

**Collaborative Journalism and Normative  
Journalism:  
Intersections and implications of normative roles in  
the collaborative action of journalists, media  
practitioners and news organisations in Latin  
America**

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## Declaration

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## **Abstract**

Collaborative Journalism and Normative Journalism: Intersections and implications of normative roles in the collaborative action of journalists, media practitioners and news organisations in Latin America

Lucia Mesquita

In this study, I investigated the commitments, norms, characteristics and processes of collaborative journalism, an emergent practice of journalism. Collaborative journalism is a practice in which journalists from different news organisations, universities, nongovernmental organisations and other actors cooperate to conduct a journalistic investigation that would otherwise not be possible. Over the last few years, journalists engaged in collaborative journalism have revealed the violations of various governments, authorities and other powerful people on a global, national and local scale. Notably, the contributions of collaboration to journalism, especially investigative journalism and fact-checking, are evident in its diverse, pluralistic and noncompetitive approach. Regarded as more than just a model of journalism with the participation of other actors, collaborative journalism emerges as a force for the restoration, reform and reparation of the journalistic field in terms of the normative functions, roles and values of journalism within society. This is due to the different contexts in which collaborative journalism develops and evolves, especially in nondemocratic and authoritarian regimes, as well as in regimes within developing democracies, which are frequently found in Latin America. In this sense, I posed the following central research question: Does collaborative journalism contribute to the normative role of journalism in society? To analyse the main forces that shape the establishment of collaborative journalism efforts and their evolution and development, I performed a mixed-methods study focused on empirical evidence of these commitments and values, which are translated into practices and processes in the conduct of collaborative efforts. Specifically, I conducted surveys, interviews and data set research. Then, to interpret the data and answer the central research question, I developed a novel theoretical framework focused on the normative journalism paradigm and comparative media systems. This study contributes to the normative journalism discussion by highlighting why normative journalism commitments, values and norms are relevant for collaborative journalism practitioners. Moreover, this study adapts and adds to comparative media systems theory to more accurately understand and interpret the contextual factors that shape the evolution and development of collaborative journalism. It offers a particular focus on the concentration of media ownership, the levels of state and government intervention and control as well as their effects in media ecosystems in Latin America. This study also adds to the discussion on security and news safety in the region by demonstrating that this factor influences the willingness of journalism practitioners to be involved in collaborative journalism. The theoretical and empirical frameworks provide a unique approach to the examination of collaborative journalism, its characteristics, internal and external factors and dimensions that shape the evolution of collaborative journalism in Latin America. My findings contribute to the growing literature on collaborative journalism for scholars and practitioners through a review of concepts as well as original empirical and theoretical analyses, discussions and evidence of the practice. This study significantly contributes to definitions and critiques of collaborative journalism by demonstrating the need for a new concept of the practice that reflects the commitments and values of practitioners, especially in the context of nondemocratic and authoritarian regimes and countries with developing democracies.



## Chapter 1 – Introduction

### Introduction

This research provides a critical perspective on new forms of journalism, specifically focusing on the emergence of collaborative journalism (CJ). Although the practice of collaboration in journalism is not a novelty per se, over the last two decades, developments in information and communications technologies (ICTs) have raised the status of the practice (Lewis, 2018). On the one hand, the affordances generated by new ICTs are understood by many scholars to be the critical factor that has allowed CJ to flourish as a model or practice of journalism through enabling journalists, organisations and other institutions to collaborate (e.g., Alfter, 2016, 2018; Sambrook, 2018; Stonbely, 2017). On the other hand, the same ICTs have disrupted traditional business models that many media organisations have relied on for decades and challenged the intermediary role of journalism in society.

CJ emerged amidst the transformation of journalism practices. It started to play a crucial role in the profession by allowing practitioners to address the complexities of a globalised society; it enabled essential investigations that have been impactful politically and professionally. Described as a solution to the challenges of a lack of funding and staff in journalism (Alfter, 2016; Sambrook, 2018), CJ aims to supplement each organisation's resources and maximise the impact of journalism (Graves, 2018). Globally, journalists have started to rely on collaborative practices to restore journalism's professional normative values and motivations while producing more investigative stories (Graves and Konieczna, 2015). Additionally, CJ reinforces some central secular values of journalism for society, especially in countries with less developed economies and democracies under authoritarian regimes, such as many Latin American countries. Although Latin America is widely perceived to be within a 'post-neoliberal' phase of policymaking, the disparity of the democratic regimes in these countries makes the region especially interesting to study.

This research focused on the understanding of CJ in the intersection of two forces: (1) the contextual economic, political, social and cultural environment and (2) the ideological framework in which journalism and news are perceived as a public service – a profession with its own norms, values and mission. This study was performed at a time where CJ holds political power to engender social transformation and justice (Mesquita and de-Lima-Santos, 2021; Mesquita and Fernandes, 2021).

Specifically, this study investigated the phenomenon of CJ in various realities and uncovered the commitments, norms, characteristics and processes of the practice in various media systems. The central argument of this study was that, contrary to previous definitions of CJ that have focused solely on the practical sharing ethos among information organisations, normative journalism (NJ), with its norms, values and mission, is an essential and common thread among journalists and news organisations that conduct CJ in Latin America. This study argued that this is especially true among those living in less developed democracies as well as authoritarian and nondemocratic regimes.

This thesis provides a deeper insight into the practice of CJ through a unique data collection and analysis of the practice in Latin America. It contributes to and expands the debate and research of the phenomenon through novel approaches and offers methodological, empirical and theoretical frameworks for examining the practice and new models of journalism in the digital age in various contexts.

## **Collaborative journalism: Concept and definitions**

CJ is a practice and model of journalism in which journalists from different news outlets and other organisations and entities, such as universities, advocacy groups and nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), join forces to investigate a specific issue or topic (Stonbely, 2017; Sambrook, 2018; etc.). Although several scholars have indicated that collaboration has always been a part of journalism, interest in collaborative actions is growing among journalists, media organisations and other social actors. The Internet, society's platformisation (Van Dijck, Poell & De Waal, 2018) and digitisation have elevated the status of collaboration and given it a unique role. CJ has been researched from practical perspectives, focusing on its achievements and industry-led motivations.

In this sense, an extensive body of literature exists on transnational efforts, which have received much attention in recent years (see Sambrook, 2018; Alfter, 2019; Graves and Shabbir, 2019; Heft, 2019). In such studies, the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) is cited as a benchmark for this new form of journalism. Founded in 1997, the ICIJ became known for striking journalistic investigations, such as the Panama Papers and the Pandora Papers. For instance, the ICIJ was mentioned in a report by the Reuters Institute in 2018, which was organised by Richard Sambrook. The report elucidates the main characteristics, inputs and outputs of collaborative efforts, particularly transnational ones. The document conceptualises CJ as an editorial collaboration between media organisations, NGOs (or nonprofit organisations), universities and other professionals, who collectively work on stories that could not be told in another way. The report's goal was to 'discuss the mechanisms' that activate collaborative practices through a series of case studies.

Other studies have focused on the impact of collaborative efforts. For example, two papers published in 2019 assessed the Panama Papers' impact through case studies. The first paper, explored the formation of a new networked public sphere on Twitter created due to the release of the Panama Papers investigation (Heft, 2019). The research method involved the use of social media platforms' application programming interface (API) to understand what happened six months after the release of the Panama Papers in April 2016. The results demonstrated the importance of the 'spreadability' – meaning the ability of reports and news to spread – that cross-border investigations have in terms of public attention (Heft, 2019). The impacts of the ICIJ's investigation were analysed in a fact sheet published by the Reuters Institute in March 2019 (Graves and Shabbir, 2019). The report highlighted the most significant outcomes of the Panama Papers three years after their release in 2016. Graves and Shabbir (2019) based their analysis on secondary research of documents that reported the investigation's results by journalists involved in the ICIJ partnership. The main finding in the report was that a high-profile investigation has a long-term impact, especially in policymaking bodies.

Another essential feature of CJ is the understanding of the practice based and built upon network structures in which information flows and is shared among participants (e.g., Alfter and Căndea, 2019; Heft, 2019). These network structures are '[a] new shared infrastructure for journalism and the variety of cooperative practices and processes developed around the material conditions of news production and dissemination' (Serna, 2018, para.1). These networks are characterised by horizontality, in which all partners are treated as equals and peers; therefore, they all possess knowledge and skills to add and share (Spyridou et al., 2013; Heft, 2019). Moreover, Alfter and Căndea (2019) suggested that journalists in collaborative projects work in a structure that allows them to take advantage of the network while possibly being submitted or submissive to this same structure, especially in global endeavours.

Yet, CJ is not always transnational and global in scope. Two studies have typified the models of arrangements of CJ on a national, regional and local scale. The first study, published in 2017 by the Centre for Cooperative Media, drew attention to a comprehensive matrix of features of CJ. Based on secondary research in the form of an inductive analysis of documents, such as conference presentations, journal papers and interviews with people who were a part of collaboration efforts, the author built a matrix of six models of CJ. The matrix aimed to illustrate the most common elements and characteristics of CJ, such as levels of engagement and duration of the efforts. The report, however, could not identify the level of autonomy for each effort within the partnership, why and how partners establish webs of connection or whether a formal agreement exists among peers.

The second study shed light on other types of collaboration at the local level. Jenkins and Graves (2019) relied on primary and secondary research data from three cases in Europe: the Local Bureau (UK), L'Italia delle slot (Italy) and Lännen Media (Finland). The study comprised 30 interviews with journalists, administrative bodies and other stakeholders involved in CJ projects in these countries as well as analyses of the case studies. The authors found that in local contexts, CJ might exhibit different features and characteristics, such as the involvement of other actors and players outside of the information and news system; moreover, the sharing ethos of collaboration might have different levels of engagement according to specific circumstances. These findings lead one to think about how these circumstances and other contextual elements might be in place and how they may impact CJ motivations, norms, values and practices.

A few studies have focused on these different contexts, specifically in Latin America. These studies have revealed that contextual factors might play a significant role in the decision to collaborate. For example, according to Chacón and Saldaña (2020), security is at the basis of the motives that lead journalists to collaborate in the context of Latin America. The journalism crisis and overall political and economic contexts have made journalistic work dangerous and unstable. Consequently, journalists in the region seek protection when partnering with other organisations.

Furthermore, Mesquita and Fernandes (2021) found that in Latin America's digital journalism ecosystem, CJ emerges as new practices in the profession with strong commitments to the promotion of diversity and plurality as well as with quality journalism. These new practices are also motivated by the lack of coverage from the mainstream and corporate media on issues deemed essential to communities and populations. According to the authors, media organisations in Latin America face political and economic constraints that affect their work:

(...) the local economic and political contexts create further constraints that also disrupt changes in media production. To illustrate this, in the political situation of countries that are living under authoritarian governments, media organizations and journalists need to adapt their norms, routines, and practices through strategies that circumvent the censorship and attacks from their governments. This results in extra care and organization management processes that enable these journalists to cope and gather evidence through collaborative projects. (p.25)

These findings reflect the results of a previous study by Harlow and Salaverría (2016). They found that new players in Latin America demonstrate high levels of attachment to journalism's role and function in society. The authors stated the following: '[T]he most influential native online sites are trying to renew traditional and outdated forms of journalism, serving as alternatives to the mainstream media, even if organisations do not necessarily identify themselves as "alternatives"' (p. 11). In summary, these studies have identified two critical elements for examining CJ, especially in the context of Latin America: the

impacts of political and economic contexts and the commitments of journalists working on collaborative efforts.

However, even though these studies have demonstrated that commitments to field reparation and journalism's normative roles and functions in society are essential for collaborative efforts, they have not placed them at the centre of their discussion nor their definition of CJ. This lack of centrality can be explained by the fact that these studies have been based on previous concepts and definitions of collaboration in journalism, which they have used to highlight experiences in contexts of higher levels of press freedom and more stable economies and democracies; however, they have not considered the need for a reconceptualisation, which emerges from the needs and experiences of CJ practitioners in other contexts.

A sound conceptualisation of CJ that can encapsulate all of this diversity and guide journalists in every possible political and economic context is lacking. Furthermore, in-depth research on the topic is also lacking, such as research on the functional aspects, power relations, financial aspects and processes as well as how they change according to the factors listed above. Even though collaboration in journalism is not new, this model for conducting investigations in a multi-entity approach, characterised as a co-creational effort, is a recent phenomenon institutionalised after the emergence of ICTs, such as the Internet, the digitalisation of processes and society's platformisation.

Moreover, little is known about the possible difficulties faced by the practice in different political and economic contexts – especially less and nondemocratic ones. Here, the following questions arise: How do CJ's characteristics change across different contexts? Has CJ been able to deliver quality reports in different contexts and societies? The majority of relevant studies have been more concerned with the impacts of such efforts rather than the conceptualisation of CJ through a critical understanding of its commitments, norms and values, work processes and practices. Thus, to meet the challenges and fill the gaps in previous research, the present study sought to perform a comprehensive and detailed examination of CJ in different contexts.

## **Research problem**

To investigate the practice of collaborative journalism, in this study, I pose the following questions:

Central research question: *Does collaborative journalism contribute to the normative role of journalism in society?*

Research sub-questions:

- (a) Is it appropriate to include the normative role of journalism within the definition of collaborative journalism?*
- (b) Does this translate into commitments, practices and processes in different contexts, such as in democratic/authoritarian contexts and poorer and less developed nations?*
- (c) Does collaboration differ between large and small organisations and their business and sustainability models? Do these factors differ between democratic/authoritarian contexts and poorer and less developed nations?*

This study makes a theoretical and empirical contribution to answering these questions. The theoretical contribution re-defines collaborative journalism, focusing on journalism's normative roles, functions and boundaries. It asks whether this expanded definition can apply within the media systems of Latin America, given their varying contexts and the influences of contextual and professional factors on

journalism and collaborative journalism practices. In the empirical research, I used a mixed-methods approach, with three different but complementary research methods, through primary and secondary data, along with qualitative and quantitative approaches, as described in the methodology chapter (Chapter 4). The contributions of this study are as follows. First, it offers an expansion and revision of the collaborative journalism definition, which reflects the perceptions, commitments, values, norms, practices and processes of journalists and news practitioners and organisations. Second, it uses the normative journalism (NJ) paradigm to pin down these commitments, norms and values in the framework of professional ideals and performance. Third, it demonstrates empirically and methodologically the need of NJ to collaborative journalism with a unique collection and analysis of data focused on Latin America and various media systems. Finally, it offers a contextual and theoretical analytical tool to contextualise the forces and factors that influence the exercise of journalism and collaborative journalism in Latin America and elsewhere, especially developing democracies and nondemocratic and authoritarian regimes.

## **Research background**

Many factors are intertwined with technological development and other political and economic variables. Thus, journalism, institutional and professional roles, functions and business models are constantly undergoing contestation, revision and transformation. In this context, the rise of populism, the re-emergence of authoritarian regimes and the overall crisis within journalism's traditional business models, as a result of the emergence of Web 2.0, search engines and social media platforms, form the basis of a more significant crisis for journalism and its capability to perform normatively well (see, Singer, 2007; Bell, Anderson and Shirky, 2015; Dijck, Poell and Waal, 2018).

At the same time, journalism has become more important than ever, as revealed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Journalism has been proven essential for people to access information and guidance during the outbreak. In addition, with the re-emergence of nondemocratic and authoritarian regimes, journalism has been a force against their abuses, aiming to denounce and investigate them. For instance, global investigations and fact-checking projects have recently proliferated, with examples emerging from well-established economies and democracies (e.g., Panama Papers, Iran Cables, Microsoft Archives, Pandora Papers, Facebook Leaks and #CoronaVirusFacts/#DatosCoronaVirus Alliance). Other examples emerged from less developed democracies, under-developed economies and authoritarian regimes (e.g., Forbidden Stories, Lava Jato, 889 Pages, Latam Chequea, CrossCheck Nigeria and West Africa Leaks). These notable projects have significantly impacted the news and public debate, influencing policymaking and political outcomes.

All these investigations, as well as many others, share a practice that has been gaining momentum, collaborative journalism. This practice is a model of journalism in which several partners from different professional backgrounds, such as newsrooms, universities and other industries, cooperate towards a journalistic endeavour. This definition is more of a description than a conceptualisation of the practice. Recent studies on this topic have focused on the practical level of CJ, levels of integration, motivations behind collaboration and cross-border investigative journalism (Alfter, 2016; Stonbely, 2017; Sambrook, 2018; Heft, 2019; Chacón and Saldaña, 2020). One contribution of this study is that it expands this definition of collaborative journalism to reflect the needs and experiences of journalists and collaborative journalism practitioners in different contexts. For more details, please refer to Chapter 2.

It is worth highlighting that the same concepts that have helped shape and develop the practice of journalism worldwide have also been contested for their Western-based orientation. In line with the

decolonisation agenda in many scholarly fields, an increasing number of journalism scholars have been attempting to shed light on the different types of journalism practised in other realities, showing that practitioners can have various commitments and practices in these different contexts. These scholarly developments towards recognising the various types of journalism reflect on the contextual elements shaping the profession and the organisational and individual commitments and values (see, Park and Curran, 2000; Mutsvairo *et al.*, 2021).

In this context, collaborative journalism emerges as a form of journalism that embraces and takes advantage of diversity. My argument is that it evolves and develops differently depending on the context and the individual and organisational frames. Thus, the aims of this study are to examine whether the definition of collaborative journalism represents the reality of the practice in various contexts; to examine whether commitments, norms and values are translated into the practices and its processes and characteristics; and to examine how and which contextual factors influence this notion.

### **Justification for the research**

Journalism faces many challenges, ranging from sustainability and financial instability to professional ideals, roles and function contestation, which contribute to a state of constant change. Among these challenges, the development of ICTs that have transformed work and how people connect, as well as the influence and transformation of business models, and the circulation and distribution of news through new intermediaries, mainly search engine and social media big tech companies, are at the bottom of the rapid changes in the news industry. These transformations add to the political and economic contexts, resulting in increasingly precarious working conditions, shrinkage of newsrooms and investigative teams, an increasing number of attacks against media and its practitioners and many other effects that have pushed journalists away and out of journalism and its traditional forms of practice. Collaborative journalism emerges amidst this rather difficult moment to address some of these issues by promoting a safer, less hierarchical and noncompetitive approach to journalism. In summary, the current state of transformation has pushed journalists and news organisations to create new forms of production, sustainability, distribution and circulation, which underlies the necessity to understand the emergence, development and evolution of collaborative journalism as a force of restoration, reform and reparation of journalism.

However, these analyses have been performed mostly from the perspective of the North American and European realities and experiences, which do not necessarily represent the realities of a significant part of the world. Journalists and news organisations outside the liberal democracies of the North face other challenges and limitations that influence how they pursue their professional commitments and practices. Hence, I argue that, similar to any other journalistic practice, collaborative journalism is a product of its time and place, which means that it suffers the influences of both internal and external factors (Traquina, 2005; de-Lima-Santos and Mesquita, 2021a; Mesquita and de-Lima-Santos, 2021).

Regarding the internal and professional factors shaping collaborative journalism, focusing on normative journalism commitments and values, as well as collaborative processes, practices and characteristics, is an essential contribution of this study. The normative journalism paradigm is regarded as journalism's functions, boundaries and roles are discourses from inside to outside as well as vice versa. On the one hand, normative journalism thus has a function that is enacted by practitioners as a set of norms and values that they share; on the other hand, it is also how the profession is perceived by society. However, most recent developments in the industry and in technology have had significant impacts on the practice and perception of journalism as well as its role and capability to deliver it. These two strands are not

necessarily contradictory, and they are complementary since the majority recognise that, even in the most hostile contexts, journalists are committed to some basic and common professional rules and norms (Hanitzsch et al., 2019). Hence, this study was able to underpin these commitments and analyse CJ's evolution and development under the light of journalism norms, values and practices.

Only a few studies have focused on collaborative journalism in the Global South, with very little attention paid to national, regional and local efforts compared to global ones, such as the Panama Papers and Pandora Papers, which are considered the most extensive cross-border and transnational investigations (e.g., Romera and S. Gallego, 2018; Graves and Shabbir, 2019; Heft, 2019; Fitzgibbon and Hudson, 2021). Moreover, little is known about how the political and economic contexts that impact journalism are reflected in the practice of collaborative journalism everywhere, especially in the Global South, in nondemocratic and authoritarian contexts and in less developed and poorer contexts. Scant attention has been paid to the impacts of such practices on the profession and its commitments, roles and societal functions. Political issues such as polarisation and attacks against media and democracy have been at the bottom of the contestation of journalism's power to change, as well as its ideals and capacity to serve as a Fourth Estate – which is defined as the power of the media to monitor and scrutinise the actions and behaviour of powerful people, governments, corporations and institutions (Schultz, 1998).

Because of its historical background and diversity, Latin America brings together the many contextual and internal singularities and similarities found in other regions of the world, making it an excellent place to investigate such differences and their impacts on collaborative journalism. Moreover, Latin America is not a hegemonic block; rather, these countries share many commonalities despite the numerous differences in many aspects. In terms of ethnicity, Latin America is regarded as the most diverse region in the world. It represents approximately 10% of the world's population, and for centuries it was subjected to colonial domination. Most of the countries still maintain a relationship of independence and dependence with their colonisers in many layers of the political, economic and cultural realms. Thus, Western models are still the primary influence in the region, which many understand as a phenomenon of the Americanisation of Latin American society and institutions, particularly journalism (Barbosa, 2007).

In general, three aspects of the Latin American reality support the choice to use the comparative media systems theory (CMS) in the context of this research. First, there are many similarities among the social, cultural, historical and political backgrounds of Latin American countries. Second, media systems reflect on these issues, with a special focus on the press and journalism profession. Third, news media ecosystems impact social structures. Therefore, they may also have some influence on the construction of collaborative journalism in the region. Generally, the CMS theory helps underpin the factors that contribute to the emergence, development and evolution of journalism and offers interpretative tools to understand the collaborative journalism's phenomenon.

In this context, this study focuses on norms and values – the paradigm of journalism – as a form of discussing the social location of journalism and its function for democracy and the citizenry (Hardt, 2002; Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch, 2009). Many scholars argue that journalism assumes the colours of the places and cultures in which it operates (see, e.g., Hallin and Mancini, 2004; Mellado, 2020). Thus, in this study, I present the main factors shaping collaborative journalism from the perspectives of the normative role of journalism. I examine the normative paradigm in terms of its importance and particularities for constructing professional identities and contextualising the environment in which collaborative journalism operates. This discussion also sheds light on the influences of professional roles and values on the commitment of journalists and news media organisations and the intersection of these variables. Finally, I strive to understand the forces that influence and limit the normative role, including the specific economic,

political and media system contexts that are essential to underpin these commitments and practices, underlying collaborative ventures, the organisational and contextual influences and implications for collaborative journalism practices and processes.

## **Methodology**

To address the limitations posed by the digitalisation of spaces in journalism, and because collaboration in journalism is embedded in networked structures permeating technological affordances and hindrances, the methodological framework employs an analysis of the contexts that make collaboration thrive, but also limit it. The methodology involves utilizing primary and secondary data as well as quantitative and qualitative reasoning in a mixed-methods approach. This is the first time that such methodological approach is conducted to examine CJ; thus, it is also a contribution of the present study to the investigation of the practice and journalism in various contexts.

Regarding the quantitative aspect, I used an internet-based survey, following the model of Wolf et al. (2016), who have described surveys as a systematic method of qualitative data collection that allows the researcher to obtain a broader picture of the subject and even interpret it to some extent. I contacted a sample of 487 news organisations in Latin America. The list comprised journalism practitioners, primarily in management, editor and director positions. Based on a Google Form, the survey included 35 questions, covering topics from demographics to safety issues, motivations, benefits and processes, among other aspects. The final sample included 120 participants.

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews represent the qualitative side of this study. Many scholars consider interviews an essential means to understand social issues (Lewis-Beck, Bryman and Liao, 2003; Flick, 2009). I conducted 40 interviews with members of organisations that are responsible for collaborative journalism efforts and projects. I surveyed the interviewees, who were recruited on a voluntary basis, during the quantitative stage of this research. The interviews were conducted between March and May 2021 virtually through Zoom, WhatsApp and/or Google Meet in Spanish and Portuguese. All interviews were based on a semi-structured script whose goal was to organise the conversation and provide a live space for follow-up questions (Ahlin, 2019). All interviews were first recorded with the interviewees' consent, following the guidelines of the Dublin City University (DCU)'s Research Ethics Committee (detailed information in the Appendix), and then transcribed. The data obtained were then analysed using a thematic analysis with the help of NVivo, following the model proposed by Braun and Clarke (2012), which involves systematically analysing qualitative data to distinguish between the different themes and their relationships. In this model, the authors suggest a combination of deductive and inductive analysis.

To provide more contextual elements pertaining to the media ecosystem in Latin America, as well as the financial strategies, sustainability and crisis of traditional business models of journalism in the region, I applied the third methodological stage, desk research with secondary data. Many digital initiatives conducting collaborative journalism in Latin America are very dependent on financial support through grants and funds provided by philanthropic foundations and big tech and social media platforms. Hence, I collected data on the financial support of the two major international foundations that have historically supported journalism in the region: The Open Society and Luminate. I also collected data from two tech and social media platforms that have been increasingly present in the region: (1) Google, through its grant initiative called Google News Initiative (GNI), which is a programme established in 2019 and financed by Google to support journalism through grants focused on the sustainability of news organisations, and (2) Facebook, through its COVID-19 grant support. Then, I performed a secondary data analysis to find



patterns and verify, challenge and refine the primary data analysis and earlier findings. I analysed the secondary data using a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches, following the guidelines of secondary research methods by Kolb (2008).

Finally, the mixed-methods analysis is understood as the best method to integrate, compare and contrast qualitative and quantitative methods (Clark and Ivankova, 2016). I integrated and compared the data and related it to the research questions and theory. I used these methods because they provide a theoretical approach for analysing internal and external contexts and influences in the emergence, development and evolution of a phenomenon. They also provide a picture of the situation in Latin America. In general, combining theoretical and empirical research is recommended because the normative role of journalism must be understood not only from the viewpoint of practitioners, but also as a theoretical body grounded in past journalism studies. Notably, many of the rules and norms that journalists and media practitioners deploy are not always clearly stated, making them difficult to pin down. Therefore, a mixed-methods analysis, alongside a theoretical discussion, offers a complete view of the problem.

### **Empirical findings and contributions**

This study has found that collaborative journalism's definition and concept are primarily focused on the description of the practice, which I argue does not reflect the realities and needs of journalism practitioners in various contexts. It was demonstrated that there is a lack of contextual analysis of the phenomenon, covering economic, political and social aspects that might be shaping the practice. It was also found a gap in the literature on in-depth analysis and empirical evidence of the practice of CJ in various contexts and paradigms, which has contributed to the lack of the reflection of the different realities and circumstances on CJ's definition and concept. However, through the analysis of the literature, I was able to identify and assemble a list of the features of the practice that were later used and expanded in the empirical part of the research. Therefore, this study provides the research with a new set of CJ's features and concept that reflects such findings, inform the research questions and locate the research.

The second major finding was that internal and external factors to the professional have significant influence on commitments, norms, values, practices and processes of CJ's practitioners. This is due to many constraints that the journalism profession faces globally, but also specific circumstances regarding the economic, political and social contexts in which CJ operates. Hence, this study offers a unique theoretical framework to analyse and interpret the emergence, development and evolution of collaborative journalism in various contexts. This study has combined, contrasted and expanded from the normative journalism paradigm and the comparative media systems theory to outline CJ's commitments, norms, types, characteristics and processes in different contexts.

Moreover, this study offers an empirical framework to analyse collaborative journalism practice in various contexts. Through the conduction of qualitative and quantitative analysis of primary and secondary data, this study was able to, first, produce a list of characteristics and features that underpin CJ's practice, commitments, norms, values, processes. The quantitative analysis of the research also provides a profile of CJ's practitioners, the benefits and challenges of the conduction of collaborative endeavours. Second, through a qualitative analysis of interviews, the study provides a typology of CJ that takes into account levels of engagement of practitioners with collaborative practices that were found in the quantitative part of this research. The study was able to identify patterns of dependence of philanthropic financial support to journalism in a model that I call 'the business of supporting journalism'. In this model, philanthropic financial support, grants and funds provided by foundations, big tech and social media companies are

driving political and economically to further expand technification and commercialisation of journalism in Latin America. This is done despite the regional contexts of state interventionism and media ownership concentration.

This study contributes to the expansion of collaborative journalism research in various contexts, to the critics of the phenomenon as well as to journalism studies on the emergence of new models of journalism in the digital era. It also further provides theoretical and empirical frameworks to analyse CJ's commitments, norms, characteristics and processes in these different contexts, especially in underdeveloped economics and nondemocratic and authoritarian regimes.

## **Research outline**

This study is divided into eight chapters. Following this presentation, Chapter 2 describes the primary analyses of collaborative journalism. It also presents a conceptual review of the current literature on the practices, characteristics and processes of collaborative journalism. The chapter starts with an introduction to the elements that may have contributed to the emergence of the practice. Then, it moves on to a discussion of the main characteristics of collaborative journalism found in the literature, as well as the main discussions surrounding the practice. This chapter identifies lacks and gaps in the literature and provides the study with a new concept of collaborative journalism that reflects these findings, informs the research questions and locates the research. The chapter finishes with the research questions posed for this research.

Chapter 3 outlines the main theories that can help shed light on collaborative journalism. Generally, a theoretical framework plays an essential role in research to help make sense of the data collected and to challenge, refine and criticise the empirical analysis. My theoretical framework is based on a discussion of normative journalism and its norms, functions and roles, as well as the boundaries of the professional, institutional and societal expectations. The chapter then reflects on the well-established comparative media systems theory and adapts it to help underpin contextual and systemic factors and to use them as a tool to understand the elements and dimensions shaping the practice of collaborative journalism in Latin America and elsewhere.

This chapter represents a theoretical contribution to understanding the contextual elements shaping collaborative journalism, emphasising the emergence, evolution and development of collaborative journalism in nondemocratic and authoritarian contexts. It also sheds light on specific internal and external elements, such as the normative roles and functions emphasised by practitioners in collaborative efforts and Latin American media ecosystems; these include the monitoring, facilitative, interventionist and informative roles, to name a few.

Moreover, Chapter 3 contributes to the theoretical underpinning of the state of journalism ecosystems and media systems in Latin America, highlighting the specificities of nondemocratic, authoritarian, underdeveloped and poorer contexts by adding and adapting, from the comparative media systems theory, the particularities of a captured liberal media system, which is characterised by media ownership concentration, state intervention and an ongoing state of violence against the media and news practitioners. Chapter 3 does not offer a new approach to these theories. Instead, it develops from them, adapting and adding specific characteristics that I believe are essential to making sense of the research problem, which is to investigate whether the concept of collaborative journalism should reflect the commitments, mission and values of practitioners; whether these commitments are even more important in the context of authoritarian and nondemocratic regimes; and whether normative roles indeed lie at the basis of collaborative journalism practices, characteristics and processes.

Chapter 4 outlines the methods used to answer the research questions. For the empirical research, I adopted a mixed-methods approach, with three different but complementary research methods, with primary and secondary data, along with qualitative and quantitative approaches. The first stage of data collection and analysis was based on surveys, followed by semi-structured, in-depth interviews and desk research. Finally, I used a mixed-methods analysis to combine, compare and contrast the findings.

Chapter 5 features the first phase of the thesis's empirical research. This chapter presents the primary data analysis and discussion. For this first phase, the data collected were based on an electronic survey in which 120 news organisations working in or conducting collaborative journalism in Latin America participated. Chapter 6 is dedicated to presenting the primary data based on semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 40 journalists and news practitioners from 10 countries in the region. Then, Chapter 7 focuses on analysing and discussing the secondary data that I collected on the public records of philanthropic support for journalism in Latin America. These data focused on international foundations and big tech and social media companies in the region. Finally, these three chapters present a mixed-methods analysis of the data collected for this research, discusses what lies beyond the data, relates such data to theory and to the research questions. These chapters outline the main contribution to the empirical investigation of collaborative journalism in various contexts, which reveals the great attachment of practitioners to normative journalism values, functions, roles, norms and performance. Finally, in these chapters, I establish a quantitative and qualitative framework for detecting and analysing collaborative journalism in Latin America and elsewhere.

The last chapter, Chapter 8, is dedicated to highlighting the main findings and contributions of the research; the conclusions drawn regarding each research question; and the implications for theory and practice. The chapter concludes with a description and discussion of the study limitations and offers directions for future research.

## **Definitions**

This study builds upon the definitions of collaborative journalism, normative journalism and media systems and comparative media systems theory as follows.

**Collaborative journalism (CJ)** is a practice that is widely defined as a coordinated editorial effort among journalism professionals, news organisations and other actors, such as universities and NGOs, to deliver investigations that otherwise would not be possible (Alfter, 2016; Stonbely, 2017; Sambrook, 2018). This definition considers the significant amount of information available in the current datafied and networked society, as well as the issues that news organisations have been facing to access enough personal skills and technologies to conduct needed investigations. Further discussion can be found in the literature review (refer to Chapter 2).

**Normative journalism (NJ)** is a professional concept that encompass the norms and values of the journalism profession (Benson, 2008; Mellado, 2020). These norms and values are understood as the profession's ideologies and practices that can change according to internal and external conditions but mostly follow patterns of professionals' commitments and behaviours. Further analysis can be found in the theoretical framework (refer to Chapter 3).

**Media systems and comparative media systems (CMS) theory** According to Hallin and Mancini (2004), comparative media systems focus on the relationship between media systems and political systems. The comparative analysis gives to analysis a unique view of social investigations, shedding light on

patterns, similarities and differences. Media systems are understood as the structures of the media industry, most mass media in their national scopes (McQuail, 2005). These structures include the various media and organisations that operate in a particular environment that has been influenced and limited not only by external and internal forces since the introduction of new technologies, but also by policymaking, regulatory laws and political and economic contexts (Hallin, 2020; Mancini, 2020). On the other hand, CMS can be understood as a conceptual tool that organises the analysis of media systems. Comparative analysis offers the advantage of avoiding generalisations and the oversimplification of media systems. More information can be found in Chapter 3.

### **Delimitations of scope and key assumptions**

The decision to choose Latin America as a place to study the phenomenon is both a delimitation and a limitation of the research. The region is marked by historical, economic and political factors that offer both singularities and similarities with many other regions of the world, but mainly those in the Global South. The Global South is a territory that is far from a unified block. It offers many elements that can be used as parameters to analyse the struggles of journalists and news organisations under nondemocratic and authoritarian regimes and in democracies that are still under development, such as in many countries in Latin America. Thus, the space delimitation of the study also poses some limitations to the research.

Among the limitations for performing this study is the inequality in access to the internet and technology in many of the countries in Latin America. In Cuba, for example, access to the internet is expensive and highly controlled by the state. In Nicaragua, journalists and news organisations face escalated governmental restrictions on the freedom of the press and speech. Similarly, although Brazil is home to one of the most significant online populations in the region (Statista Research Department, 2022), internet penetration in Brazil is still unequal, with some regions having less access than other more centralised regions (de-Lima-Santos et al., 2022). Thus, this technological limitation affected the research, and many journalists and news organisations outside the significant urban areas of such countries are superficially represented in this study.

Another limitation of this research is language. I focused my research on Spanish and Portuguese communities, leaving out other regions that speak French, for example. Moreover, translating into English can affect the meaning and interpretation of discourses and narratives. When essential, I strived to be faithful to the original intentions, especially in the names of organisations and concepts. I used the original words and translations in parentheses. However, it is important to highlight that some misinterpretation may have occurred because of cultural and language barriers.

Finally, a limitation stemming from the use of well-established theories, such as normative journalism and comparative media systems (refer to Chapter 3), to understand collaborative journalism is that the many analytical frameworks that authors have offered for analysing media commitments, norms, values and systems do not distinguish between legacy and mainstream media and alternative media. This is why they focused their analyses on the structures of mass media. Therefore, I attempted to add dissonant voices by reflecting on the role of alternative and independent media to differentiate, compare and complement the views and assumptions presented by the authors.

## Conclusion

Collaborative journalism is a widespread practice in Latin American media systems, involving organisations of all sizes and types, but predominantly medium, small, nonprofit and independent news organisations. These organisations and practitioners' conducting collaborative efforts are particularly affected by the contexts in which they operate. These contexts range from internal to external elements that influence, limit and enable the practice in the region. The internal factors are analysed in light of these organisations and practitioners' normative journalism commitments and values. The external considers the many contextual factors that influence the development of the practice in the region under the framework of comparative media systems.

Throughout this research, I demonstrate the significant commitment that collaborative journalism practitioners have to the normative values and mission of journalism, such as plurality and diversity, as well as the social functions of the profession in society, such as the monitoring, informative and facilitative roles, and the vigorous defence of democracy and representativity.

It is important to highlight that the normative role of collaborative journalism is especially significant in nondemocratic and authoritarian contexts through the promotion of safe spaces for investigations and decentralised *modus operandi*. Moreover, the construction of alternative and representative narratives, which is the focus of the many news organisations in the region, offers a counter-power tool to reinforce, restore and reform the traditional, mass and mainstream media industry in these countries. Thus, collaborative journalism in Latin America has been helpful in underpinning normative journalism in the professional practice in the region, since the restoration and reform of journalism are essential components of the practice.

I further analysed the environment in which journalism and CJ operate under the theoretical framework of comparative media systems, which shed light on the elements, factors and dimensions that shape journalism in Latin America. This offers a clear vision of the environment in which collaborative journalism develops and evolves in the region.

Latin American media systems are characterised by capture, and they exhibit low levels of mass journalism circulation and journalistic professionalism. Furthermore, despite attempts to understand Latin America not as a hegemonic block, the main characteristics of the region's media systems remain unchanged: media ownership concentration and state intervention. Therefore, to overcome these factors, CJ stands out among the traditionally and commercially driven professional standards and moves towards an inclusive, open-source, diverse and cooperative *modus operandi*.

In summary, this research demonstrates how, why and who is participating in collaborative journalism efforts in Latin America. It offers an investigation of the types of collaboration and association, processes involved in such endeavours, as well as their commitments, values, benefits and challenges; their main characteristics; and how and whether they are different from the practices in other contexts, especially in nondemocratic and authoritarian regimes and in poorer contexts.

## Chapter 2 – Literature Review

### Introduction

In recent years, scholars and practitioners have become increasingly interested in CJ. Collaboration has always been part of journalism (Lewis, 2018; Stonbely, 2017), but it has reached a new level due to the emergence of new ICTs and their many effects on journalism's practices, production, distribution and business models. The development of ICTs is also at the basis of the rise of a networked society (e.g., Alfter and Căndea, 2019), which is considered one of the main factors to have contributed to the emergence of collaborative and participatory practices in journalism.

Collaboration is regarded as the ability of organisations or individuals to share resources, practices, information and rules, among other things, to the benefit of all members of a group (Thomson, Perry and Miller, 2009). The collaboration principle has been understood as a differential of CJ practice in relation to other forms of participation and collaboration in journalism. Different theories exist in the literature regarding CJ as a cooperative practice between news organisations and other organisations from the information ecosystem; for example, Stonbely (2017) stated the following: 'Collaborative journalism is 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' (p. 14). Stonbely's definition centres on the collaboration among peers as the main thread of the CJ model of production. In the same vein, Alfter (2018) emphasised peer-to-peer production, but on a transnational scope, as follows:

(1) Journalists from different countries, who (2) cooperate on a shared theme or story, they (3) compile, mutually cross-check and ultimately merge their findings to (4) individually fact-check and publish these findings adjusted to their national, local or otherwise specialised target groups (p. 41)

Sambrook (2018) added the coordination of topics and investigation among CJ practitioners to the definition. According to him, the efforts of CJ 'focus on delivering an editorial value and opened up stories and issues which might otherwise have gone unreported' (p. 26). Alfter (2016) also pointed to the emergence of the editorial coordination role among CJ practitioners' efforts and projects. This new role points to what many studies have described as the new model of collaboration, which is based on the idea that CJ differs substantially from any other type of cooperation performed in journalism before the technological revolution (Alfter, 2016; 2018; Stonbely, 2017; Sambrook, 2018; Serna, 2018), which Stonbely (2017) referred to as a shift from a partnership tactic for accessing specific resources to a more interactive, long-term and focused endeavour.

The editorial role of collaborative efforts has been identified by previous research in two main models. The first model is the formation of a third-party entity that serves collaborative networks as a mediator for problem-solving, logistics and coordination (Alfter, 2018). Graves and Konieczna (2015) described this third-party organisation as a 'host organisation' behind the participants of a collaborative effort, which gives the collaborative enterprise meaning. On the other hand, the editorial role is focused on the function itself rather than on the establishment of a new entity, which is more aligned with the traditional editor role through specific functions of guiding and orienting news organisations and journalists within the collaborative network (Mendoza and Rojas, 2020). Porter (2021) argued that the editorial coordination in collaborative efforts is a role for the person or team responsible for overseeing a collaborative project. Research has found that the lack of editorial coordination is one of the main challenges of collaboration efforts (e.g., Mesquita and de-Lima-Santos, 2021; Palomo and Sedano, 2021). Nevertheless, the objective

of the role of editorial coordination is to merge traditional ‘good’ journalistic practices with the viewpoints of several other professionals worldwide (Alfter, 2018).

As argued before, CJ creates network structures of journalists and other professionals in which information flows and is shared among participants (e.g., Alfter and Căndeia, 2019; Heft, 2019). In these structures, the flow of information is based on relationships built in these spaces nonhierarchically. Furthermore, according to Smyrniaios et al. (2019), no top-down decision on the division of work in collaborative efforts means that journalists must trust each other to work together, which means a lack of rules and the constant adaptation of work methods, while decisions are reached by consensus throughout projects. However, as the authors highlighted, a consensus is difficult to reach. Moreover, as suggested by Alfter and Căndeia (2019), journalists in collaborative projects work in a structure that allows them to take advantage of the network while possibly being submitted or submissive to that structure.

In this sense, technology plays an essential role in the capability of journalists and news organisations to form networks in the first place. According to Alfter (2016; 2018) and Coronel (2016; 2018), the use of technology to secure sources and partners in a horizontal decision-making process allows partners to work in an environment that is genuinely collaborative. Peer-to-peer technologies have a principle of collaboration, which allows an increasing perception that people are living under a ‘convergence culture-based participatory’ or ‘co-creation’ news ecosystem (Deuze, 2008). However, research has also established that CJ is not always a peer-to-peer model of production. In many instances, it involves various organisations, which do not need to be journalistic entities and include civil society organisations, start-ups and academic institutions (Jenkins and Graves, 2019). According to Jenkins and Graves (2019), CJ at the local and regional level often counts with the participation of other actors and players who are not necessarily journalism professionals.

In summary, a considerable volume of published studies describes the role of collaboration in journalism, focusing on the analysis of practices that are essential for pinning down the phenomenon’s features and characteristics as well as factors that led to the emergence of CJ. The literature has been consistent in providing a general understanding of CJ as a journalism practice and a consequence of journalism’s transformations due to the development of ICTs, rise of the networked society and digitalisation of the media. However, only a relatively small body of literature is concerned with motivations, commitments and how they might change according to different circumstances. Little is known about the influences and relations of organisational, economic, political and media system contexts in the practice and commitments of CJ practitioners.

In this context, the present literature review informs the understanding of CJ, definitions, typification and characteristics. This chapter also identifies the main elements of collaborative practices, such as the focus on peer-to-peer production and the editorial endeavour, technology’s affordances for collaboration, the scope of collaborations (national, local and international), the topics of journalistic coverage, the introduction of new actors and players in the media market and the different levels of co-creation, shared content and skills. This chapter also outlines gaps and the lack of centrality of commitments and motives for collaboration in journalism in previous definitions. These gaps also point to the lack of contextualisation in previous discussions of CJ, especially considering various factors such as political, economic and media systems, which might contribute to different forms of conducting CJ in various contexts and environments. These gaps are informed by the small number of studies that have examined CJ in these contexts (e.g., Requejo-Alemán and Lugo-Ocando, 2014; Chacón and Saldaña, 2020).

In addition, the understanding of the CJ concept and definitions in previous studies added significant knowledge about the main factors that have contributed to the emergence of CJ and how they have contributed to shaping CJ's evolution. This background is focused on the introduction of ICTs in newsrooms and journalism, the consequences of the technological revolution, the crisis of journalism's traditional business models and the internationalisation and globalisation of economic and political affairs. I argue that constituent parts of the development and evolution of CJ practices, processes and characteristics intersect and intertwine with elements found in this background.

This chapter outlines the identified features to analyse and discuss CJ in different contexts. These features are (1) network structures; (2) the rise of co-creation practices and spaces; (3) the emergence and focus on horizontal processes, especially the decision-making process; and (4) editorial coordination, which is one of the distinctive features of CJ compared with other forms of participatory journalism. This is a unique assembly of practices and represents a contribution of this study to research on CJ. This chapter also presents a new definition of CJ that informs the research question and situates the study. The chapter concludes with a summary of the main concepts in the literature and a presentation of the research questions.

In summary, this literature review was conducted to highlight the main concepts, definitions, practices and processes that feature in the scholarly literature on CJ as well as the main factors that have contributed to CJ's emergence in the news ecosystem. It also enabled a discussion of the practice of CJ in various contexts, which was one of the main goals of the present study. Thus, I conducted a conceptual review of discourses and narratives regarding CJ and collaboration in journalism, following the approach suggested by Thomas and Hodges (2010). Searches were performed using the term 'collaborative journalism' in two research databases, namely Scopus and Scielo. The review drew on a selection of studies on the concepts, definitions, practices, characteristics and commitments of CJ to form an understanding of the practice, which is described next.

## **Methods and procedures**

This chapter aims to locate and synthesise research on collaborative journalism through a conceptual literature review. Thomas and Hodges (2010) state that a conceptual or narrative literature review provides an overview of the subject in order to offer structure and organisation to a study's analysis and discussion. A conceptual literature review demonstrates the strengths and the weaknesses of previous studies, highlighting gaps as well as clarifying the main topics and concepts under study. The present review focuses on narratives surrounding collaborative journalism; thus, the conceptual method of selecting and excluding literature was considered a better fit for the study than a systematic literature review. I have chosen the conceptual approach because, as suggested by Salkind (2010), a conceptual review is organised around the set of topics most often discussed in the literature. Thus, using this approach, I was able to identify factors contributing to the emergence of collaborative journalism, the intersection of CJ practices with other participatory practices, internal factors in the profession that might explain the motives and circumstances behind the collaboration, and the shift from more global collaborations, such as The Panama Papers and other outstanding investigations, to an everyday practice that is characterised by specific norms and commitments.

A conceptual literature review is appropriate to the objectives of this study because of the novelty of collaborative journalism and the current scarcity of relevant literature. The focus of a conceptual literature review is on the interpretation and presentation of topics of analysis; hence, this literature review is exploratory (Salkind, 2010). This choice is also because collaborative journalism is a form of journalism



of the new era (Carlson and Lewis, 2015; de la Serna, 2018) that is marked by the evolution of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and the rise of the network society (Alfter and Căndea, 2019). Journalism currently faces significant challenges, such as the crises of traditional business models and trust in the news (e.g., Stonbely, 2017; Toff *et al.*, 2021). Within this context, collaborative journalism has emerged as a form of journalism that takes advantage of ICTs to build a new form of journalism that is not competitive and is instead based on an ethos of sharing and cooperation. Also, studies and research covering collaborative journalism started to emerge recently; however, as I argue, this literature is scarce and lack contextualisation, clear definitions and problematisation of the phenomenon of collaborative journalism in different contexts.

### **Concept, definitions and previous methods applied**

One of the first attempts to classify, define and typify CJ was a report published by The Centre for Cooperative Media (Stonbely, 2017). This report on CJ models drew attention to a comprehensive matrix of features of this expanding model. Based on secondary research in the form of an inductive analysis of documents, such as conference presentations, journal papers and interviews with people involved in collaboration efforts, the author built a matrix of six models of CJ. The list incorporated the “level of integration,” “duration,” and “level of commitment,” aiming to demonstrate the primary forms that CJ takes and the costs and benefits related to each of the models. The matrix was based on an analysis of 44 predominantly North American collaborative projects. According to Stonbely, ‘[t]he matrix of collaborative journalism models in this report has the advantage of clarifying the most common elements of collaborative arrangements’ (p. 15). In the report, Stonbely arranged the ‘level of commitment’ based on an analysis of how journalists and diverse actors produce. She explained that if the members created each piece separately and only shared a common database or the capability to spread and circulate the news, the level of commitment would be lower than in a collaboration that organises members as a larger newsroom, sharing methods and operation, skills and resources. The report, however, was unable to identify the level of autonomy for each effort within the partnership, why and how partners establish webs of connection or whether there is a formal agreement.

