they are involved in CIJ, yet very little research has been done on how collaborative projects are practiced, who is involved in them and the factors influencing them. All belong to the same region of southern Africa and have ‘transitioned’ from authoritarian colonial rule to democratic government (Mare, 2016). The idea of transitioning from authoritarian to democratic rule is contestable due to some problems in the country that impact on democracy. It can be argued that these countries have not ‘fully’ transitioned to democracy as there are still problems of restrictions on media freedom, human rights abuse among other factors. In addition, they have diverse political, economic, and cultural contexts whose media operations also differ in several respects. Analysing the three countries helps to unearth contextual influences on communication organisation and practice unavailable to single-country investigations and helps to identify and probe deeper into the similarities and differences among them (Hanitzsch, 2009).

The three countries chosen for this study provide rich cases for understanding how investigative journalism of a collaborative nature is being practiced and the influences on it. Despite belonging to the same region, the three countries are not identical but share similar histories of enduring colonialism, minority rule and struggles for liberation (Mare, 2016). Considering these contextual differences is important in showing the diverse journalism in these countries (Mutsvairo et al., 2021). Eswatini got its independence from Britain in 1968 ahead of Zimbabwe and South Africa while Zimbabwe got its independence in 1980, again from Britain and South Africa in 1994, which marked the end of apartheid. Of the three, Eswatini is the only absolute

monarchy. All the three countries “were left with land imbalances, lack of thick media and economic transformation and inherited colonial laws” (Mare, 2016, 3). In reference to South Africa and Zimbabwe, Mare (2016, 3) argues that despite taking “different paths and developed in diverse ways... their political and media transformations are converging in many ways. Politically, the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa and the Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) in Zimbabwe dominate the political sphere (Mare, 2016). In terms of the media, “the public broadcasters have been riddled with cases of political interference, mismanagement, and corruption” (Mare, 2016, 3). In Eswatini, the public broadcaster functions as a state broadcaster and continues to serve state interests (Hlatshwayo, 2017). Dlamini (2019, viii) argues that “constitutional developments in post-colonial Swaziland culminated in monarchical absolutism”. The three arms of government, the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary belonged to the King (Dlamini, 2019). The absolute monarchy has continued to exert strict control over the media creating a difficult environment for holding power to account (Hlatshwayo, 2017). Between 1968 and 1973, Swazis enjoyed “fundamental human rights and freedoms of conscience, expression, assembly and movement” under a “Westminster type of constitution with Swazis enjoying” before it was repealed by King Sobhuza 11 (Hlatshwayo, 2017, 14; Dlamini, 2019). A new constitution was ushered in 2005 by King Mswati 111 and “describes the political system as a democratic, participatory, tinkhundla-based system which emphasises devolution of state power from central government to the people in the tinkhundla areas”. (Hlatshwayo, 2017, 14). Monarchists clamour for the increase of the King’s powers while civil society groups and opposition are opposed to absolute monarchism and call for “a return to constitutionalism and liberal democracy (Dlamini, 2019, 5).

Despite the three countries belonging to the same region of southern Africa, they all have different media and political systems if measured against Hallin and Mancini’s (2004) model. South Africa exhibits traits of “all three of the Hallin-Mancini models, in particular the Polarized Pluralist model but also elements of the Democratic Corporatist and Liberal ones” (Hadland, 2012, 97). This is evidenced by some political parallelism, a vibrant civic life, and limits on state power (Hadland 2012) and some of its journalism and programming adopts commercial approaches (Duncan and Glenn

2010; Santos and Mare, 2021). South African journalists are free from government influence and can report freely on public interest issues (Santos and Mare, 2021). Zimbabwe on the other hand, falls under the “polarised pluralist model” (Mare, 2016), and displays a high degree of political parallelism. According to Santos and Mare (2021, 1393), “the media system has institutionalised an environment in which party politics and the media are closely integrated”, while Eswatini, an absolute monarchy, has a similar model to Zimbabwe, characterised by a high degree of political parallelism. In South Africa, investigative journalism has focused on land reform, poor service delivery, sexual abuse, and corruption (Harber, 2018). In Zimbabwe, issues that have been investigated include land reform, corruption, mining, and service delivery (Munoriyarwa, 2018). In Eswatini, a key focus has been on government excesses and issues involving the royal family (Rooney, 2013). 32 laws restrict the freedom of the media in Eswatini, and government has threatened to apply the Suppression of Terrorism Act (STA) to critical journalists (Hlatshwayo, 2017). Despite restrictions and challenges, journalists strive to carry out their normative roles.

2.1 Investigative Journalism in South Africa

Pre- and post-apartheid media are the distinctions that scholars often make when discussing the role of the media in South Africa as seen from works by Berger, (1996), Wasserman and de Beer (2005), Wasserman (2010a, 2013, 2018) and Jacobs (2019) among others. However, it has been noted that the media’s role in South Africa is much more complex than that (Wasserman, 2018; Hadland, 2012). South Africa provides a case where the media have played a watchdog role and sometimes failed to hold the powerful to account.

Pre-apartheid media in South Africa, operated under stringent laws which prohibited the coverage of political prisoners (Wasserman, 2018). Anti-apartheid media journalists were often harassed or imprisoned (ibid). Surveillance on journalists was also common during the apartheid era (Khumalo, 2018). According to Wasserman (2018), when South Africa became a democracy, media became very free. However, the relationship between the media and government has been characterised by tensions due to differing understandings of the role that media should play (Wasserman, 2018). The media’s adversarial watchdog or Fourth Estate role has

clashed with the government's notion of a developmental collaborative role for the media for nation-building (Wasserman, 2018).

Critics have argued that there has not been enough transformation in the media post 1994 (Harber and Renn, 2010). Even where senior editorial positions are occupied by Black people, the ruling party ANC has argued that the change has been superficial as they still promote white liberal culture and narrow financial and political interests which are hostile to the ANC and its transformation project (ibid). Post-apartheid media have been criticised for lacking diversity in ownership, control, race, and language and adopting an adversarial stance against the ANC government through exposing socio-economic inequalities, corruption, and violent crimes (Daniels, 2020). Under Hlaudi, a supporter of former president Zuma, the public broadcaster, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) took a position that the media should be patriotic, do more sunshine journalism and be less critical of ANC's ruling faction (Daniels, 2020). Fear and self-censorship are said to have dominated the newsrooms and there is a general decline in public trust in the media (Daniels, 2020).

Despite these challenges, the investigative journalism culture in South Africa is more developed than Zimbabwe and Eswatini and the media play a fundamental role in exposing corruption. In terms of press freedom, South Africa is relatively free, occupying number 32 on the Press Freedom Index, while Zimbabwe occupies number 130 and Eswatini is 141 (RSF statistics 2022). Daniels (2020, 19) for example, argues that South Africa has "one of the strongest cultures of investigative journalism in the world though political journalists are often pawns in the political factions". Despite the positive role that the media plays in exposing corruption, the business press has often been criticised for failing to report on corruption by corporates (Moerdyk, 2017). Munoriyarwa (2022) notes that one of the reasons for this failure by the business press to expose corruption has to do with the data challenge. Data tends to be unreliable or is available in unfriendly formats to hide corruption and theft (ibid). Munoriyarwa (2022) argues that data-driven reporting practices in South Africa are gradual as journalists lack adequate training in data journalism. Apart from lack of data to support this failure by the media to investigate business, Roper (2022) argues that the media are sometimes co-opted into economic and political propaganda and thus

fail to do their job. Increasing intimidation of journalists by those in power and surveillance are cited as another problem hindering free media (Daniels, 2018).

One particularly well-known investigation in South Africa, which was based on a huge data set is the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation which is a case study in this thesis. The *#GuptaLeaks* came about because of a huge leak of data about the Gupta brothers (Gupta Leaks website). A full description of the case can be found in Chapter 6, where it is both explained and analysed. The *#GuptaLeaks* investigation demonstrated how 'state capture' came about. It included journalists from *amaBhungane*, the *Daily Maverick* and *News24* who collaborated to expose control of the state for personal gain (Harber, 2018b). In an act of collaboration, 19 journalists from print and online media and non-journalists demonstrated the important role of the media in exposing corruption involving the Gupta brothers (Harber, 2018b; 2020). Just like the Panama Papers, the whistle-blowers responsible for leaking the emails that exposed the *#GuptaLeaks* scandal have never been revealed. Despite the positive example of the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation and other examples in which media have exposed corruption within various government departments and the private sector, Daniels (2020) argues that exposing truth in the social media world has become tougher and more dangerous due to the prevalence of misinformation, disinformation, and propaganda. Daniels (2020) further notes that local journalists are under pressure to produce news to keep up with the digital world. She states that "besides wide scale retrenchments, journalists are working twice as hard in newsrooms and juggling more devices to get more news out on more different platforms than ever-before" (Daniels, 2020, 16). This is supported by Duncan (2014) who notes that the South African print industry has been affected by the global recession and led to the decline of circulation and advertising income which put pressure on newsrooms. Skills development budgets have suffered huge reductions (ibid). The situation has been worsened by the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Newsrooms sometimes struggle to embark on thorough fact-checking and investigation on stories (Duncan, 2018). Editorial lapses in the *Sunday Times* newsroom between 2007 and 2008 and brown envelope journalism are often cited as examples of the impact of how cutbacks can impact journalism standards (Daniels 2020; Harber 2020). Daniels (2020) further notes that bullying

online is prevalent and the gender pay gap has increased. Under president Cyril Ramaphosa's presidency there has been a focus on ending corruption (ibid).

Concerns about increasing state and private sector surveillance dominate the discussions on the safety of journalists and their freedom particularly when they are known to be investigating those in power. Scholars argue that more than two decades post-apartheid, concerns about surveillance still exist in South Africa (Hunter, 2018). 2021 revelations about the proliferation of Pegasus spyware in more than 30 countries worldwide have created more fears for journalists (Di Salvo, 2021). Surveillance is a great concern noted in Western contexts which threatens the fourth estate (Lashmar, 2017) and in the Global South (Munoriyarwa, 2021). Technology is giving governments new tools to track down confidential sources (Lashmar, 2017). Duncan (2018) argues that since the Marikana case in 2012, journalists, academics and media commentators worry about increasing state surveillance within the South African context. This has led to some arguing that the country has become repressive in nature (Hunter, 2018). Hunter (2018) further argues that the non-profit Right to Know (R2K) has shown considerable evidence of spying and that it affects all members of society. According to Hunter (2018), surveillance has mainly been targeted at journalists who have uncovered corruption, state capture, and abuse of power and those who are known to be investigating the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) the State Security Agency and the Hawks. In a 2018 report, R2K identified several case studies of surveillance on journalists detailing how it took place and who was responsible. An example is when investigative journalist, Sam Sole from *amaBhungane* had confidential conversations with whistle-blowers, sources and family members spied on (Hunter, 2018). Other journalists from various media organisations have also reported being spied on. Surveillance instils fear in journalists, and they may end up practising self-censorship (Hunter, 2018). Despite these challenges, the South African media is seen in a better position when it comes to freedom of the press and being able to carry out investigative journalism in southern Africa albeit in a difficult environment (Lunga, 2022). Daniels (2020) supports this point when she argues that journalists in South Africa are not in danger to the same extent that is seen in other countries though photojournalists are increasingly being targeted by police because of the power of images.

2.2 Investigative Journalism in Zimbabwe

Investigative journalism in Zimbabwe has gone through various phases in line with economic and political changes in the country. Journalists are constrained in performing their role by factors within and outside newsrooms (Chuma, 2020) thus it is important to consider the broader political and economic and political contexts within which the Zimbabwean media operate.

Investigative journalism has also gone through some changes over the years in line with the political and economic changes in the country. Munoriyarwa (2018), argues that print media has played the watchdog role in the country if compared to broadcast media. Television media has not been involved in investigative reporting (ibid). In the 1980s and early 1990s in Zimbabwe, a healthy economy saw the press work hard in exposing corruption and other malpractices (Munoriyarwa, 2018). The *Bulawayo Chronicle* under the editorship of Geoff Nyarota, investigated the *Willowvale* scandal of the 1980s which exposed an illegal resale of car purchases by various government officials. The result was a minister committing suicide and others resigning (Munoriyarwa, 2018). The Willowvale scandal has been considered one of the most outstanding cases of investigative journalism in Zimbabwe (Mututwa and Ufuoma, 2022). After the scandal, the editor, Nyarota was redeployed, showing that “the government was not taking the revelations lightly and in the long run, would deal with the media” (Munoriyarwa, 2018, 74). More scandals were exposed in the following years, but it became clear that the government was determined to control the media when “party functionaries were appointed as editors and as board members in the state-controlled media” (Munoriyarwa, 2018, 75). Some of the scandals included the housing scandal and abuses by the 5th Brigade in the western part of the country (ibid). In the 1990s, “subtle disapproval of media exposures by the ruling elites had turned into open reprimands where ministers sometimes threatened and warned the press not to probe too deeply” (Munoriyarwa, 2018, 72). The coming in of private newspapers like the *Financial Gazette* and magazines (Moto and Parade) from 1990-1999 provided a formidable counter-hegemonic challenge to the government’s hegemony-construction project, although most of them shut down due to an underperforming economy (Saunders 1999 quoted in Mare 2019, 107). Mututwa and Ufuoma (2022) cite the GMB Grain scandal (1995), Harare City Refuse Tender

scandal (1998) as examples of scandals in the 1990s. The Asiagate scandal exposed how senior ZIFA officials participated in match fixing for the Zimbabwean team to play in Asian countries (Mututwa and Ufuoma, 2022). Munoriyarwa (2018) further argues that by the end of the first decade of the twenty first century, there was a big decline in investigative reporting. The *Standard* newspaper exposé of “an attempted coup by the national army soldiers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which it said was ruthlessly suppressed in 1998” resulted in the torture of Ray Choto and Mark Chavhunduka (Munoriyarwa, 2018, 75). More exposés were published by the private media on the land reform. The Salarygate scandal of 2015, exposed the corruption involving parastatal bosses who were earning hefty salaries and allowances (Mututwa and Ufuoma, 2022).

The licensing of newspapers such as *Daily News*, which was popular for publishing content that was against the state led to adversarial or oppositional journalism. Chuma (2020) argues that by gaining control over the ZBC and Zimpapers, the new government got near total control of the country’s mediascape. As Moyo (2004) argues in relation to pre- and post-independence media in Zimbabwe, “despite claims to neutrality, both pre- and post-independence governments, used broadcasting as a tool for political control and manipulation of the masses, in the name of ...national security, interest and sovereignty” (Moyo, 2004, 12).

In the post 2000 era, after the formation of Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), the private media shifted its attention to investigating human rights abuses against opposition supporters including murders and abductions. Economic hardships and decline in advertising revenues severely affected the media in its watchdog role, a trend noted across the globe (Moyo, 2004; Munoriyarwa, 2018). The state attacked and labelled private media who were critical of government “terrorists” (Melber, 2004, 9). For example, former Minister of Information, Professor Jonathan Moyo stated, “President Mugabe has said that our enemy is the media, who use the pen to lie about this country. Such reporters are terrorists and the position on how to deal with terrorists is to subject them to the laws of Zimbabwe” (Melber, 2004, 9). In addition, journalists from the public media who were not compliant faced dismissal (Chiumbu, 2004). During this time, journalists suffered threats, arrests, and torture (Moyo 2011).

The introduction of tighter restrictions on freedom of the media through enactment of laws such as the Broadcasting Services Act (2001), Public Order and Security Act (POSA) (2002) and the harassment of journalists promoted state censorship which weakened the media's ability to act as a watchdog (Moyo, 2011). From the era of the late former president, Robert Mugabe, the government "styled itself as Marxist-Leninist, and sought to create a model of journalism that would also serve as 'vanguard,' actively mobilising on behalf of the party" (Chuma, 2020, 7). The media in this case was expected to be "both collaborative and patriotic, as a strategy of constructing and maintaining the ruling party hegemony" (Chuma, 2020, 7). This is reinforced by Mare (2019) who notes that the government mobilised the public media to practice 'patriotic journalism' by promoting discourses that promote the state's narratives. "The state-owned media became a political player in its own right, privileging the hegemonic discourse of the ruling party over others. Because of the fractured political environment, the media exacerbated cleavages along ethnic and political affiliation lines" (Mare 2019, 108). The private press and civil society and opposition parties have been denounced as "traitors" (Chiumbu 2004, 33). In addition, Mutsvairo and Muneri (2019) argue that deep-rooted political divisions have led to partisan journalism in the country.

The shutting down of the private press, such as the *Daily News* in 2003, demonstrates the adversarial nature of the relationship between the government and the private media (Chiumbu 2004). Moreso, inheriting colonial laws such as the Official Secrets Act, the Censorship and Entertainments Control Act, criminal defamation, among others have also had an impact on the media playing as its watchdog role since the laws are used in some instances against media that does not toe the line (Mare, 2019). As Mare (2019) argues, the public press' editorial policies and practices, reflect the ideological and socio-political environment of the country. Since independence, the state-controlled media has been instrumental in advancing the ideologies of the ruling party (Ndlovu and Sibanda, 2020).

Other investigative journalism projects have been done in the country by privately owned media against the state and according to Munoriyarwa (2018), they often lack depth as journalists are frequently denied access to state held information. The state

accuses journalists of “being enemies of the state and mercenaries of imperialism and this automatically denies them from accessing state-held information” (Munoriyarwa, 2018, 82). Munoriyarwa and Chiumbu (2020) have also noted that journalists from the private media are victims of state-led surveillance which has become popular in Zimbabwe creating fear particularly among investigative journalists. In the digital era, surveillance takes many forms including monitoring emails, phone records, camera prints, biometric data, and other forms of digital data (Munoriyarwa 2021). Munoriyarwa (2021) argues that investigative journalists in Zimbabwe are under surveillance from state organs such as the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) and the Zimbabwe Military Intelligence (ZIA). In a study on surveillance on journalists in Zimbabwe, Munoriyarwa (2021, 422) argues that “journalists noted that the Zimbabwe state has acquired capabilities like international mobile subscriber identity (IMSI) catchers from Iran, and email snooping capabilities from China” making the investigative journalism environment extremely dangerous. For this reason and others, investigative journalism is on the decline in the country as media concentrates on entertainment instead of issues that are in the public interest (ibid). With the outbreak of the Covid-19, government passed legislation restricting information access thus crippling the efforts of journalists interested in doing investigative reporting (MISA report, 2022). Erratic electricity supply also impacts internet access and reports of load-shedding in Zimbabwe adversely affecting the quality of internet services (MISA report, 2022; Santos and Mare, 2021).

The internet and digitalisation had both positive and negative consequences for the media’s ability to hold the state to account. On the positive side, they enabled some critical reporting as citizens “produced alternative platforms and disseminated news and told stories about the harsh realities of Zimbabwean life and politics” (Moyo 2011, 746). Social media and blog sites critical of the state have been described as “seminal to public discussions and thus became informal counter-hegemonic public spheres where public opinion could be formulated, nurtured and sustained” (Moyo, 2007 cited in Moyo 2011, 746). Online news sites also played a significant role in providing diverse viewpoints on issues (Mabweazara et al., 2014). Digital technologies are applauded for enabling investigative journalists expose corruption through the provision of video images, audio files and photographs as evidence (Mututwa and

Ufuoma, 2022). Whistle-blowers can share evidence with journalists thus contributing to holding power to account (ibid). Digitalisation has given rise to some online publications engaging in 'investigative journalism.' In 2020, The *NewsHawks*, an online digital platform was launched. The publication is run by journalists who previously worked for the independent media publications such as the *Zimbabwe Independent*, *Newsday* among others and is donor funded. The publication describes itself as "Zimbabwe's leading digital platform for investigative and breaking news. We're on the prowl" (The *NewsHawks* website). The publication exposes corruption in mining, economic problems, and unaccounted expenditures by government. Another online publication, *ZimLive* owned by Zimbabwe-registered Makhwedini Media TRUST launched in July 2018 and is the publication behind the leaking of audio reports of abuse of office and sexual misconduct involving married junior staff members that led to the resignation of former Vice president Kembo Mohadi in March 2021 (*ZimLive* website). The publication has in the past published some investigative pieces on Kudakwashe Tagwirei, who is close to Zimbabwe's president Emmerson Mnangagwa and how he uses his privileged access to acquire mining and fuel deals (*ZimLive* website). The publication has also published stories about passport production contract to bribes-linked Belgian firm (ibid). The publication partners with the OCCPR in some of its investigations which are published on both the *ZimLive* and OCCPR websites. The OCCPR defines itself as "an investigative reporting platform for a worldwide network of independent media centers and journalists" (OCCPR website). OCCPR provides media outlets and journalists with tools for security and provides editorial support to those working on sensitive stories (OCCPR website). The *Zim Morning Post* is another online news website in Zimbabwe which specialises in investigative journalism (*Zim Morning Post* website). The publication has played a significant role in exposing corruption at the Zimbabwean Road Authority (ZINARA) and in the procurement of Covid-19 supplies by the government. The business model of the publication is based on advertising and donor funding (ibid).

The rise of fake sites online has led to a growth in disinformation and misinformation which threatens the media and the practice of investigative journalism. There have also been cases where the country experiences internet shutdowns as a measure to curb dissent (Chibuwe, 2020). In addition, surveillance is cited as another problem that

threatens freedom of expression in Zimbabwe. The MISA state of press freedom in southern Africa 2020-2021 launched in May 2022 states that Zimbabwe is among some of the countries in southern Africa that have acquired sophisticated software to carry out surveillance on its citizens and how this threatens freedom of expression (MISA 2021 report). Surveillance results in the intimidation of journalists who are unable to carry out investigative journalism out of fear. Self-censorship is a huge problem in the media field as journalists fear harassment and imprisonment (Santos and Mare, 2021; Munoriyarwa, 2018; Mututwa and Ufuoma, 2022).

In terms of CIJ, several investigations in the country have been a result of partnerships between journalists and other actors within and outside journalism though there is deficiency empirically on who is involved and how they are collaborating. In 2016, Ray Choto, an award-winning investigative journalist who serves as Managing Editor of the Zimbabwe Service at Voice of America (VOA) based in the US, collaborated with ICIJ in the Panama Papers (2016) investigation. VOA is a US international multimedia news organisation and describes itself as offering news to audiences with limited or no access to a free press (VOA Zimbabwe website). The station is focused on issues in Zimbabwe and broadcasts in the country's two main languages: Ndebele and Shona, in addition to English. It publishes online and through short wave radio, and reports issues that are not necessarily covered in the public-owned media in the country. These issues include support of opposition political parties as well as the government's service delivery failures and corruption (VOA website). The US based journalist wrote several stories on violation of money transfer laws in Zimbabwe revealing that Zimbabwe's leading platinum-mining firm, Zimplats Holdings, allegedly used an offshore company to pay salaries for senior managers in violation of exchange control laws (Choto, 2016). In 2020, Choto's involvement in the Panama Papers ignited excitement among Zimbabwean journalists, mostly from the privately-owned media who are exploring opportunities of doing collaborative investigative journalism (HSTV radio, 2020). Some believe this new, collaborative approach could help reinvigorate investigative journalism in a context where journalists have lost their jobs and news outlets are closing due to loss of revenue brought by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Covidgate scandal, which exposed corruption on Covid-19 equipment procurement involving Drax International, the then Minister of

Health Obadiah Moyo and implicated President Emmerson Mnangagwa's son, of 2020 was a result of "collaboration of top officials in the Ministry of Finance, Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, Ministry of Health and Child Care and the presidium and the ZimLive online publication.... and Hopewell Chin'ono, an investigative journalist, who amplified the corruption stories on his popular Twitter page" (Mututwa and Ufuoma, 2022, 87-88). The result was the arrest of Chin'ono and the fleeing of *ZimLive* editor and investigative journalist Mduduzi Mathuthu for fear of persecution (ibid).

Through the non-profit organisation, Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe (VMCZ)'s establishment of an investigative journalism fund in 2016, investigative reporting is being done by local media on various themes (VMCZ website). Through this fund, several exposés, by both the publicly owned *Chronicle* and *Herald* and privately-owned *Independent* and *Financial Gazette* newspapers have resulted in collaboration and the uncovering of corruption. Mbada is one of the companies involved in diamond mining in Chiadzwa found in the Manicaland province, with more than 15 billion US dollars unaccounted for (The Independent newspaper, 2017). Security forces were deployed by the state at the mine leading to suffering, arbitrary arrests, and deaths of artisanal miners and abuses of locals (ibid). Two journalists from Africa Media Holdings (AMH)'s *Newsday* and *Zimbabwe Independent* collaborated in covering the story. The Chiadzwa diamonds scandal is one of the investigations that is studied for this research. Another investigation which is studied in this research is the *Electoral malpractices* investigation of 2018 done by an investigative journalist from the *Standard* newspaper in collaboration with an NGO, Team Pachedu. The investigation exposed malpractices in the voters roll. More details about the two investigations are provided in Chapter 7. The VMCZ is playing a significant role through funding investigative journalism in Zimbabwe and is the non-profit that funded the two investigations. The work of the VCMZ is further discussed in Chapter 7.

In its 2022 report, Reporters Without Borders noted that the Zimbabwean media landscape is demonstrating a positive change characterised by an increase in diversity though it remains dominated by state-controlled media, with the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) and ZIMPAPERS, being the most important, with six

radio stations, a TV channel and 10 newspapers, including *The Herald*, a daily (RSF, 2022). This is supported by Mutsvairo and Salgado (2022, 360) who argue that “Zimbabwe’s media space has opened up considerably since the late President Robert Mugabe was removed from power in 2017 and a significant shift in terms of freedom of expression has been registered”. However, concerns remain about how the new stations’ support the government. For instance, new television states are argued to be linked to government and therefore reproduce the hegemony of the government (MISA report, 2022). During the Mnangagwa era, The Freedom of Information Act, (FIA) which replaced the Access to Information Act (AIPPA) in 2020 still “carries retrogressive clauses that impact on investigative journalism” (Munoriyarwa, 2021, 426). Limits on information access is one such example. The Interception of Communication Act (ICA) of 2007 stipulates how surveillance can be carried out by state agencies, making it difficult for investigative journalists to do their work. The Cybercrime and Data Protection Act of 2019 is “a blow to whistleblowing... as it states the existence of consequences of unjustified reporting and third parties who may receive data belonging to other individuals” Munoriyarwa (2021, 427). To resist surveillance, journalists are avoiding digital spaces to escape leaving behind digital footprints and sometimes using encrypted devices (Munoriyarwa 2021). In some instances, they end up abandoning doing certain stories or produce incomplete stories (ibid).

2.3 Investigative Journalism in Eswatini

Compared to South Africa and Zimbabwe, the mainstream media in Eswatini is smaller. Two publishing groups dominate the media, Times of Swaziland Group of Newspapers (owned by the Loffler family) and the Swazi Observer Group of Newspapers (owned by Tibiyo Taka Ngwane (MISA Zimbabwe 2017; Hlatshwayo 2017). The two main newspapers, *Times of Eswatini* and *Eswatini Observer* are owned by the *Times of Swaziland* and Swazi Observer publishing groups, respectively. Rubicon Africa Media Group entered the space in 2022 and publishes the Eswatini Financial Times publication which is focused on business and economic news. Broadcast media is thin, dominated by the *Swaziland Broadcasting and Information Services* (SBIS) (radio) and *Swaziland Television and Broadcasting*

Corporation (STBC) (television) which are both state broadcasters (Hlatshwayo. *Channel Swazi* is the only privately-owned television station in the country. *Voice of the Church* (VOC) and Africa Unite FM (AUFM) are two small radio stations in the country.

In Eswatini, daily journalism is considered sporadic and lacking in analysis due to a lack of resources, lack of experienced journalists and lack of courage to research deeper about issues (Rooney, 2013). Self-censorship is considered the main problem hindering the media from effectively playing its watchdog role (Africa Media Barometer, 2018). While freedom of expression and that of the media are guaranteed in the constitution, journalists are afraid to speak out against the people in power (African Media Barometer, 2018). Government tightly controls the media thereby hindering free democratic participation (Hlatshwayo, 2017). In Swazi custom, criticising the King and the Queen Mother is considered disrespectful. The King and the Queen Mother are above the law as they cannot be sued and are immune to criticism from ordinary citizens or the media (Rooney, 2013). Online publication, *Eswatini Newsweek's* editor, Eugene Dube is said to have received death threats for authoring an article critical of the king and now publishes his stories online while in exile in South Africa (Rooney, 2020). Harsh media laws, and not wanting to offend people in power are problems for both public and privately-owned media in the kingdom of Eswatini (African Media Barometer, 2018). One reporter once commented that "our journalism is event based and not issues-based and reporting is centred on government and covering state functions, press releases and journalists are not necessarily covering politics and are just following events" (quoted in Africa Media Barometer, 2018, 33).

In Eswatini, the *Nation*, a political magazine has a reputation for doing strong investigative journalism and covering issues that mainstream media are failing to cover. The magazine has criticised the monarchy for its extravagant lifestyle while most of its citizens live in poverty (Eswatini Media Barometer, 2018). In 2014, the editor of the magazine, Bheki Makhubu and his co-accused Thulani Maseko spent 15 months in prison for contempt of court, which is one of the ways the state uses to suppress freedom of expression, (African Media Barometer, 2018). Mainstream

newspapers such as *Swazi Observer* and *Times of Eswatini* have little investigative journalism as they struggle with self-censorship due to limitations on press freedom and fear of going against the authorities (MISA Swaziland, 2018). This has limited the coverage of political issues and investigative reporting (ibid). Culture plays a huge role concerning what journalists may say or may not say thus limiting their critical ability (African Media Barometer, 2018). Despite the existence of three separate organs of government- the executive, legislature and judiciary, all powers are vested in the King, which permeates all aspects of life thereby greatly affecting freedom of expression (Africa Media Barometer, 2018). *Inhlase* is a non-profit publication which also specialises in investigative journalism, whose journalists also report for the *Nation* magazine. The publication constitutes another case study analysed in this thesis. The publication is small and is part of the *IJHub*, an investigative hub based in Johannesburg which brings together investigative journalism centres in the region (IJHub website). Because of its association with *Inhlase*, the *IJHub* is also analysed in the thesis. The two are explored in more detail in chapter 8.

The *Swaziland Shopping* newspaper which was critical of the monarchy and the King was closed in 2017. The manager, Zweli Martin Dlamini, popularly known as Zwemart now manages an online based newspaper, *Swaziland News* operating in exile from South Africa (Swaziland News website). *Swaziland News* publishes stories on government corruption, human rights abuses in the country and the royal family, which one would not find in the *Times of Eswatini* and *Eswatini Observer*. Examples of the kinds of stories published by the paper can be found in chapter 8. With the outbreak of the global pandemic and the political unrest in the country because of calls for reforms, the newspaper continues to publish stories involving corruption in the royal family and collaborates with citizens and disgruntled government officials to expose corruption and other forms of power abuse (Swaziland News website). The publication receives leaks from disgruntled politicians which it publishes on its website and social media platforms. Chapter 8 explores the 'investigative journalism' done by the *Swaziland News*. Despite claiming to be objective and impartial, the paper takes the side of citizens and is fiercely critical of the King and the monarchy and the kind of journalism gravitates towards activist journalism and is a strong advocate of political change as argued in chapter 8. In July 2022, the Prime Minister of Eswatini, Cleopas

Dlamini in accordance with the Suppression of Terrorism Act No. 3 of 2008, Section 28, declared the editor and his publication as terrorists “for publishing articles that instigate violence, the burning of public and state property, the seizure of state power and overthrow of lawful government” (Eswatini Observer, 2022).

The increasing calls for democratic reforms have seen a growth in online platforms such as *Swaziland Democratic News*, *Eswatini bulletin* among others which write about citizen calls for reforms and government service delivery failure. The platforms are active on Facebook and Twitter and combine user generated content from citizens in their news. Eugene Dube, editor of *Swati NewsWeek* was forced to go into temporary exile in South Africa following an attack by armed police officers after he had interviewed the then president of eSwatini opposition movement Economic Freedom Fighters Ncamiso Ngcamphalala who spoke about “removing the King from power” (MISA report, 2022).

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the media landscape and investigative journalism in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Eswatini. It has demonstrated that in the three countries under study, investigative journalism is practiced differently. In South Africa, the distinction is often made between pre- and post-apartheid media. Despite having a higher level of press freedom, journalists in South Africa continue to face surveillance from state and private sector actors which threatens investigative journalism. In Zimbabwe, a decline of investigative journalism is discussed due to increasing threats, surveillance, harassment, and persecution of investigative journalists by those in power. Economic challenges in the country make it difficult for newsrooms to invest in investigative journalism. Non-profits such as VMCZ are thus playing a fundamental role in promoting investigative journalism. In Eswatini, the *Nation* publication has been playing an active role in exposing corruption involving the government and the royal family. Journalists are afraid to embark on critical reporting against power as it is considered unSwazi and disrespectful. The shutdown of *Swaziland Shopping* led to the fleeing of the managing editor Zwemart, who set up *Swaziland News* and operates from exile in South Africa. His publication thrives on leaks to criticise the King, monarchy, and the government. The next chapter is a review of literature on CIJ.

Chapter 3

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter provides a review of literature on the theory and practice of CIJ and identifies several important characteristics of this work. The chapter begins with a discussion of what investigative journalism is and how it differs from daily journalism. It also discusses the history and the current state of investigative journalism, drawing on examples from the United States (US) and United Kingdom (UK), which dominate the existing research literature; as well as South Africa, Zimbabwe and Eswatini which are the 3 countries that are the focus of this research. A discussion on how the Covid-19 pandemic has compounded problems for journalists across the world is also included. Finally, the chapter considers various CIJ models, and their news production processes and network formation. First, that investigative journalism continues to evolve in response to economic, political and media contexts in which it is practiced. Globalisation and the rise of transnational businesses have led journalists across the globe to collaborate in investigating common problems. Digitalisation and the rise in huge data leaks require complex technologies and specialist knowledge and skills which has catalysed the collaboration of media organisations, professional journalists, freelancers, and actors from various geographical, media contexts and professions. In the difficult financial environment, we witness the growth of non-profit organisations into journalism which are impacting the journalistic norms and values.

3.1 Defining investigative journalism

Investigative journalism has been defined in a variety of ways in the research literature, and is referred to by different names including, “watchdog journalism” or “accountability reporting” (Thiel, 2018; Knobel, 2018), “the “journalism of outrage” (Protess et al., 1991, 6), “muckraking” named by Roosevelt in 1906 “adversarial journalism”, “advocacy reporting”, “public service journalism”, and “exposé reporting” (Feldstein, 2006, 106). De Burgh refers to it as “going after what someone wants hidden” (2008, 15). The names above point to key aspects of the practice. While some names emphasise its information gathering techniques/methods and purpose (exposé, accountability, and public service journalism), others focus on how the stories are told

(journalism of outrage) and on outcome (accountability reporting or outrage-which comes about when citizens are outraged by the exposure of wrong-doing)(Lunga, 2011). Despite the different names, it can be summarised as a kind of journalism which is concerned with uncovering/unearthing malpractices or shedding light on what is hidden, a practice important for democracy (Waisbord, 2000, Leigh, 2019; de Burgh, 2013; Thiel, 2018). Investigative journalists play an adversarial role when they point out failures of systems or administrations of justice and serve the public interest by telling stories of victims and villains and bringing political and economic power to account (Ettema and Glasser, 1998; de Burgh, 2008, Schudson, 2008). Investigative journalism stories are framed on moral grounds depicting the evil or wrong deeds that are done by people in power (Ettema and Glasser, 1988). Examples include the suffering of ordinary citizens, human rights abuses, corruption by governments and business, poor service delivery among others (de Burgh, 2008).

Investigative journalism is different from day-to-day news reporting in several ways. It has been described as a special form of journalism demanding a lot from journalists in terms of time, searching documents and doing extensive interviews which daily journalism does not (Lunga, 2011). In terms of how stories are produced, investigative journalists thoroughly check documents for evidence and carry out lots of interviews over an extended period (Waisbord, 2000; Protess et al., 1991). They aim to produce “enough evidence” to qualify a story as credible and thereby significantly impacting audiences’ lives (Aucoin, 2006, 2). Ettema and Glasser (1998, 3) for instance, argue that while all journalism is investigative, the “distinctiveness of investigative reporting is evident in its rigour, commitment and reactivity, employing time consuming methods with high impact results”. Put another way, “Critical, questioning and evidence-based reporting is considered to serve a public good” as journalists talk to hundreds of people to put the pieces of the puzzle together (Oldroyd, 2018, 15).

Investigative journalism is challenging, and its successful practitioners may be more inquisitive, courageous, resourceful, and imaginative than those using other approaches (MacDougall, quoted in Protess, et al., 1991). They must also have knowledge of laws that restrict and enable information gathering (Gaines, 2008). While investigative journalism is considered important for changing lives and policies

(Hamilton, 2016), promoting public deliberation on critical issues, bringing about change and helping promote governance (Bebawi, 2016; Kaplan, 2013), it has also been noted that this form of journalism is expensive, time consuming and dangerous (Hamilton, 2016; Bebawi, 2016). Investigative journalists often encounter resistance from people who do not want their dealings and acts of corruption brought to light (Hahn and Stalph, 2018; Lunga, 2011). In the Arab world, Bebawi (2016) notes that uncovering wrong-doing is considered 'foreign' due to state-controlled media. Commercial media steer towards entertainment as it is safer and more lucrative (ibid).

In countries with lower levels of press freedom such as Zimbabwe, investigative journalists are often harassed, subjected to violence, have their phones and computers taken away and sometimes killed by those in power (Munoriyarwa, 2021). The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) reports that between 1992 and 2020, 1373 journalists have been killed and more continue to be targets if they are known to be investigating powerful people. 18 were killed in 2021 while 66 went missing globally (CPJ website). Despite this, investigative journalists, particularly in hostile environments, persevere to expose wrongdoing to ensure that citizens get a complete version of the 'truth' (Ettema and Glasser, 1998). They may do this by employing techniques that may risk their lives, such as going undercover (ibid). Online surveillance makes the practice of doing investigative journalism even more dangerous as journalists and sources are targeted and more at risk from those who are being investigated (de Burgh and Lashmar, 2021; Lashmar, 2017). There is a widespread decline in investigative reporting because it is costly, and some newsrooms do not have enough resources to invest in it - as can be seen in Zimbabwe and Eswatini, in particular (Munoriyarwa, 2018; 2021; Eswatini Media Barometer, 2018).

Scholars have sought to demonstrate the value and influence of investigative journalism in holding elites to account and prompting policy reform. Protess et al., (1991) developed a mobilisation model, for example, in which they proposed that investigative journalism followed a three-step process where, investigative journalists publish wrong-doing (step 1). Their journalism leads to changes in public opinion and an informed citizenry responds by demanding reforms from their elected

representatives (step 2). Policy makers take collective action and introduce policy reforms (step 3). In the model, the investigative journalist is described as playing a role of serving the public interest, while informed citizens put pressure on policy makers for reforms thereby demonstrating a close connection between journalism, the public and policy making (Waisbord, 2000). However, the model has been criticised for assuming that policy reforms always or frequently happen because of investigative journalism– and that they take place in a relatively simple, linear fashion. Stories that do not mobilise public action and trigger policy change, can still be considered investigative (Waisbord, 2000). In a revised version of the mobilisation model, Protesse et al., (1991, 19) note that the role of the public as a “link between the media and policy changes [may] be weak and unreliable”. In their analyses, Protesse et al., (1991) found that policy making proposals may be triggered by pre-publication interactions between journalists and policy makers and that these interactions are more collaborative and less adversarial than the motorial watchdog role is traditionally thought to be. They also acknowledged how investigative stories sometimes have no clear impact on the public (ibid). In addition, there are scholars who argue that exposés alone are insufficient to bring about change; they posit that, for change to happen, there must be other factors in place, such as societal desire for change and powerful civil society groups, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), lawyers, politicians among others, who act on the information revealed (Oldroyd, 2018). The notion that exposés alone are insufficient to bring about change thus extends understanding of investigative journalism to be about exposure and acting on the investigations. For this reason, it can be argued that change is contingent on a range of factors and may happen immediately or may take many months or years later.

3.2 The history of Investigative Journalism

There is a rich literature documenting examples of investigations where journalists exposed corruption and abuse of power in corporations, governments, and militaries, resulting in Prime Ministers and Presidents resigning, politicians being imprisoned and triggering policy changes in various contexts (de Burgh, 2008; Thiel, 2018). In the United States (US), investigative journalism first became prominent when colonies were splitting from Britain and when the country was industrialising – which is sometimes referred to as the first golden age (Thiel, 2018). The Watergate

investigation of the 1970s by Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein is an example of a revelation about maladministration that led to the downfall of the then President of the US, Richard Nixon – in the second golden age. The Watergate investigation popularised investigative journalism and notably, demonstrated that television, radio, newspapers, and magazines were working together to report extensively on the case (Thiel, 2018; Protess et al., 1991). It can thus be argued that signs of collaborating are evident through this investigation. Watergate and investigative journalism have thus become inextricably connected due to its impact on journalism and journalists and this can be seen through the taken for granted use of the ‘gate’ suffix to represent a scandal till this day (Thiel, 2018). Examples include the Burning Sun Gate (2019) in South Korea, Celebgate (2014) in the US, Flakegate (2000) in the United Kingdom (UK), Willowgate (1988) and Covidgate (2020) in Zimbabwe, Guptagate (2015) in South Africa, among others.

Around the time of the Watergate scandal, high profile investigative programmes in the United Kingdom (UK) were exposing issues relating to the Vietnam War, torture and fascism, child labour and corruption in programmes including *Panorama*, *World in Action*, and *This Week* (Lashmar, 2013). Tabloid newspapers, it has been argued, contributed to exposing scandals, sex related, and the phone-hacking scandal of Rupert Murdoch’s *News of The World* resulted in its closure (Lashmar, 2013). Tabloids are important in society for connecting readers with their political and social struggles (Wasserman, 2010b). Tabloid “investigative” stories are sometimes dismissed by scholars who argue that they are less rigorous and are usually focused on entertainment rather than important political investigations (Aucoin, 2006). Investigative journalism has continued to uncover corruption and maladministration in various sectors over the years and has contributed to society by bringing about change (Protess et al., 1991).

Financial difficulties, the rise of disinformation, misinformation and propaganda have put newsrooms across the world under pressure in the last decade (Oldroyd, 2018). Principles of truth and accuracy are under threat and the credibility of media called into question. For example, the global debate on the concept of “fake news” has grown since the election of US President Donald Trump in November 2016 (McNair,

2018) and research shows that platforms such as Facebook and Twitter amplify the spread of disinformation (Ireton and Posetti, 2018 and Hahn and Stalph, 2018). The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated many challenges facing journalists and investigative journalists, which are explored further below.

3.3 Investigative journalism in the present context

Investigative journalism has continued to evolve alongside changes in the political, social, and economic spheres and in tandem with transformations in technology. In this section, I discuss how economic challenges facing media houses has resulted in a decline in investigative journalism and challenged newsrooms to develop new funding models. The non-profit model in which news organisations fundraise from billionaires and foundations is one such example. Innovative technologies particularly the internet have digital capabilities that enable journalists to do activities they would not do without technology. The internet has ushered new methods, techniques and present both benefits and challenges in doing investigative journalism (Leigh, 2019). Leaks are considered a new model for media to lure massive leaks from whistle-blowers in the public interest (Boland-Rudder and Fitzgibbon, 2021). In traditional investigative journalism, it was common for reporters to get leaks from whistle-blowers and meet in car parks and other places and then proceed to carry out interviews and search records. In the present context, leaking takes place online. However, to prevent increasing digital surveillance, journalists are resorting to traditional methods (Munoriyarwa, 2021) and using encryption tools to protect themselves (Lashmar, 2021).

In 2007, hundreds of thousands of US classified diplomatic cables were disclosed, by founder of a global whistleblowing service WikiLeaks. WikiLeaks exposed evidence of corruption by former Kenyan president Daniel Arap Moi, the Guantánamo Bay detention centre, and the US helicopter attack in Baghdad in July 2007, which killed several Iraqis (Benkler, 2011). WikiLeaks is credited for bringing to the fore, the importance of transparency and freedom of information around the world which Julian Assange has been an important advocate (Lozano et al., 2010). At the same time, the multiple legal prosecutions which Assange is facing have put issues of whistle-blower retribution into the limelight in an era of increasing surveillance on journalists (Lozano

et al., 2010). Scholars question the kind of journalism that leaks are giving rise to? (Baack 2016) While the release of secret documents into the public domain is not itself investigative journalism, it can lead to investigations when journalists use the leak to identify stories for verification (Handley, 2019). As Baack (2016) further argues, leaking has become integrated into journalists' traditional working routines. *The Guardian*, *Telegraph*, *New York Times*, *Der Spiegel*, are among the media houses which investigated and produced stories from the Wikileaks (Mair 2011) thus carrying out investigative journalism.

Leaking documents may raise ethical questions if people who have nothing to do with the crimes in question, have their documents shared on a public platform or if national secrets are revealed. In the digital era, individuals, governments, and corporates produce a lot of data (text, images, videos, reports), resulting in journalists developing new techniques to make sense of huge data sets and uncover the truth in the public interest (Hahn and Stalph, 2018). As a result, there are more data leaks and through artificial intelligence, patterns in data that the journalist was not even looking for can be picked up (Diakopoulos, 2019). Setting up search alerts to be notified when particular people are doing things is another way journalists are acquiring information in the current context. As will be discussed further below, the huge data sets arising from the leaks has been considered one of the contributing factors to the rise of global CIJ. Leak driven investigative journalism has become institutionalised in some newsrooms across the world including in southern African countries under study as will be discussed in the findings' chapters, 6, 7 and 8.

The digital era has also brought developments in journalism and initiatives linking data to investigative journalism. Digital or online journalism, computer-assisted reporting (CAR) or computational journalism are terms used to describe journalism in a digital era. The use of computers in journalism in the US dates to the 1950s (Cox, 2000). CAR was visible in newsrooms in the late 1980s and became closely "tied to investigative reporting, often being seen as an auxiliary tool to aid in long-term, public-affairs journalism projects" (Coddington 2015, 334). Diakopoulos (2011) notes that computational journalism is inclusive of CAR but distinctive in its focus on the *processing* capabilities including aggregating, relating, correlating, abstracting of

the computer in comparison to mundane aspects of storage or access. Computational journalism is defined in terms of algorithms, data and knowledge and their role in helping journalism in its accountability function (Stanford University). Lewis (2014) notes that CAR is viewed in terms of its orientation to investigative journalism, data journalism is about open participation and cross-field hybridity, and computational journalism is about the automation of information.

In addition to the rise in leak culture, technology affords journalists with opportunities to use innovative tools run on computers to analyse vast amounts of data and present audiences with audio-visual materials via the internet (Hahn and Stalph, 2018). This makes leaks inherently collaborative as large numbers of individuals with specialised skills are needed to analyse them. Reporters have a vast array of tools to make sense of the data and find patterns of wrongdoing (Hamilton 2016; Angwin, 2017). According to Leigh (2019, 132), “the advent of electronic Big Data Leaks is another technological change which kicked the practice of collaborative journalism up several gears”. Baack (2016) notes how leaking has contributed to the development of data journalism, automation and encouraging a sharing culture. A link between investigative and data journalism is drawn by Carson (2020), who argues that data journalism provides readers with evidence that they can use to verify stories for themselves. The more journalists dig into the data, the more scoops they get (Greenslade, 2019). The same journalists also need to thoroughly verify the data as some of it may turn out to be false as online data can be manipulated. To protect data from manipulation and embark on other activities that require specialised technological skills, journalists are working with technological experts who wield varying levels of power and influence. In these collaborative newsrooms, investigative journalists and technology are deploying software, magnetic tapes, data analysis strategies and codebooks (De Fleur, 2010). In addition, modern technologies are facilitating virtual newsrooms at a global scale, communicating with sources via encrypted channels or software, thus enabling journalists from across the globe to embark on complex investigations. (Hopkins, 2019). This is supported by Bunce et al., (2018) who note that virtual newsrooms such as Slack enable journalists to collaborate on complex and global news reports remotely, without meeting and without a physical newsroom. Modern technologies are also considered beneficial for broadening journalists’ access to more voices and

sources (De Fleur, 2010). The role of data, and the entrance of non-journalistic actors in collaborations and impact on journalistic practice, is explored in the findings' chapters, 6, 7 and 8.

3.4 Investigative Journalism in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities

Investigative journalism in Africa is highly varied, with many difficulties, and with different countries demonstrating positive and negative examples of the practice over time. Investigative journalism continues to be negatively affected by several factors including: financial problems, fear of reporting those in power, restrictive media laws which make access to information difficult and a lack of skills in doing investigative journalism (Munoriyarwa, 2018). The lack of training in data journalism specifically means that journalists are unable to fully explore opportunities offered by digital tools (Mutsvairo et al., 2019). These problems are particularly common in Zimbabwe and Eswatini and to a lesser extent in South Africa which has higher levels of press freedom (Lunga, 2022). Investigative journalists are often targeted by those in power and are often victims of violence from police attacks, raids, and death threats (ibid). State interference continues to be rife in public media which are manipulated for propaganda purposes and fail to perform the watchdog role (Munoriyarwa, 2018). In reference to Zimbabwe, Santos and Mare (2021, 1393) argue that a high degree of political parallelism has seen "politics and media closely integrated". Privately owned media are usually criticised for adopting an adversarial stance on government and lacking resources to embark on investigative journalism (ibid). Public owned media on the other hand are used as propaganda tools (Munoriyarwa, 2021).

In 2020, institutions that work to advance press freedom across the world such as Reporters Without Borders (RSF) and the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) reported incidents in different countries where journalists in Africa were attacked and harassed for a variety of reasons relating to reporting on Covid-19, covering anti-lockdown protests and Covid-19 deaths, corruption involving acquisition of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and accusations of spreading 'false information' among other issues. The RSF tracker on Covid-19 press freedom impacts has documented these violations with examples as follows: *"Two Cairo newspaper journalists jailed, one with Covid-19"*, *"Zimbabwe: well-known journalist arrested at his Harare home"*

(RSF, 2020). These are a few of the many examples in countries such as Egypt, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe, among others. In April, RSF reported that five Zimbabwean reporters had been arrested while covering coronavirus lockdown when police accused them of violating lockdown regulations (RSF, 2020). Journalists countrywide reported that they were being harassed, turned away at roadblocks by police officers disregarding their 2019 press cards as invalid or detained (Herald, 2020). As of October 2020, the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) Zimbabwe chapter recorded at least 30 media violations committed against journalists by state authorities since the beginning of the Covid-19 regulations in March 2020 (AllAfrica 2020). According to the RSF, Zimbabwe ranks at 137 out of 180 on the 2022 Press freedom index when it comes to press freedom violations and abuse against journalists and the media, which demonstrates an increasingly difficult environment for journalists (RSF, 2022).

Despite these negative developments, positive changes are happening on the continent demonstrating a potential change in the culture of practicing investigative journalism. The last decade witnessed growth in non-profit investigative journalism centres that are holding power to account (Ntibinyane, 2018). These non-profits are hailed for contributing to democracy and doing a wide range of capacity building initiatives for local newsrooms to grow investigative journalism and report on issues often neglected by mainstream media (Ntibinyane 2018). Chapters 6, 7 and 8 in this thesis demonstrate that some of these non-profit investigative centres are partnering with freelancers and journalists from mainstream media organisations and that these relationships contribute to the strengthening of the watchdog role of journalism. Scholars note that there has also been a rise in data journalism initiatives on the continent which are using the latest technology tools to do investigative reporting despite challenges such as incomplete/unreliable data. At the same time, Mutsvairo (2019a) argues that there exists a gap on what data journalism entails. Mutsvairo (2019a) further notes that in some countries in the Global South, authorities restrict access to data or are not transparent enough to share it, censor, imprison and kill journalists who report data in an unfavourable way. This makes data journalism less developed if compared to the Global North. Data is often unreliable and does not give a true reflection of society (Mutsvairo, 2019a; Munoriyarwa, 2022). A lack of skills and

experts such as programmers, designers, developers among others are common limitations in some newsrooms in the Global South (Mutsvairo, 2019a; Mutsvairo, 2019b; Mutsvairo et al., 2019 and Munoriyarwa, 2022).

3.5 Collaborative Investigative Journalism (CIJ): A global perspective

Existing literature suggests that CIJ is becoming common and can result in award-winning investigations which has positive outcomes for journalism and society at large (Sambrook, 2018, Berglez and Gearing, 2018; Chacón and Saldaña, 2021, Mesquita and de-Lima-Santos, 2021). The concept of collaboration in journalism is not a new phenomenon (Sambrook, 2018). Collaboration in journalism is understood to have begun with American newspapers pooling resources together to cover the Mexican border conflict, resulting in The Associated Press News Agency, born in 1846 (Lewis, 2018; Stonbely 2017). In the 170 years since, journalists have continued to collaborate. Alfter and Candea (2019) argue that cross-border journalism developed in the post-Cold War years with many examples in the Anglo-Saxon investigative journalism tradition which have coincided with the rise of computer-assisted reporting (CAR) and data journalism.

3.5.1 Definitions of collaborative investigative journalism

This section defines CIJ and the factors that have led to its rise. It also examines common collaborative models, and how journalists form networks for collaboration. Stonbely (2017, 14), defines collaborative journalism as:

“a cooperative arrangement (formal or informal) between two or more news and information organisations, which aims to supplement each organisation’s resources and maximise the impact of the content produced. Collaborative journalism is not to be confused with “citizen-,” “participatory-,” “engaged-” “public-,” or other types of journalism that solicit information from the public or consider interaction with the public a cornerstone practice (though an engagement element may be part of a collaborative project).”

From the above quote, it can be argued that resource sharing and promoting the impact of reporting is important in collaborations which can either be formal or informal. Jenkins and Graves (2019, 7) define collaboration in a comparable manner and add that it brings together diverse internal and external actors; “initiatives or projects through which journalists from different news organisations work with one

another and with other actors – such as technologists, data scientists, academics, and community members – to report, produce, and distribute news”. CIJ has seen the involvement of hackers (Lewis and Usher, 2014), app designers (Ananny and Crawford, 2014), and suppliers of web analytics (Holton and Belair-Gagnon, 2018) into journalism. For Sambrook (2018), CIJ entails the working together of professional news organisations, NGOs of various kinds, academia and other public bodies resulting in the opening of stories and issues which might otherwise go unreported. He notes that “editorial collaboration is different from public collaboration or citizen journalism and crowdsourcing which is a means of funding investigative journalism” (Sambrook, 2018, 26). In more recent research on 155 cross-field collaborations across 125 countries, Stonbely and Siemaszko (2022, 3) argue that cross-field collaboration is a “partnership involving at least one journalism organisation and one civil society organisation (usually an advocacy organisation but not always) in which they work together to produce content in the service of an explicit ideal or outcome”. This type of collaboration brings to the fore ethical concerns around the conflict between neutrality and advocacy (ibid). A review of the literature shows that there are distinct types/ models of collaborations. These models are continually evolving as journalists and media organisations work together with various actors. These models are derived mostly from studying case studies in the Global North. Konow-Lund and Berglez (2019, 1) distinguish between collaboration and cooperation when they argue that “collaboration is understood as shared effort towards a common end, whereas cooperation implies pooled resources and mutual assistance to reach individual ends”. For example, cooperation is when reporters pool their content and sources and publish for their own audiences. 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). There is a dearth of research of such collaborations in the African context despite the existence of collaborative initiatives on the continent, hence this research fills this gap.

In CIJ, information, sources, quotes, documents, and expertise are shared on a large scale to expose wrongdoing (Carson and Farhall, 2018; Jenkins and Graves, 2019). In addition, journalists share data, methods, ideas, angles, and resources (Sambrook, 2018; Berglez and Gearing, 2018). This practice has traditionally been an anathema in

journalism due to the competitive nature of the profession with journalists and media organisations wanting to ‘out scoop’ one another (Berglez and Gearing, 2018). In the process of news production, Stearns (2015) and Sambrook, (2018) note that signing agreements, having an editorial coordinator, agreeing on timelines, and clearly stating who is responsible for which part of the project is especially important for minimising problems and tensions. As Stonbely (2017) argues, tensions often arise due to clashes in newsroom culture, diverse levels of tech expertise, and unequal power dynamics among other factors and thus can be said to require negotiation and compromise for these challenges to be overcome. These issues are explored in the research.

3.5.2 Models of Collaborative Investigative Journalism

Scholarly research has shown that CIJ comes in distinct models. Scholars have developed models which are informed by the wide range of news organisations which they have studied. In their research on case studies in three European countries, Jenkins and Graves (2019, 8) identify three distinct models:

- i) *“a permanent network of journalists and non-journalists (the Bureau Local).*
- ii) *Legacy and start up news organisations working together on a single extended investigation (‘L’Italia Delle Slot’)*
- iii) *Regional news organisations sharing content through a collaborative newsroom (Lännen Media).”*

They argue that “these initiatives involve similar and divergent approaches to network building, project development and content distribution” (Jenkins and Graves 2019, 5). Resource sharing (human and technical) and minimising competition is said to be at the centre of the three models (ibid). In addition, all three models, “feature diverse and dispersed networks, and are dedicated to creating connections at the virtual and physical levels” (Jenkins and Graves, 2019). Journalists in these organisations see the benefit of collaborations in enabling them to report on issues they would not have been able to do themselves (ibid). Innovative technologies offer networks of reporters an opportunity to overcome geospatial boundaries, time zone differences and the cost of international travel (Gearing, 2016). It can be argued that the Panama Papers, with its global outlook, transnational nature and multi-country, media, and journalists’

involvement (Sambrook, 2018; Heft et al., 2019) aligns more with example (i) made up of a permanent and non-permanent network of journalists.

