Reporting on Unfinished Business: Emerging Digital Media and Investigative Journalism in Guatemala

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Abstract: Cross-border cooperation among journalists represents a new situation for investigative journalism and new challenges for security and safety. Publishing articles about corruption and financial crime can have different reactions and consequences depending on the context of the specific country. This study focuses on emerging digital media and cross-border cooperation in investigative journalism as it relates to safety and security. Major international leaks, like the Panama and Paradise Papers and Lux Leaks, have shown the importance of collaboration across borders. As financial crime and corruption traverse borders, so must journalistic work. International networks of journalists represent opportunities for collaboration in both data sharing and exchanging experiences, as well as in gaining information and knowledge on safety and security. Doing investigative journalism and exposing financial corruption can represent a risk for editors, journalists, and sources.

Whereas financial crime and collaboration among journalists can transcend borders, journalists operate physically within borders. It is therefore crucial to understand national and local contexts in order to make in-depth reporting on sensitive issues safer. This study explores the need for greater knowledge about specific local and national contexts to develop manuals for in-depth journalism, safety, and security. The focus is on investigative journalism in Guatemala and the digital platform for investigative journalism, Plaza Pública. The basis is interviews, reports, and published speeches and an analysis of the role of new digital media in a postwar process in Guatemala. Important also is an analysis of the types of physical and digital risk journalists face while reporting on power structures related to established elites, politicians, private companies, and illicit financial flows. An important finding presented here reveals how reporting on the links between national political

elites and illicit financial flows increases the risk of attacks on journalists. These attacks tend to create a 'chilling effect', aimed at scaring and intimidating journalists. The study also points out the lack of research on the safety and security of the partners in countries in, for instance, Latin America in relation to international collaboration.

Keywords: digital journalism, safety and security, cross-border cooperation, Guatemala, chilling effect

Introduction

In 2016, the chair of the board of the International Consortium of International Journalism (ICIJ) presented a keynote address entitled, "A Golden Age of Global Muckraking at Hand", arguing that cross-border cooperation among journalists and editors ushers in a new era of investigative journalism (Coronel, 2016, June 20). One of the reasons for this thriving collaboration is the need to report on issues that transcend borders, like illicit financial flows (IFF), corruption, business networks, criminal groups, and politicians (Sambrook, 2018). Another reason is technology. Technology makes it possible to collaborate over distances and with large amounts of data, and technology enables the establishment of digital platforms for investigative journalism that are able to compete with, or complement, traditional media (Grennan et al., 2015). Cross-border cooperation brings together small, independent media platforms and larger, more established platforms. Looking, for instance, at cross-border cooperation on the Paradise Papers, we find twenty-one media partners from Latin America, only five of which were from traditional media, while the great majority were from new and digital media platforms for investigative journalism.[1]

Many journalists work in countries where reporting on the 'wrong muck' can be a matter of life and death. Between 2012 and 2016, 530 journalists were killed, 90 percent of whom were local reporters (UNESCO, 2018). Coronel (2016) claims we need "watchdogs who can transcend borders because we live in a borderless world", however working conditions for journalists still depend upon local and national contexts within the

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1   https://www.icij.org/paradise-papers-media-partners/

borders. Even though there is an increased focus on safety and security, Hughes and Márquez-Ramírez (2017) stress the importance of understanding how unsafe contexts and overlapping risks influence journalism, and the ways that context and overlapping risk can vary significantly. In considering cross-border cooperation, the safety of investigative journalists should be a matter of great concern. More specifically, the working conditions for small and independent media platforms contributing to cross-border cooperation need to be addressed. This paper seeks to highlight the working conditions for investigative journalism in Guatemala, and thus to contribute to an ongoing discussion of security and safety for journalists in a new digital era with ever increasing cross-border cooperation.

Latin America and Guatemala

In Latin America, the new digital media have grown rapidly (Weiss, 2015), and Guatemala is no exception. In 2011, the digital platform Plaza Pública was established to support in-depth journalism in a country struggling to implement peace and a trustworthy democracy after four decades of war. Plaza Pública is a part of the Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN) and a founding member of ALiados, an association of online media from nine Latin American countries. Plaza Pública has a team of approximately 15 people and after seven years of experience they have produced more investigative journalism than any other media outlet in Guatemala (Avila, 2013). They recognize that transcending national borders and creating alliances with journalists around the world is fundamental to their work (Plaza Pública, 2018, January 26).