Transnational efforts and the organisations that conducting them have received much research attention. The ICIJ and its most well-known investigation, namely the Panama Papers, has been cited as one of the first organisations created with this approach to CJ as a new form or arrangement of journalistic work in mind (e.g., Sambrook, 2018; Stonbely, 2017). Founded in 1997, the ICIJ is known for its prominence in many of the most striking journalistic investigations of recent years, and it is used as a reference in many articles on the subject. One of these articles was the report coordinated by Sambrook and published by the Reuters Institute in 2018. The report brought together many authors from the field to discuss the main characteristics, inputs and outputs of collaborative efforts, aiming mostly at transnational efforts. First, a conceptualisation of what CJ is runs throughout the document: CJ is first and foremost an editorial collaboration between media organisations, NGOs (or nonprofit organisations), universities and other professionals, who collectively work on stories that could not be told in another way. Second, the goal of the report was to ‘discuss the mechanisms’ of CJ through a series of case studies, and the ICIJ was one of the most cited examples of a successful organisation. Crucially, the ICIJ has inspired, supported and shared methodologies with several similar organisations, such as Connectas – Journalistic Platform for the Americas (Colombia), IDL-Reporteros (Peru) and Centre of Investigative Journalism – CPI (Puerto Rico).

Another critical aspect of CJ emphasised by some studies is the extensive use of technology. According to Alfter (2018), news organisations and outlets take advantage of new technologies’ affordances

to build collaborative networks. In the same vein, Sheila Coronel (cited in Nakhlawi, 2018) offered another conceptualisation of collaborative investigative journalism that also highlights the role of technology:

First, it's network journalism; it's flat, horizontal, not vertical. The second difference is that it's collaborative; it's not competitive. Thirdly, it's truly global. There were foreign correspondents but nothing like true cross-border global journalism. And, fourth, the use of technology for secure communication and sharing massive amounts of data. (para. 22)

In a previous study, Coronel (2016) had already identified the role of technology in CJ. She stated that the logic of CJ is networked and horizontal, and it is a form of production dependent on technology. The author also related the emergence of CJ to the current necessities of journalism in response to the crisis of the media market – a crisis that requires the creation of new forms of organisation and production to continue promoting quality journalism. As Coronel argued, CJ is noncompetitive – it favours modes of production, distribution and circulation that are co-creative, interactive and integrated (Coronel, 2016). Coronel's definition might appear comprehensive, but it does not consider many of the arrangements seen in practice, such as local and national collaborative efforts (Jenkins and Graves, 2019; de-Lima-Santos and Mesquita, 2021a). Moreover, the centrality of technology to CJ's concept is problematic. Coronel (2016) did not discuss the dependence that CJ efforts can develop. Nevertheless, according to her, two reasons explain why technology is essential for the collaborative practice of journalism, namely security and data sharing.

Security, according to Chacón and Saldaña (2020), is also the basis for the motives that have led journalists to collaborate in the context of Latin America. According to their study, the journalism crisis and overall political and economic contexts have made journalistic work dangerous and unstable. Consequently, journalists in the region seek protection when partnering with other organisations. Moreover, the authors provided one of the few studies to have explored the practices of CJ in Latin America. Chacón and Saldaña (2020) surveyed journalism students and educators from 20 Latin American countries who attended courses given by the Knight Centre (2015–2017) to assess the motivations, challenges and use of technology in collaboration networks. Their analysis illustrated that collaborative investigative journalism in the region is still very scarce, that technology plays a significant role in collaboration and that journalists in the region collaborate on investigations because they feel safer in collaborative networks. Thus, the authors found that one of the greatest motivations for journalists to collaborate is the safety that such networks provide. According to the authors, to bypass government censorship and strengthen security measures, collaborative journalistic investigations have become increasingly common in countries such as Venezuela and Cuba. They stated the following: 'Respondents also mentioned "threats to democracy" and "censorship" as motivations to collaborate because the more news outlets were involved in a project, the more they could "disseminate the truth". Journalists in this group used words such as protection and safety very often' (p. 13). The ongoing state of violence, increasing attacks against the media and journalists and the overall state of impunity have significantly impacted journalism in the region, as discussed further in this chapter as well as Chapter 3.

Data, information and sources sharing is part of another crucial feature of CJ's definitions, namely the creation of shared spaces of work. Many collaborating organisations build entire digital spaces in which they work, produce, publish, distribute and circulate their stories, analogous to a planetary newsroom in which authorship is blurred in favour of the public interest rather than individual reputation (Stonbely, 2017; Mesquita and de-Lima-Santos, 2021). The sharing ethos has been identified in most research on CJ, and thus, it is a critical element of analysis.

There are many levels of sharing in CJ efforts. According to Jenkins and Graves (2019), news organisations in local collaborative endeavours tend to share content and write their pieces together. This is an interesting finding that corroborates the idea that the sharing ethos of CJ might have different meanings, objectives and levels of engagement. The authors relied on primary and secondary research data from three cases in Europe: the Local Bureau (UK), L'Italia delle slot (Italy) and Lännen Media (Finland). Their study comprised 30 interviews with journalists, administrative bodies and other stakeholders involved in CJ projects in these countries, and they performed analyses of those case studies. The authors inferred the following three types of CJ at the local level:

(1) a permanent network of journalists and nonjournalists involved in topic-oriented reporting projects (Local Bureau); (2) traditional news organisations and other startups working together on a single extended investigation (L'Italia Delle Slot); and (3) regional news organisations that share content through collaborative writing (Lännen Media). (p. 5)

Thus, Jenkins and Graves' (2019) definition of CJ brings several essential elements to the fore: first, CJ can be local and regional; second, projects are topic-oriented, and the topics of coverage are a critical element of analysis; third, the increasing participation of news start-ups suggests that these organisations play an essential role in journalism, especially through collaboration; and fourth, collaborative writing involves professionals who work at a deep level to produce shared content. Although the study's findings were focused solely on practices rather than motives, they offered critical elements of analysis.

The introduction of new actors and players to media ecosystems was also the object of analysis in another study, which found increasing participation of these new actors in media ecosystems. Requejo-Alemán and Lugo-Ocando (2014) investigated the characteristics of emergent outlets and news start-ups in Latin America using a model of analysis known as CANVAS, which is a tool for analysing business models' structures and innovation. The model considers the value created, captured and distributed by these organisations. The authors discovered three main characteristics of these independent organisations participating in the media ecosystems: (1) they are mainly digital projects; (2) they are supported by an international cooperation system; and (3) they are small organisations often led by veteran journalists. They found that the organisations studied could not perform their activities outside of the online environment. Many of these organisations collaborate with mainstream media organisations to amplify their ability to reach audiences. Furthermore, they often experiment with techniques and formats to attract audiences, and they tend to have a strong connection with their audiences and communities. They value social media presence, through which they can record increases in the traffic to their articles and websites. Finally, although these organisations have diversified their business models, the majority are still highly dependent on international donations, grants and/or international cooperation systems. Requejo-Alemán and Lugo-Ocando (2014) thus contributed crucial elements for the analysis of the profile of organisations participating in collaborative efforts, such as the experience of the journalists involved in projects, the organisations' relationships with legacy and mainstream media, their connection with audiences and their dependence on international financial support.

On the one hand, because organisations that are innovating and using CJ to pursue journalistic objectives are small, independent and new to the business, they face significant challenges. The most critical of these challenges concerns finances. As Requejo-Alemán and Lugo-Ocando (2014) suggested, most of these organisations rely on international funding to survive. On the other hand, commitments to journalism's reparation and role in society play a crucial role for news start-ups and independent and alternative media outlets in the Latin American media market (Harlow and Salaverría, 2016). According to

Harlow and Salaverría (2016), new players demonstrate high levels of attachment to journalism's role and function in society: '[T]he most influential native online sites are trying to renew traditional and outdated forms of journalism, serving as alternatives to the mainstream media, even if organisations do not necessarily identify themselves as "alternatives"' (p. 11). In summary, these studies have identified two critical elements for examining CJ, especially in the context of Latin America, namely sustainability and the commitments of journalists working on collaborative efforts.

However, although these studies have demonstrated that commitments to field reparation and journalism's normative roles and functions in society are essential for the analysis of collaborative efforts, they have not placed them at the centre of their discussion nor their definition of collaborative journalism. This lack of centrality can be explained by these studies being based on previous concepts and definitions of collaboration in journalism, which are used to highlight the experiences in different contexts without considering the need for a reconceptualisation that emerges from the needs and experiences of CJ practitioners' various contexts. I argue, however, that these studies have helped to pin down the elements that are specific to different contexts, and therefore, they were essential for the present study.

As suggested by Alfter and Cândia (2019), collaboration in journalism evolved when Western journalistic patterns became more widespread after the collapse of the Soviet Union; a more standardised landscape may have contributed to the emergence of this practice. However, they failed to characterise the impacts of a more standardised journalistic practice in these contexts or others. There has been an overall failure to examine the impact of internal and external elements on collaborative investigations, the culture of collaboration, risks to journalists and entities involved in investigations and the influences of the media market in the context of the Global South. Thus, I argue that an understanding of these elements and how they influence CJ practice is required; consequently, an understanding is also required of the impacts of these factors on the conceptualisation of the practice. The contextualisation and concept reflection of collaborative practitioners in different contexts is required not just for practitioners themselves to improve their practice but also for journalism studies to confirm, compare and contrast the experiences of journalism practised in different contexts.

I contend that commitments and motives are essential to journalism, especially given the increasing participation of new and more social actors in the media ecosystem, particularly in the context of less developed economies such as those of Latin America. According to a Sembramedia report (Warner *et al.*, 2017), many journalistic investigations in Latin America are completed by nonprofit organisations supported by international foundations, grants and scholarships; besides international philanthropic support, many organisations rely on governmental subsidies (Fernandes, 2019), making them even more susceptible to local political fluctuations. This context can have significant impacts on the commitments of news organisations and their ability to keep working.

In addition, the specific contexts of the region might have different influences on the development of CJ. The practice's novelty raises the question of whether the concept envisioned by the current literature, which is relatively scarce, offers a sufficient understanding of the CJ phenomenon, especially considering different contexts and political, economic and media ecosystems. Moreover, CJ has started to spread worldwide, and little is known about its practice, processes, norms and mission and how as well as whether they change in these other parts of the world. For example, the primary investigative journalistic projects conducted in Latin America are collaborative, such as the Latin American chapter of the Pandora Papers (Medina, 2021), *Vaza Jato*, 889 Pages, and Lavajato (Stearns, 2015; Mesquita and de-Lima-Santos, 2021; Mesquita and Fernandes, 2021). However, little is known about what it means to collaborate for those in

the region, how they translate commitments into practices and processes, why they are collaborating and with whom and which factors influence these motives and practices.

To more accurately contextualise some of these questions, identify the characteristics of CJ and ultimately understand it in different contexts, it is crucial to examine the factors that have shaped this practice and the motives behind its emergence. To this end, I contend that understanding the emergence of CJ and the role of the evolution of ICTs in the practice is essential for drawing a complete view of the phenomenon.

### **The development of ICTs and the ‘new’ collaborative journalism**

Further examining the influences of ICT’s affordances and hindrances to journalism and collaborative journalism presented in the introduction section, I outline here some of the factors and elements that have contributed to the emergence of CJ. In this sense, scholars have examined many factors that have contributed to the rise of models of collaboration and participation in the news industry (see, e.g., Hermida, 2011; Singer *et al.*, 2011; Van Der Haak, Parks and Castells, 2012). One of the common factors is the evolution of ICTs, especially the Internet, social media and digitisation. The development of ICTs contributes to four main reasons for the emergence of collaborative journalism: journalism’s traditional business models crisis, disruption of the intermediary function of journalism, the increasing search for convergence and innovation, and the increment of participation of nonprofessionals and audiences in the production of the news.

First, as a consequence of the development of ICTs, factors internal to the news industry, such as the high costs of investigative journalism, the shrinkage of newsrooms, lack of institutional support from media organisations and increasingly precarious work conditions (Silva *et al.*, 2020) have contributed to the spread of cooperative efforts in journalism. Though investigative journalism teams across many countries have vanished or shrunken, investigative journalism remains important. Carson and Farhall (2018) argue that collaboration has established a cooperative environment essential to keeping investigative journalism afloat. However, the authors note a reduction in journalists’ stories due to single-topic collaborations in which journalists dedicate all their time to one single story.

New technologies have undermined the media business and its role as the fourth estate. The traditional business model based on the advertisement, circulation and direct sales could not survive the digitalisation and platformisation of society (Dijck, Poell and Waal, 2018). As a result, journalism has suffered a significant loss of reputation and credibility worldwide. Since many organisations have realised that traditional models are not sustainable and new intermediaries – defined as companies that take the role of mediating the users’ access with a wide range of other agents (Nielsen and Ganter, 2018)– are constantly undermining news media’s monetising strategies, there is a need to seek innovation (Evens, Raats and Rimscha, 2017). In a sense, news media organisations have become labs for experimentation and innovation (Requejo-Alemán and Lugo-Ocando, 2014). These formats have brought an extensive range of new storytelling techniques to newsrooms. News media organisations realise that they must develop content in different formats, ranging from video to data journalism, to engage the public that is more and more participating and influencing news productions.

These participatory models of journalism are also a consequence of another factor associated with the emergence of ICTs in the news industry: the introduction of news actors in the media ecosystem, such as social actors, NGOs, advocacy organisations, civil society organisations, audiences, among others

(Featherstone, 2009; Powers, 2015). For the sake of clarity, I have divided these external agents into two categories: social actors and new players. Social actors include social movements, activists and advocacy groups that take advantage of ubiquitous media to participate in and influence news production (Featherstone, 2009). New players include NGOs, start-ups and other institutions that have access to information that journalists and news organisations once had a monopoly over, thereby changing the communication flow (Powers, 2015). These new players act as journalists to cover local issues that would otherwise go unnoticed. They represent a force in the industry's evolution and innovation, and they attempt to re-establish, restore and reform journalism's function in society through social change and transformation (see Boczkowski, 2005; de-Lima-Santos and Mesquita, 2021b).

Also, I argue that this participatory culture is key to understanding collaborative journalism as a practice emerging from the technological revolution and the increasing complexity of a networked and globalised society. Some authors have relied on the idea that collaborative journalism is a new model of journalism production for the new era because it is substantially different from other types of collaboration and participatory forms of journalism performed before the technological revolution. For example, Carson and Farhall (2018) explain that in the old model, news media organisations strengthened the power of their investigations solely through shared resources. In contrast, the new collaboration model is characterised by a deep sentiment of cooperation, sharing and noncompetition.

Furthermore, the old model of collaboration is marked by limited sharing of resources. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, media outlets shared news or information to overcome their lack of access to on the ground information, requiring news outlets and journalists to rely on nonjournalistic sources such as diplomats and even tourists (Williams, 2011). In part, this lack of access to information on the ground is because the costs associated with maintaining human resources in different parts of the world have led many media outlets to replace people with international news agencies (Lewis, 2018). In this scenario, alliances among journalists formed the basis for international news services such as Reuters and Agence France-Presse (AFP) (Lewis, 2018). Such direct sharing of information persisted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, supported by various commercial and legal mechanisms. For example, European local newspapers sometimes shared the cost of signing a foreign newsletter. In colonial America, sharing was aided by the custom codified in the Post Office Act of 1792, allowing printers to trade newspapers for free (Graves and Konieczna, 2015).

In the new model, collaborative journalism is substantially different from any other type of cooperation in journalism before the technological revolution (Sambrook, 2018; Serna, 2018; Stonbely, 2017; Alfter, 2016, 2018). Although several scholars have indicated that collaboration has always been part of journalism and there is growing interest in collaborative production among journalists, media organisations and other actors, the Internet, platformisation (Van Dijck, Poell & De Waal, 2018) and digitisation have elevated collaboration to a new status, giving it a unique role within the news ecosystem. This is due also to the rise of the networked society, which is strongly related to the transformations brought about by the development of ICTs.

Castells (2004) defines a network society as a society in which social structures are organised within interactions and human relations through largely intermediated, technological and connected networks. These connections are horizontal and lack centrality, allowing people to access collective knowledge, characterised by the distribution of knowledge among participants in the network (Lam, 2000). Collective knowledge forms the basis of the increasingly established practices of co-creation, co-production, cross-checking and other cooperative methods (Van der Haak, Parks and Castells, 2012), which is understood by many authors as another main feature of collaborative journalism, which sees CJ as a network structure.

This network structure allows information flows and sharing practices among participants (Alfter and Căndeia, 2019; Heft, Alfter and Pfetsch, 2019).

However, as pointed out by these authors, networks structures also give meaning to information. As explained by Van der Haak, Parks and Castells (2012), even though collective knowledge and co-creation are desirable in a networked society, information still requires interpretation. In other words, the meaning journalists give to information is still essential as it is created using a system of beliefs, rules and order. As such, journalism made in networks still demonstrates strong ties with professional standards, boundaries, norms and values, which raise questions of why professional standards have not gained centrality in the discussion of a networked reality of journalism. In addition, questions regarding how this decentralised, co-creational and cooperative *modus operandi* makes sense of information and how news organisations can transform it into real practices and processes are underexplored. Thus, to be able to address the issue raised and others that emerged from the objectives of this study, I have assembled the main characteristics of collaborative journalism discussed so far into four main features. These features are described next.

### **Collaborative journalism features and implications for this study**

As argued throughout this chapter, previous conceptualisations and definitions of collaborative journalism identify important characteristics of collaborative journalism. For clarity purposes, these characteristics are divided into four main features:

**Network structure** Consists of ‘A new shared infrastructure for journalism and the variety of cooperative practices and processes developed around the material conditions of news production and dissemination’ (Serna, 2018). Networked structures defy the traditional hierarchical model of journalistic production, proposing a more horizontal and shared structure (Deuze and Witschge, 2018).

**Co-creational** ‘Emerging practices of collaborative production and “prosumer” type co-creation’ (Deuze, 2006) that take advantage of a networked reality. Co-creation means sharing information, skills and practices as well as the content.

**Horizontal decision-making processes** Collaborative journalism is noncompetitive and nonhierarchical. It favours modes of production, distribution and circulation that are co-creative, interactive and integrated (Coronel, 2016; Smyrniotis, Chauvet and Marty, 2019).

**Editorially coordinated** A third-party entity or a group or individual serves as a mediator for problem-solving, logistics and coordination of processes in collaborative networks. This role emerged from collaborative networks to clarify the function that these organisations or individuals have within the group of professionals they bring together (Alfter, 2018).

It is vital to describe these characteristics because these are essential features of collaborative journalism, and they can be used, adapted and criticised in the analysis of collaborative journalism in different contexts. Most importantly, these features serve as a base to analyse whether the definition of collaborative journalism explains what is at stake in collaborative efforts, which might change according to external and internal circumstances. Thus, each of these characteristics is described and analysed below.

## Network structures

Many authors have emphasised the importance of networked structures to enable the sharing that is critical for collaboration (Van Der Haak, Parks and Castells, 2012; Alfter, 2016; de la Serna, 2018; Sambrook, 2018). One could infer that these networked structures are products of technological transformation. To support an understanding of technological influence in collaboration and journalism, the term ‘post-industrial journalism’, coined by Bell, Anderson and Shirky (2015), helps make sense of this change. The authors affirm that journalism no longer classifies itself as an industry. It finds new forms of organisation and production, with a solid appeal to cost-cutting, job reductions and digitalisation. Although the authors refer to the state of the profession and the market in the US, this is also the state of the market in many countries. As argued by Deuze and Witschge (2018), despite regional and national differences, journalism operates in almost the same way everywhere. However, many internal and external factors might influence the way similarities and singularities are seen by media practitioners. These factors are further explored in the theoretical framework (Chapter 3).

The challenge posed by technological rupture is considered one of the leading causes of media cooperation. As Keohane and Nye (1998) stated, to overcome a threat, organisations tend to cooperate. Collaboration may be the only option for media outlets that have faced cuts and seen their profits fall (see also Obermaier and Obermayer, 2017; Deuze and Witschge, 2018). In this context, Van der Haak, Parks and Castells (2012) explain that the digital environment has brought journalists a variety of new tasks. Alongside the ever-increasing flow of information, the crisis in traditional business models of news media organisations has necessitated innovation. To overcome instability, journalists have turned to collaboration. Previous approaches in which journalists work alone are no longer feasible because each stage of the work is organised in online spaces. According to Van der Haak, Parks and Castells (2012), this new form of journalism is based on networks: ‘The actual product of journalistic practice now usually involves networks of various professionals and citizens collaborating, corroborating, correcting, and ultimately distilling the essence of the story that will be told’ (p. 2,927). According to the authors, the ‘new tools and practices in journalism’ (p. 2926) enabled by technology are 1) crowdsourcing and user-generated content; 2) mining, analysis, visualisation and mapping of data; 3) visual journalism; 4) point-of-view journalism; 5) automated journalism and 6) global journalism. These networked journalism characteristics are key features of any network-based production, distribution and financing in journalism, and they are essential to understanding collaborative journalism as a networked practice.

In the same vein, as argued by Serna (2018), new arrangements in journalism are deeply influenced by technologies that allow the connection, such as technologies that are based on network structures. According to Serna, these arrangements consist of ‘new commons for journalism, or a collection of shared resources and communities reconfiguring the material and cultural conditions of news work as a social practice subject to dilemmas that require cooperation’ (Serna, 2018, p.1). Serna identifies the characteristics of these new arrangements as well as the key differences of the current collaborations. According to the author, introducing new actors to journalistic production, ‘diverse players beyond news organisations’ (p. 1), is one of the main characteristics of this new journalistic arrangement. Serna argues that the under-recognised practice of collaborative journalism is a new scheme of ‘human relations, production and governance’ within the journalistic profession. The author points out that these shared spaces of cooperation are based on network collaboration, recognising the impacts of a digital society on practices and allowing the sharing of technologies, information and data created by this news commons of journalism: ‘This broad definition aims to cover collaboration’s role in the creation of a new shared infrastructure for journalism, and the variety of cooperative practices and processes developed around the material conditions of news



production and dissemination’ (para. 1). In summary, Serna argues that these networked structures have created what he calls ‘new commons’ that allow open-access technology to flow, enabling cooperative production that ‘can be characterised as a resource system made of three distinct and intertwined layers – technological, social, and content-based structure – that contain other resources, or a commons of commons’ (para. 10). Serna’s definitions and considerations of the creation of a new commons of journalism are essential to the present study by emphasising these notions of networked structures that allow journalists to share practices, content, technologies and information not only among peers but also with other actors that are participating in the media ecosystem.

Contrary to these more optimistic points of view, Alfter and Căndea (2019) warn against power issues that network structures could pose to journalism. They argue that journalists in collaborative projects work in a structure that allows them to take advantage of the network while possibly being submitted or submissive to this same structure. As Alfter and Căndea suggest, networked structures are making work possible while perpetuating power relations:

On a more general level, questions such as gatekeeping, institutionalisation and indeed pluralism should be scrutinised within this emerging networked reality of journalism. What are the characteristics, what are the intended and unintended consequences of such networks, and what are the privileges at work? (p.145).

The authors also argue that technological tools and infrastructures may be deeply intertwined with power structures within collaborative projects and organisations. As indicated by Alfter and Căndea (2019), one could think of systems as destitute of hierarchical power because of the horizontal decision-making process of collaborative projects; however, in reality, these structures conceal a relationship of power between the journalists inside the structure and those outside.

As noted, one of the main characteristics of collaborative journalism is its networked nature through which journalists work together. This network structure is permeated by technological means benefitting but also dangerously affecting collaborations. The development of ICTs – most importantly, the emergence of the Internet and social media – has allowed journalists and other actors to participate in a larger web to make sense of the world and its issues. Yet webs that connect journalists might be hiding relations of power. Thus, questions emerge regarding how these technological advances have allowed journalists from different countries, languages, and cultures to work together, but ICTs also influence how they communicate and produce. Additionally, these network structures are described as co-creational spaces established by networks of people. In these spaces, people share content, skills and knowledge at different levels, which start to gain centrality in this collaborative model.

### **Co-creation**

Co-creation is a primary characteristic of the *modus operandi* of collaborative journalism and other collaborative practices such as participatory journalism, networked journalism and citizen journalism. Co-creation has two aspects relevant to the current research. First, it is not exclusive to collaborative journalism efforts but is a participatory culture practice (Deuze, 2008) that has impacted various layers of society. Due to the emergence of the Internet, this practice of co-creation has gained more attention and capillarity. Second, co-creation might be practised at different levels in collaborative efforts – from total shared content to checking and revision processes. It is also important to know how and with whom collaborative journalism networks co-create, whether these details differ from one organisation to another, and organisations’ goals and missions. Can collaborative journalism be defined as a truly co-creational adventure?

As Deuze (2008) argues, peer-to-peer technologies have a principle of collaboration that allows an increasing perception that people are living under a ‘convergence culture-based participatory’ or ‘co-creation’ news ecosystem. As suggested by Bruns (2016), peer-to-peer production is a ‘system which enables their users to interact directly with one another, as equals and without the intervention of a strong intermediary’ (p. 121). At the same time, Wall (2015) argues that whereas collaboration between journalists and nonprofessionals may happen in a space outside the mainstream media, in a shared and co-creational space, media professionals and entities are still the primary sources of meaning. The content streams from ordinary people and professional journalists have not always blended as envisioned. First with blogging, then in the Twittersphere, professionals’ social networking streams often became the leading sources of information, replicating their dominance of media narratives. Thus, ‘process control’ of journalistic production still belongs to journalists (see also, Kperogi, 2011; Van der Haak, Parks and Castells, 2012).

Although co-creation ostensibly offers a more democratic approach to knowledge production, Gulbrandsen and Just (2011) contend that a ‘co-creation’ ecosystem can create disagreements and show differentiation in the levels of participation. Other studies have demonstrated that, while it is desirable to engage with the public, amateurs and nonprofessionals in news production, there are types of value that only professional journalists and media organisations can provide to an investigation, including perseverance, public pressure and legal support that no other form of reporting can provide (e.g., Downie and Schudson, 2009; Van Der Haak, Parks and Castells, 2012). Similarly, Zanotti (2010) and Brambilla (2005) argue that journalists maintain the professional capacity to make sense of information derived from the public and other actors even in a co-creational environment, thereby demonstrating that journalism, as an established cultural and social profession, determines the rules.

Narrative control may present a problem to collaborative efforts, especially between more traditional legacy media and independent news outlets. However, while journalists control the narrative, the objective of collaborative journalism is still journalistic reporting. Reporting made in co-creational networks is shaped by partners’ and peers’ views and sense of the information and their shared skills and knowledge, without which the goal cannot be reached. Thus, horizontal processes are crucial to guarantee interactions, plurality, and diversity within networks and co-creational spaces.

### **Horizontal processes**

Horizontality is considered an essential characteristic of collaborative journalism efforts; this is translated into decision-making processes in which there is no evident centrality and hierarchy (Coronel, 2016; Candea, 2020). The idea of horizontality borrows from concepts of network society and network structures in which connections are established without centrality or hierarchy (Castells, 2004). As suggested by numerous authors, horizontality is a process in which all partners are treated as equals. Therefore, they all have knowledge and skills to share (e.g., Spyridou *et al.*, 2013; Heft, 2019). Within this process, trust plays an important role in people’s ability to connect (Smyrnaioi, Chauvet and Marty, 2019).

Smyrnaioi *et al.* (2019), in an analysis of a fact-checking coalition, determined that since there is no top-down decision on the division of work in collaborative efforts, journalists must trust each other to be able to work together. They also pointed out that horizontality means a lack of rules and the constant adaptation of methods of work through decisions that are reached by consensus. The authors point out that consensus is hard to reach, and, as such, the project analysed adopted a ‘reasonable debate and the assignment of tasks to the most capable and knowledgeable, according to the situation’ (p.75). Thus, flexibility is the main feature of horizontality in their analysis; however, it is not clear what relying on the

‘more capable and knowledgeable’ means in terms of power relations and information control within networks.

According to Castells (2004), flexibility is a network’s capacity to adapt and overcome obstacles. Alongside flexibility, there are two other reasons network structures are superior to traditional hierarchical and centralised models: scalability and survivability. Scalability is about the spreadability of networks. A network is a ‘set of interconnected nodes’ that does not have a centre. Survivability is the network’s ability to survive and create new forms to communicate, even when there are physical limitations due to its decentralised nature. Each node is horizontally connected with other nodes that offer the entire web (or set) flows of information (Deuze and Witschge, 2018; Van der Haak, Parks and Castells, 2012).

Yet the lack of hierarchy does not mean a lack of power struggles; instead, the power is diffused, making it harder to recognise. Power also takes different forms since the power assumes other characteristics, such as a node or hub characteristic in which more powerful nodes in a web determine and influence the flow of information. These nodes dominate the flow of information through competition or cooperation, determining what is valuable and worthy. In addition, these nodes establish connection nets and make information flow through the network. As Lawyer (2015) explains, the capability of a node to spread its information and communication in the network is what defines its source of power. Thus, the fact that collaborative journalism efforts engage with more horizontal processes does not mean a lack of control of information within organisations and networks.

### **Editorial coordination**

There are two possible approaches to editorial coordination in collaborative efforts. The first approach relates to transnational investigations, meaning that a third-party entity serves collaborative networks as a mediator for problem-solving, logistics and coordination (Alfter, 2018). The second is related to a more straightforward traditional editor role with specific functions of guiding and orienting news organisations and journalists within the collaborative network regarding the editorial line, ethical codes, strategies and so on (Mendoza and Rojas, 2020). This function of editorial coordination might be understood as one of the distinctions between collaborative journalism and other types of collaboration and participatory forms of production.

According to Alfter (2018), editorial coordination gives professional status to collaboration and enables the achievement of the network’s purpose. In line with this, Lewis (2018) explains that an effort such as the Panama Papers could not be led by legacy media and traditional competitive news outlets, and the role played by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) was essential to maintaining cohesion even in a noncompetitive environment. The ICIJ is one of the leading organisations that have emerged in recent years that focuses on allowing and promoting collaboration by hosting investigations, connecting journalists and inviting news organisations to work together on specific projects (‘About the ICIJ - International Consortium of Investigative Journalists’, 2017). According to Graves and Konieczna (2015), the ‘host organisation’ behind participants gives the collaborative enterprise meaning. In the context of the ICIJ, the authors argue that ‘the organisation tried to enforce an ethic of “true” collaboration, insisting that participating reporters work together to analyse the data rather than simply dividing it up’ (p. 1,973). However, editorial coordination does not always mean using a hosting organisation as a third-party responsible for cohesion and other tasks. Editorial coordination is also a role of a person or team (Porter, 2021) that can be crucial to a collaborative project’s success.

Studies have pointed to a lack of editorial coordination as the main challenge of collaboration efforts (Mesquita and de-Lima-Santos, 2021; Palomo and Sedano, 2021). Cultural differences, professional issues and the logistics of a complex collaborative endeavour may cause problems that a structured process can help solve. Another issue is that collaborations might focus more on the struggles of media organisations and journalists than on the issues facing the public (Bowman and Willis, 2003). To avoid these problems, Kayser-Bril (2018) translates editorial coordination into goals that the network must agree to. He argues that collaboration achieves a ‘precise goal’ (p. 62) with a group of individuals without creating a new organisation.

For Alfter (2018), editorial coordination is the path to success for a collaborative enterprise. According to Alfter, the objective of editorial coordination is to merge traditional ‘good’ journalistic practices with the viewpoints of several other professionals worldwide. Many authors have agreed that the ‘editorial’ coordination of networks formed by professional journalists and other actors is necessary. Without this, the association of so many actors with diverse backgrounds and cultures would be impossible (Sambrook, 2018; Lewis, 2018). However, Alfter’s argument of ‘good’ journalistic practices, which are the differences that the role of editorial coordination intends to attenuate, is not clear. Thus, I argue that understanding the editorial coordination role and what ‘good’ journalism means in collaborative journalism is essential to better understand collaborative journalism, especially regarding the commitments translated into practices and processes.

In summary, the characteristics of collaborative journalism provide the study with tools to analyse its practices and characterise it as a phenomenon. These characteristics have been grouped into four categories: network structures, co-creation, horizontal processes and editorial coordination. Contextual elements such as the internal and external factors, the political, economic and media systems environments are lacking to underpin the forces that contribute to the emergence, evolution and development of collaborative journalism and how and why they do this. Moreover, there is a lack of analysis of collaborative journalism in different contexts, especially in other media systems. Furthermore, it was demonstrated throughout this chapter that there is a lack of understanding of whether these features remain relevant in different contexts and what influences them.

### **A new concept for collaborative journalism**

The central thesis of this literature review is that collaborative journalism has been researched from perspectives that focus on the practice of collaboration. Such approaches, however, have failed to address commitments, norms and values that led journalists to collaborate in the first place and how these commitments translate into practices and processes. The literature also failed to contextualise and examine collaborative journalism in different economic and political contexts and other media systems. I argue that the lack of centrality of such issues in the concept and definitions of collaborative journalism results from the focus of most research on experiences of collaborative journalism in liberal democracies. Journalists and news organisations in those contexts enjoy more stable economic and political contexts and higher levels of freedom of speech and the press; hence it is understandable that these issues are largely disregarded.

The few studies conducted in other contexts have demonstrated that collaboration in journalism in these contexts is faced with significant challenges, such as the constant state of violence and the capability of being sustainable (e.g., Chacón and Saldaña, 2020; Mesquita and Fernandes, 2021). These studies demonstrated that there is increasing participation of new news players in the media ecosystem and that

these organisations are primarily nonprofit, small, independent and alternative. These organisations are founded by veterans journalists that were pushed out from mainstream, traditional and legacy media because of financial issues or ideological reasons (Requejo-Alemán and Lugo-Ocando, 2014). Nevertheless, these organisations rely on traditional and mainstream media to amplify their voices and the scope of their audiences, which can be problematic. As pointed out by Alfter and Cându (2019), many of the stories developed by joint efforts have been captured by mainstream media that benefit from the partnership without contributing anything. This raises questions about who is joining collaborative journalism and for which reasons, and whether collaboration is sustainable, especially for independent news outlets and organisations in economically less stable countries. These studies also demonstrated that small and independent news outlets are engaged in ideals of field reparation and normative journalism mission and values. However, such findings were not reflected in the collaborative journalism definition in these studies.

In summary, this review found that previous studies and research on collaborative journalism have failed to address and reflect the different contexts and commitments to collaborative journalism practices and concepts. I argue that these findings are essential in an in-depth analysis of the effects and influences of economic, political and media systems contexts on collaborative journalism, especially in less democratic, nondemocratic and where freedom of expression and the press are restricted. Furthermore, research on the subject has been mostly restricted to limited experiences of collaborative journalism, which reflect more stable realities. Therefore, this study offers a new conceptualisation of collaborative journalism that reflects these findings:

Collaborative journalism...

- 1) is a form of doing journalism that takes advantage of network structures connecting journalists, news organisations, professionals from other industries, universities, communities and other social actors;
- 2) promotes co-creational and shared spaces;
- 3) makes decisions horizontally by network members;
- 4) is editorially coordinated by a group or individual focused on administrative and logistics of a journalistic project, effort or endeavour; and
- 5) is normatively committed to the practice and performance of good journalism.

This new concept serves as a guide to drawing the research questions and informing and locating the study, as described in the conclusion of this chapter.

**Conclusion and research questions**

*Table 1 Argument and discussion summary*

Argument / Discussion	Source
Collaborative journalism is a cooperative arrangement (formal or informal) between two or more news and information organizations, which aims to supplement each organization's resources and maximize the impact of the content produced	Stonbely (2017)

Collaborative journalism is an ‘editorial collaboration’ which focus on delivering an ‘editorial value and opened up stories and issues which might otherwise have gone unreported’	Sambrook (2018)
The use of technology to secure sources and partners in a horizontal decision-making process that allows partners to work in an environment that is genuinely collaborative	Alfter (2016)
Editorial collaboration between organisations	Alfter (2016)
Shift from partnership tactic to access specific resources, to a more interactive, long-term and focused endeavour	Stonbely (2017)
First, collaborative journalism can be local and regional; second, projects are topic-oriented; third, participation of news startups; and fourth, collaborative writing	Jenkins and Graves (2019)
1) They are mainly digital projects. 2) They are supported by an international cooperation system. 3) They are small organisations often led by veteran journalists	Requejo-Alemán and Lugo-Ocando (2014)
Organisations that are innovating and using collaborative journalism as a form of pursuing their journalistic are faced with financial challenges	Requejo-Alemán and Lugo-Ocando (2014)
Commitments also play an important role for news startups, independent and alternative media outlets in Latin America media market	Harlow and Salaverría (2016)
The new model is based on the idea that collaborative journalism is substantially different from any other type of cooperation performed in journalism before the technological revolution	Sambrook (2018), Serna (2018), Stonbely (2017), Alfter (2016, 2018)
The understanding of collaborative journalism as a network structure in which information flows and is shared among participants	Alfter and Cândia (2019), Heft (2019)
Network society is defined by social structures that are organised in the interactions and human relations through largely intermediated, technological and connected networks	Castells (2004)
Collective knowledge is the basis of an increasingly established practice of co-creation, co-production, cross-checking and other cooperative methods	Van der Haak, Parks and Castells (2012)
Collective knowledge’s flow mirrors creative industries’ mode of production, which is highly decentralised and led by cooperation and co-authoring.	Deuze and Witschge (2018)
Meaning given by journalists to information is still essential, as it was created in a system of beliefs, rules and order	Van der Haak, Parks and Castells (2012)
Factors internal to the profession have contributed to the dissemination of cooperative efforts in journalism	Silva et al. (2020)
The traditional business model based on advertisement, circulation and direct sales was not sufficient to survive the digitalisation and platformisation of society	Dijk, Poell and Waal, 2018
New intermediaries are constantly undermining news media’s monetising strategies, there is a need to seek for innovation	Evens, Raats and von Rimscha (2017)
News media organisations have turned to their audiences and communities to find certain forms of sustainability	Warner et al. (2017)
News media organisations realise that they must develop content in different formats to engage the public	Requejo-Alemán and Lugo-Ocando (2014)
Engaging in collaborative efforts have also provided more funding options due to the increasing number of international grants available to such projects	Kayser-Bril, 2018
‘(1) Journalists from different countries, who (2) cooperate on a shared theme or story, they (3) compile, mutually cross-check and ultimately merge their finding to (4) individually fact-check and publish these findings adjusted to their national, local or otherwise specialised target groups’ (p. 41)	Alfter (2018)

‘First, it's network journalism; it's flat, horizontal, not vertical. The second difference is that it's collaborative; it's not competitive. Thirdly, it's truly global. There were foreign correspondents but nothing like true cross-border global journalism. And, fourth, the use of technology for secure communication and sharing massive amounts of data’	Coronel (2018)
Increasing movement towards collaborative journalism in the region might be associated with safety measures	Chacón and Saldaña (2020)
Network structures are: ‘A new shared infrastructure for journalism and the variety of cooperative practices and processes developed around the material conditions of news production and dissemination’	Serna (2018)
‘The actual product of journalistic practice now usually involves networks of various professionals and citizens collaborating, corroborating, correcting, and ultimately distilling the essence of the story that will be told’ (p. 2,927)	Van der Haak, Parks and Castells (2012)
Journalists in collaborative projects work in a structure that allows them to take advantage of the network while possibly being submitted or submissive to this same structure	Alfter and Cândia (2019)
Peer-to-peer technologies have a principle of collaboration, which allows an increasing perception that people are living under a ‘convergence culture-based participatory’ or ‘co-creation’ news ecosystem	Deuze (2008)
‘Process control’ of journalistic production still belongs to journalists	Kperogi (2011), Van der Haak, Parks and Castells (2012)
Professional journalists and media organisations can provide values that include perseverance, public pressure and legal support	Downie and Schudson (2009)
The horizontality within efforts is a process in which all partners are treated as equals, as peers, and, therefore, they all have knowledge and skills to add and to share	Spyridou et al. (2013), Heft (2019)
No top-down decision on the division of work in collaborative efforts means that journalists have to trust each other to be able to work together	Smyrniaios et al. (2019)
Horizontality also means a lack of rules and the constant adaptation of methods of work and those decisions are reached by consensus throughout projects	Smyrniaios et al. (2019)
Consensus is hard to reach, which made the project analysed adopt a ‘reasonable debate and the assignment of tasks to the most capable and knowledgeable, according to the situation’ (p.75)	Smyrniaios et al. (2019)
The capability of a node to spread its information and communication in the network is what defines its source of power	Lawyer (2015)
A third-party entity serves collaborative networks as a mediator for problem-solving, logistics and coordination	Alfter (2018)
Traditional editor role with specific functions of guiding and orienting news organisations and journalists within the collaborative network	Mendoza and Rojas (2020)
The ‘host organisation’ behind the participants gives the collaborative enterprise meaning	Graves and Konieczna (2015)
Editorial coordination is a role that a person or a team is responsible to oversee a collaborative project	Porter (2021)
Lack of editorial coordination as the main challenge of collaboration efforts	Mesquita and de-Lima-Santos, (2021), Palomo and Sedano, (2021)
The objective of the role of editorial coordination is to merge traditional ‘good’ journalistic practices with the viewpoints of several other professionals worldwide	Alfter (2018)

This literature review illustrated the main discussions around past and current collaboration in journalism, as summarised in the table above (refer to Table1). This review has found an overall lack of research focused on different contexts where collaborative journalism operates. However, this chapter illustrated some of the few studies that examine experiences of collaboration in journalism in different contexts, especially in Latin America. These studies also highlighted the relevant participation of small, start-ups, nonprofit, independent and alternative news organisations in developing collaborative efforts in the region. This chapter demonstrated that collaboration in these different contexts features significant linkage with ideals and practices aimed at field reparation. Although this linkage is under-researched, and definitions of these ideals are lacking, this chapter illustrates that these ideals are translated into horizontal processes and practices that are less competitive and more focused on creating shared spaces. Finally, collaborative journalism also features a connection with other institutions, organisations and communities, promoting diversity and a more plural narrative which is also a gap found in the literature.

Technological transformation and finances are pressing problems that have played crucial roles in the changes prompting the emergence of collaborative journalism. They affect many layers of analysis, from production to business models. Some authors have stated that the decision to collaborate might be closely linked with funding opportunities, especially for nonprofit news organisations (Kayser-Bril, 2018). Furthermore, past studies lack in-depth analysis of the transformations of journalism as an institution and as a profession with rules and norms. There is little research examining the many arrangements that collaborative journalism might have, its limitations in professional practice, and its capacity to achieve normative goals.

The rise of the network society and the network structure of collaborative journalism also pose a significant challenge to investigating the practice. Although connections are established horizontally, this horizontality does not signify a lack of power; somewhat, power is diffused, making it harder to recognise. Power also takes different forms because it assumes other characteristics, such as nodes or hubs. I argue that this element can be analysed in this study by combining many different elements, such as decision-making processes, the decision to collaborate and with whom, levels of co-creation and integration within networks, among others. Thus, the chapter highlights the following main features of collaborative journalism that I argue are essential to analyse the practice:

1. **Network structures**
2. **Process of co-creation**
3. **Horizontal decision-making**
4. **Editorial coordination**

Several studies have attempted to typify the models of arrangements, but little has been done to understand the many differences that context and professional internal and external factors might contribute. Moreover, little is known about the difficulties the practice might encounter in different political and economic contexts, notably less and nondemocratic ones. How do these elements change across contexts? Has collaborative journalism delivered quality reports in different contexts and societies?

Hence, a sound conceptualisation is needed for collaborative journalism to encapsulate diversity and guide journalists in every possible political and economic context. Therefore, this study offers a conceptualisation of collaborative journalism that reflects this review's findings, as described in the previous section (refer to Section 'A new concept for collaborative journalism').



In summary, this chapter outlined some of the main narratives, characteristics and definitions of collaborative journalism, which are essential to conducting both the empirical and the theoretical parts of this study. The objective of this literature review was not to draw a historical overview but rather to identify the elements that may have contributed to the emergence, evolution and dissemination of collaborative journalism and its characteristics and practices. Finally, the chapter also provided the study with a new concept for collaborative journalism that reflects the findings of this review. This new concept informs the research questions and locates this study. In light of the problems and assumptions raised in this chapter, this study poses the following research questions:

Main research question: *Does collaborative journalism contribute to the normative role of journalism in society?*

Sub-questions:

(a) *Is it appropriate to include the normative role of journalism within the definition of collaborative journalism?*

(b) *Does this normative role translate into commitments, practices and processes in different contexts, such as in democratic/authoritarian contexts and poorer and less developed nations?*

(c) *Does collaboration differ between large and small organisations and their business and sustainability models? Do these differ between democratic/authoritarian contexts and poorer and less developed nations?*

## Chapter 3 – Theoretical Framework

### Introduction

This chapter is organised in the following two main sections: (i) Aspiration and role of normative journalism (NJ) and (ii) Development and incorporation of comparative media systems theory (CMS). First, the literature review (Chapter 2) has indicated that CJ exhibits a crucial component of the professional restoration field through norms, values and commitments. I argue that these commitments share many components with other forms of journalism of participatory ethos, such as activism, participatory and alternative journalism. Thus, the first section discusses these common patterns and then moves to a deeper understanding of the commitments, values and norms of CJ's practitioners in relation to the NJ paradigm. The NJ paradigm states both ideological and practical rules and sets the profession's behaviour and boundaries through the intersection of four main characteristics: journalism's function, role, boundaries and performance. The first section underpins the Latin American context and aids in understanding CJ and its mission and values. Then, the second section focuses on CMS theory, which highlights the contexts that have helped to shape journalism in the region through an analysis of the structures of the media market, political parallelism, media workers' level of professionalism and the state–media market relationship. The media systems discussion is expanded with another dimension of Latin American media ecosystems, namely the constant state of violence that threatens individuals, organisations and journalism. I argue that the combination of these two main theories provides this research with the required interpretative tools as well as a unique view of the phenomenon.

Many gaps were found in the literature around CJ practices, such as the commitments and motivations of journalists and news organisations to associate in these efforts. These are the organisational practices that have helped CJ to flourish or otherwise limited it, along with the external and contextual factors that have influenced, impacted and helped to shape the practice.

Grasping these factors requires a sound theoretical underpinning of the elements that have helped to shape CJ in Latin America and elsewhere. As outlined in the literature review (Chapter 2), although CJ seems to be a phenomenon of the journalism profession that has a strong relation to the normative roles and functions of journalism in society, these commitments have not been reflected in CJ's concepts and research. These commitments are observed in a focus on normative roles, such as in investigative journalism through its monitoring and accountability functions as well as through its diversity and plurality commitments, which translate into co-creation and horizontal decision-making practices and processes. However, the literature has not been able to link these findings to professional and contextual factors. A sound theoretical framework should thus be able to identify, understand and challenge these norms and values, through the discussion of these common patterns found in the literature.

As with any social practice, journalism – and consequently CJ – develops under certain external conditions (Traquina, 2005; de-Lima-Santos and Mesquita, 2021b; Mesquita and de-Lima-Santos, 2021). I argue that CJ, as a practice of journalism, is influenced by many contextual factors, passing through the analysis of the crisis of traditional business models and the introduction and emergence of new ICTs, but mostly by the understanding of the media market and its professionalisation, capacity for political parallelism and relationship with the state. I argue that this is particularly crucial for studying journalism and its practice in various realities and experiences.

In this context, this chapter starts with a discussion of journalism's normative paradigm, roles and functions as a way of discussing the social place of journalism and its functions for democracy and the citizenry (Hardt, 2002). Then, it advances to a discussion of more contextual and external factors that have helped shape both journalism and CJ in Latin America. This novel combination of theories can assist in the exploration and understanding of CJ and the numerous factors that have helped to shape the practice in various contexts.

### **Aspiration and the role of normative journalism**

CJ has been defined by its practice rather than its norms, values and commitments. Moreover, definitions of CJ have been developed from the perspective of more mature democracies and economically more stable realities; thus, it is unclear whether the norms, commitments and values of journalists and news organisations outside of these realities differ, especially in less or nondemocratic contexts. Nevertheless, as outlined in the literature review (Chapter 2), CJ has demonstrated a strong alliance with journalistic commitments, such as in its emphasis on stories that matter, the quality of the investigation and its social impacts, rather than its commercial benefits (Lewis, 2018). In this context, CJ exhibits a crucial component of the professional restoration field (Graves and Konieczna, 2015). However, these commitments and ideals have not been reflected in the CJ concept. Hence, the literature review offered a new concept that is able to encapsulate these norms and values.