In an analysis of 44 collaborations mostly in the US involving more than 500 newsrooms and other news and information providers, Stonbely (2017, 21) came up with six different models of collaborative journalism, based on duration of time and degree of integration classified as:

- i) *“Temporary and Separate,”* One-time/finite projects in which partners create content separately and share it
- ii) *“Temporary and Co-creating,”* One-time/finite project in which partners work together to create content
- iii) *“Temporary and Integrated,”* One-time/finite projects in which partners share content/data/resources at the organisational level
- iv) *“Ongoing and Separate,”* Ongoing/open-ended collaborations in which partners create content separately and share it
- v) *“Ongoing and Co-creating,”* Ongoing/open-ended collaborations in which partners work together to create content
- vi) *“Ongoing and Integrated,”* Ongoing/open-ended collaborations in which partners share content/data/resources at the organisational level.”

Stonbely (2017) argues that several projects can fall into more than one category or have evolved into another model which shows the dynamic nature of collaborations.

Another model is one in which academics and students collaborate to investigate on common issues of interest and is done across borders (Bacon, 2011). The increasing interconnectedness of people and issues around the world has also given rise to consortia of academics and student reporters such as Europe and Australia’s Global Environmental Journalism Initiative (GEJI) Gearing (2014, 63) and Canada’s *Project Censored*, Australia-New Zealand-Pacific network’s *UniMuckraker*, among others. Alfter (2019, 143) identifies four main characteristics of cross-border collaboration:

- i) *journalists from different countries*
- ii) *an idea of mutual interest*
- iii) *gathering and sharing material*
- iv) *publishing to their own audiences*

The characteristics identified by Alfter (2019) may or may not be the same for all investigations as collaborations are influenced by numerous factors and bring together diverse actors. In defining transnational journalism, Hellmueller and Konow-Lund (2019) argue that it “signifies journalism’s concern with journalistic issues, practices,

and ideals that surpass national contexts”. Meanwhile, Heft et al., (2019) in their study on transnational journalism in Europe note how cross-border collaborations reduce the imprint of nation-states. In another study, Heft (2021) argues that in another type of transnational journalism, journalists from different nations collaborate in sharing resources and creating content together but publish stories to their audiences at national level. Differences in collaborative models show that it is important to understand the variety of collaborations in diverse contexts, to acquire a full understanding of who is involved and how they are working together.

The formation of collaborative teams is determined by a variety of factors. Some teams are formed by taking advantage of existing networks of journalists or can be formed after a story’s facts has been established and can have at least two journalists working together, “micro-collaboration” (Gearing, 2021). These develop organically, and journalists are invited to collaborate if they are known to be trustworthy, which makes trust a key factor in collaborations (Sambrook, 2018). Most collaborating journalists recognise that teamwork produces high impact results for tackling global problems such as corruption, money laundering, wars, and organised crime among others which have become transnational. In a UK-Australia investigation involving a senior cleric in Britain, Robert Waddington, collaborations were arranged once the main facts of the story were verified (Gearing, 2014). Gearing indicates that she selected Australian and English national newspapers with a strong track record of public service journalism resulting in publication in *The Australian* and *The Times*. The stories were also reposted and shared on blogs and social media platforms (Gearing, 2014). “The time difference between Australia and Britain was managed by an agreement in which *The Australian* published the initial stories only in hardcopy, while *The Times* published at the same time online, enabling the papers to publish simultaneously, despite the 10-hour time zone difference” (2014, 72). CIJ according to Gearing (2014, 73) has seen the rise of “decentralised networks that enable universal participation, connections via social media and fast and wide-ranging information gathering” as seen in the above example. Not all countries however take part in these collaborations as the Global North continues to dominate the networks. Literature shows that there are collaborations that take place at the continental level, for example Investigate Europe, which is a network of journalists holding power to

accountability in Europe. In Latin America, journalists are collaborating to fulfil the normative role of journalism in society and fill the news gaps left by the mainstream media thereby focusing on topics that are underrepresented (Mesquita and de-Lima-Santos, 2021). Latin American news outlets have also been involved in transnational investigations, such as the Paradise Papers and The Cartel Project (ibid).

There is little empirical data on CIJ in southern Africa despite a growth in projects of a collaborative nature. Little attention has also been given to how global investigations such as Panama Papers impact the national and local contexts particularly in Africa despite partnering with journalists in countries such as Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe, among others. Indeed, some global investigations, countries in the Global South are often “subjects of investigations with no country-based organisation participating” (Stonbely and Siemaszko, 2022, 10) which raises problematic power imbalances, and reinforces neo-colonial relations.

3.5.3 Factors promoting collaboration

Previous research suggests that journalistic collaboration is motivated by several factors. These include political, economic, professional, and technological reasons, with academics noting that collaboration can have exponential benefits (Berglez and Gearing, 2018, Baack, 2016). Instead of journalists scooping one another, the need to collaborate has been considered a more viable option, even for legacy media outlets, when investigating issues of common interest with huge consequences to those involved (Graves and Konieczna 2015, Berglez and Gearing, 2018, Kayser-Bril, 2018 and Carson and Farhall, 2018, Stonbely, 2017). Benefits include promoting freedom of expression and information, creating access to shared resources, and promoting reach (Jenkins and Graves, 2019). Scholars agree that collaboration can be a remarkable success if well-co-ordinated (Sambrook, 2018; Gearing, 2021, Alfter, 2019). These advantages are clearly demonstrated in global investigations such as Panama Papers (2016) and Paradise Papers (2017). Reporters who collaborated in Paradise Papers had, according to Berglez and Gearing (2018, 4078) realised that “publishing at the same time would not necessarily fragment their audiences” but could have a larger impact. Collaborative journalism is also seen as ‘field repair’ (Graves and Konieczna, 2015, 1969) where journalists deliberately engage in

practices that are “expressly reformist” and seek to “protect journalism by changing it, legitimising new approaches to or definitions of professional, objective reporting”. Some scholars see it as exemplifying journalism’s transformation (Deuze and Witschge, 2018).

Digital tools and connectivity

The rise of CIJ is sometimes attributed to the growth of networked media. As Heinrich (2011, 63) notes, new levels of connectivity brought about by the digital age, have resulted in networked journalism characterised by “information flows in and from multiple directions, including alternative media outlets as well as users feeding information back into a sphere of journalism....”. In networked journalism, information is decentralised, and abundant affecting various parts of the network, as geographic locations and time constraints are diminished (Heinrich, 2011; Berglez and Gearing, 2018; Thompson, 2005). With these new digital platforms, journalists are more open to collaborate between newsrooms/across space. Bunce et al., (2018) argue, for example, that online collaborative software give rise to virtual newsrooms where journalists work jointly on projects. The extent to which digital platforms facilitate collaborations in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Eswatini is explored in chapters 6, 7 and 8.

Big Data and collaboration with non-journalists

Linked to the idea of information overflow is Big Data or leaked large data sets involving millions of emails, database files and images in many different formats, which necessitate collaboration with other journalists and non-journalistic actors. Non-journalistic actors such as web designers and app developers provide expertise and software for analysing the documents among other needed skills and tools (Sambrook, 2018). As indicated above, the Panama and Paradise Papers consisted of copious amounts of data which were analysed using sophisticated software such as *Apache Solr* used in indexing files and *Apache Tika* for reformatting documents (Cabra and Kissane, 2016). Other software was employed for processing the documents into searchable files for journalists and the public (Berglez and Gearing, 2018). CIJ is thus characterised by large data sets which make it necessary to have

more people involved to process the information, as argued by Baack (2016) including dedicated teams specialising in data. If journalists do not have data analysis skills, they may collaborate with non-journalistic actors who possess these (Sambrook, 2018). Data usage however varies in different contexts. The importance of data, in aiding today's journalism become more transparent is critical though I have shown in preceding sections that data usage practices vary in different contexts. Mutsvairo et al., (2019) note however that these new relationships with actors outside of the newsroom may result in tensions between outsider goals and journalistic values resulting in the introduction of non-journalistic practices into traditional media. Holton and Belair-Gagnon (2018, 70) argue that these "journalistic strangers" may be influencing the news production and dissemination practices and the field of journalism.

Rise of leak culture

Another factor that may be making collaborative journalism more common is the growth in "leak culture." The expansion of a "leak culture" discussed earlier in the chapter is noted by Berglez and Gearing (2018, 4081) as important in understanding the achievements of the ICIJ. Leaks play a vital role in cross media investigations making them part of the professional identity of investigative journalists in today's media world (Baack, 2016). Journalists and non-journalistic actors come together to work on the leaked documents. The ICIJ has also developed tools and platforms that help journalists cooperate on a much larger scale (Baack, 2016). Furthermore, more questions arise about whether all collaborative investigations a result of leakage of data online and the extent to which leaks are common for investigations done at national and local levels? In chapters 6, 7 and 8, I demonstrate that not all investigative journalism projects are leak driven as some newsrooms in the Global South have not received huge leaks. In addition, leaks vary in sizes, some can be single or double pages and not require specialised skills to analyse them (see chapters 7 and 8). While leaking is helping to put wrongdoing by those in power onto the limelight, research has shown that since June 2013 when whistle-blower and former National Security Agency (NSA) contractor Edward Snowden, leaked official documents to journalists, "western intelligence agencies have conducted, and continue to conduct, surveillance and metadata bulk collection on a vastly greater

scale than previously suspected” (Lashmar, 2017, 665). Concerns over surveillance on journalists has also come up in the Global South (see Chapter 2).

The rise of non-profits

The rise of non-profit journalism is another factor which is contributing to the rise in CIJ in some contexts. The 2007-2009 financial crisis, which led to substantive declines of media revenue and job losses for journalists, is argued to be the time in which non-profit and investigative sectors grew (Birnbauer, 2018). Morton (2012) argues that the not-for-profit model was pioneered by organisations like the Centre for Investigative Reporting (CIR) and ProPublica in the United States, which are non-profits doing journalism. Examples of funders include *Volkswagen Stiftung*, *Journalismfund.eu*, and *Connecting Continents*, among others. Kayser-Bril (2018) argues that there is a huge ideological drive to work collaboratively, hence there are more collaborations today. Non-profit newsrooms, particularly in the West, have not suffered in the way that commercial media have due to their dependence on grants (Harvard Business Review 2020). The *Salt Lake Tribune*, the largest Utah newspaper in the US which became a non-profit in 2018, for example, has managed to avoid layoffs because of the grants it receives from Google, Facebook, and the US government (Harvard Business Review, 2020). Launching newsletters and events enabled the publication to have another revenue stream in the last few years (ibid). It can thus be argued that non-profits help to spread expertise and support for investigative journalism around the world. They tackle complex issues using sophisticated digital tools which facilitate collaboration across newsrooms and geographies and helps in the interrogation and visualisation of the data (Kaplan, 2013; Carson and Farhall, 2018).

Non-profit journalism organisations are more open to collaborate because they do not need to make money. Non-profit examples include reporting centres, training institutes, professional associations, grant-making groups, and online networks (Kaplan, 2013). These groups are winning prestigious journalism awards for their investigative journalism (Birnbauer, 2018; Schudson, 2008) and have demonstrated their capacity to produce stories, data sets and visualisations which mainstream media can struggle to do (ibid). The not-for-profit model is proving important for the promotion of investigative journalism in developing nations such as Brazil, Bosnia, the

Philippines and in some parts of Africa, for example West Africa, where doing this type of journalism has historically been risky, difficult, and not financially sustainable (Kaplan 2013). *amaBhungane*, a non-profit in South Africa, for example, was part of the collaboration that exposed the *#GuptaLeaks* in South Africa in 2017 (see chapter 6). There has been a proliferation of non-profits in Africa, the first one having been, *amaBhungane* established in 2010 in South Africa. In a context of traditional media frequently failing to hold power to account, Ntibinyane (2018) argues that non-profits are often setting the agenda and leading on the scrutinisation of those in power. Some newsrooms in the Global South are combining non-profit funding, newsletters, and hosting events to supplement their income (Ntibinyane 2018). Ntibinyane also cautions that non-profit newsrooms should avoid depending on one donor for more than half of their revenue to retain some independence (Ntibinyane 2018).

Non-profit models and grant funding for collaborative journalism can also face challenges. For example, sustainability can be an issue if the funding is short term. Another major concern noted by scholars and practitioners is the influence of donors in what should be covered. Schriffin (2017) points out that conflicts of interest such as editorial bias and influence on content by donors exists from funders who expect a return for their investment is common. As such, Sambrook (2018) notes how collaborating partners need to agree on what they want to achieve. The issue of who funds investigations is an important one. This thesis explores the question in relation to the CIJ done in southern Africa, such as *#GuptaLeaks* and for media organisations such as *Inhlase*, *Swaziland News* and in Zimbabwe and problems associated with it (see chapters 6, 7 and 8).

It should be noted however, that it is not always the case that journalists collaborate. Some continue to compete for scoops and journalism continues to be a competitive profession as seen through rivalry among reporters and media organisations in various parts of the world. Competition continues to exist particularly for media organisations who are targeting the same market and who use the same language. To further examine the processes involved in CIJ, the literature review now provides an overview of the largest projects of recent years. I have chosen to discuss in more detail, the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ), the organisation

behind the Panama Papers (2016) (which I also discuss) and the Paradise Papers (2017) -considered the second and third largest collaborative projects so far after Pandora Papers.

3.5.4 International Consortium for Investigative Journalism (ICIJ)

The ICIJ is a United States based non-profit with a reporting team and a global network of reporters and media organisations who work together to investigate stories about illicit financial flows, evasion of tax, corruption, and human rights abuses around the world. As a “cross-border, networked, collaborative and professional non-profit, ICIJ brings together journalists from around the world in the safeguarding of truth through data and documented supported facts” (ICIJ website). Its members come from Australia, France, Costa Rica, Spain, Hungary, Germany, and England among others and is funded by the Omidyar Network, Open Society Foundations, Ford Foundation, and public donations which frees it from the constraints of commercial journalism of making profit (ICIJ website). The ICIJ was founded by a United States (US) based investigative journalist Charles Lewis, who also founded the Centre for Public Integrity (CPI) referred to as ICIJ’s parent body (Leigh, 2019). Both organisations have won Pulitzer Prizes for global exposure of wrongdoing (ICIJ website). The ICIJ was founded in 1997 while CPI has been in existence since 1989. The CPI describes its newsroom as “composed of reporters, editors and data journalists who dig deep and deliver national and international investigative journalism of enduring significance” (CPI website). Its mission is to promote watchdog journalism and democracy. On the other hand, ICIJ describes itself as a newsroom that is concerned with growing a global network of journalists who believe in journalism’s role to bring about positive change (ICIJ website). The organisation goes on to describe how it “represents a new journalism paradigm for our troubled times and that its mission is to bring accountability on a global scale” (ibid) showing how it is responsive to addressing the problems facing journalism. The *British Broadcasting Corporation* (BBC), the *New York Times*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and *The Guardian* are some of the renowned media organisations that the non-profit has partnered with to expose truth and hold the powerful to account (ICIJ website).

Berglez and Gearing (2018, 4073) argue that “ICIJ marks the rise of global network journalism, has a global outlook on social reality and embedded in networks” which explains the rise in CIJ. As a non-profit, ICIJ is contributing to the expansion of accountability journalism in the US and across the world as they are not under pressure to make money (Birnbauer, 2018; Schudson, 2008). This not-for-profit model differs from the commercial one which is based on advertising and reader revenue, which has broken down as revenues have declined in the last few years. The non-profit model is said to have been prompted by journalists turning to philanthropists and foundations for work they considered vital in serving the public interest as resources continued to shrink (Oldroyd, 2018). To date there are hundreds of non-profit newsrooms in the US and UK including ICIJ, ProPublica, the Centre for Investigative Reporting, the Bureau for Investigative Journalism, among others. Investigative journalism thrives at many for-profit news outlets as well, particularly in the West, in organisations which are increasingly shifting revenue model to one that relies more heavily on audience payments. Such examples include the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*. Africa has also seen a growth in non-profit centres specialising in investigative journalism, for example the *Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism* in Nigeria, *amaBhungane Centre for Investigative Journalism* in South Africa, *Inhlase Centre for Investigative Journalism* in Eswatini, Nigeria’s Premium Times Centre for Investigative Journalism and Botswana’s *INK Centre for Investigative Journalism*, among others. Some of the centres are part of the Johannesburg based *IJHub* which forms part of the research (see chapter 7). Investigations such as Panama Papers (2016), Paradise Papers (2017), China Cables (2019), Luanda Leaks, (2020) among others exemplify this new model.

3.5.5 Panama Papers

The Panama Papers investigation is often described as the second largest global collaborative investigative project after the Pandora Papers of 2021 and considered a model for CIJ (Fitzgibbon and Hudson, 2021). It involved 2, 6 TB of information and brought together 400 journalists from more than 80 countries, signifying a changing culture of doing investigative journalism (Sambrook, 2018; Berglez and Gearing, 2018). The data came from a Panamanian Law firm called Mossack Fonseca and was leaked by an anonymous source. It included emails, passports and anonymous shell

companies' papers showing how the rich and powerful used offshore accounting to evade tax (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016). More than 4700 news articles were published, based on the leaked data (Diakopoulos, 2019) and the sheer size underlined the importance of data journalism to contemporary journalism practices (Lashmar, 2016). The investigation included journalists and media organisations from different countries, working transnationally and collaborating across different media – print, online and broadcast. Journalists from Africa used data from Panama Papers to tell stories relating to their countries which according to Moyo (2019) shows how data journalism crosses borders and transforms investigative journalism. Notably, The Panama Papers investigation led to the downfall of the prime ministers of Iceland and Pakistan and exposed corruption and tax evasion by former heads of states and government and in the banking and sports sectors involving celebrities Lionel Messi, Andy Cole among others, and exposed the shady business dealings of companies such as Siemens (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016; Diakopoulos, 2019). These global investigations had an impact on the politics of non-Western countries as well (Mutsvairo et al., 2019). In Ghana, it led the government to pass law requiring owners of companies to identify themselves (Fitzgibbon and Hudson, 2021).

Collaborating investigative journalists were able to “harness computing in a way that enabled them to contribute their expertise and ability to contextually interpret what they were finding” (Diakopoulos, 2019, 13). Technology is said to have played a significant role in the investigation, as millions of leaked documents were converted to digital text indexed in databases using optical character recognition (OCR) algorithms in a fast and accurate manner (ibid). Skilled journalists then used keywords to find patterns and connecting dots that showed tax evasion. The combination of human knowledge and expertise and technology's capabilities is evidence of the significant changes in investigative journalism in the current context, which contributes to scaling up and high-quality investigations (Oldroyd, 2018 and Diakopoulos, 2018). Most studies have focused on the Panama papers / CIJ in the Global North. It is timely and important to study these phenomena in southern Africa.

3.6 Collaborative Investigative Journalism: An African perspective

As discussed above, cross-media CIJ is becoming more common around the world but there is limited research on this phenomenon in Africa, despite the existence of cross-media CIJ projects on the continent. The West African Leaks (2017) is one example in which ICIJ teamed up with a regional organisation specialising in West Africa investigations, the Norbert Zongo Cell for Investigative Journalism (CENOZO) (ICIJ website). The result was a collaboration of 13 journalists uncovering corruption involving tax avoidance done through an analysis of 27.5 million documents over several months. Journalists came from Nigeria, Mali, Liberia, Togo, Niger, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Benin, Senegal, and Côte d'Ivoire. West Africa, according to the Partnership Coordinator, Will Fitzgibbon, was important to investigate because of the massive impact of tax avoidance, financial crime, and corruption in the region (Fitzgibbon, 2018; ICIJ website). The region is known for its minerals and natural resources and is strategically positioned between Europe, America, and the Middle East (Lêpiz, 2018). According to the United Nations, West Africa is among the regions with international tax fraud obstructing the realisation of the sustainable development goals (UN, 2017). Companies in the region make billions every year however most of its citizens continue to live in abject poverty (Lêpiz, 2018). It is therefore a place where CIJ has a lot to offer.

The Luanda Leaks (2020) is another African CIJ project led by the ICIJ. The investigation exposed how Isabel dos Santos, the daughter of Angola's former President of 40 years up to 2017, José Eduardo dos Santos made a fortune at the expense of the Angolan people (ICIJ website). Mutsvairo et al., (2019; xxv) notes that the reason African journalists are playing a key role in these collaborations is because "most of these illicit financial flows' havens come from tax and corporate havens in the Global South". By participating in these global collaborations, journalists from the Global South gain access to massive data leaks. These collaborations, despite focusing on political and business leaders in Africa, are led by journalists in the Global North thus reinforcing their dominance and influence on global collaborations as pointed out earlier.

The outbreak of the global pandemic Covid-19 worsened conditions for undertaking investigative reporting in the region, yet investigative journalists continued to find innovative ways to serve their audiences (Oluka, 2020). Journalists across the continent had to leverage on cross-border investigations to tell high impact stories at the national and international level (ibid). In 2020, for example, InfoNile, a Uganda-based geo-journalism non-profit focusing on issues in the Nile Basin, embarked on a collaboration which included 11 countries which straddle the Nile Basin, bringing together journalists, researchers, and media-support organisations to bolster its reporting effort (Oluka, 2020). InfoNile describes itself as “a collaborative cross-border group of geojournalists carrying out watchdog journalism in the Nile River Basin and employing multimedia storytelling techniques (InfoNile website). The Nile River story won an award for the best data visualisation techniques at the 2020 African Digital Media Awards (Oluka, 2020). This is just one positive example of investigative journalism taking place in the continent which show innovation and the importance of collaborating (Oluka 2020). The story was supported by the Pulitzer Centre and Code for Africa (CfA), “the continent’s largest network of civic technology and data journalism labs, with teams in 20 countries” (CfA website).

Collaboration of local investigative centres with western based organisations is also becoming common on the African continent. Burkina Faso based CENOZO which collaborated with the ICIJ in 2018 on the West African leaks, also collaborated with BuzzFeed and ICIJ in the FinCEN files where CENOZO’s network of reporters from 20 African countries spent months scrutinising leaked documents and following leads on illegal transactions from Africa (Oluka, 2020). The investigation resulted in almost 20 investigative stories on covert and illegal currency movements from Liberia and Cameroon in West Africa to Botswana and Namibia in southern Africa, and Kenya and Tanzania in East Africa (Oluka, 2020).

In some instances, there are partnerships between local and foreign media organisations. An example is when two Nigerian investigative reporters exposed Covid-19 corruption involving an herbalist and medical personnel who claimed that a bogus concoction could cure Covid-19. The investigation was published by *BBC Africa Eye* (*BBC Africa Eye*). Similarly, Nigeria’s *Premium Times* collaborated with Finance

Uncovered in the United Kingdom to recover money that had been stolen by politicians and hidden in the UK (Premium Times, 2020). Most centres are part of global investigative organisations such as the ICIJ and the Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN) where they are exposed to new tools and techniques and can share ideas with investigative journalists across the globe. GIJN membership is open to non-profits, NGOs, and educational organisations that actively work in support of investigative reporting (GIJN website). Hume and Abbott (2017) argue that GIJN is an example of an investigative journalism network with no physical base. The African Institute for Investigative Journalism (AIJ) is a Ugandan institute which focuses on capacity building and encourages collaborative investigative journalism in the continent (AIJ website).

The rise of non-profit investigative journalism centres on the African continent has given hope for the resuscitation of investigative journalism despite concerns about how they push the Western agenda because of their funders who mostly come from the West (Ntibinyane, 2018). Sustainability is another concern (ibid). Since 2010, more centres have emerged in Africa (ibid). Many other non-profit investigative journalism organisations have been set up in the African continent including News Hawks and Zimferrets Investigative Journalism Hub (Zimbabwe), New Narratives (Liberia), African Investigative Publishing Collective (Continental), Norbert Zongo Cell for Investigative Journalism in West Africa (Burkina Faso), INKYFADA (Tunisia), Centre for Investigative Journalism (Malawi), INK Centre For Investigative Journalism (Botswana), Oxpeckers Centre for Investigative Environmental Journalism, African Network of Centres for Investigative Reporting (Continental), Lesotho Centre for Investigative Journalism (Lesotho), The Namibian Investigative Journalism Unit (Namibia), Makanday Centre for Investigative Journalism (Zambia) among others. These centres are playing a significant role in holding power to account on the continent (Ntibinyane, 2018). Non-profit centres have their own challenges for example underdeveloped philanthropy in Africa, overreliance on single donors, short-term nature of funding, lack of grassroots support, and lack of fundraising muscle/teams (Ntibinyane, 2018).

Other collaborations which have taken place on the continent include transnational ones led by the *IJHub* which serves investigative journalism in southern Africa through capacity building of investigative journalists and journalism centres via fellowships, training workshops and a range of editorial and organisational services and fundraising for member centres (IJHub website). 7 centres are part of the *IJHub* including amaBhungane, Inhlase (IJHub and Inhlase form part of this research), INK Centre for investigative journalism, among others. The absence of strong editorial coordination has meant that member centres of the *IJHub* have not done any transnational stories, which I discuss in chapter 6. The Centre for Collaborative Investigative Journalism (CCIJ) is a US based non-profit which is fostering collaborations on the African continent through training, funding support and mentorship (CCIJ website).

Notable on the continent are collaborations amongst fact-checkers. AfricaCheck is a collaborative project, involving several large African nations. It describes itself as a “supporter of nonpartisan fact-checkers across the continent” and launched the Africa Facts network in 2017, a community of African fact-checkers who share knowledge and skills and collaborate to fight the spread of false information (AfricaCheck website). According to its website, it publishes independent fact-checking research and evaluations to increase understanding of the impact of fact-checking, promote fact-checking research in Africa, and develop evidence-based approaches in the field (AfricaCheck website). GhanaFact also organised collaboration fact-checking around elections in November 2020. Both these organisations, and others, also participated in Coronavirus hoax-busting collaborative database project via The International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN). IFCN is a unit of the Poynter Institute promoting collaboration among fact checkers globally (IFCN website). Mutsvairo et al., (2019) note that data has not transformed newsrooms that lack the data and professional capacity even when they have been offered collaboration and its impact could thus be argued in terms of imagined affordances.

The *#GuptaLeaks* investigation is another example of an award-winning collaborative investigative journalism project done in South Africa and is one of the cases analysed in the research (see chapter 6). The special focus of this research on southern Africa

provides insight into how this type of investigative journalism is being practiced outside the global North. Decades of research into journalism has shown that it is contingent on the cultural, political, and historical contexts (Hanitzsch, 2009). It is thus my intention to understand how the contexts of the three countries identified, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Eswatini influence the practice of collaborative investigative journalism in these countries (see chapters, 6, 7 and 8). The next section is focused on problems and challenges in collaborative investigative journalism.

3.7 Problems and Challenges in Collaborative Investigative Journalism

The section above has discussed some features and benefits of collaborative investigative journalism. A host of challenges have also been documented in relation to CIJ. For example, the literature demonstrates that collaborative investigative journalism is very cumbersome (Sambrook, 2018; Alfter, 2018, Kayser-Bril, 2018 and Berglez and Gearing, 2018). It can come with complex data that requires expertise to access, protect and evaluate. Moreover, the notion of the global fourth estate, which this new collaborative investigative journalism paves the way for (Berglez and Gearing, 2018) may not be relevant for newsrooms in some contexts, particularly in the Global South. This is a result of strict government control which results in the media failing to speak truth to power because of fear and end up practising censorship and promoting sunshine journalism (Lunga and Mthembu, 2019). Lack of access to data also hinders this practice as argued by Mutsvairo et al., (2019). In addition, the ICIJ's dominance by large media houses of the developed world such as *BBC*, the *New York Times*, and *The Guardian* among others can exclude amateur and smaller organisations particularly those from the Global South.

Another factor which hinders collaboration is the slow adoption of the practice. Academics note that its adoption remains slow in some sectors of society due to "professional conservatism" (Berglez and Gearing 2018, 4074). There is still fierce competition among newspapers of the same stable or with those from another stable such that collaboration or the idea of it might not be a possibility in some newsrooms. Data journalism is not yet well incorporated into newsrooms for media in the Global South as discussed earlier. The introduction of data journalism in curricula for journalism programmes is still slow and less developed due to the lack of expertise to

instruct students and use software associated with this new kind of journalism in most countries of the Global South.

Access to information for verification purposes is one of the commonly cited problems faced by investigative journalists including those working collaboratively. Freedom of Information legislation has been slow in its passing and implementation and media freedom continues to be a challenge (Kaplan, 2013). The cost of accessing government documents via FIOA can be extremely high (Hamilton, 2016). In support of this, Kaplan (2013) argues that access to public records, corporate reports, and honest police and prosecutors—are almost non-existent in some countries in the Global South. Low skill levels and little understanding on illicit financial flows, tracking foreign assets, or complex corporate supply chains also contribute to the challenges of doing investigative journalism in a digital era (Kaplan, 2013). The victimisation, harassment, and murder of journalists, as noted earlier is still a problem in the Global South (Kaplan, 2013). This and other factors have made news organisations to be reluctant in pursuing investigative journalism.

While most literature paints a positive picture of CIJ, there have clearly been challenges for some practitioners. Very little literature exists which examines some of the failed collaborations. Kayser-Bril (2018), for example, highlights unsuccessful collaborations such as The Turkish puppets which failed because partners did not see the story's relevance. Does this new model of collaboration apply in a monarchy such as Eswatini which has very few media organisations and a strong culture of secrecy when it comes to reporting about issues affecting royalty and people in power? (See Chapter 2). The same question can also be asked of Zimbabwe, whose media operate in two opposing ideological camps? These questions are explored in chapters 6, 7 and 8 which analyse collaboration in these countries.

3.8 [Covid-19: Compounding problems for journalists worldwide](#)

The outbreak and spread of the global pandemic, coronavirus in 2020, has worsened the financial problem for commercially driven media, causing substantive loss of income, newspaper closures and thousands of job losses. This has hugely affected investigative journalism resulting in the closure of century old newspapers and

magazines (Nicolaou and Barker, 2020). Rebekah Brooks, the chief executive of News UK, which publishes the *Sun* and the *Times* in June warned staff of impending job-cuts as part of a cost-cutting measure due to a decline in revenue (Sweeney, 2020). Reach, which owns *Daily Mirror*, *Daily Express*, *Daily Star*, and hundreds of regional newspapers furloughed almost 1000 employees and cut staff and management pay (ibid). The Pew Research Centre has reported that US newsrooms have lost more than 50% of their staff since 2008 (Grieco, 2020). While the outbreak saw an increasing rise in demand for news and analysis on the coronavirus, it has not led to a rise in news subscriptions for all media organisations. The *New York Times* registered 587 000 digital subscriptions in the first quarter of 2020 (Nicolaou and Barker, 2020) while many other media organisations closed or cut staff, as has already been discussed above. Newspaper owners and editors are exploring new ways of packaging news which would attract philanthropists and paying readers, and help save journalism (Oldroyd, 2018).

In Africa, the outbreak of the pandemic has compounded problems for journalism. According to RSF 2021 Index, journalism in Africa has been made more vulnerable than ever (RSF, 2021). Journalists are being attacked and arrested and many have lost their jobs. Disinformation and strict media laws are making it difficult for journalists to do their work and press freedom conditions deteriorating in various parts of the world

3.9 Conclusion

The chapter has explored the growth of non-profits and the internet and digital technologies has had a particularly strong influence on the rise of CIJ in case studies in the West. This has happened in a context of economic challenges caused by declining advertising revenue. While digitalisation has created issues including disinformation and tools to allow governments to target and monitor their citizens, it has also created opportunities for journalists to perform their watchdog role on a more global scale and providing journalists with tools to produce, analyse and tell data driven stories. Big Data often plays a significant role in these large global investigations – improving storytelling processes and giving readers an opportunity to verify stories for themselves. The same applies to how technological tools are seen to

afford journalists with opportunities to connect the dots and make sense of the data. Journalists involved in these large investigations also benefit from a training in data analysis techniques and exposure to software used to analyse the data in other contexts with more resources. It may also boost their teamwork skills, trust, and confidence. The involvement of new entrants from outside the journalistic profession is an additional, important phenomenon. The next section is a discussion of the theoretical framework information this research.

Chapter 4

Theoretical framework

Introduction

This chapter outlines and develops the conceptual framework that will be used in the study. Actor-Network Theory (ANT) and Hierarchy of Influences theory will form a theoretical framework for this study and inform the type of data collected. A combination of the two theories enables the research to look at the role of technology, trace the various human and non-human actors (actants) involved, the nature of associations among the actors and the factors influencing the collaborations. The chapter starts with providing brief justifications of why the research is not using technological determinism, social constructionism, and network theory. It then proceeds to actor-network theory (ANT) and Hierarchy of Influences Theory and explains why the theories are useful for this research.

4.1 Journalism research and technology

There is abundant research analysing the relationship between journalism and technology. News gathering, production, dissemination, and their implications for journalistic institutions, business models, distribution channels, and audiences have been researched by scholars in various contexts. Some of the scholars in the global North include Lewis (2014), Pavlik (2000) Boczkowski (2004), Deuze (2001) Mitchelsten and Boczkowski (2009), Singer, 2005, Lewis and Westlund (2015) among others. In the Global South, scholars such as Mutsvairo et al., (2019), Mabweazara (2015), Munoriyarwa and Chibuwe (2021), Moyo (2019), Wasserman (2011) among others have done research on journalism and technology. There are several key theories that both scholars in the Global North and South use to understand the relationship between journalism and technology. These are: technological determinism, social constructivism, network theory and Actor-Network Theory (ANT). The key difference between these approaches is in how they perceive how changes occur in society and the relationship between technology and society.

4.2 Technological determinism

Technological Determinism theory has been used to understand and explain a wide range of significant changes in society, including the transition from feudalism to capitalism, changing labour force in the 20th century, post-industrialism after World War II, the “information society,” “post-Fordism,” and globalisation (Clegg and Bailey, 2008). From the viewpoint of the theory, societal changes are a result of technological changes (Hauer, 2017; Servaes, 2014). One common example is the invention of the printing press. It is often said to have played a huge role in all sorts of changes in society, including helping to create the modern nation state in Europe, because it led to languages being written down for the first time, and citizens learning about their place in the world (Anderson, 2006). In addition, technology is considered to bring positive and negative change to people’s everyday life (McLuhan, 2013). Journalism research using technological determinism shows how technology influences journalism (Hutchby, 2001). For example, digitisation and convergence are argued to have resulted in more cooperation between journalists, newsrooms and other departments and shapes the relationship between journalists, sources, and audiences (Erdal, 2019; Boczkowski and Ferris, 2005; Erdal, 2011, Deuze, 2004).

Technological determinism has been critiqued for its techno-centric focus and the fact it ascribes change to technology alone. Critics argue that there are other factors besides technology which drive change in society and challenge this techno-centric focus. Clegg and Bailey (2008) for example note that technology and social structures evolve together and that the effects of any given technology depend on how it is by those using it. For Chandler (2013) technology acts on and is both acted on by other phenomena and can allow those using it to do different things. This research is thus not using technological determinism as it seeks to move away from a purely technology centric approach to a socio-technical one. The next section looks at social constructivism theory, which considers how humans appropriate and use technology in relation to their contexts.

4.3 Social Constructivism

Social constructivism investigates the “inner workings of technology, their histories and the social actors whose activities affect their development” (Winner 1993, 364). Social constructivism does not offer a unified viewpoint due to differences among its leading practitioners, Michael Callon, Bruno Latour, Trevor Pinch and Wiebe Bijker, H. M. Collins, Donald MacKenzie, Steven Woolgar, Bruno Latour, Michel Callon, Thomas Hughes, and John La (Winner, 1993). Callon and Latour see the world as made up of actor networks while Pinch and Bijker acknowledge the development of technologies within a society. Winner (1993) however maintains that the theory’s viewpoint and disposition is consistent despite these differences (ibid). As Winner (1993, 368) further argues, it is “geared to explaining how technologies arise and how they are shaped through various kinds of interaction”, a view that is disregarded by technological determinism theory”. The theory encourages us to “look closely at artifacts, the varieties of technical knowledge in question and at the social actors whose activities affect their development” (Winner 1993, 364-365). Human agency is still considered important, as individuals are seen as driving technological change within socio-cultural and political contexts, a factor ignored by technological determinism (Bijker et al., 1987; Feenberg, 2000). According to Bijker et.al (1987, 40), “technological artefacts are culturally constructed and interpreted”, a notion which acknowledges the power of humans in how technologies are used in everyday life situations. Mackenzie and Wajcman (1985) make a similar observation when they argue that people shape technologies rather than technologies shaping society. Technological design according to Jin (2017) comes about when social, cultural, economic, and technical elements intersect.

In addition, the theory acknowledges how technologies are designed to ensure flexibility of use by different individuals (Bijker et al., 1987). This is a useful contribution of the social constructivist approach as it shows the wide range of possible technological choices that can be made by those involved (Winner 1993). Bijker et al., (1987, 46) note that “the socio-cultural and political context of a social group shapes its norms and values, which in turn influence the meaning given to an artefact”. This is supported by Morley (2014)’s argument that technologies function in diverse cultural contexts. What Morley is referring to here are the complex ways

different technologies are employed by different users within their contexts as they choose those technologies which they consider relevant to them and ignore others. In journalism research, social constructivism has been used to show how different journalists appropriate and use technology in relation to their socio-cultural, economic, and political contexts (Meredith, 2017, Gillespie et al., 2014, Wasserman, 2011, Mabweazara (2015), Williams (2004), Ndzinisa et al., (2022) among others.

Social constructivism has useful insights regarding the use of technology in relation to diverse contexts. However, it has less insight to how technologies might transform social relationships (Winner, 1993). This is a key consideration in research on the relationship between people and technology especially when it comes to CIJ. Accordingly, the theory is seen as largely fascinated with “social construction of technical artifacts and processes without a consideration of the broader context” (Winner 1993, 369) which is problematic for this research. This research seeks to go beyond appropriation of technology in various contexts to show how it affects relationships of those using it. The next section moves on to network theory which partially addresses this issue and considers how elements in a network interact.

4.4 Network Theory

Another theory used to study the journalism-technology relationship is network theory. Manuel Castells introduced the concept of the ‘network society’ (1996) explaining how the use of the internet and digital technologies affect social structures in the Information Age. Based on research in the USA, Asia, Latin America, and Europe, Castells formulated the theory of the information society noting how the revolution in communication technologies had brought about changes in the realm of communication (Castells, 2010). To Castells (1996), various processes in the information age are organised around networks. In addition, there is a blurring of boundaries between mass media communication and all other forms of communication (Castells, 2010). In the network society, information can be published by anyone, and journalists are able to source information from people who were previously isolated and/or silenced (Castells, 2009). Network theory is useful for explaining the economic, social, and cultural trends in an increasingly networked society (Castells, 1996).

The concept of “network society” is strongly linked to globalisation which according to Tomlinson (1999, 2) is characterised by the “rapid development and ever-densening network of interconnections and interdependences of modern life”. The pace at which change is occurring is unprecedented and the level of interconnections is seen through the vast connections, individuals have in all aspects of their lives (political, social, and economic) with the global world. In the network society information flows quickly across all directions (Castells, 2010). Peters and Brocra (2013) in Berglez and Gearing (2018, 4074) postulate that “the advent of the network society, if it has not completely overthrown geolocated media-at least has changed the role of media outlets”. The change is seen in how media have adopted a global outlook on issues and events. As audiences can source news and information from anywhere in the world, the value of geolocated media is argued to have diminished (Berglez and Gearing 2018). Under these conditions, collaboration is considered a benefit (Berglez and Gearing 2018).

Castell’s network society concept has been applied to journalism. The high level of interactivity and the influx of information produced by citizens in all the corners of the globe highly impacts the practise of journalism (Heinrich, 2011). Citizens receive and share news through social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter instantly through mobile phones, tablets, and other technological gadgets. They are also able to share information in all directions with much greater freedom (Castells, 2013). Digital innovations further allow for collaboration across newsrooms and geography with journalism being packaged in multiple formats audio, video, and print (Berglez and Gearing, 2018).

Through network theory new synergies that are forming between journalists and other media organisations (newspaper, television, and radio) can be seen (Castells, 2010). Social networks play a key role as information networks (Castells, 2001). Carson and Farhall (2018) argue that the internet has contributed to CIJ. Understanding if technology is driving CIJ in southern Africa is one of the aims of this research. Journalism in the context of the network society is seen from the perspective of the internet, the information age, and the explosion of technology (Cardoso, 2007 and Castells, 2010, 2011). Journalists are connected to other journalists across the globe,

facilitated by digital technologies and social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp among other social networks. They are also connected with readers and news sources (Alfter, 2016). For investigative reporters, mainstream media use blogs and interactive networks for content distribution and interacting with their audience thus mixing vertical and horizontal communication modes (Castells, 2010). Castells' theory highlights how digital tools can assist collaboration across newsrooms and geographies, as well as previously impossible levels of data interrogation (Carson and Farhall, 2018). Fink and Anderson (2015) highlight the vast amounts of data produced online which has led to more leaks and the growth of leak-driven journalism. For journalism to be ethical and professional in a context as described by Fink and Anderson (2015), security and trust issues are of paramount importance (Berglez and Gearing, 2018). Berglez and Gearing (2018) argue that the technological revolution is reshaping human relations and creating economies that are deeply interdependent and defined by networked connections.

Castells' (1996) network society theory is not without its critiques. Critics have noted that it is overly optimistic about the equal footing on which individuals access networks, and they point to inequalities on the web due to the commercialisation of the internet which makes it inaccessible to those from poor contexts. Papacharissi (2002) argues that the digital divide, inequalities in access and lack of media literacy skills limit effective participation in the public sphere. The rise of disinformation and misinformation threaten the role of journalism in this networked environment. Fake information spreads further and faster through digital technologies enabled by the internet and algorithms (Carson, 2020). Furthermore, web-based communications carry risks for and sources journalists such as surveillance and harassment which can lead to disconnection in this networked society (Gearing, 2016). On the other hand, digital media technologies that enable the viral spread of disinformation challenge the media's normative fourth estate functions to provide the public with accurate information (Carson and Farhall, 2018).

This research chooses to use ANT rather than network theory for several reasons. Firstly, ANT itself draws on network theory and other fields which allows for a broader understanding of how journalism works. ANT also allows the researcher to analyse

both actors and actants and how they are shaping and influencing each other and how that impacts on the practise of journalism. ANT also enables an interrogation of the agency of technology and all the actors in CIJ to understand how they are influencing each other and shaping journalism. The next section is focused on Actor-Network Theory, which is the theory used in this research in combination with the Hierarchy of Influences theory.

4.5 Actor-Network Theory

Actor-Network Theory was pioneered by Bruno Latour (2005), Michel Callon (1986) and John Law (1987) from Science and Technology Studies (STS) in the early 1980s (Müller 2015). ANT's intellectual roots are diverse and include sociology, philosophy, and semiotics (ibid). Latour (2005, 1) introduces ANT by "redefining the notion of social by going back to its original meaning and making it able to trace connections again". According to Latour (2005, 8) "associations are made of ties which are themselves non-social". Latour (2005) argues that society and nature are a hybrid and cannot be divorced from each other. This understanding of society as a hybrid, is useful in considering journalism as a hybrid profession (Ryfe, 2022). The ANT theory sees the social as being technical in nature (Couldry, 2008). In contrast to the singular understanding of journalism as having an inside and outside, "ANT deploys a flattened image of society as consisting of multiple networks that contain only actors, and the connections they make to one another" (Ryfe, 2022, 68).

For Couldry (2008) this notion is useful as it can help us avoid functionalism in our understanding of how the media works. ANT seeks to explain social order through the networks of connections among human agents, technologies, and objects where human or non-human actors earn their power from the stability of the connections (Couldry, 2008). Lewis and Westlund (2015) for example, note that humans, technological actants such as networks, algorithms, and activities they do are intertwined in news work. An actor is what makes a difference in the ongoing action (Latour, 2005) or "any element in the network that acquires strength in association with others" (Hemmingway 2007, 24). Actant refers to any actor, human or non-human (Lewis and Westlund, 2015). For Müller (2015, 27), ANT helps us to think about power, politics, and space from a socio-material perspective. This research considers

the usefulness of a sociotechnical approach (using ANT) which show that journalism is a socio-technical practice rather than an institution (Stalph, 2019; Domingo and Wiard, 2016).

ANT is useful for considering the connections between humans, technologies, and objects and their roles (Couldry, 2008). Both human actors and technological tools are seen as relevant (ibid). Unlike network theory, which sees technology as something that enables people to act, ANT sees technology as having agency (Plesner, 2009). This notion is important in this research to understand how technology is influencing CIJ, whether it is making those involved collaborate or if it is removing competition among previously competing publications or journalists?

Latour (2005, 5) argues that the social is “a trail of associations between heterogeneous elements” and that sociology should be redefined as “*the tracing of associations*.” (Emphasis in the original). According to the theory, components in the network shape and define each other and are always in a state of redefinition (Latour, 2005). Each component is seen as playing a role (Law, 2008). Central to ANT are concepts such as ‘associations,’ ‘actants,’ ‘actor-networks’ and ‘translations’ (Plesner, 2009). The notion of tracing associations/relationships between actors is important for understanding how various actors in CIJ shape and define one another.

A central concept of the theory is translation which refers to “the collaborative process in which diverse entities assemble, form new associations and disconnect old” (Mutzel, 2009, 879). ANT provides frameworks that acknowledge the social as a heterogeneous assembly of humans and nonhumans (Stalph, 2019). According to the ANT, components in the network shape and define each other and are always in a state of redefinition (Latour, 2005). For Latour “social does not designate a thing among other things, but *a type of connection* between things that are not themselves social (Latour 2005, 5). (Emphasis in the original). Latour (2005) argues that connections should be traced between the various actors and actants and consideration should be made that their ties are always changing.

In the research, I analyse the translation or collaborative process between various actors to understand how they are interacting, influencing, and changing one another and how their interactions affect the outcome. In other words, I analyse how the various actors and actants involved in CIJ interact, empower, enable, or disempower others within the same network and how this affects the journalism that is produced. This involves a closer look at how journalists, technologists, whistle-blowers, funders, and other actors, including technologies involved influence one another and impact on how CIJ is being practiced. This is because each component of a phenomenon, shapes and defines the others through associations (Latour, 2005). As Latour (2005) argues, these entities and components do not remain unchanged as they are constantly redefined through their associations (Latour, 2005).

Black boxing is another important concept of ANT (Stalph 2019) wherein Latour (2005) argues that science, technology, and society are inseparable. This concept is useful for researchers to analyse which actors, actants and actor-networks are contained in them (Latour 2005). Within the context of this research, this involves unpacking all the actors, actants and objects involved in CIJ and ensuring that no one or nothing is left out and unpacking how they link with each other. In addition, identifying which actors, actants or activities are inseparable is also important to discuss in the research. For example, questioning if and how whistle-blowers and whistleblowing are attached to investigative journalism practise in the three countries under study.

Previous research which has used ANT in journalism has showed how digital artifacts should be treated as actants (Hemmingway, 2007; Plesner 2009; Schmitz et al 2010; Van Loon, 2011; Mico et al., 2013; Anderson and Kreiss, 2013, Mabrook and Singer 2019). Both actors and actants are seen as having agency (Stalph, 2019, De Maeyer, 2016, Plesner 2009). Primo and Zago (2015) have used ANT to understand the complex hybrid networks that allow journalism to come about arguing that actors and actants are involved in journalism, and that digital technologies have transformed journalism. Primo and Zago (2015, 39) argue that “as soon as the agency of artifacts is recognised, as well as the transformations that it exerts over associations and other actants, the very definition of journalism needs to be reconsidered”. In the same vein,

Plesner (2009) uses ANT to analyse the heterogeneous actors: people, ideals, symbolic constructions, and material elements, which he argues are equally crucial elements to analyse in understanding media practices. What is new about technology, according to Plesner (2009) is that they are a seamless part of newswork. As Primo and Zago (2015) argue, technologies are inherent to journalism, not an accessory or add on – and they should not just be viewed as an external force to journalism that impacts practice, but rather an important constituent element of the practice itself. ANT moves away from the notion that journalism is a practice restricted to humans (Primo and Zago, 2015).

ANT theory offers a powerful tool for analysing shifts in the practice of journalism under new technological conditions (Turner, 2005; Plesner, 2009). ANT has been highlighted as useful in incorporating the role of technology when analysing changing newsroom culture and practice without falling into the trap of technological determinism (Turner, 2005 and Mabrook and Singer, 2019). For example, ANT, gives journalism studies scholars the flexibility to pay close attention to the agency of technology as well as users of that technology, and thus their impact on the content, structure, affordances, and experience (Mabrook and Singer, 2019). Primo and Zago further argue that giving attention to “the participation of objects in the co-creation of journalism should not culminate in some sort of fetishism of digital artifacts as it would result in a new form of technological determinism, a problem that ANT intends to avoid” (Primo and Zago, 2015, 49.) ANT thus moves away from the notion that journalism is a practice restricted to humans (Turner, 2005). ANT also allows for the recognition and critique of the hybrid actors that are becoming increasingly characteristic of journalism in a multi-media environment and allows the research to focus on technology and the role of journalists and the associations between them (Turner, 2005; Ryfe, 2021). In addition, ANT emphasises relationships rather than giving primacy to either people or their tools (Plesner, 2009) and views all relevant components as actors, each exercising a level of agency (Latour, 2005) and each holding comparable power (Law, 2008). ANT is a powerful theory for analysing how networks are being produced in journalism (Turner, 2005). ANT offers the flexibility to devote attention to every actor involved in CIJ.

4.6 Limitations of Actor-Network Theory

In terms of the limitations, Plesner, (2009, 624), argues that ANT cannot offer “explanation and generalisation” and fails to adequately address issues of time, power, and interpretation. Müller (2015, 30) adds that ANT fails to “distinguish a priori between humans and materials, ignoring that humans are capable of intentions and pursue interests whereas things are not”. Again, this lack of recognition of human interests limits the research’s ability to unpack what the interests of the human actors are in these collaborations. Moreover, focusing too much on associations may result in endless chains of associations and failure to appreciate reasons and differences in network formation processes (Müller, 2015). Another limitation of ANT is how it “discards social context, for example cultural or historical factors, for explanation, unless it can be traced in the formation of concrete networks” (Müller, 2015, 30). Despite these limitations, ANT is still useful in understanding the heterogeneous actors involved in CIJ, the associations among them and issues of agency. Couldry (2008) argues that despite its general value as a theory, ANT itself is not a substantial or coherent theory and media pose problems, or set limits, to the applicability of ANT. According to Couldry (2008, 96) while ANT may tell us something important about the “embeddedness of social life in media and communications technologies, they do not offer a new way of analysing social action, despite claiming to do so”.

Overall, the research seeks to do a holistic analysis of the networks or associations in which journalists and other actors are involved in doing CIJ. This research hopes to make contributions to four streams of scholarship. The first deals with identifying who the main actors and actants are who are involved in CIJ in southern African states namely South Africa, Zimbabwe and Eswatini. The second relates to understanding the agency of the various actors (journalistic and non-journalistic) and non-human actors as they interact, and how the interaction affects journalism practices. The research also seeks to understanding how technology influences investigative journalism of a collaborative nature. Unlike deterministic approaches that analyse how technology is changing journalism or social constructivist approaches that emphasise user agency, this approach analyses both the technology and the wide range of actors involved and how they affect one another as part of the practice of CIJ. Fourthly, the research contributes by questioning the usefulness of ANT when applied to the Global

South, through a focus of three countries which despite belonging to the same region of southern Africa have diverse political, economic, social and media contexts. In combination with ANT, the research uses the Hierarchy of Influences theory to understand the influences on the CIJ. The combination of the two theories is important for analysing the actors, agency, how they are collaborating and the influences on the CIJ.

4.7 The Hierarchy of Influences Theory

In addition to the Actor Network Theory, the research utilises Shoemaker and Reese's (1996, 2014 and Reese and Shoemaker, 2016) "hierarchy of influences" model, which considers the interplay between structure and agency by addressing the structures that constrain/enable journalists to do their work. The model considers "the multiple forces that simultaneously impinge on media and suggests how influence at one level may interact with that at another (Shoemaker and Reese, 2014, 1). The authors specifically identify five levels of influence that can affect the news production process. Presented as a set of concentric circles, these are individual-level factors, professional routines and practices, organisational characteristics, social institutions interacting with media entities, and the larger social system (Shoemaker and Reese, 2014; Reese, 2019). The theory is a useful heuristic device or a method which helps researchers capture all the variables that may influence journalism practice. More generally, it provides a guide to understanding the practice of journalism with reference to a larger framework of power.

Individual

This level of analysis considers the attributes of individual journalists, and their personal traits including gender, race, and class, the news values they consider important and the professional roles they take on. The theory argues that journalists are influenced by these factors and that these are not always conscious influences in their reporting and thus struggle to be truly objective (Reese and Shoemaker, 2016). By analysing the individual factors, we can "understand how professional roles relate to larger structures, serving as a means of adaptation and survival" (Reese and

Shoemaker, 2016, 398). In addition, the theory argues that there are larger structures that influence the profession which journalists are constrained by.

Routines

Routines are another level of influence which pertains to “the ways of working that constitute that practice, including those unstated rules and ritualised enactments that are not always made explicit,” (Reese and Shoemaker, 2016, 399). Routines include deadlines, how to use quotations, balancing for purposes of objectivity, and news values (Reese and Shoemaker, 2016). For example, using the inverted pyramid style may shape the way that journalists author their stories at the expense of creating a compelling narrative and may appear normal to journalists. In the digital era, news routines are constantly undergoing change, with more citizen involvement in news processes. News aggregators now must find new ways to continually verify information and ensure that they are transparent to their audiences (Reese and Shoemaker, 2016). “As news organisations have had to rely on those outside the professional field for digital expertise, the values of the technology culture have become linked with journalistic practices” (Reese and Shoemaker, 2016, 400).

Organisational

According to Reese (2019), the organisational level acknowledges that news production is shaped by institutional policies and commercial imperatives. Organisations should be able to strike a balance between the goals of owners and professional concerns (Reese, 2019). Reese and Shoemaker (2016) argue that as media organisations are going through change, journalism should be understood within this context. They argue that organisational structures and the ways in which authority is exercised have influence on media content (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996). This level of influence forces us to consider the influence of ownership, organisational goals, and policy (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996).

Social Institutions/ Extra media

This level pertains to ‘everything outside of media organisational boundary including everything from audiences, powerful sources, public relations, or even technological forces’ (Reese and Shoemaker, 2016, 402). In the revised version, this level is referred to as the “inter-organisational field.” which considers how media organisations enter dependency relationships with the state, public relations, and advertising (Reese and Shoemaker, 2016). It considers the larger, more complex systems within which journalism operates (Reese, 2019). The scholars argue that power does not flow one way, “from the state to the media but the other way around in a process of mutual adaptation” (Shoemaker and Reese, 2016, 402). For example, media policy can impact on how journalists report on particular issues or advertisers may pull out if they think a media organisation is reflecting ideas that do not reflect theirs.

Ideological-level Forces

This level of influence is concerned with news media attitudes and perceptions about the role of journalists in society. This level is now called the social systems level to account for the “larger, more complex systems within which journalism operates” (Reese, 2019, 2). It considers norms, values, and beliefs at societal level (Shoemaker and Reese, 2016).

The Hierarchy of Influences theory, while developed based on US and UK empirical projects, is used by scholars in a wide variety of international contexts (Shoemaker and Reese, 2014). The revised version of the theory is useful as it considers the influences on the media in a networked environment, considering the influence of the internet, global connectivity, and the shifting of boundaries in journalism (see Reese and Shoemaker, 2016). Some of the studies that have used the approach include Frischlich (et al., 2019) on journalists’ evaluation and moderation of deviant user comments which found the meso- and micro- level influences to be useful for their research but still called for more research to explore the relationships between various levels. In their study on disaster coverage, Grassau et al., (2021) note that a combination of individual, routine, and organisational are shaped by direct experiences with journalists. Milojević and Krstić (2018) used the model to understand

transitional journalism. Similarly, Hanitzsch and Mellado (2011), Hellmueller and Mellado (2015), Hellmueller (2017) have used it offering important insights about how the levels of influences connect and impact on journalistic practice in various contexts. In this research, I use the Hierarchy of Influences theory to build on the omissions of ANT and more specifically, to understand how macro, meso and micro level influences enable or constrain journalistic practice in collaborative journalism. While ANT is useful for analysing the actors and actants and the connections between them, the Hierarchy of Influences Theory enables me to consider collaborative journalism at various levels especially with reference to a larger framework of power.

In terms of limitations, the Hierarchy of Influences model is incapable of explaining CIJ, particularly the wide range of actors involved in journalism, how they are interacting and how these impact on the journalism that is produced, without combining it with ANT. The theory also does not explain causal relationships.

4.8 Conclusion

The chapter began with brief discussions of technological determinism, social constructionism and network theory and explained why the research is not using them. It then discussed ANT and showed how it has been used in journalism and its limitations. The research uses a combination of ANT and Hierarchy of Influences theory. ANT is important in showing the diverse actors and actants involved and how investigative journalism is interwoven with technology (Turner, 2005; Stalph 2019). ANT breaks phenomena into smaller components and traces associations among them (Latour, 2005). The chapter then proceeded to discuss the Hierarchy of Influences Theory's five levels of influence and refer to research which has used the framework. Hierarchy of Influences adds to ANT by allowing a consideration on the influences on CIJ. The research hopes to explore the distinct kinds of CIJ that are made manifest in southern African cases, identifying the main actors, exploring the kinds of partnerships taking place between newsrooms, and influences on the journalism using ANT and the Hierarchy of Influences together. The next chapter is on methodology.

Chapter 5

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology used to answer the study's research questions focused on CIJ in three southern African countries, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Eswatini. It begins with a rationale for qualitative research methodology, before discussing the case study approach and the specific methods of in-depth interviews, and document analysis. It also details the process of data triangulation, sampling, and ethical considerations. The first section provides the rationale for qualitative study and presents the study's research questions.