Safety and security have become issues of great concern due to an increase in harassment and the killing of journalists on a global scale (UNESCO, 2018). The numbers are especially worrying in Latin America. Between 2012 and 2017, Latin America and the Caribbean have registered a significant upward trend in the killing of journalists, connected largely to organized crime, drug trafficking and corruption (UNESCO, 2018, p. 133). Guatemala shares borders with Mexico, El Salvador, Belize and Honduras, all countries where threats against journalists are a serious

concern (Benítez, 2017). Although the three countries share some similar problems, there are important specificities to consider. Despite the signing of the peace agreement in 1996 in Guatemala, steps towards democracy including efforts to comply with international transparency standards (Tax Justice Network, 2018) have not been fulfilled. The current political situation in Guatemala has exposed a deep crisis of corruption involving politicians and high-level officials, including the former president and vice-president of the country, making reporting on issues like embezzlement and tax evasion extremely sensitive (Tax Justice Network, 2018). The Committee to Protect Journalists (2018) reports that twenty-four journalists have been killed in Guatemala since 1992, however almost all of them are local reporters, mainly from radio stations, in smaller cities or rural areas. The media, particularly community radio and digital media, have been at the forefront of the demand for a democratic transition (Velásquez, 2016; Støen, 2018). Yet, the statistics on both physical crimes and increasing digital harassment against journalists in Guatemala remain worrying (Cerigua, 2017). In the Corruption Perceptions Index for 2017 published by Transparency International, countries are ranked by their perceived levels of public sector corruption, according to experts and business people. Almost all the Latin American countries, with few exceptions, are found to have high levels of corruption, and Managing Director Patricia Moreria underlines the link between corruption and safety for journalists: "CPI results correlate not only with the attacks on press freedom and the reduction of space for civil society organizations. In fact, what is at stake is the very essence of democracy and freedom".[2]

Existing literature on digital investigative journalism and collaboration

A well-functioning society depends on a free and independent media. It is the lifeline of freedom of expression and democracy (Carlsson, 2017). For decades, journalists have worked on corruption, human rights abuses

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2   https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2017

and corporate exploitation called either global muckraking (Schiffrin, 2014), investigative journalism, or in-depth journalism (Hunter, 2012; Lindholm, 2018; Witschge et al., 2016). Despite different names, all consider the journalist to be a watchdog or a digger with one mission: "to bring accountability to a global scale" (ICIJ Manifesto).

Investigative reporting is increasing, despite the news industry being caught up in "the biggest crisis since the Second World War" (Hunter, 2012, p. 8). This crisis consists of, and is provoked by, the concentration of news media, leading to huge budget cuts that again affect the number of working journalists (Hunter, 2012). The crisis has appeared in almost all OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries. Journalists struggle to adapt to both a new technological era and to fast-changing social, political, and economic circumstances (Sambrook, 2018). The media has lost a great amount of credibility, threatening to undermine the legitimacy of serious in-depth journalism with 'fake news' as a rising phenomenon (Sambrook, 2018). In addition, the crisis in investigative reporting is growing, not only in the OECD countries, but also in countries where media ownership concentration has been the rule rather than the exception for a much longer period (Hunter, 2012). According to Sambrook (2018) collaboration is fundamental for finding a way out of the current crisis.

Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE), the world's largest non-profit investigative journalism association, defines investigative journalism as "systematic, in-depth and original research and reporting, often involving the unearthing of secrets, heavy use of public records and computer assisted reporting, with a focus on social justice and accountability" (Investigative Reporters & Editors, 1983). The idea of working in cross-border networks on investigative journalism is not only about sharing data and information, but also about sharing methods (Hunter 2012). "Methods of conception, research, organization and composition" are all the foundation blocks of investigative journalism (Hunter, 2012, p. 3). According to Sambrook (2018) journalism is normally a competitive and investigative activity seeking exclusivity. When ICIJ got the IRE award for innovation in investigative journalism due to the Panama Papers investigation, the IRE emphasized "the unprecedented collaboration […] making public something that

others would want to keep secret" (ICIJ, 2017). Sambrook (2018) claims that increasing collaboration is driven by several factors: firstly, data leaks require specialist expertise in handling data, which can put an economic strain on news organizations making collaboration more attractive; secondly, accountability journalism should cross borders to meet the globally networked challenges of, for instance, corruption and IFF; and finally, collaboration is needed to address safety and security concerns.