Moreover, I argue that these commitments share many components with other forms of journalism of participatory ethos, such as activism, participatory and alternative journalism. Journalism, despite all of the crises faced by the profession and industry today, still has a powerful position in public debate. Activists, knowing this, explore the journalistic narrative as a way to gain legitimacy. Moreover, journalists who are deeply involved in their communities enjoy an advantage in the form of an upper hand on social issues in their communities and audiences (e.g., Hermida, 2011). Thus, understanding journalism as activism is not in opposition to media power; rather, it means taking advantage of it in the pursuit of social transformation, which is traditionally related to experiences of participatory, citizen, solution and citizen journalism (Tufte, 2013).

Furthermore, the participation of audiences and users in news production is not a novelty, and the introduction and constant evolution of technologies have transformed and blurred the limits and boundaries of the journalism profession (Carlson and Lewis, 2015). This has directly impacted the level of and demand for participation. Simultaneously, other bodies of organised civil society and movements have assumed responsibility for some of the traditional functions of journalism, such as monitoring and power-scrutiny, which has affected journalism and society (Powers, 2015). According to Powers (2015), the increasing participation of nonjournalists, mostly NGOs and advocacy groups, as providers of quality information has diminished journalists' control over information and their status as the only worthy watchdogs.

In addition, the increased participation of minorities and other organised groups in informing the public debate can be observed. However, journalism has lost its role as the Fourth Estate. Nevertheless, journalism as a culturally and socially recognised profession still holds great esteem in society, especially for its capacity to form a public sphere of debate (Vos, 2018). Moreover, activists have viewed its professional standards as a way to expand their message (Russell, 2017). Still, many authors also point to an increased de-westernisation of theories, through which traditional norms such as objectivity have lost ground (e.g., Park and Curran, 2000; Hanitzsch, 2007). This loss has given space to a more politically active kind of professional journalism, which falls under more radical approaches to the journalism role and

performance paradigms, such as the ‘radical role’. This role is characterised by radical criticism and intense battles against dominance and hegemony, and its roots are in power contestation and a popular approach (Christians *et al.*, 2010; Standaert, Hanitzsch and Dedonder, 2021). Thus, instead of undermining journalism and its values and missions, these new forms of journalism that rely on participation, cooperation and collaboration represent a hybridisation of roles and commitments rather than an opposition.

New ICTs have also enabled the emergence of what many authors call participatory journalism (Singer *et al.*, 2011). This kind of journalism – which also encapsulates the idea of collaboration in journalism – involves the participation of the audience and other actors in the journalistic enterprise. In this vein, citizen journalism is often described as a type of journalism where nonprofessionals are invited to participate in news production (see Wall, 2015). Such blurred boundaries and hybridisation have paved the way for the emergence of alternative approaches to doing journalism, which can be referred to as ‘media movements’. These phenomena have occurred in Latin America for many years and concentrate on the power of the media to shape public debate and promote social change. Such movements are intended as alternatives to corporate media and the influences of the state in the media market (Waisbord, 2009).

Nevertheless, instead of recreating journalism, the organisational part of these movements reinforces many of the traditional *modus operandi* of traditional media. The leftist position characterises many alternative media outlets and movements everywhere, and these organisations perceive the relationship to the mainstream media as their main thread (Holt, Ustad Figenschou and Frischlich, 2019). One distinction that is increasingly drawn among professionals is that between independent and corporate media. The former represents all good journalism, a journalism that is as pluralist, inclusive and diverse as the communities and realities it serves, whereas the latter represents commercialisation and the bad and good that come with it, but it is mainly regarded as distant and elitist (Esser and Neuberger, 2019; Hanitzsch, 2007). In summary, these civic and moral functions of journalism practitioners’ perception guide the work, values and mission of journalists, thus translating into actions through practices and professional performance.

Nevertheless, alternative media and activist journalism have found a nonbinary approach to journalism norms and values by focusing on journalism’s ‘duty’ to democracy and bringing dissonant voices to public debate, as opposed to focusing on the commercial thread and traditional notions of objectivity and independence (Dowling, 2021). By adopting less conventional forms of reporting and association with citizens, these emergent forms of street media have given a voice to activists and other actors commonly outside of mainstream reporting. These organisations also operate in a highly decentralised manner, prioritising a bottom-up production of narratives, in which the professional work of journalists is blurred and they start to be seen more as facilitators. Nevertheless, these organisations pledge allegiance to journalism’s role in society as well as to peer-to-peer production, indicating that their partnership with organised civil society bodies and movements is entered into not uncritically but rather under commitments to an ideology, social transformation, diversity and representation.

Thus, journalists might choose to start their own media organisations to conduct a kind of journalism that they believe to be good and helpful. This movement of veteran professionals leaving legacy media for financial and ideological reasons has increased the number of new players in media markets in Latin America (Requejo-Alemán and Lugo-Ocando, 2014). As indicated by Rodríguez Arechavaleta (2021), a unique and independent news market has recently emerged in Cuba that is confronting the government and the role of the state in the governance of the Internet and the press. This new model of journalism demonstrates a commitment to the social and civic role of journalism; thus, it is possible to infer that even when journalists and journalism are highly regulated and controlled by the state, journalists and independent

media still find a way to perform a type of journalism that is highly committed to NJ's mission and values. An example is the civic function of journalism, which is to provide the public with information that is relevant for its participation in public debate (Christians *et al.*, 2010).

However, with the emergence of these new players, an air of opposition has started to take shape. Independent and corporate media serve different functions that might be complementary but are mainly regarded as the opposite. Criticisms are related to the lack of connection of the corporate media – also described as the mass, mainstream and legacy media – to the reality of much of the population. Furthermore, journalists and news practitioners are usually located in countries' most prominent cities, and are usually white and male (Hanitzsch *et al.*, 2019). Most journalists worldwide are young men who hold a college degree and come from a 'dominant cultural group' (Hanitzsch, 2007, p. 367). This situation is consistent across countries.

Nevertheless, these numbers are considered low in terms of the total population of the country and the participation of black and mixed-race staff at the university level (Saraiva, 2020). According to Moraes and da Silva (2021), race and gender permeate the journalistic discourse, and norms such as objectivity in journalism help to maintain a narrative of dominance as well as the power of structural racism and machismo. The authors argued that the epistemological basis of neutrality and objectivity in journalism, which replicates a biased notion of rationality and dominance, is particularly harmful in terms of representation and diversity in the news. Therefore, journalists and news practitioners' lack of ability to cover particular communities is related to their detachment from social issues and realities. This is reflected in critiques of traditional journalism, which can be understood as criticisms of traditional and Westernised journalism norms and values.

Consequently, audiences perceive journalists to hold a cognitive elite occupation, which could affect and prevent journalists from engaging with audiences, a fact that contributes to journalism's loss of audiences' confidence worldwide (see also Wai and Perina, 2018). As highlighted by Ferrucci, Nelson and Davis (2020), audiences might fear that journalists disregard their voices and experiences:

Without explicitly calling the journalism elite, the data in this theme suggested that journalists often ignore any nonpowerful public and, in doing so, marginalise an audience of people who are eager—yet unable—to contribute to journalism. For example, one article about public journalism argued there existed a vast number of 'citizens who felt they were being overlooked' in journalism's coverage and decisions. (p. 1,596)

Little is known about this issue of 'elitism' and its effects within the journalistic field, especially among independent news outlets. Nevertheless, as Holt, Ustad Figenschou and Frischlich (2019) argued, there is a tendency among academics and practitioners to say that alternative media is in opposition to legacy, traditional and mainstream media, in terms of not only ideology but also practices. According to the authors, this opposition is based on contra-hegemonic discourse that disregards for-profit media, hierarchical structures and traditional organisational processes. However, they also argued that the increasing use of social media platforms and search engines has blurred the boundaries between legacy media and 'alternative' media. Thus, this dichotomy has been losing space to a more hybrid relativism, where the position of alternative media concerns mainstream media's position; that is, alternative media is in opposition to the mainstream and hegemonic discourse. Furthermore, the authors suggested that this relationship might change according to historical and systematic contexts. In contexts of more economic and political restrictions, cooperativism and collaboration in journalism could be viewed as an alternative to 'selling out' to the market.

Along the same lines, Atton and Hamilton (2008) argued that alternative media is more an activity than a defined mode of production or organisation, which changes according to its position in a larger

landscape considering the ever-changing position of the dominant journalism. Consequently, the authors suggested that beyond the economic and political anti-dominant journalism, alternative media emphasises an ‘epistemology of the news’, which not only reflects counter mainstream media practices but also the entire concept of the news, rejecting notions of commercial, hierarchical and objective kinds of journalism (Atton and Hamilton, 2008). However, as Atton and Hamilton (2008) argued, alternative media traditionally tends to be produced by nonprofessionals outside of the mainstream media and networks, but this is not always the case in the most recent developments in the media ecosystem in many Latin American countries. As argued by Gómez Rodríguez and Celecia Pérez (2022), in contexts of worsening working conditions for journalists, such as the economic pressure on and violence against professionals, journalists find in alternative media a form to continue pursuing their civic commitments. According to the authors, journalists in these contexts build upon an alternative modus of production, business models and work to be able to continue their work. In this sense, as suggested by Gómez Rodríguez and Celecia Pérez (2022), professionals are also migrating to an alternative modus operandi to fulfil social roles and sustain themselves in an environment of economic pressure on journalism:

In a review of different definitions of alternative journalism, Alejandra Meza (2015) summarizes that it is the journalistic activity that occurs outside the mainstream and is usually produced by amateurs. The latter seems to have changed considerably with the worldwide emergence of journalistic ventures developed by information professionals, who for various reasons seek and manage new spaces to carry out their work. (p.81)

Moreover, alternative journalism is deemed a model of journalism that radicalises democracy through its commitments to plurality and diversity (De Oliveira, 2011). According to De Oliveira (2011), by covering topics and introducing new voices to news coverage, alternative journalism attempts to build a new consensus. This consensus recognises the need for a new social pact that includes the populations and voices traditionally underrepresented in the public debate and spheres. It also rejects liberal concepts of democracy based on hegemony and hierarchy. In the same vein, Harlow and Harp (2013) found that alternative media takes advantage of the developments of ICTs to increase public participation, citizen empowerment and democratic change. The evolution of ICTs also has an opposite effect on alternative media in the form of blurred boundaries between alternative and mainstream media (Rauch, 2016). According to Rauch (2016), the mainstream media has consistently taken advantage of new technologies that have for years been the main form of action of alternative media to position itself outside of the mainstream information ecosystem and as an alternative to it. The author argued that the movement of convergence and hybridisation increases the interdependence between alternative and mainstream media.

In this sense, I argue that although the commitments, norms, values and practices of CJ practitioners are significantly aligned with those portrayed by alternative media, CJ is informed by this alternative ethos but does not position itself outside of mainstream networks and institutions. Rather, CJ practitioners take advantage of these networks to build a kind of journalism that they believe is normatively good, engaged and transformative. Due to transformations in ICTs, journalists and other professionals have been forced to act as entrepreneurs, which means more associative freedom and less job security. According to Siapera and Papadopoulou (2016), cooperative enterprises have allowed journalists to address the sustainable issue of connecting with journalism norms and values as well as with communities and audiences. Yet, this state of opposition – or polarisation – between media practitioners must be more thoroughly analysed and could benefit from a more systemic approach. Thus, investigating the media systems in Latin America could lead to an understanding of this situation and the different contexts in which journalism operates, which influence and impact NJ’s commitments and the practices of CJ practitioners.

Therefore, I suggest that in authoritarian and nondemocratic contexts, CJ exhibits strong alignment with the normative mission and values that expanded from the NJ concept of the practice. Thus, discussing

what journalism and professionalism are and this understanding affects the norms and roles of the journalism profession, and the social function of journalism in society is essential for understanding these differences and the role that these commitments play in CJ practices, values and missions.

NJ concerns the ideal functions, roles and practices of the profession (Benson, 2008). Journalism's functions, boundaries and roles are discourses from inside to outside and vice versa. NJ thus has a function enacted by practitioners as a set of shared norms and values; on the other hand, it is also how the profession is perceived by society. However, the development of ICTs, the introduction of new intermediaries and the platformisation of society, which have impacted the journalism industry, have also challenged the profession, its autonomy and its ability to perform well normatively. These factors have led to the contestation of the journalistic field and its capacity to deliver its mission and values to society due to movements of globalisation and convergence (Esser and Neuberger, 2019; Hanitzsch *et al.*, 2019a; Mellado, 2020). Nevertheless, I contend that these normative notions of journalism persist as an ideological beacon for journalists, especially for those practicing investigative journalism and CJ. While many scholars have for long focused on how journalism has lost its gates and boundaries (e.g., Carlson and Lewis, 2015; Deuze and Witschge, 2018; Mellado, 2020), investigative journalism depends on them, among others for security reasons, trust and professionalism (Müller and Wiik, 2021). Thus, discussing the NJ paradigm helps to underpin these commitments and relate them to the body of knowledge built around the state of both ideological and practical rules that set the profession's behaviour and boundaries, through the intersection of four main characteristics: journalism's function, role, boundaries and performance.

Moreover, NJ can have many interpretations. The norms change according to ideological constructions and cultural contexts. According to external and internal factors, these rules and norms also change over time. For instance, some have argued that digital as well as other types of journalism, such as broadcast or print press, might have different ideas of what normatively good journalism is (e.g., Witschge *et al.*, 2016; Steensen and Westlund, 2020). However, some patterns exist that are possible to explore—namely the norms, roles and functions that help a society to identify and legitimise the profession. These are also the basis of the professional identities by which journalists distinguish themselves from other professionals and of how they evaluate, criticise and judge other journalists and forms of doing journalism. Therefore, based on these common understandings of the norms, values and practices of NJ, this study used the paradigm to identify the common threads among CJ practitioners' commitments, norms, mission and values, as well as critiqued and challenged them. This theoretical framework informed the study by helping me to (i) identify the commitments, norms and values of CJ practitioners, and to (ii) understand these common threads in relation to contexts and specificities of regional and local trends.

To a large extent, normative journalism is a product of an understanding of journalism as a profession that follows rules and norms recognised inside and outside of the workplace. From a sociological perspective, Schudson and Anderson (2009) argued that two principles characterise the journalism profession: first, journalism's importance is self-evident, and second, journalism presents a 'cultural authority' (p. 88). According to the authors, the journalism profession owns its jurisdiction—which means the manner in which professionals conduct their work under a shared understanding of what it is about, or they share an 'abstract knowledge' (p. 89) of the work. Moreover, a profession is work based on a system of knowledge passed from one individual to another inside a formal educational system, which is self-governed—meaning that it has entities and instances of power, codes and a relationship with other institutions. A professional–client relationship also governs it, which is 'licensed' to be practised by legal means or otherwise, is 'widely recognised' and holds 'social esteem'. Furthermore, from a sociological perspective, journalism as a profession shares the idea of a 'project', or an 'ideal' of what the profession

should be: ‘ideal-typical constructions do not tell us what a profession is, only what it pretends to be’ (Larson, 1977).

Many authors would define journalism according to what journalists do: reporting the news. For instance, Schudson (2013) argued that journalism produces and distributes information about daily events. In the same vein, Hanitzsch et al. (2019) advocated for an understanding of journalism according to its practices and different cultures. Traquina (2005) combined NJ with its function, which is to deliver information to the public without censorship. This is related to the democratic functions of journalism. For him, the free press is responsible for being a state and power watchdog. By contrast, journalism in a totalitarian regime would be propaganda.

Furthermore, Traquina (2005) claimed that journalism is defined by two fields or ‘poles’. The first is the economic pole, which is characterised by the news as a product or business. The second is the ideological pole, in which the news assumes a definition of a public service. The author’s use of the term ‘field’ to define the profession and work of journalism was based on Bourdieu’s concept of the field as a space of relative autonomy, in which external and internal factors play crucial roles in exercising the profession. Journalism is then a profession that enjoys ‘relative autonomy’ (p. X), characterised as an activity that is highly conditioned to the profession’s external and internal factors: time, hierarchy, the business, competitiveness and pressure from diverse social agents. Simultaneously, journalism has power: journalists are active participants in the construction and definition of the news and, consequently, of reality. Therefore, Traquina argued that instead of calling it journalism, it would be more accurate to call it the journalistic field. Three reasons exist for this: First, journalism is the target of many social agents who want journalists to fulfil their communication strategies; second, the news seems like a prize that the players (the social agents) are trying to win; and third, there is a group of practitioners who claim that they own expertise or specialised knowledge, or in other words, they monopolise the definition of what the news is as well as its construction. Understanding that the main product of journalism is the news results from a dialectical relationship between the external social agents and practitioners who claim a monopoly on knowledge; however, countless forces litter the battlefield that is professional journalism. Moreover, journalism is also culturally and socially recognised by its many roles, functions and features; thus, understanding journalism as a field under dispute is also helpful.

Therefore, this research used both lines of arguments, namely those that define journalism as a normatively defined profession and those that define it as a field influenced, impacted and limited by an extensive range of forces, which are not mutually exclusive and offer a broader view of the subject. In this context, the normative paradigm of journalism discusses the social place of journalism (Hardt, 2002). For instance, concepts that cause journalism and democracy to intertwine have received much criticism, especially since the digitalisation of society and the media, which has allowed more actors to form a shared sense of reality. As Josephi (2016) argued, the increasing participation of other social actors in the process of information dissemination and production, especially the participation of marginalised communities in discussions on the Internet, have demonstrated that ‘this ever-increasing mix of global and local puts into question whether democracy needs a “common set of facts” to enable its workings’ (p. 16). Nevertheless, democratic values are still at the core of journalism’s perception of its duties and their scope of influence, especially in countries where press freedom is under constant attack (Mellado and Dalen, 2014). Thus, between rhetoric and practice, journalists’ perception of their role in society is one of the essential elements of this discussion.

Moreover, the economic security that journalism assumed in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century was responsible for the idea of total liberty, independence and autonomy of the press. Even though this theory of journalism’s



independence and autonomy is intrinsically related to democracies, especially to the context of the United States, many authors have argued that the losses caused by the digitalisation of society have caused the ‘deterioration’ of the hegemonic journalistic authority due to the disruption of its business model (e.g., Witschge *et al.*, 2016). Nevertheless, both democracy and digital media are unequally spread globally. The introduction of new players to the media industry has been viewed as an inflexion point by many, especially those who associate freedom of the press with the commercialisation and freedom of commercial alliance (Fox and Waisbord, 2002; Waisbord, 2009; Pickard, 2019). On the other hand, the emergence of new players is also viewed as a form of journalistic restoration, which inverts the commercial logic (Pickard, 2019). Therefore, although a consensus exists that journalists as professionals have established their practices and view their role quite similarly, a caveat exists to this; that is, other factors also matter, such as space, organisations and alliances as well as the social, economic and political contexts in which they operate. Siebert, Peterson and Schramm (1956) argued that the set of hurdles that journalism and journalists face in many parts of the world is at the basis of an understanding of what it means to be a journalist, what journalism is for and the values that journalists pledge their allegiance to. This still holds true today. The different circumstances and historical, economic and political contexts have demonstrated a significant impact in the development of the practice, especially in countries with authoritarian dictatorships and where nondemocratic regimes are in and out of power, such as Brazil and many other countries in Latin America (Obijiofor, Murray and Singh, 2017).

### **Normative journalism and the social function of journalism**

Journalism’s functions, boundaries and roles are discourses from inside to outside and *vice versa*. NJ thus has a function that is enacted by practitioners as a set of norms and values that they share; on the other hand, it is also how the profession is perceived by society. However, most recent developments in the industry and in technology have had significant impacts on the practice and perception of journalism as well as its role and capability to deliver it. These two strands are not necessarily contradictory, and they are complementary since the majority recognise that, even in the most hostile contexts, journalists are committed to some basic and common professional rules and norms (Hanitzsch *et al.*, 2019).

From the inside out, the ideals and commitments of journalists to the good exercise of the profession, which change according to external and internal circumstances, play a significant role in the NJ paradigm. This role is related to the sociology of the profession, which is determined by a set of norms and rules that determine the boundaries of the work, who is inside the profession and who is outside of it, the autonomy it involves and the ability to self-regulate (Schudson and Anderson, 2009).

Simultaneously, journalism’s functions are related to its roles in society, which are determined by different perceptions of the institution of journalism in the many circumstances in which it is practised. Many authors have argued that the roles of journalism might change according to the political regime (e.g., Traquina, 2005; Benson, 2008; Christians *et al.*, 2010). According to these authors, journalism under authoritarian and totalitarian regimes is highly aligned with the power, where the boundaries between journalism and propaganda become blurred. In such regimes, journalism maintains order and stability, explains issues and government rules and informs the public. By contrast, journalism practised in democracies has a more independent role and works as an essential social tool for keeping government and power under public control. However, these are very broad views of the roles and functions of journalism in society in different regimes. Hence, the present study further discussed this strand, which is firmly attached to political and economic constraints on as well as affordances to the professional journalism.

Globalisation, the increasing connectivity of the world and the fall of the Soviet Union have had significant impacts on the spread of these practices (Park and Curran, 2000; Waisbord, 2014). Hanitzsch et al. (2019) argued that journalism practices worldwide spread regardless of the country's political regime, democratic or otherwise, which relates to the idea that journalism is more of a compound of practices than an industry (e.g., Bell, Anderson and Shirky, 2015; Deuze and Witschge, 2018). Thus, in this strand of arguments, cultures of journalism are explored in the sense that ideals and experience are combined to draw a picture of the many types of journalism practised around the world.

The NJ paradigm is still very Western-based, which influences even the view of scholars on the subject (Mutsvairo *et al.*, 2021). Nevertheless, discussing journalism as a profession undoubtedly involves an understanding of the body of professional ideologies that makes journalism and journalists look alike in most places. Whereas the ideals and commitments might be similar in many contexts, the political, economic and social contexts might influence, impact and limit journalism practices, values and missions. This is even more evident in regions and countries where democracy is under siege.

Even though journalism's norms and values refer more to its effects and influences on Western democratic societies, journalists in Latin America exhibit great alignment with these norms and values, albeit with some singularities, such as the fight for freedom and democracy (e.g., de Albuquerque and Roxo da Silva, 2009). Thus, journalism in these countries is quite complex to understand. Even though journalists and social agents have started to take control of their narratives, they still hold Western normative perspectives of the profession, its mission and its values in high esteem (Mellado and Dalen, 2014).

Some of these norms and values may be stressed or abandoned according to numerous conditions. Traquina (2005) explained that these conditions are both internal and external. The internal conditions are related to the individual forum, mission and values that individual journalists carry as their purpose and jurisdiction (Schudson and Anderson, 2009), and also to the organisational forum, which is an instance of power within the profession that presents resistance to the liberty of individual professionals. Moreover, the external conditions are both directly (e.g., levels of freedom of expression and media regulation) and indirectly related (e.g., levels of the institution and democratic strength) to the profession but offer equal constraints. Undoubtedly, these forces play a role in limiting or liberating journalistic practices in a highly complex manner. Thus, it is necessary to understand which norms and values define the profession, the many roles of NJ and which are more aligned with the purposes and practices of journalists in Latin America and those living in authoritarian or nondemocratic countries. These objectives are in line with those of the present research.

In summary, journalism as a profession and an institution follows a set of rules and a shared set of ideals, which translate into norms of the profession that distinguish who is a journalist and who is not as well as how to practice it. Moreover, these norms establish the roles that journalists fulfil in society and the perception of them. However, this perception has been highly affected by the evolution of ICTs and the crisis of traditional business models of journalism. These factors have been described as the blurred boundaries of journalism, which have numerous consequences for normative roles and performance. Moreover, the introduction of new actors and players as well as the increasing participation of audiences in news production pose further challenges to journalism (see Chapter 2 for details). Finally, they define the function of journalism as an institution, according to many contextual and individual factors. NJ's functions and roles have been used interchangeably by some authors (e.g., Christians *et al.*, 2010). Nevertheless, for clarity, I suggest a conceptual distinction in which journalism's functions relate to the inside-out process of defining journalism within societal expectations, as an ideological construct that helps to determine the boundaries of the work (Deuze and Witschge, 2018). The role of journalism is understood as the role that

practitioners play in society as, for instance, watchdogs. As Mellado (2020) explained, journalists claim that they perform a certain role in society, which is how they perceive their work and justify it. These concepts are intertwined and constantly mutate due to technological advances as well as political, economic, cultural and societal factors.

Thus, NJ is a kind of umbrella that aggregates both ideological and practical rules and sets the profession’s behaviour and boundaries. For clarity, Table 1 breaks down the concepts that intertwine and intersect into four main characteristics, namely the function of journalism, professional roles, journalism boundaries and professional performance:

*Table 2 Normative journalism and intersections*

<i>Concept</i>	<i>Summary</i>
<i>Journalism function</i>	This is related to the ideal of journalism’s social function, especially in democracies, but that is also otherwise viewed as a common feature of journalism regardless of the political regime. However, it entails the vital element of the recognition of journalism’s power to change and influence social and political outcomes.
<i>Professional roles</i>	These refer to ideas and concepts related to journalism’s professional exercise. They account for rules and norms that journalists should follow to be able to perform normatively good journalism through, for instance, representing the many voices in society, monitoring power and facilitating public debate.
<i>Journalism boundaries</i>	The evolution of ICT and the crisis of traditional business models of journalism are at the basis of what has been described as the blurred boundaries of journalism, which have many consequences for normative roles and performance.
<i>Professional performance</i>	Even though journalists embrace a set of commitments, their capability to deliver them is understood not to be as promising. Thus, journalists might place some of their commitments aside due to the many constraints on their work.

### **Journalism’s function, norms and roles**

NJ can have many interpretations. The norms change according to ideological constructions and cultural contexts. According to external and internal factors, these rules and norms also change over time. For instance, some have argued that digital as well as other types of journalism, such as broadcast and print press, might have different ideas of what normatively good journalism is (e.g., Witschge *et al.*, 2016;

Steensen and Westlund, 2020). However, some patterns exist that are possible to explore—namely the norms, roles and functions that help a society to identify and legitimise the profession. These are also the basis of the professional identities by which journalists distinguish themselves from other professionals and of how they evaluate, criticise and judge other journalists and forms of doing journalism.

The normative function of journalism has been continually renegotiated due to many factors; however, most authors agree that the many changes to the practice and the relationship with audiences engendered by the development of ICTs challenge the NJ paradigm; most recently, they have been related to the introduction of new actors and players in the market as well as to convergence and globalisation (Esser and Neuberger, 2019; Hanitzsch *et al.*, 2019a; Mellado, 2020).

For starters, the development of ICT has enabled more social actors and new players to participate in the production of news and its ecosystem (Domingo and Cam, 2015). The introduction of new and more social actors, as discussed in the literature review (Chapter 2), refers to the capability of these actors to influence and participate in the production of news. These new actors are audiences, bloggers, citizens and other nonprofessionals who take advantage of the new ubiquitous media to participate in and influence news production; here, everyone speaks with everyone and all aspects of life are interconnected by electronic means (Featherstone, 2009).

The new players refer to several organisations that, due to the development of ICT, have access to information that journalists and news organisations once had a monopoly over. These new players are NGOs, advocacy organisations and others from civil society, which again take advantage of the datafied and networked society to ‘act’ as journalists and cover local issues that would otherwise go unnoticed (Powers, 2015). These new players also include news outlets, such as journalistic start-ups and independent, nonprofit and small organisations that distance themselves from the traditional mainstream media to produce a kind of journalism that they believe to be normatively good. These players force the industry to evolve and innovate as well as attempt to re-establish, restore and reform journalism’s function in society through, for example, promoting social change and transformation (e.g., Boczkowski, 2005; de-Lima-Santos and Mesquita, 2021b).

These new players have been essential for filling the gap left by the legacy and mainstream media due to the crisis that journalism publishers have faced. This movement has been primarily led by the so-called digital-native media. These organisations have been repositioning themselves away from the aggregation of second-hand content, generating quality journalism at a level that competes with the highest-quality old-guard media (Duffy, Tandoc and Ling, 2018). Across Latin America, independent and digital-native media have played significant roles in covering topics not normally covered by legacy media (Mesquita and Fernandes, 2021). Thus, contrasting with previous assumptions, the emerging digital independent and alternative media have been the bastion of this return to basics (Esser and Neuberger, 2019), undoubtedly with some critical redefinitions, such as concepts that include objectivity, impartiality and accuracy.

In addition, the rise of new ICTs is the basis of the transformation of practices and business of newsrooms, which are also related to the convergence of numerous technological affordances to journalism. The convergence process has had two main effects in the practice of journalism. The first effect concerns the precarious working conditions of journalists, who have had a decreasing amount of time to deal with the many technologies available for delivering the news, ranging from social media to video and audio, mixing the news with the promotion of news outlets and journalists (Singer, 2015). The second effect concerns the ubiquity of media and the consequences of strategies of digital- and mobile-first journalism,

which narrow the relationship between professionals and users, consumers and audiences (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2015).

Nevertheless, the advances and development of ICTs are not detached from the global political and economic environment, which is increasingly globalised. Reese (2007) suggested that globalisation has ‘affected every social practice and institution in some way, we can say that journalism to varying degrees has become “globalised,” disrupted from old relationships and reconfigured in ways not accounted for by the national’ (p. 40). Moreover, globalisation has had a broad range of effects on the media and journalism industries. However, as Reese (2010) argued, it is not quite clear whether the media is shaped as a result of this globalisation trend or whether it is instead a cause of globalisation.

On the other hand, markets themselves are becoming globalised, including the media market, with the globalisation of journalistic outlets such as CNN (Cottle, 2009). This has had a large impact on the production of news, which translates into newsworthy conditions being challenged by global discourse as well as business models converging more to an entertainment model and the pressure of time. This refers to ‘the industry’s fetish of “live” 24/7 news from around the globe facilitated by cable and satellite delivery systems’ (p. 346).

However, regardless of the angle adopted to analyse the impacts of globalisation in the media, whether one of discourse or business, one of the most pressing issues concerning the globalisation of the news is the trend of homogenisation (e.g., Reese, 2010), where journalism seems to reflect a sort of monoculture detached from national and local realities. By contrast, as argued by Josephi (2005), outside of the Western-based paradigm, globalisation does not change journalism norms since much of the journalistic culture and its understanding of inclusiveness discourses is still established at the national and local levels. Thus, even though many constraining contextual factors influence journalism, the normative function of journalism in society is still pursued by professionals and other media practitioners. Moreover, despite numerous crises related to reputation and reliability, journalism is still viewed by society as a profession with distinguished characteristics and specific social and cultural functions.

### ***Journalism’s function***

The functions of journalism are mostly related to external perceptions and its role in society and for other institutions (Deuze and Witschge, 2018). These functions are thus tied to social expectations, most of which are circumstantial and utilitarian. This means that to society, journalism has a role to play and a function that is mostly regarded as ideals of society, or a self-perception of that society (Görke and Scholl, 2006). Again, these circumstances change according to the needs and contexts in which journalism operates (Mellado, 2020). Nevertheless, practitioners also carry these ideal functions with them and attempt to incorporate them into their routines through not only commitments and behaviours but also practices, such as guaranteeing the diversity of voices and narratives. However, the function that journalism should fulfil in society is a rather ideological one shared by both journalists and society.

The ideological component of journalism operates at the level of its practitioners’ civic and moral guidelines, which remain the mainframe that orients journalists worldwide; by contrast, for society, journalism’s functions are much more straightforward, such as informing citizens with fact-based, relevant information (Deuze and Witschge, 2018). On the other hand, according to many scholars, journalism also plays a crucial function for democracy through the support of, for example, its watchdog and monitoring roles, and also through the representation and participation of citizens and political parties among others (e.g., Christians *et al.*, 2010). Nevertheless, remarkably few studies have focused on the public and societal

expectations of journalism's functions, with most studies having focused on the perceptions of journalists and practitioners regarding their functions in society.

According to Christians et al. (2010), the democratic function, for instance, is established by the normative roles and functions of journalism, which range from a 'facilitative role' to a 'radical role'. The authors described the facilitative role as the commitment of these professionals to a civic democratic environment, where they pursue and act as facilitators of civil society participation, representation and deliberation. The radical role is characterised by radical criticism and strong battles against dominance and hegemony; its routes are based on power contestation and a popular approach. These two elements configure, according to the authors, some of the many roles and functions that journalism has in society, which translate into moral obligations and a responsibility for democratic ideal and practices.

However, even in authoritarian, less democratic contexts or developing democracies, journalism's civic role and function are widespread, as are its ethical commitments to democracy, plurality and access to information and the adherence to normative professional roles and norms. Yet, circumstantial and contextual factors contribute to some functions being viewed as more critical than others. For instance, besides the journalistic function of sustaining democracy, Egyptian journalists mostly view their function as supporting Arab norms and values, with greater adherence to the informative role (Ramaprasad and Hamdy, 2006) than to objectivity, which is the cornerstone of journalism in liberal democracies (Mellado, 2020). In Brazil, Chile and Mexico, journalists' ethical and ideological commitments are identified with a set of journalistic functions within domains of journalism culture, such as an interventionism function. According to Mellado et al. (2012), this journalistic function is a form of doing journalism that is more active and involved with problems and communities than other types of journalism, which are objective and distant from the many realities. These examples are illustrative of the numerous contextual factors that influence the notion of journalism's function. Thus, in summary, even though journalism's function and roles are interchangeable, the present study separated them, where journalism's function relates to societal expectations on journalism, whereas its roles are focused on the concepts and ideals that journalists believe they are performing when producing the news (Tandoc, Hellmueller and Vos, 2013).

### ***Professional roles and identity***

The roles of journalism are understood in terms of how and what practitioners perceive to be their responsibility and identity. These roles are several and, as explained before, they might change according to many factors. Nevertheless, it is possible to highlight some common threads, such as the truth-seeking, monitoring, informative and facilitative roles.

First, the truth-seeking role refers to an ideal that is generally connected to the standards of objectivity and detachment. It is based on the idea that a journalist can report the facts without emotional attachment to people and events (Detrani, 2011). These notions have been questioned as journalists are recognised to be part of an interpretative community, influenced by their social position and view of the world (Vos, 2018). Furthermore, journalists are faced with the impossibility of bringing justice to their reporting due to historically structured racism and violence, leading to their incapacity to perform another norm—namely representativeness. The representative role rests on the idea that journalism plays a vital role in representing the many voices in society in their work (Vos, 2018). This feature is also conceptualised as the diversity of journalistic narratives, meaning that journalists should be able to bring not necessarily contrasting voices but rather a broader range of voices to public debate. These include minorities, especially those historically left out of the narratives and media discourse. The criticism of this role is heavily related to the actual

capacity of journalists to escape their comfort zone and connect with communities. Moreover, it concerns their ability to distance themselves from power and from declaratory journalism—a form of reporting that only considers the authorities' statements without critique or problematisation of the social impacts (Oliveira, 2020).

The second normative assumption is the monitoring role, which is connected to the democratic tradition that journalism should perform checks and balances on governments and power. This role is commonly known as the watchdog role of journalism in society. According to some authors, this role has not spread under totalitarian and authoritarian regimes or in less or nondemocratic countries (e.g., Mellado and Lagos, 2013). However, the emergence of new players in media ecosystems due to the development of ICTs, especially the Internet, has increased the impact of dissonant voices in journalism, especially in the Global South. This is observed in cases such as Cuba, where independent and alternative media is emerging (Rodríguez Arechavaleta, 2021), and also in Brazil, where the commercial media system is more stable. Moreover, journalism has a facilitative role, which was described by Christians et al. (2010) as the commitment of journalists to a civic, democratic environment, where they pursue a role as facilitators of civil society's participation, representation and deliberation. Said role is highly connected to the ideal of the need for an informed public to guarantee citizen participation in the political realm, and it is understood as a democratic necessity.

Third, the informative role is also connected to the democratic ideals of journalism's function. This role is understood as the practice of bringing to public attention information that is required for civil and democratic participation (Christians *et al.*, 2010). In this sense, journalists should be able to present in the news the many voices, many parties and diversity of opinions in the public arena. On the one hand, this role is associated with the capacity of journalists to be witness to facts and events, and it is widely related to the capacity to be objective in this observation, which is seen as a way to pursue the truth behind events and facts (Canella, 2021). However, this idea that journalists are able to genuinely represent reality through objective observation is highly contested, providing a path to other forms and expressions for presenting events and facts based in fairness and the recognition of unconscious bias and balance (Cunningham, 2003).

On the other hand, the informative role is also associated with the role of facilitating debate in the public arena (Gross, 2002). According to Gross, these two roles are identified by the ideals of political representation and diversity, in which the press is responsible for the introduction of new ideas, ideologies and even parties to the democratic system, thus facilitating discussions rather than directly stimulating debate. By contrast, Christians et al. (2010) argued that the facilitative role is more related to the idea of promoting a shared consensus rather than individual and specific interests. This role, according to the authors, is essential for democratic participation as well as for improving the quality of public debate. In summary, this role is regarded as fundamental for improving representation, pluralism and diversity in public debate through journalism.

In addition, experiences from around the world have demonstrated that journalism and journalists have been pursuing these roles even in less democratic contexts. An excellent example is the COVID-19 pandemic, which has demonstrated that even though journalism faces a severe reputational crisis, populations across the globe have relied on it to access information about the pandemic (Nielsen *et al.*, 2020). For instance, in Latin America, a consortium of journalists and news organisations provided up-to-date data about the number of cases, hospitalisations, vaccinations and movement restrictions. Thus, this feature of NJ can be associated with the ideals of journalism as a public service, which is characterised by a search for raising client–professional relations and delivering to audiences what is believed to be of

interest to them. Finally, other norms that have been under attack are objectivity and neutrality (or impartiality), which are increasingly challenged by the blurred boundaries of the profession.

### *Journalism boundaries*

Scholars often argue that technological developments and their pervasive nature, as well as the crisis of traditional business models, have contributed to what many refer to as the blurred boundaries of journalism. In today's scenario of fierce competition, media organisations and journalists are required to expand how news works, embracing tasks beyond the traditional limits of journalism (Carlson and Lewis, 2015). Journalism boundaries are drawn from within an ideal of the profession. The discourse and practice aim to limit the entry of other actors and to guarantee their autonomy. These work boundaries are essential for understanding how certain people, types of work and ways of thinking have evolved to construct, reiterate and even challenge the boundaries of acceptable journalistic practices. The theory evolved from Thomas Gieryn's sociological theories, which described boundaries of work under three main mechanisms: expansion, expulsion and protection of autonomy (Gieryn, 1983). The first is related to field expansion, which could invade another field, thereby merging the activities. Second, the expulsion mechanism is used to limit entry and ban intruders, aiming to protect the field from novel actors. Third, autonomy is conferred to significant actors to reinforce the control of a field; relevant studies have indicated that this sense of work boundaries has been challenged for commercial and technological reasons (e.g., Lewis and Westlund, 2015; Lewis and Usher, 2016). The commercial perspective is described as the need for journalists and news organisations to tackle the crisis of business models. Thus, they are attempted more business-oriented solutions, which often involve lowering the walls between newsrooms and commercial departments.

An example is the journalism of BuzzFeed, which has explored innovative advertising strategies through content creation (de-Lima-Santos and Mesquita, 2021c). Furthermore, from a business perspective, an increasing number of news organisations depend on philanthropic money to sustain themselves. To access such funding, news organisations must adapt and include noneditorial work in their daily activities to pursue and manage the foundation funding. They may even create new positions focused on searching and preparing for these opportunities. These duties are viewed as legitimate journalistic practices by the news outlets and journalists who undertake them. This rhetoric is used to defend a strict news–business boundary logic driven by the crisis of the news industry and its attempts to survive (Coddington, 2015; Scott, Bunce and Wright, 2019). From a technological perspective, audiences have an increasing capability to participate in journalistic production, which could also be identified as participatory journalism, as well as in other forms of journalism that promote more effective and connected audience–journalist relationships. This has resulted in a 'shift in journalists' role perceptions to more outcome-oriented reporting' (Scott, Bunce and Wright, 2019, p. 2035). All of the aforementioned elements contribute to a more fluid and unstable context, which professionals must navigate to perform their journalistic mission; however, this is not always possible due to many factors.

### *Journalism role performance*

Even though the norms and values of journalism might change according to numerous conditions, some ground rules define what journalism is and what it is supposed to do—at least ideally. On the other hand, the capability of journalists to deliver what they believe is required is limited by many factors, which might influence journalism performance. In this sense, even though journalists' commitments are firmly



attached to ideals and norms, not everything can be achieved. Many authors have argued that a detachment of conceptual and idealistic journalism roles and performance is necessary. This detachment is limited and challenged by many factors, including time pressure, precarious working conditions and even more contextual elements, as the political forces surrounding journalists and news organisations can impact how journalism is performed (Mellado and Dalen, 2014; Hellmueller and Mellado, 2015; Mellado, 2020). Journalism performance is a collective action as well as a relational one (Hellmueller and Mellado, 2015). It is a collective negotiation within the professional space, status and culture, and also a relational negotiation because it is performed within its context and zone of influence. Thus, journalism performance intersects NJ, media ecosystems and systems, as well as political, economic and cultural contexts. Thus, the journalism practised during times of democracy and peace might not be the same as that during, for example, wartime. Some different norms could be stressed or destressed according to these movements. This has been the case regarding the type of journalism seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, where the facilitative role of journalism has been much more relevant than other norms. Thus, political and cultural contexts and industry development demand that journalists and news organisations stress some roles over others. During the coverage of the pandemic, especially in Latin America and the United States, racial and gender tensions also contributed to the different roles pushed to the forefront, such as diversity and representativeness. This has also been due to the more significant impact of the pandemic on poorer communities; in black, brown and indigenous communities; and finally on women rather than on men. In summary, the change in and norms of the journalistic narrative might be more critical than others according to the circumstances, which is why some authors have argued that the performance of journalism is situational (e.g., Nee and Santana, 2021). However, the capability to perform the journalistic role is also more than ever influenced and impacted by the new forms of participation in news productions and the introduction of new actors.

### **Development and incorporation of media systems theory**

Comparative media systems theory (CMS) promotes a more grounded set of elements of media systems analysis and conceptualisation, which are complementary – not contrary – to other approaches to journalism cultures. Furthermore, these elements are particularly critical for understanding the reality of journalism in various contexts, even though this is a very Western-based outline (Mellado *et al.*, 2017). Notably, in their seminal outline of media systems theory, Hallin and Mancini (2004) did not include Latin America. They explained that this decision was due to the lack of information and data for running the proposed analysis. However, some authors have attempted to expand Hallin and Mancini's outline to understand media systems in other parts of the globe (e.g., Waisbord, 2009; de Albuquerque, 2011; Guerrero and Márquez-Ramírez, 2014). Guerrero and Márquez-Ramírez (2014), for instance, asserted that Latin America portrays a captured media system, exhibiting low levels of mass journalism circulation as well as journalistic professionalism. Furthermore, as argued by the authors, despite attempting to understand Latin America as not a hegemonic block, the main characteristics of the media systems in the region remain unchanged, namely media ownership concentration and state intervention.

Even though generalisations must be avoided, structural analysis is highly desirable. This is due to its capacity to provide grounded dimensions of analysis, which range from political to economic factors and help the researcher to not overemphasise or under-represent certain characteristics. Thus, the systemic analysis of the media is used in the present study as a tool for underpinning media ecosystems, their historical and development paths and their political and institutional relationships, thereby promoting a view of the contextual forces shaping the practice of journalism, its commitments and capability to deliver

them. To this end, the present chapter deploys Hallin and Mancini (2004)'s comparative media systems theory based on the analysis of the following four dimensions: the development of mass media, political parallelism, professionalisation and state intervention in the market. Hallin and Mancini's outline is then challenged and expanded with an analysis of Latin American specificities, using the main studies that have analysed media systems in the Global South, and more specifically in Latin America. The aim is to compare and contrast the social, economic, political and historical contexts of several countries of Latin America with the final objective of understanding the contexts in which the phenomenon of collaborative journalism is established as well as evolves and develops.

In this context, a comparison is an essential tool for avoiding incorrect generalisations as well as super-value singularities, which are critical in the context of this study due to its multinational approach. Nevertheless, an essential aspect of bringing such a theoretical framework to the present study is enabling the theory and its assumptions to be challenged. In the current research context, I argue that other factors concerning the different realities of Latin America must also be introduced. Thus, I incorporate the issue of violence and the overall state of impunity in Latin America as forces that also limit and shape the practice in the region. The region's lack of safety and overall state of ongoing violence and impunity are underlying issues directly reflected in the choices of journalists and news organisations, especially in terms of association, coverage and practices, which also reflect in the decision to collaborate (Chacón and Saldaña, 2020). Particularly in authoritarian, underdeveloped democracies and nondemocratic contexts, violence and attacks against media practitioners are changing and shaping the media systems through actively influencing the market, constraining the activity and operation of journalists and news organisations, forcing journalists and news organisations to engage in self-censorship and necessitating other practices for securing their lives and work (see, Imbusch, Misse and Carrión, 2011; Vos, 2018; González and Rodelo, 2020). Thus, through an analysis of the contexts that help shape Latin American media systems, I argue that violence and news safety are intertwined by impacting many layers of the profession.

Hanitzsch et al. (2011) demonstrated that journalism assumes specific characteristics of the places in which it is practised. The authors also argued that journalism is influenced by and plays different roles in different contexts. In the same vein, I argue that collaborative journalism will take various forms, portray other arrangements and assume different motivations in different countries. Specifically, in Latin America, as discussed in the few studies dedicated to understanding the similarities and singularities of collaborative journalism in the different areas and regions of the world, journalists and news organisations rely on a collaborative arrangement to fulfil other more pressing issues than their counterparts in other contexts (Chacón and Saldaña, 2020; Mesquita and de-Lima-Santos, 2021).

As discussed in the literature review (refer to Chapter 2), most scholars in the field have stated that collaboration has much to do with sharing. The refers to the sharing of data, resources, and sources due to the introduction of new ICT; the crisis of traditional business models, as reflected in the shrinkage of newsrooms and overall lack of investments in investigative teams; and the amount of data and information available, making it impossible for journalists and news outlets to deal with it all individually (see, e.g., Sambrook, 2018; Jenkins and Graves, 2022). Latin America shares many of the challenges faced by journalists and news organisations worldwide; however, its geographical, political, social and economic positions have made journalists there adopt the new journalistic practices for other reasons. This has emerged as a singularity and includes the use of collaboration to avoid or manage risks and to protect journalism professionals in case of attacks.

Therefore, to be able to understand these differences and what lies behind such decisions and actions, I argue that an understanding of the media ecosystems as well as the economic, political, social and

historical backgrounds of these countries can help to identify patterns, similarities and differences and also to interpret the data collected for this study. Thus, I argue that comparative media systems theory helps to underpin these numerous factors and make them a tool for understanding the elements and dimensions shaping the practice of collaborative journalism in Latin America and elsewhere.

In summary, instead of advocating and developing a media system model into which Latin America would fit, following the examples of the three models outlined by Hallin and Mancini (2004) – the liberal model, corporatist model and polarised pluralist model – this research rather concentrates on the elements that I argue help to underpin the contextual political and economic characteristics of the region. The rationale is that doing so will provide a better understanding of what lies behind and beneath the development of collaborative journalism practices.

### **Comparative media systems theory**

Comparing media systems has a long tradition. Long before the seminal work of Hallin and Mancini (2004), other studies attempted to group and compare the different experiences of the press around the world. One of the most well-known works is *Four Theories of the Press* by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm (1956), which reflected on the differences in how the press should be and what it does in authoritarian, libertarian, socially responsible and Soviet-totalitarian countries and contexts. Their argument was that the press ‘takes the form of the social and political structures’ (p. 1) and translates them into its practices, mission and values. According to the authors, the different press systems reflect the social understanding of other societies.

Therefore, the theory is grounded in theories of social systems, which are beliefs and practices in terms of politics and social organisation. This view has been widely adopted throughout the history of journalism and communications studies. Still, even though the *Four Theories of the Press* has been considered methodologically weak and Western-centric (Yin, 2008), it still holds significant esteem among those attempting to understand journalism under contextual factors and elements that help to shape the profession worldwide. Furthermore, these theories help to build a critical approach to the analysis of the forces influencing, impacting and limiting journalism and the press everywhere in the world (Hanusch and Vos, 2020). However, identifying co-evolution patterns of social phenomena cannot always be separated into cause and effect, as Hallin and Mancini (2004) explained.