5.1 Rationale for qualitative study

The aim of this research as mentioned in Chapter 1 was to explore how CIJ is being practiced in southern African states namely South Africa, Zimbabwe and Eswatini. To answer the above questions, the research adopted a qualitative methodology that allowed it to generate insights and understandings of the actors involved (Priest, 2010). As a qualitative researcher, I understood that reality is socially constructed (Brennen, 2017) and sought to understand the myriad of meanings and explanations that investigative journalists, technologists, donors, and other key actors in CIJ make concerning their practice. Considering the political, social, economic, media and technological contexts was an important part of this interpretive process (Brennen, 2017). The qualitative methodology enabled me to acquire "rich descriptions" (Sofaer 1999, 1102) on the way collaborative investigations are undertaken in different contexts and "enhanced my understanding of the context" of the investigations as well as the investigations themselves" (ibid). The qualitative research approach has been criticised for potential subjectivity. For example, Sofaer (1999, 1103) acknowledges that "many decry qualitative methods as inherently biased because these methods depend so much on the perspective and skills of the researcher". To prevent bias, I triangulated my data, carefully considered all steps of the research process, and piloted my questions. Reflexivity allowed me to reflect more critically on my role as a qualitative researcher. For example, I made my questions clear and interacted with interviewees with an open mind without imposing complex theoretical concepts on

them. I had to constantly acknowledge my subjectivities and evaluations and consider that the interpretations I was making may be influenced by my gender, ethnicity, and class (Brennen, 2017).

Reflexivity

When I interviewed seven journalists in Zimbabwe, I considered my role carefully as I had previously worked there and personally knew some of the journalists. The same applied to investigative journalists in Eswatini, where I knew some respondents due to my previous work experience in the Kingdom of Eswatini and I was careful in how I asked questions. I was also cognisant of how my own perceptions of the Zimbabwean and Eswatini journalism environment could interfere with the respondents' interpretations. My own experience of working and living in the three countries was very important in how I made sense of the context and the issues that the journalists shared with me. Transparency was also important as I openly described my theoretical foundation, research strategies and justifications for the decisions I made (Walliman, 2018). When it came to data analysis, I made use of as much direct quotes from the actors as possible and ensured that I took the quotes in context, as can be seen in the findings' chapters (see chapters 6, 7 and 8). In addition, my supervisory team reviewed my findings and helped to identify gaps which needed addressing throughout the data analysis stage. I discuss triangulation in the next section.

5.2 Triangulation

The validity and reliability of the findings from qualitative research has often been questioned by critics (Tobin and Begley, 2004). To ensure the quality of the research, I considered and triangulated data acquired from individual in-depth interviewing, and narrative analysis of purposively selected journalistic and non-journalistic actors (IT specialists and funders) and investigative journalism case studies and media organisations. By triangulating data from individual in-depth interviews, and narrative analysis, I was rejecting biases of a single method (Tobin and Begley, 2004). According to Denzin (2012, 82), triangulation "reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question". The data I collected was important to "provide cross-data validity checks" (Patton 1999, 1192) on the actors

involved in the collaborations, the influences and to explore issues of agency and technological affordance in the collaborations. In addition, triangulation enabled me to acquire comprehensive data through looking at “rival or competing themes and explanations,” through analysing what the journalistic and non-journalistic actors were sharing with me through the interviews. In analysing documents, reports, and editorial policies, I sought to understand what they said about collaborations and the kinds of stories they produced.

In addition, I have used quotes from interviews and extracts from the documents which I analysed in my findings’ chapters (see chapters 6, 7 and 8), “to permit others to judge the quality of the resulting product” (Patton 1999, 1191). This has involved being transparent about all the stages, choices and decisions made in the process of selecting the respondents and relevant documents for analysis to shed light on the practice of collaborative investigative journalism in the selected southern African states. One of the limitations of triangulation according to Patton is that due to “limited budgets and time, the amount of triangulation that is practical is affected.” Despite this, I sought to use the available time and resources to the maximum to answer the research questions identified above.

It was my responsibility to ensure that the research is rigorous, through asking questions informed by my theoretical framework and making follow up questions to cover gaps. I also ensured that I interviewed as many actors involved in the investigations as possible (see section on semi-structured interviewing below and lists of respondents in the appendices) (Rolfe, 2006). By purposively selecting case studies, investigations and actors for the research means I was not objective (Priest, 2010). Despite this, qualitative research was the most suited approach to explore the research questions of the study as I sought understandings and insights on who was involved in the collaborations and how the relationships were negotiated. As Silverman (2017) notes, in research, both theory and techniques are important, and it is about finding a theoretical approach which makes sense to the researcher. I used the Actor Network Theory (ANT) and Hierarchy of Influences theory (see chapter 4) to make sense of findings and to see the associations between the actors and how technology shapes collaborative investigative journalism together with the influences

on the journalism (Berger 1998, Brennen, 2017). I considered the diversity of meanings and how the various actors involved in collaborative investigative journalism explained themselves to the world. I was careful in asking questions particularly when specific actors did not want to disclose sensitive information for security reasons. Where it was shared, I anonymised it.

5.3 Data collection

Case study research, individual in-depth interviews and narrative analysis which are the methods that were used to collect data are discussed in this section. The chapter then considers the benefits and provides a justification for each method, drawing on key literature and previous research which has used these techniques. It also discusses purposive sampling, which is the sampling strategy that was used for the interviewees and the documents analysed.

Multiple case study

The research is a multiple case study of CIJ in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Eswatini. My choice of specific collaborative investigations and organisations undertaking this kind of journalism in the three countries was informed by Gerring (2007)'s definition of a case study as the intensive study of a particular case(s) for the purpose of shedding light on a particular issue. Traditionally, the case study research approach has been associated with qualitative methods of analysis (interviews and participant observation) though sometimes it can be quantitative or combine both (Gerring, 2007). When cases are studied intensively, it is called a case study and does not seek to be representative of other cases (Gerring, 2007; Gomm et al., 2009).

5.4 Justification of country selection

I chose to analyse collaborative investigations done in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Eswatini because it offered an opportunity to research regions that have often been marginalised by scholars (Hanitzsch, 2009; Livingstone, 2003; Kohn, 1989). Because CIJ has become a widespread practice across the world as discussed in chapter 3, it made more sense to consider how it is practiced in three different southern African

countries. This enabled me to understand unique experiences of the practice in each country setting and then identify similarities and differences and diverse explanations from the heterogeneous actors involved in these countries. Despite that the three countries are in the same region, there are unique contextual factors (Hallin and Mancini 2012). These shape the way that collaboration is practiced as I show in chapters 6, 7, and 8 which supports Mutsvairo et al.'s 2021 notion of diverse journalism cultures in the Global South.

In addition, the countries have examples of CIJ projects that are widely seen by the industry as the most important in terms of winning awards, influence, and considered to be the best examples of investigative reporting. In South Africa, I analysed the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation, which was done collaboratively by several actors and news organisations (see chapter 6). In Zimbabwe, I analysed the *Chiadzwa* diamonds and *Electoral malpractices* investigations, also done collaboratively (see chapter 7) while in Eswatini, I analysed investigations done by the *Inhlase Centre for Investigative Journalism* (Inhlase) and *Swaziland News* (see chapter 8) two organisations widely recognised as doing CIJ. All the investigations have been described in full at the beginning of each of the relevant chapters. Though the research is a multiple case study, it does have a component of comparison in it.

Comparative research has become common in the present context due to globalisation (Livingstone, 2012 and Downey 2020). According Esser and Hanitzsch (2012) and Edelstein (1982), in comparative research, a common issue is examined in two or more countries. Berglez and Nassanga (2015) note that cross-national studies help us to acquire international forms of knowledge. In addition, it “asserts the continued importance of the nation-state in framing its theories and methods” (Livingstone 2012, 417). Livingstone further acknowledges the growing importance of comparative research noting that “the study of global and transnational media phenomena has moved from the margins to the centre of our field” (2012, 416). Journalism research of a comparative nature has become common. Notably, Dan Hallin and Paolo Mancini’s (2004) book, *Comparing Media Systems Comparing countries* has led to an increase in comparative studies (Downey 2020). Comparative studies allow researchers to “test theories across diverse settings and evaluate the

scope and significance of certain phenomena” (Esser and Hanitzsch 2012, 4). It also helps researchers to avoid applying “Western conceptual thinking and normative assumptions” uncritically into other contexts (ibid).

Cross-national studies are becoming common in media and communication studies as they enable acquisition of international forms of knowledge (Berglez and Nassanga, 2015). Furthermore, such studies provide diverse settings through which the same concepts or theory and methods can be examined, thereby revealing how the media works in diverse cultural contexts (Hanitzsch, 2009). Through a multiple case study, the research hopes to offer valuable insights and understanding of collaborations in South Africa, Eswatini and Zimbabwe (Hanitzsch, 2009; Kohn, 1989). I have chosen this approach because it offers rich and valuable insights into understanding understudied regions (Hanitzsch, 2009; Livingstone, 2003; Kohn, 1989). The disadvantage of comparative studies is that it can be costly, in terms of time and money and the researcher must think carefully about how to approach the cases (Kohn, 1989). As will be seen in the below discussion, investigative journalism varies a lot among the three countries.

I explored the media systems, levels of press freedom, journalistic understandings of their normative roles and the political, economic, social, and technological contexts that shaped the collaborations as the actors involved reflected on these issues. As Esser and Hanitzsch (2012, 6) argue, exploring context, “makes comparative research exceptionally valuable”. Livingstone (2012, 417) reinforces this point by noting that “it is no longer plausible to study one phenomenon in one country without asking, at a minimum, whether it is common across the globe or distinctive to that country or part of the world”. In addition, the advantage of a multiple case-study over a single case study is that it helped me to consider CIJ beyond one media system and culture and consider the unique contexts of the country cases (Esser and Hanitzsch, 2012). In the research, I tweaked the research questions to become responsive to the heterogeneous actors and actants I found in the three countries. The theoretical framework was also applied in all the three countries to test its applicability.

Analysing different nations in one design is not without problems. Livingstone (2012, 420) notes that “cross-national projects often underestimate the degree of local variation in meanings, practices, or contexts” and analysing many countries in one research may be too much to handle. Comparative case studies can be costly, in terms of time and money and the researcher must think carefully about how to approach the cases (Kohn, 1989). Despite these challenges, I noted that the positives outweighed the negatives. By studying the three countries I acquired valuable insights and understandings of the translation/collaborative process between various actors and how political, social, professional, and economic factors shaped the practice of CIJ in South Africa, Eswatini and Zimbabwe (Hanitzsch, 2009; Kohn, 1989). Below is a table showing some key statistics about the countries under study which provides an overview of the different countries to help illustrate why I have chosen them.

Table 5.1 Key statistics about the case study countries

Dimension	South Africa	Zimbabwe	Eswatini
Economy	Third largest after Nigeria 17 out of 47 in Africa (2022 Index of Economic Freedom)	33.1 out of 47 in Africa (2022 Index of Economic Freedom)	31 out of 47 in Africa (2022 Index of Economic Freedom)
Political	Unitary dominant-party parliamentary republic with an executive presidency	Constitutional republic	Monarchy
World Press Freedom Index ranking (RSF 2022)	32	130	141
Independence from colonial rule	1994	1980	1968
Population (World Population Review 2022)	60,693,415	15,310,244	1,183,729
GDP	Total \$813.100 billion • Per capita \$13,865 (2019 stats)	Total \$41.031 billion • Per capita \$2,621 (2019 stats)	•Total \$12.293 billion • Per capita \$11,089
Ruling Party	ANC since 1994	ZANU PF since 1980	No political party

5.5 Methods

The research used semi-structured interviews and narrative analysis as data collection methods. The study employed individual in-depth semi-structured interviews of editors, journalists, funding executives and IT specialists, and narrative analysis of selected editorials on the online platforms of the newspapers under study, editorial policies, and funding reports.

5.5.1 Pilot Study

In February 2021, I conducted a pilot study which involved five respondents in Zimbabwe and South Africa (two investigative journalists, two technologists and one funder) to explore what questions would generate the richest data and ensure respondents understood the draft questions and to determine if the order of asking the questions needed to change. Three (1 journalist and two technologists) were from South Africa and two (1 journalist and funder) from Zimbabwe. I also assessed if the questions were too many or enough for a 60-minute discussion. Hennink et al., (2020, 148) argue that the pilot study is critical for “assessing how the questions are understood and considering any revisions”. This enabled me to revise the questions and make sure they are clear before the actual study begins. I also made sure that I provided sufficient information in the introduction and that all questions generated a discussion. The outcome was informative in showing that collaboration was understood differently by those involved, which let me know that I would need to explore the definitions of the terms itself in my subsequent interviews. During this time, I analysed the collaborations under study to get an idea of who was involved in them. The insights from these exploratory processes mainly informed my interviewing and the data obtained from the pilot study was not incorporated into the actual analysis.

5.5.2 Purposive Sampling

A non-probability sampling technique known as purposive sampling (Patton, 1990) was used to select participants for this research project. I selected cases that would help illuminate the research questions (Patton, 1990). To make a sampling choice, I had to consider the purpose of my study, the population, available resources, and design considerations (Daniel, 2011). I chose award winning collaborative projects

regarded by industry as the best examples of investigative projects which have had major influence in the country. When using this technique, I identified journalists, and editors involved in the investigative collaboration projects examined. They then directed me to the other actors involved such as the funders and the technologists. My choice of purposive sampling was driven by the need to better understand cross-media collaboration, which has been done by a specific group of journalists and non-journalists in the three countries under investigation. Data collection continued until data became repetitive and no new themes could be derived (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

5.5.3 The respondents

In total, I interviewed 41 respondents between April and October 2021 and continued to do follow ups until May 2022. These included editors, journalists and CEOs of media organisations, funders/donor representatives and technologists. In South Africa, I interviewed 14 participants who were part of the *#GuptaLeaks*. In Zimbabwe, I interviewed 14 respondents including journalists in the two investigations under study, funders/programme representatives, journalists who had nothing to do with the investigations, a government official and individuals from media development organisations that support investigative journalism in the country. In Eswatini, I interviewed journalists from the two media organisations under study, *Inhlase* and *Swaziland News*, funders, directors, and journalists who collaborate with *Inhlase* through the *IJHub*. These are journalists from Lesotho, Botswana, and South Africa one freelancer. The total number was 13. The respondents are summarised in the table found on the next page.

Table 5.2 Summary of respondents

Country	South Africa	Zimbabwe	Eswatini
Total number of respondents	14	14	13
Respondents	1 CEO, 3 editors, 1 technological expert and 9 journalists from Daily Maverick, AmaBhungane and News24	7 journalists from Standard, Newsday, Zimbabwe Independent, 5 representatives of funders, one government official and a MISA Zimbabwe representative	9 journalists from Swaziland News, Inhlase, a freelancer, 1 director and 3 funders/sponsors

I did semi-structured individual in-depth interviews with investigative journalists and editors, both male and female, at diverse levels of the newsroom hierarchy. The journalists and editors came from the following organisations, **South Africa-** *Daily Maverick*, *amaBhungane* and *News 24*. **Zimbabwe-** *Newsday* and *Zimbabwe Independent* and *Standard newspaper* and **Eswatini-** *Swaziland News* (which operates from South Africa and *Inhlase* Centre for Investigative Journalism (Inhlase) and members of the *IJHub* who were collaborating with the Eswatini based centre. The *IJHub* is made up of other centres including INK Investigative Journalism Centre from Botswana, The MNN Centre for Investigative Journalism in Lesotho, The investigative unit of The Namibian, The Platform for Investigative Journalism in Malawi, The MakanDay Centre for Investigative Journalism in Zambia and *amaBhungane*. Other professionals who were part of the investigation included CEOs, representatives from MISA, OSISA and the European Union (EU).

These media organisations and individuals were chosen because of their involvement in the specific investigations I studied, through funding or providing technical support. The editors were chosen because of the role they played in making editorial decisions on news production and publication of the investigations under study while journalists were chosen because they were directly responsible for the news production, carrying out research, interviews and writing the stories. Non-journalistic professionals and representatives of media organisations such as MISA, VMCZ, OSISA, EU, Cannon Collins, and IJHub were chosen because of the role they play in the collaborations providing funding, legal, technological, and editorial support. The government official was interviewed because the Ministry plays an important role as the regulator of media organisations, coming up with policies that impact on the practice of journalists.

For the *#GuptaLeaks*, I interviewed one CEO, 3 editors, nine investigative journalists and the technical expert. Four did not respond to the request to be interviewed and the money laundering expert had preferred to work anonymously in the investigation, and therefore could not be contacted. In Zimbabwe, the *Chiadzwa* investigation was done collaboratively by the *Zimbabwe Independent* and *Newsday* journalists which despite being publications of the same stable, compete for readers. I interviewed the assistant editor, and the two journalists who were involved in the investigation. The editor of the *Zimbabwe Independent* was not available for interview at the time of completing the research. For the *Standard* newspaper, which was behind the *Electoral malpractices*, I interviewed the main investigative journalist behind the *Electoral malpractices* investigation and journalists who had nothing to do with the investigation, funders from EU and VMCZ and media development representatives from MISA Zimbabwe. I was unable to interview members of Team Pachedu who prefer to work anonymously. In Eswatini, I interviewed the co-founder and main journalist of *Inhlase* and collaborating partners from other centres in South Africa, Lesotho, and Botswana including a non-executive director of the *IJHub*. For *Swaziland News*, I interviewed the editor and main journalist of the publication and one of the funding representatives from OSISA. Due to the sensitivity of the journalism done by *Swaziland News*, other members of the editorial team could not be available for interviews. No legal practitioners were interviewed in the research as there was no mention of their direct involvement in

these investigations. However, the editors and journalists mentioned that legal practitioners often play an advisory role in journalism to prevent potential lawsuits.

5.6 Data collection

The research employed individual in-depth interviewing as the main method of data collection and narrative analysis, which was a complementary method. Full details of how the methods were employed in the research are discussed below.

5.6.1 In depth semi-structured interviewing

In depth semi-structured interviewing was useful for getting the insights behind the experiences, opinions, and activities of the actors (Kvale 2007; McNamara 2009). I developed an interview guide for editors, journalists, technical specialists/technologists, and funders(see Appendices A, B, C and D) where I wrote down important questions to ask and listened carefully to the actors as they spoke about what they did in response to the questions. Some of the questions I asked the journalists and editors included:

1. What was your [editorial/technical] background and/or main area of responsibility prior to the start of the collaborative investigative project?
2. What was your role in the collaboration?
3. Prior to the investigation, had you worked on any other collaborative investigative projects? If so, can you tell me a little bit about how this specific project differed from these earlier efforts?
4. Who did you collaborate with?
5. How much did you collaborate with others outside your organisation for this collaborative project?
6. Who oversaw the collaboration?
7. Who had most influence in determining the output of the final news story?
8. What were the main activities done in the collaboration? (See **Appendix A and B** for full lists of questions for editors and journalists).

I asked follow-up questions where I needed more clarity or elaboration. I did interviews using video conference tools via Zoom and Microsoft Teams. The interviews had to be done online because of Covid-19, and this was unavoidable after the university suspended all face-to-face data collection methods because of the pandemic restrictions and threat to life. In addition, the interviewees were physically inaccessible because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Each interview lasted a minimum of 45 minutes with some lasting up to an hour. As I did the interviews, I wrote down important points which were emerging on a notebook and issues to follow up on. Through interviewing, I acquired individual experiences of how CIJ is done from the actors' perspective.

The advantage of using a video conferencing tool such as Zoom was that it enabled me to see the interviewees, particularly those who did not mind having their camera on and therefore providing me with an opportunity to be able to analyse non-verbal cues such as facial expressions, changing tone which would be important for the data. The experience was different from in person interviews, as these non-verbal cues are not easily picked up when trying to negotiate and manage various aspects of online interviewing such as checking questions, adjusting volume and network challenges etc. I also recorded the interviews so that I could analyse the videos later. Other interviewees preferred not to have their video on during the Zoom/Teams calls citing challenges of limited internet bandwidth and this had a disadvantage, as I could not pick up any non-verbal cues except hesitations in the voice. However, doing interviews online did increase the chance for respondents to talk to me as they were easily accessible online and it was less costly for me because there was no travel involved.

In depth semi-structured interviewing was particularly useful for getting the story behind participants' lived experiences, opinions, and activities (Kvale, 2007; Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Unlike structured interviewing, "semi-structured interviewing seeks to lived experiences of the actors from their own perspective" (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, 27). Furthermore, what makes the interviews semi-structured is that "it is neither an open everyday conversation nor a closed questionnaire" (ibid). It is conducted according to an interview guide with themes and suggested questions (Kvale and

Brinkmann, 2009). An advantage of individual in-depth interviewing was that it resulted in new insights resulting in new interpretations of well-known phenomena and the production of substantial new knowledge to the field of CIJ (Kvale, 2007). This however depended on my ability as the interviewer to establish rapport and set a free and safe environment with and for the interviewees (ibid). Qualitative interviews also provided the opportunity of seeking clarity where contradictory and ambiguous information were provided and establish if these contradictions are characteristic of the interviewee's world (Kvale, 2007). As a qualitative researcher, I considered Brennen (2013)'s advice that research questions should be open-ended in nature to allow one to understand a variety of potential responses, experiences, and connections. This allowed me to discover aspects of the topic that I may not have previously considered. Questions beginning with how, why, which as opposed to what allow for that (Berger, 1998).

In addition, the advantage of using individual in-depth interviews in this study was to reveal interrelations and associations between actors, actants, and the activities they undertook in the process of doing CIJ (King and Honnocks, 2010). Seidman (2006) notes that interviewing allows respondents to reflect and make sense of their experience and for audiences to understand the lived experience. It was important for me to understand the context to produce knowledge that considered the situated perspectives of the respondents (King and Honnocks, 2010). I communicated the perspective from which I was approaching my work so that interviewees can understand where I was coming from (Kvale, 2007). I paid attention to what the actors said about themselves and the collaboration to avoid imposing my own terms and understandings.

According to Mabrook (2019, 96) "scholarship applying ANT within journalism studies suggests ethnography is the most-used method of data collection" to observe the associations between actors and actants". Ethnography is defined as an "experiential, explorative research method in which the physical presence and sensory experience of the researcher play a part" Müller (2021, 3). In ethnography, the researcher puts him/herself in the situation and engages in fieldwork, interviews, and observes people

and places (Müller, 2021). In the terms of ANT, “the time has come to have a much closer look at the type of aggregates thus assembled and at the ways they are connected to one another” (Latour 2005, 22). Latour (2005) further acknowledges that it is important to understand all actors and their interconnections and the activities in which they are engaged. He further states that actors should be given “some room to express themselves.” (2005, 142). This study was unable to use ethnography due to the suspension of face-to-face data collection because of the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Instead, data from semi-structured individual interviewing and narrative analysis were triangulated which yielded important data on the practice of CIJ in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Eswatini. I started transcribing as soon as I completed the first interview. This enabled me to identify issues that needed further exploration in subsequent interviews and helped me to assess whether data had reached saturation (Hennink, et al., 2020). The recorded sound and written text made up the transcripts that I analysed for meaning (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Potentially sensitive information was anonymised, and all the respondents de-identified as journalist 1 or 2, as will be seen in chapters 6, 7 and 8. Transcription enabled me to capture the respondents’ own phrases and expressions which provided the rich detail I used to support my analysis in the findings’ chapters. The interest in transcription was less on the speech mechanics and focused more on the informational content of the interview and associated meanings (Hennink et al., 2020).

The interview method is not without its problems. A disadvantage of interviewing is that they can be time consuming. In addition, it is important to acknowledge researcher subjectivity, because the interview is “not a conversation between equal partners, since the researcher defines and controls the situation” (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, 3). This called for continuous reflexivity and creating a free space for interviewees to express themselves freely (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). “Rather than locating the meanings and narratives to be known solely in the subjects, or the researchers, ...the process of knowing through conversations is intersubjective and social, involving interviewer and interviewee as co-constructors of knowledge” (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, 18). Interviewees may be nervous to speak and may lie which can negatively impact the quality of the data. As explained earlier, triangulation was important in complementing data acquired to ensure validity and reliability.

5.6.2 Narrative Analysis

Narrative analysis was complementary to the main method which was interviewing. Narrative analysis of documents and websites was done before the interviews and provided a helpful precursor to interviewing key research subjects. It allowed for the identification of issues crucial to explore and to provide a context for interpretation of the interviews (Devereux 2007). This method involved analysing purposively selected stories, editorial policies, funding policies, reports, press codes and websites associated with the collaborative investigative projects in newspapers in South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Eswatini. The documents were purposively selected as these are the materials where the organisations constructed narratives about how they worked, whether collaboration was important to them, who they partnered with, who was funding them and how much they have acquired from the donors. Press codes had valuable information about the values that the organisations considered important, and these were accessible from the websites. I went through the documents and websites checking what was written about collaboration, funding, actors, and values guiding their work to understand the core narrative of the media organisations. The documents were of diverse sizes, funding reports were single to two pages which I downloaded from the media organisations' websites. Editorial policies had one to two pages.

In terms of stories, I purposively selected stories written for the investigations under analysis. 20 stories were purposively selected and analysed from the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation to understand how they were framed and who was quoted. In Zimbabwe, 5 stories were purposively selected and analysed for the *Chiadzwa* investigation and 5 for the *Electoral malpractices*. In Eswatini, 10 stories were purposively selected and analysed for *Inhlase* and 10 for *Swaziland News*. The stories provided more information on themes, who wrote them and how they are framed. In analysing the documents, I kept it in mind that the articles are produced in specific economic, political, and social contexts. Narrative analysis enabled me to understand what the actors said about themselves, in terms of what kinds of investigative journalism they do, what they say about collaboration, who they fund (donors) and the areas of priorities for their donations. In terms of the stories that were produced for the investigations under study, I sought to understand what the stories were about.

5.7 Ethical considerations

Research ethics were important to consider throughout the research process as they are present in problem formulation, design, data gathering, analysis and presentation of findings. All these stages require integrity, honesty, and critical reflection, as well as ensuring that the work is in accordance with the ethical guidelines of City, University London. Because the research involved human participants, I was careful in how I interacted with them to avoid any potential harm or revealing sensitive information (Alred, 2008; Blaikie and Priest, 2019). This calls for “taking into account a range of responsibilities towards them, such as: limits on what they can be expected to do or experience in the course of the pursuit of knowledge; the conditions under which they are recruited and continue in the research; what happens to information obtained from and about them; and the consequences of their participation” (Blaikie and Priest, 2019: 67). Ethical clearance was granted by the Department of Journalism’s ethical clearance committee. Some of the important ethical principles I considered in the research included treating all participants with respect (Walliman, 2018), informing participants that their participation is voluntary, and they may withdraw at any time of the research process (Blaikie and Priest, 2019). Following the advice provided by Brennen (2013), participants were not pressured or coerced to participate. Informed consent involved fully and accurately informing participants that the research is an academic endeavour conducted by myself and that it is not funded by anybody (Blaikie and Priest, 2019, Brennen, 2013). Following Kvale (2007)’s advice, I informed the actors about who will have access to the interview, that parts or the entirety of the interview may be published. I avoided raising false expectations and was transparent that I am a student researcher and that the research had no institutional backing to influence policy change (Walliman, 2018).

In addition, participants were made aware that their role was to answer questions and share their experiences of doing collaborative investigative journalism. I made the participants aware that they can refuse to answer a question if they do not want to answer it or freely withdraw from the research process at any time (Priest, 2010). Their consent to participate in the research was obtained in writing. Where verbal consent was obtained, it was documented (Blaikie and Priest, 2019). Where

confidential information was obtained, participants were afforded the right to privacy and protection from harm and risk through non-disclosure of the information and not identifying them with their responses (ibid). If data which identifies them is released, participants need to agree to it (Kvale, 2007). I am also aware that there could be conflicts of interest between management, editors and journalists which would require protection, for those making criticisms against the media organisation in question (Walliman, 2018). Respondents were informed that once the data has been anonymised/published participants will no longer be able to withdraw it. In relation to data storage, I complied with the Data protection acts that apply to the study and got guidance from the Office of Data Protection at City, University of London, to devise a storage system that is safe and accessible to me. Records were kept on an encrypted City laptop.

5.8 Data analysis

The method of data analysis that I used in the study is narrative analysis defined by Hennink et al., (2020, 209) as examining issues within the life context of individuals. I immersed myself in the data which helped me to become close to it and identify unique perspectives of my respondents. Like the analysis of funding reports, websites, press codes, and stories discussed earlier, I was able to examine and analyse what the various actors involved in CIJ said about their experiences of participating in the collaborations under study. The purpose of analysing narrative data was to understand subjective and social constructions of the actors (both journalistic and non-journalistic actors' lived experiences (Hennink, et al., 2020, Flick 2014). Narrative analysis also enabled me to "form an evidence-based understanding of the research issues" (Hennink, et al., 2020, 212).

The data analysis process begun as I collected the data. When I noticed issues that respondents were raising repeatedly and were relevant to the research topic, I developed them into codes/themes. The codes I developed were also informed by concepts from the literature and the theoretical framework (Hennink et al., 2020, Blumer, 1954; Christians and Carey, 1989). This made the analytic process an interplay between induction and deduction (Hennink et al., 2020). An inductive approach is when codes, concepts and theory are derived from the data while in a

deductive one they are derived from the literature review and theoretical framework (Hennink et al., 2020). The analysis process continued while I was transcribing where I took note of emerging themes, concepts, and relationships.

I identified the main broad themes as the following: main actors and actants, technological affordances, importance of funding, security concerns and political and economic context and media freedom and journalists' normative understandings. Developing codes was important as I broke up the data into "smaller but meaningful parts for analysis" (Hennink et al., 2020, 219). To develop the codes, I drew on both the theoretical framework and literature review and read a third of my transcribed data to identify the issues, reflecting on their meaning and capturing them in codes (Hennink et al., 2020). Identifying codes in the data was important for reflecting the issues that the actors considered extremely important in the collaborations (ibid). In the process of analysing the transcription reports for these codes/themes, I examined the content of the transcription reports, identifying the issues raised, threads of the story, category of the issues, and the participant's interpretation of the events or experiences (Hennink et al., 2020, 209-210). In interpreting the data, I went beyond what is directly said and worked relationships of what was said (Kvale, 2007). The analysis process led me to formulate the core meanings of the various actors involved in CIJ. After analysing the transcripts and coming up with core meanings for different individuals, I compared across individuals and was able to construct the overarching narrative regarding how CIJ was being practiced in the various country contexts. As the researcher who understood what I was looking for, I did the narrative analysis and used the NVIVO software for storage and better organisation my analysis files. NVIVO also enabled me to search text and retrieve coded segments of my data for closer analysis (Hennink, et al., 2020). It also gave me the flexibility to modify and edit my analysis as I went. According to Hennnink et al., (2020, 230) searching through data "may be prone to error if done by hand, therefore software can lead to more comprehensive and consistent analysis". After I was satisfied that I had gone through all the codes and taken note of all connections in the data and documented all issues that were emerging, I began the write up process.

In terms of reporting the findings, I followed Blaikie and Priest's (2019) advice that results should be faithfully reported and to anticipate effects of publication on participants. Being neutral in the use of language helped in avoiding discrimination and stereotyping participants (Walliman, 2018). Furthermore, I did my best to provide accurate descriptions of what I did, how I did it, the information obtained, and techniques used. Reporting interview data involved providing quotes in their context. This included providing the interview context of the quote, including the question that prompted an answer (Kvale, 2007). In relation to data storage, I complied with the Data protection act and sought guidance from the Office of Data Protection at City, University of London to devise a storage system that is safe and accessible.

5.9 Limitations of the research

The research had some limitations. The problem of researcher bias arose, especially when I had to interview journalists that I have previously worked with in Zimbabwe. To mitigate this challenge, I made it clear to them that I was coming to them as a researcher who was interested in learning more about collaborative journalism and asked them as many questions as possible and made several follow ups to get clarity on how they were collaborating. The inability to do interviews physically or observe the actors directly due to suspension of face-to-face data collection because of the Covid-19 pandemic was another limitation of the study. This limitation did not stop me from doing the research as I made use of video and audio web-conferencing tools such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Google Meet and got easy access to the respondents who were remote. Latour (2005) proposes that a good ANT account should not only be based on actors' expressions, but also consideration of their behaviours. Ethnography would have given the researcher an opportunity to see how investigative journalism plays out in practice by observing different actors in the process of collaboration. Although ethnography is the most preferred method in ANT research (Anderson and Kreiss, 2013), the suspension of face-to-face data collection methods due to the Covid-19 pandemic at City, University of London, meant that this was no longer a possibility. As mentioned before, I was able to access the respondents remotely and data triangulation of interviews and narrative analysis was important for the study's validity. In addition, since the research chose specific cases to study, it was not possible to generalise findings to other case studies. The findings are useful

and can still be used in future research on CIJ to analyse other types of collaborations taking place in the countries under study and in other countries in southern Africa. Doing interviews online had its own limitations of not being able to see the verbal cues of actors particularly when they had their cameras off because of bandwidth problems. Network interruptions also meant that it was difficult to have a fully flowing interview. Because of the problems I also needed to be careful in how I interacted with the interviewees bearing in mind that some may be directly or indirectly affected by it.

5.10 Conclusion

This chapter has explained the methodology used to answer the research questions of the study. It discussed the overall aim of the research and the research design and then went on to discuss the interpretative research paradigm, within which this research is located and discussed the qualitative research methodology. Case studies, individual in-depth interviews and narrative analysis are then discussed, which are the methods that the research used to explore how CIJ is being practiced in southern African states namely South Africa, Eswatini and Zimbabwe. The next chapter discusses findings of collaboration in South Africa.

Chapter 6

Collaborative Investigative Journalism in South Africa

Introduction

This chapter examines CIJ in South Africa through an analysis of the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation of 2017. The *#GuptaLeaks* project is important for this research because it is an award-winning investigation widely regarded by industry as a positive example of the power and impact collaborative journalism within the South African context. The investigation contributed to the downfall of former President Jacob Zuma, the firing of ministers who were linked to the Guptas and led to the set-up of the State Commission of enquiry on the depth of state capture in South Africa. The chapter draws on Latour's Actor Network Theory (ANT) and the Hierarchy of Influences theory to make sense of the findings from individual in depth interviews with 14 key actors involved in the investigation namely the editors, journalists, and Information Technology (IT) specialist; as well as narrative analysis of published stories, editorial policies, funding policies, reports, and websites of the media organisations that were involved. The chapter begins with a summary of the findings and then goes on to provide a case description of *#GuptaLeaks* investigation including the kinds of stories that were reported, who was involved and how the collaboration took place. The chapter specifically discusses how collaboration is being practiced in South Africa and identifies the human and non-human actors in the collaboration (RQ1). It goes on to discuss the most important factors influencing CIJ and shaping journalistic agency, and the interconnections between various actors? (RQ2).

The *#GuptaLeaks* investigation was a national cross-media collaboration done by three leading media organisations namely *amaBhungane*, *News24* and *Daily Maverick* following a leak of more than 300 000 emails provided to the *Daily Maverick* by the whistleblowers through their intermediary. The collaboration brought together journalists, an IT specialist and a money laundering expert who helped journalists identify patterns of wrongdoing. The editors made the most important decisions about the collaboration, for example, who to bring into the collaboration, story editing, assigning responsibilities and overseeing the entire project. Journalists engaged in

checking the leak for story ideas with the help of the IT specialist and money laundering expert, verification, and story writing. In terms of how the collaboration was done, the collaborators first chose to work offline for fear of surveillance and attacks by the Guptas and later went online after the leak had been disclosed by a member of the team to competing publications such as *Sunday Times* and *City Press* and civil society groups who began writing stories and publishing from it. The journalists and editors argue that when the leak was shared with other media organisations and civil society groups, they felt safer as their fear of surveillance and attacks was lessened. Technology was important at various stages of the news production and dissemination processes, in storing and analysing the leak, research, typing stories, communication, information sharing and interacting with readers. The editors and journalists said that they did not experience any tensions as they were driven by one mandate of promoting the public interest.

6.1 Case description of the #GuptaLeaks investigation

In 2019, *News24*, the *Daily Maverick*'s Scorpio and *amaBhungane* won the Global Shining Light Award of the Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN) for the #GuptaLeaks investigation. In 2017, the same team, made up of 19 journalists, won the Taco Kuiper Award for #GuptaLeaks (Harber 2018). The #GuptaLeaks involved over 300 000 emails, including images, attachments, bank statements and passports and has been dubbed the 'African WikiLeaks' (amaBhungane website). The investigation implicated the Gupta brothers, Rajesh, Ajay, and Atul, said to be working closely with one of former president of South Africa's sons Duduzane Zuma in corruption involving the awarding of government tenders and contracts (Harber 2020). The Guptas are a family of Indian immigrants who arrived in South Africa from the early 1990s, attracted by the business promise of a newly democratic, post-apartheid state (Gupta Leaks website). The investigative stories were based on the leak and focused on the corruption involving the Gupta brothers in money laundering, stealing pension funds, and engaging in corrupt mining deals among others (**see Table 1 below**). The stories reference the leaks and some of them are hyperlinked to the Drop Box file which contained the leaks. By the end of 2017, a total of 80 stories had been published and 150 by the end of 2020 (amaBhungane website) and the

investigation has been called the greatest investigative journalism project in South African history (Saunderson-Meyer 2018). The *#GuptaLeaks*’ popularity in South Africa has led to its publication in a book *So, for the record: Behind the Headlines in an Era of State Capture*, which narrates the positive and negative moments in South African journalism by veteran investigative journalist and University of Witwatersrand adjunct professor, Anton Harber. The investigation is also included in a book *We have a Game changer* of 2017 by the *Daily Maverick* which discusses some of publication's best investigations.

The Gupta brothers fled South Africa after state capture revelations and alleged government interference through ministerial appointments. As of 2022, the Gupta brothers are “sanctioned by the Magnitsky Act in the US and brothers Rajesh and Atul are under an Interpol red notice and few enablers arrested” (Daily Maverick website, 2022). KPMG and McKinsey were also implicated in the Guptas’ affairs. As the stories were being published, the *#GuptaLeaks* team faced the challenge of a disinformation social media campaign (on Twitter) by a British Public Relations firm, Bell Pottinger which sought to discredit the investigation by creating fake Twitter accounts. Bell Pottinger had to close for using bots to fuel hate speech against white South Africans (Allsop 2018). The investigation is lauded by industry for promoting public trust in journalism in a context where disinformation undermines media credibility (Allsop, 2018). Despite this, there is still doubt in the legitimacy of South Africa’s watchdog press due to the disconnect that exists between the majority of South Africans and racial bias in the media considered to be hindering the country’s developing democracy (Allsop 2018).

The three publications which collaborated in the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation: *Daily Maverick*, *amaBhungane* and *News24*, are among the most widely read publications in South Africa. All three publications subscribe to the South African press code for print and online media which sets out the guidelines and principles that media should abide by. The Press Code identifies truth, accuracy, fairness, and balance as some of its core values (SA Press Code). According to the press code, media organisations should operate independently from political, economic, and personal influence (SA Press code).

Some of the #GuptaLeaks team members: [Wits University website](#)

Daily Maverick is a South African daily online newspaper co-founded in 2009 by Branko Brkic (Editor-in-chief) and Styli Charalambos (Chief Executive Officer, who are responsible for the editorial and business strategy of the newspaper. It is run by an independently owned, private company with no affiliation to any other media group, political party, or religious organisation (Daily Maverick website). The website does not explicitly state its newsroom composition, instead it says that it has created “more than 120 permanent and near permanent positions” and that its journalists are among the most experienced in the country (Daily Maverick website). Its funding mix is diverse, combining donations, advertising, events, selling books, t-shirts, and reader contributions via subscriptions, with 17,000 members in November 2021 (Daily Maverick website). Diversifying funding limits editorial influence from a single donor. Its investigative unit, Scorpio, is mostly grant funded and was formed during the time of the #GuptaLeaks investigation (Daily Maverick website). The publication receives grants and donations from individuals for investigative reporting, climate crisis and internship training (Daily Maverick website). The publication explicitly states that “no individual donor contributes more than 5% of our total income”. It is also explicit in that “no advertisers, members, grant funders, donors or shareholders are involved in day-to-day or long-term editorial decisions” which shows the publication’s commitment to “independent reporting”. The publication is funded by local and international foundations and trusts including Donald Gordon Foundation, Vital Strategies, Roy McAlpine Charitable Foundation, Claude Leon Foundation, Open Society Foundation, Millennium Trust, Elaine & David Potter Foundation and ABSA (Daily Maverick website). The publication prides itself in offering “quality, accuracy and building an environment of confidence in a world full of misinformation and disinformation” (Daily Maverick website). ‘Building a relationship of trust’ from readers and ‘defending truth’ are identified as important values of the publication (ibid).

In contrast to the *Daily Maverick*, *amaBhungane* (dung beetles in Isizulu) is an independent, South African non-profit newsroom. Launched in 2010, the non-profit combines journalism and capacity building of other investigative units in the southern

African region done through the Investigative Journalism Hub (IJHub). The *IJHub* is registered as a non-profit which brings together investigative journalism centres in the region (amaBhungane website). The publication unambiguously states that it “collaborates with” and “supports investigative centres” in the region showing that collaboration is part of its DNA. The *IJHub* is discussed in more detail in the next chapter, which illustrates its close link with the Eswatini based centre *Inhlase*. *AmaBhungane* has a mix of Black and white female and male investigative journalists. *AmaBhungane* engages in “advocacy” and states that “we lobby, campaign, exercise laws and litigate to help secure the information rights – access to information and media freedoms – that are the lifeblood of our field” (amaBhungane website). Apart from publishing investigations on its own website, *amaBhungane* publishes via a range of publication partners including *Daily Maverick* and republishes stories of investigative centres which are part of the *IJHub*. It encourages leaks via its website, phone, or emailing through its tip-offs’ webpage. According to Harber (2020), amaBhungane has strict rules about who it takes money. The Centre overtly states on its website that “we do not sell advertising. We do not take funding from governments or corporates. And we do not take funding to investigate specific stories or themes that has conditions regarding our editorial decisions such as which stories we do and what they say” (amaBhungane website). It takes money from individual businesspeople and their personal foundations and publishes details of all donations it receives above R10 000 (US\$650) (amaBhungane website). By clearly stating where and from whom it takes money, the publication shows its clear stance and efforts in limiting editorial influence which has been discussed in Chapter 3. Since 2010, the Centre has been at the forefront of holding power to account producing an average of 200 stories per year (Ntibinyane 2018) and has since its inception published investigations involving former president Zuma, his family, and the Guptas.

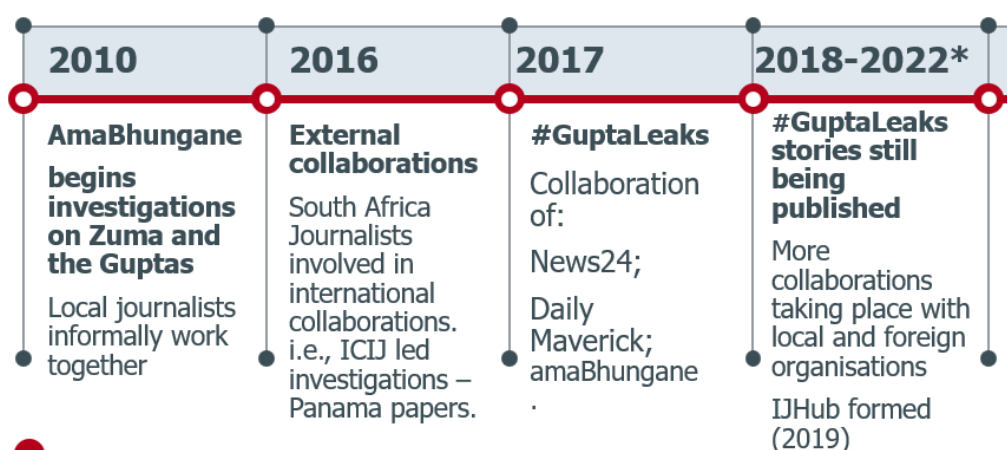
The final organisation in the collaboration, *News24*, is an English-language South African online news publication and is the largest in the country in terms of audience reach with more than one million daily readers and approximately 100 journalists based in Cape Town, Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban and Port Elizabeth (News24 website). The website does not specify the composition of its journalists in terms of

race or gender. The media organisation signed up more than 20 000 subscribers within 2 months when it launched its subscription service in 2020. As an online publication, it takes advantage of technological affordances offered by technology to present its news in various multimedia formats combining video, audio, and text. Its sister publication Network24, published in Afrikaans language is equally popular. The media house includes Fin24, Sport24, Channel24, Health24, Arts24, Parent24, Wheels24, W24, Ride24 and Business Insider SA (ibid). Created in October 1998 by Naspers, the publication is led by Editor-in-chief Adriaan Basson and has offices in Cape Town, Johannesburg among others (News24 website). *News24* is owned by *Media24*, South Africa's "leading media company, with interests in digital media and services, newspapers, magazines, e-commerce, book publishing, print and distribution" (News24 website). *Media24* is part of Naspers, a multinational group of media and e-commerce platforms. The publication covers breaking news and describes itself as playing a watchdog role by investigating and exposing wrongdoing and holding political and private power to account and covering a wide range of topics that reflect the diversity of South Africa (News24 website). There is nothing said explicitly on the website about engaging in collaborative journalism. In terms of the funding model, the publication combines reader subscriptions with advertising.

Timeline of #GuptaLeaks investigation

CIJ Timeline

#GuptaLeaks investigation



*No previous academic research on CIJ until 2022.

- External collaborations not researched. May be earlier than 2016.

The Gupta brothers and President Jacob Zuma's son Duduzane: [Daily Maverick](#)

Table 6.1 below provides examples of some of the stories from over 200 that were published under the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation since 2017. The stories are framed to portray the Gupta brother as villains.

Table 6.1 Story examples of the #GuptaLeaks investigation

Date	Headline
26 November 2017	#GuptaLeaks: KPMG missed money laundering red flags
24 November 2017	#GuptaLeaks: How multichoice paid the Guptas millions
14 November 2017	Exclusive: Gupta 'negotiator' and the R4bn Transnet IT deal
19 January 2018	#GuptaLeaks: Meet the money launderers
19 January 2018	#GuptaLeaks: Indian politician's deal with Gupta partner
8 March 2018	SAPS's #GuptaLeaks investigation finds irregularities and question marks
28 March 2018	The Nkonki Pact Part 1: How the Guptas bought themselves an auditor
3 May 2019	My big fat Gupta wedding-the movie
12 July 2019	Another Gupta wedding brings shadowy in-laws into the fold
2 September 2019	R349m stolen from pensioners in four days
5 September 2019	The barren Sahara: A lesson in money laundering

Source: [AmaBhungane website](#)

6.2 How is collaboration being practiced in South Africa? Who are the human and non-human actors in the collaboration?

The *#GuptaLeaks* investigation was a national level cross-media collaboration which brought together journalists and editors from three national publications *Daily Maverick*, *amaBhungane* and *News24* in South Africa alongside non-journalistic actors such as specialists in IT and money laundering, sources, and whistleblowers. The model can be defined as a one-off collaboration which brought together a non-permanent network of journalists and non-journalists thereby aligning with Stonbely (2017)'s temporary and co-creating model described as a one-time project which involves partners working together in story creation. In the words of ANT, the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation can be described as a translation process of a non-profit (*amaBhungane*), privately owned online publications (*Daily Maverick* and *News24*), and non-journalistic actors namely an information technology and a money laundering expert who worked anonymously, the whistle-blowers responsible for the leak and the news sources used by the journalists to verify information. This was against the usual practice of individual journalists and media organisations doing investigative journalism separately as competitors.

"The #GuptaLeaks was different. We hadn't before done such a big collaboration except that we had participated in the ICIJ efforts" (Editor 1 interview: 9 April 2021).

The quote above shows that *#GuptaLeaks* investigation was the first collaborative project which brought the three media organisations together, to work on a single project, share ideas and knowledge and author stories with a common objective of promoting the public interest. It was different from cooperative agreements that media organisations and journalists enter with "shared access to material used for individual ends" (Heft, 2021, 457). Before the investigation, the three media organisations had publishing deals in which they co-published their stories for wider reach. One editor said:

"There was a pre-existing, non-exclusive publication deal between amaBhungane and the Daily Maverick to start with -- a partnership if you like. When the #GuptaLeaks came along, that partnership was taken to a different level. It was no longer just amaBhungane supplying stories which

Daily Maverick would publish, but working together to obtain the leaks, analyse them and publish stories about them. The team was very quickly widened to include other journalists, experts, and media organisations, which turned it into what may be termed a full-scale collaboration” (Journalist 1 Interview: 9 April 2021).

The quote reveals that the partnership between *amaBhungane* and *Daily Maverick* existed before the *#GuptaLeaks*. They took the partnership to another level and brought in other players so they could tell the *#GuptaLeaks* corruption story. As the Actor-Network theory calls for the identification of all actors it is important to acknowledge other human actors involved in journalism production and distribution processes though these are often silenced or not recognised: “A news story is not solely the result of social forces. Multiple actors are associated in a complex network, from the truck to the cable man, from the easy-access notepad to a correctly held camera” (Primo and Zago, 2015, 42). The other human actors who indirectly participated in the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation such as telephone operators, personal assistants of the editors, the editors’ drivers, the postal services that were used in transporting the leak between Johannesburg and Cape Town among others are “invisible” (Primo and Zago, 2015, 41). Their invisibility arises from the “limitation of what is considered an actor” in journalism (Primo and Zago, 2015, 41). In the interviews with the editors and journalists, they saw themselves as doing journalism and did not mention the existence and value of the ‘invisible actors.’ This is like other case studies discussed in Chapters 7 and 8 on Zimbabwe and Eswatini, respectively, where journalists describe themselves as the ones doing journalism and the other human actors who support them remain invisible. In addition, the money laundering expert influenced the agenda of the stories as he is the one who could assess the documents and tell journalists where money laundering was involved.

The *#GuptaLeaks* investigation came about following a leak from a hard drive belonging to Sahara Computers executive Ashu Chawla (Harber 2020). Sahara Computers was a Gupta company which shut down in 2018 (Gupta Leaks website). In an excerpt about how the leak came about, Harber (2020) says:

“The hard drive John had picked up contained a few years of emails – hundreds of thousands of them – to and from Sahara Computers executive Ashu Chawla. He had taken the broken disk drive to a computer-repair company, but it was a difficult case, and it would have cost about R10 000 to

fix. Chawla had declined to pay. It was probably the costliest R10 000 he never spent. The damaged drive had been put onto a discard pile and went on a roundabout journey for some months before landing in a pile intended for spare parts, where on that quiet afternoon in 2016 John (not real name) went in search of a drive to work with. When Stan (not real name) realised whose drive, it was that John had picked up, he immediately told John to make two copies of the data. He wanted to look at the emails, but he was not in a hurry and the data needed some work to make it readable” (Harber 2020:no pg. So for the record).

The author goes on to say that:

“A few days later, when he had some spare time, Stan sat down and read a few of the emails, and then a few more. Then he put them aside for a while because he was busy and came back later and read some more. He slowly began to realise that he had in his hands information that could throw the whole issue wide open. ‘I realised,’ he told me in a 2019 interview, ‘that Zuma was not running the state. The Guptas were.’ Stan agreed to give the data to someone who had the skills and contacts to verify and process it. The realms of raw information had limited value without those who could make sense of it, turning it into something that told a story” (Harber 2020:no pg. So for the record).

The above excerpt details how the hard drive with the leaked emails ended up in the hands of the #GuptaLeaks team and that the whistleblowers wanted the emails made public so that the wider public could see the corruption the Guptas were involved in. The leak was shared with the *Daily Maverick* publication first, whose editor then invited the *amaBhungane* editor for the two organisations to collaborate. *News24* asked to join the collaboration at a later stage, after the disclosure of the leak:

“I was contacted by a source and when I saw how big the leak was, I contacted amaBhungane who were better positioned to investigate the Guptas because they had been on it for seven years. On the other side they had good journalists that we could learn as much as possible and as soon as possible from them. From day one, we made clear agreements on how we were going to work” (Editor 2 interview: 22 April 2021).

From the above quote, it can be noted that *amaBhungane* was considered an important partner because of their previous experience investigating the Guptas, which they had been doing since 2010. The leak, hard drive, and the internet gave birth to the investigation, are the important actants that brought the collaborating partners together. Thereafter, *Daily Maverick* and *amaBhungane* had to decide on how to work on the leak and brought into the collaboration South African millionaire

businessperson Magda Wierzycka, to fund the investigation. Due to fear of surveillance, hacking and attacks from the Guptas, the investigative journalists decided that they will move to Ireland to analyse the leaks and publish stories from there. Specifically, Wierzycka was invited into the project by the *Daily Maverick* editor to cater for the expenses of relocating the whistleblowers and funding the purchase of air tickets and accommodation costs for the team that was to go to Ireland. They later abandoned the idea of going to Ireland after being scooped by the *Sunday Times* and *City Press*, after Wierzycka had leaked the emails as discussed further below. One of the editors explained:

“We made plans to work on the leak in Ireland and the weekend when the Sunday Times started tweeting about the story, I was about to rent a massive house on a golf estate for the team because we did not know what would happen. What we did know is that we had a once in a lifetime project that will change the future of South Africa but what we did not know was, what is going to be the action of Zuma’s government and the Guptas? Remember they were in control of the state security they controlled the crime intelligence, and they were in control of some of the security squads that were dangerous” (Editor 2 interview: 22 April 2021).

This was supported by another editor, who expressed strongly how the whole team feared being hacked by the Guptas if they knew they were being investigated thus showing the problem of surveillance in South Africa which makes journalists to be afraid of pursuing the watchdog role as discussed in chapter 2.

“Our thinking at that time was that we did not know how the Guptas or how the state might react once there is publication so there was always the possibility of trumped-up charges, raids, hacking, physical harm, all those kinds of things. And we thought that if we were in a neutral third country, such as Ireland even if the other side got to know it that we were on to something big or up to something in relation to Zuma and the Guptas, for example, they could not really have touched us. So, we felt it would be much safer to be in a place like that” (Editor 1 interview: 9 April 2021).

Security and fear of surveillance was a major concern for those involved in the *#GuptaLeaks* as highlighted in the quote above. Despite the existence of a liberal media environment, South African investigative journalists continue to raise concerns about surveillance, attacks, or raids if they are known to be investigating those in power (see chapter 2). It is evident in the quote above that the editors chose Ireland as a destination of choice as they thought that it would become difficult for those who

wanted to attack them, to do so in a foreign land. Furthermore they planned to travel separately, using different routes and modes of transport to avoid suspicion.

The millionaire businessperson Wierzycka's involvement from the time the leak was acquired and giving her full access to the leak showed that the editors considered her an important part of the team. The editors or #GuptaLeaks project leaders considered her part of the "circle." (Editor 1 interview: 9 April 2021) However, Wierzycka later pulled out after disagreements on how to go about the investigation. According to the journalists and the editors, she had wanted the leak to be published on an online platform like WikiLeaks and shared with political actors. Explaining what transpired, one editor said:

"She was a columnist for Daily Maverick and is the richest businessperson in South Africa. She had been brought on board to fund the whistleblowers. They had to be relocated for their security and helped to settle abroad. She had suggested that the leak be taken to Julian Assange where it would have been published online and had wanted us to share it with political actors. So, we had a disagreement on that because that is not what journalists do. Journalists write and publish. They do not share information with political actors because giving them the raw data would imply that we are not there to serve the public but that we have become involved in factional fights and activism. Quite early on in our interactions she said that there must be a media, political and legal strategy. We said we are journalists, we do media, and we do not do politics and we do not do legal as that would be outside our mandate and that would be unprofessional of us" (Editor 1 interview: 9 April 2021).

The disagreement between the editors and Wierzycka on how to manage the leaks and conduct the journalism as shown by the above quote demonstrates two factors. First, that there were power dynamics and misunderstandings in their association which occurred due to different understandings of what journalism is and how it should be done. Secondly, the editors showed autonomy and the ability to exercise agency and power on how the investigation should be conducted thus preventing external influence on editorial. By refusing to i) work with politicians and ii) publish the leak on public platforms, in the "Assange way" as was being suggested by Wierzycka, the editors asserted their power and reinforced the narrow understanding of journalism as an exclusive role done by those who research and author stories. In the editors' understanding, Wierzycka was an outsider to the profession, and they were the insiders. This is a form of boundary work which journalists commonly do to

protect the field from outsiders (Carlson and Lewis, 2015). In this case, it can be argued that they were protecting themselves from direct influence from politicians who may have wanted to use the leak for political reasons. Wierzycka was not interviewed in the research. However with investigative journalism it is impossible to be impartial as stories are framed on moral grounds and often take the side of the oppressed and downtrodden (Ettema and Glasser, 1988). Journalists frame their stories to create moral outrage from citizens and call for reforms. This is evidenced in the way the #GuptaLeaks stories frame the Gupta brothers as evil people who were abusing power and harassing their employees with the help of the former president Zuma and his son Duduzane. In one story headlined *#GuptaLeaks: Working for the Guptas, where sexual harassment was part of the job* (5 July 2017), the journalist frames the story by foregrounding the voice of a former employee who says that she had to run away from one of the Gupta brothers who wanted to abuse her sexually. She is quoted saying “*It was the worst 24 hours of my life*” and that “*Tony Gupta allegedly tried to blackmail her into sexual favours if she wished to keep her job*”. The journalist says that “*a sex-pest culture went beyond the Guptas’ immediate employ.*”

Clashes over control and authority are common when new actors come into journalism (Carlson and Lewis, 2020). The journalists understood Wierzycka’s role ending with providing funds for the investigation and not deciding how to work on the leak, who to share the leak with and how to conduct the investigation. The editors perceived her actions as *non-journalistic* (my emphasis) and therefore posing a threat to professional journalism. The editors also showed a commitment to wanting to fulfil their journalistic obligations and be ethical. Carlson and Lewis (2020, 127) argue that “claims to journalistic professionalism rely on the assertion that news judgments should be free from outside influences...” In defining what journalists do, journalist two had this to say:

“We are journalists, and we know how investigations are done. We disagreed because she wanted us to work with the ANC (the South African ruling political party), but we said no so that we could do the stories the right way, talk to sources and verify information” (Journalist 2 interview: 26 April 2021).