Going back to the ICIJ manifesto, we can understand investigative journalism, both historically and in the digital era, as a tool to deepen our knowledge of how the world works. Who is in power? Who controls war and peace? Who controls the money and the power? Piketty (2015) argues that if we are interested in inequality, global injustice and the future of democracy, we should care about how private persons and companies hide money in tax havens. Reuter (2017) estimates that IFF exceed $1 trillion annually. IFF have five major sources: bribes, tax evasion, criminal enterprise earnings, corporate profit shifting and currency regulating evasion (Reuter 2017: 1). Tax havens and IFF contribute to a dysfunctional world-economy deepening the gap between rich and poor (Tax Justice Network 2016). Some countries are more vulnerable to this than others, especially countries in Latin America and Africa that suffer from hidden fortunes and tax evasion (Alstadsæter et al. 2016). "The rule of law is partly dependent on the support of economic and political elites […] Broader public trust can also be eroded by the revelation of elites moving money out of the country" (Reuter, 2017, p. 2).

Sorting out the power and money structures hidden in the massive leaks requires a system to handle big data. A specific team for data journalism inside the ICIJ was established in 2014 to organize the 2.6 terabytes of information from the Panama Papers leading to thousands of articles around the world on tax havens and IFF (Knightscenter, 2016). This is one example of how collaboration can lead not only to one breaking story, but multiple stories simultaneously. The amount of data can be overwhelming, however, and for this reason books on data journalism are increasingly shared and updated frequently online.

Changes in digital technology combined with an increased dependency on digital communications technology pose a new risk for journalists

and their sources (UNESCO, 2018). Telling stories that want to be hidden can lead to the silencing of journalists. The 2015 press freedom index of Reporters Sans Frontières documents that freedom of expression is declining on all five continents, and that the main reason lies in information wars and increasing attempts to control information, leading to physical and digital threats against journalists. Hunter (2012) also highlights the concentration of ownership of news media as a problem for freedom of the press, leading to censorship if the news questions an owner's political or financial interests.

According to the ICIJ manifesto, the journalist's job is to arm the public with information, to empower citizens to strengthen democratic institutions and democracy itself.

The media and journalists can play an important role in post-conflict processes by promoting participation and dialogue, providing information to civil society, as well as through their watchdog function (Orgeret, 2016). Combining in-depth muckraking and data collection with the capacity to tell *the* story to the public, is what makes investigative journalism powerful. Yet when this has an influence on public debate and touches the "untouchable", it can represent a risk to the journalist.

Methodology

This study is based upon six semi-structured interviews with investigative journalists, editors, academics, and digital security consultants. The names of those interviewees have been anonymized.

The study is also based on an analysis of the manual "Así investigamos (y así nos cuidamos)" ("this is how we investigate (and how we protect ourselves)")[3] for in-depth journalism created by Plaza Pública. The manual explains how Plaza Pública seeks to engage investigative journalism and access data inside Guatemala. The study is also based upon a close reading of the material published by Plaza Pública related to the Panama and Paradise Papers and Lux Leaks, in particular the articles that connect

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3   https://www.plazapublica.com.gt/content/material-formativo

the Guatemalan economic and political elites with tax havens. Additionally, the study refers to published keynotes, presented by relevant actors, to understand both the importance of collaboration in investigative journalism and the political context in Guatemala. The keynotes are from the conference "Making Transparency Possible" organized by Publish What You Pay in Oslo in December 2016 entitled "Against all odds in Guatemala: A corruption case involving the highest political and military levels" by Iván Velásquez, Commissioner of the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala, (CICIG, Spanish acronym), and the panel debate from the same conference, "How to hold a president and a vice-president accountable for corruption charges"[4] with Ivan Velasquez, Professor Mariel Støen (University of Oslo) and Rodrigo Véliz, investigative journalist from Guatemala (Plaza Pública and CMI Guatemala). The study is also based upon a published article by the journalist Véliz, an interview with Iván Velásquez published on InSight Crime (2018, February 1), and the Open Society Foundations report: "Unfinished business: Guatemala's International Commission against Impunity (CICIG)".