The social, political and economic contexts influence media systems, but the media also affects social actors and influences political outcomes. Therefore, it is crucial not to lose sight of the dynamics in these systems or the media market’s constant transformation. Moreover, Latin America is not a hegemonic block, but the countries do share many commonalities despite numerous differences. Latin America is the most diverse region in the world in terms of ethnicity; it represents approximately 10% of the world’s population and was subjected to colonial domination for centuries, from which most of the countries still maintain a relationship of independence and dependence in many layers of political, economic and cultural realms. Thus, Western models are still the primary influence in the region, which many understand as a phenomenon of the Americanisation of Latin American society and institutions, particularly journalism (Barbosa, 2007).

Three aspects of the Latin American reality support the choice of using comparative media systems theory in this research: the first is that many similarities exist between the social, cultural, historical and political backgrounds of Latin American countries; the second is that media systems reflect on these issues, focusing on the press and journalism profession; and the third is that news media ecosystems also influence

social structures, and therefore, they might as well demonstrate its influences in the construction of collaborative journalism in the region. It is worth mentioning that this section does not intend to create a model (or several) that explains the Latin American media environment; rather, it aims to elucidate some of the aspects and patterns of distinctive and specific systemic characteristics and structures of influence that might affect the decisions and appetite of journalists and news organisations that conduct or are part of collaborative journalism efforts.

A question that has persisted since the technological revolution and has profoundly transformed the media ecology is whether the concept of media systems is still valid for analysing the many contextual factors that have shaped the news industry (Mancini, 2020). Although the seminal theory developed by Hallin and Mancini (2004) has received much criticism for its lack of a strong definition of media systems, it is mostly recognised that the definition can still provide several features that must be understood as whole (Hallin, 2020). This idea of wholeness is essential to comparative analysis since it offers a set of parameters for the analysis; however, it is especially critical not to overestimate or overlook some features that might influence media practices and development: ‘a media system comprises all mass media organised within a given social and political systems (usually a state)’ (Hardy, 2012, cited in Mancini, 2020, p. 5763).

In the opening of the book *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World*, Hallin and Mancini (2011) explained the reasons behind their decision to focus on Western countries when writing their first book on the topic. The authors clarified that they did not choose Western countries because they thought they were more important than other countries. Instead, one of the reasons was the availability of information about those countries. Several reasons exist for the lack of substantial, in-depth information about other world regions. Nevertheless, the traditional comparative media systems theory does not offer sufficient substance for analysing Latin American countries’ contexts. Still, it does provide food for thought and especially demonstrates that it is time to untie the strings holding back the development of a theoretical framework grounded empirically and epistemologically on different contexts. Therefore, in particular, a view of the media system in Latin America is not in discordance with global media trends, but rather – and most crucially – it is a political discourse inserted in specific contexts within the region. Salaverría and de-Lima-Santos (2021) stated the following:

In some cases, the media system of a place distinguishes itself by the attention paid to specific topics that, in other latitudes, do not arise any interest at all. In other cases, the differences come from the professional routines applied by the journalists, the technologies they use, or even the underlying values that guide their news work. If examined in detail, professional journalism cultures hide many subtle differences on a global scale beyond their apparent homogeneity. (p. 1)

Hallin and Mancini (2011) also argued that there is no ‘unitary “Western Model”’ (p. I), and the South most likely features as many singularities as commonalities, thus making them difficult to compare. Moreover, as explained by Márquez-Ramírez and Guerrero (2014), despite globalisation, digitalisation and other global trends, ‘local politics still play a fundamental role’ in shaping specific contexts (p. X). Furthermore, not disregarding the central role that technology plays in the current state of media systems (Chadwick, 2017), one should consider the insatiable contexts that many systems feature (Hallin, 2020). For instance, Mellado and Lagos (2013) offered a broader framework for analysing media systems outside of the Western world, focusing on new democracies. Using the case of Chile, the authors suggested a new approach to comparative analysis that considers broader dimensions, including a review of Hallin and Mancini’s (2004) theory.

For instance, instead of only considering political parallelism in the framework, Mellado and Lagos (2013) also introduced the political regime in which journalism operates. According to them, this is a significant difference since Hallin and Mancini’s (2004) framework departs from their analysis of the

perspective of Western liberal and stable democracies, thus considering political regimes as well as other factors, such as political structures. This involves the analysis of the centrality and/or regionalisation of power, which would be essential for including many other regions and countries in comparative studies. However, Mellado and Lagos (2013) also included a cultural dimension in their framework, which was less grounded and clear. They mentioned that a society could be considered more or less conservative, more or less religious and so on; nonetheless, they did not offer enough information about the issue and how this could impact media systems. They did, however, mention the influences that culture has on audiences, but again, the relationship needs to be more clearly established. Yet, the authors interestingly offered a hypothesis that watchdog journalism has had fewer impacts and is underdeveloped in Latin America. According to them, this is due to the cultural values characterised, for instance, by a society that ‘has a deep respect for hierarchy’ and ‘values education on obedience’ (p. 15).

In summary, even though a very Western-centric dominance exists in comparative media systems theory, there are many reliable new approaches to this valuable tool for analysing, describing and criticising the contexts that have helped to shape journalism in different parts of the world. Thus, by using a mix of the paradigms offered by Hallin and Mancini (2004, 2011), Guerrero and Márquez-Ramírez (2014) and Mellado and Lagos (2013), it is possible to analyse some of the Latin American systemic contexts. Thus, I critically approach these paradigms to shed light on the contextual factors shaping journalism in the region, adding to them specific elements that are directly related to the practice of collaboration in journalism. Such elements include the issue of the overconcentrated media ownership ecosystem in Latin America, the commercial model that shaped the region’s market and the increasing participation of new players and actors in the ecosystems. I also add the issue of security and news safety to the outlined theories, as this is a factor that has contributed to the evolution and development of collaborative journalism in the region.

Although many differences exist among Latin American countries, they also share similarities that can be explained by their common colonial and historical past. Furthermore, state intervention in the media through regulation policies and advertising structures and the over-concentration of the media are widespread. A critical ingredient of this shared historical path was described by Hallin and Papathanassopoulos (2002) in a Europe–Latin America comparative study. They singled out clientelism and its influence in shaping political systems in seven countries. Clientelism, as defined by the authors, is the uneven and often submissive relationship developed in a system of patrons and clients. According to them, due to the historical proximity and colonisation that led to Greece, Portugal, Spain and Italy on one side and Brazil, Colombia and Mexico on the other, clientelism made its way towards influencing the media and political systems of the latter group of countries. This argument was later reaffirmed in Hallin and Mancini (2004)’s comparative media systems study, in which they stated that the Polarised Pluralist model (represented by Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece and France) could also be applied to understand media systems in other parts of the world, especially in Latin America. Back to the clientelism study, the authors argued that the concept helps to understand the long-standing formation of political systems that privilege the few, which translate in Brazil into the rule of the *coronéis* – landowners linked to dominant oligarchies that go back to imperial times, which used to threaten and coerce workers into voting for their candidates (Lemenhe, 1996). Although Hallin and Papathanassopoulos’ (2002) study demonstrated that the significant number of similarities among these countries in terms of clientelism force political and media system formation, the authors argued that clientelism is losing power, mainly due to the commercialisation of the media in these countries. This means that the forces of the media market can help to undermine these almost colonial structures to build a more democratic and representative media system. Commercialisation is still seen as a lifeboat against elitism and populism (Curran, 2011). However, other experiences, especially the Latin American one, have shown that, despite the significant commercialisation of the media in Latin

America (Fox and Waisbord, 2002), the leading media organisations remain in the hands of a few, still perpetuating the elite discourse and power structures (Serrano, 2003; Bolaño, 2014). Thus, instead of promoting plurality, the commercialisation based on economic and political dominance has been reflected in greater media concentration and the perpetuation of old habits (Guerrero and Márquez-Ramírez, 2014).

Most countries in Latin America have followed the United States' commercial models to frame their models of media market development, especially in broadcasting, as many authors have stated (see, e.g., Bolaño, 2014; Fox and Waisbord, 2021). This does not mean a greater plurality of the market nor its independence. Guerrero and Márquez-Ramírez (2014) argued that extreme commercialisation has had the opposite effect in Latin American market, which is the elites working on and for the concentration and favouring their allies over the decades. They stated the following: 'Private-owned media in Latin America gained enormous economic benefits from local governments and historically played a fundamental role in sustaining the *status quo* for either dictatorial regimes, authoritarian governments or conservative agendas' (p. 2). For instance, in Brazil, as Bolaño (2014) emphasised, broadcasting has played an essential role in the formation of the culture and national identities. The elites' support for large broadcasting conglomerates has paved the way for 'the state being hijacked by the "fourth estate"' (p. 238). This common thread of mass media communication towards manipulating public opinion has been explored thoroughly by scholars in Brazil and Latin America (see, e.g., Kucinski, 1994; Serrano, 2003; Moraes, Ramonet and Serrano, 2015). Moraes et al. (2015) went so far as to say that the extreme concentration of the media in Latin America has implications for the understanding of well-established concepts, such as freedom of the press. According to the authors, these large media conglomerates, owned by oligarchies and allied with governments, dictate what freedom of the press is, pushing their agenda to safeguard their commercial liberties and guarantee their impunity in case of abusive commercial and even political arrangements. They argue that instead of press interests, freedom of the press means freedom of big capital in the media industry: 'these media corporations are not the fourth power at all: they are the power of money' (p. 73-74). This echoes other findings; for instance, Guerrero (2014) argued that the media system in Latin America has been seized by large media corporations that follow a model that does not necessarily apply to the needs of society: 'The model is called "captured liberal" due to the predominance of private commercial media organisations and to the conditions that hurdle states' regulatory capacities, and that afflict the watchdog role of journalism by economic and political interests' (p. 43).

Nevertheless, the crescent presence of independent and alternative media in Latin America has broken these patterns. Thus, in addition to the crisis of traditional business models in journalism and the increasing use of new ICT, the number of players in the Latin American market has also presented a risk to the large media corporations. Therefore, as Christofletti (2019) argued, there is not just one journalism crisis but many. They are related to journalism's economic and business models as well as its institutional dimension, which is emphasised by the decreased credibility and reputation of the press worldwide. A recent Reuters Institute report on trust in digital news and confidence in the press in Brazil, India, the United States and the United Kingdom seemed to confirm some of these arguments (Toff *et al.*, 2021). It indicated a higher level of distrust in the media than in other institutions, such as the church, military or science, in the case of Brazil. In summary, what have universally been understood as common threads of the press in democracies, such as freedom of the press and commercial freedom, have in Latin America different and sometimes chilling effects; thus, these concepts and ideals cannot be freely transported from liberal and mature democracies to understand the realities of the South and of other countries that do not enjoy the same social, economic and political structures. Then again, however, they do offer excellent material for comparison as well as to underpin the communalities and singularities of the studied subjects.

## **Political parallelism**

Political parallelism, according to Hallin and Mancini (2004), is a crucial dimension in the analysis of the autonomy and political alliances of the media. The authors argued that partisan media can still portray highly professional and neutral journalism, while highly commercialised media can be strong allies of power. This is understood as the levels of participation and representation of the political system in the media, considered in the content that the media produces, the organisational connections between media organisations and other political and institutional organisations, such as political parties, but also churches and unions. The authors also argued that political parallelism is how journalism practitioners tend to act as political actors, and how often, in some media systems, journalists tend to get involved and advocate for their political affiliations. This is also reflected in how audiences perceive the media and how journalists work, resulting in a partisan audience. Finally, these political affiliations and commitments are reflected in the roles and practices of journalism that, according to the authors, are translated into practices that are more like those of a publicist than a journalist in some media systems, while in others journalists would practice a more neutral or entrainment role.

Political parallelism has been used to discuss the levels of relationships and connections between political systems and structures and the media, and it has also been used as an instrument of the media for political outcomes (Guerrero and Márquez-Ramírez, 2014). In this sense, Latin America exhibits highly diverse levels of political parallelism; while the recent market reforms in Colombia have been reflected in higher levels of political parallelism (Montoya-Londoño, 2014), the still poor political party structures in Peru and in Brazil have had the opposite effect, with higher levels of media ownership concentration and powerful influence in political outcomes (see, e.g., Porto, 2012; Mastrini and Becerra, 2017). Yet, as argued by Guerrero and Márquez-Ramírez (2014), the overall unstable political and economic contexts in Latin America have significant impacts on the media industry and the capacity for journalism to fulfil its roles and functions in society, such as the watchdog role.

The structure of this dimension (political parallelism) of analysis has been criticised by several scholars, especially in the Global South. For instance, for Protzel (2014), political parallelism is impossible in countries where political parties have been dismantled by long dictatorships, which is the case for many countries in Latin America. A strong political party system was also understood to be crucial for analysing political parallelism by de Albuquerque (2012). According to him, besides a strong structure of political parties, political parallelism is also dependent on stable institutions. In this sense, the connections between media and the political structure would be defined by the relationship between these two structures. For instance, a weak political party structure and stable institutions would be reflected in media practitioners that are strongly attached to their role in promoting a better relationship between governments and the public; by contrast, a non-competitive political party system and unstable institutions would be reflected in self-censorship by media practitioners or less politically active media to be able to adapt to whoever is in power. In summary, according to the aforementioned authors, even though political parallelism is a critical dimension in the analysis of media systems, it must be adapted to the realities of less stable and democratic countries.

In this vein, the analysis of political structures and regimes is a constant in media systems theories as one of the leading forces of influence. To a large extent, political parallelism is considered one of the main concepts used by theorists. However, as de Albuquerque (2013) cautioned, there is a lack of political parallelism in many countries:

Many societies do not have competitive political systems and stable relationships between media and politics; some have neither. The connection between media and politics can assume features different from those commonly identified in the West in these societies. (p. 747)

According to the author, in South America for example, where the relationship between the political class and the media is increasing distrust as well as diminishing, the argument is even more evident. The region experiences a historical and constant alternating between authoritarian and democratic regimes (Tovar, 2009), which is characterised by a lack of stability. The state of repression and persecution that once characterised the less democratic and nondemocratic regimes in the region gave way to ‘a “softer” power control over economic means and “confluence of interests of the media”’ (Salaverría and de-Lima-Santos, 2021, p. 11). However, this all ended with the re-emergence of far-right and far-left authoritarian regimes in recent years. These new governments have been applying both approaches to the media. The far-right and far-left share the treatment of journalists and news media organisations in common. On one side, there is the far-right experience of Brazil, where the media is characterised as fake news and the attacks are very broad, from lawsuits to smear campaigns (*Voces del Sur lanza dossiê sobre ataques à imprensa na América Latina*, no date). On the other side, Nicaragua's far-left government has been employing more traditional persecution tactics on journalists and news organisations (Vílchez, 2019). Furthermore, in Latin America, in the most prolonged authoritarian regimes of Cuba and Venezuela, some differences exist in the treatment of journalists and news organisations, especially the independent ones. In Cuba, most media organisations are owned by the state; the flourishing independent and alternative media has been constantly suppressed, and citizens protest for freedom of expression (Rodríguez Arechavaleta, 2021).

In addition, the ups and downs in Cuba's relations with the United States present a particular situation regarding the capability to establish independent and alternative media. Venezuela also has similar economic constraints, yet independent media organisations have been able to emerge. Some of these organisations have continued their work, such as Armando.info, Efecto Cocuyo and El Pitazo, which have participated in many significant investigations, especially international ones such as The Panama Papers (Suárez Montoya, 2020). In this sense, Mellado and Lagos's (2013) framework aligns with the analysis of such ordeals by introducing the study of political regimes into the comparative media system paradigm.

### **Development of the media market**

The development of the media market as well as the mass circulation and penetration of the press are understood as some of the main differences among media systems (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). According to Hallin and Mancini, the mass circulation of newspapers has developed strongly in some media systems but not in others, making it a critical dimension of analysis. The reason is as follows: while in some countries the press has had lower levels of circulation, demonstrating the crucial participation of political actors in the sustainability of these businesses and some level of horizontality between the public and political systems, strong mass circulation on the other side has led to commercialisation and a more vertical relationship with the audience. Here, the press is seen as an intermediary between the public and the power.

However, in Latin America, the main market has not been the traditional press, but rather broadcast television and radio, which has followed an American model of commercialisation (Fox and Waisbord, 2002). According to de Albuquerque (2011), television has had a significant impact on the formation of national and cultural identities in the region. Rede Globo in Brazil and Televisa-Univision in Mexico are the largest and dominate the advertising market; thus, they have great power in the form of political and market influence. As argued by the author, Rede Globo in Brazil was responsible for influencing journalism practices and the commercial model. Furthermore, as suggested by Porto (2012), large conglomerates in



broadcast television in Brazil, for instance, played a crucial role in the process of re-democratisation by influencing the public sphere.

Contradicting the assumption that commercial liberal model media systems would reflect in journalism's professional autonomy, the Latin American experience in fact reveals that the commercialisation of the media market actually transformed it into a political instrument in the hands of a few, often those supporting the government (Protzel, 2014). This political instrumentalisation of the media is particularly evident through practices of power and control, such as clientelism (Hallin and Papathanassopoulos, 2002), as discussed earlier in this chapter.

Another assumption was that globalisation would have a significant impact on the region's market. Even when considering the external forces that influence media markets in Latin America, a high concentration of ownership in the market is widespread regardless of the medium (Guerrero and Márquez-Ramírez, 2014). Guerrero and Márquez-Ramírez (2014) argued that local regulations competing against the forces of globalisation and homogenisation have actually privileged and protected local powers and dominant players, thus resulting in a battle between deregulation, liberalisation and privatisation of the market and the members of a movement that aims to revive the social and civic roles of journalism in society.

Furthermore, the emerging digital and independent news market in the region raises some questions about the capability of the press to set the agenda for social and political communication and, consequently, of public debate. As Chadwick argued (2017), the development of digital media has had a significant impact on the media systems, transforming them into a hybrid system, where the old and new converge and transform practices, norms and organisational structures embedded in technologies. In this hybrid media system, where power is diffused, the new and old forms of doing journalism have the same potential to influence outcomes.

New media outlets, emerging mostly since the spread of access to the Internet and the deepening of the media publisher crisis, are the organisations that have been able to challenge not only the mass media monopoly on information control but also the market (see, e.g., Requejo-Alemán and Lugo-Ocando, 2014; Salaverría *et al.*, 2018). In this new and emerging market, other forms of journalism do not just emerge as a promise to restore journalism's social function, but also as alternatives to traditional business models through innovation and collaboration (de-Lima-Santos and Mesquita, 2021c).

Thus, rather than emphasising the power of mass, traditional and mainstream media, a better understanding of the media market in Latin America should consider these new forms and types of journalism endeavours, which are in line with a ubiquitous media reality and the de-centralisation of power.

### **Professionalisation**

As previously suggested, journalism's roles and functions in society in Latin America have been challenged and limited by the many political and economic contexts. Nevertheless, journalism as a professional and socially recognised institution prevails worldwide. Hallin and Mancini (2004) reported that professional training in journalism has increased, even though in some media systems, such as the North American system, professionalism and formal training have not always walked hand-in-hand. However, journalism as a profession has been able to establish itself in Latin America, through formal education, relative autonomy and independence. As was clearly demonstrated by Hanitzsch *et al.* (2019), a majority of journalists in Latin America are formally trained and introduced to the profession.

Moreover, as described by Hallin and Mancini (2004), the professionalisation of media practitioners is considered a critical dimension in the analysis of media systems through their characteristics, namely autonomy, professional norms and public service orientation. Autonomy is defined as the capability of a professional to establish and control its working process. There is also an external component to this, such as what the public knowledge of a professional journalist should or should not do. Nevertheless, according to the authors, the control that journalists have over the flow of information is recognised and gives them a certain level of dominance over their work. However, this specific thread of journalism autonomy has been contested, especially considering the development of ICT and the rise of a platformised society.

Yet, professional norms, as discussed throughout this chapter, remain widespread. As suggested by Hallin and Mancini (2004), professional norms are strongly attached to autonomy and the capability of professionals to set the rules for the free exercise of their profession; however, external elements can also influence this capacity. According to the authors, the influence of external actors can prevent journalists fulfilling their roles, as they themselves can limit the autonomy of these professionals. Finally, the public service orientation is understood as contrary to the instrumentalisation of the journalism profession, which means the control from outside actors (see also, Guerrero and Márquez-Ramírez, 2014). Nevertheless, as explained by Hallin and Mancini, the public service orientation is considered essential for journalism since the profession lacks other common threads in the sociology of professions. According to them, since journalism does not enjoy the same levels of social recognition from society, its autonomy and authority depend on the view that journalists and news organisation are serving the public with relevant information.

In this context, even though journalism professionalisation in Latin America does enjoy a somewhat clear formalisation, regulation and social recognition, the many issues that challenge, limit and restrict journalism practices in the region are also high, as explained by Guerrero and Márquez-Ramírez (2014) as follows:

Concerns about the future of journalism worldwide have focused on shifting business models, new platforms for news production and distribution, and the impact of technology and media convergence on journalistic practices. Yet many Latin American countries remain anchored to unresolved press issues including lack of autonomy, passive reporting, conflicts of interest, political advertising, threats to press freedom, weak, even dangerous conditions for investigative journalism, and political polarization. (p. 6)

Thus, the notion of journalism professionalism is under threat in Latin America, due not only to many political and economic factors but also to tensions inside the profession. According to many authors, the media industry in many countries in the region has privileged the discourses of the powerful, of the elites, rather than of citizens (see, e.g., Mastrini and Becerra, 2017; and others). This alliance with powerful and ruling elites has captured media professionalisation and its development. Thus, understanding the role of ruling elites in shaping the media market and industry in the region is essential for understanding the state–media relationship.

### **State–media relationship**

The levels of influence and intervention of the state in the media industry are considered one of the main threats in Latin American media ecosystems. According to many authors, post-Second World War, a new trend towards the regulation of the media market was marked by the deepening control and ownership of the old elites, not by the pluralist movement present in the region and in other contexts (e.g., Waisbord, 2000; Guerrero, 2014). As already argued in this chapter, large television broadcasting and media conglomerates have had significant impacts on the regulation process in the region. However, little is known about the many regulation policies that have emerged more recently in countries there. One common

thread, though, is the persistent lack of plurality and diversity policies, especially in terms of ownership status (Guerrero and Márquez-Ramírez, 2014).

In Argentina, for instance, the new regulation policies implemented by the Audio-visual Communications Services Law in 2009 were considered progressive in terms of guaranteeing plurality in the market (Macrory, 2013); however, a later analysis discovered that the law actually served Kirchners' (Néstor Carlos Kirchner and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner) political motivations and attacked Clarín's consolidation of the audio-visual market in the country (Guerrero, 2014). Furthermore, in Venezuela, Hugo Chavez's administration passed many laws to restrict the power of media owners, also suggesting the promotion of plurality, but actually the laws mostly promoted a discourse that media companies were biased against progressive governments and that media owners were defending 'anti-popular interests' (Norris, 2009, p. 315). According to Waisbord (2011), populism in Latin America is prone to regulatory policies to control the media in a policy-making process of media antagonism.

Another common thread in the state interventionism present in Latin America is the control of advertising. Public advertising is widespread and threatens the sustainability of many media companies in the region. Waisbord (2011) recalled how Kirchner increased official media advertising, which had a significant impact on the capacity of news media to cover wrongdoings of the government since 'news organizations that receive larger amounts of official advertising are less likely to report wrongdoing' (Di Tella & Franceschelli, 2009, cited in Waisbord, 2011, p. 108).

More recently, in Brazil, another form of public advertising control demonstrated how populist and authoritarian regimes also use this form of state intervention to punish the opposition and reward allies. In 2019, Jair Bolsonaro's government increased 63% the official advertising, whereas the ally TV Record received the greatest amount, becoming the first recipient of official advertising in the country (Prazeres, 2019). TV Record is a television network owned by the largest religious conglomerate in the country, named The Universal Church run by Edir Macedo, which has severely impacted the media market and promoted conservative and intolerant discourse (Birman and Lehmann, 1999).

Finally, another form of state intervention is the licence for operation given by the state, which is quite compelling in Latin America because of the region's cultural, economic, social and political dependence on television. According to Hallin and Mancini (2004), this form of state intervention is particularly influential on broadcast television and radio, which are entirely dependent on it to operate. Nevertheless, alternative media outlets, especially in the radio broadcasting market, have long challenged the state and media market by introducing new voices and dissonant discourses (see, e.g., Mattoni and Ceccobelli, 2018; Cushion, McDowell-Naylor and Thomas, 2021), but again, this is not hegemonic in the region. For instance, alternative radio broadcasting has been captured by the government, such as in Bolivia. According to Quintanilla (2014), the community radio stations that emerged in rural areas were co-opted by the government and, like in Cuba and Venezuela, started to promote the populist anti-elite discourse made popular by Evo Morales.

State intervention ranges from direct action in regulatory policies, laws, official advertising budgets and operation licences to more indirect and politicised discourses against the media and opposition. Although ruling elites and the overall concentration of media ownership still remain the same in most countries, emerging as well as traditional alternative media challenge the market and state control, but they also risk being co-opted by populist movements. Furthermore, these organisations are prone to attacks and violence by the state, other powerful figures and even the public, as discussed in the following section.

In summary, instead of creating a media system model (or several) into which Latin America would fit, I use and adapt the main dimensions in comparative media systems theory to discuss the contexts in which collaborative journalism is inserted. These dimensions are the development of the media market, the mass media industry, and the emerging digital and independent news market; political parallelism and its impossibility in the context of many countries in the region; professional journalism and the dominance of an elite in the construction of journalistic narratives; and finally, the level of influence and intervention of the state in the media industry, which is considered one of the main threads of Latin America media ecosystems. In addition, to the existing literature on media systems theories in Latin America, I add the issue of journalism safety. According to many reports, Latin American's countries are ranked as the most dangerous places for the exercise of journalism (RSF, 2020, 2021; UNESCO, 2020); hence, I argue this is an essential dimension to analyse collaborative practices in the context of this study.

### **Violence and its impacts on investigative journalism**

The analysis of media systems in the context of this research is concentrated on the specificities of Latin American realities; however, there is another contextual factor that is highly particular to the region. Said factor is the ongoing state of violence against the media in most countries under investigation (RSF, 2021), and I argue that analysing it is essential for developing a complete analysis of collaborative journalism in the region. 'Latin America has long been a violence-prone continent in all shapes and forms: political violence, guerrilla movements and civil wars, bloody revolutions, brutal dictatorships, domestic violence, criminal violence, and youth violence' (Imbusch, Misse, and Carrión 2011, 88). In Latin America, both civilians and governments promote violence against the media. The rage against journalists 'ranges from harassment to arbitrary detention, kidnapping, physical attacks, and killings' (Orgeret and Tayeewa, 2020, p. 1). These threats to journalism practice directly affect the value of the free flow of information, which can be equated, to a large extent, to attacks against freedom of speech and access to information (Garcés Prettel *et al.*, 2017; Orgeret and Tayeewa, 2020).

Cases of violence against the media and media practitioners are increasing worldwide. Technology has helped journalists to connect and collaborate in the same ways that governments, authorities and even the public use to attack journalists and news organisations (González and Rodelo, 2020). The decrease in journalism's reputation and power is another element of this tragic context, which in Latin America takes on more complex notes. In the last 10 years, 13 Latin American countries have been classified as the worst places in the world in terms of investigating and prosecuting murders of journalists. Among these 13 countries, Brazil and Mexico feature on the list every year (CPJ, 2019).

From assassinations to lawsuits, every aspect of the life of a journalist is at risk. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, from 1992 to 2020, almost 2,000 journalists were killed in the world, with 147 confirmed cases – where the instance of killing could be related directly to the journalist's work – registered in Latin America and another 173 unconfirmed cases – where the motivation is unclear but potentially linked to the exercise of the profession. This discrepancy in numbers – confirmed and unconfirmed – is the face of a region where impunity prevails. Few journalists have died as a consequence of their work in the last few years, but this is due to the discovery of new strategies for undermining the voice of journalists (UNESCO, 2020). Journalists and news organisations are constantly under pressure in the region. Other approaches for silencing journalists have emerged since the migration of the news ecosystem to an online environment, which is dominated by hate speech and polarisation (Walker, Mercea and Bastos, 2019). The popularisation of platforms underlies the political polarisation that many countries

in the region face (Sunstein, 2001), and it could be at the heart of this escalating violence. The hiring of bots on the networks as well as smear campaigns, just a couple of the strategies used to threaten journalists, are the new state policies against journalists and the free press. These new attacks are coupled with an already tragic history of violence against the media in Latin America.

This constant state of violence makes journalists restrict their actions, engaging in self-censorship and agenda cutting (Buchmeier, 2020; González and Rodelo, 2020; Larsen, Fadnes and Krøvel, 2020). Chacón and Saldaña (2020) demonstrated that many journalists rely on collaborative efforts to continue reporting safely in rough conditions. According to their study, news organisations collaborate to avoid and even combat the attacks perpetrated by state agents and the public. News organisations get together to learn how to protect themselves and their sources as well as share the risks. Another line of protection that has emerged recently is to collaborate with attorney associations and offices, which provides news organisations with the support they need to respond to lawsuits (e.g., last year, the Brazilian association for investigative journalism launched the Centre for Legal Protection of Journalists). This is particularly critical because investigative journalists are threatened in terms of the safety of their practice, technological infrastructures and individuals' psychological and physical safety, which reduces their capacity to work as watchdog reporters (*Council of Europe calls on states to support quality journalism: new guidelines*, 2022).

Other recent studies have echoed these findings, demonstrating that independent small and medium-sized news organisations are the ones facing more difficulties regarding their safety (e.g., Konow-Lund and Høiby, 2021). For instance, media work is especially challenging in Brazil, particularly for journalists covering corruption, public policy and organised crime. According to the report *World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development*, 29 journalists were killed in Brazil between 2012 and 2016 (UNESCO, 2017). Even with significant challenges, new news organisations have emerged since 2011, most notably since 2013. Independent news organisations have taken advantage of the period of political turmoil that Brazil has experienced in recent years in a slow but continuous process of institutionalisation of independent journalism (Ganter and Paulino, 2021). This context has had a significant impact on the capacity of journalists to protect themselves, making them even more susceptible to attacks, but also more proactive in terms of collaboration with a focus on training and safety measures. Thus, journalism and news safety measures and strategies are increasingly relying on networks made by and for journalists and news organisations to collaborate and exchange. Still, little is known about these structures and how they operate and impact the work of journalists.

Moreover, how the violence and attacks perpetrated against media practitioners, journalism as an institution, journalists and news organisations in Latin America might influence the countries' media systems in the long run remains unknown. In Nicaragua for instance, news organisations have been closed and robbed, and journalists have been persecuted and jailed, while in Venezuela, the government has used a more subtle approach but with much more profound consequences, namely to acquire media organisations and align with media owners and controllers. In Brazil, the government threatens to redirect its advertising revenue to their friends in the media market, while simultaneously promoting attacks against journalists and news organisations directly in their discourse, as well as indirectly through a parallel office known as 'the office of hate'. This office is reported to be behind digital attacks and smear campaigns against media practitioners and opposition leaders (Mello, 2019; Said, 2020). In summary, the tactics are numerous, but the thread is the same: journalists and news organisations are the enemies, for the left and right. Motives for attacking the media are also different, but the strategies are highly similar.

Nevertheless, I argue that it is possible to relate the attacks against the media to the rise of authoritarian and populist discourse, ideologies and strategies for weakening institutions, and journalism as

part of this environment is understood and combated as an elite that must be erased. As argued by Reese (2021), the rise in authoritarian and populist regimes threatens journalism as an institution, since the primary goal of these political movements is to weaken accountability and independent voices. Thus, anti-institutional discourse in the case of journalism translates into real actions, such as juridical, digital, psychological and even physical threats. According to Reese (2021), the populist campaign to delegitimise journalism and its watchdog role (or investigative journalism) is a direct attack on journalism as the basis of democratic regimes. The present research introduces this new factor to media systems analysis, which to my knowledge has never been addressed in comparative media systems (CMS) before. Thus, even though it is still difficult to establish the connections of journalism safety and its impact on media systems, the issue cannot be diminished nor discarded and, as I argue, must be understood in relation to attacks against the journalism institution, and consequently against democracy.

## **Conclusion**

This theoretical framework's objective was to shed light on the main concepts of normative journalism that influence and shape journalists and news organisations' commitments, values and norms. I argue that these commitments are at the basis of the decision to collaborate, which helps to understand why journalists and news organisations collaborate as well as what the commitments, practices and behaviours are that they enact for a chance to perform a kind of journalism that they believe in. Moreover, I argue that despite the many cultural, political and economic contexts and other external factors that impact and influence normative journalism functions, roles, boundaries and performance, journalists and news organisations have a strong ideological attachment to professional norms and values. These ideals, norms and values are the main reasons for journalists and news organisations choosing to collaborate as well as how they do so.

I also argue that in authoritarian, nondemocratic states as well as developing democracies, like those found in Latin America, the commitment of journalists and news organisations to normatively good journalism is imperative due to numerous constraints. These constraints include state intervention and control; the concentration of media markets; the role of mainstream and legacy media in maintaining and promoting elitist, detached and power alignment reporting; the lack of political parallelism; and the overall situation of ongoing violence and attacks against media practitioners.

Thus, the present theoretical framework is based on well-established theories to shed light on concepts, but it also adapts and adds to these theories, raising specific issues that the theories do not cover or cover less often. Such issues include elitism and activism's influences on normative journalism as well as the necessity of discussing violence against media practitioners. The framework focuses on what influence this issue, specific to Latin America and others under authoritarian and nondemocratic regimes, could have on the capacity of journalists and news organisations to deliver their commitments to society and to perform the kind of journalism that they believe in, and that society needs.

A limitation found through using these theories to understand of collaborative journalism is that the many analytical frameworks that authors have offered for analysing media commitments, norms, values and systems do not make a distinction between legacy and mainstream media and alternative media; thus, they have focused their analyses on the structures of mass media. Therefore, I attempted to circumvent the situation by introducing the very few studies on the topic wherever possible, to differentiate, compare and complement the views and assumptions presented by the authors.

Finally, the present chapter has not offered a new approach to these theories. Rather, it has developed from them, adapting and adding specific characteristics that I believe are essential for making sense of the problem of the present research. Said problem was investigating whether the concept of collaborative journalism should reflect the commitments, mission and values of practitioners; whether these commitments are even more important in contexts of authoritarian and nondemocratic regimes; and whether normative roles are indeed at the basis of collaborative journalism practices, characteristics and processes.

## Chapter 4 – Methodological Framework

### Introduction

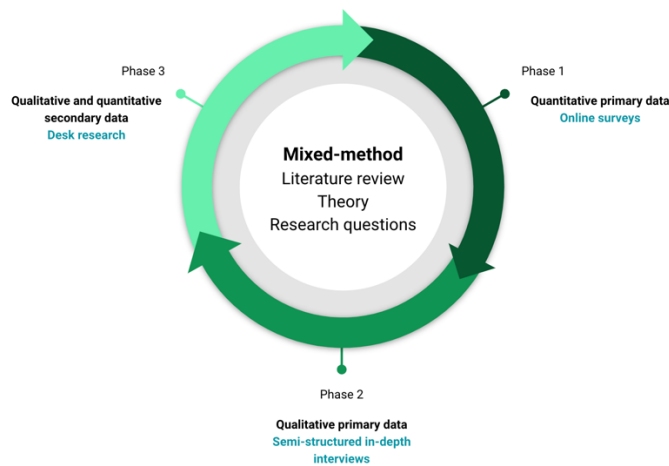
Collaborative journalism has been assessed by its practices and processes, rather by its norms, values and commitments to society (Chapter 2). Moreover, different methods have been proposed to classify the practice in terms of internal elements, disregarding contextual and external factors that might as well contribute to shape CJ in different contexts. Previous studies also have based their criteria for selection mostly on European and North-American CJ's projects and organisations. (e.g., Stonbely, 2017; Heft, Alfter and Pfetsch, 2019; Jenkins and Graves, 2019). The few studies that concentrate their investigation in diverse realities have demonstrated that external factors influence the collaborative practice (Chacón and Saldaña, 2020; Requejo-Alemán and Lugo-Ocando, 2014). These studies combined both primary and secondary data analysis on a qualitative and quantitative approaches. However, these studies, as argued in the literature chapter (Chapter 2), the conceptualisation of collaborative journalism that does not reflect the realities and needs of practitioners, especially in nondemocratic and authoritarian and less developed economies. Therefore, this study provides a new conceptualisation of collaborative journalism that, as I argued, is able to translate the different commitments, norms and values of CJ's practitioners conducting efforts in various contexts. Hence, to be able to address the issues found in the literature, to fill the gap left in previous studies and to provide an empirical framework to analyse CJ's practice, norms and values, this study conducted a mixed-methods research. The mixed-method approach is regarded as an organised and systematic form of conducting research mixing qualitative and quantitative reasonings to investigate a phenomenon in-depth (Adamson, 2004).

In the context of this study, the mixed-methods approach is based on well established techniques, such as online surveys, semi-structured in-depth interviews and desk research with primary and secondary data. This systematic but also broad methodological approach addresses the limitations posed by the digitalisation of spaces in journalism. This approach is also understood as a better fit for the present study due to the novelty of collaborative journalism as discussed in the literature review which requires developing exploratory, explanatory and confirmatory methods that, combined, can offer the conclusions needed to answer the research questions. Moreover, most of collaborative networks are based on online structures, because collaboration in journalism is embedded in networked structures permeated by technological affordances and hindrances which connect the members in a digital space of sharing (Chapter 2). Lastly, this study was conducted in several countries of Latin America, making it impossible for the researcher to be physically present to collect the data. Thus, this mixed-method approach is used to overcome the lack of on the ground data collection by applying a 360 degree view of the objects and subjects of research, integrating and comparing quantitative and qualitative data, as well as relating it to the research questions, literature and theory (Clark and Ivankova, 2016). The method is well-established in social sciences. This is particularly desired in the present study.

As suggested by Clark and Ivankova, mixed-method research is integrated into the processes from the first stage of the study, in the conceptualisation of the study, and then, during the collecting of data. In this sense, the integration and implications of each methodology were evaluated in each stage. The literature review and the theory served as a means to build as well as analyse and criticise the data collected. Both questionnaires (for the quantitative and for the qualitative data collected) were designed on the basis of the literature and theory. The primary data collected in the surveys served as the starting point to the collection of qualitative data via interviews. Then, those data served as the starting point for the collection of secondary data, giving the base for the decision of what to collect, where, and how to analyse it. Finally,



the mixed-method research was applied both as a beyond-the-data analysis and as the conclusion of the empirical research to answer the research questions. The theory and literature review were consulted to help interpret the data, following the guidance of Clark and Ivankova (2016). Figure 1 visually represents the methodological process:



*Figure 1 Methodology scheme*

The methodology involves utilizing primary and secondary data as well as quantitative and qualitative approaches in a three-phases structure. In the first phase, this research has conducted an online survey that gave path for recruiting interviewees for the conduction of the second phase of the research. The second phase, thus, was performed using semi-structured in-depth interviews technique that was later analysed using thematic analysis. Lastly, in the third phase, I have conducted desk research with secondary data.

In synthesis, I integrated and compared the data and related it to the research questions, literature and theory (Clark and Ivankova, 2016). I used these methods because they provide a theoretical approach for analysing internal and external contexts and influences in the emergence, development and evolution of a practice. They also provide a picture of the situation in Latin America. In general, combining theoretical and empirical research is recommended because the normative role of journalism must be understood not only from the viewpoint of practitioners, but also as a theoretical body grounded in past journalism studies. Notably, many of the rules and norms that journalists and media practitioners deploy are not always clearly stated, making them difficult to pin down. Therefore, a mixed-methods analysis, alongside a theoretical discussion, offers a complete view of the problem. This is the first time that such extensive methodological approach is conducted to examine CJ; thus, it is also a contribution of the present study to the investigation of the practice and journalism in various contexts, giving to the research on collaborative journalism a framework for empirical analysis of the practice.

In summary, the mixed-method is a useful tool to integrate, compare, challenge and critically analyse the data collected for this research. From quantitative data collected by surveys to qualitative and quantitative analysis of secondary data, the present research has investigated all the factors that have given the path to the emergence of collaboration in journalism. It has examined the contextual and internal motivations, characteristics and processes of the practice, and, finally, the main constraints, challenges and limitations of the practice. This methodological design also poses limitation to the examination of CJ's practices. However, these limitations are related to the specific techniques used by the research rather than by the mixed-methods approach (Ivankova, 2022). Hence, each of the techniques are described in detail.

## Electronic-based survey

The first stage of the research's methodology is quantitative, based on primary data collection. To this end, I selected electronic-based surveys as the method of collecting data. Surveys are a well-established method to collect quantitative data, such as demographics and profiles of practitioners. Within journalism studies, surveys have been used to understand the profession, its roles, its influences and its impacts. However, only a few studies on collaborative journalism used surveys. Chacón and Saldaña (2020) surveyed journalism students and educators from 20 Latin American countries attending courses given by Knight Centre 2015–2017 to access motivations, challenges and the use of technology in collaboration networks. Their analysis illustrates that collaborative investigative journalism in the region is still very scarce, that technology plays a significant role in collaboration and that journalists in the region get together to investigate especially because they feel safer in collaborative networks.

Heft (2021) in another study researching cross-border collaborative efforts, surveyed 152 journalists who were registered in Hostwriter – an online platform that connects journalists around the world to foster collaboration and other information related to journalism. These journalists were also present at Dataharvest, the EIJC, a periodic event that congregates journalists and data scientists from majority European countries. According to the study, these journalists share a strong feeling of restoring journalism through quality reporting. These journalists see collaboration as strengthening their work and broadening audiences. However, few surveyed journalists addressed the challenges that collaboration might pose in terms of processes and management, demonstrating a need to further investigate the issue.

In this context, the present research aims to deepen the knowledge around the topics of motivations, challenges and benefits; thus, extending previous research, challenging it, comparing and adding new information and analysis to the increasing body of knowledge on collaborative journalism. It also focuses on other issues that were not covered by previous studies, such as the financial aspects of collaborative efforts, the role that networks play in decision-making processes, the technological role, dependency and independence. Specific problems of Latin America are also addressed – violence and the safety of journalists, news practitioners and news organisations. The survey elements are analysed under the light of the qualitative approach in the semi-structured in-depth interviews, which are described next in this chapter.

Some of the questions I wish to answer concern the demographics of the collaboration in media organisations and the media ecosystem – to verify whether the assumptions made in the literature review are present in Latin America. The object of study – contemporary digital journalistic practices spread in Latin American countries outside the mainstream – led to the application of an exploratory methodology (MacInnes, 2020). It speaks of phenomena that are in full construction, without having yet reached an evident hegemonic model. The survey is also essential to offering elements later used as references for the qualitative part of the research. The questionnaire follows the methodological approach of Lavrakas (2008), using a mix of closed-ended, multiple-choice and short open-ended questions, which are intended to be mutually exclusive and exhaustive when possible. However, surveys could also have 'problems of coverage, lack of suitable sample frameworks, and nonresponse' (pp. 357–358). The problem raised by Lavrakas is considerable. To lessen the issue, I focused the questionnaire on closed-ended questions and worked to increase the number of contacts with snowball sampling.

The first step was to construct a database with the organisations involved in collaborative journalism efforts in Latin America. The list of organisations is based on three online databases of digital news media organisations in Latin America and Brazil. The first database is powered by SembraMedia, a nonprofit

organisation dedicated to empowering Spanish-speaking digital native entrepreneurs in Latin America (*Directorio SembraMedia*, no date). Their database contains more than 800 entries. In a first analysis, I identified nearly 300 organisations that are potentially conducting collaborative journalism on a daily basis. Another database is powered by Agência Pública, a news agency in Brazil, and collects information of approximately 90 organisations in the country that might be part of collaborative journalism efforts (*O mapa do jornalismo independente – um projeto da Agência Pública*, no date). The third list is a map of community communication organisations in Brazil. The map, powered by Data\_labe – an organisation promoting free access to information in poorer Brazilian communities – listed news organisations focused on peripheral communities (Data\_Labe, 2014). From the lists, I collected the contacts in the organisation’s websites, Facebook pages or from direct indication. I sent them an email containing a summary of the research proposal, the plain language statement and informed consent form (required by the DCU’s Research Ethics Committee). The email also linked to the online survey based on DCU’s Google drive and protected with a password. Documentation and email are provided in the Appendix (reference: DCUREC/2020/249).

I sent the survey to 500 news organisations in 20 Latin America countries during March and April 2021. Some entries had to be erased when the emails bounced back because some organisations had ceased to exist, or the contact person was no longer with an organisation. After the data cleaning, the final list achieved a sample of 487 focused on the practitioner, mostly in management, editor and director roles. The survey, based on a Google form, comprised 35 questions from demographics to safety issues, passing through motivations, benefits and processes. As suggested by Lavrakas (2008), the questionnaire was grouped by topic to make it easy to understand the objective of each part. For questions that were multiple-choice or designed to measure engagement level (e.g., scaled questions) further instructions were provided. The questionnaire followed a funnel format from general to specific and from less complex to more complex and sensitive questions. These more general questions also work as an icebreaker. Below is a final list of the topics covered in the questionnaire:

### **Question blocks**

1. Block demography (age, country, city, current role, activities, organisation name, size – number of members, type of organisation – nonprofit, for-profit, freelance)

According to Requejo-Alemán and Lugo-Ocando (2014), many quality journalistic investigations conducted in Latin America are performed by nonprofit organisations ‘led by an experienced reporter but staffed by junior reporters who, in some cases, are students at local universities’ (p. 525). This reality meets other relevant research on the socio-demographic profile and working conditions of journalists in the Ibero-American region (Latin America, Portugal and Spain). Blanco-Herrero et al. (2020) state there has been a valorisation of women’s role in newsrooms, but the working conditions for all professionals have worsened. The research demonstrates that the precarious conditions of journalistic work have forced many professionals to ‘exercise multi-employment’ (p. 1). However, countries have different legal frameworks, media systems and cultural backgrounds that influence the conditions of journalists and media organisations. This group of questions was intended to establish profiles of the organisations and individuals involved with collaborative efforts. This primary set of questions is a determinant part of this research because it maps the efforts, organisations and individuals conducting collaborative journalism in each country – their age, educational background, type of organisations they work for and so on.

2. Block motivations – suggested questions: Do you collaborate (yes; no – why)? Why did you decide to collaborate (e.g., skills, access to information, data and sources)? What motivated the network to be created?

According to many authors, the primary motivation for collaboration is to deal with the enormous amount of information collected by major organisations and access other skills and sources (Sambrook, 2018; Jenkins and Graves, 2019). Safety is an important reason why journalists work in the networks (Chacón and Saldaña, 2020; Heft, 2021). Other motivations emerge along with the specialisation of efforts and with the environments and contexts in which these investigations are conducted. A collaboration that was arranged merely to have more hands and shorten the time dedicated to the investigation now moves to a more specific goal. Recent research in the Global South, especially in Latin America, demonstrates that the motivations behind collaboration might be related to the precarious conditions of journalistic work in traditional newsrooms. Therefore, journalists reorganise themselves in alternative work arrangements (Figaro, 2018; Figaro *et al.*, 2019). Figaro (2018), in research about the new economic arrangement's alternative to the great media corporations in Brazil, found that to continue working, journalists often rely on diverse forms of organisations focusing on the journalistic mission to the public rather than on profitable business. To survive, journalists form cooperatives, associations, small newsrooms and other creative models. According to the author, journalists who were forced out of legacy media have found in networked experiences forms of exchange, sharing, and solidarity that favour a product delivering a service essential for democracy. This part of the questionnaire was designed to understand the motivations of journalists and news organisations to join collaborative efforts.

3. Block types and duration: What topics does collaborative journalism cover? How long does the collaboration effort last (average)? Is there a formal arrangement for collaboration (e.g., contract)? How do you collaborate (write together with four or more hands or separated)? What level of autonomy does your organisation have in the collaboration (very autonomous to total cooperative)?

To enable comparison with other efforts on mapping collaborative journalism, I argue that the report of The Centre for Cooperative Media (Stonbely, 2017) is a good start. The centre released a report on models of collaborative journalism, providing a matrix of characteristics. The matrix presents different formats and levels of integration that consider the duration of the projects and the commitment level of participating organisations. Using mixed methods, such as interviews and data collection, Stonbely catalogued 44 mostly North American collaborations through 'level of integration', 'duration' and 'level of commitment'. Stonbely then divided them into six models of collaborative journalism: (1) temporary and separate; (2) ongoing and separate; (3) temporary and co-creating; (4) ongoing and co-creating; (5) temporary and integrated; (6) ongoing and integrated.