The quote above reinforces the notion that the editors and journalists saw

themselves as the ones doing journalism. It can be argued that disagreements in the way an investigation should be conducted can have unforeseen consequences and may require a change of strategy, particularly when an important actor like a funder pulls out. Additionally, tensions can occur when a network of journalistic and non-journalistic actors come together due to different understandings of how an investigation should be done leading to them being perceived as threats and therefore expelled (Carlson and Lewis, 2020). Wierzycka later pulled out of the investigation. Since she had been given full access to the leak, the editors, and journalists from the three publications later learnt that she had reproduced it and shared copies of it with competing publications such as, *Sunday Times* and *City Press* among others, political parties, and civil society organisations. One editor had this to say:

“She stole the leak from us and made a copy of it and then said that she is out and that she does not want to do anything with us, including giving us any money which she promised, including funding the whistle-blowers. And she almost destroyed the whole project literally, she almost destroyed it.... That was the unpleasant part of the whole thing, as I mean being betrayed trust me, and especially in such a moment it is a very unpleasant feeling” (Editor 2 interview: 22 April 2021).

Another editor supported this emphasising how they were ‘scooped’ by *Sunday Times* and *City Press*.

“She then saw it fit to abscond with the copy of the leaks and she took it to the Sunday Times and City Press indirectly. They scooped us. To us that really was not that much of a problem in fact because to us it is about serving the public. It is about getting the story out there properly rather than being first with everything and we worried that it would expose the whistle-blowers” (Editor 1 interview: 9 April 2021).

By using the term scooped, it can be argued that the *#GuptaLeaks* team had wanted to be the first to break the Guptas story which was no longer possible when the *Sunday Times* and *City Press* were the first to do so. However, the editors and journalists argued that they did not worry much about being scooped since they were driven by the public interest. The above quote demonstrates that the easy reproduction of information in the digital era can have negative consequences as leaks can easily be multiplied and shared with competitors which may negatively impact an investigation. The quote also shows the importance of trust in investigative

journalism as one of the editors worried that the project was “*almost destroyed*” (Editor 2 interview: 22 April 2021). The editors also worried that the leak would compromise whistle-blower anonymity since the leak had been shared with them on the condition of total confidentiality. Discussions about whistle-blower protection have come onto the limelight as they play a significant role in putting issues of public interest onto the agenda, yet governments in various contexts are using prosecutions to punish them or they are targeted by those involved in wrong-doing if they become public. Protecting whistle-blowers has its own legal issues which require consideration by journalists (see Lashmar, 2017).

Still on the issue of trust, all actors interviewed agreed that trust was incredibly important to the investigation, despite the betrayal when Wierzycka leaked the emails. The journalistic actors indicated that trust was founded on friendship, and they did not sign any legal documents such as contracts or non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) as often happens with global collaborations such as the ICIJ led ones. One journalist remarked:

“Ours was a small circle kind of people based on trust much more than legal agreements. That would have been the rationale there” (Journalist 3 interview: 12 April 2021).

Even after the leak, they did not see the need to sign any NDAs which arguably demonstrates a laxity on their part as it could have helped enforce confidentiality and privacy going forward. In addition, their collaboration was flexible with no predefined schedules thus can be said to be low degree (Heft, 2021) unlike the ones that have predefined routines and schedules and managed by one strong entity (high degree) such as ICIJ led ones. However, the degree of flexibility can vary in some collaborations on a continuum from low to high (Heft, 2021). After the *Sunday Times* and *City Press* published the initial stories, the #GuptaLeaks team focused on analysing the leak, writing, and publishing stories.

“Once the Sunday Times had broken it and it was all out in the open, then off course, all the advantages of being elsewhere were much diminished. In fact, that other media also had it, kind of spread the risks. We did feel much safer then” (Editor 1 interview: 9 April 2021).

The above quote reveals that when the leak spread, the collaborating actors felt

safer from being attacked or raided by the Guptas and felt more confident to continue with the investigation in their South African newsrooms. This was important as it reduced the total funding they would have needed to travel and pay for accommodation in Ireland.

The technical complexity of leaks or huge data (more than 300 000 emails with attachments) in the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation necessitated the involvement of actors with backgrounds outside a newsroom, for example the IT specialist, a computer science graduate, and the money laundering specialist. Their roles were important in the success of the investigation by helping to identify money laundering in the documentation, making documents readable, and identifying wrongdoing on the leak. This leads to the conclusion that the *#GuptaLeaks* was an association of journalists, editors, whistle-blowers, technology, the IT and money laundering specialist, the public, sources, and the businessperson brought in to fund the investigation. It also demonstrates how investigative journalism of a collaborative nature is characterised by journalists and professionals outside of journalism (Chua and Duffy, 2019), who share a passion for holding power to account and share skills and knowledge to achieve a common goal of holding power to account. The responsibilities of the technical expert are discussed in detail further below.

The investigation demonstrated that diverse actors and actants are contributing to journalistic processes (Primo and Zago, 2015; Ryfe 2022). Actants such as the leak, computers, the internet, mobile phones, WhatsApp, e-mail clients, the Optical Recognition App (OCR) app, Signal and websites were part of the investigation showing how journalism is embedded within technology as they could not have been able to do the tasks they did with technology (Primo and Zago, 2015). More information about how the software and tools were used in the investigation can be found in a discussion further below. The investigation represents a kind of 'network journalism' which brings together various actors, particularly journalists from the three media organisations and non-journalistic actors who are contributing to journalism and disrupting its boundaries (Chua and Duffy, 2019; Holton and Belair-Gagnon, 2018). At the same time, some actors are excluded (Wierzycka) when they do not

work in tandem with journalistic values and are perceived as threats as argued earlier.

Regarding how the *#GuptaLeaks* managed competitive tensions which often arise when journalists from different media organisations collaborate, all the editors and journalists involved argued that there was no competition as they all worked under a single command and a common vision.

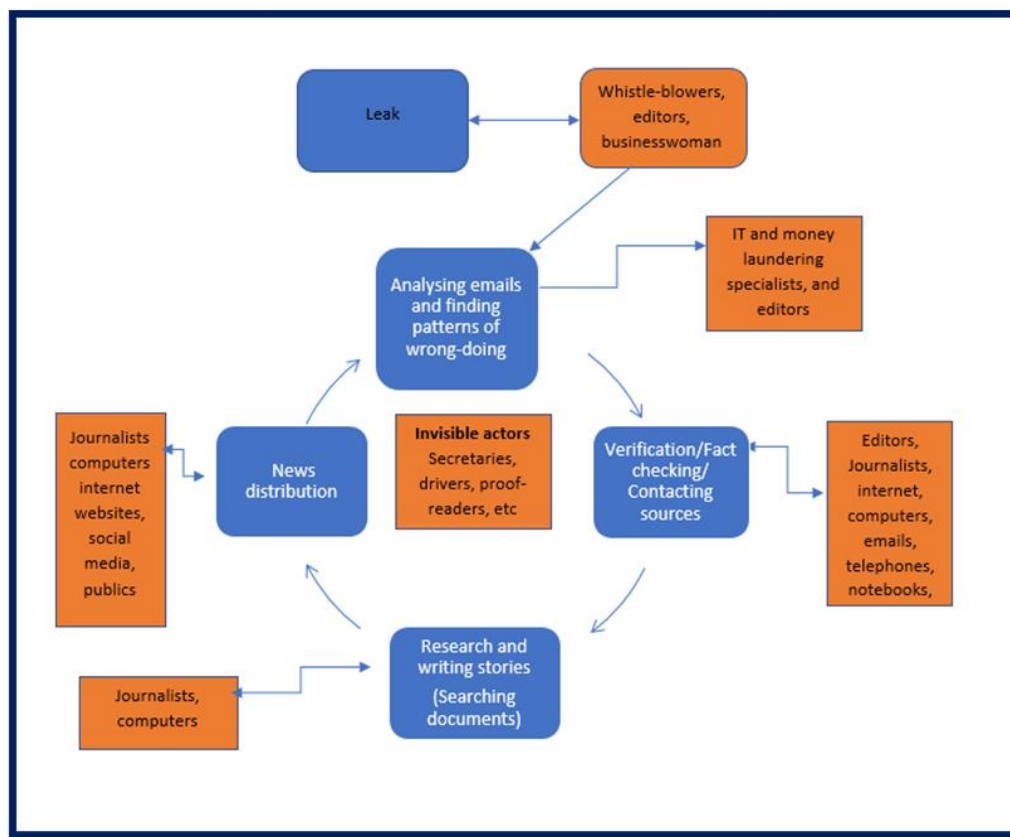
“Within our collaboration there was no competition as we were all working together under a single command, though a relatively loose command, and published simultaneously. But as you know, because Magda Wierzycka took the leaks from us and proliferated them before our planned publication start, there were others who started publishing before us (Sunday Times, City Press). They remained our competition throughout that time. But it was benign competition which we did not feel had to be minimised or countered. The public interest in the matter was so great, and the leaks so vast, that it would not have been right to hog it for ourselves – which is also why we further opened the leaks to other journalists via an OCCRP portal” (Editor 1 Interview: 9 April 2021).

The above quote demonstrates that the collaborating partners did not compete among themselves as they published the stories simultaneously and on a joint site since their vision of promoting the public interest and belief in the watchdog role overlapped and converged. The *Sunday Times* and *City Press* who had published the leak before them were their main competitors though the *#GuptaLeaks* team appreciated that the stories on the Guptas were reaching a wider audience which would generate more impact and therefore did not need a counter strategy. On the joint site, the stories were packed as text (with varying lengths, less than 30, 40 or more than 40 paragraphs), images and videos. As digital native organisations, they leveraged on their online expertise to produce various multi-media packages taking advantage of the digital affordances of technology to publish stories on platforms thus reaching and interacting with a global audience. By publishing on websites and via social media platforms, the journalists exercised their agency and reinforced the notion advanced by Primo and Zago (2015, 38) that in the digital era, “technology seems to disappear in journalistic practices as it blends into everyday routines”. In addition, readers were able to engage with the stories and draw on their lived

experiences to make sense of the stories in a politically polarised environment. The stories had diverse bylines showing who had collaborated on a story. For instance, some bylines acknowledged the journalists and editors involved in a specific story (e.g., *Journalist A, Journalist B and Journalist C*), the name of a single media organisation (e.g., *amaBhungane*), two media organisations (e.g., *amaBhungane and Daily Maverick*), a collaboration of reporters from the same organisation (e.g., *News24 reporters*) and across organisations (e.g., *Journalist A for Scorpio with amaBhungane*).

In terms of the steps taken from the leak up to the publication of the stories, I have created a visual representation below which summarises the activities done by various actors and identified the actors involved (both visible and invisible). It was not possible to list all invisible actors as they are endless.

#Gupta Leaks investigation visual representation



Key

- Steps involved in the Gupta Leaks
- Actors (human and non-human)

The above visual shows the steps involved in the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation after the leak had been acquired by the *Daily Maverick*. It also identifies the actors and what they did in the investigation. The process is cyclical to show that it was an ongoing process and stories based on the leak continue to be published to this date in 2022. The model of collaboration exemplified by the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation shows that journalists from traditional media that are powerful still dominate: there was no involvement by citizens or amateurs. Similar observations are made by Berglez and Gearing (2018) in reference to ICIJ and Heft's (2021) small or medium collaborations usually driven from the bottom by journalists. The dominance of senior experienced and elite media organisations in the *#GuptaLeaks*, shows the challenges -or lack of effort – to collaborate with freelancers, smaller media organisations or student

journalists. The journalists played important roles, researching, writing, and editing stories. The editors made important decisions and influenced the course of events and the actions that journalists and other actors needed to take. Journalists who were interviewed confirmed this. One journalist had this to say:

“3 or 4 journalists worked together on a story and one person took the lead. We created folders where we added the information that we found. That one person is the one who drafts it. You would have a period where we all do research together, share that information and discuss it. But then one person is going to sit down and write it. That person is going to bounce it back to everyone to make sure everyone is on the same page and then it goes through the ordinary editing process etc. Major decisions or strategising were done by the editors” (Journalist 5 Interview: 14 May 2021).

The above quote shows the roles that the journalists and editors undertook in the story-development process. Individual journalists took a lead on topics they had previously researched, and the editors made the important decisions of the collaboration and edited the stories. In terms of the amount of time it took for the #GuptaLeaks news stories to be researched, written, and published, the journalists involved were forced to publish faster than they had initially planned after being scooped by the *Sunday Times* newspaper. They published quicker than what investigative journalists normally do when they spend months and months investigating a story.

“You know, I think at the time there was a lot of coffee and a lot of adrenalin once the bomb had burst prematurely because of the Sunday Times publication. At the start it was very intense publication with relatively short turn-around times. But at that time, we had done quite a bit of research and people had started acquainting themselves with some of the material. I would say compared to the time that we would usually spend on a story that went much faster because there was so much to get through and often the stories were kind of relatively well defined... So, there was so much material there that was just kind of immediately publishable” (Editor 1 Interview: 9 April 2021).

The quote above shows that after the #GuptaLeaks team was scooped by the *Sunday Times* and *City Press*, the collaborating partners published the stories much more quickly. It can be argued that leak-driven investigative journalism has the potential of reducing the time taken to investigate an issue if those involved have previous experience of researching the topic like in the #GuptaLeaks and if the material is immediately publishable.

As the editors made decisions about who to bring into the collaboration and who not to, they also decided how the collaboration was to be done which shows that important decisions lay in the hands of the top editors. It was mainly the editors of the *Daily Maverick* and *amaBhungane* who had more power and made most of the decisions while the editor of the *News24* did not wield so much power as his publication had joined the investigation when it was ongoing. One journalist said:

“Starting with the managing partners, you know, initially, it was a collaboration that happened at that level. You know senior management men speaking to other senior management that then forming the basis for the collaboration and then each side, bringing in more journalists, as we went along and making the key decisions” (Journalist 6 Interview: 20 June 2021).

The above quote shows that even in collaborations, there are hierarchies in terms of who is in charge, who makes decisions about the responsibilities of all those involved. The two editors, from *amaBhungane* and *Daily Maverick* had more power since they were the initial people to come into the partnership. The *News24* editor contributed to the decision making to a lesser extent. Whereas in collaborations driven by journalists, Heft (2021) notes that there are ‘flat hierarchies’ and less structured ways of working which vary from collaboration to collaboration. Also notable from the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation was that participants were not engaged as equal partners in the editorial process particularly when it came to access to the leaks. One journalist remarked that:

“a lot of senior journalists in the room, and then a few kinds of, I suppose, at the time, I would have called myself more junior or mid-level and some others in the same position, who were not included in the storytelling aspect, so we weren’t given access to the leaks” (Journalist 7 Interview: 12 June 2021).

The quote explains that junior journalists who were not directly involved in the storytelling process were not given access to the leaks. The collaborating team also did not sign any publication schedules as what often happens with big investigations that take months or years since they were all in the same country and could meet in the same room to discuss on the progress. Stories were published when they were ready, and the team did not face the challenging issue of collaborating with journalists in different time zones as often happens with large global collaborations because they were all within South Africa.

The project's success was based on a range of factors including having experienced investigative journalists and other professionals such as the IT specialist and money laundering expert.

“Really experienced investigators from the amaBhungane side and some of the people who had been brought in by Daily Maverick and then the history. Pre- exposure to the Gupta story as it were by amaBhungane helped a lot. The digital person, who was an expert was key, because of the kind of solutions he had set up for us to be able to navigate the emails. Even though it was such a simple solution. Although I can tell you it took a lot of hard work on his side and then the freelancer, the follow the money expert was key to this one because so many of the breakthroughs were depended on proving that there was money laundering” (Journalist 1 Interview: 9 April 2021).

AmaBhungane had years of experience investigating the Guptas which was an advantage for the project (Journalist 7 Interview: 12 June 2021).

The above quotes demonstrates that *amaBhungane's* previous experience of investigating the Guptas was considered particularly important for the success of the collaboration. The money laundering expert helped to identify money laundering while the technical expert was responsible for helping the journalists navigate through the emails. The coming together of journalists and non-journalists in the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation was thus transformative.

The media organisations involved in the *#GuptaLeaks* also considered existing audiences on their online platforms when they did the investigation which demonstrates how technology is intertwined with journalism in a digital era. By bringing in audiences into journalism, a translation process of readers, journalists and non-journalists and various technological tools and software emerges. In an interview one editor confirmed the key role of audiences:

“Journalism is important but there is no point in doing journalism if there is no audience” (Editor 3 interview: 26 April 2021).

The quote demonstrates that audiences are part of journalism as stories were crafted with them in mind thus showing that their online presence on websites and social media and the sizes of audiences impacted on the decisions regarding disseminating the stories on these platforms. Audiences as demonstrated by the quote above were understood as recipients of stories and not necessarily as co-creators of content. In Protesse et al., (1991)'s mobilisation model of investigative journalism and its revision,

when stories are published, citizens put pressure on policy makers for reforms when outraged by wrongdoing. The investigation was published in print, news websites of the news organisations involved and on a joint website created specifically for the *#GuptaLeaks* stories and citizens were outraged by the Guptas' and the former President Zuma's corruption which led to citizen calls for his resignation. However, it should be noted that the political environment was already polarised when the investigation was published and thus provided a fertile ground for political parties such as the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), Democratic Alliance (DA) including some members of the African National Congress (ANC) and citizens at large to call for Zuma to step down (see Allsop, 2018). The *#GuptaLeaks* investigation could not have been possible without the interconnections of the journalists and non-journalists (social) and technology (technical) which interacted in the news production processes that led to it and the audiences who read the stories (Couldry, 2008; Plesner, 2009). As I argue later in the chapter, journalists did however wield considerable agency and power over the tools as they made decisions about which tools to use, when and how to use them.

In terms of the racial and gender composition of those involved in the investigation, the investigative journalists in the *#GuptaLeaks* had both males and females and less than three black journalists which raises the problematic question of whether the South Africa media has truly diversified its editorial staff and the influence that this could potentially have in how corruption involving black individuals is framed? When asked about the presence of fewer Black journalists in the collaboration, one editor said:

"It is an unfortunate fact. Again, I can only speak for our publication, where the #GuptaLeaks team was reflective of our newsroom makeup. Why our newsroom was not yet demographically representative is a complex question, but the factors include: As transformation in the South African media gathered pace post-apartheid, Black reporters may have chosen or been directed more towards e.g., political reporting and less towards some niche fields, including investigative reporting. With a relative scarcity of Black reporters in investigative journalism, those who were already accomplished in the field could command high salaries. (Editor 1 Interview: 9 April 2021).

The quote above shows that there are fewer Black journalists doing investigative journalism in South Africa which in the quote is a result of many choosing political reporting instead of investigative journalism, an issue which may require more

research. Furthermore, the collaboration did not involve academics, NGO players or citizens in the editorial process as seen with other types of collaborations that occur at regional or global level in the Global North.

The study also established that there were some challenges in the collaboration. Analysing vast amounts of data under pressure was highlighted as one problem. Journalist 5 and 6 had this to say:

"I have always enjoyed the idea of collaborative working, but I think putting that into practice, particularly in a pressurised environment is very difficult" (Journalist 5 Interview: 14 May 2021).

"We had to write stories within a short space of time which made it feel very overwhelming" (Journalist 6 interview: 17 June 2021).

The above quotes highlight how some of the journalists in the *#GuptaLeaks* found it difficult to work in a high-pressure environment as they had to publish stories faster after the leak to *Sunday Times* and *City Press* publications. Additionally, editors stated that managing a team of diverse backgrounds was a challenge:

"It was a challenge to manage a large team of reporters and experts from different organisational backgrounds. We had some technological challenges related to how to keep the leaked material secure on so many machines and analyse them efficiently. But we solved most of our technological issues and fell into an easy work rhythm very quickly. Team members by and large were team players, and the shared common purpose bound us together" (Editor 1 Interview: 9 April 2021).

"We worked very well together despite that the team was made up of journalists from different newsroom cultures" (Editor 3 Interview: 26 April 2021).

Managing journalists from different organisational cultures and backgrounds can be a challenge in collaborations as highlighted in the quote above. In Western collaborations, the same has been noted with scholars arguing that compromise and ability to negotiate differences is important (see Sambrook, 2018).

6.3 RQ2: What are the most important factors influencing CIJ and shape journalistic agency, and the interconnections between various actors?

Professional and organisational factors had more influence in driving the *#GuptaLeaks* collaboration. Political factors do not come up as drivers of collaboration. Instead, the actors considered the political context when they made decisions about how to do the

collaboration and they mentioned the vital role of funding (economic influences) which led them to bring in the millionaire businesswoman Wierzycka and acknowledge how donations from the public have become a permanent feature of their business model going forward. Journalistic agency in the investigation is demonstrated in various stages of the journalistic process, news gathering, production and dissemination in ways that were unrelated to technology as shown above. Technology enabled those collaborating to do tasks they would not be able to without its availability.

6.3.1 Professional and organisational influences

The *#GuptaLeaks* investigation came about because of the existence of the huge leak which was given to the *Daily Maverick* by the whistle-blowers. According to the editor who was first contacted by the whistle-blowers with the leaks, the decision to collaborate was based on the realisation that the project was of national importance and too big for one organisation to handle.

“The first thing I realised, is that this is a project national importance and it's bigger than one publication” (Editor 2 Interview: 22 April 2021).

The above quote shows that the decision to invite *amaBhungane* to collaborate was based on the realisation that the *Daily Maverick* which first acquired the leak lacked the human, knowledge, and skills capacity to handle the huge leak. The other interviewed editors and journalists confirmed this reiterating that working together on the project was important since it was significant at national level. From this, it can be argued that leaks facilitate collaboration as media organisations may come together to share the workload and bring together skilled and knowledgeable journalists. Sambrook (2018) for instance notes that some newsrooms may not have the expertise needed to analyse huge data leaks thus leading to collaboration. The collaboration can also be argued to have been initiated at the meso level of established media organisations negotiated between the editors (Heft, 2021).

The journalists' previous working relationship as partners, with a similar ideology of holding power to account, came out as one of the main reasons which influenced the decision to collaborate.

“There was a pre-existing, non-exclusive publication deal between amaBhungane and the Daily Maverick to start with, a partnership if you like. When the #GuptaLeaks came along, that partnership was taken to a different level. It was no longer just amaBhungane supplying stories which Daily Maverick would publish but working together to hold power to account by obtaining the leaks, analyse them and publish stories about them” (Journalist 1 Interview: 9 April 2021).

“We have previously worked together with amaBhungane as we sometimes publish their stories on our site” (Editor 2 interview: 22 April 2021).

The above quote reveals that the two publications *Daily Maverick* and *amaBhungane* had a publication deal before the *#GuptaLeaks* and they decided to take their relationship to another level and work together in the investigation. They both shared a strong ideology of holding power to account or acting as watchdogs within a politically polarised environment. They decided to bring in other actors such as the money and technical expert to provide the skills they were lacking. *News24* was brought into the collaboration after the *Sunday Times* had published the initial stories following the leak. Apart from the publication deal that the *Daily Maverick* had with *amaBhungane*, their presence in the collaboration was considered important for the project’s success due to their previous experience and knowledge of investigating the Guptas.

“They (amaBhungane) had been looking into the Guptas since 2010, so that’s like seven years’ worth of knowledge that they had built up in understanding the different companies, different structures, different players, how they operated so a lot of the times what a good two weeks did is they gave us the kind of final pieces we needed” (Editor 2 interview: 22 April 2021).

The quote shows that *amaBhungane*’s experience of investigating the Guptas was considered valuable for the project’s success. Again, this is one of the factors considered important when partners are invited into collaborations among other factors (see Sambrook, 2018; Alfter, 2019). In addition, the publications considered the investigation to be of national significance thus leading to collaboration. Editor 2 said:

“When I first got contact with the whistle-blowers, I realised what it was about. The first thing I realised, is that this is a project of national importance, and it is bigger than one publication” (Editor 2 Interview: 22 April 2021).

The above quote shows that uncovering corruption involving the Guptas was of national significance hence collaboration would promote the story's impact. As noted in the literature, collaboration can increase the impact of the journalism when media organisations publish the story simultaneously (Sambrook, 2018, Jenkins and Graves, 2019).

Previous participation in ICIJ led projects such as Offshore Leaks, Paradise and Panama Papers also had some influence in the collaboration:

"But we are driven by a mandate which is to develop the field, to do the best practice of investigative journalism. Then often a collaboration is the best way to crack the story, to serve the public. So small collaborations kind of a part of the course. We had not before done such a big collaboration except that we had participated in the ICIJ efforts and so obviously we did have the experience with that kind of collaboration." (Journalist 1 Interview: 9 April 2021).

The above quote demonstrates the strong understanding of journalists in their professional role in promoting the watchdog role and that previous experience in ICIJ led projects led contributed to the decision to work together. Some journalists also shared that they had previously participated in collaborations sometimes informally and so the collaboration was not new.

The participants argued that they were able to negotiate their differences to promote the public interest thus demonstrating a strong attachment to performing the watchdog role collectively (Jenkins and Graves, 2022). They sacrificed temporarily their competitiveness for the investigation's success.

"So, we are not a scoop driven thing as much as, although of course, we like having scoops. But we are driven by a mandate which is to develop the field, todo the best practice of investigative journalism. Collaboration was the way to go" (Editor 1, Interview, 9 April 2021).

Editor 2 agreed with this noting that:

"It was going to be beneficial and complementary, and we said no problem because remember again all along it was not about us breaking the news. It was not about us owning the information. It was about letting South African people know that the Guptas had captured the state" (Editor 2 interview: 22 April 2021).

Journalists also expressed that they were interested in doing the kind of journalism that would make an impact on people's lives and contribute to the wider watchdog role of journalism. This was the case for *News24* which joined the collaboration after hearing about rumours of emails that had been leaked and could join the collaboration because of its reach which meant that the investigation could be shared with a wider audience. One editor remarked:

"I heard a rumour that there were emails that were being distributed to journalists. So, I started reaching out to amaBhungane who convinced Daily Maverick to let us in on the action because of our reach and scale because it is important with a story like this. Journalism is of course very important but if no one is reading there is not so much point in producing those stories. So, they saw the reach and size of News24" (Editor 3 Interview: 26 April 2021).

The above quote shows that a key consideration in allowing *News24* to be involved in the collaboration was their high online readership shows that the collaborating partners were concerned with getting the story out to a large audience which brings into question their commitment to collaborating with smaller media organisations.

6.3.1.1 Journalistic agency in newsgathering and production stage

Based on the foregoing discussion, this section provides a list summarising the editors and journalists exercised agency in the newsgathering, production, and dissemination stages. It also lists the technological affordances at each stage of the news production process. The purpose of this section is to provide a picture of what the editors, journalists and other actors including technology did and where they interacted/interconnected.

- i) The editors actively decided who to bring into the collaborations. As shown above, the editor of the *Daily Maverick* who was first given the leak invited the editor of *amaBhungane* and they both agreed on which journalists to bring, including bringing to the collaboration Wierzycka, the technological and money laundering expert. When *News 24* asked to join the collaboration, the editors of the *Daily Maverick* and *amaBhungane* agreed that they could join.
- ii) The editors refused the proposal made by one of the partners,

Wierzycka to involve politicians in the investigation as they did not want political interference or take the side of a political factions of the ruling party ANC, thus drawing a boundary of who journalists are and what they do and who journalists are not.

- iii) The editors of *Daily Maverick* and *amaBhungane* drew up a plan for how the collaboration was to be done and did the overall coordination of the project.
- iv) The editors of the three media organisations also actively decided on how to fund the investigation, including embarking on various fundraising initiatives after Wierzycka, who had been brought to fund the investigation had pulled out. However, each editor focused on funding their own organisation. Any extra costs were to be carried by the *Daily Maverick*.
- v) The editors of the three publications participated in assigning roles within the collaboration for all those who were involved. This included clearly defining the role of the IT and money laundering specialists who played fundamental roles in helping them make sense of the leak by identifying wrong-doing and making the documents searchable.
- vi) The editors decided on which tools and software to use in the investigation in collaboration with the IT specialist.
- vii) The editors and journalists made conscious decisions about who authors which stories and how they are verified.
- viii) The journalists and editors went through the leak, verified, and authored the stories.
- ix) The money laundering expert helped the journalists and editors identify wrongdoing in the leak.
- x) The IT specialist was responsible for making the leak accessible, including breaking into encrypted documents, and making them readable. Specific roles of the IT specialist are discussed in the section about technical affordances.
- xi) The editors and journalists made conscious decisions about how to frame the stories based on what they were finding on the leak and existing knowledge and experience of investigating the Guptas.

6.3.1.2 Journalistic agency in News dissemination

In the news dissemination processes, the editors and journalists also played an influential role, and they made decisions about how to publish the stories and where to publish them. This included how the stories were to be written and by-lined. Here is a list below:

- i) Proactively deciding to publish stories on websites and via social media was done by the editors and journalists. Journalists shared the stories on their social media platforms and engaged with readers.
- ii) The editors and journalists consciously decided the order in which the stories were to be published.

The points listed above show some examples of journalistic agency in the news production and dissemination stage.

6.3.2 Economic influences

Chapter 3 explained the significance of funding to investigative journalism. Interviews with the actors showed that economic factors (organisational level) were important in driving the investigation though this came secondary to their strong beliefs in fulfilling the watchdog. Funding was important for different operational requirements of the project including purchasing computers, phone bills, travel, and other requirements. Bringing in a partner who would fund the investigation was important for the project. Millionaire businesswoman Wierzycka was invited to fund the relocation of the whistle-blowers. Following the disagreement and Wierzycka pulling out of the investigation after covering a part of the money for the whistle-blowers' relocation, the journalists and editors were able to mobilise funds and when they started publishing the stories, members of the public engaged with the stories and poured more donations to show their support and trust in the media organisations' role of holding power to account, thus becoming part of the collaboration. *AmaBhungane* received an increase in donations, from 11% of its total revenue in 2016 to 29% in 2017 which has made "crowdfunding become a strong part of their revenue mix" (Editor 1, interview: 9 April 2021). By making crowdfunding part of their revenue mix as argued by editor one

demonstrates that *amaBhungane*'s business model was impacted positively by the investigation. The organisation has a permanent feature on their website for the public to donate to their investigations by becoming "*an AmaB supporter*" (*AmaBhungane* website). The publication goes on to state that "*Our work is a public good to be shared by all, no strings attached.... and amaB are Supporters are our biggest form of income*" (ibid).

Daily Maverick also received funding support and have "stabilised since the *#GuptaLeaks* and included diverse models in their fundraising" (CEO interview). *News24* was able to set up an investigative unit during the time of the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation. As Sambrook (2018) argues, crowdsourcing as a means of funding investigative journalism is a further type of public collaboration. In the case of the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation, the public went beyond the usual putting pressure on the politicians and government as argued by the mobilisation model in Chapter 3 and donated to the media organisations involved to show their support, showing several ways in which audiences play a role in investigations as described in Protesse et al., (1991)'s mobilisation model. The three organisations have a mixed business model which combines donations, events, book sales, grants, and advertising. *AmaBhungane* does not have advertising. Overall, the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation can be said to have boosted the finances of all the three media organisations involved showing that collaborations are helping those involving financially. This however may not be the case for all collaborations in various contexts.

6.3.3 Political influences

Political influences did not come up in the interview data as a factor that drove the collaboration. Instead, consideration of the political context (socio-institutional level factors) emerged when the collaborating actors made decisions about their operational plan, including concerns about security and how to use/not use technology in the investigation. As shown earlier in the chapter, the collaborating actors in the *#GuptaLeaks* feared being hacked, raided, or attacked by the Guptas if they got to know that they were investigating them. Despite having a more liberal media context and ranking at 32 on RSF's freedom of expression index, journalists expressed concerns about surveillance and attacks if known to be investigating the powerful (see

chapter 2). Security concerns did not deter the journalists from conducting the watchdog role and expose the corruption involving the Guptas instead, they took measures that would protect themselves and the whistleblowers while working together on the leaks. Security considerations are discussed further below to show how the collaborating partners protected themselves and the whistle-blowers and how this impacted on their operational strategy.

6.4 Technological affordances and journalistic agency in the investigation

Technology and its affordances came up prominently in the interviews with the journalists, editors, and the IT specialist. Here I discuss the leak, the internet, security, websites, social media, the Optical Character Recognition app, Signal, WhatsApp, Dropbox, mobile phones, and Mac books which afforded the actors the opportunity to conduct various activities of the news production, and distribution process. The journalists mentioned that leak driven investigative journalism has become a common feature in South African investigative journalism, a trend popular across the world where individuals disgruntled with the system anonymously share confidential documents without official permission. As explained above, the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation came about following a leak. The *#GuptaLeaks* investigation would not have been possible prior to the technology that allowed such mass leaks. This is reinforced by Moyo (2019) who argues that data journalism extends the boundaries of journalism, promoting digging deeper into issues of public interest. Through the data, the investigative journalists made linkages with individuals outside of the newsroom, the technical and the money laundering expert and identified patterns of wrong-doing and told complex stories in multi-media formats. Through ANT, the research recognises the human actors and technological actants and the interconnections between them in enabling collaboration, which they would not have been able when using analogue methods. Technology in this investigation is transformational.

Technology played a significant role in the investigation (after the disclosure of the leak). Platforms such as WhatsApp and Signal allowed them to communicate using encrypted channels later in the investigation. Signal afforded the partners an opportunity to communicate in a more secure manner though face to face remained important. Hard drives were important for storing the leaks while Dropbox was used for

information sharing. Courier services such as DHL played a key role when they were used to courier information from the Cape Town offices to Johannesburg as they feared transmitting information via the internet early in the investigation. A contrast to the Panama Papers can be noted where everything was done online and there was a lot of encrypted technology. A wide range of different tools were used to secure the whistle-blower, the leak itself and the ongoing investigation (Baack, 2016). As already explained before, the decision to avoid the internet and conducting activities earlier in the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation was out of fear of being hacked.

Air-gap computers (MacBook computers which are not connected to a network) were used for typing the stories and the OCR app used to turn images into readable text a role undertaken by the IT specialist, which journalists would not have been able to undertake. Without the OCR app, the journalists would also have not been able to access the contents of the documents. Putting attachments and images on an OCR app was another activity which the team considered important to make the documents more searchable. One journalist and editor said:

“We had to OCR as much as we could of the attachments and of the loose documents that we also found in the leaks. It made it much more searchable but still not perfectly searchable. But of course, the trove was so large that, that any effort had to start with searching” (Editor 1 Interview: 9 April 2021).

The above quote shows the role that the OCR app played in the investigation. The quote also demonstrates the core ANT premise that a news story is not solely the result of social forces but is produced after different actors and actants interact (Primo and Zago, 2015). For instance, the technical specifics of the search function might have influenced the stories that were identified and written by the journalists.

When I interviewed the journalists, they focused more on what *they* did with technology thereby assigning themselves more agency. Technology made a difference in the interaction of the various actors involved and undertaking certain activities which showed the interconnections among actors (Lewis and Westlund 2015). In line with the ANT, it can thus be argued that the three collaborating organisations and the technology which they used translated the leaks into news stories which audiences could engage with.

Journalists noted that IT skills were particularly important within the investigation. The

IT specialist was invited into the project to provide technical expertise for the investigation. His role was only technical and not in the news writing process.

“I focused more on enabling the experts, you know the journalists, trying to support them to do their jobs. I wanted to sink my teeth into the project in more of a journalistic role” (IT specialist Interview: 17 May 2021).

The above quote explains that the IT specialist was called in because the journalists and editors “needed some help with the project.” In other words, the journalists saw themselves as the ones doing the journalistic work, which means they do not conceptualise journalism production in the ANT way, in which all actors are considered as doing journalism, but see journalism as the output or stories which they produce as they are ‘inside’ the profession. The IT specialist also indicated that his skills were underutilised.

“I didn’t really exercise a lot of my skills my technical literacy, but even so, it is really important, you know it was a very important role that I filled” (IT specialist interview: 17 May 2021).

The above quote shows that the IT specialist felt that he could have done more in the investigation. Hacking into documents was an important part of the investigation, which investigative journalists would not have been able to do by themselves according to the IT specialist:

“So, the Guptas had an accounting system on the hard drive, seven or eight companies which were password protected and what I did was access that data, which was not accessible. That is something that I think it would be impossible for journalists to do by themselves” (IT specialist Interview: 17 May 2021).

The above quote shows that the IT specialist brought into the investigation important skills which the journalists would not have been able to do. Meanwhile, the journalists also undertook several tasks using technology. For example, going through the emails was considered especially important and previous knowledge of researching the Guptas was important in understanding them.

“You know the Gupta leaks had an amazing amount of information, but a lot of it doesn’t make sense unless you have a huge baseload amount of knowledge” (Journalist 6 Interview: 14 May 2021).

The above quote highlights that to understand the leaks, the journalists needed to

have some background knowledge and context otherwise the emails themselves would not tell a story. Finding data that would support the investigations and analysing transactions was also considered critical as that is where stories emerged.

“Traditional investigative journalism, it may be, the journalist has a question that they would like to answer. But data journalism one form of it is essentially finding the questions using large databases, so you don't necessarily know what to ask that, because you have a large database, you are then able to find patterns in the data” (Journalist 9 Interview: 17 May 2021).

The quote above shows how leaks are transforming journalism practice. In the digital era, journalists use leaks to find stories. In traditional journalism, journalists sought answers for questions and must find supporting information to answer those questions. It can therefore be argued that leaks have transformed the practice of investigative journalism as stories are being produced from leaks (Mair, 2011; Handley, 2019). Verification of the emails was important, as they checked the metadata. Even so, the editors and journalists indicated that they did not doubt their authenticity because they had trust in the source. Through verifying documents with sources and going through previously published documents and company records, one can note a translation process with actants.

“And we were quite comfortable about where the information had come from,...we were comfortable with who they had passed it on to who had handled the information along the way and kind of cross checked that the information was consistent” (Journalist 6 Interview: 14 May 2021).

The above quote demonstrates that the #GuptaLeaks team had faith in the leak as they trusted the source. Boland-Rudder and Fitzgibbon (2021) for instance, argue that data needs to be verified before it can be relied upon. Some of the factors that they recommend journalists consider as part of verifying the leaks include checking the metadata, questioning the motives of the leaker, and the probability of them having access to the leak.

Doing keyword searches was amongst the common activities that all journalists interviewed reported doing:

“But of course, the trove was so large that any effort had to start with searching. But in general, it is not going help because when you first start

looking at this stuff it's so blend, its such mundane corporate communications between people working together in the Gupta owned companies, until you start doing your keyword searches and then chancing upon a spreadsheet that shows financial flows and you start matching financial flows to other information etc. and, every now and then you have got a real gem then you can start proving all sorts of crimes and conspiracies but it always start with searching. It does not start with working your way from one side of the leaks to the other that just would not have been humanly possible even for a team of 19 people" (Editor 1 Interview: 9 April 2021).

The above quote shows that doing keyword searches was an important part of the investigation. In doing leak-driven investigative journalism, keyword searches constitute a crucial step for working through the massive leaks before crimes and wrong-doing can be identified. Data search is however considered a monumental task (Boland-Rudder and Fitzgibbon, 2021). In the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation, the editors of the three organisations invited skilled investigative journalists whom they were confident would do great investigative work, analysing emails and drafting investigative stories.

Unlike collaborating online using collaborative software such as Slack, the investigative reporters met physically in one large room and dispersed later when they felt that it was safer to do so and, in the process, transferred skills to one another. Security concerns influenced this decision to work offline and all interviewed respondents confirmed this.

"In our case, we worked very much offline whereas you can imagine with ICIJ because they work across countries and borders, they have to rely on electronic platforms. So, in our case, each member of the team was given an offline machine, a machine that during that period could not go online at all. With the idea that because you only get hacked once you go online. If you do not go online you know, you are safe" (Editor 1 Interview: 9 April 2021).

"The decision to work offline was for security reasons. We needed to disconnect ourselves from the internet as we were not sure what would happen" (Journalist 6 Interview: 14 May 2021).

The quote above demonstrates that the security concern was strong that it drove the *#GuptaLeaks* team to work offline, including buying new laptops which they could not connect to the internet. The journalists consciously chose to disconnect themselves from the internet to avoid information leaks and surveillance. The above strategies

constituted their anti-surveillance techniques. Despite having brought in an IT expert who could advise them on the defensive and encryption technologies they could employ to protect themselves from hacking, the journalists demonstrated that their security concerns were so huge that they opted for avoiding the internet, doing tasks offline and meeting sources face to face. Apart from their own physical safety, the journalists and editors indicated that they were concerned with whistle-blower protection and this was mentioned by all the interviewed editors, journalists and technologist. One journalist said:

“It would have been different if we had stuck to the original plan which was to work for a few months offshore. We would have gone to Ireland. Our thinking at that time was that we did not know how the Guptas or how the state might react once there is publication or once, even pre-publication if they knew that we were working on it so there was always the possibility of trumped-up charges, raids, hacking, physical harm, all those kinds of things. And we thought that if we were in a neutral third country, such as Ireland even if the other side got to know it that we were on to something big or up to something in relation to Zuma and the Guptas, for example, they could not really have touched us” (Editor 1 interview: 9 April 2021).

Two key factors emerging from the quote include the fear of attacks, harm and being raided by state and non-state agents that exists among investigative journalists in South Africa. Despite South Africa having a strong and more liberal media context with more press freedom and a strong professional culture as discussed in chapter 2, journalists are not safe if they are known to be investigating powerful people. Another factor is that Ireland the physical distance between South Africa and Ireland could have made it difficult for the state actors to raid or harm the journalists. Additionally, when they made use of new air-gap machines (machines with no internet connection) they showed their ability to decide on what technology worked for them and what did not and put their security first, showing their agency and power in ability to make decisions that satisfied their interests.

Some of the interviewed actors were however critical of the decision to work offline which they argued made work more difficult which suggests that the editors could have made better decisions on usage of technology. The technology expert could have been fully utilised for this role. *“When we worked offline that was the most difficult part of the investigation” (Journalist 4 Interview: 29 June 2021).* Another journalist echoed similar sentiments:

“Had we been able to use technology, it would have made the whole process, just like a million times easier. You know, not being able to use technology and trying to collaborate with a different organisation in different cities was incredibly difficult and slowed down the process a lot, because we just could not. We just could not share information as quickly and in a way that would that we would normally do” (Journalist 5 Interview: 14 May 2021).

The quote reinforces the earlier argument that despite the internet playing a key role in connecting dispersed journalists in collaborations of diverse sizes globally, regionally, and locally which are described in chapter 3, in the South African context, the journalists were sceptical and collaborated offline. Duncan (2018) argues that since the Marikana case (killing of miners) in 2012, there are huge concerns about increasing state and private sector surveillance. Investigative journalists are usually the targets of surveillance (Hunter, 2018) which explains why the *#GuptaLeaks* team considered their security very strongly. Contrary to views in most Western literature of how technology plays a key role in security, those involved in the *#GuptaLeaks* minimised their online presence and chose offline strategies at the beginning of the investigation as they were afraid of being hacked and raided if they were known to be investigating the Guptas. This shows a strong influence of the political context and fear of surveillance which intimidates and instills fear in journalists as discussed in chapter 2.

Another key task in analysing the leaks was identifying patterns of wrongdoing. To do this work, the team invited a money laundering expert who supported the editorial team by identifying story ideas and issues which might otherwise have gone unreported. One of the editors said:

“We had one freelancer whom we brought in, someone who was really an expert in following the money. The freelancer that we had on board worked. That person really helped a lot.” So many of the breakthroughs were dependent on proving that there was money laundering” (Editor 1 interview: 9 April 2021).

The above quote shows that the money laundering expert played a key role of proving that the Guptas engaged in money laundering. This supports the argument made by ANT about journalism being a product of an interplay of journalistic and non-journalistic actors (Ryfe, 2022; Turner, 2005).

When the team started publishing the stories, they were confronted with a disinformation campaign run by Bell Pottinger to discredit the stories. The firm closed after the scandal.

“It became clear very early on that the Guptas were never going to engage on a factual level. They accepted that they are very vulnerable and that anything could potentially come out. They did not know what we had, and anything could potentially come out. They were not going to try to figure out what we would publish next and try and counter it on a factual level. They had a simple narrative. This is all false and that we are hand maidens of white monopoly capital and so they had their social media strategies to tarnish us. They had Bell Pottinger’s spinning going on to tarnish us and place us in a context that was not favourable and to place themselves in a better context. It is all about, a kind of divert strategy etc.” (Editor 1 Interview: 9 April 2021).

The above quote demonstrates that in the digital era, information can be manipulated by those implicated in wrongdoing and bots used to drive a disinformation campaign to discredit the media. Social media is considered a fertile ground for disinformation due to its capability to spread information fast across the globe. The #GuptaLeaks stories show that the journalists involved made attempts to give the accused a right of reply with no responses received from those accused. This did not stop them from going ahead to publish the stories as they used evidence (emails, passports, memoranda among others) from the leak to support their stories. Examples from most of the #GuptaLeaks stories include:

- *Both Esheetaa Gupta and Karan Singh were sent detailed questions regarding these allegations. They were asked to confirm their employment history with either SES Technologies or SCEL, and the reasons for the subsequent intra company transfers.*
- *Despite follow-up requests, neither Singh nor Gupta have responded to our requests for comment.*
- *Khosla was also requested to provide comment on the evidence contained in the #GuptaLeaks but did not respond to our questions.*
- *Questions were also emailed and sent via WhatsApp to both Chawla and his wife, Harsh Chawla. No response has been forthcoming.*

The researcher was unable to talk to government officials by the time of the completion of data collection. Below, I provide lists which summarise how technology played a part, affording journalists the opportunity they would not be able to do themselves.

Technological affordance in Newsgathering

- i) Hard drives enabled the collaborating partners to store large datasets from the leak
- ii) Optical Character Recognition (OCR) was used for making images readable
- iii) Mobile phones were used for communication between collaborating actors
- iv) Signal and WhatsApp were used for communicating securely later in the investigation
- v) Dropbox was used for sharing information later in the investigation

Technological affordance in News dissemination

- (i) Social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter were used for story dissemination and connecting the newspapers and their readers globally.
- (ii) Websites were used for publishing stories and connecting the newspapers with their readers. As mentioned earlier, the media organisations published on a joint website and on their individual websites.
- (iii) Packaging information in multimedia formats combining video, audio, and text.

6.5 Conclusion

The foregoing chapter has discussed the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation and answered two research questions. RQ1. How was the *#GuptaLeaks* done and who are the

human and non-human actors involved in the collaboration and RQ2. What are the most crucial factors influencing CIJ and shaping journalistic agency, and the interconnections between various actors? The chapter analysed the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation which shows that collaboration involved journalists coming from three media organisations namely *amaBhungane*, *Daily Maverick* and *News24* and non-journalistic actors namely the technology and money laundering experts. Non-journalistic actors played a key role of doing tasks and activities that journalists were unable to do while journalists concentrated on story development including research and verification. The collaboration was one off and was driven by an interplay of professional, organisational, ideological, political, and economic factors within a context of fear of raids, attacks, and fear of surveillance from state and non-state actors. The journalists and editors involved shared strong beliefs in the watchdog role, particularly when it relates to the government and ruling ANC. Journalists saw themselves as the ones doing the journalism which led to the disagreement and withdrawal of the potential funder from the project. The investigation shows that experienced journalists from established media organisations are driving collaborations. The next chapter discusses collaborations in Zimbabwe through the viewpoint of two case studies, one on the *Chiadzwa* investigation and the *Electoral malpractices* one which were done collaboratively.

Chapter 7

Collaborative Investigative Journalism in Zimbabwe

Introduction

The chapter discusses how CIJ is being practiced in the Zimbabwean context. The chapter refers to two award winning case studies, the *Chiadzwa Diamond investigation* of 2017 done by the *Zimbabwe Independent* newspaper and the *Electoral Malpractices* one of 2018 done by the *Standard* newspaper. These are among investigations in Zimbabwe in recent years which have won awards. Informed by data from interviews with 14 journalistic and non-journalistic actors and narrative analysis of the stories, funding reports, website materials and grant calls, the chapter examines the actors behind the investigations, their models of collaboration, reasons for collaborating, the role of technology and issues of agency as informed by the ANT Theory. The Hierarchy of Influences theory helps to illuminate the influences at play in the investigative journalism. The chapter begins with a summary of the key findings, followed by case descriptions of the *Chiadzwa* and *Electoral malpractices* investigations. This is followed by a section on the Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe (VMCZ), a non-profit driving investigative journalism in Zimbabwe, which funded the two investigations under study. Following is a section on how the collaborations were done and who the human and non-human actors in the collaborations are, which answers RQ1. This is followed by a discussion on the most important factors influencing CIJ and shaping journalistic agency, and the interconnections between various actors? (RQ2).

The research found that there were a diverse range of actors involved in the two investigations. In the *Chiadzwa* investigation, two journalists and two editors collaborated to uncover malpractice in the public interest showing that collaborative teams in Zimbabwe are generally smaller, involving two journalists who are driven by the public interest within a politically difficult environment. This can be referred to as “micro-collaboration” (Gearing, 2021). The *Chiadzwa* investigation brought together journalists from two national publications, *Newsday* and *Zimbabwe Independent*, both owned by the same proprietor Africa Media Holdings (AMH). The investigation did not involve technologists, data specialists, financial/money laundering experts or

accountants as often happens in big collaborations such as ICIJ (see chapter 2). The investigation was funded by VMCZ which gets funding from Western donors and has become an important actor in investigative journalism in Zimbabwe as I elaborate further below.

The *Electoral malpractices* investigation brought together a journalist, and a non-profit organisation called Team Pachedu, made up of accountants, data specialists and actuarial scientists. Team Pachedu (described in more detail below) is a non-profit that analysed the voters roll and shared the data with the journalist leading to the *Electoral malpractices*' investigation. The investigation was supported by donor funding from VMCZ. Non-human actors or actants in the investigations included pens, notebooks, spy cameras, the internet, computers, and mobile phones. Spy cameras were used in the data collection process, mobile phones and emails were used for communication and social media and websites were used in the story dissemination processes and engaging with readers. No specialised software was created or used in the investigations. The research also established that journalists, editors, and funders defined the process of working together using various terms such as “*collaborations*,” “*cooperation*,” “*partnerships*.” Journalists referred to the other actors as their “*supporters*” implying that they did more of the journalistic responsibilities while partners or non-journalistic actors “*supported*” them. Macro-level factors such as donor funding, political oppression, and individual/professional factors including public interest motivation and sharing workload were cited by the actors as among the top factors leading to collaboration.

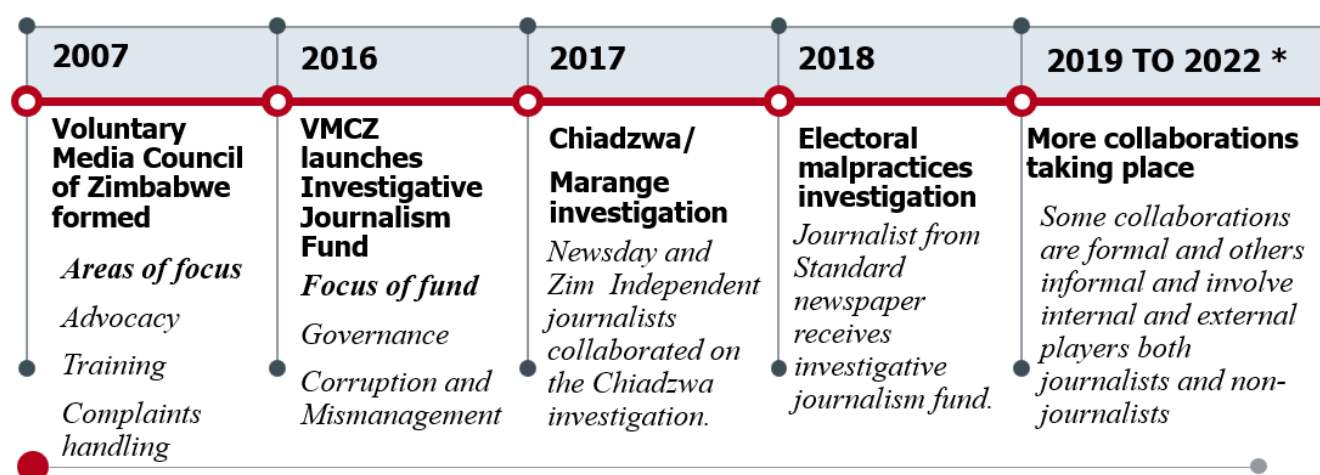
The two collaborations differ in size, mission, and journalistic production, despite being done by journalists from sister publications. The publications involved in both investigations have one proprietor, Africa Media Holdings (AMH), a private media company owned by Trevor Ncube. These publications are anti-government and publish stories that are critical of the ruling party ZANU PF. In both investigations, technology was present but not to the extent of investigations as large as ICIJ based on huge data sets and making use of sophisticated technologies. The journalists also shared that journalists and media organisations partnered with foreign based media in South Africa and with the OCCPR on stories about money laundering. The stories are

published anonymously in South Africa or on the OCCPR website and believed to have more impact if carried by foreign media. The journalists also shared that sometimes collaborations take place with other external players and the actors involved kept anonymous.

Timeline of the Chiadzwa and Electoral malpractices investigations

CIJ timeline

Chiadzwa and Electoral malpractices investigations



*There has been no other academic research into CIJ in Zimbabwe until 2022

7.1 The Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe (VMCZ)

This section provides detailed information about VMCZ, the non-profit which is enabling journalists and media houses in Zimbabwe to undertake investigative journalism. VMCZ is the non-profit which funded the two investigations under study and is contributing to investigative journalism in the country. VMCZ defines itself as a professional media self-regulatory body set up in 2007 by Zimbabwean journalists and other stakeholders in civil society who subscribe to the principles of media freedom, accountability, independence, and ethical journalism (VMCZ website). Its mission is to promote a strong and ethical media with the ability to contribute to building a more

democratic and just society (VMCZ website). The non-profit receives foreign funding from international bodies such as the European Union (EU), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), PACT, the United States (US) Embassy among others and hosts workshops, contests, and competitions in various media areas including election reporting, media ethics, the Covid-19 pandemic's impact on journalism ethics, etc. It can thus be said to act as an intermediary in the funding process between local media organisations and Western donors. In one of its workshops in 2020, the non-profit in collaboration with the US Public Affairs and HSTV radio hosted a webinar to deliberate on the state of CIJ in Zimbabwe, opportunities, and challenges.

In the area of investigative journalism, the non-profit offers funding to individual journalists or media organisations and conducts workshops on illicit financial flows, good investigative journalism practice among others and brings in expert investigative trainers within the country and from the United States of America (US). These trainers are called mentors and offer support to investigative journalists from story idea, during the development process until publishing stage. One example of an international expert is Lucinda Fleeson who worked as a reporter for the US based Philadelphia Inquirer for 15 years (allAfrica website). The *Chiadzwa* investigation, a case study in this research, was funded by VMCZ through its Investigative Journalism Fund, an annual fund which enables media organisations to embark on investigative journalism. Launched in 2016, the fund also sponsors the Investigative Journalist Awards which recognise excellent investigative journalism reporting in the country (VMCZ website). The funds' focus on governance, corruption, and mismanagement sets the direction on which topics the media organisations can investigate about thereby satisfying VMCZ donor interests.

In March 2022, VMCZ issued a call, number 001/2022 (SMAZ) for "investigative journalism story pitches on accountability, illicit financial flows, budget processes, procurement processes, corruption and/ or maladministration" (VMCZ website). I have included the call below to provide an example of the thematic areas of the call and to show that the non-profit does not specify where it is getting its funding.

VMCZ Call for story pitches



Call for Investigative Journalism Story Pitches: accountability, illicit financial flows, budget processes, procurement processes, corruption and maladministration stories.

Call Number: 001/2022 (SMAZ)

The Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe (VMCZ) is inviting and hereby makes a call to journalists to pitch story ideas on investigative journalism (IJ) on illicit financial flows, budget processes, procurement processes, corruption and maladministration stories. This call for investigative story pitches is part of VMCZ's objective of strengthening watchdog journalism and media reporting for accountability. An investigation that will result in a series of stories will be highly considered for funding.

The main criterion for eligibility is that the pitch should include the following:

(i) 1 (one)- in-depth investigative story with thorough investigations on accountability, illicit financial flows, budget processes, procurement processes, corruption, and maladministration.

Pitches and investigative story ideas that will be supported are stories that break new ground and expose wrongdoing relating to and affecting the public. Each successful pitch will be supported with a ceiling payment in the amount of **US \$600**. The support shall cover direct costs that shall be incurred by the journalists in the field on the production of investigative journalism stories that are limited to transportation, communication, and lodging among other surface costs.

{NB: DO NOT EDIT OR REMOVE ANY SECTIONS FROM THIS TEMPLATE}

FULL NAME: _____ **SEX:** _____

Call Number: (Refer to the call) _____

AGE: (Tick appropriately; X Below 35years ☐ ; Y Above 35years. ☐

MEDIA HOUSE: (If you are a freelance, indicate) _____ **Duty Station:** (Indicate City/Town) _____

MEDIUM: (where the story/stories will be published) _____

CONTACT DETAILS: (email/phone number) _____

PROJECT OVERVIEW (max 150 words)

Briefly summarize your topic(s).

STORY PITCH (max 400 words)

Story pitches must demonstrate research and answer the following **KEY QUESTIONS**: **WHY** is this story important? **WHO** are my sources? **WHAT** is the context?

HOW will the story/stories be presented (eg. Multi-media, digital print with photos, newspaper with sidebars and photos, etc.)?

WHEN do you expect to start and complete the investigation stories? (Submit investigation format).

Attachments: Please submit with this application form a signed acknowledgment note from an editor as a guarantee that your story will be published after a successful application process and production. Freelance journalists can make their applications directly.