Guatemala: Digital investigative journalism

After almost four decades of war in Guatemala, the Truth Commission (1999) documented the killings of 200,000 people, the majority indigenous people from rural areas. During the civil war, the formation of Illegal Bodies and Clandestine Security Apparatuses (CIACS, Spanish acronym), groups of parallel structures composed of (former) military intelligence officers, judges, prosecutors, police officers and other state officers, was revealed (Velásquez, 2016). The CIACS basically took control of Guatemala after the signing of the peace agreement in 1996, with violent results and destructive effects on Guatemalan society and the young democracy (Open Society Foundations, 2015). The CIACS became 'untouchable' both for the justice system and for the media. In 2007, the International U.N. Commission against Impunity in Guatemala started

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4   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VTfoVzIRGjM

working with national authorities to resolve complex cases and investigate and prosecute the 'untouchable figures' in Guatemala (Open Society Foundations, 2015). In 2015, CICIG and the Public Prosecutor's Office, together with the Attorney General and the National Civilian Police, revealed how several politicians in the administration of former President Otto Pérez Molina set up a corrupt customs ring with the help of high ranking officials in the tax and customs administration, a case known as La Línea (Velásquez, 2016). The revelation led to massive demonstrations for 22 weeks throughout Guatemala and culminated in the downfall of President Molina and the government. Velásquez (2016) calls La Línea a watershed in Guatemalan history and underlines three key elements for understanding the events that shook Guatemala in 2015: the work of CICIG, the role of the population and the role of the press.

New digital platforms like Plaza Pública, Nómada and Centro de Medios Independientes (CMI) reported on the case of La Línea on a deeper level than simply the court case. They reported on the historical connections among the power elites in Guatemala, making it possible to reveal to the public how La Línea was merely one example of how power structures persisted in Guatemala since the war. However, there is still some 'unfinished business' in Guatemala (Open Society Foundations, 2015). In August 2017 the current Guatemalan President, Jimmy Morales, ordered the immediate expulsion of the head of the CICIG, Iván Velásquez. This has resulted in a climate of insecurity in Guatemala, making it hard to predict what will happen (Støen, 2018). This unpredictability and uncertainty also affect the work of journalists who, for the last few years, had been able to write about formerly 'untouchable' issues in Guatemala (Anonymous, 2018).

Media ownership concentration and the rise of digital platforms

Media ownership and the absence of public service media exacerbate the problem of a free press in Guatemala (Avila, 2013). As mentioned, the concentration of media ownership is now of great concern in many OECD countries, but in most of the Latin American countries media ownership

concentration has historical roots. Four out of five terrestrial television channels and 90 percent of television audiences in Guatemala are controlled by a single individual, the Mexican born Remigio Ángel González, and four out of five major national newspapers are controlled by two families (Avila, 2013). González not only owns the TV channels 3, 7, 11 and 13, and 25 percent of the radio stations in Guatemala, he also owns the Latin American media network Albavisión, consisting of 45 TV channels and 68 radio stations. In 2016 Interpol issued an international arrest warrant for the registered owner of the Guatemalan TV channels belonging to Albavisión, González's wife, Alba Elvira Lorenza Cardona. Cardona was accused of illegally financing former President Otto Pérez Molina's political campaign in exchange for favoring her companies (Alonso, 09.09.16). Despite historical media ownership concentration, Guatemala has a long history of investigative journalism. The Guatemalan Journalists' Association (Asociación de Periodistas de Guatemala, APG) was founded in 1947, but the civil war, the criminalization of journalists, and corporate control of the media have, together, effectively silenced journalists and editors. A quarter of all adults in Guatemala are unable to read, and although television is increasingly popular, radio is still the only mass medium readily available throughout the country (Avila, 2013, p. 6). No official number of community radio stations exists: some estimate that there could be 240 stations broadcasting in more than twenty-three indigenous languages (Cultural Survival, 2005), while others estimate between 500 and 1000 community radio stations in Guatemala (Skaar, 2010). According to Avila (2013, p. 7) community radio stations offer the best hope of challenging the corporate media in Guatemala.

However, internet use is also rising in Guatemala, leading to the emergence of new digital platforms. Today, 42 percent of the Guatemalan population can access the internet (We are Social, 2018). Facebook is by far the most used social media with 7.2 million users, followed by Twitter and Instagram (ibid.). Since 2002, different initiatives, from television and the printed press to social media journalism and digital platforms, have entered the communication scene (Anonymous 5, 2018). Anonymous 1 (2018) calls the last decade "the golden age for investigative journalism in Guatemala". Crucial for this 'golden age' in Guatemala is the work of

CICIG and the juridical processes starting to tear apart the parallel structures, as well as increased access to technology and the internet, thus creating alternatives to traditional media (Velásquez, 2016; Støen, 2018; Anonymous 1, 2018, Anonymous 2, 2018). "The new media and emerging digital platforms are important, first because they are a sign that the public sphere and freedom of expression have expanded in Guatemala, and second because for that same reason the population has access to better information" (Anonymous 5, 2018). Anonymous 5 (2018) even claims that to some extent, the alternative media have set the tone for the information being presented in Guatemala, and that even the traditional media now present more courageous and diverse analyses compared to what was possible even just ten years ago.