According to Stonbely, 'The matrix of collaborative journalism models in this report has the advantage of clarifying the most common elements of collaborative arrangements' (p. 15). In the report, Stonbely arranges the 'level of commitment' based on an analysis of how the journalists and diverse actors produce. As she explains, if the member creates each piece separately and only shares a common database or the capability to spread and circulate the news, the level of commitment is lower than in a collaboration that organises members as a larger newsroom, sharing methods and operation, skills and resources. The report, however, could not identify the level of autonomy for each effort within the partnership, why and how partners establish webs of connection, or if there is a formal agreement. Therefore, I have added these variables to the questionnaire.

4. Block scope – suggested question: What is the scope of the network (national, local, transnational)?

There has been much research about collaborative journalism efforts on international and national levels (Alfter, 2016, 2018; Sambrook, 2018). It relies on the assumption that organisations and professionals join forces on a global and national scale due to the lack of resources and the advantage of a transnational view of issues. Alfter (2018) argues that an important feature of collaboration is a global perspective. The unique vision of each participant helps to compose a larger picture of the topic. In a globalised society, journalism should also be global, and the national perspectives of singular newsrooms cannot comprehend the complexities of global issues. Therefore, cross-border journalism is a necessity rather than a luxury.

In contrast, Jenkins and Graves (2019) found that collaboration also happens at the local level. Their research is based on primary and secondary research of three cases in Europe (UK, Local Bureau; Italy, L'Italia Delle Slot; Finland, Lännen Media). The study comprises 30 interviews with journalists, administrative bodies, and other actors working with collaborative journalism in the United Kingdom, Finland and Italy. The authors suggest that collaborative journalism at the local level can be '(1) a permanent network of journalists and nonjournalists involved in topic-oriented reporting projects (Local Bureau); (2) traditional news organisations and other start-ups working together on a single extended investigation (L'Italia Delle Slot) or (3) regional news organisations sharing content through collaborative writing (Lännen Media)' (p. 5).

This report has similarities with the one produced by the Centre of Cooperative Media discussed in the last group of questions; therefore, I believe that the Jenkins and Graves report may extend the variables with the local coverage. However, I argue for an important element that may change the perspective on conceptualising whether an organisation is collaborating or merely outsourcing – who decides when and with whom to collaborate. I argue that a bottom-up, horizontal decision-making process is essential to qualify as a collaboration. These issues must be addressed by the questions in the next block that are related to decision-making and deliberation. Considering the sensibility of questions related to decision-making, another method (e.g., interviews) must be applied to complement, integrate and challenge the findings of the quantitative analysis.

5. Block processes (decision-making, deliberation, production) – suggested questions: What is the process for decision-making in the network (horizontal, vertical)? From where come the ideas to report (e.g., the coordinator, someone in the network, communities)? How networks decide who is part of the decision-making processes? With whom do you collaborate? How they decide (who is part of the processes of this decision, and how is it made)?

The Panama Papers and other investigations that followed the structure of collective investigation revealed a 'new common' in journalism (Serna, 2018) that needs further analysis. These efforts created the conditions to strengthen future collaborations; however, little is known about the criteria for choosing journalists and news media organisations with whom to collaborate. Little is understood on the role of ICIJ in the global investigation or how the power relationships within the network are established (in particular with journalists who are inside ICIJ's structure and the journalists that are outside). As Alfter and Căndea (2019) argue, ICIJ is a sort of 'Facebook for journalists' (p. 145), a platform that connects its members to conduct investigations globally.

An analysis and understanding of networks are crucial as cross-border journalism by its nature applies networked structures. But while networked structures provide some obvious and necessary solutions, they also bring new interaction patterns and power structures. Comparable to media institutions, networks may practice access control – or indeed network logics may lead to such access control – where some journalists are inside and others outside those networks. This matters for journalism practitioners (p. 144).

The block of questions addresses the processes involved in collaborations and the risks, challenges and affordances of networked structures. As discussed in Chapter 2, network structures are an important element of collaborative journalism, and the present part of the methodology must help find the patterns, behaviours and practices related to the establishment, processes and work conduct in these structures.

6. Block technology – suggested question: Which technologies does your network use to communicate, produce and archive?

According to Lewis (2018), global investigations such as the Panama Papers were carried out by more than 300 journalists from more than 100 countries and exposed tax evasion schemes in fiscal havens such as Panama. The investigation was possible thanks to the enormous amount of data leaked from the Panamanian law firm Mossack Fonseca. This investigation was only possible because of the technology affordances taken advantage of by journalists and organisations. According to Carson and Farhall (2018), there is a new and old collaboration model. Technology affordances have disrupted the news industry but have created an environment where legacy media is willing to share instead of use its investigative teams as a weapon to increase the value of their companies. The authors argue that collaborative investigations have increased their potential. Awards demonstrate recognition of these efforts from its peers. By asking how, when and who is winning journalism awards in investigative journalism, the authors found that collaborative journalism efforts have won awards because of their high quality, despite the economic challenges faced by the news media industry and the shrinkage of many traditional investigative teams. The model used by the authors defines investigative journalism but does not define ‘collaboration’. However, they recognise its characteristics, especially the ones related to digital technology such as the internet that allows journalists to share content. The same affordances created by technology that allowed journalists to work together also embed risks for journalists and organisations – not just safety-related ones but also influences and dependency (González and Rodelo, 2020). As Alfter and Căndea (2019) argue, each technology, technical tool and platform has its logic that may affect how investigations are produced. The authors call for a critical analysis of these affordances and dependencies.

I agree that this dependence on technologies and platforms must be investigated, and they have many layers. One of the most comprehensive studies conducted among digital media organisations in Latin America was made by SembraMedia (2017) and analysed by Salaverría et al. (2018). The study demonstrated the critical need for training, especially the use of technologies that are still scarce in the region. The technification of journalism, through the convergence and evolution of information and communication technologies, presents a great challenge for journalists and news organisations in Latin America that have struggled with access. However, technification must be also considered as the emergence of platforms for financing journalism. I argue that the financial aspect of supporting journalism is even more pressing in Latin America. The literature review and the theory chapters (2 and 3) reveal that the problems related to the sustainability of journalists and news organisations have become more relevant to collaboration. This aspect is further investigated in phase 3 of the present research, which is addressed in the desk research (Chapter 7).

7. Block participation (community, diversity) – suggested questions: Would you say that the network has a relationship with the community? What are the processes in place to engage, hear and interact with communities, especially marginalised ones? What are the tools and actions in place to connect with communities?

Ford, Gonzales and Quade (2020) argue that news media has ‘failed’ to be inclusive and introduce new voices. They suggest that journalism schools have an important role in promoting inclusive and

collaborative discourse. The authors argue that collaborative journalism is a crucial tool to engage with communities and diverse voices. Furthermore, the authors argue that history is told from a point of view, and inclusion and collaboration can change the way stories are told. A ‘collaborative approach among newsrooms, journalists, and community members in a spirit of inclusion, dialogue, and analysis’ (p. 61) is essential for this narrative turn. They analyse how journalism schools can better teach students to engage with collaboration and inclusiveness. They list recommendations to address the issue: (1) recognise the news media role in misrepresenting marginalised and diverse communities; (2) create a discourse encouraging diversity; (3) recognise that economic, political and cultural contexts are interconnected with the reality of these communities; (4) recognise unconscious bias and train to mitigate this issue and (5) enrol students from these communities in journalism schools. The authors conclude that true collaboration and inclusion might be the key to overcome ‘historic and current distrust of journalists and journalism’ (p. 62). This block of questions should ask if collaborative journalists have promoted inclusive narratives and connected with their communities. Furthermore, the interviews explore this theme by trying to understand what role communities play in collaborative journalism, its missions, values and practices.

8. Block news safety (security, challenges, benefits) – suggested questions: Have you been attacked due to your work? Do you feel protected by the network when working on it or reporting? Do you think the network provides you with enough information, training and support about security? What are the tools and processes in place for your security?

Studies about collaboration have found that security is a great motivation for journalists to work together in networks provided by collaborative journalism efforts (Heft, 2021; Chacón and Saldaña, 2020). Cueva Chacón and Saldaña (2020), in a study around collaborative journalism in Latin America, found that one of the greatest motivations for journalists to collaborate is the safety that networks provide. According to the authors, to bypass government censorship and strengthen security measures, collaborative journalistic investigations have been more common in countries such as Venezuela and Cuba, ‘Respondents also mentioned “threats to democracy” and “censorship” as motivations to collaborate because the more news outlets were involved in a project, the more they could “disseminate the truth”. Journalists in this group used words such as protection and safety very often’ (p. 13). As discussed in the theory chapter and literature review (Chapters 2 and 3), the ongoing state of violence, increasing attacks against the media and journalists and the overall state of impunity have significantly impacted journalism in the region. This block maps the problems of safety in collaborative journalism and how collaborative networks have been able to address the issue.

9. Sustainability (tools, models) – suggested questions: What are the business models of the organisation (e.g., events, training, membership, advertisement, grants)? Which business models will the organisation focus on in the next months? Can members of the organisations sustain themselves with journalistic work?

According to the *SembraMedia* report (Warner, et al., 2017), much of the journalistic investigation in Latin America is done by nonprofit organisations that are highly dependent on international foundations, grants and scholarships. Requejo-Alemán and Lugo-Ocando (2014) emphasise how difficult it has been for organisations in Latin America to be sustainable. Many organisations rely on governmental subsidies (Fernandes, 2019), making them even more subject to local political fluctuations and influences. In parallel, an increasing number of organisations participate in the regional news ecosystem. These organisations have been fighting to overcome challenges and offer quality journalism to the public. Harlow and Salaverría (2016), who mapped the region’s native digital media, concluded that ‘the most influential native online

sites are trying to renew traditional and outdated forms of journalism, serving as alternatives to the mainstream media, even if organisations do not necessarily identify themselves as “alternatives” (p. 11).

Other authors are concerned with the changed working relationships in these new economic arrangements (Figaro *et al.*, 2019), as well as with the sources of financing (Santos, Pontes and Paes, 2018). As discussed in Chapter 3, the media systems in Latin America are characterised by a low level of mass press circulation, high state intervention and the over-concentrated media ownership, which further constrains the development of alternative narratives. However, as suggested by many studies, Latin American entrepreneurial news organisations are a game-changer in the fight for justice and human rights (e.g., Salaverría *et al.*, 2018; Schmitz Weiss *et al.*, 2018). Guided by innovation, many of these organisations produce quality journalism within a mix of revenue streams (de-Lima-Santos and Mesquita, 2021). Some authors recognise that the decision to collaborate might be closely linked with funding opportunities (Kayser-Bril, 2018), especially for nonprofit news organisations. Thus, this block addresses the issue of sustainability through an understanding of the business models of the news organisations conducting collaborative efforts. It also examines their capability of being sustainable and whether members have been able to sustain themselves with the journalistic work. This part of the data is also further explored in the desk research. In the desk research, it is presented a discussion around the dependence and independence of philanthropic and platform funding to journalism in Latin America that can further deepen the financial issues of collaborative journalism. In summary, data regarding sustainability and business models are analysed in-depth in the three methodological approaches of the study: the quantitative; the qualitative, in the desk research in a mixed-methods analysis.

### **Methodology considerations**

Although a survey is a well-established method of investigation, some challenges, risks, and limitations should be addressed to avoid misinterpretation. For instance, the assumption must be avoided that collaborative efforts are static and the map of their motivations, benefits, challenges and processes is insufficient to understand the practice. Thus, I argue that another methodological approach focused on routines and meanings is essential. To mitigate the risk of misinterpretation for the lack of in-depth analysis, surveys are followed by interviews to fill the gaps and make the data more accurate. To this end, the Google form with the survey questionnaire invited participants to engage with the research via an in-depth semi-structured interview. The methodology and the steps taken during this stage of the research are described below.

### **Qualitative semi-structured in-depth interviews**

This section details the qualitative part of the research, which has as its primary technique semi-structured, in-depth interviews. This part of the research was conducted after the quantitative stage and aimed to be exploratory, explanatory and confirmatory, following the models of Weiss (1995) and Bryman (2016). Weiss (1995) states that the qualitative interview is more successful than the quantitative interview in providing a fuller picture of the interview subjects. The author argues that the interview can be considered qualitative from the moment the resulting analysis is based more on an interpretative, summarised and integrated evaluation than simply on the accounting of citations, words and expressions used by the interviewee. Weiss (1995) adds that a qualitative interview has fewer questions but elicits answers beyond ‘yes’ or ‘no’. This approach respects the objective of this study which is the understanding of meaning



construction, of the social or individual unconsciousness of the subjects, the perceptions of the subjects in relation to their practices and how they may be being impacted by the concepts and dimensions presented in the literature review and in the theoretical framework (refer to Chapters 2 and 3).

Scholars investigating collaborative journalism have used interviews not only as the main source of data collection but also as a complementary source (Stonbely, 2017). The semi-structured interview is a good method due to its flexibility. Questions asked to all participants highlight patterns, while individual-based questions help to identify other issues, singularities, and similarities. The semi-structured interview is characterised openness, leaving both interviewee and interviewer free to add more questions. The idea is to not limit responses (Bryman, 2016). This approach is beneficial for thematic analysis, which is a methodology to analyse the answers given by interviewees, and for typological analysis (Given, 2008b).

This study conducted 40 interviews with members of organisations responsible for collaborative journalism projects. They were surveyed during the quantitative stage of this research and volunteered to be interviewed. The interviews were conducted virtually through Zoom, WhatsApp or GoogleMeet. Five interviews were conducted after the closing of the survey; therefore, demographic data is not available. However, all interviews followed the same guidelines. The interviews were conducted in Spanish and Portuguese during March and May 2021. They were based on a semi-structured script that organised the talk while providing live space for further questions (Ahlin, 2019). All interviews were recorded with the consent of the interviewees, following the guidance of the DCU's Research Ethics Committee and then transcribed (see the appendix for forms and approved documents). The interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes.

The questions took into consideration the discussions, characteristics and elements of collaborative journalism found in the literature review as well as the contextual factors analysed in the theory chapter (see Chapters 2 and 3). The semi-structured questionnaire was built with respect to the theoretical model of Flick (2009) and Lewis-Beck, Bryman, and Futing Liao (2003). The model 'reflects an ontological position that is concerned with people's knowledge, understandings, interpretations, experiences, and interactions' (Lewis-Beck, M.S, Bryman, A., and Futing Liao, T. 2003, p. 1020). As Lewis-Beck, Bryman and Futing Liao (2003) stated, the interview process is based on a grid of topics to be covered rather than a fixed script. If interviews could not be conducted on the spot, I added another line of conduction –the electronic interview and computer-assisted interview based on the orientation suggested by Cassell and Symon (2004) and Gubrium *et al.* (2001). As Cassell and Symon (2004) explain, the electronic interview can complement or even replace a face-to-face interview. It allows both the subject and the interviewer time to reflect, offering a greater possibility of subject engagement. The technique facilitates multinational research. Therefore, I apply the method to meet the objectives of the present research as follows:

1. Consideration of individual meanings and ways of constructing meanings

The main goal is to identify what the journalists, administrators and other actors within the collaborative networks understand by collaborative journalism, why they take part in such efforts and how they think collaborative journalism influences the journalism practice and the communities they are part of.

2. Interest in routines, daily life and the production of these subjects

Here, I research the practices of collaborative journalism by asking how taking part in the collaborative effort has changed the way that journalists and other actors involved in the production stage perform their duty. Did they receive proper or specific training? Which processes are in place when producing a collaborative piece or when taking part in the network? What skills are required, and how do they differ from the 'normal' skills of journalistic production?

### 3. A concern with the social or psychological unconscious of the subjects

This part of the method is at the interpretation and analysis level of the research. As Flick (2009, p. 135) explains, the interpretation part of the qualitative method is crucial to give meaning to the data collected. It gives the researcher a more profound and complex view of the social, cultural, historical, economic and political contexts of the subjects, as well as a sense of what the subjects believe they are achieving versus what others are saying and a better understanding of more abstract meanings, such as ‘reality’ and ‘human existence’. To me, this advice is welcome, taking into consideration the novelty of the topic of the current research, because collaborative journalism is a model in development rather than a ‘normality’ in journalism practice. Thus, the thematic analysis method is applied. I argue that thematic analysis can both avoid premature assumptions from the researcher and interpret the interviews under the light of a larger context presented in the theoretical framework (Chapter 3).

#### **Thematic analysis**

The interviews were conducted with practitioners inside news organisations and journalists that conduct or are part of collaborative journalism. The obtained data were then analysed using thematic analysis with the support of NVivo, following the model proposed by Braun and Clarke (2012) that involves systematically analysing qualitative data to distinguish different themes and their relationships. In this model, the authors suggest an intersection and combination of deductive and inductive analysis. The inductive is responsible for a bottom-up approach, which assumes that the themes and analysis are derived from the data itself. However, the authors also warn that it is not possible to be only inductive. Therefore, this analysis is done together with the quantitative part of the research presented before. That is why, in this stage of the analysis of the data collected, I performed both a deductive and inductive analysis of the data collected from the interviews. Since I am using a semi-structured interview technique developed before the interviews that is based on a literature review and a theoretical framework, I argue that some deductive analysis is expected. The interpretation draws on theoretical constructs of the theoretical framework, namely normative journalism and comparative media systems ‘to render visible issues that participants did not explicitly articulate’ (p. 60). As Braun and Clarke (2012) suggest, I prioritise the participants’ constructions and meanings and the data itself rather than my own theoretical assumptions.

As suggested by Braun and Clarke (2012), thematic analysis is ‘experiential in its orientation and essentialist in its theoretical framework’ (p. 59), meaning that since the research’s transcription stage, an open orientation guided the researcher’s work. Detailing each pause, hesitation and other sounds that the interviewee made during the interview was not essential. In addition, the theoretical framework was not used as a form to fulfil but as a contextual set of interpretational tools. Therefore, I use a more freestyle transcription focusing on meaning rather than exact words. This is especially suitable for working in two languages with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Following the six-step approach given by Braun and Clarke, I describe the phases of application of thematic analysis:

*Table 3 Thematic analysis step by step*

Step 1: Familiarisation	According to Braun and Clarke (2012), this is a phase in which the researcher focuses on the meaning of the data by answering the following questions: How do the participants make sense of their experiences? What assumptions do they make in interpreting their experiences? What kind of world is revealed through their accounts? (p. 61).
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Step 2: Initial codes	In this phase, codes start to be drawn. The primary purpose of this stage is to be as descriptive and close to the semantics of the transcription as possible. It is also important that codes start to move beyond the data towards a more interpretative meaning rather than a mere description. The authors call this the latent meaning of codes: ‘meanings that lie beneath the semantic surface of the data’ (p. 61). This first phase of the coding I did directly in the transcriptions that were moved to NVivo. I was able to scale the codes and move faster to the next stage of the thematic analysis that was drawing the themes.
Step 3: Searching for themes	In this stage, I started connecting the codes produced from the transcriptions and the research questions. This phase involves reviewing and searching for similarities, asking the question: ‘What does this code mean in a more contextual and theoretical sense?’ This stage shows some relationships among themes and subthemes. By the end of this phase, I had mapped the themes and subthemes that emerged in this process.
Step 4: Reviewing potential themes	This stage is about verifying the quality of the previous steps, verifying that they match the data and the research questions. It is a stage in which the themes and subthemes start to be more precise and refined.
Step 5: Defining and naming themes	In this phase, the researcher states what is unique about each theme. The theme must have a single focus; it must not be repetitive, and it should directly address the research questions.
Step 6: Producing the report	This last stage makes sure that the analysis told a story, detailing explicit and latent meanings within the data.

The thematic analysis was carried out through a combination of inductive (themes emerged from the interviews) and deductive (themes that emerged from the theoretical framework and literature review – Chapter 2 and 3) approaches. Thus, it is useful to detail the semi-structured guide used for the interviews because, as suggested by Mills, Durepos and Wiebe (2010), the research question alongside the theory and the interview questions can be used as a start list of themes for the deductive analysis: ‘a start list of a priori themes for coding data documents (...) can facilitate within- or cross-case comparisons’ (p. 2).

1. Block concept – questions were related to what collaborative journalism is understood to mean in the perspective of who is practising it, for example, ‘What does collaborative journalism mean to you and to the organisations that you work for?’

This block of questions aims to understand, from the perspective of practitioners and news organisations, what collaborative journalism is. As stated in the literature review (Chapter 2), collaborative journalism is a cross-entity form of conducting journalistic investigations (Sambrook, 2018; Stonbely, 2017) characterised by editorial coordination, co-creation, and network. However, for many practitioners and especially in Latin America, the concept does not entirely meet the expectation of the literature. Latin American practitioners have a strong commitment to a certain kind of activism towards the power of journalism to change society (Mesquita and Fernandes, 2021). This is demonstrated by the significant number of organisations that focus on covering topics such as human rights, gender and race – as illustrated by the quantitative data (Chapter 5). Some organisations and practitioners might understand collaborative journalism as a form of achieving this objective.

2. Block process – questions are related to how collaborative journalism is done. To achieve this goal, I used the projects named by the organisations in the electronic-based survey. I did that because it was easier to discuss processes based on an actual event, making it tangible to both the researcher and the interviewee.

The literature review identified some of the processes that organisations engage when collaborating. However, there is little information on this on various contexts. Therefore, the following questions were developed: ‘What was the working process of project X?’, ‘Who was involved?’, ‘Who was responsible for each step of the process?’, ‘Was there some person or organisation responsible for the logistics and administration of the workflow?’, ‘How is the allocation of teams and personnel handled?’ and ‘Which function did you have in the project?’ among others. As Alfter and Căndea (2019) state, collaborative journalism is a network, a web and a system where practitioners, organisations, and other actors establish relationships of sharing and solidarity.

These systems are embedded with relations of power and emotion. Moreover, the connections allowed by digital means play an essential role in enabling the participation of diverse authors in producing the news (Deuze, 2006; Singer *et al.*, 2011). However, it is not clear whether collaborative journalism and the organisations that conduct these efforts have used the technology and networks in their favour, exploring these capabilities to empower communities and other entities and practitioners outside the network. I argue that, to make these issues tangibles, the questions around a specific event would be a better form to know indirectly whether organisations have been able to break their bubbles and engage and expand their networks. To this end, I asked specific questions about a project or effort that the journalists conducted.

3. Block reputation – with questions ranging from whether the practitioners could identify the benefit of collaborative journalism to the credibility of their organisations and themselves, this block was not always answered by the interviewees. These perceptions are often blurred and addressed from a broader perspective of collaborative journalism’s contributions to the reputation of journalism. However, many organisations, especially small start-ups, agree that partnering with larger and more established organisations positively affects their reputation. However, they also had mixed feelings of criticism and resignation.

News media reputation and credibility have been strongly affected by the introduction of new ICTs. Collaboration has restored some of the credibility lost due to the increasing number of investigations. On the one side, CJ shares the possible damages that investigations may cause to news outlets when covering topics that shake the public arena. On the other side, as argued by Graves and Konieczna (2015), CJ efforts have a practice of sharing the news that present a form of field repair, by journalists and news outlets been able to restore journalism field purposes through ‘self-conscious efforts to respond to the ongoing crisis in journalism—directly, by providing the kinds of public affairs coverage seen to be lacking, and indirectly, through institution-building meant to promote such coverage in the news industry as a whole’(p. 1,968). The perception of reputation, credibility and independence of news outlets is difficult to measure. Thus, this block was complemented by another block focused on benefits.

4. Block impacts and results – different from the traditional ways of measuring impacts with audiences using numbers (e.g., page views and time exposure), I adopted a different approach to this part of the questionnaire. I asked explicitly about impacts and results on policymaking, social activities, and communities. The idea was to understand through the eyes of those practising collaborative journalism which normative values and missions were being addressed. Questions included, What do

you think this collaborative journalism project achieved in terms of changes (social, political, economic)?

Normative values and missions of journalists are difficult to access due to their intangible nature. Journalism, according to Larson (1977), shares the concept of a ‘project’, an ‘ideal’ of what the profession should be: ‘ideal-typical constructions do not tell us what a profession is, only what it pretends to be’ (cited in Schudson and Anderson, 2009, p. 89). However, journalists in Latin America have proved to be committed to such values. According to Mesquita and Fernandes (2021), there is a prevalence of a commitment to the social role of journalism, as a mission, to act to bring relevant stories and to make a difference among journalists in the region. There are also flourishing new journalism initiatives in which collaboration plays an essential role to expand geographic and structural limits to reach populations ignored by the legacy media.

Moreover, journalistic practices suffered disruption from new information and communication technologies. Because of that, practices have been deranged and reorganised. Even though the practices have changed, journalism’s core values remain. The reaffirmation of the traditional journalistic mission, combined with an emphasis on journalism’s role in the fight against injustices and inequalities, becomes the primary justification for the existence of these digital journalistic groups in Latin America as discussed in Chapter 3.

5. Block relation with mainstream media and other organisations – this part of the interview guide aims at understanding the hindrances and affordances of working with mainstream media, legacy and more established news outlets that practise a more traditional, hierarchical, and commercial kind of journalism. It also seeks to understand the challenges and benefits of conducting investigations with organisations such as universities and companies from other industries. Questions include, How and why did you decided to partner with this organisation? What benefits and challenges did you face when collaborating with this organisation? What are the processes involved? Are they different from traditional journalism?

The literature review found that collaborative investigative journalism often involves other news media outlets and diverse entities such as universities and advocacy organisations (see Chapter 2). However, little is known about the processes behind such partnerships. A set of norms permeates journalism and characterises it as a profession recognised by society (Traquina, 2005). Nevertheless, the pervasive nature of new ICTs has deeply affected the profession’s boundaries by introducing new actors to the journalistic production. In addition, Latin America portrays a captured media system (Guerrero, 2014), showing a low level of mass journalism circulation and low journalistic professionalism. As Guerrero and Márquez-Ramírez (2014) argue, the main characteristics of the media systems in the region remain unchanged: media ownership concentration and state intervention. These factors play a role in understanding the relationships of news organisations in collaborative journalism.

6. Block challenges and limits – Normally asked at the end of the interview, questions around the challenges and limitations of collaborative journalism, were asked to participants. Those questions aimed at understanding the type of investigations that are suitable for collaboration as well as the difficulties faced when collaborating with others. In summary, these questions aimed at identifying the obstacles that professionals and news organisations may face while conducting collaborative efforts.

As Jenkins and Graves (2019) argued, some of the challenges faced by news organisations when collaborating have a strong relationship with the differences of journalism cultures and companies’

structures. Individuals with different backgrounds may have a hard time understanding each other. Partnering with organisations outside the journalistic field may also create challenges for news organisations. The discussion in the literature review around the need for editorial coordination in collaborative efforts is intrinsically related to this part of the interview guide (see Chapter 2). Alfter (2016, 2018) explains that the role of editorial coordinator is created to resolve differences among participants in collaborative efforts. However, in Latina America, another set of hurdles may add difficulties to collaboration:

In countries where there is an inequality in the distribution of power, structural inequalities emerge in the access to an extensive variety of resources, including access to mainstream platforms by marginalized societies (Levy 2018). In other words, marginalized communities are settled and persist at the margins through their economic and communicative lack of access to media (de-Lima-Santos and Mesquita, 2021, p. 2).

Finally, this section claimed that the blocks of questions of the semi-structured interview guide were used as the main source of the deductive part of the thematic analysis. However, during data analysis, some of the previously designed themes and the description of the above-mentioned block were modified, grouped or expended. See Chapter 6 for details about these changes.

### **Coding with NVivo support**

The interviews were transcribed and coded with the support of NVivo. The software, provided by the university, is a tool for the analysis of qualitative data such as interviews, texts, audio and video. Following guidelines provided by training undertaken by the researcher, the research adapts to the reality and needs of the present study, which are both inductive and deductive. Often NVivo is utilised for grounded methodologies and theories, meaning that the data is the primary source of theory construction (Welsh, 2002). However, thematic analysis was identified as the best methodology for this study since the theory is also used as a form of analysis to interpret the data. A combination of inductive and deductive approaches was seen as the best option for the analysis. The steps taken to treat the data were: free coding the interviews; grouping codes into categories; merging the categories that emerged in the interviews and the categories and themes identified in the literature and in the theory that were described above as blocks of questions of the semi-structured interview guide.

### **Methodology considerations**

Interviews conducted by computer offer challenges such as the internet connection. Hardware issues can be disruptive as well (Gubrium et al., 2001). The greatest challenge is not being at the same place to feel the ambience and see the space where the interviewee works. An in-person interview can overcome this lack of contextual elements. However, due to the pandemic, in-person interviews were not an option. The positive aspect of online interviews is that many more countries can be reached. Even though computer-assisted interviews are not ideal in terms of context, it is the best methodology for multinational research. To give more contextual analysis to the research, a third stage of methodology was conducted – desk research based on secondary data from the philanthropic and platform funding to journalism in Latin America and The Caribbean region.

## Desk research

To provide the research with more contextual elements regarding the media ecosystem in Latin America a third stage of the methodology was applied, which is desk research with secondary data. This is due to issues pointed in the literature and in the theory (refer to Chapters 2 and 3) which are the sustainability and the crisis of traditional business models of journalism in the region as the most pressing challenges for the news organisations and journalists to fulfil their role and functions in society. Many of the digital initiatives conducting collaborative journalism in Latin America are dependent on financial support through grants provided by philanthropic foundations and big tech and social media platforms. Data was collected regarding the financial support of two major international foundations that have historically supported journalism in the region – The Open Society and Luminate. Data was also collected from two tech and social media platforms – Google, through its grant initiative Google News Initiative (GNI), a programme established in 2019, and Facebook, through its COVID-19 grant support. Secondary data analysis was performed to find patterns and verify, challenge and refine the primary data analysis and findings in the previous stages of the methodology (see Chapters 5 and 6).

The desk research is used as synonymous with secondary research, which means using secondary data for analysis and discussion. Secondary data is everything that is available publicly or otherwise, but that is not created by the person using it (Given, 2008a; Allen, 2017). In the context of this study, the secondary data used for analysis are publicly available on the websites of the institutions and companies analysed. The steps taken to gather and analyse the data are as follows:

1. Analysis of the primary data collected in the first two methodologies confirmed that the foundations and companies supporting journalism in Latin America are, among others, The Open Society Foundation, Luminate, Google and Facebook.
2. The second step collected the available data about the financial support these organisations provided news outlets in Latin America. The Open Society Foundation and Luminate even supply the public with searchable databases. Google and Facebook do not offer the same level of public transparency, and the available data are much scarcer. Nevertheless, Google also provides a small summary of the project approved by the Google News Initiative with information related to the regions, the names of the organisations funded or awarded.
3. Each database was analysed separately, first quantitatively and then qualitatively. The quantitative approach identified basic information related to the number of organisations supported in each country, the number of times that the same organisation was granted and so on. The qualitative part was conducted to find patterns in the types of projects granted financial support.
4. The data was integrated and compared for the conclusion analysis.

The use of secondary data has benefits and limitations. The benefits are the time saved because such a large amount of information would take a long time to collect; accessibility, since the data is publicly available; and the possible generation of further insights into the data and the research already conducted. However, the lack of detailed information limits the capability of analysis and discussion. As Allen (2017) states, the lack of researcher control over the data and the quality thereof is restricting. This is due to the lack of transparency of the institutions and the companies investigated. Still, the foundations provide more information than the companies, which made the analysis possible. Though the direct mention of collaborative journalism is rather scarce in the data set, the experience of the researcher and the support of

the primary data collected, make it possible for further analysis and discussions that were then summarised, compared, integrated, and completed in a mixed-methods analysis.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter described the procedures for data collection, the treatment of data, the considerations of the application of the methodologies for each stage of the empirical part of the research as well providing guidance for the analysis and discussions presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. It described how, why, and with whom the primary data were collected via online surveys, then via semi-structured in-depth interviews. It also discussed how these methods were previously used by studies about collaborative journalism. The procedures of the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the secondary data collection were then set out. Finally, via the mixed-methods approach, the present study carried out an analysis of the main findings of each of the previous methods and related it to the literature and to the theory to answer the research questions. I argue that the mixed-method approach offers a more complete view of the subjects studied. This methodology applies a critical analysis of the phenomenon, its elements and characteristics through data that are then grouped, compared, and extrapolated to offer a complete vision of collaborative journalism in Latin America and what lies beyond the data to understand the practice in the region and elsewhere.



## Chapter 5 – Quantitative Data Analysis and Discussion

### Introduction

The first phase of the research method is based on quantitative data collected by online survey. The survey is composed of questions drawing upon the literature review, theoretical background, and research questions. The format of the questions varies, including short open-ended, multiple-choice, and checkboxes. The survey was sent to 487 news organisations in 20 countries of Latin America during March and April 2021. The survey was answered by 120 news organisations from 15 countries in Latin America. The questionnaire comprised 35 questions, of which 34 are analysed in this chapter. Only one question that asked the name of the organisation and the name of the collaborative effort was not used and served only as a reference for other methodology chapters. Names of individuals were not included in the survey.

### Data analysis procedures

The data analysis presented in this chapter follows the instructions of Nishishiba, Jones and Kraner (2014). First, it defined data *cases* and *variables*, the former being each of the survey respondents, the latter is represented by each of the questions asked in the survey. To ease access, variables were labelled under a singular or a short-term (e.g., ‘What is your nationality’ was labelled under the term *nationality*). The description of each term labelled can be found in the Appendices (Table 42 - Questionnaire’s categories, variables, format and labelled variables).

Next, the variables were grouped by categories representing the major topic under which each variable lies (e.g., the variables age, gender, country, country of residence/work, are grouped under the category of *demography*), as can be seen in Appendices (Tables 42 and 43). According to Nishishiba, Jones and Kraner (2014), the table should contain information regarding the instrument of the data collection, but since this part of the data analysis is dedicated to the survey, the information is already given and does not need to be repeated in each cell. For cleaning, clarity and summarising purposes, the only description concerns the format of questions: open-ended, multiple-choice or checkbox. The multiple-choice and checkbox questions contain fixed answers that are set in this analysis as groups. Each group means each option of answer given in the question. For instance, the age question gave the participant five options (from 18 to 24, 26 to 35 and so on). Each of these options are understood as groups of people and group of answers. Changes were made in the groups for standardisation purposes when needed, as illustrated in Table 42 in the Appendices.

### Data normalisation

The data set with the survey responses illustrates differences in the numbers of respondents by country and in many of the questions, especially checkboxes. The dataset contains discrepancies in the engagement of participants. First, some participants did not respond to all questions, and some wrote their own answers. Second, there are significant differences in the number of participants from one country to another. For instance, from Brazil there are 54 answers and from Nicaragua only one. Since understanding which variables account for different approaches and perspectives on the topics investigated, there was a need to normalise the data. The normalisation of data is helpful for comparisons. It scales, transforms and equalises the data, as explained by Vogt (2005). This procedure was done in every question where the analysis by

country and by general numbers would be of interest. For example, the weight that Brazil for its 54 participants would take over the data, while using a base of a 100 in normalised data, makes its weight similar to other countries. Below is the formula used to normalise data on a scale of 100:

$$= \left( \frac{x}{x\$x} \right) * 100.$$

The steps taken were as follows:

- 1) Data cleaning and translation,
- 2) Definition of cases and variables,
- 3) Labelled variables,
- 4) Grouped variables under categories,
- 5) Description of variables and formats,
- 6) Definition of groups and description of changes and
- 7) Analysis and discussion with the use of descriptive statistics and normalised data. Categories, variables, groups, changes to groups and description of changes

## Data presentation, analysis and discussion

*Table 4 Overall data collection summary*

	Total	Percentage of Participation
News organisations reached	487	-
News organisations replies	120	25%

Country	Initial Sample	Sample Size	Response Rate
Argentina	30	8	27%
Bolivia	25	4	16%
Brazil	136	54	40%
Chile	15	3	20%
Colombia	39	12	31%
Costa Rica	12	0	0%
Cuba	16	4	25%
Dominican Republic	27	0	0%
Ecuador	13	2	15%
El Salvador	11	0	0%
Guatemala	7	2	29%

Honduras	5	0	0%
Mexico	53	8	15%
Nicaragua	13	1	8%
Panama	5	3	60%
Paraguay	11	3	27%
Peru	19	3	16%
Puerto Rico	11	0	0%
Uruguay	18	3	17%
Venezuela	17	3	18%
Regional	4	1	25%
Other countries	–	6	–

### Summary of category demography

*Table 5 Age*

Variable	Age	Nominal	Percentage
Group	18–25	10	8%
Group	26–35	41	34%
Group	36–45	43	36%
Group	46–55	15	13%
Group	56+	11	9%

*Table 6 Corporate name*

Variable	Corporate name	Nominal	Percentage
Group	For-profit	36	30%
Group	Nonprofit	63	52%
Group	ONG	7	6%
Group	Other	14	12%

*Table 7 Variable gender, role by gender and role in collaborative projects by gender*

Variable	Gender	Woman	Man	Other
		58	60	2
		48%	50%	2%

Variable	Role	Woman	Man	Other
Group	CEO/Director/Founder	23	26	–
Group	Content creator	4	4	–
Group	Editor-in-chief/Editor/Coordinator	23	21	1
Group	Freelancer	–	1	–
Group	Journalist/Reporter	7	7	1
Group	Public relations	1	1	–

Variable	Role in Collaborative Projects	Woman	Man	Other
Group	Coordination	36	25	–
Group	Data and information collection	18	18	1
Group	Fieldwork	11	9	–
Group	Report	15	20	1
Group	Production of video, audio or multimedia content	19	17	–
Group	Data analysis and visualisation	15	10	1

*Table 8 Educational background*

Variable	Educational background	Nominal	Percentage
Group	Journalism	74	61%
Group	Communications	24	20%
Group	Other	20	17%
Group	No formal education	2	2%

*Table 9 Type of organisation*

Variable	Type of organisation	Nominal	Percentage
Group	Digital native	72	60%
Group	Magazine	2	2%
Group	News agency	7	6%
Group	Newspaper	16	13%
Group	Others	18	15%
Group	TV/Radio	5	4%

Table 10 Size

Variable	Size	Nominal	Percentage
Group	Depends on the project	7	6%
Group	Large (>20 people)	24	20%
Group	Medium size (5–20)	50	42%
Group	Small (≤5)	39	32%

Table 11 Type of organisation versus size

Variable/Group	Size			
Organisation Type	Small	Medium	Large	It depends
Digital native	38%	44%	15%	3%
Newspaper	6%	44%	44%	6%
TV/Radio	80%	0%	20%	0%
News agency	43%	43%	0%	14%
Magazine	50%	0%	0%	50%
Others	17%	44%	28%	11%

### Category demography

This group of questions profiles the organisations and individuals taking part in collaborative efforts. Through this primary set of questions, it is possible to map the efforts, organisations and individuals conducting collaborative journalism. The number of informants, 120 in total (25%), is considered representative. In terms of nationality and country of residence, the representation of the survey is deemed to be high. Of the 20 countries surveyed, 15 are present in the data collection. Regarding the residence of the informants, data do not show a significant difference, meaning that the majority of the respondents are working in the same country where they are nationals. There are six exceptions to this number from countries that are under nondemocratic, under-developed democracies or authoritarian regimes: Cuba (2), Brazil (2), Venezuela (1) and Peru (1). Although Peru is considered a democratic country, it faces significant political instability and the most concentrated media ownership in the region (Protzel, 2014).

There are two pieces of information to unpack in these findings. The first concerns the age of journalism practitioners in Latin America who are conducting investigative journalism in general, not just collaborative. Almost 70% of the respondents are between 26 and 45 years old, approximately 22% are 46 or more years old and fewer than 8% are 18–25 years old. This analysis infers that most respondents have some professional experience. The second assumption regards the type of organisations conducting investigative journalism in the region. Nonprofit organisations are the majority of the outlets (52%) present in the data collection. For-profit organisations comprise 30%, nongovernmental organisations 6% and 12% are declared ‘others’. In summary, the findings Requejo-Alemán and Lugo-Ocando (2014) are confirmed as demonstrated by the age of the respondents and by the higher number of nonprofit organisations.

Concerning gender, Blanco-Herrero et al. (2020) argue that there has been a valorisation of women’s roles in newsrooms. Salaverría et al. (2018) have shown that women present in the command and management are still low in traditional news media, but 60% of independent news start-ups count women as their co-founders. The data collected for the present research illustrate a balance in the gender of the respondents (50% male, 48% female) but only 2% nonbinary. Men are slightly more present in the group ‘CEO/directors/founders’ than women (26 men and 23 women). In the ‘editor-in-chief/editor/coordinator’ group, women are slightly ahead – 23 against 21 men. In the groups ‘journalist’, ‘freelancer’ an ‘content creator’, numbers are the same for both genders.

Regarding collaborative projects, more women than men are present in all functions, especially in management roles. The group ‘coordination’ counts 36 women and 25 men. Other groups traditionally considered more masculine, such as data journalism (Heravi, 2018), indicate that, in collaborative projects, women are at the front line in projects that deal with data. In groups ‘data collection’, ‘data visualisation’, and ‘multimedia production’, women outnumber men. The only group where men outnumber women is ‘reporting’. In summary, the data demonstrate results similar to recent gender representation studies in Latin American digital journalism: An increasing presence of women in the lines of command and management in the independent, alternative, and nonprofit news organisations (e.g., Blanco-Herrero, Alonso, and Calderón, 2020; Salaverría et al. 2018).

The demographic is largely educated. More than 60% of the respondents majored in journalism, approximately 20% in other areas of communication and 17% in areas such as social sciences, law, science, engineering and psychology. Regarding the type of organisation in collaborative efforts, the data show that 60% consider themselves digital native news organisations. Approximately 15% declared being ‘other,’ including freelancer, collective or movement. Most of the organisations are medium size (5–20, 42%), the second group is small-size organisations ( $\leq 5$ , 32%), and the third is large organisations ( $> 20$ , 20%). Approximately 6% of the respondents said that the organisation’s size might change according to the project. More traditional types of organisations, such as newspapers and TV/Radio, tend to present consistency in size. In this sample, newspaper is usually composed of medium to large organisations; and TV/Radio typically are small. Therefore, most of these organisations are small to medium sized, digital native and conducted by largely educated people.

### Summary of category type, duration and scope of collaborative journalism efforts

Table 12 Types of collaboration and comparison

Variable	Types of Collaboration	Nominal	Percentage
Group	Other news outlets	108	90%
Group	Universities	43	36%
Group	Communities	54	45%
Group	Advocacy	37	31%
Group	Freelancer	52	43%
Group	NGO	3	3%
Comparison	Group	Group	Nominal Percentage

News outlets	Communities	44	37%
News outlets	Universities	43	36%

Table 13 Topics of collaboration

Variable	Topic	Nominal	
Group	Various	35	29%
Group	Human rights	29	24%
Group	Politics	12	10%
Group	Race and gender	10	8%
Group	Environment	9	8%
Group	Health	8	7%
Group	Art/culture	4	3%
Group	Finance/economic/business	3	3%
Group	Technology	3	3%
Group	Others	3	3%
Group	Environment, health, politics	1	1%
Group	Health, science	1	1%
Group	Politics, finance/economic/business	1	1%
Group	Politics, race and gender, human rights	1	1%
	Total	120	100%
	Single topics	78	65%

Table 14 Scope

Variable	Scope	Nominal	Percentage
Group	National	73	61%
Group	International	62	52%
Group	Regional	45	38%
Group	Local	31	26%
	Total	120	
Unique Responses	Group		
Group	National	23	19%
Group	International	23	19%
Group	Local	10	8%
Group	Regional	10	8%
	Total	66	55%

Sum	Group		
Group	International + national	39	63%
Group	Regional + local	6	13%
Group	National + regional	5	7%
	Total	54	45%

*Table 15 Duration*

Variable	Duration	Nominal	Percentage
Group	Continuous / open (indefinite)	50	42%
Group	Temporary – 6 months (approximate)	29	24%
Group	Temporary – one year or more	24	20%
Group	Temporary – 1 month (approximate)	10	8%

### ***Category type, duration and scope of collaborative journalism efforts***

The current and following categories (processes) have more potential to present comparison with previous studies on collaborative journalism (see Chapter 2). The data illustrate that 68% of the informants declare that they are collaborating with two or more types of organisations (e.g., other news outlets, communities and universities). However, collaboration among peers is the most common arrangement. Apart from the 90% of the organisations collaborating with other news outlets, 18% collaborate only with this group. There is no clear pattern in terms of which type of collaboration when considering the organisation's size.

The data also indicate that almost half of the news organisations are actively collaborating with communities. Still, most organisations that collaborate with communities also collaborate with other organisations, mostly with news organisations as shown in Table 12. This correlates with findings of previous studies on participatory journalism. For instance, engaging the audience and the public in the news production is yet to evolve since there is a prevalence of a hierarchical dominance of journalists over the narrative (Wall, 2015). More recent studies on data journalism illustrate an increase in journalism relying on 'alternative' sources to build data. These alternative sources are often citizens, audiences and the general public. As pointed out by de-Lima-Santos and Mesquita (2021a), building data with the community has been a way to circumvent the lack of data, especially in poor and neglected communities. The level of community participation and why and how journalists and news organisations collaborate outside their bubble is explored in Chapter 6.

Most collaborative efforts in Latin America are single topic (65%), meaning that organisations mainly collaborate on one topic at a time, or they are specialised in one topic, the most common being human rights (24%), politics (10%), race and gender and environmental issues (8% each). Even though Brazil represents almost half of the total numbers, this tendency toward more pressing social matters remains the same in other countries. Investigations are increasingly being done in the region by small, medium size, independent, nonprofit news organisations that emerged after the introduction of the internet



and other ICTs (Requejo-Alemán and Lugo-Ocando, 2014; Mesquita and Fernandes, 2021). The preoccupation of such organisations to cover topics that are often avoided by captured liberal mainstream media demonstrates a commitment to an idea of journalism's role in society, which is represented by an evident not always declared activism, or they see themselves as agents of change (see Chapter 3). This discussion is only possible in the qualitative part of the research with the interviews (see Chapter 6). Nevertheless, journalists want to perform a kind of journalism relevant to society, which is demonstrated by the topics covered by most of the organisations engaging in collaborative efforts: human rights, politics, gender and race, environment and health.

The collaborative efforts are mostly national (61%) in scope, followed by international (52%), regional (38%) and local (26%). The sum of the percentages is more than a 100 because most of the respondents chose more than one option in the multiple question. These numbers are in line with the previous extract. News organisations are more focused on investigating social issues that directly impact the communities these organisations are part of. Although this variable was based on a checkbox question, most respondents declared that they work only on the national, international, regional, or local levels (55%). However, the percentage showing the difference margin between 'unique responses' and 'more than two options' is low. Another 45% of the respondents have a mixed approach to the scope of the collaborative project, the most common being 'international' and 'national' (63%) of the ones that declared working on international efforts and 33% of the total (120).

Other mixes are less relevant. The next one is 'regional' and 'local' (13%), and the last one is 'national' and 'regional' (7%). The first two reports to consider these different geographical perspectives are the Centre for Cooperative Media and the Reuters Institute Digital News Project. The former does not raise the geographical scope of the collaborative projects analysed in the report, but many of the projects described are national or local. The latter is a special project on collaborative journalism at the local level in Europe. Both shed light onto other spaces of collaboration in journalism. Even though collaborative journalism has a powerful international component, most of the efforts carried out in Latin America are at the national level.

Collaborative efforts in Latin America are continuous or open, meaning that they are ongoing projects. Of the respondents, 42% confirmed that their projects are ongoing without a clear beginning and end. Another 24% of the collaborative projects are temporary (approximately six months) and 20% are temporary (approximately one year or more). These numbers indicate that collaborative journalism might be the basis of journalistic and investigative practices at many organisations. Conversely, it could be inferred that those organisations have a looser approach to collaboration. This permits more liberty of association and creation but also prevents these organisations from realising the full potential of a structured collaboration, editorially coordinated, with assigned responsibilities (Stonbely, 2017).