Deadline: Due date for submission of this application is **COB Friday, 1 April 2022**. All applications should be submitted to: programmes@vmcz.co.zw and copied to info@vmcz.co.zw and director@vmcz.co.zw

Source: VMCZ Facebook page

When I embarked on desktop research into non-profits providing funding for trainings and doing investigative journalism in Zimbabwe, I uncovered that organisations usually based in the US or UK such as Thomson Reuters Foundation, make calls targeting specific African journalists to investigate on illicit financial flows. One such call was advertised on the MISA Zimbabwe website.

“Thomson Reuters Foundation in partnership with MISA Zimbabwe, of the Media Institute of Southern Africa, is looking for Zimbabwean

journalists who are motivated to understand how their country could be losing money via illicit means” (MISA Zimbabwe website).

Thomson Reuters Foundation describes itself as an independent charity, registered in the UK and the USA, and committed to advancing media freedom, foster more inclusive economies, and promote human rights (MISA Zimbabwe website). Schifffrin (2017) notes that foundations supporting the media use journalism to promote topics of interest such as coverage of health, governance, corruption, elections, criminal justice. By so doing, foundations set the agenda for what media should consider important which may result in some issues of public interest being overlooked. The next section identifies the human and non-human actors involved in the *Chiadzwa* and *Electoral malpractices* investigation, respectively.

7.2. Case description of the Chiadzwa/Marange Diamonds Investigation

In 2017, the *Zimbabwe Independent* newspaper published an investigation into the Marange alluvial diamonds discovery and how it was subsequently looted (VMCZ website). The *Chiadzwa* investigation was a story about the plunder of diamonds mined at Chiadzwa by miners, merchants and dealers which led to widespread violence in 2008 in a village called Marange. Local villagers were forced out of the area when the Zimbabwe National Army were deployed to take full control of the lucrative mine (The Zimbabwe Independent Newspaper). 15USD billion worth of diamonds are said to have been smuggled out of Zimbabwe by the late President Robert Mugabe through corrupt means, when children and adults engaged in forced labour and tortured to mine for diamonds. The investigation focused on the companies that were involved in the mining of diamonds, analysing the history of these companies, their ownership structure, production levels and other factors, prior to the companies being forced out of Chiadzwa in February 2016 (VMCZ website). In 2016, two journalists from the Africa Media Holdings (AMH) decided to partner and tell the story of the plunder of diamonds resulting in a series of investigative stories which won the VMCZ award for investigative journalism in 2017. The investigation was driven by the *Zimbabwe Independent* newspaper and its journalist who invited one *Newsday* journalist to collaborate. The journalists went to Marange, spoke to villagers, interviewed government officials, and sometimes received leaked documents from

disgruntled state officials. The investigation was made up of at least 12 stories focusing on corruption, human rights violations, suffering of ordinary citizens and violence. The first of these was published in December 2016. Some examples of the stories published in the investigative series are included in table 2 below. The investigation did not employ any sophisticated technologies. The journalists working on this investigation were awarded VMCZ's investigative journalists of the year award in 2017 while the *Chiadzwa* investigation got the first prize.

AMH investigative journalists at the VMCZ investigative journalism awards:

[Newsday](#)

The table below provides a summary of the stories that were published under the *Chiadzwa* investigation.

Table 7.1 Summary of the Newsday stories published under the *Chiadzwa* investigation.

Date	Headline
23 December 2016	How Marange diamonds looting started
16 December 2016	Marange diamond plunder explodes
6 January 2017	Chiadzwa diamond looting: Victims recount their ordeals
13 January 2017	Marange security crackdown, violent death amid illicit deals
6 February 2017	Blood diamonds: How army killed my brother
13 February 2017	Chiadzwa atrocities: Security opens up
10 March 2017	Chidhakwa bungles Chiadzwa project
17 March 2017	Diamond safe box disappears - The Zimbabwe Independent
26 May 2017	Marange Diamond output plunges
12 June 2017	Military largest diamonds beneficiary

Source: The Zimbabwe Independent

7.3 RQ1: How is collaboration being practiced in Zimbabwe? Who are the human and non-human actors involved in the *Chiadzwa* investigation?

The *Chiadzwa* investigation can be described as a national collaboration which involved four journalistic actors, who included one investigative journalist coming from a legacy media outlet, the *Zimbabwe Independent* newspaper and another from *Newsday*, its sister publication both owned by AMH, and two editors from the *Zimbabwe Independent* newspaper. The non-human actors or actants included computers, pens, notebooks, the internet, cellphones, the *Zimbabwe Independent* website, social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, WhatsApp, phones, recorders, and spy cameras. Ordinary citizens were involved as news sources and audiences of the stories when they were published. Invisible actors include secretaries, drivers, typesetters, proof-readers, designers, and marketers, among others.

“Ours was a small collaboration involving myself, another journalist, the editor, and assistant editor” (Journalist 1 Interview: 17 March 2021).

“There were just the 4 of us, so it generally a small kind of collaboration” (Journalist 2 interview: 17 March 2021).

The above quotes shows that the *Chiadzwa* investigation only involved four journalistic actors and no individuals coming from outside the newsroom. The four individuals have more than 15 years each working as journalists. One can argue that in the Zimbabwean context, collaborations are driven and dominated by more experienced journalists from legacy media and exclude less experienced journalists or students. The type of collaboration of the *Chiadzwa* investigation can be defined as bottom-up, driven by journalists and temporarily financed by non-profits. This type of collaboration is like the ones by Heft (2021) in her study of smaller and medium level collaborations in Europe. These experienced journalists come together to promote transparency and accountability, winning awards and differ from the more institutionalised, large-scale ones driven by ICIJ (see Heft, 2021). As Heft (2021) argues such journalists play a critical role in redefining the field. Since the journalists involved in the *Chiadzwa* investigation came from the AMH stable, the collaboration could be easily managed with no major ideological differences among them and as such the journalists did not report any breakdowns in trust or confidentiality.

“As a small team, we did not have any major issues of failing to trust one another as we all understood the scale and importance of telling the Chiadzwa story. We had off the record and on record briefings with industry players, government officials, and security sector sources who knew goings-on in Chiadzwa. I must say there was a lot of information sharing among the team” (Editor 2 Interview: 17 March 2021).

The above quote shows that the team involved in the *Chiadzwa* investigation did not experience problems of breakdown in trust despite sharing a lot of information and meeting important sources. Sambrook (2018) argues that breakdowns in trust and confidentiality can negatively affect the success of a collaboration and destroy opportunities for working together in future projects. The *Chiadzwa* investigation was the only project the journalists worked on together though they have informally shared information and sources within their stable.

In terms of newsgathering, talking to primary sources was considered an important part of the verification process as shared by both journalists who were involved. One journalist said:

“We were talking to primary sources, the mining executives, people in Chiadzwa and government officials. We were trying as much as possible to talk to those people because you cannot substitute their accounts. Even if it is not a truthful account but you can only get the truth when you hear the side of the story from this person then you can compare notes. You can then compare what person A tells you and what person B tells you. So, for a person to open up he/she must be convinced that you know what you are talking about and also, they would also want to ensure that they are not the first person to give you information because Zimbabwe is a dangerous country because people normally do not want to be said that this was the first person to give us information. They want to corroborate the information, so it was easy for us to go to primary sources with something” (Journalist 2 Interview: 17 March 2021).

The above quote shows that carrying out interviews with villagers, mining executives and government officials was an important part of the newsgathering process. It also highlights the fear that sources have when they do not want to be the first ones to provide evidence. In investigative journalism, journalists spend a lot of time conducting interviews with as many people as possible to corroborate information (Ettema and Glasser 1998). In the *Chiadzwa* investigation, the journalists spent months talking to people to find the underlying cause of the human rights abuses of villagers and the corruption by mining companies and the army at Chiadzwa. As mentioned in the

above quote, sources included villagers in Chiadzwa, mining executives and government officials and these were considered important as they provided information and shared individual experiences of what transpired. In terms of ANT terminology, the *Chiadzwa* investigation can be said to be a translation process involving actors found within the newsroom such as journalists and editors of the *Zimbabwe Independent* and *Newsday*, sources and a website, social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, WhatsApp, phones, recorders, and spy cameras.

The assistant editor, and the editor did interviews and sought information for the project, going beyond their 'normal' editorial duties to ensure that the story was told comprehensively.

"As the news editor, I was part of the planning team. I also held briefings with our journalists who took part in the investigation, directing them on information to be sought. I also shared with them documents and other information that I had received from my sources and pointed them to certain people for briefings. The editor at the time, also played a critical role in the investigation. In addition, I edited all stories, identified gaps etc before passing them to the editor for final approval" (Editor 1 Interview: 6 April 2021).

Journalist 2 agreed, noting that:

"The editor would point us to most critical issues that needed to be investigated. When handling such a big investigation there is always something exciting which makes investigative journalists to lose their focus...People trusted the institution of the Zimbabwe Independent and people are very cooperative when dealing with the Zimbabwe Independent. And also, there are people who will say I don't want to talk to reporters, I don't trust reporters. I can talk to an editor so the editor was very handy in trying to convince people to open up, he could also do the interviews, he could also source some documents from high places, from high offices, at the end of the day it all came together to one big story" (Journalist 2 Interview 17 March 2021).

The above quotes show that the editors were also involved in information gathering and shared the information with the journalists on top of editing stories and providing guidance to the journalists for this investigation and daily news stories. The second quote shows that the *Zimbabwe Independent* was considered a trustworthy publication in a politically polarised environment and that individuals preferred to share sensitive information with the editors and not the journalists which made the editors play a significant role in the information gathering process. Furthermore, the above quote

shows that journalists may encounter trust challenges if sources are not interested in providing sensitive information to them and prefer to share it with the more senior editorial staff such as editors.

In addition, the editor, was described as having more influence on the way the stories were written. Responding to the question of who played a more influential role in the collaboration, the journalists said:

“The editor had the final say, he directed and shaped the narrative and determined how we framed issues. We were just doing reporting at his directions as the editor. It was his idea too to do this long story, remember it was for the Zimbabwe Independent, I was just invited to help with the reporting. We worked as a team and the editor was the overall supervisor-more like player coach too” (Journalist 2 Interview: 17 March 2021).

The above quote shows that the editor had more influence in how the stories were framed. In investigative journalism, stories are framed based on moral grounds to depict the wrong deeds that are done by people in power (Ettema and Glasser, 1998). In one of the stories in Table 2 above, the state was portrayed as the enemy of the people. The journalists wrote “...the state wiped out the illegal diamond miners under Operation Hakudzokwi which resulted in untold suffering, arbitrary arrests and deaths of artisanal miners at the hands of ruthless security forces” (Chiadzwa atrocities: Security opens up: 3 February 2017). The Chiadzwa stories portrayed villagers as victims of state and army brutality and abuse while the state and army were portrayed as villains (see Table 2). The journalists involved did not make any claims to objectivity and the notion of the detached observer as their stories were all written in favour of the villagers. Instead, they indicated that they went to Chiadzwa with a clear motive, of showing the abuses on the villagers by the army and the state.

Document evidence was also particularly important in the verification process which reinforces the key role of document search in investigative journalism as discussed in Chapter 3. This was shared by both journalists.

“We also had to rely on documents. When we went for interviews, we also asked for documents and a person may give you a less relevant document and then you go to another person and you ask for a document and then the other one would say no, do not rely on that document. So, it was a building block, one door led to the other. We also had a very good editor who was so

good at finding documents and he is so connected” (Journalist 2 Interview: 17 March 2021)

The above quote shows that document evidence was important in the *Chiadzwa* investigation. Unlike in contexts with freedom of information access laws, in Zimbabwe journalists often struggle to access information for verification purposes as the information is not readily available (Munoriyarwa, 2018). During the Mnangagwa era, the Freedom of Information Act, (FIA) a replacement of the Access to Information Act (AIPPA) still “carries retrogressive clauses that impact on investigative journalism” (Munoriyarwa, 2021, 426). One journalist had this to say:

“In Zimbabwe, it is extremely difficult to access information from government departments unless you are working for the state” (Journalist 2 Interview: 17 March 2021).

The quote explains the difficulty in information access often faced by private media journalists. Munoriyarwa (2018, 77) for instance argues that “various government officials tend to work together to thwart journalists’ efforts at exposing corruption by withholding information”. He also argues that even when journalists get a big story, they must weigh the consequences of publishing it and being arrested hence they end up practising self-censorship (Munoriyarwa, 2018). However, in contradiction to what the journalists said, a government official in the Ministry of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services said that compared to the previous government of President Mugabe, the Ministry had implemented reforms to make information more accessible. The information which journalists cannot access is that of a security nature.

“We support developmental or solutions journalism and to ensure that journalists have access to information, we have opened space. AIPPA is now in the archives, and we have replaced it with the Freedom of Information Act which allows media to access information from government and government departments” (Government official, 28 December 2022).

In terms of who oversaw the collaboration, one of the journalists saw himself as more in charge of the investigation, as the leader, giving orders on what needed to be done and hence he says:

“I played the leading role as the chief investigative journalist. My colleague had to assist me since he also knew the territory well because originally, he comes from Manicaland. I would also task him to compile minutes during

interviews with our sources. I had to task him to look for other bits of information” (Journalist 1 Interview: 17 March 2021).

The above quote shows that clearly defining roles is important in investigations of a collaborative nature. In major global investigations involving hundreds of journalists, such as the ones done by ICIJ, roles and responsibilities are clearly defined to avoid conflicts. Written agreements are drawn to manage publication schedules (Sambrook, 2018). It can also be noted that the leader/supporter relationship in the investigation was important in clearly defining the roles in the collaboration unlike in small collaborations studied by Heft (2021) where the hierarchy is flattened. Additionally, the editor in the *Chiadzwa* investigation can be said to have played the editorial coordinator role found in most collaborations, including global ones such as Panama papers acting as the bridge of the investigation and responsible for its success (see chapter 3).

Technology was important in data gathering and story dissemination though it was not as sophisticated as the tools used in big collaborations such as the ones done by ICIJ. One journalist and editor said:

“When carrying out interviews we would use spy cameras especially with players we suspected would later turn around and change. This was to safeguard ourselves in the event of lawsuits.” We did not use any sophisticated tools” (Journalist 1 Interview: 17 March 2021).

The above quote shows that spy cameras and recorders were important in the news gathering process for journalists to safeguard themselves in case some sources of information denied sharing specific details. However, journalists risk going to prison when they protect the identity of their sources (Lashmar, 2017). In the *Chiadzwa* investigation the journalist did not mention the circumstances which would lead to disclosure. Social media and the internet were also used in the research process and story dissemination. The collaborating partners in the *Chiadzwa* investigation did not use any sophisticated tools or software commonly used in large ICIJ led projects. Sambrook (2018) argues, that multiple levels of technology are used in collaborations- for analysing the leak, encryption technology used for confidentiality, defensive technology for preventing hacking and softwares such as Slack for managing the collaboration. Since the *Chiadzwa* investigation did not involve any huge leak, there was no need for technology used in analysing leaks. The journalists did not use any

defensive technologies or collaborate on Slack or a similar platform. In addition, the journalists could meet face to face with their sources hence they were able to use recorders and spy cameras in these settings. However, it should be noted that technology adoption in Zimbabwean newsrooms is not as developed as in Western newsrooms and persistent power cuts affect access to the internet and expensive data costs make it impossible for journalists to always have reliable internet connectivity. In relation to data costs, Mutsvairo and Salgado (2022) mention that the cost of 1Gigabyte in Zimbabwe is the most expensive in the world.

In terms of the skills and techniques adopted to produce these stories, the reporters involved in the *Chiadzwa* diamonds investigation indicated that interviewing, research, and fact checking were critical.

“We just went by basics, interviews, stitching the chronology, fact checking, document (evidence) gathering and a little bit of data. Most of it was just interviews.... knowing the right people to talk to and press for more information and fact checking...especially where money was involved. We also discovered that the 15 billion heist was a lie. Although it was difficult to quantify, diamond proceeds never got close to that 15 billion. You can compute this by checking the monthly production and estimate the best-case scenario and multiply that production with the current market rate of selling a carat. It will just give a glimpse of how much was realised” (Journalist 2 Interview: 17 March 2021).

“Most of our work involved talking to people on the ground and going through documents. I can say interviews played a significant role in the project” (Journalist 1 interview: 17 March 2021).

The above quotes show that interviews were the main information gathering method for the journalists as they sought to understand what transpired at Chiadzwa. The stories were produced and written in the same way that stories are produced for daily journalism by individual journalists and by working as a team they assisted one another. The journalists said:

“The stories were processed in the usual way that they will do for every story. So, after writing the story as news reporters, the story will be given to the news editor, who will take it to the editor. In our case, we had a direct relationship with the editor and the news editor outside other things” (Journalist 2 Interview: 17 March 2021).

The above quote shows that even when they worked together on the stories there were no major differences with how they draft stories daily. The Chiadzwa diamond

mining stories were generated by the reporters and was not a collaborative effort with citizens. Audiences only played a role as sources and in the consumption of the stories when they were published. Despite the digital era presenting opportunities for co-creation of stories, audiences were still understood as recipients and not co-producers and this was confirmed by the two journalists.

“We did not write stories together with readers” (Journalist 2 Interview 17 March 2021).

In the *Chiadzwa* investigation, several challenges were encountered in the professional relationship together with the threats that the journalists encountered when doing the stories. While collaboration is seen as beneficial in telling comprehensive stories, often those collaborating must negotiate tensions and challenges encountered in the process of collaborating (Jenkins and Graves, 2022).

“The editor was different from all these other editors because he was exposed to other models of journalism, so he tried to bring that collaborative spirit, but it worked at first but towards the end there were so many challenges. Right from the start we did not want to say that this was an opposition project because we were putting a lot of people on the spot. They are trying to tarnish us, so they tried to undermine us and to shield information away from us. They also tried to mislead us. These are challenges you face daily as an investigative reporter” (Journalist 2 Interview 17 March 2021).

A key factor coming through the quote has to do with how journalists working for private owned media or ‘opposition media’ are often harassed and struggle to access information for verification purposes as they are said to be working with enemies of the state as discussed in chapter 2. Private media journalists have been labelled as terrorists and are subjected to harassment by state agents (Melber, 2004). However as earlier argued, the government official interviewed in the research indicated that as a ministry they were committed to ensure that journalists have access to information they need so they can tell complete stories which are balanced.

In terms of funding, the *Chiadzwa* investigation was funded by VMCZ, which receives its funding from Western donors such as EU, US Embassy, among others. After the stories were published, they included the phrase *“This special series is supported by*

the Investigative Journalism Fund...” to acknowledge the donation (see Zimbabwe Independent story 13 February 2017). Smaller collaborations which are driven by journalists in Heft (2021)’s analysis showed that these were temporarily financed by grants as was the case with the *Chiadzwa* investigation. Regarding the funding from VMCZ, a funder from the non-profit organisation said:

“The funding for the IJ fund comes from the EU and from International Media Support (IMS). The funding we have had over the years is diverse OSISA, PACT and the US public Affairs have funded the IJ Fund, so it is very diverse. When we fundraise it is not the donor who prescribes on what we can focus on. It is the VMCZ that wanted funding to conduct investigations around corruption because we felt it is an area of national concern and the government through the President has declared zero tolerance towards corruption” (Funder Interview 25 March 2021).

The above quote shows that the funding for VMCZ comes from diverse funding bodies including EU, IMS, OSISA, PACT and the US public affairs. As argued by the funding executive, as a non-profit they sought funding for conducting investigations on corruption because of the President’s zero tolerance on corruption. However as has been argued in literature, media organisations “risk being captured by foundation agendas and thus less able to investigate the issues they deem most important” (Benson, 2018: 1059). Schiffrin (2017) for instance supports this point noting that foundations influence the agenda for the media organisations they support and that of society. She argues that “by using journalism to promote coverage of health or governance or corruption or elections or criminal justice, these foundations are making decisions for all of us about what problems the public should know about and even pressure governments to fix” Schiffrin (2017, 3). Safeguarding journalism’s editorial independence is considered important (Scott et al., 2018) and donor funding threatens this independence. Questions also arise about whether non-profit funding is a sustainable solution to the current economic challenges facing journalism (Benson, 2018). The non-profit, VMCZ, plays a significant role in investigative journalism in Zimbabwe in a poor economic environment. By providing donor funds to newsrooms to embark on investigative journalism, VMCZ, an intermediary of Western donors, can be argued to occupy a very influential and powerful position in the investigative journalism space in Zimbabwe which shows that it is an important actor. In addition, the role played by VMCZ can only be fully understood in relation to the other actors within its network, for example the Western donors (EU, US Embassy, USAID, PACT

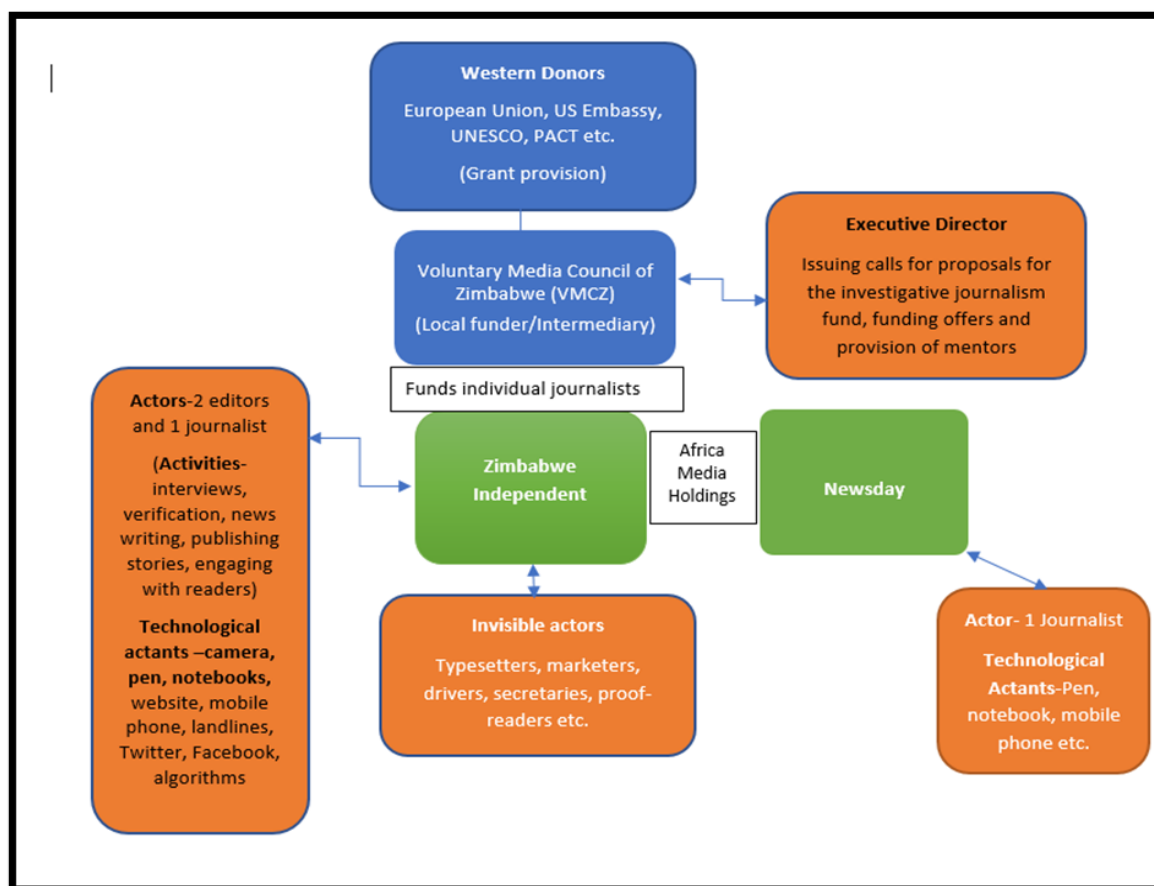
among others) which provide the NGO with funding around specific themes year after year (illicit finance, corruption, electoral malpractice) and the journalists and media organisations which apply to it for support to engage in investigative journalism. This supports the contention of ANT theory, that Ryfe explains (2022, 268) “actors only become actors in relation to other nodes in a network”. By sponsoring journalists to embark on investigations under specific themes, the influence of donors in determining the investigative journalism agenda in Zimbabwe can be seen. This has the disadvantage of side-lining other story ideas which have nothing to do with the interests of the EU and USAID, the International Media Support (IMS) among others where the donor funds are coming from. When asked about the investigative journalism fund for 2018, an executive funder from VMCZ said:

“In 2018, we had one which was supported by the EU, and this was about electoral malpractices and many other things in relation to elections. We are also running an investigative fund currently funded by the EU. Our investigations have specific themes. You noticed that we had a call two days ago, this one is supported by USAID and PACT, where we are calling around investigations around Covid-19. Two weeks ago, VMCZ put out a call” (Funding executive Interview: 18 February 2021).

The above quote reinforces the point already argued that the agenda of investigations in Zimbabwe is driven by the non-profits that are funding investigative journalism. It is then not surprising that the 2018 Investigative Journalism Fund (which was focused on electoral malpractices) is the one that led to the *Electoral malpractices* investigation which is another case study in this thesis discussed in the second part of this chapter.

I have created a visual representation below to show the steps and the actors in the *Chiadzwa* investigation. The diagram shows the four main actors, three (two editors and one investigative journalist) from the *Zimbabwe Independent* and one journalist from the *Newsday*. The diagram also shows the funders who are sponsoring the VMCZ which in turn administers the investigative journalism fund to local media organisations where journalists pitch their stories in line with the theme of the fund. Invisible actors are also identified and may not be all of them.

Chiadzwa investigation visual representation



Key

-  Human and non-human actors in the investigation
-  Funders

7.4 RQ.2: What are the most important factors influencing CIJ and shaping journalistic agency, and the interconnections between various actors in the Chiadzwa investigation?

The *Chiadzwa* investigation is discussed in this section in relation to the second research question and analyses the most important factors influenced the collaboration and discusses issues of agency, technical affordance and interconnections between the various actors involved in the collaborations.

7.4.1 Professional influences

Professional factors had a strong influence on the collaboration of the journalists in the *Chiadzwa* investigation. All the collaborating partners involved agreed that they collaborated to share the labour and expertise.

“The more I ventured into the investigation the more the work required more manpower and I had to rope in a journalist who had more experience working in the area. Eventually it turned out to be a collaboration as I had to task him to look for other bits of information” (Journalist 1 Interview: 17 March 2021).

It can be noted from the above quote that the *Newsday* journalist was invited to collaborate so that he could bring his knowledge and background of working in Manicaland to the story. The journalist argued that due to his previous experience of researching on issues on Natural Resources governance and his strong familiarity with the area, he had easy access.

*“Newsday asked me to go to Manicaland and be their full-time correspondent there. They did this because I understood issues happening in Manicaland. I am from Manicaland myself. It was easy for me to penetrate villages because I also grew up in villages. So, I knew the problems that were happening in villages. I also knew what it means to have resources and not benefit from those resources. So, it was easy for me to interpret the *Chiadzwa* issue, one from a person who grew up in villages as well and who understands that when resources are here, they must be utilised to cover one or two things that are affecting the village, developmental issues, and stuff. So that is a way of background” (Journalist 2 Interview: 17 March 2021).*

The quote above shows that the journalist’s experience as a person coming from Manicaland was considered important as he would bring local understanding of *Chiadzwa* than a journalist who is not from the area. It can also be argued that he brought into the collaboration better language skills and sources which was important for the story. This confirms the point that, ‘a local journalist lives and breathes that society and by definition knows it better’ (Borden 2009, 154).

Collaboration provided the collaborating partners with an opportunity to tell the stories comprehensively.

“So, we wanted to give a consistent narrative, where we come from, how the diamonds were discovered, what happened when the diamonds were discovered, who benefited, there was the time of the diamond rush, how did that happen, there was also a massacre in Chiadzwa, Operation Hakudzokwi kind of, which was carried out by soldiers. So, the kinds of stories that were coming out were so mixed and distorted because in Zimbabwe we have a strange kind of media environment. On the other hand, there is the state-controlled media, and they were giving a different narrative and on the other hand, we were also trying as private media to give a different narrative. It was easy because this was familiar ground for me, and it was also a collaboration” (Journalist 2 Interview: 17 March 2021).

The above quote shows that the journalists involved took up the opportunity to do the *Chiadzwa* investigation to tell the story in a more comprehensive manner. What also comes up in the quote is how journalism practiced by private media journalists differs from that of state-controlled media due to political polarisation. Munoriyarwa (2018) argues that fear and self-censorship are the two main factors that are governing investigative journalism in Zimbabwe. He further argues that “out of fear, state media journalists in Zimbabwe find it safer to stick with their current patriotic propaganda” (Munoriyarwa, 2018, 78) and private media journalists sometimes practise self-censorship out of fear of those in power. Fear among private media investigative journalists is also a result of state-led surveillance of journalists which has become common in Zimbabwe (Munoriyarwa and Chiumbu, 2020, Munoriyarwa, 2021). Munoriyarwa further argues that journalists from “state-controlled media confessed that they were under strict instructions not to publish any stories incriminating ministers, ZANU PF senior members, prison, army, police and intelligence officials” (2018, 79). These journalists receive scripts which they modify a little and publish (Munoriyarwa 2018, 79). It can be argued that state-controlled media journalists ‘collaborate’ with power in a manner that leaves out corruption involving government out of the public sphere. Munoriyarwa says, “journalists in the state-controlled media have become state-controlled journalists. Hence there is a “subtle collaboration between (public) media, journalism, and power (Munoriyarwa, 2018, 79). It is under this context that the *Chiadzwa* investigation was carried out.

Through collaboration, journalists with different strengths were able to complement each other.

“I have been to Chiadzwa more than 10 times even up to now I still talk to those village heads. I still have sources in Chiadzwa who many years after I still talk to those people. They still give me stories. That was my strength as well. I could go to every village head. I could go to everyone in Chiadzwa. I understood their plight. On the other hand, my colleague had sources in government, outside government, I can say outside the Chiadzwa, the bigger context, the bigger players. It was a mixture of skills. I brought my skills, and he brought his skills. That way it was easy to do this project but also it was not easy on the hand because the media operational environment is very challenging. Right from the start we did not want to say that this was an opposition project because we were putting a lot of people on the spot. They are trying to tarnish us, so they tried to undermine us and to shield information away from us. They also tried to mislead us. These are challenges you face daily as a reporter, as an investigative reporter” (Journalist 2 Interview: 17 March 2021).

“We divided the work between ourselves and that made it so much easier” (Journalist 2 Interview: 17 March 2021).

The above quotes show that the journalists in the *Chiadzwa* investigation complemented each other's skill sets and knowledge which was important for the project success. A crucial factor coming through the quote has to do with how journalists working for private owned media or 'opposition media' are often harassed and struggle to access information for verification purposes as they are said to be working with enemies of the state. In Chapter 2, Melber (2004) notes that in the post 2000 period after the formation of Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), the state attacked and labelled private media who were critical of government “terrorists”. Moyo (2011) notes that attacks, threats, and arrests on journalists from the private media increased when they were known to be investigating the ruling elite which results in intimidation and journalists being afraid to perform their watchdog role.

7.4.1.1 Journalistic agency in the news gathering processes

Based on the foregoing discussion, this section provides a summary of how the editors and journalists exercised agency in the newsgathering, production, and dissemination stages. It also summarises the technological affordances in these stages. The purpose of this section is to provide a picture of what the editors, journalists and other actors including technology did and where they interacted/interconnected.

- i. The editors and journalists proactively decided which sources to contact to verify information and they were all involved in the information gathering process.
- ii. The editors and journalists were involved in the information verification processes where they spoke with government officials, villagers, and mining executives with interviewing as their main source of information gathering.
- iii. The editor decided how the stories were framed in line with the publication's editorial policy which is against the government.
- iv. The journalists drafted the stories, and the editors edited them.

7.4.1.2 Journalistic agency in the news dissemination stage

- i) The editor and journalists decided on when the stories would be published.
- ii) The editor decided to publish the stories on the *Zimbabwean Independent* website and on the platform's Twitter and Facebook platforms. On the social media platforms, audiences engaged with the stories, commenting, and sharing them for wider reach.

7.4.2 Economic influences (Social-Institutional level)

Non-profits such as VMCZ are playing a key role enabling journalists to do investigative journalism in Zimbabwe while at the same time driving collaboration in editorial through their mentorship/training programme. My argument is that in a country with a poor performing economy, non-profit journalism may help sustain investigative journalism in Zimbabwe, and represents a "larger shift in journalism" (Jenkins and Graves, 2022, 3) with "journalistic strangers influencing the process of journalism from news production to distribution" (Holton and Belair-Gagnon 2018, 70). In the *Chiadzwa* investigation, the role of VMCZ was to provide funding for the project and contribute to skills development through its mentorship programme. The funding executive of the VMCZ noted that apart from funding, they also brought in trainers who imparted investigative journalism skills to local journalists.

"We realised that in Zimbabwe, and generally in most settings, one of the biggest challenges that hampers investigative journalism is lack of funding."

Newsrooms do not have money. So, we thought we could have an all-encompassing fund. So, our fund has three aspects. The first aspect is where we train journalists. We train journalists, where we get 30 to 40 journalists we are targeting, we train them in terms of capacity and we bring a trainer, who comes in with new skills on investigative journalism” (Funding executive Interview: 18 February 2021).

The above quote demonstrates that non-profits such as VMCZ are gaining access into the newsrooms because of the lack of investigative skills among journalists. VMCZ offers training based on the standards of the trainers, who are based locally in Zimbabwe or come from Western countries such as the United States (US). The quote brings to the fore several issues. First, the vital role that ‘mentorship’ may play in a country where newsrooms have limited resources, do not have dedicated investigative journalism desks and therefore no skilled investigative journalists. Second, one can argue that there is an indirect transfer of journalism values from the Global North to the South which may be problematic if the mentor/trainer does not have a full appreciation of the local journalism context. Mentors who are brought in through the US Public Affairs may end up teaching local journalists interested in doing investigative reporting how to research and draft investigative stories in ways that may be alien to the context of local journalists. For instance, Mutsvairo et al., (2021) have called for challenging the homogenisation of journalism and consider the diversity of journalisms that exist in the world shaped by political, economic, social, and cultural contexts. This is a valid call which requires that practising journalists question and challenge the values they are being taught and how investigative journalism should be done within the local context.

“In our first fund, we realised that a lot of journalists get lost along the way, along the investigations. Newsrooms do not normally guide them. The editor just wants a story, how it is done, they do not care. They just want a reporter to bring a story that can be published. We produced a mentorship programme where we train the journalist, give them the funds, and attach them/ assign them to a mentor, a good mentor, who will work with them, who would not allow them to publish until they feel that the story is investigative. We have had people coming in doing a feature and calling it an investigative” (Funding executive Interview: 18 February 2021).

The quote emphasises the point raised earlier that non-profits such as VMCZ have made it their responsibility to train investigative journalists through their mentorship programme which is a form of collaboration. As argued by the funding executive, a story is considered ready for publication based on the mentor’s discretion which raises

the problematic question of the values the mentor is basing on to qualify an investigation to be investigative enough. At the same time, it gives rise to the importance of questioning what journalism is and how it differs in various contexts.

An approach like the one done by VMCZ, of bringing investigative journalism trainers, was mentioned when one journalist indicated that other NGOs such as Information Development Trust (IDT), which registered in 2015, in Zimbabwe are partnering with journalists by offering funding and training opportunities. The journalist was not speaking on the *Chiadzwa* investigation but the state of investigative journalism in the country. One journalist said:

“What happens in Zimbabwe is that an NGO often identifies reporters and trains them to carry out investigative journalism. The stories are then published at the media houses where the reporters work, with a line that says the report was published with the support of the NGO. I would call this more of a partnership rather than a collaboration. The NGO's presence there is just to provide financial support and is not involved in the editorial process. A case in point is IDT, which works with several media organisations” (Journalist 7 Interview: 6 June 2021).

The above quote shows that NGOs are commissioning investigative journalism stories in Zimbabwe and influencing how the journalism is done.

While the entrance of NGOs is considered by most journalists interviewed in this study as ‘positive’ in a context in which media do not have the capacity to carry out investigative journalism because of a poor economy, shrinking budgets and lack of skilled staff, donor funded journalism often comes with potential risk to the independence of the journalists. Journalists funded by non-profits may have limited autonomy in selecting stories they wish to pursue. This has been demonstrated earlier by Schiffrin (2017, 19) who argues that foundations funding journalism in the Global South are setting the editorial agenda as argued earlier.

Concerns about the sustainability of non-profit funding came up when one journalist remarked:

“This issue of relying on donations does not make business sense. You can accept donations to start the operations but allow the creation of a business model that will enhance your independence in terms of your editorial thrust. Once you rely on donations there shall come a time that donors will develop

fatigue and say no, we are done with such labor of investment, we want to now move into climate, we are done with the media how are you going to sustain the operations?” (MISA professional Interview: 27 May 2021).

The above quote shows a concern with sustainability when it comes to non-profit funding especially when donors’ priorities change. Concerns about sustainability of donor funding have often come up as the economic crises continue to affect journalism.

Technological affordances in the *Chiadzwa* investigation

In terms of the Chiadzwa investigation, news gathering processes

- i) Spy cameras were used in the information gathering
- ii) WhatsApp was used for communication
- iii) Mobile phones were used for communication between journalists who also met face to face in most instances.

Technological affordances in news dissemination

- iv) The Zimbabwe Independent was used for publishing stories
- v) Social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter were also used in story dissemination and connecting with readers.

7.4.3 Political influence and legal restrictions (Social-institutional level)

Political factors can be said to have had no direct influence in driving the *Chiadzwa* investigation. Instead, journalists stated that because of a repressive media environment, threats, and arrests by the state, they feared to do investigative journalism due to political persecution by those in power. Investigative journalism continues to be a dangerous practice for those who are involved in it in Zimbabwe. A significant element of the interview data suggested that this was a key consideration in all investigative journalism work:

“Investigative journalism is exposing what others do not want exposed. It is telling a story behind the story so it means subjects would do anything to

make sure the story is never published. If it is a corruption story, then those involved will do anything so that they are not exposed. Those engaged in corruption are a mafia and can even eliminate investigative journalists. Sometime during investigations journalists are arrested, tortured with aim of making them drop the investigations” (Journalist 1 Interview: 17 March 2021).

The above quote shows that journalists may be killed if they are known to be investigating those in power. A major challenge to investigative journalism in Zimbabwe which was cited by all actors as a problem was a lack of a conducive environment to do investigative journalism due to restrictive media laws and lack of free press. Zimbabwe is 130 out of 180 on the Press Freedom Index and journalists are often attacked or harassed (RSF website). As one journalist commented:

“We have an environment that does not promote freedom of expression, so what that environment does, is to make it difficult for investigative journalism to thrive. So, the legal environment, the economic environment as well” (Journalist 1 Interview: 17 March 2021).

The above quote reinforces the point about a lack of a conducive environment for journalists to do investigative journalism. Schiffrin (2017) notes that in newsrooms in the Global South, journalists operate in more restrictive environments and are threatened and intimidated by the powerful. As discussed in Chapter 2, journalists in Zimbabwe operate in a restrictive environment and difficult political and economic context which makes it difficult to pursue investigative journalism in the public interest (see Munoriyarwa, 2018 and 2021; Munoriyarwa and Chiumbu, 2020). The above section has answered RQ1 and RQ2 as it pertains to the *Chiadzwa* investigation. The government official from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting services when asked about these problems stated that journalists were not playing their role independently.

“In Zimbabwe there is a problem of political polarisation. Journalists are political players, and this make them fail to carry out their investigations well” (Government official interview 28 December 2022)

The next section discusses how the *Electoral malpractices* investigation was carried out.

7.5 Case description of Electoral malpractices investigation

In 2019, an investigative journalist working for *The Standard* newspaper, won the 'Best 2018 Election Reporter' for his investigation into election malpractices at the Zimbabwe Election Reporting Awards, an award ceremony held by The Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe (VMCZ). The awards marked the conclusion of the Media Alliance of Zimbabwe (MAZ) election programme launched in February 2018 to promote the reporting of election malpractices (IMS website). The programme was implemented by Media Alliance of Zimbabwe members in partnership with International Media Support (IMS) and with funding support from the European Union (EU) Delegation to Zimbabwe as well as the Norwegian Foreign Affairs Ministry (IMS website). MAZ is an alliance of media support organisations including the Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe, Media Institute of Southern Africa (Zimbabwe chapter), Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ), Zimbabwe National Editors' Forum (ZINEF), Gender and Media Connect (GMC), the Media Centre, the Zimbabwe Association of Community Radio Stations (ZACRAS), the Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe (VMCZ) and the African Community Publishing Development Trust (ACPDT) (MAZ website).

The *Electoral malpractices* investigation was a series of stories on elections malpractice in 2018 which implicated the government and the ruling party ZANU PF in the manipulation of the voters' roll. The investigation brought together an investigative journalist and a non-profit organisation Team Pachedu constituted of data specialists, actuarial scientists and accountants who analysed the voters roll in the 2018 elections and identified some anomalies. The journalist began to do further investigations and verification based on the findings of the analysis done by Team Pachedu and drafted several stories on elections malpractice. In the process of verification, he spoke to Zimbabwe Electoral Commission officials, Harare City Council among others and visited citizens' homes. Team Pachedu specialists are based in Zimbabwe and outside in South Africa and the United States of America and prefer to be anonymous.

Founded in 2018 (the year in which the *Electoral malpractices* investigation was carried out), Team Pachedu describes itself as a "*human rights pressure group*"

(Pachedu Facebook page). According to their website, Pachedu, was founded in early 2018 to promote democracy.

“Team Pachedu was founded in early 2018 when a group of patriotic Zimbabweans compared ZEC’s BVR statistics against population census data. We were finding discrepancies between the amount of people ZEC was registering and the number of eligible voters. Since then, we went onto analyse the 2018 Voters Roll and publish a report on our findings. Our analysis and investigative work has been guided by a goal to promote transparency, responsibility and accountability without fear or favour, and ultimately ensure a strong democracy in Zimbabwe” (Pachedu Website).

The non-profit has an online presence on Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp and has its own website. Its Twitter account has 236 000 followers (2022 statistics) and describes itself as *“patriotic Zimbabwean citizens who strive to promulgate the culture of transparency, responsibility and accountability without any fear or favour”*. The non-profit also shares updates on WhatsApp groups. It does not specify how it is funded but does crowdfunding initiatives and asks its supporters for donations. It hosts live broadcasts and discussions on its Facebook page, analyses news stories and identifies and posts evidence of anomalies in the voters’ roll and criticises poor service delivery in the country. A narrative analysis in which I went through the Twitter account to get a sense of what they post on its platforms show that it is against the ruling party ZANU PF: this is demonstrated through posts about the President’s failure, under-performing economy, and poor service delivery. It also monitors the ruling party’s ZANU PF elections’ candidates which it accuses of vote buying etc. *“In Bindura, Esitina Bunu (ZANU-PF) is walking door-to-door demanding back the mealie meal she gave away to Ward 10 voters just before the by-elections”* (31 March 2022- Facebook page). On its website are reports of the Biometric Voters’ Roll Analysis and supporting files (Team Pachedu website). With the next elections scheduled for 2023, Team Pachedu has already started doing its investigations on voter processes in Zimbabwe for the 2023 elections and publishing reports of its findings showing anomalies in the voter registration books. It can thus be concluded that the non-profit plays more of a political activism role in the country.

The Standard journalist receives a prize under the ‘Best 2018 Election Report: [International Media Support website](#)

Below are examples of some of the stories published under the *Electoral malpractices* investigation.

Table 7.2 Investigative stories published under the *Electoral malpractices* investigation

Date	Headline
1 July 2018	Voter roll fiasco: Fictitious addresses, missing names raise eyebrows
11 July 2018	ZEC sets up shady polling stations....one centre to serve 2 voters
3 October 2018	ZEC in e-voting tender storm
19 July 2018	Security breach at ZEC, database hacked
5 September 2019	MDC confronts ZEC over voters’ roll

7.6 RQ1: How is collaboration being practiced in Zimbabwe? Who are the human and non-human actors involved in the *Electoral malpractices*’ investigation?

The *Electoral malpractices* investigation can be defined as a local collaboration which brought together a journalist and a non-profit organisation called Team Pachedu. In ANT terms, the human actors included a journalist from the *Standard* Newspaper, and a human rights non-profit organisation called Team Pachedu who include statisticians, data specialists and actuarial scientists (based locally and outside of Zimbabwe). The actants included a pen, notebook, recorder, mobile phones, WhatsApp, Zoom, internet, email, and the voters roll. Invisible actors include drivers, secretaries, typesetters, proof-readers, and marketers. Like the *Chiadzwa* investigation, the *Electoral malpractices* investigation was funded by VMCZ, and won an award for excellent investigative journalism sponsored by the VMCZ.

The model of collaboration of the *Electoral malpractices* investigation can be described as complex one which straddles between the local, and NGO model as it brought together a journalist, two NGOs, one Team Pachedu, which is a human rights NGO and the other VMCZ (interested in media development) which funded it.

“I discovered that there are people who were generally interested in elections and especially the voters roll and these people using their own resources and their own funding analysed the data in the voters’ roll. These were experts in accounting, figures, coding, actuarial scientists, and this group is called Pachedu. They came together and they did analysis of the voters’ roll, things that newsrooms in Zimbabwe do not have the capacity to do. It was data analysis. It was analysing the age groups and odd things in the voters’ roll. So, I partnered with them. This was a collaboration. Some of the guys are in the US, some in South Africa and some in Zimbabwe at the University of Zimbabwe data centre” (Journalist 3 Interview: 10 March 2021).

The above quote shows that various actors are getting involved in investigative journalism in Zimbabwe which demonstrates a changing culture of doing investigative journalism in the country. This changing culture is characterised by the entrance of non-journalistic actors into journalism who may impact journalistic autonomy. It also emerged in the research that these ‘journalistic strangers’ have access to data, resources and tools for analysing information and are the ones reaching out to journalists, which then leads to collaboration, as was the situation with the *Electoral malpractices* investigation.

“They did not have a source to push out their data, so they reached out to a journalist or myself to do that” (Journalist 3 Interview 10 March 2021).

The above quote explains how Team Pachedu saw an opportunity to partner with *the Standard* newspaper journalist and shared with him findings of the analysis that they had made on the voters roll thus driving the agenda. It can be argued that they deliberately chose an investigative journalist from a publication that shares the same ideology as it is doubtful that they would have chosen a journalist from the public/state-controlled media who cannot criticise government or any of its institutions since they are used as a propaganda channel (Munoriyarwa, 2021). From the point of view of the journalist, collaborating with Team Pachedu was advantageous as they brought in the skills which he did not have.

“Lack of resources and technical knowledge the major reason for me opting to collaborate. Sifting through the voters roll to locate anomalies needed expertise that I did not have” (Journalist 3 Interview: 10 March 2021).

The quote above shows that the journalist was able to collaborate with the NGO as they had the expertise for analysing the voters’ roll. It can also be argued that *the Standard* journalist recognised his own limitations and saw it beneficial to go beyond his newsroom boundaries and resources and launch his own collaborative network. In collaborations done in the Global North, bringing together experts in various fields is considered one of the reasons that is leading to collaboration (Sambrook 2018). Holton and Belair-Gagnon (2018) argue that these non-journalistic actors extend the journalistic field and impact journalistic norms such as objectivity and its associated terms impartiality, and fairness.

In terms of the newsgathering and story writing process, the journalist used the findings that had been presented by Team Pachedu to do further research and verify the information.

“When they got that data together and flagged out odd things that were in the voters’ roll. I then took that data and went on the ground. So, for instance, there was a person on the voters’ roll who had 101 years. I went out to seek for their address and seek that person so that I could see them physically and confirm that this is the person and could not find them. There were addresses that were there, where one address had ten people staying in that address and those ten people were registered in different constituencies....because I had funding and resources, I could drive there and spend my time looking for that, I went to find number 1, went to the Harare City Council to look for the map and the bill that you send to number 1 highlands, where you bill them, and they did not have the records. I then wrote the investigation and brought out all these discrepancies” (Journalist 3 Interview: 10 March 2021).

The above quote shows that the journalist used the initial findings made by Team Pachedu to carry out further research and verify information. Based on the quote, it can be argued that non-journalistic actors are influencing journalism. Team Pachedu was able to cross the journalism boundary and influence the reporting in the *Electoral malpractices* investigation. As Eldridge (2019, 9) argues “.... peripheral actors ... are not only claiming but demonstrating journalistic capabilities.” Team Pachedu used their data expertise and analysis to provide information that the journalist used to base his investigation on.

Despite working with *the Standard* journalist, members of Team Pachedu chose to remain anonymous and were also not identified in the stories that quoted them or referred to their work. Apart from using their findings to do further investigations, the journalist quoted them in the stories as news sources. One such example is when a story they are quoted says “...in the wake of publication of a report by an independent data management team exposing irregularities, errors and omissions on the voters’ roll, which threatens the credibility of the polls” (*Security breach at Zec, database hacked*, 19 July 2018). In other articles they are quoted as “*Biometric Voters Roll (BVR) experts*,” or just “*experts*.” Talking about Team Pachedu choosing to remain anonymous, the journalist said:

“I managed to work with non-journalists who had expertise in different fields in various parts of the world and some of them chose to be anonymous” (Journalist 3 Interview: 10 March 2021).

The above quote explains that the members from Team Pachedu chose to remain anonymous in the investigation. Later in the chapter, I come back to the issue of collaborating partners who choose to remain anonymous as this came up often in interviews with journalists in Zimbabwe.

Apart from providing funding for the investigation, the journalist argued that he had been provided with a mentor by VMCZ prior to the Pachedu investigation.

“Yes, I have been privileged to attend training with their partners Fredrik Newman Foundation and we have interacted with other internationally recognised, renowned investigative journalists and they have shared with us, you know basically the tools that I can use in investigative journalism, the skills that I can employ to be able to get around my work and that could help my work. If you are successful, to get the funding VMCZ gives you a mentor who looks into your story or your pitch and helps you to develop it and help you look at other things if you missed anything so there's that mentor-mentee thing that is going on. The mentor I had was on other stories not on the ones on Electoral malpractices investigation” (Journalist 3 Interview: 10 March 2021).

The above quote shows that the VMCZ not only provides funding to investigative journalists but pairs them with mentors who train and support them in various investigative journalism projects as discussed in the *Chiadzwa* investigation. As the

journalist further highlights, the values the mentor imparted to him had been important in the *Electoral malpractices* investigation.

“The ethical values that the VMCZ mentor imparted on me, carried me through the investigation. My mentor was a local more experienced journalist who emphasised checking and cross-checking information to ensure accuracy” (Journalist 3 Interview: 10 March 2021).

The quote above shows that the investigative journalist appreciated how the local mentor had imparted to him ethical values which he was able to use in the *Electoral malpractices* investigation thereby underlining the significant role of mentorship in transfer of ethical values.

In terms of technology, the journalist used various online and offline methods to connect with Team Pachedu but when it came to his own investigations and verification, he used physical checks.

“We used different approaches, Zoom, WhatsApp and email since some of their members are based outside of Zimbabwe. I used traditional tools on my side. Physically checks mostly. Anything that needed cross checking on the roll I deferred to Pachedu” (Journalist 3 Interview: 10 March 2021).

The above quote shows the key role that technology played in the collaboration between the investigative journalist and Team Pachedu without which they would not be able to work together and share information. WhatsApp, email and Zoom afforded the collaborating partners an opportunity to connect and share information quick and cheaply thus eliminating geographical limitations.

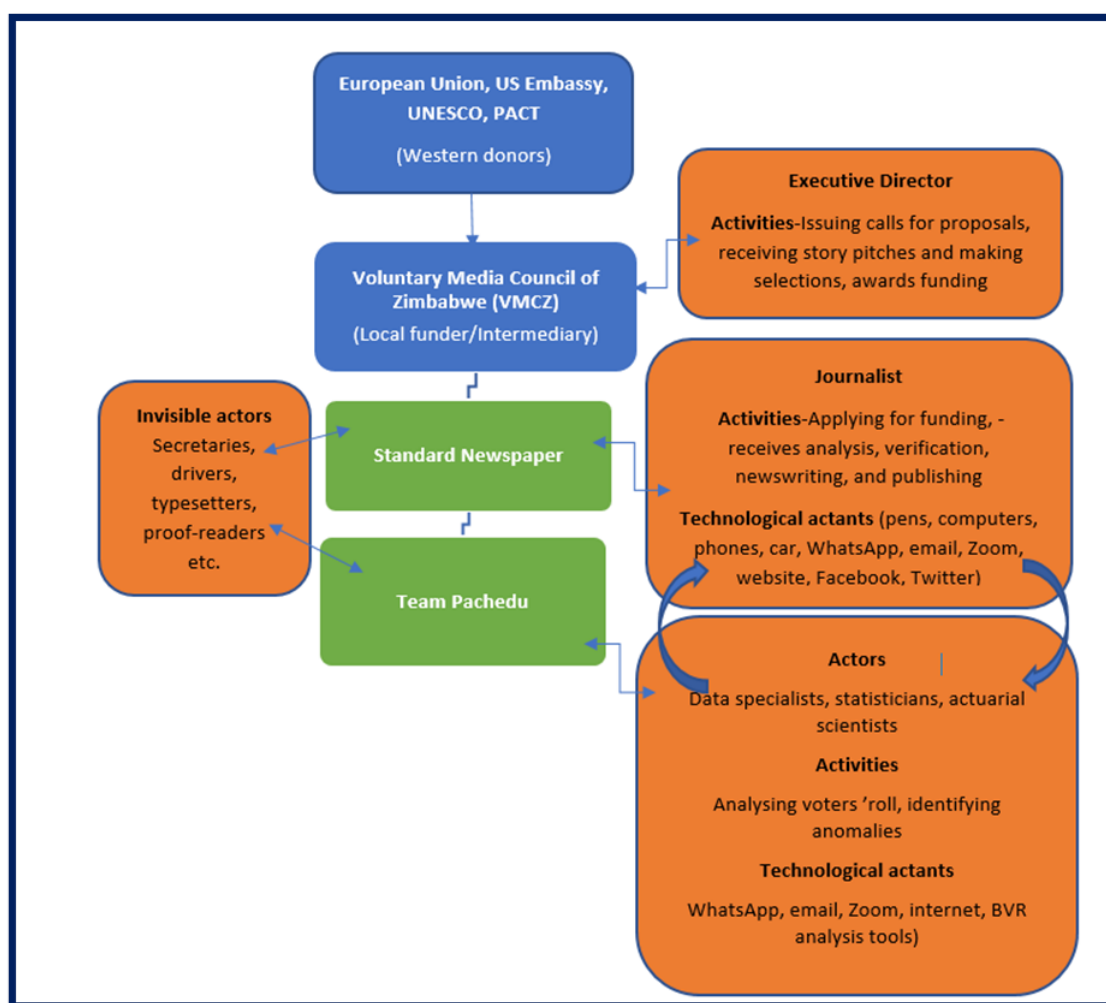
Despite the collaboration bringing together a journalist and non-journalists, the journalist stated that no specific tensions/clashes were experienced in the relationship.

“We never had tensions because we both understood the need to be accurate. The team was professional and always double checked before conveying information to me. They also did not interfere with my final report” (Journalist 3 Interview: 10 March 2021).

The above quote shows that the journalist and Team Pachedu did not experience any specific tensions since they both were driven by professionalism and accuracy. In addition, it can be argued that the journalist was responsible for the crafting of the

stories in the investigation hence they did not “*interfere with his report.*” Much as the journalist spoke about non-interference with the final report, the stories took the angle of the findings of Team Pachedu. This then did not require them to change the narrative as what they found in their analysis was confirmed by the journalist. Below is a visual representation of the *Electoral malpractices* investigation. It identifies the human and non-human actors involved in the investigation and their roles. Due to the endless list on non-invisible actors, it is not possible to identify all.

Electoral malpractices investigation visual representation



Key

- Human and non-human actors in the investigations
- Funders

The above visual representation shows the human and non-human actors involved in the *Electoral malpractices* investigations and the activities in which they were involved.

7.7 RQ.2: What are the most important factors influencing CIJ and shaping journalistic agency, and the interconnections between various actors in this investigation?

7.7.1 A convergence of professional, economic, and political factors

The collaboration which led to the *Electoral malpractices* investigation can be said to have been driven by a convergence of factors. These factors are professional (individual level), political, and economic (social-institutional) and converged in a complex way. Team Pachedu, a human rights NGO reached out to the journalist so that their findings could be published in a story. Professionally, the journalist involved argued that he was driven by wanting to promote the watchdog role by uncovering corruption in elections which drove him to apply for funding from VMCZ and then connect with Team Pachedu who had the expertise in voters' roll analysis.

"They did not have a source to be able to put their data out there, so they then reached out to a journalist in the field that they felt would do justice to the story. So, these are the kinds of collaborations taking place because we lack this expertise within the media circles itself. We do not have that expertise to be able to analyse data, we are not accountants, we don't have the required tools to be able to sift into for instance, the voters roll, and we also don't have access to resources" (Journalist 3 Interview: 10 March 2021).

It can be argued from the quote that Team Pachedu saw the opportunity to partner with the *Standard* journalist to push out the findings of the anomalies found on the voters roll. Meanwhile the journalist had funding from VMCZ's Investigative Journalism Fund to carry out an investigation under the electoral malpractices theme and sought the expertise of Team Pachedu. It can thus be argued that the investigation was influenced by a convergence of professional, economic, and political factors.

Explaining why it was important for him to acquire VMCZ funding, the journalist said that newsrooms did not have the resources for investigative journalism.

“Investigative journalism in Zimbabwe is not really prioritised. Investigative stories mostly come through assistance in terms of funding by partners in the media. The stories that I have done that are investigative have been funded by Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe (VMCZ) in partnership with other organisations. newsrooms in Zimbabwe are very thin and they do not have labour to allow someone to do investigative journalism. As you are aware that IJ does not take a day or two it takes time and the number of resources required” (Journalist 3 Interview: 10 March 2021).