Eroding the muck – the work of Plaza Pública

Plaza Pública (Public Square) was established in 2011 as an autonomous digital platform for in-depth journalism in Guatemala. The site's name and concept was inspired by Jürgen Habermas' idea of the public sphere, where private citizens come together to discuss matters of public relevance. Plaza Pública is hosted by the private Rafael Landívar University, but claims total autonomy from the university in their editorial perspective. Plaza Pública began covering subjects that were invisible or ignored by the national media due to the "injustice committed by previously unmentionable powers in the country" (Plaza Pública, ¿Quiénes somos?).

In October 2018 Plaza Pública published a manual on investigative journalism, or what they call profound journalism. The manual has two purposes: to educate the journalists inside Plaza Pública, and to distribute information to students who want to become journalists. The first part of the manual explains how they work to develop a story, what kind of language they use and the length, thus providing in-depth insights while retaining people's attention. The second part outlines how to investigate and where to look for information. Distinct from online manuals like "Computer-assisted reporting: A practical guide" (2014) or "The data journalism handbook: How journalists can use data to improve the news" (2018), this manual presents detailed information on how you can

work *in* Guatemala. There are lists and explanations with addresses, institutions, people and offices where you can go to obtain information. The core of their work is based upon the methods of the old muckrakers: to ask people in the field who, why, how, where and when, and combine this with digital data and investigation in physical archives.

In 2008, Guatemala approved the law of free access to public information (Ley de Libre Acceso a la Información Publica), yet getting access often remains a matter of security (Anonymous 3, 2018). There are two problems concerning access to data: firstly, not all is made public despite the law; and secondly, you will be registered if you search for data, which can be a risk (ibid.). The information system for private companies in Guatemala is opaque and even looking for small data can take weeks (Anonymous 2, 2018.). The opaque system in Guatemala is partly explained by the parallel structures that for years learned how to protect themselves, creating a system so opaque that it is nearly impossible to access information on ownership of the media and large scale companies (Anonymous 2, 2018, anonymous 4, 2018).

Through their work with the ICIJ, Plaza Pública was able to process data from the Paradise Papers and LuxLeak. Plaza Pública was the only news outlet in Guatemala with access to the data, and for eight months three journalists worked on it full time with the editors. When writing stories based on the leaks, it was important for Plaza Pública not to be tempted by 'dynamite news', explained as the shocking information of the leak itself, but rather to go deeper into the stories by linking national companies to a global network of IFF, and emphasizing the underlying structures (Anonymous 2, 2018). Even though data from the leaks revealed the connection of companies and politicians in Guatemala to tax havens, it was challenging to track down this data and trace the money back to its origin (ibid.). "The leaks give us a hint that can bring us to an international plot with national actors, but you don't know exactly where the leak will take you" (Anonymous 2, 2018). In the case of the Paradise Papers the "hint" brought Plaza Pública to one of the 'untouchable' sectors in Guatemala: the sugar producers (*los azucareros*). "*Los azucareros* had been a 'no-go', something you can't write about because they are part of the 'untouchable' elite. With proof from the leak, together with our

earlier investigations of the companies, we could do solid publications, not only on their connection to tax havens, but also on the power they have in Guatemala" (Anonymous 2, 2018).

Security and safety

In February 2018 two journalists were killed in the department of Suchitepéquez in Guatemala. "The murders […] only further chill the climate of press freedom in Guatemala, where journalists work with constant fear of intimidation and violence" (CPJ, 07.02.18). The assassination of journalists is a phenomenon affecting the rural areas of Guatemala (Støen, 2018). The city of Guatemala appears to be physically safer for journalists (Anonymous 2, 2018). However, digital harassment of a different kind is becoming more common among emerging digital journalists in the cities (Cerigua, 2017; Avila, 2013). Anonymous 4 (2018) explains how digital and physical threats have different motivations. While the former try to disqualify people, censor and steal information, the latter aim to put an end to the work of a journalist by simply taking his or her life. Death threats against journalists are common and Véliz (2017) explains in his article "The coal case of Guatemala" how he experienced death threats after publishing an article that revealed some parallel structures. According to Avila (2013) threats against journalists create a chilling effect due to the general failure to bring perpetrators to justice, and the lack of reliable investigation makes it harder to claim that those deaths are directly connected to journalism. The two journalists killed in Suchitepéquez in February 2018 were doing investigative reporting on corruption, and they were investigating the murder of two journalists from 2015 in the same area. These two journalists are often included in lists of community leaders killed during 2018 in Guatemala, murders characterized by one fact: there are no results from the investigations. Cerigua has tried to put pressure on the on the government to complete the development of the Program to Protect Journalists. However, as of now, the murders remain unpunished and organizations like Reporters Without Borders[5]

5   https://rsf.org/en/guatemala

characterize Guatemala as a country where crimes against journalists are protected with impunity.