Stonbely (2017), in her work on the six models of collaborative journalism, deems the duration of collaborative projects as an element in the matrix that also considers the level of commitment and integration of projects. The duration of collaborative projects in the matrix provides more description of the projects than a variable influencing the levels of commitment and integration. However, longer projects may leave space for the maturation of practices, transforming them into something almost natural, as I discuss in the qualitative part of the research. Shorter projects must be more focused and have clear objectives. These are the kind of projects that are more common among long-time partners or in a more hierarchical fashion. Both hypotheses are discussed in the 'process' and 'motivation' categories. In summary, Latin American collaborative efforts are often ongoing projects. To understand the implications

and motivations behind the duration of collaborative projects, this study explores the processes adopted by news outlets when collaborating with other organisations.

### Summary of category process

Table 16 Network

Variable	Network	Nominal
Group	Editorial/management team	60
Group	All of us in the organisation	43
Group	The network	11
Group	All by myself	4
Group	Others	2

Table 17 Decision-making

Variable	Decision-making	Nominal	Percentage
Group	Horizontal (with coordination)	76	63%
Group	Horizontal (no coordination)	31	26%
Group	Vertical (traditional newsroom)	12	10%
Group	Others	1	1%

Duration/decision-making	Horizontal (w/coordination)	Horizontal (no coordination)	Vertical
Ongoing	54%	36%	10%
Temporary – 1 month	60%	30%	10%
Temporary – 6 months	72%	17%	10%
Temporary – 1 year	71%	21%	8%

Table 18 Workflow

Variable	Workflow	Nominal	Percentage
Group	Common content creation	53	44%
Group	Organisational shared environment	31	26%
Group	Separated content creation/common dissemination	29	24%
Group	Others	3	3%
Group	Common content creation, organisational shared environment	2	2%

Group	Separated content creation/common dissemination, common content creation	1	1%
Group	All the above	1	1%

*Table 19 Agreement*

Variable	Agreement	Nominal	Percentage
Group	Verbal agreement	45	38%
Group	Contract or any formal agreement	44	37%
Group	Without any formal agreement	23	19%
Group	Verbal agreement, any formal agreement	5	4%
Group	All the above	3	3%

### *Category process*

The editorial or management team of collaborative projects decides who is part of the network in 50% of the cases. Approximately 36% of the respondents declared that all the members of the organisation take part in this decision. In only 9% of the cases, the network – the group of organisations forming a consortium – makes the decision. This variable illustrates the persistence of top-down models and processes. The power relationship is further analysed in Chapter 6.

The decision-making process reveals that most of the organisations prefer nontraditional and less hierarchical approach to collaborative projects. Almost 90% of the respondents declared that the process is carried out horizontally, in which all participants have similar or the same rights and have similar levels of engagement with projects and organisations. However, horizontality does not mean a lack of coordination. As suggested by Alfter (2018, 2019), collaborative efforts need ‘editorial’ coordination focused on solving problems, administrative and logistic coordination. Alfter’s argument is confirmed by the data. Nevertheless, power relations are embedded in any social structure and must also be observed in collaborative journalism.

In an attempt to understand whether power struggles influence processes within collaborative journalism efforts, I conducted a test to know whether short-term projects are more hierarchical. To analyse this hypothesis, the data of the group ‘decision-making’ from the category ‘process’ was crossed with the group ‘duration’ from the category, ‘types, duration and scope’. The conclusion is that a strong correlation exists between more hierarchical decision-making processes and temporary projects. Through the data analysis is possible to see that while the time on temporary efforts increases – from one month to six months and then to one year – it also increases the number of organisations that declare having a horizontal decision-making process with coordination. Even though the group ‘horizontal with coordination’ is the majority of the cases in ‘ongoing’ projects, the number is the lowest in the series. Moreover, another factor might be influencing the data, such as the size of the organisations. The majority of the organisations present in this research are small to medium size (74%). Thus, it is much easier for them to approach collaboration as a more horizontal decision-making process. However, there is a tendency to concentrate the decision in the hands of few when collaborations are temporary.

Most of the content is created together, which is found in the data of the variable ‘workflow’. Approximately 26% of the respondents said that they work in a shared environment where data, content, sources and resources are shared at the organisational level. Another group of 24% create content separately and then share it. Only a small number said that they create content together and share the environment. Another smaller group declared doing all the above – common and separated content creation, common dissemination and shared environment. This question aims to understand at which level collaboration can permeate the production of content. As argued by Stonbely (2017), organisations that can conduct collaboration at the level of production have a higher level of integration. Thus, the ‘level of integration’ that was translated into ‘workflow’ in the context of this research proved to be high among Latin American practitioners conducting collaborative journalism efforts, meaning that collaboration is embedded in journalistic practices. It is not possible to compare the level of integration in collaborative journalism efforts across regions; however, it is possible to infer that efforts with a higher level of integration also have higher levels of success (Spagnuolo, 2021).

Most CJ efforts are formally established among collaborators (80%), verbally or through a formal contract. However, 19% declared that they do not formalise any type of agreement. This might be related to the fact that formalising agreements can be a natural process that organisations do not even think about, but this could lead to organisations losing the capability of improving, innovating and looking outside their bubble, as suggested by Alfter and Cândia (2019). Unfortunately, no other study has investigated this issue. This is interesting information to evaluate: First, what is the level of formality of such projects? Second, the lack of a formal agreement could damage the *ethos* of collaboration. Third, in the long run, formal contracts or similar might mean an institutionalisation of collaborative practices, which can be both beneficial and hurtful. Concerning the formality of collaborative efforts, most of them rely on a formal agreement, verbal or through contracts.

### Summary of category motivation

Table 20 Motivation for collaboration

Variable	Motivation for collaboration	Nominal	Percentage
Group	Expertise / specific knowledge	83	69%
Group	Data and information	69	58%
Group	Funding	62	52%
Group	Technology	59	49%
Group	Sources	46	38%
Group	Safety	15	13%
Group	Broader coverage audiences	10	8%

Table 21 Motivation for the project

Topics / Motivation for collaboration	Common agenda	We are used to	Remote places	New skills	Due to the topic	Others	Matrix
Human rights	57%	23%	17%	17%	47%	10%	First
Politics	67%	13%	20%	33%	47%	13%	Second

Race and gender	100%	9%	9%	18%	55%	9%	Third
Environment	90%	10%	10%	20%	20%	10%	
Variable	Motivation for the project	Nominal	Percentage				
Group	Common agenda	80	67%				
Group	Due to the topic	48	40%				
Group	New skills	25	21%				
Group	We are used to work with	19	16%				
Group	Remote places	17	14%				

Table 22 Benefits

Variable	Benefits	Nominal	Percentage
Group	More sources/resources/information	92	77%
Group	Information from different places	77	64%
Group	Wider audience	69	58%
Group	Better reporting	63	53%
Group	Not sure how it is beneficial	4	3%
Group	Others	1	1%

### Category motivation

In terms of motivation, two groups are interrelated: ‘motivation for collaboration’ and ‘motivation for the project’. These groups account for a more general motivation toward collaboration and are more specifically related to the collaborative project. The former illustrates that most of the collaboration efforts are motivated by searching for ‘specific knowledge and expertise’ (69%). Another 58% declared that they are looking for data and information when collaborating with other organisations. More than half (52%) respond that they decided to collaborate to get access to funds. This echoes previous studies that criticise the practice. For instance, according to Kayser-Bril (2018), the last few years have seen increased grants and other kinds of funds for collaborative projects. The author argues that this has a strong influence on the increase of collaboration itself since many collaborations are a form of journalism that attracts the attention of foundations and philanthropic organisations. However, the data show that, although funding is a significant concern among the Latin American news organisations, it is not the primary motivation to instigate collaborative efforts in most cases. Country-level data illustrate that countries that consider ‘funding’ their primary concern often have also other motivations. A respondent from Nicaragua said that

having access to ‘sources’ and sharing the risks of investigations are as important as having access to funding. Respondents from Guatemala aligned ‘funding’ and access to ‘specific knowledge and expertise’.

The extreme financial difficulties of news organisations in Latin America have led organisations to increasingly rely on external funding (Requejo-Alemán and Lugo-Ocando, 2014; Salaverría et al., 2018). This has been a particular challenge in countries such as Venezuela where individuals and organisations that receive foreign funds can be charged with treason (Human Rights Watch, 2020). Other primary motivations for collaboration include access to technology (49%) and access to more and more diverse ‘sources’ (38%). Both results mirror previous studies that illustrated the importance of sharing technology in collaborative efforts to enhance investigations and transfer technology to organisations with different levels of usage or access. Access to more diverse sources is also characteristic of many new journalism practices, such as participatory, networked and solution journalism (Singer et al., 2011; Van Der Haak, Parks and Castells, 2012; Domingo, Masip and Costera Meijer, 2015).

Regarding ‘safety’, fewer than one-quarter of the respondents rely on collaboration as a security measure or to share the risks of an investigation. It is symptomatic that the countries prompting this type of concern have lower levels of press freedom (RSF, 2020) – countries under internationally recognised authoritarian and nondemocratic regimes. Those countries are, in order, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Mexico, Colombia, Cuba and Brazil. Interesting to notice that increasing coverage and audience reach (8%) were also pointed out by participants under the option ‘other’ motivation in the survey. All these variations of ‘other’ answers were consolidated under the group ‘broader audiences/coverage’. In summary, most of the respondents displayed an interest in reaching out not only for specific knowledge and expertise but also for data, information and funding. The data concur with the literature when pointing out that many collaborations are motivated by the need of organisations to access data and information, skills, tools, sources and resources that they do not have in-house and also to circumvent newsroom shrinkage.

Organisations tend to collaborate because they have a common agenda (67%). Another 40% of respondents declared that they band together due to the project’s topic. 21% claimed that they are searching for new skills to add to the project and they do not have them in-house. 16% revealed that they get together with other organisations because they are used to working with this group of people, and 14% said they were searching for people in remote places. Since this variable was composed of checkboxes, most of the answers were a combination of two or more motives: First, ‘common agenda’ and ‘due to the topic covered’; second ‘common agenda’ and ‘new skills’; third ‘common agenda’ and ‘remote places’. Also, interesting to observe that when breaking the data according to the ‘topics’ that the collaborative efforts are covering, being human right, politics, race and gender or environment, some specific characteristics emerge. For those covering human rights, besides the ‘common agenda’ and ‘due to the topic covered’, organisations choose to collaborate with people that they ‘are used to’.

Those working with politics and gender and race issues tend to prioritise new skills when deciding to collaborate. This finding could lead to the proposition that human rights are a challenging subject. Especially in countries where attacks on human rights are a norm, journalists and news organisations must be careful when choosing their partners. As Mesquita and Fernandes (2021) pointed out, independent news tends to collaborate and cover topics that are mostly disregarded by the mainstream media. However, the study did not consider the effects of such types of coverage on the news organisation – how they prepare themselves, how and with whom they collaborate to be able to protect themselves and their sources when covering risky issues. Therefore, it seems reasonable that organisations covering such issues decide to collaborate in projects with organisations that they are ‘used to’. ‘More access to sources, resources and information’ (77%) are seen as the main benefits of CJ. They are also able to get information from ‘more

and different places' (64%); they have access to wider audiences (58%) and they claim they are 'reporting better' (53%). This question had checkboxes, which were commonly all selected. Some respondents added that they have more access to funding, security measures and efficiency in reporting. However, 3% admitted that they are not sure how and whether collaborative journalism benefits them and their organisations. Nevertheless, the great majority of the organisations recognise the many benefits of collaboration, confirming the previous studies on the topic (e.g., Stonbely, 2017; Heft, 2021; Jenkins and Graves, 2022). This question is explored further in the qualitative part of the research (Chapter 6).

### Summary of category sustainability

Table 23 Business models

Variable	Business Models	Nominal	Percentage
Group	Financing by project	59	49%
Group	Collaborative financing (crowdfunding)	54	45%
Group	Content production	46	38%
Group	Sale of products and services	40	33%
Group	Advertising sale	37	31%
Group	Cultural incentives promoted by private philanthropic institutions	35	29%
Group	Partners / associates / members	33	28%
Group	Events	25	21%
Group	Subscription	23	19%
Group	Education	20	17%
Group	Resources of the organisation's own members	20	17%
Group	Government-sponsored cultural incentives	13	11%
Group	There is no funding	10	8%

Table 24 Financing collaborative projects

Variable	Financing	Nominal	Percentage
Group	With resources from the organisation itself	34	28%
Group	We seek external support (partners/crowdfunding / etc.) for our projects	30	25%
Group	We apply for funds (grants/scholarships) that already have specific projects	20	17%
Group	A mix of the previous ones	36	30%

Table 25 Sustainability

Variable	Sustainability	Nominal	Percentage
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Group	Not always		50	42%
Group	No		28	23%
Group	Yes, most of the time		27	23%
Group	Yes, always		15	13%
Group	For-profit	Nonprofit	ONG	Other
	100	100	100	100
No	16.7	25.4	28.6	28.6
Not always	44.4	41.3	42.9	35.7
Yes, always	8.3	11.1	14.3	28.6
Yes, most of the time	30.6	22.2	14.3	7.1

*Table 26 Investment in business models*

Variable	Investment	Nominal	Percentage
Group	Financing by project	20	17%
Group	Collaborative financing (crowdfunding)	19	16%
Group	Partners / associates / members	16	13%
Group	Cultural incentives promoted by private philanthropic institutions	14	12%
Group	Subscription	11	9%
Group	Content production	10	8%
Group	Advertising sale	9	8%
Group	Other	7	6%
Group	Education	5	4%
Group	Sale of products and services	4	3%
Group	Government-sponsored cultural incentives	3	3%
Group	Events	2	2%

### ***Category sustainability***

The great majority of the organisations rely on more than one source of income, the most common ones being ‘financing by the project’ (49%) and ‘crowdfunding’ (45%), followed by ‘content production’ (38%) and ‘sales of products and services’ (33%). Almost at the same level is income by ‘advertising’ (31%), ‘philanthropy’ (29%) and ‘membership’ (28%). The next level is shared almost equally by ‘events’ (21%), ‘subscription’ (19%), ‘education’ (17%) and ‘resources from its own members’ (17%). The last level is shared between ‘government incentives’ (11%) and ‘incentives by private philanthropic institutions’ (11%). Unfortunately, 8% of the organisations admit not having any kind of funding or income.



When it comes to funding a collaborative project, one-third of the respondents (30%) declared that they apply a mix of ‘seeking for external funds for projects’, ‘using the organisation’s own resources’, and ‘applying for existing funds and grants’. Another third of the respondents said that they rely only on the organisation’s resources (28%), and another third ‘seek external funding’ (25%) for the projects they have already designed. The final portion of respondents (17%) rely only on ‘application for existing funds and grants’ to fund projects, which means that they create projects with the main objective of applying for a specific grant or fund. These numbers demonstrate, first, that most organisations are flexible and adapt to finance their collaborative projects case-by-case. However, a significant portion do not find external funding or choose not to seek it.

Although organisations have been applying a mixed-income approach to sustain the organisation and fund collaborative projects, most organisations and members of the network are ‘not always’ or ‘not’ at all able to support themselves only with the revenue generated by journalistic work (65%). The question evaluates the degrees of sustainability, where the highest level is ‘yes, always’, then ‘yes, most of the time’, ‘not always’ and ‘not’. In this sense, 23% declared that members of the organisation are ‘not’ able to support themselves. Another 23% said that members ‘most of the time’ can support themselves and a minority (13%) claim that the organisation’s members are ‘always’ able to support themselves only with the revenue generated by journalistic work.

Employment conditions for all professionals have worsened worldwide (de-Lima-Santos and Mesquita, 2021b). The data illustrate that nonprofit and for-profit organisations are having problems sustaining themselves. However, for-profit organisations are performing slightly better (approximately five percentage points above). For-profit organisations also have the best performance in the series, with 39% of the organisations claiming they can sustain themselves ‘always’ (8%) and ‘most of the time’ (30%). NGOs have the worst sustainability rates; approximately 71% are unable or not always able to maintain themselves. Nonprofits score 67% in the same situation. This alarming number reflects not just the precarious situation of journalism professionals in the region but also demonstrates that the majority of the respondents see collaboration as a necessity.

There is no clear tendency regarding future investments in terms of business models to sustain the organisations; 17% plan to invest in a business model in which income is pursued project-by-project. A mixed approach is expected in any case. Another 16% said they would be investing in crowdfunding and 13% in memberships. Interestingly, 12% will invest in pursuing philanthropic funding, leading one to think that many organisations might see this kind of funding as a silver bullet. This could be dangerous because more international philanthropic organisations might be deciding the agenda of independent news organisations in Latin America (Browne, 2010; Benson, 2018). This situation is further explored in Chapter 7. Many respondents declared that they have been using their own resources to conduct investigations.

### Summary of category participation

Table 27 Relationship and channels

Variable	Relationship	Nominal	Percentage
Group	Yes always	85	71%
Group	Yes, most of the time	26	22%
Group	Not always	8	7%

Group	Never	1	1%
	Total	120	100%

Variable	Channels	Nominal	Percentage
Group	We have an open hotline with the community	65	54%
Group	We produce events to listen to and contact the community	19	16%
Group	We have regular meetings	6	5%
Group	We have no formal action	25	21%
Group	Other	5	4%

Channels	Yes always	Yes, most of the time	Not always
Hotline	65%	38%	0%
Events	13%	23%	13%
Meetings	7%	0%	0%
No formal	11%	35%	25%
Other	4%	4%	0%

### ***Category participation***

The great majority of the organisations taking part in collaborative efforts actively promote communities' participation in their work. 71% claim that they always count on the community in the collaborative projects, and 65% of these declare that this relationship is often made through an open hotline with the community. A hotline can take many forms, from regular meetings to informal relationships in daily routines. These relationships are further explored in the qualitative data analysis and discussion in Chapter 6. The open hotline is also the preferred form of connecting with communities for those that 'most of the time' count on community participation. However, those that do not have any formal action to assure community participation declared that 'most of the time' (35%) they can count on this kind of participation and that they are 'not always' (25%) able to do it. Therefore, 60% of those that do not have any formal action towards community participation are the ones that also have the lowest numbers of community participation.

As discussed in the literature review, participatory journalism is often mistaken for collaborative journalism and vice versa (Chapter 2). This confusion is probably based on the idea that nonprofessionals are invited to participate in the production of the news in both cases. However, even though nonprofessionals might join in collaborative journalism, the journalistic purposes and mission guide the production. Therefore, the journalist still dominates the narrative, the decision on topics to cover and with whom to collaborate – as demonstrated by the data in the present research. In collaborative journalism,

communities, such as other institutions, entities and organisations alien to journalism act as partners, sources and specialists. The result of this action is still a journalistic endeavour (Sambrook, 2018).

I argue that one does not cancel the other. Collaborative journalism might take advantage of participatory journalism as in the case of fact-checking projects that count on communities in the journalistic processes (de-Lima-Santos and Mesquita, 2021a, 2021b). In many cases, the journalists themselves are part of the communities they are reporting on, such as the case of gender and race collaborative efforts. This adds another layer of analysis – the limits and boundaries between collaborative journalism and community journalism. According to Lowrey, Brozana and Mackay (2008), community journalism is about the community but mainly uses the voice of these communities. Collaborative journalism projects that deal with community issues could be mistaken for community journalism. As evidenced by the present data, both may co-exist. As discussed in literature chapter (Chapters 2), these types of journalism, from participatory to networked, are intertwined in the practices of collaborative journalism. However, some specificities are found, such as the emergence of more institutionalised practices of co-creation and coordination. This and other conceptual delimitations are made clear throughout this research.

### Summary of category technology

Table 28 Technology

Variable	Technology	Nominal	Percentage
Group	Whatsapp	107	89%
Group	Google Docs (and other Google apps)	95	79%
Group	Telegram	46	38%
Group	Slack	24	20%
Group	Dropbox	18	15%
Group	Other:	16	13%
Group	Technology (software/application) developed by the collaboration network or a partner	15	13%
Group	Airtable	3	3%

### Category technology

The use of messaging apps is wide-spread among collaborative teams with WhatsApp being the most popular (89%). All the Google apps and platforms are used by most organisations (79%). WhatsApp is still the most used messaging app, even after the recent changes in the platform’s policy that made many users migrate to other platforms such as Telegram and Signal (Nicas, Isaac and Frenkel, 2021). Nonetheless, WhatsApp maintains its dominant position in Latin America (Nielsen *et al.*, 2020). Dodds (2019) argues that WhatsApp has been used by many professionals to reach sources faster and create a sense of comradery with others. The author also points out that journalists use the platform to circumvent government censorship because of its encrypted feature. The present data echo previous studies indicating that

technology has enabled collaboration to flourish (Lewis and Usher, 2014; Alfter and Căndea, 2019; Heft, 2019).

### Summary of category security

Table 29 Protection

Variable	Protection	Nominal	Percentage			
Group	Yes, most of the time	51	43%			
	Yes, always	42	35%			
	Not always	19	16%			
	I prefer not to say	6	5%			
	Not	2	2%			
	Total		120			
By gender	Female	Percentage	Male	Percentage	Nonbinary	Percentage
Yes, most of the time	26	45%	25	42%	0	0%
Yes, always	21	36%	19	32%	2	100%
Not always	6	10%	13	22%	0	0%
Prefer not to say	4	7%	1	2%	0	0%
Not	1	2%	2	3%	0	0%
Total	58		60		2	

Table 30 Information and training

Variable	Information and Training	Nominal	Percentage			
Group	Yes always	28	23%			
	Yes, most of the time	38	32%			
	Not always	39	33%			
	No	7	6%			
	I prefer not to say	8	7%			
	Total		120			

Table 31 Tools and processes

Variable	Tools and Processes	Nominal	Percentage			
Group	Training	32	26%			

Juridical support	21	17%
Technical support	20	16%
I prefer not to say	20	16%
Psychological support	10	8%
None	7	6%
Various	7	6%
Direct line	6	5%

*Table 32 Victims*

Variable	Victims	Nominal	Percentage
Group	No	64	53%
	Yes	45	38%
	I prefer not to say	11	9%
	Total	120	

*Table 33 Collaboration role*

Variable	Collaboration role	Nominal	Percentage
Group	Yes, always	19	42%
Group	Yes, most of the time	12	27%
Group	Not always	8	18%
Group	Not	5	11%
Group	I prefer not to say	1	2%
	Total	45	

*Table 34 Support*

Variable	Support	Nominal	Percentage
Group	Training	11	24%
Group	Psychological	11	24%
Group	Professional	10	22%
Group	Processes	10	22%
Group	Tools	11	24%

### *Category security*

Most of the journalists and professionals conducting collaborative journalism efforts feel protected by their networks. Almost 80% of the respondents said they feel protected ‘most of the time’ (43%) and ‘always’ (35%). This tendency is present even when the data are viewed by gender. Interestingly, more men than women feel less protected by their networks; 25% of men said they ‘not always’ and do ‘not’ feel protected by their networks against 12% of women. This may be explained by the fact that women do not participate in the survey in Ecuador, Nicaragua, Panama and Paraguay. The countries where men feel less protected by their networks are Colombia, Brazil, Paraguay and Bolivia. Those are the countries where women also feel less protected; however, since there is no information about women in some countries, the data do not reflect the region’s reality. The data confirm previous studies suggesting that organisations in Latin America resort to collaboration to protect themselves (Chacón and Saldaña, 2020; Mesquita and de-Lima-Santos, forthcoming).

Most collaborative networks (55%) provide information and training for the safety of their organisations and professionals. However, a significant number of them do not offer specific information and training about this matter (39%). This indicates that either the collaboration does not require particular attention to security measures or collaborative efforts are not addressing an essential issue for journalists and media practitioners.

Concerning support that collaborative networks provide for organisations and practitioners – 26% offer training, 17% provide judicial support, and 16% offer technical support. Only 8% provide psychological support, and 6% declare that the network offers various types of support. However, 16% of respondents replied they would rather not say, and 6% said they did not receive any support. The data illustrate a somewhat contradictory reality. While it is good that organisations and practitioners receive some support in terms of safety, it is bad that a considerable number of them do not enjoy the same assistance. This happens for a number of reasons, but the economic power that larger organisations possess may reflect in more structured security measures, such as legal advisory and digital security teams in the newsrooms.

Small and medium sized organisations, especially in Latin America, often rely on grants and collaboration to deal with attacks of many kinds, from digital harassment and lawsuits, to threats of assassination, robbery and incarceration (UNESCO, 2019). However, González and Rodelo (2020) argue that organisations’ safety measures to tackle these new threats are still limited. Although the data indicate that most organisations receive security support from their networks, there is space for concern because many respondents do not enjoy the same environment.

The majority (53%) of journalists and practitioners of collaborative efforts declared that they were never victims of attacks from the public or the government during investigations or because of them. However, another 38% declared that they had been attacked because of their work. The same tendency is evidenced in the data separated by gender. Nevertheless, it was also possible to verify that countries with more victims are nondemocratic, authoritarian and weak democracies such as Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Mexico and (surprisingly) Argentina – an exception worth further analysis. The countries with fewer incidents are Uruguay, Chile, Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala and Peru.

These numbers seem to contradict the expectation of an overall unsafety situation of news practitioners in Latin America, but most of the organisations in this survey are small and medium size. Therefore, it is expected that practitioners are less exposed, and they will be attacked less. The number of incidents is still high since more than one in three people suffered some kind of attack from conducting

collaborative journalistic investigations. From those attacked, approximately 70% declared that collaborative networks were essential to resolve or lessen the impacts of the attacks ‘always’ (42%) and ‘most of the time’ (27%). Still, one-third said that the collaborative networks are ‘not always’ and ‘not’ able to resolve or lessen the attacks suffered during collaborative journalistic investigations. The actions are varied in terms of support that collaborative networks can provide to those who were attacked. Collaborative efforts provide training, psychological support, better tools and software (24% each), but they also offer professional support and the elaboration of more secure working processes (22% each).

## **Conclusion**

Collaborative journalism is a wide-spread practice in Latin America. The data show that from the 20 countries reached by the survey, at least 15 reported participating in collaborative journalistic activities. The practitioners are experienced professionals from mostly journalistic backgrounds. The data illustrate a balanced presence of women in high command lines, especially in management and coordination positions. However, in some countries, there was no participation of women in the survey, which makes it impossible to generalise. The majority of participants are digital natives and small to medium sized organisations. The digital natives and news agencies taking part in collaborative projects tend to be small and medium sized organisations. Newspapers tend to be medium to large. TV and radio stations and magazines are small in general. Collaborative journalism has been largely practised by experienced journalists in digital native organisations, which are mostly small and medium sized. Collaborative projects are mainly coordinated and managed by women in this sample.

Most collaborative projects are conducted among peers between two or more news organisations. However, the projects have various approaches to collaboration, including community collaboration, followed by partnering with freelancers, universities and advocacy organisations. Topics covered by these collaborative efforts are varied. Still, the majority of the organisations are focused on social issues such as human rights, politics, gender and race, environment and health. Most projects are ongoing national collaborations. The normative mission and values of journalism and the profession’s social role starts to be present in the data through the topics covered by the organisations. However, the data also illustrate that collaborative journalism is mostly a peer-to-peer type of partnership.

Decision-making is mostly horizontal in collaborative projects, but this does not mean a lack of coordination between participants. Most projects are coordinated, and networks are established by these coordination bodies. Those who decided to collaborate are still the coordination team most of the time. Nevertheless, the projects show a profound format of cooperation by sharing content creation in most cases. In addition, collaborative projects are formally established by the partner organisations. Collaborative journalism in Latin America follows the tendency observed in other countries. It is characterised by horizontality, formal agreements, editorial and administrative coordination and common practices.

Specialised knowledge and expertise motivate most collaborations. However, when it comes to specific collaborative projects, organisations tend to work with other organisations that share a common agenda. The benefits of collaboration perceived by the organisations mainly focus on the aggregation of sources, resources and information. Again, collaborative journalism in the region displays a similar motivation to its peers in other countries. Differing from those in more developed economies that have more access to technology, collaboration is seen as essential to access remote places. Nevertheless, most collaborations are motivated by the need for specialised knowledge. They are conducted by organisations sharing a common agenda that benefit from more diverse sources, resources, and information.

Unfortunately, the majority of the organisations taking part in collaborative journalism efforts are not always able to sustain themselves. This is a reality for all types of organisations, for-profit, nonprofit, NGOs and others. Latin American news organisations apply a mix of income streams to their business models, and the most common is a flexible approach case-by-case based. This more flexible income stream is the best business model for most of the organisations. Even though philanthropy is considered important in the region, the reality is that this kind of funding cannot make small, independent investigative journalism profitable. This type of funding is not accessible for most organisations and cannot make them profitable in the long run. This is further analysed in Chapter 7 which focuses on philanthropic and big tech funding. Practitioners are not able to sustain themselves only with journalistic work. News organisations have difficulty being sustainable, and the majority can still not pay enough to their members.

Community participation is a strong characteristic of collaborative journalism in Latin America. Most organisations count on this kind of participation. The most common method to secure this endeavour is having an open hotline with the community. Moreover, the data demonstrate that it is essential to have a formal strategy to ensure community participation; otherwise, organisations cannot count on this crucial perspective.

Technology has been an enabling force in collaborations. Most organisations rely on messaging applications such as WhatsApp to communicate and work. Also, the data confirm many reports showing that WhatsApp is still the main form of communication in Latin America, a reality which raises questions about security measures adopted by news organisations to report and investigate safely. The permissive nature of such technologies has sounded the alert about digital safety of journalists and media practitioners. The data collected for the present research show the increased preoccupation with safety and that collaborative journalism has been able to support organisations to be prepared. Most of the organisations declared receiving training and other kinds of support such as juridical, technical and psychological assistance from their collaborative networks. Even though the majority of the professionals did not experience any trouble, one-third declared being victims of harassment or attacks while conducting their journalistic work or because of it.

In summary, this chapter presented a profile of the professionals and organisations involved in collaboration in Latin America. It offered insights into their motivations and the processes in place while collaborating with other organisations. Moreover, it demonstrated how these organisations are funding their work and the projects they are carrying out. The chapter illustrated that collaboration in the region has a strong relationship with national communities and social issues. However, the safety of journalists, practitioners and other professionals in the region is a reason for concern. Nevertheless, collaborative journalism in Latin America is wide-spread and has shed light on important issues, performing a relevant social and normative journalistic role.



## Chapter 6 – Qualitative data analysis and results

### Introduction

The qualitative research analysis and discussion follow the thematic analysis approach. The interviews were conducted during March and May of 2021 with practitioners and journalists who responded to the survey in the first part of the research methodology (see Chapters 4 and 5). The survey contained a final question asking participants whether they would deepen the discussion about collaborative journalism. Those that agreed provided their contact details and were contacted via email, WhatsApp, Telegram and other messaging apps to schedule an interview. The interviews were conducted virtually through Zoom, WhatsApp and/or GoogleMeet. Another five interviews were conducted after the survey closed; therefore, demographic data is not available. However, all interviews used the same guidelines. The interviews followed a semi-structured, in-depth guide provided in an Appendices at the end of this study. A summary of the questionnaire can also be found in Chapter 4. This semi-structured interview technique gives the researcher flexibility to add or delete questions. The interviews were recorded with the interviewees' consent, following the DCU's Research Ethics Committee, and then transcribed (see the Appendices for forms and approved documents). The interviews were conducted in Spanish and Portuguese and lasted approximately 45 minutes.

### Data analysis procedure

The qualitative data analysis follows a thematic analysis approach. Codes rather than the literal meaning of words and sentences are the basis of interpreting statements and information given by interviewees to the researcher. To this end, the researcher followed the instructions of Braun and Clarke (2012), which involve systematically analysing qualitative data to distinguish different themes and their relationships. For this purpose, the interviews were transcribed and then coded using NVivo (see Chapter 4 for more information regarding NVivo and qualitative analysis). The software, provided by the university, is a tool known for its analysis of qualitative data such as interviews, texts, audio and video. Following the guidelines provided by a specific training undertaken by the researcher at the university level, the present research adapts from NVivo guideline to the reality of the present study, which is both inductive and deductive.

### Data analysis, inductive and deductive analysis

The majority of the interviewees are from Brazil, young, but with some experience in journalism. There is a balance in gender: 19 women, 19 men and two nonbinary. Most interviewees hold a high position in their organisations; most are editors-in-chief and editors (20), then CEOs, directors and founders (12), and finally, journalists, content creators and freelancer professionals (8). Most interviewees are from Brazil (26), Colombia (4) and Peru (2). The other seven countries have only one interview each: Argentina, Guatemala, Mexico, Chile, Cuba, Nicaragua and Panama. One interview counts as regional since the interviewee is the Latin America correspondent and coordinator for The Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP). In summary, it is possible to assume that the data show a good spread of profiles reflected in a high level of information for the analysis.

Table 35 Profile of the interviewees

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Role</b>
Departamento Geral de Ações Socioeducativas	Brazil	56+	Male	Editor-in-chief
Coletivo Bereia	Brazil	18–25	Male	Editor-in-chief
OCCRP	LATAM	26–35	Male	Editor-in-chief
CDD / Jornal Boca no Mundo	Brazil	56+	Female	Content creator
Bichos de Campo / El Café Diario Puntocom	Argentina	46–55	Nonbinary	Journalist/ Reporter
Fala Roça	Brazil	26–35	Female	CEO
Site da Baixada	Brazil	26–35	Male	CEO
Biblioteca	Brazil	26–35	Male	Content creator
O Eco	Brazil	36–45	Male	CEO
Agência Mural	Brazil	26–35	Male	CEO
CDD Acontece	Brazil	36–45	Female	CEO
24Horas / Factchecking.cl	Chile	26–35	Female	Editor-in-chief
Canal Caribe	Cuba	18–25	Female	Journalist/ Reporter
Boletín Ecológico	Nicaragua	36–45	Male	CEO
Diario La Prensa	Panama	56+	Male	Journalist/ Reporter
Núcleo Jornalismo	Brazil	36–45	Male	Editor-in-chief
Cajueira/Redação Virtual	Brazil	26–35	Female	Editor-in-chief
Mídia Ninja	Brazil	36–45	Male	Editor-in-chief
Ipys	Peru	46–45	Female	Editor-in-chief
Maré de Notícias	Brazil	46–55	Female	Editor-in-chief
Periodismo Negro	Mexico	46–55	Male	CEO
Factor4	Guatemala	26–35	Female	Editor-in-chief
BaudóAP	Colombia	26–35	Female	CEO

Generación Paz	Colombia	36–45	Female	Editor-in-chief
Mutante	Colombia	18–25	Female	Journalist/ Reporter
Consejo de Redacción	Colombia	26–35	Female	Editor-in-chief
Congresso em Foco	Brazil	56+	Male	CEO
Portal Catarinas	Brazil	36–45	Female	Journalist/ Reporter
InfoMercado	Peru	36–45	Male	CEO
Comprova	Brazil	56+	Male	Editor-in-chief
Alma Preta	Brazil	26–35	Female	Editor-in-chief
Freelancer	Brazil	36–45	Female	Freelancer
Notícia Preta	Brazil	36–45	Male	Editor-in-chief
Abaré	Brazil	18–25	Nonbinary	Editor-in-chief
Desenrola	Brazil	–	Male	Director
Sem Migué	Brazil	–	Male	Founder
The Intercept Brasil	Brazil	–	Female	Editor
Fakebook	Brazil	–	Male	Editor
Favela em Pauta	Brazil	–	Female	Editor and co- founder
ConfereAI	Brazil	–	Female	Editor and co- founder

As described in Chapter 4 (Methodology), the questionnaire reflects the main topics that emerge from the literature review (Chapter 2). For interpretation, the main topics used in this part of the research are deductive. As O'Reilly (2009) described, deductive reasoning is a form of drawing hypotheses from the literature and can be used to test assumptions and theories. As Braun and Clarke (2012) argued, thematic analysis benefits from both inductive and deductive reasoning to make sense of qualitative data. Therefore, to make the correlation between the interviews and the literature, the topics that emerge from the literature are deductive themes, as illustrated in Table below:

*Table 36 Deductive analysis*

Deductive	Description
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Concept	The perspective of practitioners and the news organisations of what collaborative journalism is understood to mean.
Processes	Processes related to collaboration, teams and management.
Reputation	Impacts of collaborative journalism on the reputation and credibility of organisations and professionals.
Results and impacts	Impacts and results on policy making, social transformation, and communities.
Relation with mainstream media and other organisations	Challenges and benefits of working together with mainstream media, legacy and more established news outlets as well as universities, professionals of other industries, institutes and advocacy organisations.
Challenges and limits	Questions around the possible challenges and limitations of collaborative journalism.

The table below represents the inductive analysis of the interviews. The categories were defined based on a group of codes that share a latent meaning. The description provides the primary information and the topics covered and found in these codes for interpretation. This part of the analysis indicates some cross-references with the deductive analysis. Therefore, it is possible to describe the relationship of some of these categories to the themes that emerged from the literature, as presented in the table above.

*Table 37 Inductive analysis*

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Description</b>
Challenges	Everything related to the challenges in collaborating, challenges for the projects, for the practice of journalism and the limitations of collaboration.
Collaboration benefits	A strong relationship with the mission and values of collaborative projects and collaborative practices, information about the perceived benefits of collaborative journalism.
Collaborative practices	Subthemes such as type of collaboration, types of networks formed and characteristics such as editorial coordination.
COVID-19	Impacts and influence of COVID-19 in the collaborative work and in the organisations.
Critics	Critics of traditional journalism, mainstream media, declaratory media and industry.
Financing and business models	Everything related to financing strategies, financial support, funding, business models and critics of financial models.
Meaning, concepts and normative journalism	What collaboration means, how it is conceptualised, normative journalism, mission and values.

Network	The formation of networks, how they start and the importance of networking.
Platformisation	Social media dependence for work, distribution of products and news, social media as a tool.
Processes	All processes related to collaboration.
Safety	Problems, risks and practices related to the safety of journalists.
Social impact	Results and social impacts that organisations and practitioners consider because of their collaborative work.
Territory and narratives	The importance of territory for many organisations, changes in the hegemonic narratives around communities, the problems of inequality and the question of diversity.

Table 38 merges the deductive and inductive analyses. It demonstrates that certain themes emerging from the literature predict some of the themes of the inductive thematic analysis. Nevertheless, other themes are underestimated or overestimated, such as the case of ‘reputation’ and ‘relationship with mainstream media and other organisations’. In the former, reputation is a benefit of collaborative action, not the primary concern of organisations and practitioners.

The themes illustrated in the interviews are often related to other benefits, such as visibility and credibility. These kinds of personal or organisational gains are often disregarded by organisations and practitioners. Most organisations and practitioners did not report concerns about credibility, often showing a ‘natural’ approach to relationships with mainstream media. Collaborating with the mainstream media and other organisations is part of a larger process, which is covered in the theme ‘collaborative practices’ and other themes as well, but not as the main concern. Therefore, there was no need to maintain the separation of this theme. Another theme of the deductive analysis was underestimated: ‘processes’. The interviews provided a large amount of information on this topic, which forced the separation of this theme into two parts. The description of the processes of merging, reductions, replacements, relationships and amplification of themes and subthemes are summarised in the table below:

*Table 38 Themes and subthemes*

Themes	Description	Subthemes
Concepts	This theme encapsulates the meanings and understandings of collaborative practice, organisations and individual’s mission and values and concepts. Subthemes are a merging of deductive and inductive approaches.	Meaning
		Mission and values
		Normative journalism
		Ideology
		Objectives
		Activism
		Motivation
Processes	Theme related to how collaborative journalism is done at the organisational	Territory and narratives
		Editorial coordination
		Volunteering

	level. Subthemes are focused on everyday practices and routines.	Professionalism
		Technology
		Partnership
		Workflow
		Team
		Work arrangements
		Horizontality
		Methodology
		Production cycle
Benefits	This theme emerged mostly from the inductive analysis of the data. It is related to the benefits perceived by practitioners while conducting or being part of collaborative efforts. The subthemes reflect the merge of inductive and deductive analysis, including ‘reputation’ and other emerging topics from the data.	Reputation
		Visibility and credibility
		Profession
		Innovation
		Social
		Characteristics
Results and impacts	The theme concentrates on impacts and results on policy making, social transformation, and communities. The subthemes are related to how and which values and missions were achieved and addressed by the practitioners and their organisations.	Social impact
		Audiences
		Policy making
		Results
Challenges and limits	This theme encapsulates all kinds of challenges that interviewees reported on, such as political constraints, cultural and editorial differences and organisational issues.	Cultural
		Editorial
		Methodological
		Organisational
		Industry
		Political
		COVID-19
		Safety
Business models	This theme emerged from the inductive analysis of the data that shows a great concern of interviewees related to financial issues, the capability of being sustainable and the strategies adopted by organisations and practitioners to conduct collaborative journalism.	Financial issues
		Platformisation
		Sustainability
		Types and processes
Context	This theme emerged from the inductive analysis of the data. It is related to a common topic in the interviews concerning the crisis of journalism, critics directed to traditional journalism, mainstream media and the general market and industry’s context	Critics
		Journalism crisis
		Industry
		Traditional normative journalism

	in which collaborative efforts take place.	
Collaborative practices	This theme is a division of the theme ‘processes’ and intends to identify structures of collaboration, types, culture, models and formats of projects, as well characteristics of the emerging model.	Types of partnership
		Types of collaboration
		Culture
		Communities
		Diversity
		Characteristics
		Technology
		Network

### **Thematic analysis, describing themes, subthemes, and relationships**

In addition to the tables above, it is worth describing some of the changes made to themes, such as the reduction of ‘categories’ that emerged both from the inductive and the deductive analysis. This section describes each theme and the findings in the interviews. As argued by O’Reilly (2009), knowing that a totally inductive approach would not be possible in the analysis of the data, I am, therefore, aware of my unavoidable bias. I have executed an analysis based on meaning and how these meanings were in accordance or disagreement, or even whether they were complementary or reductionist.

In this analysis, the inductive and the deductive themes are compared, merged, reduced and/or expanded and then analysed with respect to the interviews. For example, the theme ‘concepts’, from the deductive analysis (Table 36) is merged with the theme ‘meaning, concepts, and normative journalism’ from the inductive analysis (Table 37). These two themes were merged and expanded since the concepts of what collaborative is understood to mean opened a whole range of different meanings, conceptualisations and commitments which needed a list of subthemes that captured all the diversity of the statements and opinions given by the interviewees (see Table 38). It is also possible to identify the strong relationship of these subthemes; therefore, instead of dividing these subthemes into different themes, they were grouped to make a stronger case and simplify the analysis of the theme. In summary, after the analysis of both the categories and themes that emerged from the literature and the ones that emerged from the data, it was possible to narrow down the analysis to eight main themes and subthemes, as described below. In this part of the analysis, each theme is discussed separately. The theme ‘collaborative practices’ is last one to be discussed. I have left the category for last, as it will serve as a reference for the typology presented in the last part of this chapter. A conclusion follows in which all the findings are summarised.

### **Concepts**

Collaborative journalism is a novelty for the majority of journalistic organisations interviewed. Even for those that have been practising collaborative journalism and taking part in collaborative efforts, the practice takes different forms and meanings. It was expected that a number of different concepts, meanings and interpretations would emerge during the interviews. The deductive approach predicted some of the many different responses given by interviewees. Nevertheless, from the inductive analysis, it is possible to see that the category would have to expand to accommodate the many arguments interviewees used to describe collaborative journalism, its concept and meaning. Yet, concepts are still the latent meaning of the

statements of the interviewees around the topics of what collaborative journalism is understood to mean. For example, the concept of journalism itself, the concept of the social function and the normative mission and values of journalism, are interchanged and intersected with the meaning of collaborative journalism. Therefore, ‘concepts’ as a theme was expanded by the findings of the theme ‘meaning, concepts and normative journalism’ of the inductive analysis (Table 37). The many different arguments were grouped as subthemes. Therefore, the theme ‘concepts’ expands from its original definition.

It is not uncommon among interviewees to understand collaborative journalism in activist terms. This activism is related to an idea of what journalism is, how it should be performed and whom it should serve. For one of the interviewees, a freelancer journalist that works in São Paulo (Brazil’s largest city), collaborative journalism both reports and acts on issues. It is a kind of journalism that connects with the problems in society in a deeper way. ‘If you’re reporting on the Amazon and behind you, it’s on fire, you throw water, it’s not just reporting’. For her, acting directly on issues is a form of restoring the function of journalism in society, not just reporting from a distance, objective and cold. This journalist wants to be involved, promote social transformation and be part of the solution. This confirms some of the recent discussions around the topics of the transformation of journalism norms and values. The professional boundaries and journalism as activism can be found in Chapter 3.

Similarly, for a journalist from Mídia Ninja—an organisation born in Brazil, during the manifestations of June 2013, which describes the organisation as a media activist movement—, being inside of the communities about which you report is key to do a kind of journalism that really represents the reality, the voices, and the narratives of the people that journalism should serve. To this interviewee, collaboration is an essential *modus operandi* without which it is impossible to understand the social issues. ‘In collaborative action, you get to understand, you get to know the actors, you get to know who’s on the street, you get to understand the tensions there, you get a better understanding of the relationships. It serves all reporting, so it’s really another power, so I think collaboration brings very great power to the reporting’. As discussed in Chapter 3, activists see in the professional standards of journalism a way to expand their message.

Another journalist, who is part of a feminist collective, shares the sentiment of being inside a problem to promote a deeper representation of the social issues. According to this interviewee, her collective was born as a collaborative effort from the demands of the feminist community to change the dominant narrative around women and their issues. The interviewee from Portal Catarinas, a feminist collective that reports and act on women issues in the South of Brazil, explains that traditional and mainstream media have always misrepresented and underreported women. According to studies, women are approximately 25% of the sources and subjects of news articles in the world (GMMP, 2020). However, there has been a valorisation of women in news-making, especially among independent news organisations (Blanco-Herrero, Alonso, and Calderón, 2020; Salaverría et al. 2018). Among organisations conducting collaborative journalism, women have been present in positions of leadership (see Chapter 5). Nevertheless, as the interviewee points out, collaboration among activists and journalists has changed the narrative around women by adding new voices, different points of view and forms of interpreting the world. This reflects some of the findings of the literature by pointing out the relevant role that collaboration has in promoting diversity of viewpoints (Alfter, 2018) and gender equality in news organisations. In summary, the combination of the quantitative and qualitative data analysis and discussion confirmed some of the studies related to the increase of women’s roles in news organisations, especially nonprofit, independent ones (e.g., Blanco-Herrero, Alonso, and Calderón, 2020; Salaverría et al. 2018). The present research expands from it by showing that collaborative journalism projects are more diverse in terms of gender than the news media industry in Latin



America. Thus, collaborative journalism has been a force of change towards gender equality in the news ecosystem.

As discussed in the literature review (Chapter 2), the theoretical framework (Chapter 3) and in the quantitative data analysis and discussion (Chapter 5), Latin American practitioners in independent and alternative, nonprofit news organisations have a strong commitment to a kind of activism toward the power of journalism to change society (Mesquita and Fernandes, 2021). This research confirmed these findings and expanded them by demonstrating that collaborative journalism in Latin America has been carried out to a large extent by organisations that focus on topics such as human rights, gender and race, as shown by the quantitative data (see Chapter 5).

Thus, some organisations and practitioners understand collaborative journalism as a way of achieving this objective. For a journalist who works in an organisation in the compound of *favelas* of Complexo do Alemão in Rio de Janeiro, collaboration is the *modus operandi* to connect with the community, bring audiences what is important to them and change the narrative of mainstream media. The journalist comes from the community and is an offspring of a journalistic project that took place during the Olympiads in Rio de Janeiro in 2016. She found collaboration with the community to be a kind of journalism that she believes in. It is journalism that serves its purposes and represents the voices and the reality of the people living in these communities. The interviewee describes how these populations living in the *favelas* are represented by the mainstream media, ‘The television narrative about the favela or any space like that, it’s always the perspective of the camera entering the favela and never from the perspective of whoever is in the favela and receives the police, so the press itself is protected by the police because it comes after the police, always looking from the outside to the inside’.

The statement of the interviewee from Favela em Pauta illustrates a news media industry problem that has been identified in other parts of the world but that has stronger implications in Latin America: the profile of journalists working with news organisations around the world. It is not uncommon that journalists and practitioners interviewed for this research refer to the profile of journalists, especially the ones in mainstream and legacy media. They criticise the lack of connection to the reality of much of the population. Journalists and news practitioners are normally located in the largest cities and are normally white males. Chapter 3 explores this discussion further. Nevertheless, these critics reflect a commitment that is not opposed to normative journalism but advocates restoring those values that reflect the needs of the society that journalism should prioritise.