The above quotes show that a lack of resources to fund investigative journalism is a problem affecting media organisations in Zimbabwe, hence non-profits such as VMCZ are funding investigative journalism and push the agenda of Western donors who are funding it. A poor economy is often cited by Zimbabwean journalists as the reason it is impossible to consistently do investigative journalism. The spectrum of non-profit news organisations in Zimbabwe includes those which are focused on media development and training and those which do journalism. In the case of VMCZ, it can be classified as belonging to the first category, as it combines media development and training among other responsibilities. It can thus be argued that these foreign organisations are driving investigative journalism in Zimbabwe in partnership with local non-profit organisations, without which there would be limited investigative reporting in the country. Most of the topics that are investigated favour donor interests and perpetuate dependence on the West for financial support while promoting their ideological agenda in Zimbabwe.

In an interview with a European Union (EU) Programme manager on what kinds of projects they support said, she said:

“From 2018 to now we supported the following: Increasing community access to information and participation in the development and governance processes in Zimbabwe, implemented by International Media Support. Support to Media on Governance and Electoral Matters in Zimbabwe (finalized), implemented by IMS. This had a component on investigative journalism. Both IMS projects are for an estimated duration of 2 years, each around 800 000 EUR which includes sub-granting to local organisations” (EU programs manager interview: 21 April 2021).

The above quote shows that local partners play a crucial role and act as a go-between/intermediary between the international funders and local organisations. Governance, increasing community access to information are among the agenda of EU's areas of interest. The EU programs manager went on to say:

“Zimbabwe benefits from some regional funding to counteract misinformation on Covid-19, through UNESCO and Free Press Unlimited. The projects work with local actors as per their mandate and expertise e.g., MAZ, ZINEF, ZUJ, MISA, MMPZ, VMCZ, ZACCRAS etc” (EU programs manager Interview: 21 April 2021).

The above quote reinforces the point that foreign donors are driving investigative journalism in Zimbabwe through partnerships with local non-profit organisations. Local non-profits as listed on the quote thus push the agenda of EU through the various organisations across the country with which they are working.

Another concern which comes with donor funding is when investigations are subjected to Western benchmarks through their monitoring and evaluation standards to ensure that they achieve their goals. This came out of the interview with the EU programme manager who said:

“Every project must include its own monitoring and evaluation component, furthermore they can also be subject to external evaluations and results oriented monitoring contracted by the EU while the Delegation does the continuous monitoring” (EU programs manager interview: 22 April 2021).

Western notions and understandings of how investigative journalism ought to be done is transferred to local journalists through partnerships with the United States (US) public affairs department mentors and other local investigative journalists who have been trained overseas and through their monitoring frameworks.

In an interview with an official from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting services, he argued that they were concerned about the influence of foreign donors on journalism as they wanted to drive regime change.

“It is a problem of funding that we have as a country. There are some foreign governments who want to influence regime change in the country and we are in the process of introducing a PVO bill to curb this problem. It is not meant to silence the media. We want civil society and the media to do what they have said they will do. Also, we encourage them to get funding from development partners such as FES, Konrad Adenauer among others” (Government official interview, 28 December 2022).

The above quote shows that the Ministry has a specific preference for donations from development partners than from foreign governments who end up driving the agenda of media houses they are funding.

There are lots of ways in which journalists show their agency. Here are some of the specific examples in which the journalist showed agency in the news gathering and dissemination processes of the *Electoral malpractices* investigation.

7.7.1.1 Journalistic agency in the news gathering process

- i. After getting the findings from Team Pachedu, the journalist proactively decided to contact various sources and verify information. As shown above, this included visiting specific addresses and finding the people who had been flagged in the voters' roll to confirm if they were real. The journalist contacted the Harare City Council, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, and other sources to verify information.
- ii. The journalist used his news writing skills to craft stories and support them with the findings from the voters' roll and from verification with other sources.
- iii. The journalist framed the stories in ways that confirmed the findings of Team Pachedu.

7.7.1.2 Journalistic agency in the news dissemination process

- I. The editor of the *Standard* newspaper published the story on the publication's website and on the sister publication's website *Newsday* and shared the stories on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to reach a wider audience.

Below is a summary of technological affordances in the news gathering and dissemination processes.

7.7.1.3 Technological affordances in the news gathering processes

- I. Communication between the journalist and Team Pachedu via email, Zoom and WhatsApp
- II. Internet afforded the journalist and Team Pachedu to share information across borders while overcoming geographical barriers.

7.7.1.4 Technological affordances in the news dissemination processes

- I. Publishing stories on the websites of the *Standard* and *Newsday* publications.
- II. Sharing stories on social media and connecting with audiences
- III. Recording interviews

7.8 Comparing the Chiadzwa and Electoral malpractices investigations

The focus of this section is on five areas about the two investigations: human and non-human actors, models of collaboration, funding, technology, and information gathering strategies. The *Chiadzwa* investigation of 2016 done by the *Zimbabwe Independent* and *Newsday* journalist and the *Electoral malpractices* one of 2018 done by the *Standard* newspaper. Both investigations are award winning and commended by industry in the Zimbabwean context for uncovering wrongdoing. The *Chiadzwa* investigation uncovered human rights abuse and looting of diamonds at Chiadzwa while the *Electoral malpractices* investigation showed anomalies in the voters' roll in the 2018 elections. The two investigations featured experienced journalists from the private media, owned by the same proprietor, AMH and in both investigations journalists argued that they were driven by promoting the watchdog role in the projects they did. Despite being done by local journalists in the same country, who work for publications owned by the same proprietor AMH, with the same ideology, the two investigations, show that even within the same country there are variances in the way that CIJ is practiced.

In terms of human and non-human actors, the two investigations involved different actors. The *Chiadzwa* investigation brought on board two experienced journalists and two editors. The technological actants included computers, pens, notebooks, the internet, cellphones, the *Zimbabwe Independent* website, social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, phones, and spy cameras. Ordinary citizens were involved

as news sources and readers of the stories when they were published. Invisible actors included secretaries, drivers, typesetters, proof-readers, designers, and marketers. The *Electoral malpractices* one brought together a journalist and a human rights non-profit, Team Pachedu made up of non-journalistic experts, accountants, data specialists and actuarial scientists based in Zimbabwe, South Africa, and the United States (US). Non-human actors or actants in the investigation included pens, notebooks, spy cameras, the internet, computers, and mobile phones. Spy cameras were used in the data collection process, mobile phones and emails were used for communication and social media and websites were used in the story dissemination processes and engaging with readers. Invisible actors included secretaries, drivers, typesetters, proof-readers, designers, and marketers.

The two investigations' models of collaboration have some similarities and differences. The model of collaboration displayed in the *Chiadzwa* investigation can be described as a local collaboration happening at a small scale, driven from the bottom by journalists, from two media outlets with a similar ideology driven to promote the watchdog role. Similarly, the *Electoral malpractices* investigation was small scale, and brought together a journalist and a human rights NGO. The model of the *Electoral malpractices* investigation straddles the between local, and NGO model as it brought together a journalist and non-journalists who both contributed to the editorial process and the journalist and the NGO hold similar ideologies, of showing wrongdoing by the ruling ZANU PF and state institutions.

In terms of funding, both investigations were funded by the local non-profit VMCZ which can be said to be an important actor in the investigative journalism space in Zimbabwe. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, VMCZ is funded by Western donors such as USAID, PACT, EU among others and encourages journalists to investigate topics that are in line with donor interests. Issues regarding the sustainability of donor-funding came up in the interviews with journalists from the two investigations showing that the funding problem is a concern for journalists. In interviews, all journalists interviewed highlighted the need for the media to find a permanent solution to the funding crisis. One journalist remarked:

“Donors are like birds of the passage, they come and go, there is a need to find more permanent models of funding investigative journalism. Donors do not stay forever. They say we are changing the editorial thrust and after 2 years they dump you” (Journalist 5 Interview: 2 June 2021).

Journalist 6, supported this by noting that:

“Donor funding is some kind of time-out”- it’s like you are taking a break in football “We are regrouping but it does not mean that the game must stop.” You are continuing to do journalism, but it is not the end game. You cannot depend on non-profit support forever” (Journalist 6 Interview: 18 October 2021).

Journalist 3 mentioned that finding a permanent solution to the funding crisis in Zimbabwe would enable them to do more investigative journalism.

We need a permanent solution to deal with this funding crisis, otherwise as journalists, we are unable to fulfil our mandate (Journalist 3 Interview: 10 March 2021).

The above quotes shows that there is a need for a permanent solution to the economic problems facing journalism in Zimbabwe, as donors only offer temporary support. In the Zimbabwean context, non-profits may also reduce the autonomy of journalists who are now engaged in the kind of investigative journalism that suits the donor interests.

In terms of technology, both investigations did not employ sophisticated technologies. Earlier in the chapter I showed that the technological actants that were used in the two investigations include websites, social media, email, mobile phones, WhatsApp, computers, recorders, and the internet. In the *Chiadzwa* investigation, the journalists involved also used spy cameras. In both investigations, the journalists did not have any huge leaks requiring sophisticated software for analysis. Neither did they make use of encryption tools or software for their security. As argued in the chapter, data practices are not that much developed in the Zimbabwean context and the penetration of technology is less developed if compared with that of Western newsrooms as upgrading to more advanced technologies is expensive and not considered a priority by some news organisations.

Information gathering methods and strategies were similar and different in the two investigations. In the *Chiadzwa* investigation, journalists and editors did face to face interviews with villagers, mining executives and government officials and sourced documents which informed the stories that made up the investigation. In the *Electoral malpractices* investigation, findings of the voters' roll made by Team Pachedu formed the basis of the investigations that the journalist embarked on. The journalist made visits and called the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission and went to the Harare City Council to check for records and statements of the people that had been identified by Team Pachedu. In the latter investigation, it can be argued that the human rights non-profit Team Pachedu influenced the angle of the story and were also quoted as sources in the stories thus having a dual role in the investigation.

7.9 Additional information on CIJ in Zimbabwe

To acquire a broader understanding of the state of CIJ in Zimbabwe, I interviewed journalists and media practitioners who had nothing to do with the two projects mentioned above and their insights complemented those from the ones involved in the investigations under study. From the interviews, several issues emerged including how journalism continues to be a competitive profession, lack of support from editors for collaborative projects, partnerships with South African and other foreign based media. The journalists also reiterated concerns about funding, a politically polarised climate and lack of skills.

7.9.1 Emphasis on individualism

Emphasis on individualism as opposed to collaboration was cited as a major challenge hindering collaboration in Zimbabwean newsrooms. Most interviewed journalists said that individualism was still a problem. In an interview, one of the journalists said editors emphasise the lone-wolf approach and that they sometimes combine related stories, which at face value may appear like a collaborative effort when there has been no collaboration.

"The idea of collaborative work was not so much of a thing as editors emphasised individualism. They emphasised on trying to shine on your own. What do you have on your own, it is like individual glory. That is what they encouraged. Even when you see a double by-line probably, I write my own

story and reporter B writes his own story and it's just the editor who will combine those stories it's not like we worked together, and we just share the by-line at the end" (Journalist 2 Interview: 16 June 2021).

Journalists not willing to work together can be a problem in the Global South (Mutsvairo 2019a) due to ideological differences and emphasis on working alone as highlighted in the above quote. It also emerged from the research that collaborations also fail when the editors of the same media stable or proprietor do not agree completely, again showing that individualism is still a problem. One journalist said:

"When I work on a big project which is potentially one of the biggest projects for the whole company, I expect support. Sometimes I did not get that support. Even when part of a collaborative project I would be assigned other stories which makes it difficult to continue in the partnership as I missed deadlines" (Journalist 8 Interview: 20 June 2021).

This was supported by two other journalists who mentioned that the collaborative spirit is not fully developed as journalists continue to compete.

"It is not all journalists in the country who want to collaborate. Competition is still a huge problem". (Journalist 5 interview, 2 June 2021).

"Some journalists are beginning to see that collaborations are beneficial. I hope this will help fight individualism within newsrooms" (Journalist 7 interview, 29 March 2021).

The above quotes demonstrate that not all journalists are interested in collaboration and without the support of the editors from media houses whose journalists are collaborating, the collaborations are likely to fail.

7.9.2 Lack of professionalism

Lack of professionalism was also cited to be a problem affecting investigative journalism practice. Journalist 6 noted that some journalists can be bribed by sources and act unprofessionally:

"At AMH there was a time when the newsroom was very toxic, to the point that reporter A can go behind your back and tell sources that be careful, reporter B is trying to do this, and he will call you. This story that they are trying to do, they have these facts. There was internal spying maybe because of poverty, all those things, lack of ethics" (Journalist 6 Interview: 21 July 2021).

“Lack of resources is making it difficult for journalists to invest time to do thorough investigative journalism” (Journalist 5 interview, 2 June 2021).

The problem of lack of professionalism was also cited by the government official who saw it as a problem in the country.

“We have some journalists in the country who are very corrupt. They do what is called brown envelope journalism and this is a problem because they are no longer doing investigative journalism but are serving the masters who sent them” (Government Official interview 28 December 2022).

The quote highlights that in contexts where journalists are poorly remunerated, some end up accepting bribes which make them act unethically. Lack of professionalism was also supported by five other journalists interviewed. The government official went on to say that:

“In Zimbabwe we get half-baked stories which are not factual. Speculation and polarisation of the media is a problem. Journalists are not taking time to research and write stories” (Government official interview, 28 December 2022).

The above quotes show that journalists themselves acknowledge that the problem of lack of resources prevents them from doing thorough investigative journalism. The same problem makes the ministry and other players in the country not to take journalism seriously.

7.9.3 Partnerships with foreign media

To protect the identity of local actors, local journalists in Zimbabwe partner with foreign media, where their articles are then published anonymously which sometimes makes it difficult to know who the collaborating partners are.

“A lot of investigation journalism done by organisations such as the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCPR), and the investigative centre for journalism. They usually do not name local partners so that there is that protection. I know also that MISA Zimbabwe worked on some investigative works in the aftermath of the coup in 2017 but again the idea was that you publish them outside the country so that you are protected, and you publish them when it is not your name. So, this is the nature because of the chilling nature of journalism in Zimbabwe this is what has been happening a few times. You cannot say for certain who is collaborating with you because of the nature of the projects and the secrecy that is involved” (Journalist 7 Interview: 29 March 2021).

Journalist 8 supported this noting that:

“I know that Daily Maverick have done a lot about state capture in Zimbabwe. Daily Maverick did not mention who their local partner was, I think to protect them. This is the extent of the collaborative investigative journalism because of the environment that we operate in. Most organisations that are here locally are not willing to come upfront to say this is whom we are collaborating with because they risk or fear that they might be followed up or dealt with if I can call it that way. Those are the two investigative collaborations; they are not the only ones. Like I have pointed out, it is very difficult to know who they are working with.” (Journalist 8 Interview: 30 March 2021).

Publishing stories anonymously is considered beneficial in the Zimbabwean context hence journalists are collaborating with foreign players. Despite the challenges facing investigative journalism in Zimbabwe, all journalists interviewed expressed hope on the opportunities offered by collaboration to hold power to account through working with foreign partners to circumvent censorship and political persecution.

7.9.4 Leak vs investigative journalism

Another observation mentioned by the actors pointed to the absence of ‘real’ investigative journalism, which is often confused with leak journalism. Four journalists interviewed said that leak journalism had become common.

“What is there in Zimbabwean media mostly its leak journalism which is now confused as investigative journalism. This is where people get documents from interested parties especially from people who would have lost tenders and people who are in government who are not happy with certain things, they leak documents and people pass that as investigative journalism without putting any extra effort just reporting from the documents. This is what I have noticed in the Zimbabwean instance” (Journalist 7 Interview: 15 June 2021).

Journalist 8 in support said:

“Some journalists instead of doing further investigations, they just go ahead and publish stories without verification and this can raise credibility issues” (Journalist 8 Interview: 30 March 2021).

In addition to the problem of leak journalism, the government official interviewed noted that social media had given rise to journalists who have become lazy to do thorough journalism.

“We now have a problem in the country with journalists who have become lazy and just want to tweet without doing further investigations. As a government, we like what the media does, and we do not condone corruption. Instead, we say that journalists should go deeper because merely tweeting and getting information from one source is dangerous as there is always a motive (Government official interview, 28 December 2021).”

Other challenges which can be identified in the Zimbabwean context include lack of access to data, a lack of interest in data and Math and lack of knowledge on why journalists should be interested (Mutsvairo, 2019a).

7.9.5 Non-prioritisation of investigative journalism

Another issue which came up in the interview data is the non-prioritisation of investigative journalism in Zimbabwe due to several challenges. Five journalists interviewed mentioned that investigative journalism was not prioritised. Two journalists said:

“Editors and owners of media houses are generally not prioritising investigative journalism. The juniorisation of newsrooms is another headache; experienced and capable journalists have left local media houses over the years. Another problem emanates from editorial policy; some media houses are modelled like lapdogs rather than watchdogs. There is also pressure from influential advertisers meant to create obstacles for investigative journalists” (Journalist 10 Interview: 27 July 2021).

“Media organisations are not prioritising investigative journalism and that needs to change as investigative journalism is important in a democracy” (Journalist 9 interview: 25 July 2021).

The above quotes shows that there are a wide range of problems that curtail investigative journalism practice in Zimbabwe including lack of prioritisation of the practice, the juniorisation of newsrooms, journalists leaving the country and pressure of advertisers. From the viewpoint of the government official, the media was facing problems, some of them which were a result of journalists not committed to doing thorough investigative journalism, lack of resources and lack of professionalism as argued above.

7.10 Conclusion

The chapter discussed who the main human and non-human actors were involved in the *Chiadzwa* and *Electoral malpractices* investigations. The chapter also discussed the key role that non-profits are playing in driving investigative journalism in Zimbabwe. Data from interviews showed that the journalists are concerned about the lack of media freedom in Zimbabwe, which makes it dangerous for journalists to carry out the watchdog role. As a result, collaborations with publications based in South Africa can provide the opportunity to publish sensitive stories anonymously and without fearing persecution. There is a low technology penetration in Zimbabwean newsrooms and this topic was rarely raised by interviewees. The next chapter discussed collaboration in the Eswatini context.

Chapter 8

Collaborative Investigative Journalism in Eswatini

Introduction

This chapter discusses how CIJ is practiced in the Eswatini context. Specifically, it considers the work of *Inhlase Centre for Investigative Journalism (Inhlase)*, a non-profit doing investigative journalism of a collaborative nature with actors found within and outside the Kingdom of Eswatini. It also examines the work of an online-based independent publication *Swaziland News*, which operates from exile, in South Africa, and collaborates with diverse local and international actors taking advantage of the digital capabilities afforded by technology to expose wrongdoing. *Inhlase* is collaborating with local and investigative journalism Centres in the southern African region and is using philanthropic funding to embark on investigative journalism, while *Swaziland News* is collaborating with citizens, students, political activists, and international actors such as Amnesty International, OSISA among others and uses grants and advertising to fund its 'investigative journalism'. Despite both publications being focused on Eswatini, they practise investigative journalism differently with divergent topics, sources, adherence to journalistic ethics and norms and uses of technology. This chapter does not focus on specific investigations. Rather, it looks at specific news organisations because there have not been any obvious, small, or large scale CIJ investigations in Eswatini.

The chapter draws on Latour's Actor Network Theory (ANT) and the Hierarchy of Influences Theory to make sense of the findings from individual in depth interviews with 13 key actors in the collaborations, six interviewees for *Swaziland News* and seven for *Inhlase*, including the editors, investigative journalists, funders, IT specialists, and narrative analysis of written text, headlines, selected stories, editorial codes/policies, member charters, grant funding documents, invoices, memoranda, and reports. The findings are organised around the study's research questions. The chapter starts with a description of *Inhlase* and provides an overview of the general operations including the kind of investigative journalism that the publication does, and how it is funded and constituted. This is followed by a section on how collaboration is being practiced by *Inhlase* and who the human and non-human actors in the collaborations are (RQ1)? the

most important factors influencing CIJ and shaping journalistic agency, and the interconnections between various actors (RQ2). The same approach is adopted *Swaziland News* which is discussed second.

The chapter shows that collaboration in Eswatini takes place at various levels, local, regional, and global, with heterogeneous human and non-human actors from within and outside journalism who collaborate at various points in the journalistic production process, including through the provision of funding, legal and security support, and news distribution. The non-human actors or actants include, the internet, social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Telegram, and websites which afford them with digital capabilities for information sharing, news gathering, creating multimedia news packages, and news distribution and live streams. When I interviewed the actors, they defined the relationships/interconnections they are forming in diverse ways- as ‘a *collaboration*,’ ‘*partnership*,’ *alliance/ union*’ and ‘*our supporters*.’ These collaborating actors or “journalistic strangers” (Holton and Belair-Gagnon 2018) particularly the technologists, funders, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) extend the journalistic field and impact journalistic norms such as objectivity and its associated terms impartiality, and fairness.

The two Eswatini media organisations analysed in this study, *Inhlase* and *Swaziland News*, show that even within the same country, there are differences and similarities in the models of collaboration, the actors involved, donors, use of technology and impact the collaborations have on the editorial processes and the journalistic norms. This is attributed to differences in ideology, funding models, editorial policies, journalistic beliefs and culture, and the nature of stories being pursued. The research shows that the actors are diverse and have specific interests and motivations for collaborating which can be categorised as political, economic, technological, and professional. A common factor is the journalists’ desire to expose corruption and a strong belief in watchdog journalism in a restrictive media environment. In line with Latour (2005), the actors exercise their agency at various points in the journalistic production process to promote accountability journalism. The research also uncovered significant differences in the ways in which investigative journalism stories are told, and adherence to ethical principles compared with Western investigative reporting. This illustrates Hanitzsch et

al.,’s (2011, 273) argument that rich “diversity of journalistic practices and orientations” can be found even for journalists within and of the same country.

8.1 Case description of Inhlase Centre for Investigative Journalism (Inhlase)

Inhlase is the first non-profit Centre doing investigative journalism in the Kingdom of Eswatini registered in 2017 (see Chapter 2). It uses the philanthropic funding model (grants and foundation funding) to fund its journalism and receives grants through its own fundraising efforts and from the Investigative Journalism Hub (IJHub), an organisation that coordinates collaboration of different investigative centres in southern Africa. *Inhlase* is small and is run by two veteran investigative journalists, both of whom report for the *Nation* Magazine, a monthly magazine with a formidable reputation of investigative reporting in the Kingdom of Eswatini. *Inhlase*’s mission includes doing public service journalism and providing training for local journalists. It actively positions itself “as a guardian of public interest that is concerned with developing and honing investigative reporting skills for reporters in newsrooms struggling to maintain investigative journalism desks” (Inhlase website). *Inhlase* firmly emphasises producing “credible investigative stories crucial for freedom of information and expression at the heart of an open, accountable and participatory democracy” (ibid). The Centre defines itself as a ‘non-partisan media organisation’ (Inhlase website) which contradicts the notion of investigative journalism which is subjective by nature and inherently adversarial against power (Moyo, 2019).

Inhlase’s ideology is anti-human rights abuse, pro-social justice and pro-democracy, and its stories are focused on poor service delivery by government, effects of climate change on communities, the plight of widows, human rights abuses, and calls for democracy in the country. Examples of stories that have been published by the *Inhlase* include “Royal gluttonous spending puts shade on the monarchy” (20 August 2021), which details how the King has continued to amass wealth for his benefit. “How king turns eSwatini into a fiefdom” (5 February 2021) which is about how King Mswati “has turned the kingdom into a family affair, appointing his children and close family members in key positions”. “Revealing developments of water blues in Somntongo” (28 October 2021) is another story which details how the state-owned water authority Eswatini Water Services Corporation (EWSC) has destroyed a multi-million Lilangeni

rural water supply system in Somntongo area – an act residents believe was deliberate sabotage of the privately funded and managed system, which serviced approximately 1000 people (**see Table 8.1 below for more story examples**). The stories are published on its website and social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, a local magazine, the *Nation*, and further afield, in neighbouring South African publications such as *amaBhungane* and *Daily Maverick* for wider reach. Journalists at the organisation leverage their experience and networks within the southern African region to converge and collaborate with organisations with a similar ideology in the promotion of investigative journalism, considered extremely important in the functioning of democracy (Protess et al., 1991, Waisbord, 2000 and de Burgh, 2013). An analysis of the *Inhlase* website shows that there are fewer stories about the monarchy and King Mswati 111 than there are stories about issues that affect ordinary citizens.

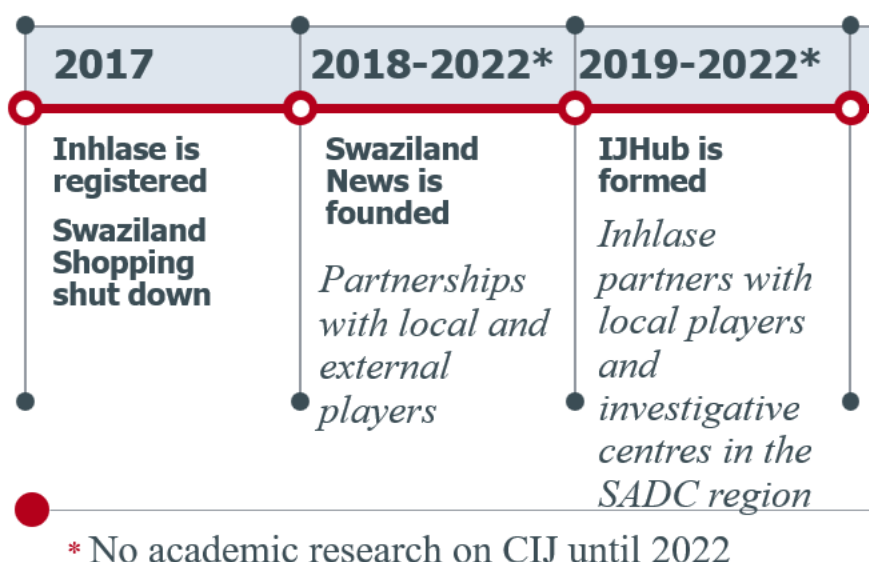
Table 8.1 Examples of investigative stories by Inhlase

Date	Headline
28 October 2021	Revealing developments of water blues in Somntongo
2 November 2021	Eswatini widows of ex-miners getting a raw deal
26 July 2021	Climate change taking its toll on Ngololweni community
6 April 2022	Ex-miners, families die without getting security benefits
17 March 2022	Missing Nyanyali toddlers: Fear grips community on eve of election
20 August 2021	Royal gluttonous spending puts shade on the monarchy
18 January 2022	“Let the Dog Die” – Eswatini citizens under attack
8 April 2022	Democratic pressure: Africa’s last absolute monarch running out of options
22 April 2022	Eswatini pro-democracy talks: lost in translation?

Source: <https://inhlase.com/>

CIJ Timeline

Inhlase and Swaziland News publications



8.2 RQ 1: How is collaboration being practiced in Eswatini and who are the human and non-human actors in the collaborations?

Inhlase journalists collaborate with actors locally (within eSwatini) and regionally /transnationally (in southern Africa). Locally, *Inhlase* is collaborating with journalists from mainstream media organisations, local NGOs doing development work *and* with technologists from an external IT company). In terms of the regional/transnational collaboration, the publication partners with various investigative centres which are part of the IJHub. Collaboration with South African publications is done by the publication for stories which are considered sensitive. I have provided more details on these collaborations in the following sections.

8.2.1 Local collaboration

Inhlase's model of collaboration can be defined as a local one which includes professional journalists from the two mainstream media organisations, *Times of Eswatini* and *Eswatini Observer*, *The Nation* magazine, freelancers, local NGOs, and IT specialists, all found within the Kingdom of Eswatini. Journalists from the

mainstream publications, *Eswatini Observer* come to the Centre to be trained on investigative journalism and working collaboratively on stories to promote accountability. As one journalist indicated:

“In our media houses, you find that newsrooms do not have an investigative desk or unit. So, you find that it is one area that is not taken care off in newsrooms in the country, so to cover that gap, we have decided to come up with Inhlase which is now going to enable journalists who are interested in investigative reporting to work with us or give us the story so that we publish them” (Journalist 1 Interview: 8 March 2021).

The quote illustrates the significant role the Centre plays in developing investigative skills in the country where mainstream media organisations lack resources and skills. Collaboration at the local level enables Inhlase journalists to work with journalists interested in the watchdog role. Collaboration done by *Inhlase* is dominated by journalists and thus excludes amateurs, students, or academic institutions. The Centre wishes to collaborate and build more networks with local journalists who may want to have ‘sensitive stories’ (usually about corruption involving the political elite) published which is not happening because of constraints of the restrictive media environment (Eswatini Media Barometer, 2018). As one journalist commented:

“We have said that journalists should feel free to publish with us stories that their editors have rejected, and we will not publish their names” (Journalist 1 interview: 7 November 2021).

The above quote illustrates the difficulty of exposing corruption and malpractice involving political elites in the mainstream media in Eswatini because of a repressive media environment (Eswatini Media Barometer, 2018). This goes against the view in Western literature that more experienced and older journalists from legacy media are collaborating more because of the benefits it provides. In the case of Eswatini, journalists are not collaborating as much as their Western counterparts because of a lack of a thriving investigative journalism culture and fear of repression from those in power. One journalist noted:

“Because we know how the media houses work in Swaziland, we cannot publish their names but unfortunately for us since we started, they have not shown any interest in giving us stories. I remember in the first budget, we budgeted about E30 000 (USD 2000) for them, and that money was never used but we are still encouraging them especially those who have received

training from amaBhungane because there are quite a few of them in the country who have received training from AmaBhungane, so we are trying at least to encourage them, guys come and work, if you have a story” (Journalist 1 interview: 8 March 2021).

The quote above shows the reluctance by journalists at the *Eswatini Observer* and *Times of Eswatini* to take up collaboration opportunities offered by *Inhlase*. In addition, the lack of investigative journalism in mainstream media organisations such as the *Times of Eswatini* and *Eswatini Observer* creates a vacuum for quality investigative reporting needed by citizens to make informed decisions (Eswatini Media Barometer, 2018).

Locally, *Inhlase* journalists also partner with the *Nation* magazine to promote the reach of stories- and this is a local collaboration between a non-profit and an independent magazine with a commitment to promoting accountability. The partnership demonstrates an overlap of values signifying how modern investigative journalism brings together journalists and organisations who strongly support and value the watchdog role. As one journalist noted:

“We publish stories on our website and on other publications. Here in Eswatini some of our stories are published by the Nation magazine who prioritise investigative journalism” (Journalist 1 Interview, 8 March 2021).

The above quote illustrates the role that the *Nation* magazine plays in co-publishing stories produced by *Inhlase* and because of a common ideology in the watchdog role, they can share story ideas and have their stories published by the *Nation* magazine.

Local NGOs doing humanitarian work in the country such as WaterAid and the National Disaster Management Agency are important actors who collaborate with *Inhlase* in story production by providing leads and evidence of malpractice by government. The NGOs are not involved in the story writing, fact-checking, or carrying out interviews which continues to be the preserve of the journalists. The role they play may be said to be that of sources of information instead of collaborators. This role is a powerful one as they are directing the focus of the journalists. This is unlike in much mainstream, international news where NGO actors may write news stories for mainstream organisations, based in the global North (Cooper, 2009). It can be argued

that both the NGOs and journalistic actors have agency in journalistic practice in Eswatini. As one journalist revealed:

“I am working on a story on how communities were let down by the Ministry of Agriculture in 2008 which wanted to construct dams for them. So, they hired a technician to do it for them but only to find that that man did a shoddy job. I am working with that organization to cover this story. They have got this thing they are doing called Public Expenditure Tracking which I like because these are the guys who came to me and said look we have got this story here this is what is happening you know so I went down there with them I interviewed the people and now I have to go back to the government and said because I have seen the dams you know the shoddy work and everything because those dams were left incomplete. I am trying to use them to make sure you know in fact right now I have two stories is that one and I’ve got another one on cattle rustling” (Journalist 1 Interview: 7 November 2021).

The above quote illustrates that *Inhlase* uses the NGOs as sources of information. The journalist does more of the journalistic role and relies on the NGO for information as he commented in an interview that, *“they give us the data and we do the stories”* (Journalist 1: interview 3 March 2021). At the same time, the NGO demonstrates its power through influencing the story’s focus more so than any other source would. The journalists then use their skills to sift information they consider relevant, determine who to interview and craft the story which ‘makes sense’ to their readers. Readers draw on their lived experiences in the meaning making process.

Inhlase deliberately chooses to focus more on stories about ordinary citizens because of the challenges of writing stories that implicate the King in wrongdoing. When asked why they had fewer stories on the King and Monarchy, one journalist identified cultural barriers and lack of reliable sources:

“The main reason is that Inhlase is issued-based not targeting individuals. Also, verification of stories is important in investigative journalism. Verifying information on the King and the Monarchy is too difficult because of secrecy and cultural barriers unless you have reliable sources. The most important thing in investigative journalism is to get your facts for the story right not get it out first” (Journalist 1 Interview: 11 April 2022).

The quote shows that secrecy and cultural factors hinder the publication from investigating the King and the monarchy. The Eswatini Media Barometer (2018, 5), notes that journalists fear reporting about those in power. “This fear is driven by the

legislative framework and by cultural traditions that promote an ethos of silence and fear of authority.” According to Swazi cultural traditions, criticising the King and royalty is considered disrespectful and said to be unSwazi. This affects the right to freedom of expression, as journalists end up practising self-censorship for fear of persecution.

Inhlase Journalists: <https://inhlase.com/>

Inhlase also collaborates with technologists who are outside the news organisation, who manage their website. The technologists are part of an external organisation contracted to manage the website and provide *Inhlase* with analytics that help the publication to make decisions on which stories are popular and doing well and vice-versa. According to one of the publication’s co-founders and journalist, analytics are important for making editorial decisions. One journalist commented:

“We are working together with an external IT company which is telling us about our reach and topics of interest to our readers. They do content management, full website back (done weekly), optimising website (improve speed & loading time), search engine (improve website ranking), annual security patches and website analytics. I can say we are faring well on social media as this is where we are getting a lot of criticisms and support which helps us measure know our readers are reading. Numbers help us to know which stories our readers like and if we are making an impact” (Journalist 1 interview: 7 November 2021).

While *Inhlase* is a non-profit, basing editorial decisions on analytics shows how numbers of readers are important as they use them to justify the need for funds from potential donors. Their editorial agenda is thus made up of topics which rank high on the analytics. Technology is thus an important actor in the journalistic process (Latour, 2005). The publication’s website shows the numbers of people who have read/seen the stories but does not have space for comments. There is thus limited visible interaction between the publication and its readers on the website except that which is visible on Facebook. Thus, it can be argued that the publication has limited collaboration with users, as they are not gathering any content or authoring stories together with the journalists. Readers make their own choices about how to interact with the publication which the journalists have no control over.

8.2.2 Transnational collaboration

Inhlase is involved in trans-national collaboration with non-profit journalism organisations located in various countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region which are part of the regional Investigative Journalism Hub (IJ Hub) located in Johannesburg, South Africa. Regional /transnational collaboration is with investigative centres belonging to the IJ Hub. These Centres include the INK Centre for Investigative Journalism (Botswana), the MNN Centre for Investigative Journalism (Lesotho), the investigative unit of The Namibian (Namibia), The Platform for Investigative Journalism in Malawi (Malawi), The MkanDay Centre for Investigative Journalism (Zambia) and amaBhungane (South Africa), all of which are members of the Investigative Journalism Hub (IJ Hub), a non-profit organisation driving collaboration in southern Africa. The non-human actors/actants in the interconnections between IJHub members include a website, mobile phones, emails, social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, WhatsApp and Zoom, used for connecting the journalistic actors and their sources in information gathering and news distribution. The actants are also significant in further connections with the readers who consume and interact with the news through mobile phones and computers. The nature of the collaboration characterising member centres of the IJ Hub is mostly low commitment, as centres are independent and prioritise the stories they do for their centres since they have not done any cross-border stories together. In the terms of Graves and Konieczna, (2015, 1969), this can be seen to be a form of “field repair” in which journalists “protect journalism by changing it, legitimising new approaches to or definitions of professional, objective reporting”. At an ideological level, the Centres can be argued to be counter-hegemonic seen through their concern with speaking truth to power through exposing corruption and human rights abuses and coming together to share ideas, tips, and information for best practice. All the centres are reliant on donor funding from the Open Society Initiative for southern Africa (OSISA) whose values of an “*open society and vibrant democracies*” (OSISA website) align with the investigative centres. Interesting to note is a similarity of wording and phrases found in the Centres mission and value statements and that of OSISA and other donors such as “*promoting good governance,*” “*promoting an open and democratic society*” (MNN and Inhlase websites).

The regional centres are members of investigative journalism networks such as the Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN), “*whose core mission is to support and strengthen investigative journalism around the world—with special attention to those from repressive regimes and marginalised communities*” (GIJN website). Other journalists from *Inhlase* are members of collaborative journalism institutions such as the Centre for Collaborative Investigative Journalism (CCIJ) where they participate in training, share story ideas and techniques, and offer each other editorial support, demonstrating “journalism’s concern with journalistic issues, practices, and ideals that surpass national contexts” (Hellmueller and Konow-Lund 2019). Points of convergence among the Centres can be seen through similar commitments and values, visible on their missions and value statements (**see appendices E, F and G**). For example, all centres have a commitment to i) training investigative journalists in their countries ii) engaging in local and cross-national collaborations and iii) promoting the public interest which reinforces the watchdog role in southern Africa, considered by all Centres as extremely important. While transnational journalism gives rise to journalism practices beyond geographical borders and “cross-culture connectedness” (Reese, 2008), the Centres’ editorial decisions are influenced by national issues/boundaries (Hellmueller and Konow-Lund 2019). *Inhlase*’s journalism is inward looking and is concerned with issues affecting local Swazi citizens.

Individual journalists from *INK Centre*, the *Namibian Investigative Unit* among others have previous experience and involvement in global collaborative investigations driven by ICIJ such as the Panama Papers, Mauritius Leaks etc (**see Chapter 3**) where they have exposed corruption about local leaders within their countries using data from the leaks. The Namibian Investigative Unit also partners with the OCCPR. The OCCPR’s vision is to “*develop and equip a global network of investigative journalists and publishing their stories, OCCRP exposes crime and corruption so the public can hold power to account*” (OCCPR website). The networks built through the interconnectedness of local, regional, and global media organisations and journalists’ networks shows how contemporary investigative journalism has become interdependent and globalised in response to the global webs of high-level corruption and organised crime visible in today’s world. In these collaborations, journalists share skills, and knowledge and work on stories together (Sambrook, 2018).

8.3 IJHub collaboration

This section discusses various aspects of the transnational collaboration of the IJHub. Focus is on South Africa's influential position, the importance of the editorial code and charter, technology use, non-profit funding and working arrangements.

8.3.1 South Africa's influential position in the IJHub

A closer analysis of the formation of *Inhlase* and *IJ Hub* shows that South Africa has an influential role in promoting collaboration in the SADC region. As explained in Chapters 2 and 6, investigative journalism in South Africa is much more developed when compared to other nations in southern Africa and has aspects of the liberal model which privileges the watchdog role, and a strong professional culture (Santos and Mare, 2021). The establishment of *Inhlase* in Eswatini was largely due to the influence of South African based journalists when local journalists initially thought “*it was not for us*” and “*if it is not going to cause some troubles for us*” thus reinforcing the point about fear to do investigative journalism in the Eswatini context (*Journalist 1 interview, 8 March 2021*).

“In Eswatini, we did not have a journalism investigation Centre. We were encouraged by Drew Forest who works for amaBhungane in South Africa. We said it is a good idea as long as it is not going to cause some troubles for us. He said no, no ways. You are experienced enough to write investigative stories. That was in 2017 when we started the whole thing. We registered it. We stayed for 2 years not operating back he said look guys other Centres in the region are coming together to the IJHub” (Journalist 1 Interview: 8 March 2021).

The above quote shows how a South African investigative journalism and key member of the *IJHub* was instrumental in encouraging local Eswatini journalists in establishing an investigative centre when they initially thought it was not for them.

Interviewees indicated that *Inhlase* collaborates with media organisations in South Africa to publish stories that are sensitive, which makes collaboration with actors in the neighbouring country an advantage as it promotes freedom of expression and helps the distribution of stories to a wider audience.

“If we feel that the story is going to burn our fingers, we always send our stories to the Hub” (Journalist 1 interview: 13 April 2021).

The quote shows that sensitive stories, which may be considered disrespectful of the monarchy are sent over to the IJHub for publication in South African media for fear of political persecution locally. Editors and journalists in South Africa edit the stories and ensure that they are in line with their editorial policies. When these stories are published in South Africa, they carry the Swazi journalist's by-line and are said to be produced in association with the collaborating partner, which to some extent shields them from Eswatini politicians and members of the monarchy who may want to come after them because of the complications of suing media organisations in neighbouring countries, (see. *The media is dead, long live the king*, 8 August 2020, and *Climate of fear in Eswatini media*, 6 November 2020) published in the *Mail and Guardian*. The above quote supports the earlier claim that

Interview data revealed that the IJ Hub collaborates with South African based publications such as *Daily Maverick* and *amaBhungane* for the purpose of news distribution which helps promote the stories' reach. Both the local and regional models of collaboration bring together young and old journalists, which shows that it is not the digital natives (usually young people) who have a mindset/attitude of collaboration. In terms of the kinds of collaboration practiced by the two publications, an alignment with some of the models discussed in literature (**see chapter 2**) can be noted. *Inhlase* can be said to fit into the definition of a collaboration, where it is working with various actors to promote the watchdog role which aligns with Konow-Lund, et al.,'s (2019, 1)'s definition of collaboration as "a shared effort toward a common end". Some actors who are collaborating with *Inhlase* however mentioned being involved in a "cooperation" to fulfil their own ends.

"The idea behind the creation of IJHub was to ensure that centres in the region collaborate, partner, and cooperate more. In fact, I think on paper we are a collaborative partnership. We wanted to collaborate to raise funds and work on investigative stories. As things are, have collaborated to raise funds and this is going well. On the other hand, we have collaborated less when it comes to working together on cross-border stories. When it comes to cooperation, we have cooperated on story editing. There are instances we have reached out to IJ Hub members, amaBhungane to help edit our stories" (Journalist 3 interview: 19 April 2022).

The quote above shows that different member centres go to the IJHub to fulfil their own individual needs, thus getting involved in cooperation and not collaboration.

The Hub also plays a role of finding external partners who can publish sensitive stories if they cannot be published in the countries in which they were produced. One journalist said:

“There are certain publications that have agreed to publish our stories. When we give the editor our stories at the Hub. After editing them, he then sells the idea of the story to the targeted publications that he thinks may be interested Like Daily Maverick and Mail and Guardian. They have an arrangement as you know that all along the Centre was housed by amaBhungane and some of the staff at the Centre used to work at amaBhungane” (Journalist 1 interview: 10 March 2021).

The above quote shows that South African based publications such as *Daily Maverick* and *Mail and Guardian* play a vital role when they publish stories for member centres to promote their reach. This shows how present-day investigative journalism has become networked, with local and regional partnerships facilitated by the affordances of technologies such as emails, phone calls and websites. These partnerships take many different forms and involve various actors driven by strong beliefs in promoting watchdog journalism.

8.3.2 The importance of the editorial code and charter in the IJHub

The editorial charter of the IJHub captures values that are important to the journalists, including: the public interest, truth and working in the interests of children and other vulnerable groups. Freedom from commercial and political interests is also highlighted in the code’s preface and is considered by interviewees to be particularly important.

“The work of IJ Hub members should be guided at all times by what is in the public interest in an open and democratic society. This means striving for truth, avoiding unnecessary harm, showing a special concern for children and other vulnerable groups, being sensitive to the culture of customs of readers, and acting independently – free from commercial and political influences” (Extract from the editorial code, page 1.)

The editorial code also underlies the importance of values that are also considered important by mainstream media organisations such as accuracy, avoiding hate speech and maintaining confidentiality of sources, among others. Transparency is also considered important, and the code encourages members to declare any forms of conflict of interest which may compromise the journalism, particularly politically and financially.

“Members shall not allow commercial, political, personal or other non-professional considerations to influence their reporting; avoid conflicts of interest to the extent reasonably possible and declare those that are unavoidable” (Extract from the editorial code, page 2).

Even though the editorial code is explicit about not allowing any forms of influence, all interviewed members from various centres and Boards of Directors, mentioned that donor influence was a big problem since donors sometimes shaped the news agenda and did not trust small investigative centres. I explain in detail on donor funding further below.

Journalists and member centres belonging to the *IJHub* are guided by an editorial charter and a membership code (**see appendix E**) which spell out responsibilities, values and expected conduct. A narrative analysis of the written text of the four-page membership code showed the criteria for journalists and member centres to become part of the *IJHub*, expected conduct and grounds of expulsion or termination. For example, the code spells out that a media organisation or journalists can only become part of the *IJHub* if they are already practising investigative journalism among other things. The code states that:

To qualify for membership, the candidate must –

- 2.1. Be an organisation that practices investigative journalism as a primary objective.*
- 2.2. Have credible governance and compliance structures.*
- 2.3. Have a credible track record (or if a new organisation, its people must have credible track records) in the practice of investigative journalism and of professional and ethical conduct; and*
- 2.4. Subscribe to the IJ Hub Editorial Charter and these rules*
(Extract from the membership code, page 1).

From the extract above it can be argued that the *IJHub* is set up to cater to established centres already practising investigative journalism. This excludes amateurs and mainstream media organisations who may not be practising investigative journalism but have an interest to do so, particularly in a region which has a shortage of journalists skilled in doing investigative journalism. A similar criticism has been made against global collaborations such as Panama Papers (Berglez and Gearing, 2018).

The membership code highlights that all member centres should not undermine “*the collective*” though it does not make explicit what the interests of the collective are. This silence presupposes that all journalists and member centres which are part of the *IJHub* know what the collective interests are.

“This code is to help ensure that the IJHub serves a professional and ethical corps of member centres whose conduct will contribute to and not undermine the collective” (Extract from the membership code, page 1).

When interviewed, one of the collaborating journalists acknowledged that the code was important for guiding them ethically and professionally.

“I consider IJHub editorial code to be a road map for ethical investigative journalism. We need it to ensure that we remain committed to the basic principles of journalism. And, to ensure that there is trust between us and our readers” (Journalist 6 interview: 19 April 2022).

It also emerged from the interviews that some members of the *IJHub* were not happy with the decision-making processes at the *IJHub* and set up parallel structures to fulfil their own individual interests. For example, a senior journalist with more than 10 years doing investigations commented:

“The IJ Hub is good as a concept, the only problem is that it is an amaBhungane baby. Member centres have no control of certain decisions and that is why sometimes we have parallel structures away from IJ Hub” (Journalist 5 interview: 12 February 2022).

The above quote shows that while transnational collaborations such as the one facilitated by the *IJHub* is considered by all member centres in a positive way, some journalists are disgruntled by the decision-making processes and are critical of the dominance of South Africa which leads them to form separate partnerships involving two or three member centres to fulfil their own individual interests.

8.3.3 Technology use in the *IJHub*

IJHub does not have an online/virtual collaborative newsroom such as Slack, Figma, Slite, Linear, commonly used in some Western collaborative newsrooms, which is one of the characteristics of Jenkins and Graves’s (2019) regional model. Collaboration has been done in the traditional face to face method, with member journalists travelling to Johannesburg for meetings. One can thus argue that technology is not the facilitator of collaboration in this case. This runs in contrast to the more positive view

from technological optimists about the digital age creating technological affordances which make collaboration easier than ever before (Stonbley, 2017). However, journalists belonging to the member centres do use platforms such as WhatsApp and Zoom for communication purposes, which became amplified when they could not travel physically because of the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic as they were restricted by lock-down and social distancing rules put in place in the different countries.

Investigative journalism done by *Inhlase* are not based on leaks. A journalist at *Inhlase* had this to say:

"We are still new in this field. So far, we have not come across that. But when it comes to leaking information, people have started opening up to us. We are getting a lot of leads" (Journalist 1 interview: 3 March 2021).

The quote above shows that *Inhlase* is yet to receive leaks to base their investigative stories on. As will be shown in the analysis on *Swaziland News* which operates in exile and does a lot of leak-driven journalism *Inhlase* has not received leaks despite being geographically close and accessible to whistle-blowers.

Email and mobile phones are important in bringing the journalistic actors together and contacting sources while cameras are used in news gathering (taking photos) and the website and social media in disseminating the story and getting user feedback. Unlike collaborations done in Western newsrooms which use in built sophisticated software, in the Eswatini context and *IJHub*, investigative journalists use basic tools and cannot be said to be driving collaboration.

"Technology is not the main driver of collaborative journalism in Africa. The investigative collaborative tools between African journalists are still old-fashioned. We call each other, email, and use WhatsApp and on rare occasions do use Signal for communication. In the US and the UK, they use sophisticated platforms developed internally to communicate. The platforms are well encrypted and allow for a smooth flow of information. With IJHub, journalists use WhatsApp and email for communication purposes. IJ Hub has a WhatsApp group where partners/collaborators share information" (Journalist 5 Interview: 12 February 2022).

The above quote shows that in some newsrooms in Africa technology is not as advanced as in some UK and US newsrooms leveraging on collaborative software to

do journalism. The IJHub despite coordinating collaborative journalism in southern Africa, uses WhatsApp for communication and information sharing.

When asked further why the technology was not as advanced, lack of resources was cited as the main hindrance. One journalist who is part of the IJHub said:

“We do not have the resources to invest in technology to enhance our collaborative efforts. With the little resources we have, technology is the last thing in our minds. Nevertheless, we see the importance of technology in collaborative journalism. When we were invited to participate in the Panama Papers (and other projects) by ICIJ we were exposed to amazing technological developments that made it easy for reporters around the world to collaborate and share information. As African reporters, we wish we had the funds and the expertise to develop our own Africa-grown online collaborative tools” (Journalist 5 Interview: 19 April 2021).

The above quote shows that lack of resources due to unfavourable economic environments in the southern African region make it difficult for journalists to invest in the latest tools and software to be able to carry out collaborative investigative journalism.

8.3.4 Non-profit funding and skills development

The management of *IJHub* combine vast experience in journalism and previous links with funding institutions and journalism organisations which play a key role in the administration of the *IJHub*. The Centre fundraises for member centres among other roles. As seen on its website:

“The IJHub serves investigative journalism in Southern Africa. We build the capacity of investigative journalists and journalism centres via fellowships, training workshops and a range of editorial and organisational services. We also raise philanthropic funding for our member centres” (IJ Hub website).

The quote shows that the *IJHub* is involved in several activities in support of member centres. *IJHub* is funded by Millenium Trust and the Open Society Institute and defines itself as a southern African institution concerned with advancing investigative journalism in the region. A senior investigative journalist with ten years' experience emphasised how centres shared skills and techniques:

“Members often discuss cross border story ideas and share notes. The discussions vary in depth and scope. Some developed centres such as INK CIJ and The Namibian Center often hold zoom seminar to workshop other colleagues on techniques they adopted to cover/deliver an investigation. The Namibian for example often has a 4-minute video explaining the back story of a particular investigation, including challenges and lessons learned during the investigation. This method helps other centers to develop and fine tune their investigative methods avoid any pitfalls in future. Centers also hold regular workshops in their respective countries and share notes” (Journalist 6 Interview: 19 April 2021).

The above quote shows that member centres support each other with knowledge and skills sharing to improve the quality of stories they tell. They converge because of similar values and missions, are diverse and dispersed geographically and are dedicated to connecting in person, and via WhatsApp groups for knowledge and skills sharing purposes (Jenkins and Graves, 2019). While members exercise agency to come together with others with similar interests, the same members also exercise their agency to diverge and pursue individual interests. The global pandemic Covid-19 has impacted on the practice and revealed issues with the model of collaboration such of the *IJHub* as members have not been able to do cross-national stories to date due to travel limitations (April 2022). Where Western organisations use collaborative software such as Slack in collaborations, the *IJHub* has not taken advantage of such tools to set up an online newsroom that will eliminate travel costs.

8.3.5 Working arrangements and ethical adherence for collaborating partners

Clearly defining the terms and conditions of the working arrangements of collaborating partners is another key factor in CIJ which is considered useful for preventing tensions particularly for huge collaborations. Contract signing, level of community involvement, topic/types of issues covered are some of the issues considered in the agreements. In relation to the signing of agreements, the collaborating actors with *Inhlase* and at the *IJ Hub* do not sign any formal agreements (non-disclosure agreements) and have not collaborated on stories. Thus, it can be argued that *Inhlase's* ways of working have several variables of Stonbley's (2017: 14-15) six model matrices (defined in terms of “duration of time and degree of integration among partner organisations”). There are also differences in the regional model of collaboration of the *IJ Hub* if compared with the one by Jenkins and Graves (2019) and Stonbley (2017)'s matrix. The *IJHub* model can be defined as a cooperative arrangement in which journalists are working towards

achieving individual ends (Heft, 2021). While the IJHub provides the structure that brings the different member centres together, their collaboration has been loose, not involving a concrete joint project and involving sharing of information and tools (low degree).

Ethical adherence is another prominent issue that came up through the interviews with the journalists at *Inhlase* showing that truth and transparency were mostly valued than other journalistic values. Ethical values such as objectivity and impartiality are not highly valued like in Western journalism. The outlet does not aim to be objective.

“We take investigative journalism as a service that makes the people’s lives better. Ours is, therefore, a service to all people in our society. For us objectivity are the facts that we have in the story. Based on these objective facts we can come up with a subjective conclusion or verdict” (Journalist 1 Interview: 7 November 2021).

Another partner indicated that objectivity was not possible with investigative storytelling as there was a tension between adversarialism and objectivity. When asked if objectivity and impartiality were important for the stories that they wrote as a Centre. He said:

“It is impossible for journalists to be objective when working on investigative stories. We have an agenda, and the agenda is simple, ‘it is to hold power to account and be the voice of the voiceless.’ What I think is important however is to be fair on those we are investigating. And this is what I have tried to do as an investigative journalist. Fairness means you should be able to listen to the other side of the story, and make sure they defend themselves if they must. In 2018, we spend days in a refugee camp investigating mistreatment of refugees. After interviewing the refugees and getting first-hand account of what they went through in detention, it was clear which side we were on. We were on the side of the refugees, and we needed to tell their stories in a compelling way. And to expose the government’s inhumane treatment of these defenseless people. There was no way we were going to try to be impartial or objective. But we were fair to the government. We gave them space to respond to the accusations leveled against them. They delayed the response by six weeks, but we waited patiently for them. That is fairness” (Journalist 3 Interview: 19 April 2021).

The above quote highlights that when doing investigative journalism, journalists are engaged in doing moral work, and to trigger moral outrage from the public they use narratives that emphasise pain and humiliation of a victim by a villain (Ettema and Glasser, 1988, 1998; de Burgh 2000). For this reason, they cannot claim to be

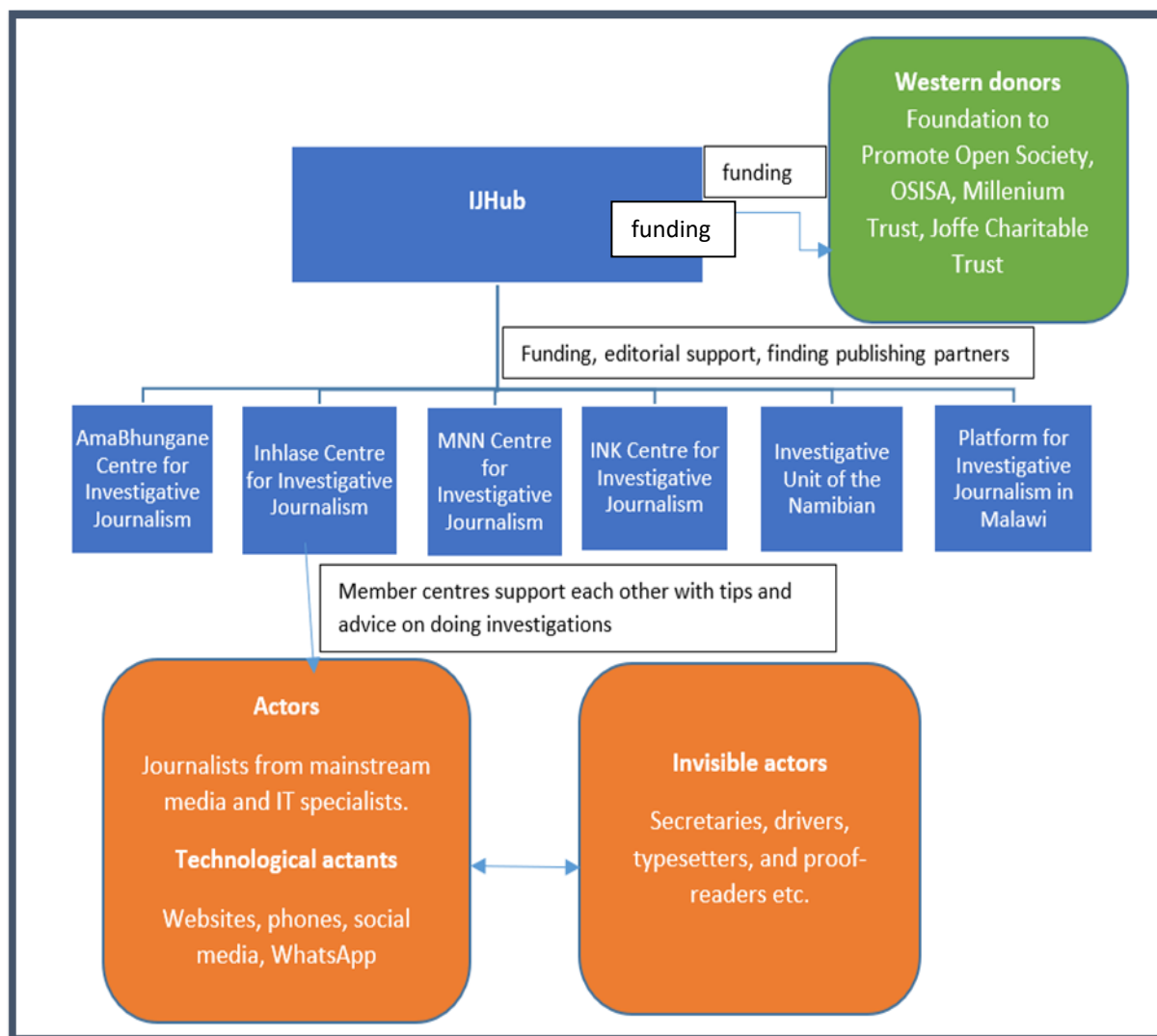
objective. Journalistic conversations in this research showed that objectivity is not an important pillar guiding their work as they argued that it was impossible to be objective since their work involves making value judgements, siding with the oppressed and the political polarisation of the media makes them to operate in different ideological camps. Instead, all journalists from Inhlase and IJHub spoke about the importance of giving the other parties the right of reply.