Assassinations and direct physical violence against journalists are more serious problems in the rural areas of Guatemala, however digital threats against journalists in urban areas are increasing. Plaza Pública is concerned about this increase in digital attacks, both personally against journalists, but also against the website itself. Anonymous 2 (2018) relates how increasing harassment affects the political climate in Guatemala, and creates insecurity in relation to how the elites might adapt after the case of La Linea. More recently, there has been a growing awareness of what the journalist Luis Assardo calls "digital assassins" or "armies of opinion shapers" (Medium 2018, February 8). The "digital assassins" are described as net centers that routinely and relentlessly harass and intimidate opponents of Guatemala's entrenched elite. The net centers involve people who can manage hundreds of fabricated accounts on social media at the same time. The Intercept (2018, April 7) also explains this phenomenon referring to Assardo's work showing how "digital assassins" have attacked people like the head of the CICIG Iván Velásquez, former Attorney General Thelma Aldana, and several journalists. The "armies of opinion shapers" are a global problem, and according to a report from Freedom House (2017) there are thirty countries where governments were found to employ "armies of opinion shapers" to spread government views, drive particular agendas, and counter government critics on social media. The number is rising and the technology is becoming more sophisticated, with the proliferation of bots, propaganda producers and fake news outlets (Freedom House, 2017). Guatemala has a growing population connected by the internet, and there is increasing concern about how both "digital assassins" and "armies of opinion shapers" can affect the possibility for more open and free debate, which had been developing during the last ten years (Anonymous 5, 2018).

Concluding remarks

Studies on safety and security for journalists reveal an increase in violence against journalists, and at the same time, investigations and reports

like the World Press Freedom Index show us that working conditions for journalists around the world are inequitable (Hanitzcsh, 2017). Hughes and Márquez-Ramírez (2017) in their case study on Mexico underline an awareness of unsafe contexts and overlapping risks for journalists, while Torsner (2017) stresses the need to explore the multidimensional nature of risk. As was stated in the introduction, investigative journalism through cross-border cooperation is increasing, both due to the need to transcend borders just as financial crime transcends borders, but also because digital technology makes it possible to share big data. The work and development of the digital platform Plaza Pública in Guatemala, discussed in this article, offer insights into the potential of these types of platforms, which are in many cases partners in cross-border cooperation on leaks like the Panama and Paradise Papers and Lux Leaks. What experiences from Guatemala can help us understand are the multidimensional and overlapping risks in doing in-depth journalism on financial crimes and corruption. Revealing what those in power want to hide is far more dangerous in countries with greater corruption, and where there is a weaker judicial system. It is therefore important to highlight how investigative journalism in Guatemala has been able to develop due to a judicial system that manages, partially, to put an end to the pattern of impunity for the political and economic elite. Ulla Carlsson (2017) claims that a well-functioning society depends on a free and independent media; however, it is also the other way around. Freedom of speech and freedom of the press also depend on a trustworthy democracy where crimes do not go unpunished. It is likely that the development of cross-border cooperation will continue to increase, because the work is indispensable in order to end illicit financial flows, but it is also important for ensuring that major leaks do not lead to silencing journalists who work in vulnerable situations. Developing safety manuals based upon proper work and experiences, like the one Plaza Pública is working on, can be a step towards not only enabling journalists to do the digging, even in opaque countries like Guatemala, but also helping to secure the work of the journalists. The fact that this manual is written specifically for the context of Guatemala and specifically for the journalists who will continue the work on financial crime and corruption in Guatemala, makes the manual much more

adapted to securing the safety and security of these journalists than generalized manuals aimed at journalists who work on in-depth journalism 'anywhere'. The potential of cross-border cooperation depends upon the work of the journalists who operate inside the borders of countries where corruption is at its worst. However this requires a much greater focus on the working conditions for both the editors and the journalists.

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