The tone of the discourse among journalists and collaborative practitioners on the peripheries of big cities and those reporting from places outside the big centres of power and trying to connect with populations in remote areas, tend to converge. Territory and change in the narratives are always present in the interviews of these journalists. The space has an important meaning of belonging and diversity, which is shared among these practitioners. For instance, for a journalist in Colombia, traditional journalism cannot embrace the narratives, voices and realities of people living in remote areas. For her, collaboration is an essential tool to connect with these populations, but also a way to provide a platform for journalists in these areas. The journalist works with an organisation called Baudó Agência Pública, which has been conducting collaborative investigations in Colombia with a focus on topics that affect communities’ lives. They promote collaboration on two fronts: a more traditional one with other news organisations, focusing on broader investigations; a second one focusing on the formation of a network of journalists and professionals in remote areas of the country to promote journalistic investigation and the formation of local professionals. A journalist from Chile reinforces the importance of collaboration to connect with audiences in the most remote areas as well. According to the journalist, there are cities and communities in Chile that even

television cannot reach. For her, the collaboration with journalists and practitioners in these regions is essential to make the information accessible to these populations.

Thus, the territory offers two layers of inputs to understand the importance of collaborative journalism. One is connected to the idea of diversity and the sentiment of belonging and representation; the other one focuses on audiences and the democratic imperative of access to information. Using the paradigm offered by Christians et al. (2010), the normative journalism norms and values of journalists and news practitioners in collaborative efforts range from the 'facilitative role' to the 'radical role'. The facilitative role is described by the authors as the commitment of professionals to a civic democratic environment; they act as facilitators of civil society participation and deliberation. The radical role is characterised by radical criticism against hegemony; its routes are based on power contestation and on a popular approach. This and other paradigms are discussed in Chapter 3. For now, it is possible to state that collaborative journalism conceptualisation lacks the normative journalism dimension since the norms of journalism top the list of reasons why journalists and news practitioners decide to collaborate.

The meaning of collaborative journalism is connected to ideals that are not always homogeneous, such as the mission and values of journalists and news organisations. As explained by Mellado (2021), journalism is conditioned by context, which may lead practitioners to perform a kind of journalism that might not be seen as professional. For instance, CDD Acontece is a page on Facebook that reports on the daily life of Cidade de Deus, a neighbourhood in the west part of Rio de Janeiro. Cidade de Deus is known for its namesake movie released in 2002, co-directed by Fernando Meirelles and Kátia Lund. In the movie and in the media, Cidade de Deus is portrayed as a violent region dominated by drug cartels, but in recent years the community has tried to recover from this derogatory portrayal and build its own narrative. CDD Acontece has an important role in this. For more than 10 years, this one-person project has taken the role of building pride in being from Cidade de Deus. According to the interviewee, CDD Acontece's mission is to rebuild the sense of community and pride of the Cidade de Deus population. She does that through a collaborative approach with the community, reporting from and for the community, paying local reporters and promoting the local economy. One of the biggest achievements of this journalist is to promote social change through collaboration.

Collaborative journalism has a strong relation of meaning with normative journalism and other theories related to the social role of journalism in societies and its place in democracies. Latin America is known for its inequalities and the recent emergence of authoritarian and nondemocratic regimes. However, there is a need for a discussion around the connection with normative journalism and the possible effects that it might have in the conceptualisation of collaborative journalism in Latin America and elsewhere as discussed in Chapter 2.

## **Benefits**

This theme has a strong relationship with the theme 'concept'. Many interviewees tended to mix both topics; nevertheless, there was enough information to justify the separation of the two themes. In the deductive approach, it was expected that the theme surrounds the topic of reputation; however, the inductive approach has illustrated that the interviewees do not disconnect 'reputation' from other benefits perceived by themselves and their organisations while collaborating. Other benefits, such as visibility, credibility, as well as the professional and social gains related to collaboration are sometimes more tangible for organisations. This theme was created to accommodate the entire range of benefits claimed by interviewees.

Some studies about collaborative journalism have pored over the topics of benefits, results and impacts that the practice has brought to news outlets and practitioners (e.g., Graves and Shabbir, 2019; Heft, 2021; Jenkins and Graves, 2022). In terms of benefits, the general commentary is around the gains in audience reach, the exchange environment of expertise and skills, data and information, as well as the sharing investigations' costs (Stonbely, 2017; Carson and Farhall, 2018; Jenkins and Graves, 2019). The case of Mutante, from Colombia, echoes these findings. The interviewee said that one benefit of taking part in collaborations is the possibility of reaching audiences that otherwise would not have heard of them. Jenkins and Graves (2019) suggest that benefits are also related to the raise of awareness on issues of gender, race, ethnicity and the promotion of geographical diversity in journalistic coverage. This finding is in line with many of the findings already reported here, especially through collaborations with communities.

Alma Preta, from Brazil, brought their race perspective to a collaborative effort. 'A journalism agency focused on investigating the food industry gave us this support to be able to produce stories. One of the articles we did was about the presence of black people in leadership positions in food companies, at Nestlé for example. We didn't know what path we had to take to find information about the food industry, and as they already work with this, and since the race perspective is not their strength, they directed it to us'.

Many of the interviews point out the benefits collaborative journalism has provided news organisations and practitioners, such as time for in-depth analysis and the possibility to go deeper on social issues. For the interviewee of Bichos de Campo, from Argentina, the possibility of deepening investigations is one of the greatest benefits of collaboration. According to the interviewee, their profound analysis of issues has made the organisation gain credibility and become one of the main sources on the topic of farming in the region. This opened to her and her colleagues the possibility of experimenting on other skills and widening their range of working options. The interviewee has been called to give interviews and training on storytelling, which, according to her, is due to the credibility and visibility her work has gained.

Two other organisations have declared that collaborations increased communities' trust in their work, thus, making people more willing to send them materials. In the case of Maré de Notícias, the credibility of their collaborative work helped them create a kind of communication focused on mobilisation around topics essential to the community. Mídia Ninja benefited from the credibility they gained by having more sources willing to send them information that increase the potentiality of their stories. 'We have also become a hub, we can be seen as an organisation of public interest because people feel identified by us. We end up being a window of very strong visibility, and we show, for example, things that are happening in cities where television does not reach, where the news never sets its sights'.

As explained by these interviewees, the credibility, reputation and visibility deriving from their collaborative efforts have two main effects: 1) being able to promote social transformations and mobilisation and 2) enhancing their brands as organisations that act for the advantage of their audiences. For Portal Catarinas, one of the greatest benefits of collaboration is that the organisation has gained visibility and, therefore, attracted other collaborations. They have been recognised by their peers as an organisation that brings different perspectives to the projects. The interviewee also claims that collaboration gives them autonomy to focus on what is important.

Other studies pointed to unintended benefits of collaborations. For instance, Chacón and Saldaña (2020) revealed that journalists and news outlets in Latin America are relying on collaborative journalism to be safer and stronger professionals. Even though the study was more concentrated on the motivations to collaborate, in the present research it is possible to see a significant correlation between motivations and benefits from practitioners. Being a stronger professional is pointed out by interviewees as both a

motivation to collaborate and a benefit of collaboration (see Chapter 5). However, this benefit is understood in this research as an unintended benefit since it is not the direct result of collaboration but a benefit that goes beyond the act of collaborating for journalistic purposes.

The interviewee from *Redação Virtual* claims that a benefit of being in touch with other journalists is helping the profession to be stronger and professionals to be more connected to realities of the society. According to her, collaboration has the benefit of making journalists closer, making them aware and promoting innovation in the field. It also promotes awareness around the need of defining and defending journalism as a vital profession for society. She said that working conditions have been deteriorating and professionals are being paid less. There is no other way to combat this if not through collaboration. The interviewee from *Comprova* also pointed to the fact that the proximity between journalists and news outlets in collaboration makes them improve their own professional skills. 'It is important that the outlet knows how others handle the work and that there are different editorial standards from different newsrooms. They are important because they also help to evolve in the standards themselves. I think this is a super good point for the work, this learning process. I think it's fundamental'.

However, as pointed out by Chacón and Saldaña (2020), practitioners in Latin America collaborate for different motives that I argue benefit journalists and collaborations in ways far beyond the journalistic endeavour. This is exemplified by the case of *Boletín Ecológico*, from Nicaragua, where the safety is a great concern. Attacks against media and opposition in Nicaragua have taken a toll on journalists and news organisations these last few years. The government has jailed many journalists and has been persecuting journalists and opposition with actions, from legal processes to seizure of equipment and occupation of newsrooms (Vílchez, 2019). According to the interviewee, collaboration with other news organisations has allowed him to continue working. First, through a network of journalists in different countries, he could move investigations and materials related to it to those countries. Second, through a network of journalists in Nicaragua, he could move safely from one region to another, avoiding capture by the government.

In summary, this research confirms some studies around the benefits of collaborative journalism to journalists and news organisations. It illustrates that Latin American organisations conducting collaborative efforts benefit from the leverage such collaborations to promote change and mobilise people around important issues. Collaborative journalism promotes a virtuous cycle in which more collaborations expand promotion, defence and safety.

## **Processes**

This theme was divided into two parts. One is dedicated to the organisational processes adopted by organisations, their strategies, workflow, work arrangements, hierarchy and use of technology. The second one is the collaborative practice discussed in the last part of this chapter. This theme merges the deductive and inductive approaches.

The literature review (Chapter 2) provided information related to the processes adopted by news organisations while collaborating. One of the main studies that tackle this issue is Stonbely (2017)'s report on the six models of collaborative journalism. She describes some of the processes and relates them to a degree of integration of the collaborative projects, such as the co-creation, whether the content is produced together or separately by the partners, and whether the duration of the projects is temporary or ongoing. In that study, these two variables led to the level of integration from low integration – where content is created separately and the duration of the project is temporary – to high integration of ongoing and co-creational

collaborations. In addition to Stonbely's model, the present research added other variables: editorial coordination and decision-making (see Chapters 2 and 5).

The analysis of the interviews is made by the identified processes: content creation, editorial coordination and decision-making. Many of processes' patterns discussed here were previously mentioned in Chapter 5, but they are now analysed in-depth in the theme dedicated to described processes in place while collaborating.

A main characteristics of collaborative journalism processes is related to the creation of content, whether it is created separately or together by the participants of the projects. Co-creation is described by some studies as the capability of introducing different voices in the processes of producing the news (see Chapter 2). However, co-creation has been 'translated' in the context of collaboration as the action of writing, producing content together, with four or more hands.

Even though most of the organisations in this research declared that they often have a common content creation with partners, this declaration has several meanings. For instance, one of the most common forms of collaborative content co-creation is performed by the fact-checking organisation Comprova. Comprova emerged in the movement to spread fact-checking worldwide, which gathered 24 news outlets in its first phase. According to the interviewee, each piece of news that Comprova produces passes through the scrutiny of other three partners in the coalition. One or more journalists is responsible to check the information, and the other three check the analysis made in the piece. This process shows common patterns with other news organisations working with several partners. One downside of this practice is that it is time consuming. As explained by the Comprova's interviewee, the base of their work is consensus, everyone must be on board with the analysis and conclusion of a checked piece. Even though it takes time, it also guarantees the accuracy of the information. As argued by the interviewee, audiences tend to trust these pieces because they feel represented by at least one of the outlets that joined the effort. 'The big advantage, I think is its diversity, because last year we saw this a lot, people from the right [political spectrum] starting to complain about the checks, the right produced a lot, but then they saw that Gazeta do Povo, which is an outlet more focused on the right, or that harbours more opinions from the right, was signing along, so we saw a retraction in the critics [from this group]'.

More mainstream types of collaborations use other forms of co-creation. These are not always related to shared content creation but are more focused on the creation of sharing environments in which sources, resources, data and information, skills and expertise are seen also as forms of co-creation. The collaborative efforts in which BaudóAP is constantly involved often present this type of process. BaudóAP is in a collaborative effort with other news organisations that are working from home due to the pandemic. They have a clear process of co-creation that represents the notion of sharing environments. In this process, BaudóAP and the other partners have periodic meetings to align editorially the content they are producing. Each does their own content piece, and then they share sources, resources and information. They also share tasks in the coalition, for instance, an organisation that has more expertise with one type of media (e.g., video or animation) is responsible for that type of content.

Another type identified is the co-creation in the stage of collecting information. For example, an organisation in the peripheral area of Rio de Janeiro. Site da Baixada's process related to co-creation of content start in the first stages of the news production. As the interviewee described: a member of the community or a volunteer covering an event from the ground gives the information gathered to another person in the organisation that is responsible for writing the article in their website. Similarly, in the case of CDD Acontece, the first stage of the reporting is done with the community in the ground. Then, the shape

of this content will be given by a member of the organisation, which means that the organisation will serve as an editor, to guarantee a certain level of professionalism to the material collected by the partners. Thus, these types of collaboration with communities are mostly co-creational, but the journalistic production norms and narrative formats prevail. This pattern was observed by other studies about participatory and citizen journalism and other types of journalism where the nonprofessional is invited to take part in the news production (Wall, 2015).

As argued by Alfter (2016; 2018), editorial coordination is a role that is increasingly present in collaborations of all types. As discussed in the Chapter 2, the main purpose of this role is to serve as a mediator, facilitating communication between partners and guaranteeing editorial cohesion. The present research demonstrated that this role is present in collaborative journalism efforts in Latin America, but with different levels of responsibilities. In Consejo de Redacción, from Colombia, the editorial coordination team decides which organisations to collaborate with, based criteria, such as skills and access to information. According to the interviewee, the organisation has a clear process to collaborate with other news organisations: ‘I give you the example of *Tierra de Resistentes*. First, we did a great workshop in which journalists from all countries travelled to Colombia in which they said this is the project. That is what we want to investigate. We are going to make a big database, with the contributions of the information from each country. They also define which journalists, what regions, and who are the editors, who is the general editor, who is going to do the follow-up, and all the logistics of the project. And then, the working groups are established, the schedule is generated and that is what allows that afterwards we can control deliveries and the periodic meetings for progress’. *Tierra de Resistentes* is a large project which involved more than 90 journalists from 24 news outlets in 12 countries in Latin America. The magnitude of this project is probably why this process is used by many other organisations of the mainstream collaborations type (details in the typology), such as Connectas and Mutante. This process was first identified in ICIJ and has been replicated by many of the organisations in Latin America.

Other organisations have a looser approach to editorial coordination. The coordination is basically logistic and does not interfere in the decisions nor in the editorial line of the participants. An example is the small fact-checking collective Bereia, which fact-checks religious content. It uses a type of coordination more focused on allowing the work to flow than guaranteeing the editorial alignment of partners and volunteers. As the interviewee explained, ‘I work 20 hours a week. I manage the site, the teams, advise the general editor and send the texts for review. I do the communication between the teams and the reviewers. So, we set up an apparatus on WhatsApp for us to share everything and keep this whole organisation. I also answer the staff who send messages to the collective. I forward articles. So, I am this kind of hub that picks things from one side to put on the other side’. Editorial coordination takes different forms in different efforts and organisations. This is most probably due to the size of the organisations involved, the size of the project and the type of sharing environment required.

In summary, even though editorial coordination takes many forms in different collaborative efforts, it basically serves the purpose reported by Alfter (2016) and other studies (e.g., Mendoza and Rojas, 2020; Porter, 2021) that saw the emergence of this role in collaborative journalism which is essential for the flow of the work within the networks. There are two possible outcomes of this process. First, is the obvious guarantee of editorial cohesion, support and working flow among the different partners. However, the process also perpetuates dated structures of power and control. Nevertheless, the decision-making process might be the point of inflexion that makes this role more or less static.

For instance, the organisation Maré de Notícias claims to have a horizontal decision-making process which is reflected in the news production workflow. According to the interviewee, everyone in the

newsroom and the partners in collaboration are encouraged to edit and question what others have written. ‘The dynamics of collaboration is in all axes of the work, in the distribution, in the chat with residents [of the community], in the partnerships, but also in the internal *modus operandi*’.

An organisation that follows a more traditional and vertical approach to collaborations is a Brazilian outlet focused on the coverage of political affairs of the federal congress, *Congresso em Foco*. The organisation, founded by a veteran journalist, is a for-profit organisation that has had little experience with collaborations. Nevertheless, they have been part of groups that have been promoting collaborative journalism in Brazil. According to the interviewee, the most significant collaborative project that *Congresso em Foco* was involved in is called *Reload* (see ‘mainstream collaborations’ in the following part of this chapter). In this project, the fact that the collaboration has a parallel newsroom responsible for the ‘translation’ of news products to a younger audience might be understood as a vertical process of decision-making. However, few or none of the partners would agree with that. Even though horizontal decision-making is supported among collaborative journalists and organisations, its definition is not clear to some of the organisations working on collaborative projects. Nevertheless, the fact that most of the organisations share the commitment to have a more horizontal decision-making process, makes other processes subordinated to this value. This is in line with the more democratic form of association, work, and organisational structures identified in this research.

This finding expands from the literature on the role of editorial coordination in collaborative projects. The finding demonstrates that the role is subordinated to a logic of horizontal decision-making processes, which ties the role to a more administrative and logistic function rather than a traditional editorial role. Thus, the editorial coordination role in collaborative projects subverts the editor function as preconised by studies on newsrooms internal operation (Breed, 1955). The function is subverted because as Breed (1955) argue the editor function is of policy and control, and in the case of collaborative efforts where many organisations have their own tone of voice, their own styles and deontological codes, the function of policy enforcement is downsized. Also, in terms of control, the editorial coordination role is much more at the level of the processes, as guaranteeing that partners receive the information needed, that they deliver their tasks in time, alignment to legal rules, and so on (see for example Alfter, 2018). Finally, the role is much more at the management level, than a top down decisions-making, like selecting the news, cutting and editing journalistic material in accordance with the editorial line of a news outlets and its own policies.

However, different from what was assumed by Sambrook (2018), the editorial coordination function is not neutral. As identified in the present research, editorial coordination has an active role of orientation and is often responsible for decisions such as to whom to collaborate with (see Chapter 5). Nevertheless, the role is identified as an important characteristic of collaborative journalism, as suggested by Alfter (2018).

## **Results and impacts**

It was expected that results and impacts of collaborative journalism projects would be difficult to measure just with audience numbers, awards, and other kinds of success measurements. Therefore, in the deductive approach, a theme was designed to accommodate all possible kinds of results and impacts that those interviewees perceived as their measurement of success. It was observed that social impacts, social transformation and other sorts of social and community changes and support are considered valuable results. Therefore, the theme preserves the deductive assumption and adds to it the emergent inductive codes and categories.

Measuring results and impacts of journalistic work is often disregarded by news organisations and journalists. This discussion is often considered unimportant since the mere fact that journalism provides an essential service to society (Christians et al., 2010) is seen by many professionals as the greatest impact of their work (Graves and Shabbir, 2019). The financial crisis faced by the media industry has changed the focus to a more commercial position of news outlets and journalists. There is a valorisation of techniques and tools to measure engagement, results and impacts of journalistic work among practitioners. However, as pointed out by Graves and Shabbir (2019), measuring results and impacts is difficult, because they are based many times on metrics of intangible nature that even more difficult to translate into real gains to journalists and news outlets, such as policy making influences. Thus, it is common that journalists and news outlets avoid this discussion, and the few that try to measure the effects of their work frequently rely on simple techniques such as audience engagement on social media platforms.

Site da Baixada saw increased social media interactions due to their investigation on the misuse of public money to support the local cultural scene. According to the interviewee, even though people did not comment on the story, they read it. The piece was even used by local television to report on the case. “It was an original story that we managed to have an impact on RJTV (local TV). The municipality was supposedly doing a practice of extortion with the city’s artists because of the Aldir Blanc law (law to support local artists), adding up to almost 200,000 reais that the city would put in the safe, kind of without explanation. The article was very compromising, so we had almost no sharing on the social network. No one wants to commit by speaking bad of the city hall, but the article was a huge hit’.

Agência Mural is another organisation that called attention of the mainstream media to a local issue as a result of a collaborative project with the community. The organisation did a special report on public transportation and the danger to commuters related to the gap between the train and the platform. In the best ‘mind the gap’ style, Agência Mural relied on audiences and readers to report on the issue and found out that many accidents in the train stations are a consequence of this gap. The story became a hit, and the national television reported on the case using Agência Mural’s data. Thus, setting the agenda of the mainstream media is recognised as a great impact and result of the work that local and small collaborations have promoted.

CDD Acontece argues that their close relationship with public entities is a direct result of their collaborative work with the community. According to the interviewee, they have promoted real change and improved the lives of residents. Partnering with the local health centre, for example, enabled them to promote public health information to the community and demand changes in government public assistance in the territory. These findings illustrate a similar pattern with previous studies: Journalistic investigations might have a small impact on audiences, but they alert policymakers to issues and promote real change (PROTESS et al., 1987). The analysis mirrors the findings of Jenkins and Graves (2019) who argue that the trust that news organisations built with communities, through collaboration, is essential to make a real impact on local issues. Contrary to the authors’ argument that organisations choose to collaborate with those who share a common reporting strategy, the interviews in this research demonstrate that most collaborations in Latin America are less structured (see Chapter 5).

For many of the interviewees, the results of their work are connected to their mission and values, which is translated into being able to influence public debate and governmental action. Bichos de Campo, from Argentina, has been following the public agenda to raise awareness around topics that might influence the outcomes of national policies: “I began a series of interviews with experts who defend one model or another (organic or not organic production), and it has caused a lot of sensation in the agricultural sector. Those topics are of genuine interest, and I’m not going to say that my notes are going to make a big change.



But I feel that we are bringing to light a topic that needs to be discussed. I notice that because from the first note I made, I have received a lot of comments, and it is the most read note on the portal'. Being part of the discussion on public policies was noted as an impact of Portal Catarina's reporting on women issues. According to the interviewee, the organisation took part in a recently created state commission to discuss public policies for women, as well as influence the creation of these policies and monitoring the actions: 'We are participating in the State Council for Women's Rights, CEDIM, here in Santa Catarina (a state in the South of Brazil), which has civil society organisations and governmental organisations. From this, we managed to start working in a more institutionalised, more formal way, on this issue'. Thus, being able to act directly in the formulation of public policies is understood by many of the interviewees as one of the main impacts of their work.

Among the interviewees there is an agreement that the real results and impacts that collaborative journalism efforts and projects can offer are mostly related to social change, such as society and communities' awareness, empowerment of communities, diversity of narratives and of the public debate. In consequence, collaborative journalism practitioners advocate for results and impacts at the microlevel and at the local level. For Mídia Ninja, the main result of their work is the ability to form a solidarity web, where people and activists can share their actions and engage with one another. Similarly, for Maré de Notícias, having an open channel with the community is one of their biggest achievements in which residents trust their organisation to share information, criticise, and mobilise to promote social change.

For BaudóAP, the public awareness of complex issues is an impact difficult to measure but is the most important result they have achieved due to collaboration. The organisation did a campaign with professionals from other industries to call attention to the out-of-control use of glyphosate (herbicide) in crops all over Colombia. BaudóAP, in partnership with professionals from the chemicals industry, did an installation in a public space to make people understand the effects that such misuse can have on their lives. This partnership engaged other news outlets that called government attention to the issue.

Another reported result and impacts relate to the development of a stronger profession and the public and peer-to-peer recognition of the organisations. In the former, Consejo de Redacción, believes that the organisation's strategy on the training of stronger professionals has generated a longstanding impact of their work. According to the interviewee, the organisation called for journalists interested in reporting on climate issues. The call attracted more than six thousand people. In the latter, small organisations such as Mutante, Coletivo Bereia and Jornal O Eco, collaborating has made them known to their peers, which generated more possibilities for work and increased their audience reach.

### **Challenges and limitations**

It was expected that many challenges and limitations to collaborative journalism projects and the expansion of the concept would be demonstrated in the interviews. The designed deductive theme was broad enough to capture this topic, which was significant in terms of references in the interviews. Therefore, this theme preserves deductive expectation and adds inductive codes as subthemes.

Collaboration in journalism is not natural. Most studies have pointed out that journalism is an individualistic and competitive profession (see Graves and Konieczna, 2015; Hamilton, 2016). Nevertheless, as indicated by many authors, collaboration in journalism has been getting momentum due to the networked society and the journalism crisis, especially the traditional business models crisis (Van Der Haak, Parks and Castells, 2012). Thus, collaboration is increasingly integrated into the culture of news

organisations, but many challenges arise from this practice. From the spread of a collaborative culture among the journalistic profession to the lack of communication and coordination, collaborative efforts face a long list of challenges (Alfter, 2016; Heft, 2021). The present analysis identifies findings that confirm previous studies and some that are specific to collaborative efforts in Latin America (e.g., safety, technological access and financial constraints). This analysis presents the most common challenges and limitations reported by the interviewees.

First, is the limitation of establishing a culture of collaboration. The interviewee from *Redação Virtual* believes establishing a culture of collaboration requires knowledge about the abilities of the partners and a rejection of the traditional competitive environment: ‘We complement each other a lot, I think the challenge of collaboration is to find people and understand the skills that each one has to offer, and how each one can fit together to avoid this dispute for space, and really recognise what the space for each within the project. This will take a while, because they don’t know each other, they’ll get to know each other in practice’.

For the interviewee from *Comprova*, the wish to learn and exchange expertise is essential to foment a culture of collaboration, which can be difficult between organisations with totally different methodologies and editorial lines. This difficulty was also reported by the interviewee of *Abaré*, for whom maintaining the independence of each partner can be a struggle: ‘Differentiating the work and the limits, such as how far this collaboration goes, for each institution to have its own identity. I think this is a challenge’. The interviewee from *Núcleo Jornalismo*, a small data journalism start-up from Brazil, claims that the problem with establishing a collaboration culture comes from the education system which privileges individualism and competition. For the interviewee from *Canal Caribe* (Cuba), education and journalism schools have an important role to play in the spread of a more collaborative and cooperative mind-set.

This argument is widely spread among collaborative journalism practitioners. As pointed out by the freelance journalist based in Brazil, the culture of collaboration must be spread in the profession because journalists and news outlets are still thinking on their own benefits first. According to her, many journalists and news organisations are using collaboration as pretext to access information and impose their own agendas. This problem is cited in some of the interviews, especially with the small organisations. It has to do with authorship in collaboration and limitations of collaborating with mainstream media organisations that are driven by traditional business models, such as advertising. The interviewee from *Maré das Notícias* reported that they often do not know how to author the articles and, which is important to maintain the relationship they have with the community. To circumvent the issue, they decided that everyone who contributed the article should sign it. This might be a solution for smaller organisations and collaborative projects, but is probably impractical for larger groups of partners.

This leads to another problem, as argued by the interviewee from *Núcleo Jornalismo*: ‘Brazil still has a somewhat old mentality of thinking about journalism and journalism collaboration. [Journalists and news outlets] don’t “link”, don’t link to the site, don’t give credit. This is very common, and it seems that this [giving credit] only happens when it’s unavoidable. We are doing exactly the opposite, we give all the links, give all the credit to everyone, and we are trying to expand this collaborative journalism thing a lot’. Collaborating with more traditional organisations and mainstream media has pitfalls, as in the case of *Agência Mural*. According to the interviewee, one of their investigations was censured by a traditional newspaper with which they had a partnership. The newspaper, *A Tarde*, is one of the largest news outlets in Northeast Brazil and, according to the interviewee, they refused to publish *Agência Mural*’s investigation because it could have a bad impact with an advertiser. Thus, as suggested by some of the interviewees, smaller organisations have less leverage to negotiate, maintain independence and showcase their work and brands.

Another reported problem related to smaller organisations and collaborative projects is that they find it difficult to reach sources and get access to funding. For BaudóAP, being a small organisation has prevented them from engaging in more collaborations because they might not have enough personal or budget to cover costs. Being new to the market may also affect their capability to access sources and information, as reported by SemMigué, a collaborative project to fact-check politicians during the municipal elections in Northeast Brazil. However, other small organisations declared that being small, segmented and niche focused was an advantage in collaborations. For instance, Coletivo Bereia, focused on checking religious content, saw that their speciality was an advantage which became a way to keep their work and their existence despite all the issues related to sustainability and continuity of small businesses. The same was reported by another fact-checking organisation, Fakebook, which focuses on fact-checking information related to the environment, as well as by Jornal O Eco, also focused on covering conservation, biodiversity, and environmental policies. Being a small organisation in collaborative efforts has both challenges and opportunities. In terms of challenges, relations of power within collaborative networks are an aspect of the practice that should be taken seriously. In terms of opportunities, small organisations benefit from collaboration by expanding their work and contributing to networks with their expertise and skills.

As argued by Chacón and Saldaña (2020), being a professional journalist in Latin America adds another layer of constraints – the violence, impunity and corruption that dominates the region. As discussed in Chapter 3, the ongoing state of violence and the double-edged effects of technology have been used to attack journalists and news organisations, have a longstanding effect on collaborative journalism. Some interviewees declared that collaboration has provided them with more security to continue their work, as stated by the Nicaraguan journalist from Boletín Ecológico and by Portal Catarinas, which diverted an attack against their website through a collaboration with other organisations. Nevertheless, as pointed out by the interviewee from Portal Catarinas, the technological inequality faced by organisations and individuals in poorer regions is a determinant to their safety. Moreover, as discussed in Chapter 5, most collaborative efforts have not been able to promote enough safety measures and support, especially in terms of psychological support. The freelance journalist based in Brazil states, ‘There is this partnership between the Order of Attorneys of Brazil, or Brazilian Bar Association (OAB) and the Brazilian Association for Investigative Journalism (Abraji), to whom I pay monthly fees and everything else. As much as I pay monthly fees, what protects me? Nothing protects me, nothing. It doesn’t matter, the lawyer won’t protect me from a bullet, the lawyer won’t protect me from receiving phone calls. It doesn’t protect me from this psychological aggression’. The interviews confirm some of the patterns found in previous studies, which argue that safety is an important support that collaborative journalism has been able to provide organisations and journalists. It is also one of the motives that lead the practitioners to collaborate in the first place. However, this research also illustrates that collaborative efforts have not been able to promote enough safety measures.

Another challenge reported by interviewees is the timeline of collaborative investigations, which is naturally longer. This presents one more layer of preoccupation for organisations. As argued by Hamilton (2016), investigative journalism is time-consuming, and it is natural that some organisations think twice before engaging in such efforts. For Comprova, the time spent between fact-checking and cross-checking is significant, but this gives the pieces produced by them a higher level of accuracy and guarantees the diversity of views from the different organisations involved in the process.

News organisations in collaborative efforts have found different ways to solve the issue. For Maré de Notícias, the secret is to avoid breaking news stories and this kind of approach to the news. According to the interviewee, a piece that took 20 days to be written brings more than the investigation itself; it brings

the entire engagement that the work has promoted with the community. The Intercept Brasil (TIB) has found in collaboration a way to accelerate the investigation process. As indicated by the interviewee, TIB is a small organisation and does not have enough personnel to deal with larger amounts of data and information; thus, they rely on other news organisations to publish faster. According to the interviewee, having other news organisations in the investigation was crucial to quickly publishing a large amount of data with greater accuracy and diversity of views. However, lack of planning, coordination and understanding of each other's timing and processes can be hard for those collaborating, as argued by the interviewee from Congresso em Foco. This problem of planning and coordination was also pointed out in another group of challenges raised by interviewees, which is related to sustainability.

Sustainability permeates most of the discussion around the challenges and limitations of collaborative journalism. The lack of coordination and planning have been identified as among the main reasons organisations are not able to sustain themselves. For Redação Virtual, applying for grants, writing projects to foundations and calls is a complex, unpaid job. Thus, there is a need to have a person whose focus is on transforming the audience and supporters into paying members of the projects and organisation. According to the interviewee from Portal Catarinas, the lack of commercial and marketing knowledge of the journalists in most of the projects is a barrier to developing sustainable work. The interviewee from Maré de Notícias agrees and adds that collaboration can be a solution for this as well, by pulling together each organisation's expertise and training them and to take advantage of the many opportunities available.

The amount of foundations' and other organisations' financial support has increased (Bell, 2019) to journalism worldwide. However, the unintended consequences of this practice are not totally understood by Latin American news organisations and journalists. An in-depth analysis of this situation is presented in Chapter 7. Nonetheless, most organisations do not have a choice in terms of funding. Relying on financial support from Google, for instance, is seen as a necessary evil for most of the organisations interviewed in this research.

ConfereAI, a fact-checking organisation that developed an AI tool to identify false content, admits that they could not have developed the product without financial support from Google. ConfereAI was a project that involved a legacy newspaper and a university in Northeast Brazil which won the Google News Initiative (GNI) in 2019. According to the interviewee, 'It would not be possible to develop this without this money. Why? Because we are talking about local journalism, local journalism is in a very bad situation. The *Jornal do Comércio* did a series of dismissals of highly qualified professionals because they could not pay salaries to these people anymore. They fired dozens of special reporters, executive editors, editors, so *Jornal do Comércio* wouldn't be able to finance that [the AI tool] either. And that was said in the first meetings we had. We're going to submit the project to Google's call because outside of it we can't make it viable. We like the idea a lot. We think the idea is cool, but outside of a call we wouldn't be able to do it'. This confirms previous studies (e.g., Requejo-Alemán and Lugo-Ocando, 2014; de-Lima-Santos and Mesquita, 2021) and is discussed further in the theme dedicated to 'business models'. According to the interviewees, there is a lack of commercial and promotional ability among collaborative journalism practitioners and organisations. To circumvent the situation, many organisations have been relying on grants and calls from foundations and from tech platforms such as Google. They are mostly aware of the risks involved but cannot avoid them.

Many of the interviewees recognized that the COVID-19 pandemic was a huge challenge for their business and their reporting. According to the interviewee from Consejo de Redacción, the pandemic prevented journalists from digging deep on issues to make sense of contexts and even to find sources and cases for their investigations. The same was reported by Redacao Virtual, to whom accessing characters to

their stories in the midst of the pandemic was troublesome. However, collaboration with local journalists and professionals from other areas, such as professors and teachers from public schools, made it possible to identify cases and report on them, calling public attention to the problems of students in the pandemic and the technological gap faced by larger populations in remote areas of Brazil. This finding shares patterns with another study conducted by Olsen, Pickard and Westlund (2020), which found that during the pandemic crisis, journalists, especially in local journalism, relied on communal news work to sustain themselves. The authors mostly focus on the financial web organisations established to continue producing news. This research finds that collaborative journalism during the pandemic focused much more on reporting and sharing sources, information and data, than establishing financial support webs. Collaborative journalism in Latin America has also found innovative ways to fund investigations. This kind of financial support is explored in the next theme.

### **Business models**

It was expected that this topic would be present in more than one theme. However, the fact that the topics are repeatedly mentioned in the interviews led to the decision to include a theme to debate this subject separately. The relationship of this theme to other themes may add interesting elements to the investigation. Also, the interviews demonstrate some important characteristics of Latin American news organisations and the constraints that these organisations must overcome to be take part in or promote collaborative activities. In summary, this theme deals with the strategies not only in terms of sustainability but also the challenges, possible effects, influences and opportunities, as well financial dependencies and the preservation of independence.

Most news organisations involved in collaborative efforts rely on a multi-revenue scheme in their business models, as discussed in Chapter 5. The interviewees identified two main strategies in terms of sustainability and the impacts on business models strategies. The first one, ‘challenges and impacts’, is the financial support of foundations and tech platforms. The second one is a more innovative form of sharing financial resources in a collaborative *modus operandi*, which has been gaining momentum in organisations and projects all over the region. Although these strategies are not mutually exclusive, they play different roles in collaborative practices, business models and financial strategies.

The first one, is based on foundations’ financial support – mostly international funds, grants and calls. This has recently evolved into journalism support promoted by tech and social media platforms, mainly Google and Facebook. Although there is general agreement that platformisation of society and the consequent financial disruption have undermined journalism, Nielsen (2016) argues that the media can still provide information without which platforms cannot survive. It may explain the fact that Google and Facebook are trying to establish a healthier relationship with the media. According to Bell (2019), this might be happening because the platforms see that they are killing the producers of the content they need and because of the public pressure for regulation. As suggested by the interviewee from Notícias Pretas, Google and other tech and social media platforms’ financial support can be seen as historical reparation, and many news organisations cannot afford but to engage in such schemes. According to the interviewee, these tech companies have endangered journalism and must be held accountable; nevertheless, most organisations do not have the option nor the time to search for other forms of financing.

However, for Desenrola, it is possible to accept this kind of financing without compromising ethically. According to the interviewee, the equipment and technology that Desenrola developed with Google’s financial support was designed with a different logic from these big tech platforms, which is avoiding

capturing of personal data and facial recognition programmes. The interviewee argues that this ethical commitment is crucial to maintain the independence of their organisation and defy the commercial logic of these platforms that have been using the Global South as their labs. This assumption may help to understand some of the motives behind tech platforms' support to journalism and the fact that most of GNI's financial support has been granted to organisations and projects that promote technological solutions to journalism, through the development of apps and artificial intelligence, for example.

This pattern was identified by another organisation that received Google's financial support to develop a data journalism project. According to this interviewee, Google's preference for technological solutions to journalism is more in line with their own business models and intentions than with the real needs of journalism. In contrast, Google's support was essential for Alma Preta to find a more sustainable revenue stream based on membership and other forms of audience engagement. Alma Preta did not receive financial support from Google; they were part of an initiative that gathered other news organisations in a consulting and training experience to help them with their sustainability and business models strategies. Through analysis of the interviews, it is possible to infer that without tech platforms' financial support, much journalism work would not be possible. However, analysis also illustrates how permissive this relationship is, tending to reinforce power unbalance between journalists, news organisations and tech platforms.

The second most recent type of funding scheme has advanced to more collaborative networks. It is characterised by a deep understanding of the journalism crisis and the need to continue the journalistic work. It emphasises the sentiments of solidarity and empathy, as well as a profound commitment to collaborative culture. In this type of funding, organisations themselves promote financial schemes to fund collaborative projects. Such is the case with Consejo de Redacción, Amazônia Real, Connectas and Comprova.

Through its educational branch, Consejo de Redacción promotes topics such as the environment, where journalists apply to receive training and have their projects supported by the organisation. Consejo de Redacción is supported by crowdfunding, membership and philanthropic donations, such as The Open Society. Consejo de Redacción describe themselves as a journalistic association which focus on promoting investigative journalism, through collaboration, training and entrepreneurship and have been expanding its role in the field in Colombia via this direct financing of journalistic projects, collaboration and investigations.

Similarly, Connectas promotes direct financial support through its educational branch. The organisation also receives support from Fundación Konrad Adenauer, the Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo Panamá (Inter-American Development Bank Panama) and other institutions and foundations. Comprova was supported by Google until their third phase; now they are looking for other forms of funding. Comprova is a fact-checking project that used to operate in cycles with specific themes. The first one focused on the elections, the second on public policies and the third one on COVID-19. The project was conceived in a partnership led by Google with FirstDraft – a fact-checking organisation based in the United Kingdom – and the Brazilian Association for Investigative Journalism (Abraji) and was based on a concept of distributed resources. Through the project, the news organisation part of the consortium had access to direct funding. This financial support enables them to hire professionals or trainees and pay existing professionals. Each partner organisation could use the financial support as they wish or not use it at all. Even though information about each organisation that used the financial support or not is unavailable, it is known that among the organisations were legacy media with different commitments, values and mission.

Another financial arrangement based on shared financial resources for collaborative projects was reported. In the case of Portal Catarinas, they received financial support from Amazônia Real and AzMinas. These organisations conduct their own investigations but share financial resources. BaudóAP also relies on some of these initiatives promoted by news organisations in Colombia to be able to dedicate professionals and time for collaborative projects. In these arrangements, organisations are a kind of hub, coordinating the action as well as sharing the resources that they were granted from foundations and other institutions. There are still few studies on the sustainability of collaborative journalism and projects. Nevertheless, this type of financial arrangements can be understood as suggested in the literature review as a *modus operandi* that has emerged as a result of many factors, such as the advance of precarious work conditions, massive layoffs and the introduction of new technologies. As argued by Fígaro and Nonato (2017), these conditions made journalists seek news economic arrangements outside the corporate media. In another approach, Kayser-Bill (2018) argues that engaging in collaboration efforts provides organisations with more options in terms of funding, due to the increasing number of grants available internationally. Thus, collaborative journalism in Latin America has an important component of field repair, by introducing new forms to sustain their work. This new modality of shared financial resources needs more investigation, and this starts to show that the significance of collaborative work goes beyond the motivations of sharing sources, skills and expertise. Other possible explanations for the emergence of such arrangements could be related to the reality of the region where financial resources are scarce. Thus, understanding the economic and social contexts in which these organisations operate could provide clues on how to interpret this phenomenon.

## Context

It was expected that discussions around the journalism crisis, market and industry issues and critics to journalism and mainstream media would appear in the interviews. However, the category designed to deal with these topics ‘relationship with the mainstream media and other organisations’ was insufficient to deal with the complexity of the issue. The types of critics that emerged in the interviews were much deeper in terms of the entire idea of what journalism is and what it is supposed to do and whom it is supposed to serve. Critics also surrounded the problems of representation, diversity and the narratives that legacy and traditional media build upon. Such narratives are often described as ‘racist’, ‘gender-biased’, limited and exclusionary. Although direct mentions to media systems and its consequences in the perceptions of the current state of the news media industry are not very common among interviewees, the consequences of over-concentrated industry and the lack of power parallelism between the media and the political parties, the state-interventionist and subsidy policies regarding the media industry, are the latent meaning of the many criticisms (see Chapter 3). Therefore, a theme was created broad enough to encompass the range of information that the data provides for interpretation. This theme has a relationship with other themes such as ‘concepts’, ‘challenges’ and ‘business models’.

Very little was found in the literature about the context and the conditions in which collaborative journalism operates and which are the impacts of these external factors to the work of journalists and news organisations participating in collaboration. One of the initial objectives of the present research was to identify whether collaborative journalism characteristics in countries under less democratic or authoritarian regimes would differ from those in more mature democracies. Thus, the analysis of contexts could help answer this question. As presented in the literature review, the studies on collaborative journalism have indicated that the journalism crisis and the introduction of new information and communication technologies into the routines of journalists and news organisations were the motor to the emergence of this

practice (see Chapter 2). Analysis of the interviews verifies that these contextual factors are present in the discourse, but less than expected. The interviewees agree on a critique of journalism that goes beyond its state of crisis and the emergence of new technologies as the main enabling factor of collaboration. How journalism is done in the region, its alliances with power and its elitism are most commonly criticised. For many interviewees, collaboration has created an independent market which defies the commercial logic of traditional journalism and stands for the normative role of journalism and the restoration of its social function.

As the interviewee from *Redação Virtual* stated, ‘I think that the maximum word of independent journalism must be collaboration. If we enter this market to dispute spaces, scoops and articles, as was done in the commercial market of traditional media, it doesn’t make any sense. We are inaugurating a new independent journalism market’. This is seconded by the interviewee from *MídiaNinja*: ‘We do not start from this conception of academic journalism, which is a person who, based on a trade, or a profession, of being a journalist manages to abstract from the world and have an objective vision. No, we understand that we are always positioned in the world, your gaze is positioned, and this position is much richer when it is built collaboratively’. This constant criticism against objectivity is another common thread among collaborative journalism practitioners, which is seen as a practice that normalises the elite discourse (Harcup and O’Neill, 2017) and has been substituted by a more engaged reporting.

Criticism of the hierarchical nature of traditional journalism adds another layer of analysis. To the interviewee from *Maré de Notícias*, the hierarchical decision-making processes are the stages of the traditional journalism organisation: ‘Another thing that doesn’t happen in traditional journalism is the discussion of the reporting. The process of discussion of the reporting in traditional journalism is like this: the decision on what to report comes from above, it has a dynamic of a hierarchy very different from ours, a construction and a look very different from ours’. *Site da Baixada* emphasises collaboration to encompass the different narratives and viewpoints on issues which, according to the interviewee, go beyond the traditional looks at both sides of the story. However, the greatest concern in the interviews is the stereotype perpetuated and normalised by the traditional media. According to the interviewees, traditional, corporatist, mainstream media lost their ties (if they ever had any) with the reality of the people; they lost sight of who they are supposed to inform and benefit – the majority of the population, the voiceless, the people in favelas. According to the interviewee from *24horas* and *Fact-checking.cl*, traditional media has a rigid structure which prevents them from engaging in collaboration. The *Consejo de Redacción* interviewee reinforced the need for economic independence to pursue investigative journalism.

For the interviewee from *Congresso em Foco*, traditional media is missing its primary role in defence of democracy, and this is related to the economic dependence of the media on the state and big advertisers. The interviewee cites the recent campaign they launched to impeach the current president of Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro. They did not receive support from most traditional news organisations in the country; they even lose advertisers because of the position. However, he sees that as a small price to pay considering the risk for democracy if Bolsonaro stays in power: ‘I feel that these operational alliances between journalistic organisations for the good of society, for the good of users are not very advanced in Brazil. It is evident that there are some organisations with good international alliances, that conduct international investigations, but I see it as punctual. I believe that the great collaboration needed in Brazil today is the consolidation of ties to defend journalism, democracy, but, unfortunately, we are bad at it’.

This sentiment is that corporatist, mainstream media have given up on journalism’s social commitment, its mission and values. This goes with disturbing accusations of the media covering up social and political issues and their close relationship with power in many countries – such as the case denounced



by the Colombian news organisation *Generación Paz*, with the case of ‘False Positives’. The interviewee confirms what many entities, activists, civil society and independent and alternative media have been saying: The traditional, corporatist media has engaged in criminal behaviour by omission or consent of the military assassination of thousands of people (Wallace, 2011; Morales, 2019).

Media cover-ups and complicity are difficult to trace and disclose (Stich, 2005), but they are a source of social mistrust in the news, as suggested by interviewees. There are numerous studies around the topics of media manipulation in politics and other instances of everyday life (e.g., Entman, 2007). However, this is not the main purpose of the present research. Through this analysis and discussion, it was possible to verify that, as discussed in Chapter 2, collaborative journalism emerges as a force to restore journalism’s function in society. Collaborative journalism’s values are closely attached to democratic aspirations and are counter the position of the captured liberal media in Latin America as discussed in Chapter 3.

### **Collaborative practices**

This theme emerged from the need to separate processes into two parts. The first part, the ‘process’ theme, focuses on organisational processes. This second part is focused on collaborative journalism types, criteria and processes related to partnerships and the formation of networks, the culture of collaboration and its characteristics. This separation was conceived to aid the comprehension of the processes involved in collaborative journalism projects. Also, this theme encapsulates one of the themes designed in the deductive approach, which is ‘relationship with mainstream media and other organisations’. It was not possible to separate this theme from the practices and processes related to collaboration in general. It seems that practices and processes can be influenced by the types of partnerships that organisations establish. On one hand, the theme ‘processes’ illustrates the daily routines and organisational processes; on the other hand, the collaborative practices present more structural arrangements of collaborative journalism and its culture. This discussion follows in the next part of this chapter dedicated to discussing the different types of collaborative journalism.