“We always give ourselves enough time to hear what the other side has to say” (Journalist 1 Interview: 7 November 2021).

“Right of reply is one of the most important pillars of investigative journalism which we abide by” (Journalist 6 Interview: 19 April 2021)

To sum up, *Inhlase* has two models of collaboration, local and regional/transnational. Locally, the Centre works with journalists, NGOs, and IT specialists. Journalists collaborate in skills sharing and story development while NGOs can be said to act as sources of information and IT specialists are contracted to provide analytics which shape/influence the editorial, showing that in the Eswatini context, web designers are important actors that are influencing journalism. Local journalists from *Eswatini Observer* and *Times of Eswatini* are reluctant to collaborate because of the repressive media environment. Regionally, the chapter demonstrated the interconnections between journalists from different member centres is the southern African region who are providing each other with editorial support driven by non-profit funding. Non-profits are sustaining investigative journalism in southern Africa and shaping the editorial agenda. Below is a visual representation which shows the human actors who are part of the IJHub. The member centres support each other with tips and advice when working on investigations and they acquire funding from the IJHub. Due to the endless nature of invisible actors, it is not possible to name them all.

Visual representation of the IJHub actors and activities they do



Key

- Human and non-human actors in the investigations
- Investigative centres
- Western Donors

8.4 RQ2: What are the most important factors influencing CIJ and shaping journalistic agency, and the interconnections between various actors?

Based on the foregoing discussion. It can be argued that the different models of collaboration done by *Inhlase* are influenced by a convergence of professional, economic, and political factors. Below, I discuss how these influences are playing out.

8.4.1 Economic influences (Social-institutional/organisational level factors)

The non-profit model is considered by all journalists, editors, managers, interviewed as an advantage as it enables investigative journalism and eliminates the profit motive (see Benson 2018 and Scott et al., 2019) particularly in the Eswatini context where there are economic challenges and media organisations do not have funds to embark on investigative journalism. When asked if *Inhlase* would be able to do investigative journalism without the support of grant funding, one of the founding partners and journalist said:

“I would be lying because we all know that investigative journalism is expensive and time consuming. Grant funding is important to us, but I am always concerned about what will happen when the donor funds dry up” (Journalist 1 Interview: 11 April 2022).

The quote highlights that while donor funding is important for local Eswatini journalists, concerns about its sustainability remain. The same notion was shared by all the other partners interviewed in Botswana, South Africa and Lesotho and Namibia. One journalist remarked:

“Grant funding is everything for us. We would not survive a day without grant funding. We tried to find ways to raise funds away from the grant makers, but that has not been successful. For example, we tried to create a system where the public is asked to fund our work directly, but that has not worked. This is because the culture of funding journalism is still foreign in most African countries” (Journalist 2 Interview: 19 April 2021).

The above quote demonstrates the funding challenges that investigative centres face which make them rely on donor funding without which they would not be able to do investigative journalism. Non-profits such as *Inhlase*, *INK* and *MNN* proactively seek out grants to enable them to do investigations. *Inhlase*’s dependence on donor funding means that it can only meaningfully pursue stories when there is available funding, which raises the question about the long term-sustainability of the non-profit model, particularly as it relates to small Centres such as *Inhlase*. The same applies to the rest of the member centres in the region.

In addition, *Inhlase* gets funding support from donors, such as Canon Collins. This has led to the “expansion of the professional journalistic boundary” (Scott et al., 2019, 2035) as journalists end up doing non-editorial tasks such as participating in trainings,

applying for grants, training other investigative journalists in the country, and making grant applications which takes them away from pursuing investigative stories in the public interest. *Inhlase* is doing investigative journalism that links with the donor's priorities, showing an overlap of values between their interests and those of Cannon Collins, a concern noted by Scott et al., (2019) as some important topics can be overlooked. It emerged from interview data that *Inhlase* was granted the Sylvester Stein Fellowship because its work is in line with the Fellowship. The Stein Fellowship is a Cannon Collins grant that was "set up in 2016, from money donated by friends and family of the late Sylvester, a South African writer and publisher, and is used to support the development of talented southern African journalists with a focus on the promotion of human rights and social justice in the region" (Cannon Collins website). In an interview with a Communications Specialist at the Cannon Collins Trust when asked why they funded *Inhlase* said:

"We funded Inhlase because their values and efforts resonate with our vision for an open and just society in southern Africa and the vision of the Sylvester Stein Fellowship to honour the memory and legacy of journalist Sylvester Stein. Since 2016, money donated by Sylvester's friends and family has been used to support southern African journalism with a focus on the promotion of human rights and social justice in the region" (Communications specialist Interview: 11 March 2022)

The quote above shows that donors fund organisations that do investigations that are in harmony with their priorities. While the grant is managed by Canon Collins, Sylvester's widow has the final say of who gets the grant.

"The fund likes to invest in projects that will make a palpable impact in the region – the decision is made by Stein's widow" (Communications specialist interview: 11 March 2022)

Inhlase has thus been able to do journalism on the human rights violations and violence on citizens by the police because it links with the priorities of the Stein Fellowship. It has done stories such as "*Let the Dog Die*" – Eswatini citizens under attack," (18 January 2022) made possible by the availability of the grant.

"We won a Cannon Collins grant to document victims of the protests and violence Eswatini has been going through since March 2021" (Journalist 1 Interview: 31 December 2021).

A senior journalist from one of the member centres, with more than 15 years investigative journalism experience said that despite donor funding enabling them to do investigative journalism, they were constrained by funder influence, which was a frequent problem, as donors, asked them to draft stories, mostly about the Heads of states and other people in power. The journalist said:

“Donors are like editors. They influence the stories. Sometimes you will get a call from a donor saying hi guys you didn't publish anything this time around what's happening, and you wonder what they mean because you would have published stories and then they say we heard that leader so-and-so is involved in corruption, are you not planning to write about him?” (Journalist 2 Interview: 19 April 2021).

The above quote shows that donors directly influence stories, and this has direct implications for journalistic autonomy. When asked if funders directly influenced the stories done, one of the Board members of IJ Hub stated that it was difficult to say as he has not directly encountered it. However, he noted that some donors had a particular preference of stories.

“It is a difficult issue to deal with. There are some funders who concentrate on the head of state and those linked to him. Sometimes institutions that fund us, we do not know who is funding them. I remember that we had this discussion that we have to be careful about where we get our money from but really, we could not come up with a solid solution” (IJHub Board member Interview: 6 January 2022).

The board member further indicated that small Centres of investigative journalism faced difficulties in fundraising for themselves as donors do not trust them.

“As a Hub, we source for funding for the collective members because it is difficult for small Centres to fundraise for themselves. Donors, have trust issues. If they do not trust you, they can't fund you” (IJHub Board member Interview: 6 January 2022).

While the non-profit journalism model is considered a solution to the economic challenges facing media, it comes with its own challenges, including donor influence and the potential for ideological pressure and media capture (Benson, 2018), in addition to an increased pressure on journalists to perform non-journalistic administrative tasks, such as application and impact reports (see Scott et al., 2019).

8.4.2 Professional influences (Individual level)

Since their establishment investigative centres in Africa are making it part of their mandate to offer training to cultivate important investigative journalism skills to promote accountability journalism in the region due to a commitment to promote the watchdog role. When I asked IJHub journalists why there this was so one journalist had this to say:

“There is a passion amongst investigative journalists to hold power to account and this passion often forces us to find ways to work together. For example, when we collaborated on a story with one of the centres in 2016, we did so because we felt that we had the obligation to hold power to account. We cared less about technology what we wanted was to find the underlying cause of the story. Sometimes, we are forced to collaborate because we have no choice but to do so to survive as we can cut costs. As a news organisation news is our currency, without news we are dead” (Journalist 2 Interview: 19 April 2021).

The quote above shows that investigative journalists are driven by the need to promote investigative journalism in the region, which they also consider a strategy for survival in an unfavourable economic environment.

Centres such as *INK Centre for Investigative Journalism* in Botswana, *MakanDay*, *Zambia Centre for Investigative Journalism*, and the *MNN Centre for Investigative Journalism* in Lesotho among others explicitly state on their mission statements their commitment to train other investigative journalists in their respective countries and in the region. In an interview with one of the co-founders and investigative journalist of *Inhlase* with more than 20 years journalism experience, it emerged that only one journalist from the *Eswatini Observer*, has collaborated with the publication, undertaking training, and authoring stories with *Inhlase* journalists. This is like some western collaborations discussed in chapter 2, which are small, with two or three journalists involved which Gearing (2021, 5) refers to as “micro-collaboration”.

8.4.2.1 Journalistic agency in the news gathering process

There are lots of ways in which journalists show their agency. Here are some specific examples to show how journalistic agency is exercised in the news gathering and dissemination processes by *Inhlase* journalists.

- I. Journalists deciding which stories to cover in line with donor priorities
- II. Journalists deciding who to interview and where to find information

8.4.2.2 **Journalistic agency in the news dissemination process**

- I. Technologists optimise website and provide metrics for popular stories and journalists use this information to decide on which topics to focus on.

8.4.2.3 **Technological affordances in the news gathering process**

- I. Journalists use emails and mobile phones to contact sources
- II. Cameras used by journalists to take photos
- III. Website used to publish stories and connect with audiences.
- IV. Social media used to publish stories and connect with audiences
- V. WhatsApp and Zoom used to connect with other journalists at the IJHub

8.5 **Case description of Swaziland News**

This section describes an online independent publication *Swaziland News*, whose model of collaboration is significantly different from that of *Inhlase* in terms of ideology, partners/actors, how investigative stories are written and its deployment of technology. It is an Eswatini focused publication run from South Africa by Zweli Martin Dlamini popularly known as Zwemart, who was forced into exile in South Africa, following the closure of his publication *Swaziland Shopping* in 2017 on the grounds that it was publishing falsehoods. In an interview he said:

“I started my own newspaper, it was known as the Swaziland Shopping at the time, but it was eventually closed by the government after I started to be critical of the way they were running things” (Journalist 1 Interview: 3 January 2022).

Swaziland News was registered in South Africa in 2018 as an independent publication whose business model combines advertising, crowdfunding, and grants. The managing editor, Zwemart, acts as an investigative journalist, editor, news anchor and leads a team of 10 individuals who fiercely criticise King Mswati 111 and exposing corruption that involves the political elite in the Kingdom of Eswatini. South Africa ranks

at 35 on RSF's 2022 Press Freedom Index, while Eswatini ranks at 131 (see Chapter 2). The publication is anti-King Mswati 111, anti-corruption and pro-democracy and it collaborates with organisations and individuals sharing similar beliefs. Unlike *Inhlase*, which has fewer stories on the political elite and has no hardcore corruption investigations, *Swaziland News* exposes corruption by government, politicians, the monarchy, the King, and his children, police brutality, citizens' suffering and calls for democratic reforms (see Table 3). Approximately 90% of the stories on the *Swaziland News* website and Facebook page, have Zwemart's by-line which means the publication is synonymous with this journalist, and his own disapproval for corruption, the Monarchy and King Mswati 111. It can be said to be playing a radical role which "provides a platform for views and voices that are critical of authority and the established order and also give support for drastic change and reform" (Christians et al., 2009, 3). The publication gives a platform to political and gender activists, political parties and individuals clamouring for democratic reforms and it defines its mission as "*to provide accurate information that will enable citizens to make informed decisions regarding issues that affect their welfare, be it political, socially, economically or otherwise*" (Swaziland News website). The publication explicitly asserts on its website that it is "*guided by the principles of journalism and relevant laws, it seeks to provide accurate, fair and balanced information on issues of democracy, human rights and other developmental issues in the public interest.*"

Table 8.2 Examples of *Swaziland News* investigative stories

Dates	Headlines
4 May 2022	REVEALED: Senior Superintendent drops multi-million fraud investigation, marries SPTC suspected Manager Ncobile Magagula
30 April 2022	REVEALED: Chief Justice defrauds Government over R1million housing allowance, ACC Commissioner sabotaged investigation.
4 April 2022	AFTER PURCHASING TWO MORE JETS: Mswati reduces R120million health budget, now struggling to pay salaries for 400 nurses.
7 February 2022	EXPOSED: Prince Sicalo secretly lobbying for R100million to buy more guns, spying equipment.
25 November 2021	EXPOSED: King Mswati's leaked military strategy to shoot protesting civilians during elections at Siphofaneni.
17 September 2021	EXPOSED: How Deputy Prime Minister Themba Masuku, wife 'looted' R200, 000.00 public funds as allowances for one international trip.
25 February 2021	EXPOSED: King Mswati, Finance Minister, and the controversial multi-billion Oil company
23 December 2020	EXPOSED: Princess Sikhanyiso buys Mercedes Benz worth over E600, 000.00 for military boyfriend with taxpayers' money.
7 December 2020	King Mswati defrauded Swazi Nation in a multi-billion shareholding deal to take over Sun International Hotels
15 November 2020	King evicts poor women vendors, Mafutseni residents, Princess Sibahle's Arab husband takes over land.

Source: <https://www.swazilandnews.co.za/>

Swaziland News takes advantage of affordances of technology when it uses social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Telegram to build networks, distribute news and engage with readers which helps it overcome geographical limitations and to evade censorship and restrictive media laws in the Kingdom of Eswatini. Leaks play a significant role in its investigative journalism and demonstrates the alliance it has with political actors facilitated via technology. Thus, it can be argued that journalism in the digital era, is characterised by the convergence of local, regional, and global networks, who exercise their agency by taking advantage of technology's affordances to overcome geographical limitations and regulatory constraints. The next section is focused on identifying the human and non-human actors that are collaborating with the *Inhlase* publication.

8.6 RQ 1: How is collaboration being practised in Eswatini? Who are the human and non-human actors in the collaborations done by Swaziland News?

Swaziland News is an Eswatini focused publication operation in exile in South Africa. Locally, the publication is collaborating with local South African media organisations such as *Mail and Guardian*, *amaBhungane*, *South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC)* and *Pretoria News*. Regional collaboration takes place with journalists, ordinary citizens, political and gender activists, students, and political parties in Eswatini, and global collaboration/partnerships include international organisations such as Amnesty International, funders such as OSISA, diasporic communities and the Chinese government which sponsors the work it does by offering it paid projects. Other actors are anonymous. *Swaziland News* does not disclose other partners they work with to protect their identity because of the sensitive nature of investigative journalism they do. Non-human actors or actants include websites, social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Telegram, emails, mobile phones, and the internet. They also do not disclose the software and tools they use which they argue is part of protecting their security. The model of collaboration of *Swaziland News* involves three levels as opposed to *Inhlase* which has two. It also differs from other models documented in literature, in which most collaborating partners are known and disclose the kinds of software and tools they use for the success of the collaboration (see McGregor et al., 2017).

8.6.1 Local collaboration

At a local level, *Swaziland News* partners with South African organisations such as *Mail and Guardian* and *Pretoria News*, *South Africa Broadcast Corporation (SABC)* and *amaBhungane*. The relationships Zwemart has with the publications are diverse as some publications invite him to contribute stories on Eswatini for the publication as a freelancer (SABC, Pretoria News and BBC World Service Focus on Africa) and consider him a source for Eswatini news (ENCA and SABC). Zwemart is considered more credible on Eswatini issues by these foreign based media organisations. In an interview, one journalist had this to say:

“Highly reputable organisations such as the BBC, SABC, ENCA and others are quoting us. So that means we are upholding international journalism standards, but when you go to Eswatini because those journalists are captured, they will tell you we are not ethical” (Journalist 1 Interview: 3 January 2022)

The above quote demonstrates that the publication is considered credible by local, regional, and international players. An image showing a story on Eswatini by the *Swaziland News* editor which was a lead story on the *Pretoria News* publication follows. Following is another image of the *Swaziland News* editor with the *Mail and Guardian* news editor.

Pretoria News leads with a story by Swaziland News editor and journalist on 25 May 2021: [Swaziland News Facebook](#) page

8.6.2 Collaboration with eSwatini journalists, students, and politicians

The publication collaborates with journalists based in Eswatini, who do information gathering for some of the stories published in *Swaziland News*. The journalists thus operate within two parallel ideological camps, where on one side, they draft favourable stories in support of the King and the monarchy in the publications they work for and on the other side perform whistle-blower/journalistic duties and write anonymously for *Swaziland News*.

“We work with journalists from Eswatini mainstream media publications who collaborate with us by sharing information and writing stories for us anonymously” (Journalist 1 Interview: 3 January 2022).

Unlike examples of collaborations in the US, driven by “an earnest desire to create better content with less or different resources than would be possible alone,” (Jenkins and Graves 2022, 2), *Swaziland News*’ partnerships with political actors, who are against corruption and whose political ideology is against King Mswati 111, shows a convergence of political beliefs and commitment to undertaking the watchdog role under difficult conditions.

Swaziland News also collaborates with ordinary citizens, Eswatini public officials and some royal family members disgruntled with the status quo. These actors exercise their agency and put their lives at risk by collecting information, taking photos using their mobile phones, and leaking official documents to enable *Swaziland News* to play its watchdog role. They use secure tools and channels (WhatsApp, Telegram, and email) that afford them the opportunity to share information across borders. The vital role these sources play is supported by Lashmar (2019, 2) who argues that “sources provide journalists with the normative means of challenging alternative, official, and elite narratives and enhance a journalist’s ability to discharge their fourth-estate role within society”. Students from academic institutions such as University of Eswatini (UNESWA) and the Southern Africa Nazarene University (SANU) among others, who are not happy about the running of their institutions, engage in journalistic and

whistleblowing practices, and exercise their agency, filming protests and leaking internal university memos which they share with the publication anonymously.

“Citizen Journalists are playing a key role using their phones and risking their lives to report events live” (Journalist 1 interview: 3 March 2022).

The same is done by politicians from various political parties such as PUDEMO, SWALIMO among others who actively film themselves when they do meetings or engage in protests within Eswatini and share the content with *Swaziland News*, taking advantage of the more digitally advanced capabilities afforded by WhatsApp (instant and free messaging, ability to send images, screenshots, audios, and videos) email, Facebook, and Telegram (with similar capabilities as WhatsApp) to do journalism. Technology is thus an important actor (Latour, 2005) used in crowd sourcing by *Swaziland News*. In the digital era, this has become a common practise with user generated content increasingly helping media organisations to use first-hand information from eyewitnesses recorded via mobile phones and shared over email or social media (Omar, 2014). The footage is not attributed to the students, political parties in question or public officials disgruntled with the system to protect them. *Swaziland News* journalists are responsible for the framing, selecting relevant facts, and deciding which images to use, which part of the video to embed in their news bulletin and share on their Facebook and Twitter platforms guided by their culture and ideology. It can be argued that *Swaziland News* is interacting with various human and non-human actors bringing significant changes to investigative journalism practise considered novel in the Eswatini context.

8.6.3 Collaboration with whistle-blowers

The publication has an extraordinarily strong connection with whistle-blowers which helps it to produce stories. Leaks constitute a common feature of the stories written by the publication. The publication publishes some of its stories within a 24/hr news cycle or after a few days of receiving the leak evidenced by the dates of some of the leaks and when the stories are published. The publishing of leaks within the same day of the leak or after a few days brings to the fore the question of whether the digital era allows for faster ‘investigations. As Gearing (2021, 4) states, “digital technology have also produced new opportunities for investigative journalists to undertake the work faster

and more cost-effectively whilst maintaining sound ethical practices”. Explicit evidence of supporting PUDEMO politicians is available on his Facebook page and website. From this, further questions can be raised about the kind of ‘investigative journalism’ that the publication is doing as it borders around ‘activism,’ ‘cyber-leak journalism’ and ‘investigative journalism.’ The publication thrives on leaks and has built networks with local and international actors which make it possible for the publication to do ‘investigative reporting.’

“Investigative journalism is attached to the role of whistle-blowers. We cannot call ourselves journalists because we fully rely on them for information” (Journalist 1 interview, 3 January 2022).

The above quote illustrates the key role whistle-blowers play for *Swaziland News*. Below are memos that were leaked to the publication and published on the publication’s social media platforms and website.

Leaked memo written on 22 November and published on the same day.

Leaked memo written on 17 January and story published 5 days later.

Available on [Swaziland News Facebook](#) page

When publishing leaks, the publication does not hide personal details of individuals being reported on (particularly those who are perceived to be enemies- such as the security forces, the King and his children and some members of government), which impacts on ethics. The *Swaziland News* publishes phone numbers, police force numbers, dates of birth, passport numbers, salaries or transactions of police, ministers, and car license numbers of state security agents and members of the royal family. When including images and footage from whistle-blowers, the publication often anonymises the source showing that source protection is core to the publication. To exemplify this, the publication says:

- *This is contained in a bundle of documentary evidence in our possession that include invoices and other payment processing documents (9 April 2022)*
- *An independent investigation by this Swaziland News (7 April 2022).*
- *Highly classified information in our possession (4 April 2022).*
- *This is contained in highly classified State intelligence documents (25 March 2022).*
- *But despite the tight security, this Swaziland News managed to obtain close range pictures of the King and his birthday cake (20 April 2021).*

(Source: Swaziland News website and Facebook page)

The above examples highlight some of the strategies used by the publication to protect the identity of the sources. Lashmar (2017) notes that journalists have gone to prison rather than reveal the identity of their sources. Most investigations done by the *Swaziland News* publication are leak driven. Operating in exile has allowed *Swaziland News* to take advantage of the far more liberal press freedoms in South Africa, bypassing censorship, encouraging a leak culture within Eswatini with documents shared securely via online platforms. A strong relationship thus exists between the journalists and the tools which enable them to do investigative journalism. In ANT terminology, technology can thus be said to be a “seamless” part of news work in relation to *Swaziland News* (Plesner, 2009). Leaks shared with *Swaziland News* are usually a single page or two pages, WhatsApp messages/screenshots, audio recordings, invoices/receipts, memoranda (see appendices) delivered instantaneously via the internet. These documents are usually shared online on the day or the day after they are received. This differs from big collaborations, involving hundreds of journalists who come together to analyse vast caches of documents and data shared in such as in Pandora or Panama Papers and publishing simultaneously in dozens or even hundreds of publications in many countries on an agreed date which often takes months and weeks to do. (Sambrook, 2018; Gearing 2021; Gearing and Berglez, 2018). *Swaziland News* is forming networks with whistle-blowers enabling the publication to use technology to call power into account much quicker. Anonymous whistleblowing through online platforms is also being encouraged in this context. The leaked documents are not complex and do not require specialised skills or expertise. Thus, it can be argued that *Swaziland News* is changing how investigative journalism is perceived and undertaken in South Africa and Eswatini through taking advantage of web-based communication tools to uncover wrongdoing (de burgh and Lashmar, 2021; Gearing, 2021), a practice which is uncommon for legacy media in Eswatini.

Table 8.3 Exposes published between the 1st and 7th April 2022

Date	Headline
1 April 2022	Exposed: Gaddafi recorded Mswati when handing over millions, Libyans send senior Prince to issue final demand for cash. https://www.swazilandnews.co.za/fundza.php?nguyiphi=2295
7 April 2022	Exposed: Inside the State intelligence file on petrol bombings. https://www.swazilandnews.co.za/fundza.php?nguyiphi=2322
Monday, 4th April 2022	Exposed: Clinic Group doctors resign after Mswati's order to kill pro-democracy patients, royal family members and MPs. https://www.swazilandnews.co.za/fundza.php?nguyiphi=2308
4 April 2022	Exposed: AFTER PURCHASING TWO MORE JETS: Mswati reduces R120million health budget, now struggling to pay salaries for 400 nurses. https://www.swazilandnews.co.za/fundza.php?nguyiphi=2306

Source <https://www.swazilandnews.co.za/>

Despite the hostile and dangerous media environment of Eswatini reported by all interviewed journalists, the *Swaziland News* publication demonstrates the ability of a single brave individual who has defied death threats, multiple lawsuits, repressive legal laws to do 'investigative journalism' in the public interest thus doing what other journalists have failed to do for a long time in the Kingdom of Eswatini. The fact that investigative journalism done by *Swaziland News* depends on the availability of various technologies and software supports the view by ANT that journalism is intertwined with technology, as it would have been impossible to publish stories on Eswatini within the Kingdom prior to digital and social media technologies which the publication uses to amplify citizen/ whistle-blower voices. This allows those who has access to the platforms to know what is happening and say their views which allows for a global public sphere (Gearing, 2021). Cellphones enable citizens to record sensitive information which they share with Zwemart. The chat facilities available on these applications enables readers to interact directly with the publication and state

their views without fear. The publication does live broadcasts on Facebook and supports stories with video or audio evidence and images.

“We are on Twitter, and we use Facebook because most of the people we are targeting are on Facebook and WhatsApp. We are a publication now with a huge following where we are quickly reaching 200,000 followers” (Journalist 1 interview: 3 January 2022).

When further questioned on which other tools the publication used, the editor and main journalist refused to say arguing that it was a secret of the publication.

While collaboration is disrupting the characteristic of competition among news organisations as documented in literature (Alfter, 2019; Konow Lund, 2019), in the case of the *Swaziland News*, the paper can be said to be partnering with various groups of people in Eswatini as a survival tactic. The networks of convenience formed by *Swaziland News* via digital platforms are the lifeblood of the publication. In relation to the same definition by Konow-Lund et al., (2019), *Swaziland News* can be said to be both a collaboration and a cooperation where some of the actors work together with the publication to achieve a common goal of exposing malpractice in Eswatini (collaboration) while also “promoting individual ends” such as getting back at the royalty or monarchy and intensifying calls for democracy and reforms which Konow-Lund, et al., (2019) define as cooperation. The publication also collaborates with ordinary citizens via Facebook and Twitter asking readers to contribute to the editorial policy. In asking readers, the journalist exercises more agency and ‘empowers’ readers by providing them an opportunity to influence the editorial. However, it is the journalist who determines whether to include the suggestions or not. When seeking citizens’ input, the post was written as follows:

“Swaziland News was founded to, among others, promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. Do you think we are adhering to our founding principles and or editorial policy? SHARE your views on our Facebook Page and help us improve our reporting in 2022” (Swaziland News Facebook page, 29 December 2021).

The close to 1000 reactions (850 likes, 112 comments and 12 shares) generated by the post show that the readers are active and interact with the publication. When interacting with *Swaziland News*, readers choose which stories to respond to, like or

share, letting their innate subjectivities to influence the experience thereby demonstrating various levels of agency.

News resulting from investigative journalism often takes months or years before being published on public forums as journalists need to first build rapport, trust with their contacts, and follow up leads to produce and verify stories which are credible to prevent potential lawsuits (Gearing, 2021). Compared to these norms, *Swaziland News* publishes its stories at an incredible pace, often releasing four exposes or more a week. Table 8.3 above showed four stories published in the week of 1 to 8 April 2022.

When asked about the values that inform his journalism, journalists said that all their stories were ethical. A *Swaziland News* journalist argued that protecting his sources and making sure that he publishes stories that he has evidence of is of priority for him.

“There must be founding evidence which you base your story to. If you are being critical against the government in Swaziland, they will always say you are unethical. Sometimes we are taken to court by the same government. We avail ourselves to prove. If you follow the history of the Swaziland News, it is the only publication that has been taken to court by the King and we always go there to prove that what we have written is accurate” (Journalist 1 interview 03 March 2022).

A further question about the extent to which the right of reply was important to the publication showed that the paper would not be able to get the opinion of government on the issues the publication publishes since there was a deliberate strategy by the government to sabotage his publication.

“I have evidence from a cabinet minister who told me that they were told not to respond to my questions so that they will then come back and say no, this publication does not give us a right to reply. Even though it is like that, we always send them questions and they do not reply, and we go ahead and publish the stories” (Journalist 1 interview, 3 January 2021).

An analysis of the stories published by the publication show that the journalists make efforts to give a right of reply to those accused of wrongdoing though the publication may go ahead and publish before the responses. This can be seen when the publication says,

A questionnaire was sent to Superintendent Phindile Vilakati, the Police Spokesperson, however, she had not responded at the time of compiling this report (30 December 2022, 29 December 2022, 27 December 2022, 25 December 2022).

However, the publication publishes some stories, which read mostly like opinion pieces and are based on the journalist's observation and are based on the journalist's point of view.

There are lots of ways in which journalists show their agency. Here are some specific examples to show how journalistic agency is exercised in the news gathering and dissemination processes.

8.6.3.1 Journalistic agency in the news gathering and process

- I. Editor/Journalist deciding which stories to cover in line with donor priorities
- II. Editor/Journalist deciding who to interview and where to find information

8.6.3.2 Journalistic agency in the news gathering processes

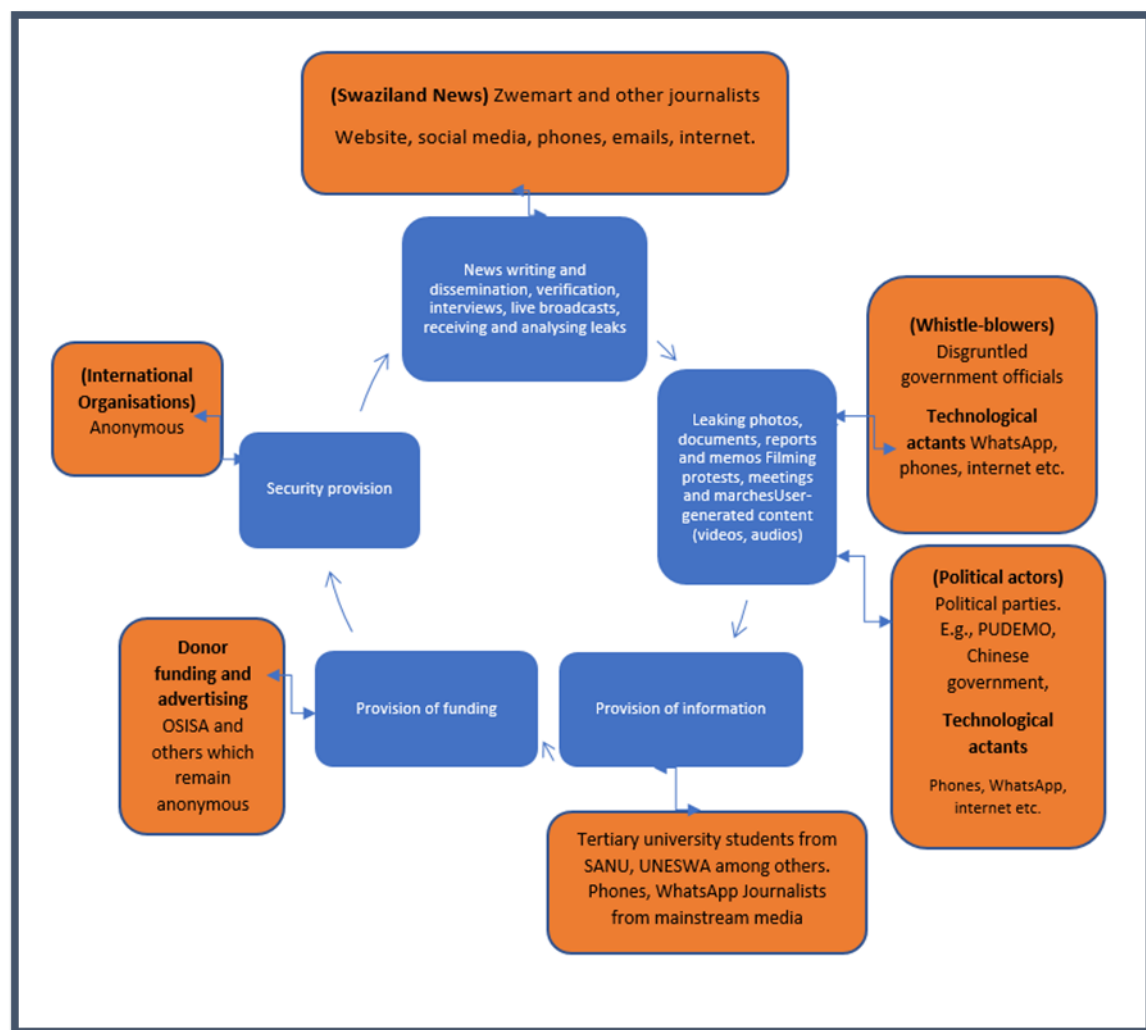
- I. Journalist deciding where to publish stories

8.6.3.3 Technological affordances in the news gathering and dissemination processes

- II. Internet enabling the publication to connect with dispersed audiences
- III. Leaks enable the publication to do investigative reporting
- IV. WhatsApp used to share leaked documents
- V. Use emails and mobile phones to contact sources
- VI. Cameras used to take photos
- VII. Website used to publish stories and connect with audiences
- VIII. Social media (Facebook, Twitter) used to publish stories and connect with audiences and live-stream protests, marches, political meetings

On the next page is a visual representation of the collaborative process taking place in the *Swaziland News* news production and distribution processes. Some of the stages in the blue squares might play a role in some investigations but not others.

Swaziland News visual representation



Key



Stages involved in the news production and dissemination process



Human and non-human actors

The above diagram shows the processes involved in the collaborative process between *Swaziland News* and various human actors and actants who help the publication to do investigative journalism.

8.7. RQ 2: What are the most important factors influencing CIJ and shaping journalistic and the interconnections between the various actors?

8.7.1 Political influences

Journalism is known to be the result of many complex factors that shape its production (Reese and Shoemaker, 2016). One such factor that comes out top in *Swaziland News* is through the close relationship that the publication has with political parties such as PUDEMO, SWALIMO among others which dominate coverage to clamour for 'democracy' and which the publication supports openly, by making donations to the parties and donating cars to activists etc. (see Swaziland News website and Facebook page). When I asked the editor about his political status and if he had a specific bias for these political parties, he said:

"We are not the friend, even though we promote democracy, but we are not the friends, and we should not be allies of political leaders, because one day those people will be in power, and we must hold them accountable, so it is a thin line between supporting democracy and being captured by certain politicians, I myself I'm of the view that, even though we are supporting democracy when are supporting human beings or certain political leaders, we have to separate that with what they stand for, We work on the basis of the public interest" (Journalist 1 Interview: 3 January 2022).

Analysis of stories and live broadcasts demonstrates clear support of politicians. Below are images of the president of the Eswatini National Students Union, for example, who is also an active member of a political party PUDEMO and a political and student activist, receiving a car donation from the *Swaziland News* editor.

**Outgoing National Students Union President Colani Maseko re-elected
Students Union President gets car gift from Swaziland News Editor
Available on [Swaziland News Facebook page](#)**

Dlamini's position as a private investigator, journalist, political activist, makes it difficult to define his journalism as fully investigative in nature as it has qualities of activism, leak-journalism, and investigative journalism while his role straddles between critical agent and political activist. In some of his live Facebook broadcasts, he incites citizens to burn businesses belonging to the King and encourages citizens to go into the streets

and protest the monarchy, Mswati 111 or anyone believed to be working with the monarchy and the King. The image on the next page provides evidence.

[Live broadcast](#) of Zwemart for action against Nyekane UMphakatsi who grabbed Swati NewsWeek editor Eugene Dube's land.

In another story, "Zwemart pledges 10% of his salary to fund the struggle for democracy that seeks to liberate the people." (Swaziland News, 22 February 2022). Below is a quote from a story about the editor providing a donation to assist some victims of the June 2021 protests and an image of the story:

"The editor said the fund could assist in many ways including assisting victims of the massacre under SWAVISA, paying scholarships for students who were victimized by the system, food and transport for protestors, political schools and other activities that cannot be publicised." (22 February 2022 newspaper article).

Editor pledges 10% of his monthly salary to fund the struggle for Democracy: [Swaziland News](#)

His identity as a political activist has made his reporting subjective and interested. The journalism environment in Eswatini is hostile to the extent that when I carried out interviews, journalists from *Swaziland News* were worried about the interview. For example, when I interviewed him, he was worried about his security and not sure that he could trust the researcher as he decided to do the Zoom interview with his name as "Zoom User" and kept saying "I do not know how you will use this information", and "I hope your report will be accurate", "I may not know what your research intends to do" which showed that he was suspicious and not trusting of the researcher since he fears persecution from King Mswati's government that is pursuing him and has accused him on numerous occasions of publishing falsehoods. The interview still had value as he shared insights about his work. I have reflected on this in the methods section in Chapter 5.

"I am always running away from Mswati's security forces" (Journalist 1 Interview: 3 January 2022).

Despite the sensitivity that surrounds the kind of 'investigative journalism' he does, particularly from those in power in the Kingdom of Eswatini, the publication 'partners' with various local and international media organisations who trust and support his publication.

As other journalists in the study commented, Dlamini indicated that the environment in Eswatini was very hostile for journalists. "*It's not easy*" "*it is a difficult environment*" (Journalist 1 interview, 03 January 2022). The publication uses WhatsApp and Telegram to connect with sources and promote freedom of expression. It builds on multimedia storytelling capabilities, afforded by various platforms. Technology is, thus, an actor (Latour, 2005) that transforms the journalistic products of *Swaziland News*. From the viewpoint of ANT, it can be argued that investigative journalism done by the *Swaziland News* is a translation process of a private investigator who is also a journalist, whistle-blowers, the internet, WhatsApp, Facebook, and ordinary citizens. The publication also demonstrates a convergence of audio, print and television in the work that it does.

While most literature on CIJ shows collaborating partners who are 'known' or visible, in the Eswatini context, most of the actors collaborating with *Swaziland News* choose to do so anonymously for fear of retribution from the state. Most of the publication's partners and sources are anonymous. Above 90% of stories published by the *Swaziland News* do not reveal sources and in some of them, journalists claim to have spoken to "*a royal guard*", "*one of the King's sons*" etc. which puts into doubt the credibility of his stories, as critics have argued. The innovative usage of these tools has enabled the publication to overcome geographical boundaries and do 'investigative journalism' in the public interest. The publication has also been able to respond to emaSwati's hunger for alternative news "*who have been starved with good quality journalism for a long time*" (Journalist 2 interview: 14 October 2021). Technology thus enables *Swaziland News* to do news gathering, publishing, and engaging with various actors within and outside the Kingdom of Eswatini and shapes the ways in which they communicate, whether by using video, audio, and various encrypted channels to protect their security.

Due to the adversarial journalism practised by the *Swaziland News* publication, security is considered particularly important.

“The issue of security is important, and we always try to make sure that we are secured. Our places of residents are not known by people who might pose a risk to us, in fact, very few people know where I stay. And these include the international human rights organisations because what we need to understand is the fact that this news organisation is being supported by international human rights organisation financially and in terms of training. That is why I’m saying to you, such a big organisation that has been recognised with the world and then you go to Eswatini, and they say we are unethical. Our security is enhanced by the international community because they understand that if they want to get verified information on Swaziland, they must make sure this publication continues to exist” (Journalist 1 Interview: 3 January 2022).

It can be argued that collaboration done by the *Swaziland News* publication signifies a structural change in doing ‘investigative journalism,’ which is driven and is built on technology. The seamlessness of technology and journalism, as advanced by the Actor Network Theory, can thus been seen in this case (Plesner, 2009). Without technology, *Swaziland News* would not be able to do ‘investigative journalism’ due to its strong reliance on technological tools that are used to convey news and information on events taking place in Eswatini. A senior journalist in Eswatini with 12 years’ experience working for the *Times of Eswatini* indicated that because of the oppression and increasing calls for democracy, citizens now are aware that they can use their phones to tell their stories.

“People have become braver and more courageous, and they are now aware of their rights. Even elderly people now have phones and are capturing events as they are happening even in deep rural areas” (Journalist 3 interview: 25 November 2021).

By its very nature, the *Swaziland News* was created to promote adversarial investigative journalism against the government and the monarchy and *Swaziland News* has been criticised by readers, journalists in Eswatini and government for falling short of upholding journalism values such as fairness with critics citing a lack of facts and right of reply in some of the stories. One Eswatini journalist, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said that the publication was unethical despite acknowledging the significant role it is playing as an alternative news provider.

“Swaziland News have played a key role but when it comes to ethical reporting, most of their stories are wanting in terms of facts. Instead of being partisan, they have sided with politicians” (Journalist 3 Interview: 20 November 2021).

This was supported by another journalist who noted that:

“I have a problem with the way they do their reporting because they have decided not to be professional. They are inciting people; they incite students to burn schools. They should not use the media for their selfish ends and taking advantage of people who have been starved of good quality journalism” (Journalist 5 Interview: 21 November 2021).

The quote highlights the criticism levelled against the *Swaziland News* journalists when they use the platform to incite students to protest and burn schools which goes against what ethical media do. The publication can thus not be deemed to be impartial and professional in some of its reporting.

8.7.2 Economic influences

The publication gets funding from various actors, some of them political actors such as the Chinese government. A high level of political parallelism between the publication and political players with similar ideologies (Hallin and Mancini, 2004) is made visible by a story, *“Editor harassed by Taiwan, eSwatini government for meeting Chinese Ambassador over R290,000.00 Magazine diplomatic project”* (July 9, 2021). This relationship with the Chinese comes at a time when scholars are debating about the increased presence of Chinese media in Africa since the early 2010s (Wasserman and Madrid-Morales, 2018). Concerns often border around China’s state influence or control, lack of respect of human rights and support for its economic ambitions (Wasserman and Madrid, 2018). Munoriyarwa (2021) notes that the Chinese are providing easy and cheaper surveillance technologies which are making it difficult to practice investigative journalism in Zimbabwe. Whereas in the case of *Swaziland News*, they are providing economic support.

Zwemart with the then Chinese Ambassador to South Africa Chinese Ambassador Lin Songtian : [Swaziland News Facebook page](#)

In terms of funding, the publication combines grants and advertisements. Some of the funders, for example, the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA), and

some advertisers are known while others have asked the publication to protect their identity.

“Again, we do not just reveal our partner organisations without their consent. Our agreement with OSISA was that they did not have a problem to be revealed as one of our supporters. Another thing you would not know is that we have journalists in Eswatini who share information with us (Journalist 1 Interview: 3 January 2022).”

When I interviewed the programme manager at OSISA, he stated that they were a political philanthropy which draws its money from George Soros, a family foundation and are concerned with promoting values of open and inclusive societies and they funded *Swaziland News* because it provides an alternative news platform for emaSwati and those interested in what is happening in Eswatini:

“We are supporting Swaziland News because they offer counter narratives and alternative viewpoints which are not available in Eswatini with media which are pro-monarchy. The paper would not have exponentially grown as it has so it means there are people who believe that it saves their interests” (Programme Manager OSISA Interview: 3 May 2022)

This quote demonstrates that the role played by *Swaziland News* in exposing corruption done by the political elite is considered alternative to mainstream journalism in Eswatini and, as such, aligns with the values, and finds support from, big international donors such as OSISA.

8.8 Conclusion

This chapter presented findings from analysis two publications namely *Inhlase* and *Swaziland News* which are doing investigative journalism focused on Eswatini. *Inhlase* is based locally while *Swaziland News* operates from exile, in South Africa where it is taking advantage of the liberal freedoms to report on corruption involving the elite in Eswatini. Based on information from the interviews and narrative analysis, the chapter showed that collaboration in Eswatini takes place at various levels, local, regional, and global, with heterogeneous human and non-human actors from within and outside journalism who collaborate at various points in the journalistic production process, provision of funding, legal and security support, and news distribution. Despite both publications being focused on Eswatini, they practise investigative journalism

differently with different partners, divergent topics, sources, adherence to journalistic ethics and norms, as well as in their uses of technology. The ANT theory was useful in identifying the human and non-human actors and to understand the interconnections among them but arguably does not pay enough attention to the ways in which these relationships are powered.

Chapter 9

Discussion and Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the findings from the three country case studies countries to answer RQ1 how is CIJ being practiced in southern Africa? Who are the human and non-human actors? It then goes on to discuss the most key factors which are influencing CIJ and shape journalistic agency and the interconnections between various actors in the three countries. It ends with a discussion on the usefulness of ANT and Hierarchy of Influences Theory in understanding CIJ in southern Africa (RQ3).

9.1 RQ1 How is CIJ practiced in southern Africa? Who / what are the key human and non-human actors involved?

In answering the two questions above, this section emphasises four main themes drawn from the three country case studies: the diverse ways in which collaboration is practiced, models of collaboration, the dominance of experienced journalists and the vital role played by South Africa in the region.

9.1.1 Collaboration is practiced differently in the three countries

An analysis of the three country cases in chapters 6, 7 and 8 demonstrated that despite the three countries belonging to the same region of southern Africa, there are many differences in how CIJ is practised. CIJ in southern Africa brings together journalists, technologists, funders, NGOs, politicians, and other actors outside the journalism field who are impacting journalistic norms such as objectivity and its associated values impartiality and fairness showing how it is a hybrid practice increasingly characteristic of journalism in a digital era. As de Burgh and Lashmar (2021) argue, NGOs and donors which are funding journalism have brought new complexities into the profession as they do not subscribe to norms such as impartiality and detachment. Analyses of the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation (South Africa), *Chiadzwa* and *Electoral Malpractices* (Zimbabwe) and *Inhlase* and *Swaziland News* (Eswatini)

demonstrated that the practice of CIJ cannot be divorced from the micro-, meso- and micro- influences (individual, social-institutional, organisational) that shape this practice. The influences play out differently and CIJ practice is shaped by the cultural, national and media contexts prevailing in each country (Shoemaker and Reese, 2014; Hellmueller and Mellado, 2015). For example, professional influences are playing a significant role in all three countries. Investigative journalists in the region see themselves as having a responsibility to save the public by holding power to account thus putting corruption and wrongdoing onto the public sphere and onto the political agenda. To undertake this role, journalists are forming networks with various actors while navigating economic and political challenges. In Zimbabwe and Eswatini, this is happening in a context of limited freedom of expression, restrictive media laws, political repression, and fear of reporting on people in power. South Africa on the other hand, enjoys liberal freedoms but still journalists fear surveillance, attacks, and raids from private and state actors if they are known to be investigating people in power. Economically, funding challenges have led to the coming in of NGOs and donors who are funding investigative journalism while driving their agenda thus impacting on journalistic norms such as impartiality and fairness. The EU and US Embassy are supporting investigative journalism in Zimbabwe with funds focused on themes such as governance, corruption, illicit finance, and election malpractice. These donors are setting the agenda for what media should consider important which may result in some issues of public interest being overlooked (Schiffrin, 2017). Journalists interviewed in the study also highlighted concerns about the sustainability of the non-profit model.

9.1.2 Diverse models of collaboration

Collaborations in the three countries of the study can be classified as diverse. The collaborations are mostly one-off, bottom-up and bring together non-permanent networks of journalists and non-journalistic actors who are involved in co-creation, thus resembling Stonbely (2017)'s second model classified as temporary, involving co-creation, and mainly relating to one-time projects. This model type shows that the collaborating actors, mainly journalists come together to work on a specific project and are supported by donor funding. The sizes of these collaborations are small scale and

not institutionalised like the ones done by ICIJ but similar to the ones analysed by Heft (2021) which are small-scale and organised from below. These collaborations are normalising CIJ into journalistic work routines as journalists reported sharing tips, ideas and working together on stories sometimes informally. Examples of models that emerged from the research include:

- I. Local or NGO collaboration based on a non-permanent network of journalists (e.g., *Zimbabwe- Chiadzwa and Electoral malpractices investigations and some of the investigations done by Inhlase*). The collaboration in the *Chiadzwa* and *Electoral malpractices* investigations was once off and small scale. Information gathering in these investigations included face to face interviews with sources combined with telephone communication. Spy cameras, recorders, WhatsApp, websites, and social media, mobile phones, are some of the actants used in the collaborations. For *Inhlase*, local collaboration includes working together with journalists from the mainstream media *Times of Eswatini* and *Swazi Observer*, NGOs, and IT experts. For *Swaziland News*, local collaboration with South African publications is evident though the organisation also collaborates with journalists from Eswatini mainstream media, ordinary citizens and international organisations who are kept anonymous. *Inhlase* and *Swaziland News* use actants which include websites, cameras, social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, mobile phones, WhatsApp among others which enable those involved to receive and share information and hold power to account.
- II. National collaboration based on a non-permanent network of experienced journalists from mainstream media organisations- (e.g., *South Africa- #GuptaLeaks*). The *#GuptaLeaks* collaboration was once off and involved the co-creation of stories thus resembling Jenkins and Graves' (2019) model in which legacy media outlets work together on a single investigation. The model of the *#GuptaLeaks* however did not include any start up news organisations as was the case in the *L'Italia Delle Slot's* model analysed by Jenkins and Graves (2019). The collaborating partners initially worked offline due to fears of surveillance and being hacked but later moved online when they believed it was safe to do so. The *#GuptaLeaks* investigation was based a huge cache of

leaked data and the OCR app, mobile phones, WhatsApp, Signal, Twitter, the internet, websites, and social media are the actants in the collaboration.

- III. Regional/Transnational collaboration, based on a permanent network of journalists (*IJ Hub*). *Inhlase* belongs to this network in which journalists share story ideas and information on tools to use in investigations. *IJHub* is a form of 'regional or transnational CIJ network which is constituted of countries in the southern African region, with a regional focus on issues and promotes freedom of the press in the region (Hellmueller and Konow-Lund, 2019). The network combines traditional and online methods of communication including face to face meetings and using Zoom, WhatsApp and emailing for communication and do not have a collaborative online newsroom. The journalists sometimes form smaller networks involving two or three member centres and share tips and latest tools. In addition, individual journalists belong to other international networks such as GIJN, CCIJ among others where they benefit from training and information on the latest tools in investigative journalism. Some of the journalists are part of ICIJ and have previously been involved in large collaborations such as Panama Papers where they have told stories focusing on their countries.

9.1.3 CIJ is dominated by more experienced journalists

Collaborations in southern Africa are dominated by more experienced journalists from legacy media and digitally based outlets. In the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation the *Daily Maverick* invited *amaBhungane* because of their previous experience of researching and investigating the Guptas. The journalists have more than 10 years' experience of investigative journalism. *News24* also brought into the collaboration the most experienced investigative journalists. The *#GuptaLeaks* investigation demonstrates that non-profits (*amaBhungane*) and digital native organisations (*Daily Maverick* and *News24*) are more committed to promoting the watchdog role and strengthening democracy. Similarly, Chacón and Saldaña (2021) have noted how digital native organisations in Latin America are committed to bettering society and uplifting democracy which shows that such organisations are more flexible and innovative. In the *Chiadzwa* and the *Electoral malpractices* investigations, the journalists involved have more than 10 years of doing investigative journalism. In Eswatini, even more

experienced investigative journalists, with more than 20 years in the industry, are working together to hold power to account in *Inhlase*, which also collaborates with experienced journalists in the region through *IJHub*. The editors and journalists have a deep understanding of their countries, are committed to promoting the watchdog role and have the potential to tell important and insightful stories to a regional audience. In the case of the *IJHub*, those involved are supporting each other in story-editing and sharing tips and information on tools they can use to go about the investigations within their countries and have plans in place to embark on transnational journalism on common problems. The *IJHub* can thus be defined as a cooperative arrangement by member centres seeking to promote individual ends (Heft, 2021). However, they have plans to work jointly on stories about common problems in the region. While the *IJHub* provides a structure which brings together investigative centres in the region, the cooperation has been loose with limited exchange and the members are yet to work jointly on a project.

The research showed that trust is an incredibly key component of journalistic collaborations. In the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation, *Daily Maverick* had a previous partnership with *amaBhungane*. The IT specialist had also previously worked with the *Daily Maverick*. The millionaire businesswoman Magda was brought into the investigation because she was a columnist for the *Daily Maverick* although she went on to betray the team due to disagreements about the investigation. The *News24* editor had also previously worked with the editor of *amaBhungane* hence it was easy for them to ask to be part of the collaboration. In Zimbabwe journalists from the two investigations, *Chiadzwa* and *Electoral malpractices* came from the same stable as they belong to media organisations owned by the same proprietor, AMH.

Swaziland News works with established media organisations who publish its stories in South Africa, as well as journalists in Eswatini who choose to remain anonymous for fear of persecution and international media organisations who fund the organisation and support it with security needs. From all the cases and publications analysed in this research, *Swaziland News* is the only publication that shows a strong relationship with ordinary citizens, who share information with it via social media platforms, phones, and WhatsApp. This can be explained through two factors. First, because of operating

in exile in South Africa, the publication takes advantage of digital affordances to connect with Eswatini based citizens and the information that it receives is vital for its survival. Second, the unstable political climate and increasing calls for democracy are pushing citizens and the publication to each other as they share the same vision, calling for democratic reforms. The publication also has a strong relationship with politicians and whistle-blowers who leak documents to it. These individuals are critical of King Mswati 111 and the monarchy and because they are unable to have the information published locally, they share it with *Swaziland News* which puts the information onto its social media platforms and website thus promoting engagement with emaSwati scattered across the globe. Government also engages with the stories and sometimes dismisses the stories or counters them by issuing press releases often published on its social media platforms or in the *Eswatini Observer* and *Times of Eswatini* newspapers. The collaborations discussed save for *Swaziland News* can thus be said to be exclusivist as they exclude amateurs or less experienced journalists, freelancers, and students. *Inhlase*, which operates from within Eswatini focuses on service delivery and has fewer stories on the King and the monarchy for fear of persecution.

In some of the analysed collaborations, journalists dominate the decision-making processes and see themselves as the primary actors *doing journalism*. Other actors are seen as “*supporters*” who enable them to undertake journalism. This was seen in the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation despite the key roles that the IT and money laundering expert played in identifying where the Guptas were involved in money laundering. In Zimbabwe, collaboration with South African based organisations and OCCPR showed that local journalists can engage in partnerships with foreign based organisations to publish stories which they are unable to publish at home for fear of retribution. These foreign partners publish their stories anonymously to protect them from political persecution locally and help give stories a wide reach.

The research also showed that technologists and other non-journalistic actors are involved in investigative journalism where they are influencing the agenda of the stories and providing support on activities that journalists are not able to do. In the *Electoral Malpractices* investigation, Team Pachedu directly influenced the story by

arguing and providing evidence of electoral malpractice. In the case of *Inhlase*, the technologists, an external company plays a significant role, helping the journalists to see which stories are popular on the websites. In the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation, the technical expert searched for documents in encrypted emails, assisted journalists to find patterns of wrongdoing, scanned the hard drive to check if all the emails were there and cleaned and extracted information showing how CIJ is bringing together journalist and non-journalists. Non-profits are getting involved in the collaborations by providing funding thus pushing the agenda of the Western donors who are funding them which has the potential of limiting the diversity of investigative stories. Bringing in non-journalistic actors into collaborations is extending the journalistic boundaries and the entrance of these new actors impacts traditional journalistic norms such as objectivity and its associated values of impartiality and fairness (Chua and Duffy, 2019; Holton and Belair-Gagnon, 2018).

Whistle-blowers are playing a significant role in the three countries albeit in diverse ways and helping uncover corruption (except for *Inhlase* which has not received any leaks). The *#GuptaLeaks* investigation was based on a huge cache of data of about 300 000 emails and documents shared by a citizen who had access to the lost hard drive belonging to a close associate of the Guptas. Leaks help journalists find evidence of wrong-doing and let them identify patterns in data (Diakopoulos, 2019). The journalists and editors in the *Chiadzwa* investigation received leaks as they were gathering information on the *Chiadzwa* diamond looting and abuses. None of the journalists in Zimbabwe and Eswatini reported receiving massive leaks, such as the ones in global collaborations such as Pandora or Panama Papers, discussed in chapter 3. What is common is to receive single- or two-page documents which shows that data leak culture and the leaks themselves vary in different contexts. *Swaziland News*' investigative journalism is leak-driven. *The* publication thrives on leaks by virtue of operating in exile and offering an alternative viewpoint to Swazi readers. The leaks come from individuals who are close to power structures and at the same time in support of calls for democratic reforms. The *Swaziland News* case study shows that leaks have become integrated with the investigative journalism done by the publication and are used as a political weapon (Sampredo et al., 2018) in contexts with restrictive media freedoms and a culture of secrecy such as Eswatini. It can thus be argued that

whistleblowing is a core component of investigative journalism as leaking has become integrated into journalists' traditional working routines enabling them to do public interest journalism (Baack 2016; Lashmar 2017).

Linked to the above, data has not impacted investigative journalism in southern Africa in the way that it has done in Western newsrooms (Mutsvairo et al., 2019). As seen in chapters, 7 and 8 on Zimbabwe and Eswatini, whistle-blowers share one-page documents, invoices, receipts, memos, and these do not require specialist software or advanced IT skills; this contrasts with the prevailing view in Western collaborations that leaks require specialist software and tools. In addition, the level of 'data journalism' is small scale when compared with large collaborations done by ICIJ as discussed in chapter 3. In addition, data is not readily available or always reliable in some newsrooms in the Global South (Munoriyarwa, 2022). The digital era is giving rise to diverse forms of 'data journalism,' wherein in the southern African context, the scale is small, and some newsrooms do not have dedicated data specialists. In the *Electoral malpractices*' investigation in Zimbabwe, data specialists emerged from outside the newsroom, from an anti ZANU PF, NGO called Team Pachedu that specialises in analysing the voters roll (see chapter 7) thus directly influencing the investigation's agenda. One can thus argue that studies which focus on one kind of 'data journalism' characterised by huge data sets miss the point by failing to recognise that the digital era gives rise to various scales of 'data journalism.'

9.1.4 South Africa plays a more influential role in the region

The research established that South Africa plays an influential role in the region on three fronts. First, the country is seen as an epitome of effective investigative journalism practice because of its vibrant investigative culture, and the commitment of its journalists to the watchdog role. Second, the country cultivates and encourages investigative journalism through the establishment of the *IJHub* which brings together investigative centres in the region, offering trainings and financial support to member centres. The funding comes from donors including OSISA, Millennium Trust, among others. Despite this, some member centres expressed that the *IJHub* model was lacking in terms of offering editorial coordination for transnational collaborations when there are problems in the region requiring regional cooperation. Some member

centres stated that the dominance of South Africa in the *IJHub* led them to create separate networks outside the hub to support each other. Third, journalists from *Inhlase* and in Zimbabwe had sensitive stories published in South Africa as they feared persecution within their countries. Both Zimbabwe and Eswatini look up to South Africa to publish sensitive stories anonymously. Journalists from these countries have been to South Africa where they do internships and are being supported by organisations such as *AmaBhungane*, *Mail and Guardian*, *Daily Maverick* and the *IJHub*.

As discussed in chapter 2, South Africa has higher levels of freedom of expression if compared to Zimbabwe and Eswatini which have lower levels of press freedom and restrictive media laws hampering investigative journalism. Eswatini is the most constrained with very few dedicated investigative journalists within the country due to fear of the King and royalty, customary practices which prohibit criticism of the King and the monarchy and restrictive regulation. Despite a thriving investigative culture, scholars and journalists argue that the media in South Africa continue to be shaped by racism and the apartheid legacy seen when investigative journalism is mostly targeted at black South Africans. The research showed that collaborating partners in the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation were mostly white and came from elite media organisations thus excluding amateurs and less experienced journalists from grassroots media. Zimbabwe and Eswatini have fewer problems of racism in the media as these countries are Black majority. In terms of sizes, collaborating teams are smaller in Zimbabwe and Eswatini, if compared to the team that collaborated in the *#Gupta Leaks*. The research argues that collaboration holds a lot of potential to help local media organisations hold power to account (Graves and Jenkins, 2019). More potential exists to involve users, amateurs, smaller media organisations and students to ensure skills transfer and promote democratic processes.

9.2 RQ2 Which important factors influence CIJ and shape journalistic agency, and the interconnections between various actors?

Evidence from the data collected in the research demonstrated that a convergence of macro level-economic, political, and micro-level, professional/organisational factors both enable and constrain journalistic agency. Moreover, it demonstrates that

technology is better considered an enabler than a key driver of collaboration in the southern African region. Below, I expand on how these influences interact in each case study country and discuss the role of technology.

9.2.1 Economic influences (Organisational/Social-institutional level)

The research established that in all three countries, donor funding is crucial to the practice of CIJ. In Zimbabwe, newsrooms are constrained and a poor performing economy has impacted the media and thus local NGOs, which are funded by Western donors are supporting investigative journalism. Local NGOs such as VMCZ in Zimbabwe play an intermediary role as they are getting funding from these Western donors and foundations and push their agenda. In Eswatini, both *Inhlase* and *Swaziland News* are heavily reliant on donor funds to do investigative journalism, again the donations come from Western organisations. *Inhlase* is also funded by Cannon Collins because their values align. *Swaziland News* also uses advertising to fund its investigative journalism. The US embassy, European Union, OSISA among others are some of the common donors funding investigative journalism in the three countries. OSISA, a political philanthropy is behind the funding for *Swaziland News*, *IJHub*, *AmaBhungane* and investigative units in Zimbabwe. In South Africa, donor funding allows more established media organisations such as *Daily Maverick*, *News 24* and *AmaBhungane* to diversify their revenue alongside income from events, advertising, and other sources. Despite concerns about editorial influence, its impact on journalistic norms and values, and its long-term sustainability as discussed in the findings' chapters. For example, most interviewed actors in Zimbabwe indicated that they would be limited in doing investigative journalism without the support of grants which shows that non-profits are helping to keep investigative journalism alive (Ntibinyane, 2018). Journalists can navigate their way to embark on investigative journalism- applying for funding to do watchdog journalism within a restrictive Zimbabwean media environment characterised by restrictive laws, difficulties in accessing information, persecution, and attacks on journalists if they are known to be investigating those in power. However, the problematic issues of influence on the editorial agenda and pressure to make proposals and account for the funds remain.

9.2.3 Professional influences (Individual level)

Professional factors had a strong influence on the collaboration of the journalists in all the investigations under study. Despite operating in difficult political and economic contexts, journalists demonstrated a strong belief in promoting accountability and transparency and the watchdog role. For example, in the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation, the journalists shared that they were driven by the public interest and wanted the nation to know the level of corruption that the Guptas were involved in. As already discussed, surveillance did not deter them from contributing to the public sphere by putting the *#GuptaLeaks* on the political agenda. In the case of the *IJHub*, investigative centres in Africa demonstrate a commitment to cultivate important investigative journalism skills to promote accountability journalism in the region. The Centres are involved in investigative work in their countries where they are enabled by donor-funding and associations with international actors such as GIJN, CCIJ and ICIJ, who support them through training workshops among other factors. Similarly, *Inhlase* journalists showed that they are committed to doing watchdog journalism and choose to focus on service delivery issues because of the unfavourable context due to restrictive laws and self-censorship which makes it difficult to criticise the King and the monarchy within the Kingdom of Eswatini. Service delivery stories are less political and safer for the publication to focus on. *Swaziland News* journalists also display a strong professional element in the work they do hence they take advantage of the more liberal freedoms in South Africa to criticise the Eswatini government, the monarchy, and the King.

9.2.4 Political influences (Social-institutional level)

Political influences on collaboration are quite complex. In the *#GuptaLeaks*, political influences did not come up in the interview data as a factor that drove the collaboration. Instead, consideration of the political context emerged when the collaborating actors made decisions about their operational plan, including concerns about security and how to use/not use technology in the investigation. As discussed in chapter 6, the collaborating actors in the *#GuptaLeaks* feared being hacked, raided, or attacked by the Guptas if they got to know that they were investigating them. Despite having a more liberal media context and ranking at number 32 on RSF's freedom of

expression index, journalists expressed concerns about surveillance and attack. Security concerns did not deter the journalists from conducting the watchdog role and expose the corruption involving the Guptas instead they took measures that would protect themselves and the whistleblowers while working together on the leaks.

In the case of *Swaziland News* political influences interact in quite complex ways. As discussed in chapter 8, the publication has a close relationship with political parties such as PUDEMO, SWALIMO among others which dominate coverage to clamour for 'democracy' and which the publication supports openly, also calling for democracy, making donations to the parties and donating cars to activists. The close association with these actors and making calls for democracy makes the kind of journalism practiced by *Swaziland News* straddle between activism and journalism raising questions on the publication's failure to be impartial.

In Zimbabwe, the collaboration which led to the *Electoral malpractices*' investigation can be said to have been driven by a convergence of factors. These factors are professional, political, and economic and converged in a complex way. Team Pachedu, a human rights NGO reached out to the journalist so that their findings could be published in a story, and the journalist was able to do further research because of the VMCZ grant on electoral malpractices. The journalist involved strongly believes in holding power to account and promoting the public interest and Team Pachedu's work focuses on election malpractice hence they were able to directly influence the main narrative of the investigation. In the *Chiadzwa* investigation, professional, ideological, and economic factors converged in a complex manner giving rise to the investigation. The journalists involved came from the AMH, owned by the same proprietor and with similar ideologies and the funding from VMCZ enabled them to undertake the investigation. In some of the interview data, journalists in Zimbabwe explained that they were collaborating with foreign based actors to circumvent censorship and political repression in the country. In such investigations, journalists did not mention who they are collaborating with and when the investigations are published, they do not mention the names of local Zimbabwean journalists. Some of the known collaborators include *Daily Maverick* in South Africa and the OCCPR.

9.3 Technological affordances in the collaborations

Technology is more of an enabler than a key driving factor for those who are collaborating, and it enables those involved to do activities they would not be able to do without the existing tools and software. The research established several factors regarding the role of technology in the three countries under study. Collaborating partners demonstrate agency at various stages of the journalistic production and dissemination processes and take advantage of the more digitally advanced capabilities afforded by various technologies thereby raising questions about the role, significance and agency of technology and other actors in these collaborations. The research found that technology is enabling journalistic and non-journalistic actors to come together in the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation and investigative journalism done by *Swaziland News*, which operates in exile. The power of digital tools including WhatsApp and social media are enabling *Swaziland News* to overcome geographic boundaries and converge with whistle-blowers, ordinary citizens, readers, among others allow for greater transparency. This demonstrates that technology is playing a significant role in collaborations. A strong relationship thus exists between the journalists of *Swaziland News*, the readers and whistle-blowers and this relationship is enabled by technology. One can also note a strong commitment to whistle-blower protection with *Swaziland News* which does not disclose where the leaks are coming from. In Zimbabwe, there is not much adoption of sophisticated technology due to infrastructure, electricity problems and the digital divide. The journalists use the internet, websites, computers/laptops, landlines/mobile phones, WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter in the news gathering and dissemination processes. To argue that technology is making journalists collaborate or that convergence/digitisation is leading to more collaboration misses the point when one considers the investigations that have been studied, especially in Zimbabwe and in Eswatini (more specifically for *Inhlase*). Macro-level factors such as political, economic and media challenges are leading journalists to find new ways to report sensitive stories. Technology can be argued to be enabling those involved to do tasks and activities that they would not be able to do without its availability.

9.3.1 Security concerns and trust

Linked to technology is security. Similarities can be noted in concerns about security in the three countries. Since investigative journalism is known to be a dangerous profession as discussed in chapter 2, the actors involved in the *#GuptaLeaks*, *Chiadzwa* and *Electoral malpractices* and investigative journalism done by *Inhlase*, and *Swaziland News* all indicated that they feared for their safety and security. In South Africa, journalists are often raided, attacked, or put under surveillance by state or non-state agents if they are known to be investigating powerful people. In the *#GuptaLeaks* example, collaborating actors chose to work offline and used air-gapped machines for fear of being hacked, showing that doing journalism online is considered much riskier than traditional methods of meeting and sharing notes and information in person. The team purchased new laptops and hard drives which were not connected to the internet as a strategy of protecting themselves and mobile phones were placed away from the room that they were working. Journalists indicated that they did not trust technology and encryption tools and feared that state agents could have even more powerful tools to hack them thus choosing the offline model. For *Swaziland News*, the main actor stated that he feared for his life and was always running away from security agents thus he kept some of his collaborating actors and actants used in the investigations anonymous. In Zimbabwe, journalists are attacked, raided, or arrested if known to be investigating those in power and thus there is a decline in investigative journalism in the country. Governments have intensified surveillance practices in the digital era which make journalism riskier (Munoriyarwa, 2021). Despite these challenges, journalists do not stop investigating power in the public interest and try to navigate them by employing anti-surveillance techniques such as minimising communication online, meeting sources and exchanging information offline.

9.4 How do Actor-Network Theory and Hierarchy of Influences theories help us understand how collaboration is practiced in these settings?

Using ANT was useful to understand the actors and actants in contemporary journalism and to understand, the use, agency, and associations between the human (journalistic and non-journalistic) and the technological tools (Primo and Zago, 2015; Turner, 2005). Hierarchy of Influences theory helped to identify the most key factors

influencing the collaborations in the different countries which included considering the macro, meso and micro level factors influencing journalism. A combination of the two thus provided a stronger analytical tool to capture the heterogeneous actors in CIJ and the influences on it.

ANT ensured that the analysis was wide enough to incorporate the politicians and citizens who leak documents to *Swaziland News* and how this influences the nature of issues the publication covers, as well as the technologists who are collaborating with *Inhlase* that play a significant role in optimising the site, generating the analytics which help the organisation measure impact. In addition, the theory helped to identify the donors who are helping to keep investigative journalism alive. It can thus be argued that various actors influence journalism at various stages of the news production and dissemination processes in a converged manner. In addition, Actor Network Theory (ANT) enabled the research to identify the complex hybrid networks of news production that are being formed in doing CIJ in Eswatini seen through the local, regional, and global interconnections among the actors, some of which are anonymous (Primo and Zago, 2015). Both *Inhlase* and *Swaziland News* demonstrate the diverse levels of collaboration, partnerships or alliances that are being formed in the southern African region to promote watchdog journalism. These networks have been formed in response to the economic, political, and professional challenges facing journalism in the countries discussed in chapters 6, 7 and 8, thereby pointing to the strengths of the Hierarchy of Influences theory. The human actors demonstrate more power and agency over the tools as they can make decisions about which tools and software to use to support them.

Donors are another important actor, playing a critical role in the collaborations. This leads to one of the key findings of this thesis: that non-profits and donor-funding are driving structural changes within the field of journalism. First, donors indirectly influence the topics for investigative journalism by funding investigative journalism that supports specific themes. Second, some of the donors' favour collaboration and thus encourage journalists and media organisations to work together. This was mainly evident in Zimbabwe and Eswatini and to a limited extent in South Africa, which has a

more vibrant economic context and media organisations' ability to adopt a diversified funding mix in to limit influence. While ANT theory is useful to trace and discuss the role of human and non-human actors and their associations in CIJ, it does not help to see how close the actors and non-human actors are from each other and how their gender, class or race influences the interactions. The hierarchy of influences theory in its individual level (micro-level) helps to interrogate the individuals in terms of their age, gender, and professional values. ANT also places all the actors and actants on an equal footing, yet the research has shown that there are power relations and actors and actants cannot be equal as the human actors are more in control, deciding which tools to use and how to use them for their benefit. It is difficult to know how they navigate algorithms embedded within the social media networks they use as they are invisible. While ANT is useful in identifying the heterogeneous actors and the actants in the collaborations, it cannot explain the range of political, economic, and professional factors that drove collaborations in the three countries under study. The hierarchy of influences theory covers this gap by showing the influences on journalism. Macro-level factors such as politics and the economy shape how the collaborations in terms of who to involve and how the investigations get funded. Due to the involvement of a range of actors in the networks, it is however difficult to see which influences have the most impact as they converge within the production and dissemination stages.

In addition, the two Eswatini case studies show that modern investigative journalism is a socio-technical hybrid which comes about when heterogeneous human actors and technology interact (Primo and Zago, 2015). *Inhlase* and *Swaziland News* are deploying social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, websites, emails, mobile phones in the news production and distribution processes. In the *Swaziland News* case study, political actors are taking advantage of the digital capabilities of mobile phones, WhatsApp, and Telegram to engage in news gathering and share the information securely to *Swaziland News*. *Swaziland News* on the other hand takes advantage of the multimedia capabilities offered by Facebook and Twitter to post leaks and other investigative stories and get immediate feedback from readers. The publication is also engaging in live broadcasts and doing live phone ins afforded by the Facebook medium which gives the publication a direct and live connection with readers across the geographical spectrum. These tools are not sophisticated for the

journalists using them thus they are able to retain control of the journalism. The publication thus shows a translation or collaborative process between those who gather information and leak documents, the publication which packages the videos and leaks, adding headlines and text to make it a complete journalistic product which readers can make sense of. Readers draw on their lived experiences and use the chat/comment functions, emojis and share functionalities on Facebook and retweet functions on Twitter to further disseminate the stories to their networks. The processes of news production and dissemination adopts a network like fashion which is unending and can be consumed by interested individuals anytime of the day no matter their geographical locations. In the case of *Inhlase*, which has contracted an external IT company to manage the technological side of journalism shows that *Inhlase* journalists lack the technological skills thus giving power to the IT company influence over them.

ANT's shortcomings can be seen when it considers all actors to have equal power. As seen in the cases analysed, different actors display different power levels. The funders are playing a more influential role in shaping the editorial as the media organisations are constrained when it comes to embarking on investigative journalism without the support of non-profit funding. It can be argued that journalistic and non-journalistic actors/professions are converging to define modern investigative journalism. Using the Hierarchy of Influences theory helped to mitigate these shortcomings as it helped to analyse the levels of influences on the various collaborations. It also emerged from the research how some journalists experience fatigue and have some of their time taken away from doing investigative journalism when they must prepare proposals and do reports for the donors. The ANT theory falls short when it does not explain the implications of power in the associations (Anderson and de Maeyer, 2015).

ANT and Hierarchy of Influences theory gives recognition to other actors who are coming into the profession and impacting journalistic norms and values. For example, funders are influencing the editorial agenda and technologists determining which stories are more popular among audiences and providing metrics to organisations (*Inhlase*) and helping to find patterns of wrongdoing as in *#GuptaLeaks*. Interviewed actors refer to working together in various terms-collaborations, partnerships,

alliances, or cooperation thus showing the different understandings of collaboration in the present context. The research established that CIJ in the three countries under study is not homogenous as it very much shaped by the political, economic, social and media contexts of the countries. While the hierarchy of influences theory helps to identify factors that influence these collaborations, there are often multiple variables at play, making it hard to isolate which have the most influence. Nevertheless, macro-level political and economic, and micro-level, professional factors exert more influence in two of the three countries under study. The boundaries between levels become more unclear as more actors are involved (Reese, 2019). In Eswatini, individual, economic, and political influences play a significant role in the way that *Swaziland News* does its journalism. The publication is driven by a strong belief in the watchdog role and promoting transparency and accountability. However, the investigative journalism done by the publication is partisan and overlaps with activism seen through the journalists' open calls for democratic reforms in the Kingdom of Eswatini. It can thus be argued that despite being in the same region, differences and similarities were noted in the way CIJ is practiced in the three countries as argued in chapters 6, 7 and 8. The collaborations under study showed that there were a wide range of actors involved in the investigations showing that modern investigative journalism is characterised by convergences.

9.5 Conclusion

The study concludes that there is an emerging culture of investigative journalism in the southern African region characterised by networks of journalists and non-journalistic actors, which display some similarities in the three country cases, and vary due to contextual factors. Investigations done collaboratively are proving to be beneficial to those involved, in terms of sharing resources, ideas, sources, tools, promoting freedom of expression and the impact of the stories. The investigations are also winning awards and bringing about change within their contexts. In Zimbabwe, there is particular potential for journalists to come together, around election reporting, as all are researching and focusing on the same topic. Collaboration with actors in neighbouring countries such as South Africa is helping journalists in Zimbabwe and Eswatini to publish sensitive stories. South Africa thus has an influential role in the region which suggests that in the southern African region, a more stable economy,

with a freer media and well-established newsrooms have more influence and power over less powerful countries with freedom of expression issues.

CIJ is practiced differently in the three study countries, showing that contextual factors have a profound influence on CIJ. By focusing on a few purposively selected cases within the three countries, the study only shows a snapshot of the many CIJs found in the three countries under study. This shows that small-scale collaboration can become more widespread as a journalistic practice and these investigations need to be studied within their contexts to understand who is initiating them, which actors are coming together and how they are collaborating. The findings show that collaborations in the three countries are influenced by a convergence of macro-level factors such as political (bypassing government censorship and promoting freedom of expression) and economic factors (donor influence through funding and encouraging culture of collaboration), and professional/individual factors (strong belief in watchdog journalism and values such as transparency and accountability). These factors interact differently in the three countries. Unlike in Western newsrooms where technology is considered to play a significant role in facilitating collaborations, it is not driving collaborations due to low adoption levels in newsrooms, infrastructural problems, and the digital divide, particularly in Zimbabwe and Eswatini. Technology is present in some of the activities done by the collaborating partners, enabling journalists to undertake tasks they would not be able to do themselves but cannot be argued to be the main factor that is driving collaborations.

Challenges can be noted in some of the collaborations. For example, journalists shared that some editors are not fully in support of collaboration, instead encourage competition and “individual glory” and many organisations and journalists struggle to secure funding for their investigative work. Despite this, a new culture of doing investigative journalism is growing as journalists and media organisations see benefits in collaboration such as sharing resources, skills and promoting freedom of expression.

The research contributes to journalism studies by providing a detailed account of the perspectives, experiences, and practices of investigative journalists in southern

African countries and how macro, meso- and micro level factors converge in the process. The research has shown that there is no single way in which CIJ is practiced, instead different journalists and media organisations are bringing on board a wide range of actors and technological tools to fulfil their objectives within varying contexts. We can draw on a combination of theories to understand the influences, actors, actants and interconnections in CIJ.

This research also contributes to our understanding of security and the risks facing journalists around the world. In all the three countries, security concerns were mentioned by the journalists which threatens the safety of journalists, the information, whistle-blowers, and the sources who are all at risk due to heightened surveillance in the digital era. In the *#GuptaLeaks* investigation, the collaborating partners were concerned about moving the team to a neutral country, technical measures to isolate the leak from internet attacks, and editors and journalists taking the responsibility upon themselves to ensure whistle-blowers are protected. This study provides more nuance to Chacón & Saldaña (2021)'s findings regarding motivations to collaborate at the national level. In their study, they argued that journalists participated in cross-media collaborations to diffuse the risk of attacks and to strengthen the quality of their reporting. This study extends theirs by arguing that in countries in the Global South, journalists are collaborating across borders and not naming their partners so that their stories are published anonymously in neighbouring countries (as shared by Zimbabwean and Eswatini journalists) as a method to protect themselves. Despite operating in a liberal media environment with high levels of press freedom, journalists in South Africa considered traditional methods of meeting face to face and avoiding connecting to the internet until they were certain that there was no risk. Despite the deployment of strong encryption and information security tools in large scale collaborations such as ICIJ, in South Africa, journalists do not trust encryption tools and fear that the state and other actors may have stronger tools and can still hack into their systems. Adding to Lashmar (2017)'s point that journalists need to be more outspoken about surveillance and how it is stopping them from fulfilling the watchdog role, this research argues that strengthening collaborations/partnerships with foreign actors is vital for journalists to continue playing the watchdog role and bringing power to account. It has been shown in this research that collaborations with external players

helps journalists in Eswatini and Zimbabwe to publish stories anonymously and such stories have greater impact.

In terms of the theoretical framework, the research has shown that using ANT and Hierarchical of Influences gave the research illuminative power which enabled an analysis of the actors (both human and non-human), their agency and how they are collaborating. Furthermore, it allowed the research to identify the most important micro and macro-level factors which are influencing CIJ. The research extends the Hierarchy of Influences theory, showing that in the Global South, political, economic, and professional factors have more influence on journalism than organisational and social systems factors due to the political and economic challenges facing journalism. Shoemaker and Reese (2014) argue that no one level is important than the other, yet the research showed that macro level, political and economic factors and individual level, professional factors are more important in influencing who are collaborating and how they impact the journalism produced.

The limitations of the research included not being able to see the collaborating actors in practice as most of the data was collected during the Covid-19 pandemic when travel restrictions and lockdowns were in place. Observing CIJ in practice would have shed light on power dynamics and how tensions are negotiated instead of relying only on actors' accounts of their experiences of collaborating. To mitigate this challenge, I triangulated data from interviews and narrative analysis and ensured that the data collected was as thorough as possible. Lack of face-to-face access to respondents was mitigated by doing interviews using video conferencing tools such as Zoom, which promoted access as they were easily available remotely.

Future research could adopt ethnographic approaches to follow the actors to observe collaborations in practice. This would provide an in-depth understanding of how collaborations are being practiced and how they are evolving and allow researchers to observe the tensions and negotiations involved in such work. Studies on collaboration could also consider different country cases to understand how collaborations are being practised and examine the factors that are influencing the practice. This research was focused on three country cases and is not representative of the whole of

southern Africa. Instead, it begins an important conversation on collaborations that have taken place in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Eswatini in the last few years which has been deficient in literature on CIJ which has mainly focused on collaborations done in Western countries.

Appendices

The lists contain all the questions that were written down for the different actors. The interview questions were adapted depending on which country and investigation editors and journalists came from. As such some of the questions which were not relevant to other investigations were left out while additional ones were included.

Appendix A: Interview Questions for editors

1. What was your [editorial/technical] background and/or main area of responsibility prior to the start of the collaborative investigative project (**mention specific project done in a particular country** e.g., #GuptaLeaks or Chiadzwa etc?)
2. What was your role in the collaboration?
3. Prior to the investigation, had you worked on any other collaborative investigative projects? If so, can you tell me a little bit about how this specific project differed from these earlier efforts?
4. Who did you collaborate with? Explain why?
5. How much did you collaborate with others outside your organisation for this collaborative project and why were they invited to collaborate?
6. What were the roles of those who came from outside the newsroom?
7. Who oversaw the collaboration?
8. How did journalists versus editors feed into it?
9. How long did it take?
10. Who had most influence in determining the output of the final news story?
11. How did you go about authoring stories collaboratively?
12. Which values do you consider the most important in doing your work? Explain why?
13. What activities were done in the investigation?
14. How were the leaked emails analysed?
15. How were the authenticity of the leaks verified?
16. Where audiences involved and what was their level of involvement and role in the investigation?
17. Which systems/software/tools were used in the investigation?
18. Which skills and techniques made the project a success?

19. What was the importance of the software to the investigation?
20. What would you say is the role of technology?
21. Which tools did you use for security?
22. Would you say that technology is playing a role in driving collaboration?
23. How did communication take place among all those involved?
24. In your own words, how would you describe the systems/software both in terms of their functionality and how they were implemented?
25. How did you fund the investigation?
26. Do donors tell you what to write about?
27. How do you guard against donor influence?
28. What challenges were encountered in doing the investigation?
29. Any other information about the collaboration that you can share with me?

Appendix B: Interview Questions for journalists

1. What was your [editorial/technical] background and/or main area of responsibility prior to the start of the collaborative investigative project (mention specific project done in a particular country e.g., #GuptaLeaks or Chiadzwa etc?)
2. What was your role in the collaboration?
3. Prior to the investigation, had you worked on any other collaborative investigative projects? If so, can you tell me a little bit about how this specific project differed from these earlier efforts?
4. Who did you collaborate with? Explain why?
5. How much did you collaborate with others outside your organisation for this collaborative project and why were they invited to collaborate?
6. What steps did you take to collect information? Take me through the process?
7. What were the roles of those who came from outside the newsroom and who oversaw the collaboration?
8. How did you feed into the project and was it the same for editors?
9. How long did it take?
10. Who had most influence in determining the output of the final news story?
11. How did you go about drafting stories collaboratively?
12. Which values do you consider the most important in doing your work? Explain why?
13. What activities were done in the investigation?
14. How were the leaked emails analysed?
15. How were the authenticity of the leaks verified?
16. Where audiences involved and what was their level of involvement and role in the investigation?
17. Which systems/software/tools were used in the investigation?
18. Which skills and techniques made the project a success?
19. What was the importance of the software to the investigation?
20. What would you say is the role of technology?
21. Which tools did you use for security?
22. Would you say that technology is playing a role in driving collaboration?
23. How did communication take place among all those involved?

24. In your own words, how would you describe the systems/software both in terms of their functionality and how they were implemented?
25. What challenges were encountered in doing the investigation?
26. Any other information about the collaboration that you can share with me?

Appendix C Interview Questions for technologists

1. How did you get involved in collaborative project (provide name)?
2. What was your role in the investigation?
3. Did you get involved in the newswriting processes?
4. Who else did the roles that you conducted in the investigation?
5. Which skills or techniques did you find most valuable?
6. Which tools/software were used in the investigation?
7. What were the roles of using the tools?
8. Had you taken part in journalistic investigations?
9. Which values guided you in doing your roles?
10. Tell me more about how the emails were analysed?
11. Without the technical support you offered, do you think the journalist would not have been able to do the investigation?
12. Can you say that technology drove the collaboration?
13. Describe your relationship with the other people who engaged in the investigation?
14. What challenges did you encounter in the investigation?
15. Any other information that you can share with me about the investigation, your role, the role of technology and other people involved?

Appendix D Interview questions for funders

1. Tell me more about your organisation and the kinds of projects that you are funding?
2. Explain how the funding process works?
3. Why did you fund publication A or investigative journalist B?
4. Have you funded the same organisation or journalist before and why?
5. Where do you get your funding?
6. Do your funders tell you the journalism areas/topics to focus on?
7. Do you tell those you fund what to write about? Explain?
8. How else are you supporting investigative journalists besides funding?

Appendix E: Interview questions for government officials

1. How does the Ministry support investigative journalism?
2. Are there any policies in place to guide how investigative journalism should be done in the country?
3. Does the Ministry provide funding to support investigative journalism in the country?
4. Which media organisations is the Ministry supporting if the answer is yes to question 3?
5. What is the view of the ministry on the role played by EU, the US Embassy and other international organisations which fund investigative journalism in the country by providing them with grants?
6. Are there any training workshops that are being done by the Ministry to promote skills development among journalists in the country?
7. From interviews done so far with journalists, some of them talk about challenges in accessing information for them to carry out investigative journalism where public officials and businesses are implicated, what is your view on this?
8. Are there any policies or documents which enable easy access to information for easy verification of information?
9. Any other comments or documents you may share?

Appendix F IJHub editorial charter and membership code

IJHub Editorial Charter

This charter is to help ensure that the IJ Hub serves as a professional and ethical corps of member centers at an editorial level and whose conduct will contribute to and not undermine the collective.

The charter may be amended from time to time by a simple majority vote of the member centers in good standing.

Preface

The work of IJ Hub members should be guided at all times by what is in the public interest in an open and democratic society. This means striving for truth, avoiding unnecessary harm, showing a special concern for children and other vulnerable groups, being sensitive to the culture of customs of readers, and acting independently – free from commercial and political influences.

Gathering and reporting of news

Members shall:

report news truthfully and fairly.

obtain news legally, honestly and fairly, unless the public interest or any person's safety dictates otherwise;

use personal information for journalistic purposes only;

make amends for inaccurate information or comment by publishing, promptly and prominently, a correction and apology.

- ensure that subjects of critical coverage are given adequate opportunity to respond to all allegations against them before publication except where the public interest, any person's safety or the ability to publish may be compromised;
- not plagiarise;
- protect confidential sources;
- not pay for information, except when it is in the public interest and cannot be sourced by other means.

Independence and conflicts of interest shall:

- not allow commercial, political, personal or other non-professional considerations to influence their reporting; avoid conflicts of interest to the extent reasonably possible and declare those that are unavoidable.
- not accept any benefit intended to influence coverage;
- indicate clearly when outsiders have contributed to the cost of reporting and be transparent about funders;

- keep editorial material clearly distinct from advertising and sponsorships.

Discrimination, dignity, privacy and hate speech

Members shall:

- avoid discriminatory or offensive references to people's race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic or social origin, age, disability, religion, culture, or language, and shall refer to these only where it is in the public interest and relevant to what is being reported.
- avoid publishing material that undermines people's right to dignity and privacy, except where it is clearly in the public interest;
- not publish propaganda for war, incitement to violence or hate speech.

Protected comment

Comment is justified as long as it is on a matter of public interest, is made honestly and without malice, is based on facts that are true or reasonably true and is clearly presented as comment.

Children

Members shall:

- not interview, photograph or identify a child without the consent of his/her legal guardian if there is any chance that this could harm the child, except where there is an overriding public interest.

IJHub Membership Code

This code is to help ensure that the IJ Hub serves a professional and ethical corps of member centers whose conduct will contribute to and not undermine the collective.

These rules may be amended from time to time by a two-thirds majority vote of member centers in good standing.

Accession to membership

1. A candidate for membership of the IJ Hub may be nominated by any member center in good standing or the IJ Hub management.
2. To qualify for membership, the candidate must –
 - 2.1. be an organisation that practices investigative journalism as a primary objective.
 - 2.2. have credible governance and compliance structures.
 - 2.3. have a credible track record (or if a new organisation, its people must have credible track records) in the practice of investigative journalism and of professional and ethical conduct; and

- 2.4. subscribe to the IJ Hub Editorial Charter and these rules.
3. The candidate becomes a member center when –
 - 3.1. its candidacy is supported by a vote of two thirds of member centers in good standing; and
 - 3.2. the IJ Hub board, which must be informed of the member centers' decision, does not veto it within two weeks of being informed.
4. Member centers considering a candidacy and the board considering a veto must determine whether the candidate complies with the criteria in paragraph 2.
5. They may also take into account; –
 - 5.1. whether the application is born of a genuine desire to practice investigative journalism professionally.
 - 5.2. whether the accession of a new member will overstretch the IJ Hub's capacity and resources; and
 - 5.3. the extent of need in the geographical region served or to be served by the candidate.
6. They may not take into account narrow self-interest regarding editorial, organisational or resource competition between existing members and the candidate.
7. A complaint regarding a member center may be brought by any member center employee, any IJ Hub employee or any IJ Hub board member.
8. The complaint must include a motivation and be addressed to the IJ Hub management.
9. The IJ Hub management must obtain a response from the member center complained about and consider the complaint, the response and the results of any further investigation deemed necessary.
10. Once it has considered the complaint, which it must do in a reasonable time, the IJ Hub management must revert to the complainant and the member center with a recommended course of action, which could include dispute resolution, a proposal that the conduct complained about be corrected, or that the membership of the member center be terminated.
11. Should the recommendation be that the member center's membership be terminated, the member center ceases to be a member center in good standing pending the final resolution of the matter.
12. Should the recommendation be dispute resolution or conduct correction and both the complainant and the member center accept the recommendation and resolve the complaint, no further action will be required.
13. Should the complainant or the member center not accept the recommendation and resolve the complaint, the complainant or the IJ Hub management may escalate the matter to the member centers as a collective.

14. Should the recommendation be that the member center's membership be terminated, the IJ Hub management must escalate the matter to the member centers as a collective.
15. If the matter is escalated to the collective, the IJ Hub management must provide the collective with the complaint, any response, the results of any investigation and any other relevant record.
16. The collective must elect a chair from among its number to manage the ensuing process and to cast a deciding vote in the event of a tie.
17. The collective must gather any further input it deems necessary from any stakeholder and deliberate, following which it must resolve by a simple majority vote of all member centers in good standing and not conflicted –
 - 17.1. to take no further action;
 - 17.2. to terminate the member center's membership; or
 - 17.3. to demand that the member center correct any conduct it specifies by a date it specifies in a manner it specifies.
18. If the latter, the collective must determine as soon as possible after the specified date by the same simple majority vote whether the conduct has been corrected as specified.
19. If it determines that the conduct has not been corrected as specified, the membership of the member center is terminated, provided that if it lodges an appeal as elaborated below, the termination is suspended until final resolution.
20. The member center or the complainant may within two weeks appeal to the IJ Hub board a decision to terminate or not to terminate membership.
21. The appellant must and any other stakeholder may provide the board with motivations. The IJ Hub management must provide the board with all relevant records relating to the complaint.
22. The board must gather any further input it deems necessary from any stakeholder and deliberate, following which it may decide by a simple majority vote of all directors not conflicted –
 - 22.1. to endorse the original decision;
 - 22.2. to strike down the original decision; or
 - 22.3. to substitute the decision for a demand that the member center correct any conduct it specifies by a date it specifies in a manner it specifies.
23. If the latter, the board must determine as soon as possible after the specified date by the same simple majority vote whether the conduct has been corrected as specified.
24. If the matter is escalated to the collective, the IJ Hub management must provide the collective with the complaint, any response, the results of any investigation and any other relevant record.
25. The collective must elect a chair from among its number to manage the

- ensuing process and to cast a deciding vote in the event of a tie.
26. The collective must gather any further input it deems necessary from any stakeholder and deliberate, following which it must resolve by a simple majority vote of all member centers in good standing and not conflicted –
 - 26.1. to take no further action;
 - 26.2. to terminate the member center's membership; or
 - 26.3. to demand that the member center correct any conduct it specifies by a date it specifies in a manner it specifies.
 27. If the latter, the collective must determine as soon as possible after the specified date by the same simple majority vote whether the conduct has been corrected as specified.
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 - 31.1. to endorse the original decision;
 - 31.2. to strike down the original decision; or
 - 31.3. to substitute the decision for a demand that the member center correct any conduct it specifies by a date it specifies in a manner it specifies.
 32. If the latter, the board must determine as soon as possible after the specified date by the same simple majority vote whether the conduct has been corrected as specified.
 33. If the matter is escalated to the collective, the IJ Hub management must provide the collective with the complaint, any response, the results of any investigation and any other relevant record.
 34. The collective must elect a chair from among its number to manage the ensuing process and to cast a deciding vote in the event of a tie.
 35. The collective must gather any further input it deems necessary from any stakeholder and deliberate, following which it must resolve by a simple majority vote of all member centers in good standing and not conflicted –
 - 35.1. to take no further action;
 - 35.2. to terminate the member center's membership; or

- 35.3. to demand that the member center correct any conduct it specifies by a date it specifies in a manner it specifies.
36. If the latter, the collective must determine as soon as possible after the specified date by the same simple majority vote whether the conduct has been corrected as specified.
37. If it determines that the conduct has not been corrected as specified, the membership of the member center is terminated, provided that if it lodges an appeal as elaborated below, the termination is suspended until final resolution.
38. The member center or the complainant may within two weeks appeal to the IJ Hub board a decision to terminate or not to terminate membership.
39. The appellant must and any other stakeholder may provide the board with motivations. The IJ Hub management must provide the board with all relevant records relating to the complaint.
40. The board must gather any further input it deems necessary from any stakeholder and deliberate, following which it may decide by a simple majority vote of all directors not conflicted –
 - 40.1. to endorse the original decision;
 - 40.2. to strike down the original decision; or
 - 40.3. to substitute the decision for a demand that the member center correct any conduct it specifies by a date it specifies in a manner it specifies.
41. If the latter, the board must determine as soon as possible after the specified date by the same simple majority vote whether the conduct has been corrected as specified.
42. If the matter is escalated to the collective, the IJ Hub management must provide the collective with the complaint, any response, the results of any investigation and any other relevant record.
43. The collective must elect a chair from among its number to manage the ensuing process and to cast a deciding vote in the event of a tie.
44. The collective must gather any further input it deems necessary from any stakeholder and deliberate, following which it must resolve by a simple majority vote of all member centers in good standing and not conflicted –
 - 44.1. to take no further action;
 - 44.2. to terminate the member center's membership; or
 - 44.3. to demand that the member center correct any conduct it specifies by a date it specifies in a manner it specifies.
45. If the latter, the collective must determine as soon as possible after the specified date by the same simple majority vote whether the conduct has been corrected as specified.
46. If it determines that the conduct has not been corrected as specified, the membership of the member center is terminated, provided that if it lodges an

appeal as elaborated below, the termination is suspended until final resolution.

47. The member center or the complainant may within two weeks appeal to the IJ Hub board a decision to terminate or not to terminate membership.
48. The appellant must and any other stakeholder may provide the board with motivations. The IJ Hub management must provide the board with all relevant records relating to the complaint.
49. The board must gather any further input it deems necessary from any stakeholder and deliberate, following which it may decide by a simple majority vote of all directors not conflicted –
 - 49.1. to endorse the original decision;
 - 49.2. to strike down the original decision; or
 - 49.3. to substitute the decision for a demand that the member center correct any conduct it specifies by a date it specifies in a manner it specifies.
50. If the latter, the board must determine as soon as possible after the specified date by the same simple majority vote whether the conduct has been corrected as specified.
51. If it determines that the conduct has not been corrected as specified, the membership of the member center is terminated forthwith.
52. The IJ Hub management, the member centers collective and the IJ Hub board must consider and decide any complaint against the following standards –
 - 52.1. The conduct complained about must be more than just an individual's conduct; it must be connected to or impact on the professional life of the member center and threaten the credibility or reputation of the member centers as a collective or the IJ Hub; and
 - 52.2. The conduct must relate to any of the followed alleged conduct: contravention of the Editorial Charter; serious and relevant criminality including fraud and corruption; abuse of IJ Hub or third- party funding; egregious or repeated abuse of power; racism, sexism or sexual harassment; non-compliance over a period of time with either condition for accession to membership specified in paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2.

IJHub grants received

Grant Receipts

IJ Hub NPC

For the period 1 April 2019 to 31 July 2022

		ZAR
07 Aug 2019	Foundation Open Society Institute/Programme on Independent Journalism - receipt (USD 22 834)	335 262
28 Aug 2019	Millennium Trust - receipt	1 000 000
10 Dec 2019	Foundation to Promote Open Society/Programme on Independent Journalism - receipt (USD 100 000)	1 443 800
24 Dec 2019	Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa - receipt (USD 15 000)	218 996
27 Jan 2020	Millennium Trust - receipt	1 000 000
18 Feb 2020	Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa - refund	(68 717)
12 May 2020	Foundation Open Society Institute/Programme on Independent Journalism - refund	(86 786)
09 Jun 2020	Foundation to Promote Open Society/Programme on Independent Journalism - receipt (USD 100 000)	1 658 810
23 Oct 2020	Millennium Trust - receipt	1 000 000
25 Nov 2020	Open Society Institute/Programme on Independent Journalism - receipt (USD 140 000)	2 115 008
23 Apr 2021	Millennium Trust - receipt	1 000 000
23 Sept 2021	Millennium Trust - receipt	1 000 000
15 Oct 2021	Open Society Institute/Programme on Independent Journalism - receipt (USD 140 000)	2 039 072
12 Nov 2021	Joffe Charitable Trust - receipt (GBP 30 000)	619 762
06 Apr 2022	Open Society Institute/Programme on Independent Journalism - receipt (USD 200 000)	2 904 600
Total		16 179 806

Source: IJHub website

OUR STORY

About Inhlase

Lightning spark in fathomless darkness

Inhlase Centre for Investigative Journalism is the Kingdom of Eswatini's non-profit and non-partisan media organization registered with the Eswatini Registrar of Companies in June 2017. Inhlase acts as a guardian of public interest that is concerned with developing and honing investigative reporting skills for reporters in newsrooms struggling to maintain investigative journalism desks.

Inhlase also produces credible investigative stories crucial for freedom of information and expression at the heart of an open, accountable and participatory democracy. It further conducts media research to ensure the documentation of evidence which crucially contributes to democracy and media development in the kingdom.

Appendix G. MNN Centre for Investigative Journalism editorial policy and values

The screenshot shows the 'ABOUT US' page of the MNN Centre for Investigative Journalism. The page has a navigation bar with links: HOME, NEWS, OUR STORIES, SPECIAL REPORT, OPINION, OPPORTUNITIES, ADVOCACY, ADVERTORIALS, and CONSULTANCY. The 'ABOUT US' section includes a 'Vision' paragraph, a 'Mission and Objectives' section with three bullet points, and a 'Core Values' section with eight bullet points. On the right side, there is a Facebook post from the MNN Centre For Investigative Journalism, dated about 2 weeks ago, featuring a photo of a group of people and a text-based post about a book design challenge.

ABOUT US

Vision

The MNN Centre for Investigative Journalism PTY was founded in March 2016, and envisions to be a leading investigative journalism organisation in promoting accountability, transparency, exposing corruption and wrongdoing, protection of human rights, promoting good governance, promoting an open and democratic society in the Kingdom of Lesotho and be counted among the best in the Sub-Saharan region.

Mission and Objectives

The primary mission of improving the quality of investigative journalism and in depth news reporting in the country. The Centre mission is also to transform the country's media to be an agenda setter and a bulwark of the country's nascent democracy.

The Centre also exists to promote Investigative journalism through skills development, transfer and mentorship thereby contributing towards fostering a robust fourth estate that builds political, social and economic accountability and transparency in the Kingdom of Lesotho.

Once again our goal as the MNN Centre for Investigative Journalism PTY is to nurture a future generation of Investigative journalists in Lesotho for a future robust media fraternity in the country. We are going to be in the daily business of investigating cases of corruption in Lesotho and ensure those in authority are held accountable and there is transparency and good governance through exposing wrongdoing and corruption.

Core Values

- We shall uphold international accepted journalistic standards and ethics.
- In pursuance of our work on a daily bases we shall gather factual and report unquestionable truths at all times in our published work.
- We shall promote democratic principles through investigative stories that promote accountability and transparency, expose corruption, abuse of state resources and wrong doing, we shall also publish stories that promote the protection of human rights, good governance, open and democratic society.
- We shall not be biased in our reporting of stories. We shall reflect and publish stories and pictures that reflect all sides of a story without biases. We shall ensure that our organisation does not disseminate propaganda and or be polarised in its reporting on political matters.
- We shall give all people, subjects and authorities that our stories cast in a bad light, affecting or affected by our stories ample time and space to give their side of the story before we publish.
- We shall also afford the marginalised groups that include women, children, LGBTI community and the disabled persons a right to fair representation in our reporting.
- We guarantee our sources anonymity and confidentiality.

Our Governance Structure

We are governed by a Board of Directors consisting of:

1. Advocate Monahaneg Rasekoai Phoofole and Associates Inc. Lawyer (Chairperson)
2. Pascalinah Kabi a Lesotho Times and Sunday Express Journalists and Media Activist

The screenshot shows the 'Core Values' and 'Our Governance Structure' sections of the MNN Centre for Investigative Journalism website. The 'Core Values' section lists eight bullet points. The 'Our Governance Structure' section states that the organization is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of two members. On the right side, there is a Twitter feed showing a tweet from MNN CIJ and a retweet.

Core Values

- We shall uphold international accepted journalistic standards and ethics.
- In pursuance of our work on a daily bases we shall gather factual and report unquestionable truths at all times in our published work.
- We shall promote democratic principles through investigative stories that promote accountability and transparency, expose corruption, abuse of state resources and wrong doing, we shall also publish stories that promote the protection of human rights, good governance, open and democratic society.
- We shall not be biased in our reporting of stories. We shall reflect and publish stories and pictures that reflect all sides of a story without biases. We shall ensure that our organisation does not disseminate propaganda and or be polarised in its reporting on political matters.
- We shall give all people, subjects and authorities that our stories cast in a bad light, affecting or affected by our stories ample time and space to give their side of the story before we publish.
- We shall also afford the marginalised groups that include women, children, LGBTI community and the disabled persons a right to fair representation in our reporting.
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We are governed by a Board of Directors consisting of:

1. Advocate Monahaneg Rasekoai Phoofole and Associates Inc. Lawyer (Chairperson)
2. Pascalinah Kabi a Lesotho Times and Sunday Express Journalists and Media Activist

Advertise here

TWITTER FEEDS

MNN CIJ

MNN CIJ Retweeted

Appendix H Swaziland News values and mission

Not secure | www.swazilandnews.co.za/about/

Amazon.co.uk - On... Booking.com Express VPN McAfee Security https://mail.google... New Tab https://www.facebo... Gmail YouTube Other favouri

About Swaziland News

"The Swaziland News" is a newspaper that seeks to publish and give an insight of what is happening in the Kingdom of Eswatini, the Republic of South Africa and around the world. Guided by the principles of journalism and relevant laws, it seeks to provide accurate, fair and balanced information on issues of democracy, human rights and other developmental issues in the public interest. The newspaper is published by Swaziland News (PTY) LTD, a publishing company legally registered in the Republic of South Africa.

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide accurate information that will enable citizens to make informed decisions regarding issues that affect their welfare, be it political, socially, economically or otherwise.

Our Vision

Our vision is become the most reliable source of credible information that will make a difference not only for the people of Eswatini but around the world.

Our Values

- Transparency
- Integrity
- Accountability

Advert



The Press Council of SA has a vacancy for a DEPUTY PRESS OMBUD

(ON A PART-TIME BASIS)

The Deputy Press Ombud will be required to:

- Adjudicate complaints lodged against newspapers, magazines and online publications that subscribe to the Press Code;
- Work closely with the Press Ombud to ensure the smooth functioning and efficiency of the adjudication process;
- Report and be accountable to the Press Council; and
- Contribute to monthly, quarterly and annual reports of the Press Council.

The applicant is required to possess an in-depth knowledge of the role of the media in a democratic society in general, and the Press Code in particular, in order to maintain the confidence of both the industry and the public in the credibility and authority of the office. He/She should be independent, impartial and fair and must have strong writing, communication, facilitation, decision-making and mediation skills.

Details:

Applicants must have extensive media experience, a fair understanding of the workings of the South African legal system, and a sense of public service.

Experience in dealing with media complaints will be an advantage.

Applicants must be citizens of the Republic of South Africa and reside permanently in the country. They must be committed to the values underpinning the South African Constitution, as well as the Code of Ethics and Conduct for South African Print and Online media.

How to apply:

Please submit a written application to one of the following channels:

Address:
Building 12
Sunside Island Office Park,
451 Jan Smuts Avenue,
Craigfield Park,
Johannesburg

Email:
mls@pcsa.org.za

Telephone: 011 454 3612

CLOSING DATE: 26 AUGUST 2022
www.presscouncil.org.za

subscribe



Editorial Policy

The editorial policy of the newspaper shall among others be guided as follows:

- Promote democracy, human rights and the rule of law.
- Promote culture, tourism and traditions that are not in conflict with democratic values, human rights, particularly the rights of women and children.
- Promote talents by giving coverage to entertainment and other sporting activities.

Ethics ETH1920-1841: Ms Carolyn Lunga (Low risk)

Dear Carolyn

Reference: ETH1920-1841

JProject title: Collaborative Investigative Journalism in Southern Africa

Start date: 29 Oct 2020

End date: 1 Sep 2023

I am writing to you to confirm that the research proposal detailed above has been granted formal approval from the Journalism Departmental Research Ethics Committee. The Committee's response is based on the protocol described in the application form and supporting documentation. Approval has been given for the submitted application only and the research must be conducted accordingly. You are now free to start recruitment.

Appendix J Informed Consent

Name of principal investigator/researcher

Carolyn M. Lunga



REC reference number

ETH1920-1841

Title of study: Collaborative Investigative Journalism in Southern Africa

Please tick or initial box

1	I confirm that I have read and understood the participant information dated for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions which have been answered satisfactorily.	
2.	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw without giving a reason without being penalised or disadvantaged.	
	I understand that I will be able to withdraw my data up to 1 September 2023, (this is the time I anticipate to be the time of publication of the research)	
	I agree to the interview being audio OR video recorded.	
	I agree to City recording and processing this information about me. I understand that this information will be used only for the purpose(s) explained in the participant information and my consent is conditional on City complying with its duties and obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).	
	I would like to be informed of the results of this study once it has been completed and understand that my contact details will be retained for this purpose.	
	I agree to the use of direct quotes in the study	
	I agree that anonymised data will be made open access. E.g., to underpin journal publication	
	I agree that the data obtained will destroyed at the end of the study	
	I agree to take part in the above study.	

	I agree to the use of images in the thesis that are already published on the news website or social media platforms or given by myself.	
--	---	--

Name of Participant Signature Date

Carolyne M. Lunga C.Lunga
26/6/2020

Name of Researcher Signature Date

When completed, 1 copy for participant; 1 copy for researcher file.

Explicit consent for the following should be obtained where applicable:

Reuse of data and an explanation what the data will be used for, as well as reassurance that the data will only be reused in studies which have been given ethics approval.

The use of direct quotes.

Sharing data outside the research team (e.g., with collaborators).

A statement that asks the participant to confirm that they understand that their anonymous data will be made open access, e.g., to underpin journal publication or to meet funding requirements.

Appendix K List of Respondents

South Africa (14)

Respondent 1	CEO
Journalist 1	AmaBhungane
Editor/ Journalist 2	News24
Editor/Journalist 3	Daily Maverick
Journalist 4	AmaBhungane
Technologist	Open Up
Journalist 5	AmaBhungane
Journalist 6	AmaBhungane
Journalist 7	Daily Maverick
Journalist 8	Former Mail and Guardian
Journalist 9	News24
Journalist 10	Daily Maverick
Journalist 11	ENCA
Journalist 12	SABC/ENCA

Zimbabwe (13)

Legal specialist	MISA
Funder	VMCZ
Journalist 3	Newsday
Journalist 4	Zimbabwe Independent
Journalist 5	Zimbabwe Independent
Journalist 6	Zimbabwe Independent
Funder/Sponsor	EU
Funder/Sponsor/Programme Manager	EU
Funder	EU
Funder/Sponsor	OSISA
Journalist 7	The Standard
Journalist 8	The Standard
Journalist 9	Newsday

Eswatini (13)

Journalist 1	Eswatini
Journalist 2	Botswana
Journalist 3	Botswana
Journalist 4	Eswatini
Journalist 5	Eswatini
Journalist 6	Eswatini
Journalist 7	Eswatini
Journalist 8	Eswatini
Journalist 9	Lesotho
Director	South Africa
Sponsor/ Funder 1	South Africa
Sponsor/Funder 2	South Africa
Sponsor 3	South Africa

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<https://www.herald.co.zw/vmcz-launches-investigative-journalism-fund-awards/?fbclid=IwAR2VywyjaRzWp3pszaMtoqbPs5LS62IG2vNnapUs3uTu19tPxNc2qEXctnQ> (Last accessed 5 July 2022).

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Awards, Publications, Competitions, Conferences, Webinars and Book reviews during PhD registration period

Awards

- School of Arts and Social Sciences Doctoral Studentship

Submitted papers for publication in this thesis

- **July 2022.** Digital Journalism: Networked Journalism: Collaborative investigative journalism in southern Africa. A case study of the #GuptaLeaks. (*Under review*)
- **Lunga, C. M.** 2022 Networking Knowledge, Silencing the barking watchdog. Journalists' experiences' and ethical dilemmas of reporting the global pandemic COVID-19 in Zimbabwe. (*Forthcoming*)

Publications

- **Lunga, C.M.**, 2021. Book Review. Investigative journalism, H. de Burgh, and P. Lashmar (eds.) (2021) *Journal of Applied Journalism & Media Studies* 2021, pp. 1-3 https://doi.org/10.1386/ajms_00069_5
- **Lunga, C.M.**, 2021. Book Review - The Handbook of Journalism Studies, Editions 2009 and 2020. *JOMEC Journal*, (16), pp.134–143. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.18573/jomec.215>
- **Carolyn Mande Lunga** (2021) Tabloid journalism in Africa, *African Journalism Studies*, DOI: [10.1080/23743670.2021.1898800](https://doi.org/10.1080/23743670.2021.1898800)
- **Lunga, C. M.**, 2022. Book Review. Journalism in the Data Age (Jingrong Tong). *Journalism* (*forthcoming*)
- **Carolyn Lunga**, Overcoming the Challenges to Investigative Journalism in Southern Africa April 2022. Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN) <https://gijn.org/2022/04/07/overcoming-the-challenges-to-investigative-journalism-in-southern-africa/>
- **Carolyn Lunga**. Interview: Using digital solutions to protect the practice of investigative journalism. European Journalism Observatory (EJO) <https://en.ejo.ch/media-economics/interview-using-digital-solutions-to-protect-the-practice-of-investigative-journalism>

- Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism (RISJ), Twitter, Journalism Worldwide A selection of news article from media around the world. *Overcoming the Challenges to Investigative Journalism in Southern Africa*. 21 April 2022. https://twitter.com/risj_oxford/status/1517075637546192896
- Reprinted: Journalism and Media Lab, Wits Journalism. *Overcoming the Challenges to Investigative Journalism in Southern Africa* <https://jamlab.africa/overcoming-the-challenges-to-investigative-journalism-in-southern-africa/>

Competitions

- **May 2022- City Doctoral College Images of Research Competition.** Collaborative investigative journalism in southern Africa. Second prize.
- **June 2022/May 2021, 3 Minute thesis Competition** School of Arts and Social Sciences Heat 2021 Third prize and joint 1st runner up
- **June 2021 - Postgraduate category of the SASS Sustainable Development Goals competition,** 2nd Prize. <https://www.city.ac.uk/news-and-events/events/2021/05/sass-united-nations-global-goals-for-sustainable-development-competition/competition-winners-2021>

Conferences

- **Presenter,** International Communication Association (ICA), Networked Journalism: Collaborative investigative journalism in southern Africa. A case study of the #GuptaLeaks. 28 May 2022. ICA-session "The Many Facets of Studying News Production."
- **Speaker,** Africa Investigative Journalism Conference (AIJC), Collaborative Investigative Journalism Workshop. 11-15 October 2021 <https://aijc.africa/programme/>
- **Presenter,** September 2021, Future of Journalism Conference. Reporting the pandemic: lessons from Russia and South Africa. Session: Overcoming Obstacles in Journalism. <https://cardiffjournalism.co.uk/foj2021/future-of-journalism-2021-itinerary/future-of-journalism-conference-2021-day-2/>
- **Presenter,** ICA May 2021 Journalism Studies, Pre-Doctoral Conference, Graduate student Colloquium. Analysing the practice of collaborative

investigative journalism in southern Africa: A case of the Gupta Leaks investigation. <https://www.ica-phd-colloquium.news/previous-colloquiums/7th-phd-colloquium-ica-2021-digital/>

Webinars/Seminars presented based on thesis

- **March 2022. Lecturer**, Collaborative Investigative Journalism, International News Class. MA International Journalism, City, University of London.
- **March 2021. Lecturer**, Collaborative Investigative Journalism, International News Class. MA International Journalism. City, University of London.
- **March 2021. Lecturer**, Collaborative Investigative Journalism, International News Class. BA Journalism class. City, University of London.
- **June 2020-** Festival of Research presentation, City, University of London.
- **May 2020. Speaker**. Alpha Media Holdings, Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe, and The US Embassy Public Affairs Webinar. Is Collaborative Investigative Journalism the future?

Roles and responsibilities done during PhD registration period

- **Associate Editor**, Media, Communication and Cultural Studies Association (MeCCSA) postgraduate journal (2021-2022)
- **Graduate Teaching and Marking Assistant (2019-2022)**
 - International News (Postgraduate)
 - Global Journalism (Postgraduate)
 - Media Ethics (Postgraduate)
 - Reporting Conflict (Undergraduate)
 - Humanitarian Communication (Undergraduate)
 - International News (Undergraduate)
- **Student Communications Assistant**, Academic and Student Services, City, University of London (2021-2022)
- **Student Digital Assistant**, Learning Enhancement and Development (LEaD), City, University of London (2021-2022)