### **Collaborative journalism typology**

Many of the studies on collaborative journalism focus on practices based on cooperative environments (Stonbely, 2017; Sambrook, 2018). As described in the literature (Chapter 2), CJ is characterised by a set of practices, such as editorial coordination, co-creation, horizontal processes and network structures. Editorial coordination is described as a role in collaborative networks focused on problem solving, coordination of projects and editorial cohesion (see Alfter, 2018). The creation of an environment where everyone can participate, which is co-creational is characterised by shared spaces of collaboration, from the inception of an investigation to a shared document in which everyone part of the collaborative project can, for example, input information and check each other’s work, exchange ideas and sources (see Stonbely, 2017; and Chapter 5). Networks structures are described as a more horizontal chain of command, shared processes and highly connected teams (see de la Serna, 2018; Deuze and Witschge, 2018). These practices are confirmed and expanded in the interviews. However, many of these practices might change according to, for instance, topics covered, project and partners involved. Chapter 5 identified organisations that have different motivations and might practice collaborative journalism in different ways. Unfortunately, the quantitative data were not conclusive to understand the idiosyncrasies and analyse them in-depth. The integration of qualitative and quantitative data is explored further in the conclusion. This part of the chapter

presents the data analysis and discussion of the themes ‘collaborative practices’ and ‘processes’ involved in such practices. For clarity purposes, the discussion below is guided by the identified patterns in the discourse of the interviewees that led to the following: types of partnership, types of collaboration and the implications of these to the practices. The types of collaboration are related to whether the collaboration is made, for example, with communities, freelancers or other news organisations. While the types of collaboration are the motives, such as collaboration for sharing content, for sharing audiences and so on. Finally, these types are analysed under the implications of them to the practices. The table below presents the main patterns that emerged from the interviews:

*Table 39 Types of partnership, collaborations and implications*

<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Implications</b>
Cooperative collaborations	This type of collaboration has a high level of integration among participants. It is characterised by a shared space of content creation where everyone is encouraged to engage with the content, checking, analysing, inputting of information and sharing sources and resources. This type of collaboration is more common among news professionals that share codes and practices; thus, the collaboration is more straightforward while preserving the independence of the parties involved.	This kind of collaboration requires a low level of editorial coordination but values co-creational practices and network structures. It has a high level of independence and horizontality. However, it lacks effectiveness and efficiency in terms of results, processes and clear objectives.
Mainstream collaborations	This type of collaboration follows many of the mainstream patterns of collaborations discussed in Chapter 2, such as the collaborations with universities and professionals from other industries, but mainly with other news organisations. The focus of is on sharing content, resources and sources, and expanding audiences.	Mainstream collaborations are characterised by a high level of independence of partners, a medium level of coordination and low level of co-creation. The efficiency of projects is higher and results are more tangible in terms of audiences and reach; however, a bubble is produced where power relations play an important role.
Community collaborations	In this type of collaboration, the partners are mostly members of the community. The community-based collaboration is strongly attached to journalism’s social role ideals and to sentiments of belonging, empowerment, and	Community collaborations are characterised by a bottom-up approach to journalistic coverage in which the communities are the main source of information. They forge long-term relationship with communities, which can be restricting. This type of collaboration

	social issues, such as territory, race, and gender.	is more integrated in the different realities and can change the dominant discourse; however, they have difficulty sustaining themselves.
Network collaborations	Virtual shared spaces prevail as well as the practices of ‘radical sharing’. The network structures are as loose as possible, but they are the basis of every process. Professionals are independent, but they rely on the network for expertise exchange. Most participants engage for financial issues but also to fulfil an ideal of the journalism profession.	These kinds of collaboration are difficult to understand; however, it is possible to establish some patterns of behaviour with other forms of collaborative action. For instance, these networks provide journalists a platform of exchange and sharing that is commonly found in collaborative projects, but they lack coordination, audience engagement and they rarely produce content together.
Activism collaborations	This collaboration relates to ideals of normative journalism and journalistic as activism. These collaborations are characterised by strong commitments to social issues and communities. They also rely on a counter-hegemonic and critical view of traditional journalism. It is difficult to draw a line between journalism and activism. Most projects are connected to social issues, and boundaries can be blurred.	This type of collaboration has routes on social movements and activists, but also on professionals who are committed to the social role of journalism. Their practices derive from traditional forms of journalism, but they add their social commitment, showing how journalism practices have been rearranged due to social and technological transformations. This type of collaboration is characterised by a low level of independence and horizontal decision-making. Relationships among participants are based on trust and common agenda.

### *Cooperative collaborations*

The interviews collected for the present research demonstrate similar patterns to studies on cooperative work arrangements (e.g., Kperogi, 2011; Siapera and Papadopoulou, 2016). One example is El Café Diario Puntocom, an Argentinian online radio station founded by journalists who are both freelancers and professionals employed with other news organisations. El Café Diario is an informal network where professionals share information, sources and financial costs. According to the interviewee, one person works as an editor but does not dictate what is to be published. This person serves more as a logistic contact point to help journalists with sources and other forms of exchange. ‘There is someone who works as an editor. Other colleagues are part of the network, that is, we maintain the El Café Diario together with our personal work, but at the same time as a team. So, the collaboration is to work as a team so that the radio is more and more known. We provide daily news so that the radio can take them. But it is not a content collaboration. It is content, but the radio pays for it, we give it to them in exchange for them mentioning us as a source’.

An example of a more formal form of cooperativism is *la diaria*, a cooperative of journalists in Uruguay who have a strong relationship with their community. They are specially known for their collaborative efforts in producing informative discussions with the communities around topics that affect the lives of Uruguayan society. According to de-Lima-Santos and Mesquita (2021), the organisation offers two models of work for its professionals: co-ownership, where they share responsibilities with the administrative body of a formal cooperative organisation; and another more traditional work arrangement with a company formed by the cooperative to hire journalists under contracts. The co-founder of the organisation claims that the economic reality of Uruguay has made them decide on this model since few people in the country have the resources to pay for news.

Collaborative journalism has been regarded as a less formal model of work and organisational structure that can be used in both formal cooperative enterprises and informal cooperative endeavours. This analysis shares patterns with previous studies illustrating that collaboration is used interchangeably with cooperative work arrangements (e.g., Kperogi, 2011; Suárez Montoya, 2020). It is characterised by a low level of integration among collaborators in terms of co-creational spaces but strong integration at the organisational level, which coordinates administrative and logistic aspects of the work. These endeavours normally employ horizontal and democratic decision-making. They are committed to the normative role of journalism, illustrated by an effort to bring stories that matter to society and guarantee the representation of communities in the news. This type of collaboration is celebrated mostly among practitioners and professionals of the news industry with shared codes, values and norms. They focus on normative journalism roles in society as well as expanding their audiences.

### ***Mainstream collaborations***

Collaborative journalism has been gaining attention, especially in international fora. Investigations such as the Panama Papers and the Pandora Papers have led many organisations around the world to adopt this model of investigation that gained the international scene through the US-based International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) and the Centre for Public Integrity (Lewis, 2018). In this model ‘radical sharing’ of information is the trademark of transnational and cross-borders efforts (Sambrook 2018). This kind of effort has been described as the ‘real’ collaborative journalism that has framed the discourse around the definition of collaborative journalism. However, some studies have been expanding and challenging this dominant narrative by demonstrating that collaborative journalism can take different forms (Stonbely 2017; Jenkins and Graves, 2019; Mesquita and Fernandes, 2021). Nevertheless, the model persists and influences collaborative efforts everywhere, which can be both beneficial and harmful.

For instance, the model was adopted by Connectas, a Colombian platform focused on transnational investigations. Connectas has done many of the ICIJ’s investigations in Latin America and also carries out their own investigations. Connectas mixes ICIJ’s model with other lines of action, such as the training and professional development of journalists in the region. According to its director, the ‘radical sharing’ philosophy of ICIJ is not the main form of action of Connectas, but their ‘platform’ structure, which allows for a professional network of exchange and share, is at the core of Connectas *modus operandi* (Mesquita, 2019). Thus, there is the spread of an investigation model that has restored journalism’s role in setting public debate. Conversely, little is known about its processes, motivations and whether they change according to context and other structural influences, such as the media system and market in different countries.

The interviews have illustrated that this type of collaboration is mainly done between news organisations that are invited to take part in the consortium. For example, in Peru, the organisation responsible for the Panama Papers investigation was a small news outlet called OjoPublico. A source in a journalistic association in Peru reported to this researcher that OjoPublico did not achieve the same results with the investigation as their peers in other countries. According to the source, they were ‘brought’ to the investigation despite not having significant information nor Peruvian public interest in the case. Large transnational investigations present an obscure power relation which does not necessarily take into account the local realities and needs. Little is known about the power relations and the criteria involved with ‘inviting’ news organisations to large transnational efforts and consortiums such as ICIJ. Alfter and Căndea (2019) identified this issue but did not offer much interpretation. The present study confirms the argument of the authors; however, it also shows that the power relation is mostly found in larger transnational investigations. In more day-to-day collaborations, the power relations tend to vanish or become less influential (see ‘community collaboration’).

Nevertheless, this model of collaborative journalism is widely spread in the region. For example, Consejo de Redacción focuses on collaborative journalism projects because this model stretches the capacity of the organisation in terms of audience, results and impacts of its investigations and having access to more information and sources. According to the interviewee, one of the main benefits is that small and medium size organisations are not competing for the same stories; they collaborate to achieve the best results. ‘For us, collaborative journalism is working with other organisations hand-in-hand to achieve better results in investigative issues. We realised that, before, journalists were even working on the same investigations, on the same issues, in a very isolated way, very lonely, but we realised that by joining efforts with other professionals the results were much more satisfactory. In the investigation projects, we are having a greater number of sources, having much more data. So, working with other teams not only generates a multidisciplinary result, but also the opportunity to see the same topic across different spectra’. Consejo de Redacción was part of a collaborative project that investigated the cases of violence against environmentalists and activists in Latin America. The objective was to hold accountable the countries that signed the Escazú Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Mutante, another small news outlet in Colombia, teamed with a larger news organisation in the country to combat mis and disinformation related to the COVID-19 outbreak. The organisation was part of what interviewee called a ‘brigada de información’ (information brigade) on WhatsApp to spread checked information about the disease and about vaccination to the public. Mutante has participated in many other transnational collaborative efforts, always with other news organisations. According to the interviewee, personal relationships are how the organisation decides to collaborate. In the case of the partnership with a larger news organisation, El Espectador, the interviewee reported that the fact that one of the Mutante directors had worked with El Espectador made it possible for them co-operate. ‘[This project was possible] because there is a friendly relationship, because the director of Mutante worked for a long time on El Espectador. Therefore, he knows who they are, who continued to work with El Espectador, in the health section’. Friendly relationships among professionals, especially those who migrate from legacy media to small and medium size investigative and independent news organisations, often determine this kind of collaboration. This pattern was also found in the quantitative part of the present research (Chapter 5) by the number of organisations that decide to work together with organisations that share an agenda.

Collaborations based on friendship are a consequence of a networked society. Evidence was provided by an interviewee who is the director of O Eco, an organisation focused on covering environmental topics.

O Eco was formed by experienced journalists backed by generous donors. It has recently expanded into collaborative journalism. According to the interviewee, O Eco is a well-established news organisation that found a niche covering animal extinction, until they saw the need to expand their reach and produce content that was interesting to many other layers of society. O Eco was invited to take part in a project called Reload with other news organisations that were also struggling to engage younger audiences. Many of the independent news organisations were producing content for a specific, well-educated audience and leaving behind important parts of the society. To tackle the problem, they consulted with other news organisations focused on this audience, using multimedia strategies with a great deal of visual content. They established a parallel and independent newsroom that ‘translated’ content for a young audience. Project Reload involved the elite of the investigative and independent journalism organisations in the country that shared a long trajectory of relationships and commitments. The interview illustrated and expanded some important patterns with previous studies by arguing that the phenomena of ‘endogamy’ and ‘homophily’ behaviours are largely spread in collaborations (e.g., de-Lima-Santos and Mesquita, 2021; Heft, 2021).

According to de-Lima-Santos and Mesquita’s (2021) study, to explain why humans and/or groups establish relations, one theory explores a phenomenon usually referred to as ‘endogamy’ or ‘homophily’, which is very characteristic of network societies. Endogamous behaviour is described as human associations based on similarities within professional boundaries, and homophilous relationships are based on association preferences. They have an important influence in defining the information the individual or the group will have access to. These phenomena can be experienced in many human relations, from marriage to work-related relationships. They can be based on friendship and other commonalities. These forms of associations based on preference, tendency, and similarities among practitioners exacerbated by the development of information and communication technologies present both opportunities and challenges (see also Beckett, 2010). In terms of benefits and opportunities, one is the increase in the capability of news organisations to work together due to their shared agenda, codes, norms and values; but, on the other hand, they also establish a perilous path that is often recognised by power struggles and control.

These behaviours analyses are based on patterns from human relations and are generally observed in small groups as the social resin that puts people together. Later, these patterns were also used to study larger groups, such as organisations. As described by McPherson, Smith-Lovin and M Cook (2013), homophilous behaviour is characterised by two primary forms of social relations; one that is related to individual characteristics such as gender and race; and another that is more socially based, which is sharing beliefs and norms, which also concerns to patterns of future behaviour. However, some other patterns emerge when these behaviour patterns are analysed in networks. According to the authors, the relationship of these groups of people connected through the social resin in networked structures is challenged by their capability of keeping homogeneity and engagement within the group; then, these groups start to see the formations of peripheral areas of influence. The authors refer to it as the ‘core-periphery’ pattern (p.427), in which there is a larger group of people who are less densely connected to the core values and characteristics of the group. However, the authors could not clarify how these groups are eventually broken and how the ties that link them together might weaken over time and then dissolve. One possible explanation for this is that these groups are disputed in a network society, and the group itself also evolves; people change. As the group expands, it also raises the range of external and internal influences that might change the very fabric of the group beliefs and characteristics. In summary, these behaviours analyses demonstrate “how social choices can help reproduce inequalities regardless of intentions” (Lambert and Griffiths, 2018, p.20), thus limiting groups’ capability to generate change within networks.

In this sense, collaborative journalism projects might as well, as social and networked structures, be influenced, determined and established by these patterns of social behaviours. To analyse such patterns, a long period of observation of the groups involved in the action would be necessary. Still, some elements could help to point the presence of such behaviours and their possible impacts on them to the practice of collaboration, such as the preferences, motives and decision-making processes in collaborative actions as explored and examined in this study.

Another organisation that took advantage of endogamic behaviour, in which friendly relations determined collaboration, is Abaré, a Brazilian organisation founded by young professionals from the North part of the country. Abaré counts only five members and covers one of the poorest and least digitally connected states in the country – Amazonas. Nevertheless, their work has flourished through collaboration. One of their first experiences was a partnership with *A Crítica*, the largest news outlet of Amazonas, to fact-check statements of politicians during the municipal election. According to the interviewee, the fact that one of the members of the organisation had already worked as a journalist with *A Crítica* made it easier for them to collaborate. ‘We developed this whole methodology, together with *A Crítica*’s editors, that was good for both of us. And we received funding for this process. It was something that at the time we tried to reach a consensus on this methodology, which would be fundamental for the checks to be done so that this fact-checking journalism process took place in a methodology, and it was something we tried to build together’. As the interviewee explained, the level of collaboration was quite low in terms of common content creation. However, the editorial coordination – by assuring that the methodology was built by both parties – and the horizontality of decision-making was high. When asked whether the project would continue and if there were any exchanges of expertise with other professionals of the *A Crítica*, the interviewee stated that the collaboration focused only on the fact-checking expertise that Abaré already had and the first-hand information in that *A Crítica* could provide, as they were the ones hosting the election debates. Therefore, the organisations involved in this effort could exchange information as mainstream collaborations normally do. However, the lack of transfer of expertise and the fact that Abaré was paid to do this job, might lead to another set of analysis and critics of collaborative journalism being used by some news organisations, especially legacy and mainstream news media, as a form to avoid the costs of a specific investigation.

Alfter and Cândia (2019) pointed out that the value generated by different formats, such as collaborative journalism, might be captured by the mainstream media for their own benefit. Thus, the hypothesis is that collaborative journalism is carried out by organisations that benefit from a format that brings value to their businesses. This brings an opportunity to research the value chain of a news media organisation and determine how collaborative journalism adds value to audiences and to the business of the news outlets while reducing costs and producing quality journalism.

An example of a collaborative project that can help to understand this dynamic is the VazaJato investigation. It was carried out in Brazil by the main legacy media outlets under the coordination of an independent investigative news organisation, The Intercept Brasil (TIB). VazaJato was launched in June of 2019, and since then has faced strong attacks from the government’s supporters and even threats against the life of the founder and former editor of TIB, the journalist Glenn Greenwald. After a couple of reports, TIB decided to team with other media outlets in the country, and as stated by Glenn Greenwald to the congress in Brazil, these media outlets and journalists that worked with TIB to validate and publish the leak are known as conservative outlets (Greenwald and Demori, 2019). The collaborative journalism approach was used as a tool against the Brazilian authoritarian populist government and, at the same time, as a means to bring reputation to a difficult and challenging investigation. This investigation has been

claimed as the first of a series of actions and news stories that have been destabilising Bolsonaro's government and putting in check the results of one of the biggest trials in the country known as Lavajato (a.k.a. Car Wash), which put former president Lula da Silva behind bars. The interviewee from TIB said that the organisation decided to collaborate in this investigation for many reasons. First, they realised they needed more hands-on board to analyse and publish all the data leaked from the messaging apps of the team of prosecutors and the judge responsible for the Lavajato case. Second, they saw that the investigation was too important to be kept by them for a long time before they could release the totality of the material. Third, they saw that attacks from the government and supporters would be unavoidable; thus, partnering was also a strategy to protect the investigation and promote the quality and accuracy of the data and information gathered.

In these types of collaborations, the normative role of journalism – such as setting the debate in the public arena and making the powerful accountable – and normative journalism values – such as professionalism and monitoring – are the ultimate objectives (Christians et al. 2010). However, as argued by Christians et al. (2010), the capability of journalism to perform these duties depends on the quality of the democracies in which the profession operates. Nevertheless, these are the main activities of journalism that are recognised as being in the core of the profession. This type of collaboration is characterised by a strong independence of the partners, the high valorisation of the journalistic monitoring role and interpretative function, and journalistic control of the narratives. This kind of collaboration demonstrates some level of endogamy and homophily behaviours due to its constant preferences to work with the same people and organisations. More formal criteria of partnership based on skills, expertise and sharing in the market gives the process an appearance of objectivity and independence. Still, the lack of transparency and clear decision-making, raise questions about the real motives behind such decisions. Nevertheless, it is possible to see that this kind of endogamy and homophily behaviours are common throughout the many types of collaboration, as is presented next.

### *Community collaborations*

As discussed in Chapter 3, differences between the participation of communities in collaborative journalism efforts and other models of participatory journalism remains unclear. One possible answer for this dilemma may be at the level of participation, the professionalisation of the organisations involved as well as their position (or opposition) toward journalism as an institution. Norms and values differentiate the many models of producing journalism with communities, as argued by Fröhlich, Quiring and Engesser (2012). According to the interviews, the participation of communities in collaborative projects have varying effects. Although many of the interviewees could not ascertain the differences between collaborative journalism and other models that include communities in the production of news, the latent meaning of their statements demonstrate journalism needs capable professionals, with clear values and who follow specific norms. These initiatives intend to restore the perception of journalism in the public that they should serve and represent.

Maré de Notícias, an organisation with more than 10 years of reporting about and for the communities in the 16 favelas of the Complexo da Maré in Rio de Janeiro, has been developing a model of journalism that intersects with the many genres of community participation. Maré de Notícias is coordinated by a journalist coming from traditional legacy media in Brazil and it is integrated with other professional journalists. They produce a newspaper and distribute it in collaboration with an organisation that assists homeless and drug addicts in their social reintegration. Maré de Notícias is member of professional



associations in the country. They have been invited to collaborate in numerous projects, mostly with other peripheral news organisations. According to the interviewee, the most important collaboration they promote is with the community: ‘One of the pillars of collaboration, if I can put it that way, is with the resident, this newspaper’s protagonist’. Regarding Maré de Notícias’ experiences in collaboration, the interviewee described three main formats: 1) the community itself; 2) lateral partnerships with civil society organisations and 3) a network formed only by organisations located in the peripheries of great cities such as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. According to the interviewee, the motivations for their work are related to the change in the narrative of the mainstream and legacy media that often misrepresent the community living in favelas and peripheral areas. It is important for the interviewee that they promote social transformation and public policies that improve the lives of these communities.

Desenrola (‘unroll’) is another organisation that promotes social transformation through collaboration. This organisation participated in a financial scheme, funded by Google, in which they developed technology to distribute the journalistic products of dozens of reporters and organisations of the peripheries in local business located in these areas. The project collaborated with independent journalists who were having difficulty getting their material read by the population they served. However, their commitments go beyond monetising and audience issues. As the interviewee explained, ‘we are part of a network of journalists from the suburbs, which is a kind of coalition of black and peripheral journalists from the city of São Paulo who have been organised for about five years thinking about public policies at the municipal level to support peripheral journalism, thinking methods of private social investment for journalism and also thinking about a political impact to bring media education into schools and, above all, sustainability for those who do journalism in the peripheries and favelas’. Desenrola’s project has another component similar to Maré de Notícias, which is the promotion of local economies. In Desenrola’s project, the money given by Google News Initiative was used to produce a totem using only local expertise and materials. In the next phase of the project, these totems will be placed on local business and will be broadcasting news produced by the coalition. Desenrola shares a common sentiment with other organisations of this coalition of peripheral journalists, which is the need to change mainstream and legacy media narratives on communities, race, gender and territory and the promotion of diversity.

Favela em Pauta is another organisation that is part of this coalition of peripheral actors. Favela em Pauta prioritises collaboration with communities to develop stories that matter for them, but the interviewee argued that, for her, all the news outlets are biased. According to the interviewee, objectivity is impossible because all journalists and news outlets have formed a vision of territories, communities and populations: ‘The journalism of corporations is a journalism produced for the elites because it is the result of that elite’. According to the interviewee, this coalition and the journalists from the periphery are changing the perspective of the news to guarantee diversity of views.

As argued by Goode (1957) and Reader and Hatcher (2011), communities are not only about territory but also about groups of peoples that share commonalities. The concept of communities expands to other subjects such as race and gender. For instance, Portal Catarinas has taken the mission of changing the narrative around women to produce journalism that is relevant to this community in a collaborative approach. Catarinas is a small group of journalists that voluntarily started reporting on the many issues faced by women in the country and their region, as explained by the interviewee: ‘The portal was born collaborative, it was born from a demand of the feminist movement to represent this journalistic narrative from feminism, due to the lack of women’s voices in the media, to talk about the use of news angles, from the perspective of women, the multiple gazes of women and multiple feminism’. They were part of the collaborative project ‘Um vírus, duas guerras’ (One virus, two wars) which reported on the effects of the

pandemic on women, domestic violence and femicides. The project was funded collaboratively by AmazoniaReal, an organisation whose objective is to give voice to the populations of the Amazon Forest, and AzMinas, another organisation focused on women. However, as the interviewee explained, the challenge of her organisation is to be sustainable. The fact that no one in the team understands administration or other aspects of organisational life makes their work unstable.

ChicasPoderosas is an organisation focused on gender that has recently expanded into Cuba. The organisation is a global community founded in 2013 by an International Centre for Journalists (ICFJ) Knight Fellow, Mariana Santos. After eight years, it is present in 16 countries with the objective of including more women in the media. In Cuba, the organisation is represented by a journalist that is taking the role alone. She is also a journalist in a state broadcast television called *Canal Caribe*. The interviewee has recently joined the global community and produced news reports on women's condition in the island. According to the interviewee, the topics of investigations are aligned with the global community, and she contributes with the local view. She also said that for her, collaborative journalism is gathering different newsrooms and news outlets to conduct journalistic investigation. ChicasPoderosas has given her the opportunity to show the realities of her people, especially women who are forgotten and most feel the social and economic issues in the country. As she explained, most news organisations in Cuba are state-owned, and they do not have the habit of collaborating. This lack of interest in collaborative journalism was explained by the interviewee as a lack of information at journalism schools about this model and its benefits. She argues that journalism schools do not provide students with enough information about the real work of journalists in newsrooms and that they offer largely dated content. However, as discussed in Chapter 3, the different media systems and the state interventionism in the industry, especially in countries under authoritarian and nondemocratic regimes, influence the appetite and even the capability of news outlets to engage in collaborative efforts.

On the topics of race, two organisations interviewed for this research share similar motivations but different approaches to collaboration. The first is a small news organisation based in Southeast Brazil called Notícias Pretas (Black News). The organisation was founded by two experienced journalists that counted mostly on volunteers to cover the issue of race in the country. Notícias Pretas works in collaboration with other news organisations to gather information and produce news with a race cut-out. According to the interviewee, their purpose was to give journalists visibility on their website and promote news from a race perspective. The organisation was not sustainable, and the two journalists responsible for the website are employed with other organisations. To the interviewee, their motivation to report on race and promote an anti-racist narrative was the lack of black representation in the news.

Alma Preta (Black Soul) is an organisation founded in 2015 by a group of journalism and communications students who saw the need of producing high quality journalism with a race perspective. Alma Preta is a more structured organisation, having participated in many collaborative projects with other news organisations not only with the same cut-out perspective, but also with peripheral, gender and other communities' perspectives. As for many organisations in this type of collaboration, financial issues impact the capacity of Alma Preta to expand its collaborations. The organisation has received support from Google to find new ways to promote their work, make Alma Preta's marketing strategy more professional and increase its financial support from the audiences. As the interviewee explained, Alma Preta is only able to sustain itself due to foundations' financial support, such as The Open Society. This is the biggest issue in this type of collaboration. As pointed out in Chapter 5, most of the organisations surveyed are unable to sustain themselves and their projects. While Notícias Pretas is more focused on promoting black journalists and voices from the community through a race cut-out of gathered information in a collaborative model,

Alma Preta focuses on promoting original investigations in collaboration with other news organisations, providing race and peripheral perspectives to investigations and content. In both cases, commitments to journalistic values and diversity in the news industry is a common thread.

These organisations' missions and values share many commonalities with organisations of the 'activism collaboration' type, with strong connections to ideals of representativity, diversity and occupying spaces. Most organisations working in this type of collaboration are critical of the mainstream media and structures of the industry and the market. However, the reaffirmation of the importance of access to information, the civic function of journalism, the promotion of public debates and the social role of journalism is a constant. This type of collaboration is characterised by independence of the participants but a strong networked model of action. These organisations show endogamy and homophily behaviour which are characteristic of networked communities. In community collaborations, levels of co-creation as well as of the editorial coordination are considered medium, but commitment to a common agenda and the power of journalism for social transformation are considered high. These findings illustrate similar patterns of behaviour and discourse analysed in Chapter 2 and 3.

### ***Networked collaboration***

While collaborative journalism in general is a networked structure, some types of collaboration show different levels of integration within networks. Different practices and processes also have a strong relation to which level of integration networks can provide practitioners. However, as the interviews illustrate, practitioners do not comprehend the unintended consequences of such networks. Practitioners are still discovering this work format and the recent establishment of such structures make it even more difficult for them to analyse such effects. Nevertheless, more networks are being formed, especially among journalists, and they use some collaboration practices that make it difficult to merge this type of collaboration with other ones.

For example, one of the largest networks in Brazil is *Redação Virtual* (Virtual Newsroom). This network was first established by a journalist from the mainstream media. Through freelancer training that she offers to other journalists, she gathered people on social media platforms to form a network. Everybody could help everybody else to get information about where to send news article suggestions for editors, find sources get tips on writing skills and marketing – everything related to the life of a freelancer. This network evolved to the co-creation of journalistic products to diverse audiences, such as *Cajueira* – a newsletter which aims to decentralise media coverage, focusing on journalistic content created outside the large centres of the media market, mainly São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Brasília. *Descentralisa* is another newsletter which showcases the production of *Redação Virtual*'s members.

*Redação Virtual* also conducted a collaborative investigation, called *Lição de Casa* (Homework) – a project that investigated the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education of children all over Brazil. The project did not count with any type of financing support and was totally carried out by volunteers from the network. The network is composed mostly of young journalists, many of them still students, who are trying to 1) establish themselves in the professional field; 2) sustain themselves with the journalistic work and 3) produce a kind of journalism that they believe is important. As the interviewee explained, 'I arrived at a point in my life when I want to make the articles that I want to do, focused on what I believe, which is [producing news articles] about gender, human rights and health'. The network established by the interviewee is very informal. Most interactions are related to exchanging tips on work opportunities in news outlets.

The level of interaction in terms of co-creation is low. However, the network provides an environment that promotes new formats of work and a culture of collaboration among practitioners. Also, the network has created new products and collaborative projects. The network has a high level of hierarchical processes, where most interactions are coordinated by the interviewee, who networks as coordinator and editor. Since the network was formed mostly because professionals were after working tips, it struggles to evolve into something more than a list on WhatsApp.

Another organisation founded by experienced journalists through training was Agência Mural. The training, focused on citizen journalism, was the first step in the formation of a network of approximately 70 journalists from the peripheries of São Paulo. Agência Mural started with a weekly column in *Folha de S.Paulo*, the largest newspapers of Brazil, which showcases reporting from peripheral communities. The organisation has expanded its operations and now counts 13 fixed professionals, who are responsible for the administration of the organisation and the publication of the work produced by the network. According to the interviewee, professionals in the network are paid according to the work they produce, an arrangement similar to freelancing. The outlet has worked with other types of organisations, such as advocacy organisations. In this type of collaboration, the journalistic content is done exclusively by Agência Mural. A parallel team was created to deal with the demands of collaboration, specifically for the project 32xSP – a project carried out in collaboration with an advocacy organisation that provides Agência Mural with data about the city of São Paulo. The data are mostly related to infrastructure of the city, access to education and to the health system in the 32 administrative regions of the city. Agência Mural has, then, the responsibility to transform this data into news articles and disseminate it through many channels, such as the radio station *CBN* – a national broadcast radio station part of the largest media conglomerate of Brazil, Rede Globo. In this type of collaborations, the participation of communities is widely spread. A commitment to territories and diversity are strongly disseminated among practitioners and other collaborators (de-Lima-Santos and Mesquita, 2021b).

In this type of collaboration, other more formal networks appear, such as the Chilean fact-checking network. The fact-checking ecosystem in Chile has a long history of working together, especially in the coverage of national events such as elections. According to the interviewee, the main purpose of this network is to train professionals and form alliances that enable more collaborations. According to her, the network is still in its first moments and it is too soon to form opinions around it. Nevertheless, one of the reasons why fact-checkers form alliances is to reach remote areas and expand audiences. The interviewee believes that this network will be transformed into something like a Chilean fact-checking association. Another organisation in the process of creating a more formal network, is the Peruvian InfoMercado. InfoMercado is an outlet focused on economic and financial coverage. It has recently established a network with other digital news outlets in the country to promote these organisations and their work, especially when applying for grants such as the GNI. According to the interviewee, working together to apply for these grants is the best way to promote the work and guarantee the presence of organisations from outside the greater centres – regions that are normally forgotten by the largest news outlets.

Another example of a more formal network is the recently created Brazilian Association of Digital Journalism (AJOR), formed with approximately 30 news outlets, mostly independent and small to medium in size. AJOR's mission is to promote diversity and professionalisation while defending journalism and democracy. Many of the founder organisations were interviewed for this research. The association emerges in the midst of a financial crisis in journalism, and its network will be crucial to helping organisations obtain grants. As explained by one of the interviewees, 'We believe that if we are not a network, we will not be able to do much. This association has been quite important even to fill out calls with a more precise look at

the peripheries, at its reality, because they are very complex, even for us to be able to apply'. A common thread among interviewees is that calls for grants from foundations and advocacy organisations are the main forms of sustainability for many independent news outlets that recently emerged. This type of funding is often very complex and time consuming, leading many organisations to lose opportunities. Thus, on the one hand, these more formal networks offer their members a certain level of security, training, and formal processes of share and exchange. They also promote the culture of collaboration and diversity. On the other hand, some unintended consequences are related to the indirect promotion of dangerous endogamy or homophily behaviours, which can be both beneficial and harmful. The benefits of these behaviours are the establishment of networks that are mutually beneficial for member in terms of promoting training and support. However, there is also a downside of establishing networks that often do not offer clear and transparent information. For example, one of the interviewees argued that the Brazilian association for the digital media was formed by elite independent news outlets in the country and the process of 'inviting' news organisations to the network was already excluding some organisations. Even though it is normal that to maintain cohesion networks might start filtering members and partners, it is also expected that such networks are able to evolve to embrace the diversity of the field and of their national realities.

In summary, through the analysis of these interviews it is possible to infer that a new form of conducting collaborative journalism based on network structures has emerged. These networks can be formal or informal. They all share the sentiment of collaboration as a motor for alliances and projects carried out with members and with other organisations outside the network. This type of collaboration also presents particularities which are more traditional – hierarchical decision-making, high levels of integration among members, focus on a more normative journalism role and performance. Unintended consequences of these types of association through social networks might be the exclusion of an important part of the journalistic field and entire social groups, leading to the creation of bubbles and elitist networks.

Much of the discourse around what journalism should be contributes to the formation of networks. Even though the counter-hegemonic discourse is dominant among many of the interviewees, there is an overall perpetuation of traditional structures within many of these networks, such as hierarchical decision-making and the ideal of professionalism.

### *Activism collaboration*

Even though the literature has never described collaborative journalism as a form of activism in, the interviews have made the argument for activism. In this type of collaboration, a common form of partnership is between news outlets and advocacy organisations. Recent reports mention the increasing number of collaborations between news outlets and advocacy organisations ('Center for Cooperative Media Receives Research Grant to Study Impact of Journalism and Advocacy Collaboration', no date). According to the Centre for Cooperative Media, activism has emerged due to the need of nongovernmental organisations to produce real impact in society – through policymaking, for instance. News outlets can access exclusive information and data and also promote news directly related to social change. This evolution was spotted in this research. Although there are few studies around the topic, the interviews demonstrated some commonalities and specificities that are worth an in-depth analysis.

For example, *Mídia Ninja* mixes activism and communication. Their practices diverge in many aspects from the most organisations involved in collaboration. Their format, organisational structure and working process are normally found among nongovernmental organisations and social movements. Nevertheless, they emerge as an alternative media, grounded in counter-hegemonic discourse and

cooperative formats of work. Mídia Ninja collaborates with many actors, from other news organisations to individuals, politicians and celebrities. All the collaborations serve to democratise communication. They promote information focused on human rights, culture, identity and the environment. They network with many organisations of the civil society, and they are strongly positioned at the leftist political spectrum. Mídia Ninja claims that their collaborative work with Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Teto (MTST, a.k.a. The Homeless Workers Movement) combines participatory engagement and communications skills. As the interviewee explained, Mídia Ninja does not just go to an area settled by MTST to cover the movement and then report to their audiences. Instead, they live in the settlement with members of the movement. They report from it, providing an inside vision, and they help build the movement's communications strategies. This gives Mídia Ninja and their audience another level of information. 'Our reading of the MTST movement is very in-depth, it is much more complex, and when we are going to bring news to a social media network, this already has another level, another power'.

As suggested by Holt, Ustad Figenschou and Frischlich (2019), the leftist position characterises many of the alternative media initiatives everywhere, and the relation to the mainstream media is perceived by these organisations as their common thread. However, despite strong criticism of the legacy media, these organisation – different from the organisations described in the type 'networked collaboration' – do not share most of the practices and processes of traditional media. The present research shares some patterns described in Holt, Ustad Figenschou and Frischlich (2019)'s study, which are useful to understand some of the finds of this research. Even though the study considers that the position of alternative media is relational to the mainstream media (which might change according to political and historical contexts), it does not take into consideration some of the most recent media formats such as Mídia Ninja, which emerged from civil society rather than from the media industry and the journalistic field. Nevertheless, the study sheds some light on the types of ideologies built by alternative media that glue participants together – mainly the distancing and critical approach to journalism and to traditional media.

Portal Catarinas is another organisation born from the activist movement that formed a news outlet out of the claims of its participants. Thus, it is difficult to draw a line between activist and community collaborative journalism. One factor that might help in this differentiation is the processes involved in the collaboration and the types of partnership that they celebrate. In the case of communities, as described before, collaborations are made with a specific community not organised. While the activist collaboration is characterised by partnership with an organised group of people that might represent or not a community, but, normally, they represent a group of communities or ideologies.

Another organisation formed around political motivation is Generación Paz, from Colombia. The organisation, founded by journalists, has one motivation, which is to promote peace in the country. After the main force in the guerrilla movement, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), disposed of their guns after 50 years of civil war, casualties were drastically reduced after the peace agreements made in 2016. However, other guerrilla organisations have come back to fight, and the government and the media have been accused of hiding the real numbers of casualties caused by military action. These casualties are known as 'falsos positivos' (false positives), meaning that many deaths caused by the military were civilians not involved with the guerrillas. According to the reports from La Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz (JEP, a.k.a. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace), the action was an attempt to cover-up the murders and inflate the numbers of military campaigns against the guerrillas. In this context, Generación Paz emerged.

Generación Paz has been collaborating with many other types of organisations, such as universities, but one of the main forms of collaboration is with organisations of civil society, such as the FARC. After laying down the guns, FARC became a political party under the name Comunes (common). According to

the interviewee, they have been essential collaborators to help Generación Paz reach communities in the most remote areas of the country. Generación Paz and FARC have established an editorial board where the two share the content creation. As the interviewee explains, ‘FARC party were our allies and we did [everything] hand-in-hand with them, not like the journalists who come to extract the information and take it away, but we built it with them in the editorial committees. They accompanied us to the territories and also supported the creative part [of the work]. For example, the videos, the design of the book and all the distribution were done together, which is the most important thing. That is to say, we are a medium where we produce content, yes, but what we do with it differentiates us from other media, in the sense that we use this content to do pedagogy, to do political work’.

The interviewee also recognises that content produced in collaboration with FARC is not neutral, as a journalistic work is supposed to be. According to the interviewee, the content produced is a tool for the political action in defence of peace. ‘This content is not, let’s say neutral, where we say this is how peace is in Colombia, according to the Institute, according to the Javeriana University, as expert researchers, but we say this is how peace is and this worries us and we act [on this]’. Such collaboration with the civil society is also spotted in the case of Mídia Ninja, is not a novelty in the alternative media ecosystem in Latin America, according to Waisbord (2009). Waisbord in his study of the increasing number of alternative and other types of media organisations emerging from the civil society (the ‘media movement’) is a phenomenon taking place in Latin America for many years, which concentrates on the power of media to set public debate and promote social change. The author argues that this movement intends to be an alternative to corporate media and state influences in the media market. Nevertheless, as the author also argues, the organisations in this movement, instead of recreating journalism, reinforce many of the traditional *modus operandi* of the traditional media.

As suggested by the Centre of Cooperative Media, the relationship between news organisations and advocacy organisations is mutually beneficial. However, a downside of this immersive network and activist collaboration is that the boundaries limiting each of the parts in the network are blurred. The majority of the public cannot distinguish what is news, what is journalism, what is activism. The blurred boundary encourages narratives that accuse journalists of being biased and untrustworthy. However, they give audiences a more complex view of events, while providing leverage to civil society organisations to promote social changes.

The interviews analysed demonstrate similar findings with previous studies. For instance, as argued by de Albuquerque (2012), political parallelism as defined by Mancini and Hallin (2004), is a dimension of independence and objectivity of news organisations mostly applicable only to Western societies. Further discussion around the topic can be found in the Chapter 3. For instance, the chapter states that political parallelism is an important dimension to analyse the level of independence of the media system. It also points out that such an assumption is done under the light of mature Western democracies, which is not the reality of most countries. Thus, different models of analysis of the independence of the media should consider other dimensions. For instance, the model proposed by de Albuquerque takes into consideration two main ‘situations’: the level of competitiveness of political parties in the system and the level of institutional stability.

De Albuquerque (2012) offers cases to support his argument. However, he does not establish a formal structure of analysis, leaving the proposed model free to adaptation and discussion. Even though his model is limited in the sense of a theoretical or analytical tool, it gives food for thought. When using this model to understand the connections between the media and political parties in Latin America, it has been reported (see Chapter 3) that many of the media systems in the region are highly concentrated and there is a

permissive relationship between the press, political parties and politicians in several countries (Guerrero, 2014). However, none of these discussions mentions alternative media. The permissive nature of the relations and connections of the Latin American mainstream media gave path to a sense of defiance among alternative media organisations. Even though there is no evidence that there is a relation of cause and effect as the one described here, the interviews and the literature around ideological commitments of alternative media, back this claim. One of the possible explanations for this behaviour of blurred boundaries between alternative media and political parties could be at the basis of a counter-discourse of the mainstream and legacy media, at the same time a proposition for social action, inciting social rebellion and gaining leverage in the political sphere to, again, promote social change. Thus, what would be seen as an outrageous and corrupt relationship in mature democratic societies, in societies under less democratic and authoritarian regimes, such as Brazil, Colombia, Cuba and Venezuela, the relationship between leftist political parties, social activists and the alternative media seems to be an act of resistance for social change.

How this relates to collaborative journalism is explored in this summary. As pointed out by Dowling (2021), alternative media and activism journalism found a nonbinary approach to journalism norms and values by focusing on the journalistic ‘duty’ to democracy and on bringing dissonant voices to the public debate rather than on the commercial thread and traditional notions of objectivity and independence. By adopting not so traditional forms of reporting and association to citizens, according to the authors, these emergent street media give voice to activists and others who are commonly out of the mainstream reporting. These kinds of organisations also operate in a decentralised manner, prioritising a bottom-up production of narratives in which the professional work of journalists is blurred and more like a facilitator. Nevertheless, these organisations pledge their allegiance to the journalism role in society and to peer-to-peer production, showing that their partnership with political parties is made not uncritically but under a commitment to an ideology.

Their *modus operandi* is mostly in line with the ones identified as being characteristics of collaborative journalism practices and processes. The types of partnerships might affect the way collaborative journalism is perceived and practised. However, their commitments to normative journalism (in a nonbinary approach) and to the role of journalism in society and for democracy, put them side-by-side in the collaborative journalism types’ plethora.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter analysed the main findings of the interviews conducted with journalists and practitioners in lines of command of news organisations that are involved in collaborative journalism projects in Latin America. This conclusion focuses mainly on the thematic analysis report and the relevance of these findings to answer the research questions.

First, this chapter identified that collaborative journalism has many meanings to journalists and practitioners. Commitments to normative journalism, its mission and values and its role in society are guiding principles for most of the interviewees. According to the analysis, collaborative journalism in Latin America is about restoring the role of journalism in society and promoting democracy. It is also about giving voices to the voiceless, empowering communities and establishing a more democratic form of communication with communities. Above all, practitioners do not distinguish between their mission and values and their practices. Collaborative journalism is interpreted by many practitioners as a form of producing a kind of journalism that they believe. For them, CJ is translated into the involvement of other news organisations, professionals from other industries, universities and, most importantly, communities.



Mainly, collaborative journalism is an ethos, a form of thinking and acting that goes beyond the boundaries of the profession but is based on the professional principals of diversity and plurality. These commitments, values and mission are constant throughout the analysis of the interviews and they are decisive for association choices and formats. They also influence investigative focuses and topics to be reported, processes and forms of perceiving results and impacts. Thus, the normative journalism essence of this theme ‘concept’ was present in other many themes analysed.

Collaborative journalism offers a range of benefits to practitioners, from professional benefits to society and communities. As perceived by the interviewees, the analysis focused mainly on four types of benefits: 1) individual, the capability of journalists to be recognised by their work, their peers and society; 2) organisational, creditability, visibility and reputation of the brands; 3) professional, exchange environments, the defence of journalism and its mission and 4) societal, through policy-making influence and social transformation. Again, the normative role of journalism to society and democracy are the main guide and the latent meaning of statements.

It was found that collaborative journalism has four interrelated processes: 1) duration, whether the collaborative effort is ongoing or temporary; 2) co-creation, whether content creation is made together or separately; 3) decision-making, related to horizontality or hierarchical processes of decision within networks and 4) editorial coordination. It was possible to verify that collaborative efforts are mostly ongoing, especially with communities, based on an idea of collaboration as an ethos and commitment of longer relationships.

It was possible to infer that the level of co-creation varies but is based on the idea of collaboration at all levels of the working production processes, and they are related to objectives of assuring quality, accuracy and plurality. In terms of decision-making, there was agreement that collaborative journalism should pursue a more horizontal process to guarantee the participation of partners. However, it was also pointed out that horizontality in decision-making is not fully understood, and practitioners often rely on more hierarchical processes. This study verified that while editorial coordination is present in collaborative projects, there is a loose approach to it, raising questions about project efficiency. There is also a deep commitment to a more democratic form of communication within networks.

Mentions to challenges and limitations of collaborative journalism were concentrated on issues related to the spread of a collaborative culture in the profession. This is related to the relationship with partners, especially with the mainstream media. Also, small organisations face another range of challenges related to power struggles. However, small organisations also benefit from niche focus and shared skills in collaborative projects. Safety of journalists and news organisations were also pointed out by many organisations as a great challenge. In this context, collaborative journalism has been used as a tool to protect journalists and to solve problems related to attacks and harassment of journalists and news organisations.

Another issue that permeates the commentary around limitations relates to financial issues illustrated in the ‘business models’ theme. In that theme, two main formats were identified: 1) tech and social media platforms and the philanthropic support to news organisations and 2) the shared financial resources format, an emergent model in which news organisations fund themselves. In the former, organisations have been able to promote investigations and build tools that were not possible without financial support; however, problems arose related to dependence and biased orientation of the platforms towards technological solutions. In the latter, while it was possible to identify this emergent form of self-funding within networks, it is still not clear the consequences this format may have in the longer run for news organisations and for the market.

It is possible to infer that patterns of endogamous and homophilous behaviours may be at play when deciding who will be part of the efforts and receive the financial support through this shared funding model. It is also possible to infer that this model could help solve financial issues in countries where the funding system is pressured by economic inequalities. Finally, this is a theme that relates to the quantitative analysis and offers a great opportunity to cross-analysis.

Lastly, the contexts in which collaborative journalism operates have shown significant impact in how the practice is perceived. Context influences practices such as who is doing CJ and how, which are the topics that they cover and their mission and values. Most importantly, contexts impact the motives that led organisations and practitioners to collaborate. These are more related to how they see and perceive the market, journalism profession, normative roles and functions of journalism in society than the factors identified in the literature (refer to Chapter 2). This specificity suggests that the main concerns of CJ practitioners go beyond the journalism crisis – mostly the traditional business models crisis – and the emergence of new information and communication technologies.

From the theme ‘collaborative practices’ and the analysis of the previous themes, it was possible to draw a typology of collaborative journalism. The types of association were described as types of collaboration and divided by 1) the types of organisations that are conducting or are part of collaborative efforts; 2) the types of collaborations that they are establishing, whether with universities, other news organisations, communities and so on; 3) the duration, whether ongoing or temporary; 4) their mission, values and motives to form or to be part of collaborative efforts; and 5) the processes involved, such as levels of integration in terms of co-creation, horizontality and coordination. In this typology it was observed many forms of association that follows patterns of endogamous and homophilous behaviour, which were strongly subjected to relations of friendship and shared mission and values translated into common agendas – identified by topics covered, commitments to society, to the profession and to communities. It was also observed issues related to power relations, elitism and movements of capture of benefits, such as economic value of investigations, reputation, and credibility, attached to the collaborative efforts by mainstream media. It was also possible to identify many layers of separation and intersection of collaborative journalism with other forms of participatory, activism and community journalism. It was found that the limitation is based on commitments and practices intrinsically based on journalism practices, the power of journalism in establishing the public debate, and towards social transformation.

From the latent meaning of the interviewees’ discourse, it was possible to verify that the criticism to journalism and journalists is oriented by an ideal of how journalism should be practised and to whom it supposes to serve. This orientation demonstrates relevant ties to normative journalism and the role of journalism in society and for democracy. The theme ‘context’ was able to advance in some of the previous analysis that normative journalism plays an important role for collaborative journalism practice. This finding is essential to also answer the research questions by stating that there is enough evidence to support that collaborative journalism helps to underpin normative journalism mission and values in society and for democracy. Also, these values and mission are more relevant to collaborative journalism practitioners in countries under less democratic and authoritarian regimes. This qualitative data analysis and discussion start to demonstrate that some of the characteristics that help to underpin these mission and values are the focus on communities, on social issues, on horizontality and the overall commitment to social transformation and the social role of journalism in society. These practices and commitments are much aligned with normative roles and functions, such as the monitoring, facilitative, informative and even the radical role as suggested by Christians et al. (2010).

## Chapter 7 – Desk Research Analysis and Discussion

### Introduction

Throughout the research, financial issues and journalism's traditional business model are discussed as among the many concerns of journalists and news media organisations conducting or participating in collaborative journalism projects (see Chapters 5 and 6). Moreover, financial struggles (e.g., redirection of advertising from news media organisations to tech and social media platforms, the consequent shrinkage of newsrooms and the increase of job insecurity) are the main reasons why journalists and news organisations join collaborations (see Chapter 2). Philanthropic support is widely spread in Latin America, and many organisations could not continue their work without it. Thus, journalism's traditional business model crisis has driven news organisations to rely more on third-party support to continue working.

Philanthropic and big tech platforms play an increasingly important role in supporting journalism. These relationships are unbalanced because they might reorient journalistic work and create dependency in the long run (Bell, 2019). The present research aims to comprehend the many influences and constraints on collaborative journalism. Understanding the roles of foundation and big tech platform financial support for collaborative journalism is an essential piece of the puzzle to underpin the necessary focus of philanthropy on normatively good journalism. Otherwise, there is a risk of a utilitarian use of such funds, especially in contexts where freedom of the press and the overall economic and political realm are more unstable, where powerful elites capture the media system. Instead of fulfilling journalism's commitment, philanthropic funds, donations and grants, by not considering normative journalism values and missions, may be deepening the inequalities in media systems. To better understand the implications of such financial schemes to journalism in Latin America, it is necessary to analyse the philanthropic donation structure.

According to many authors, philanthropic support from governments (e.g., through embassies) or nongovernmental organisations has been shaping journalism in the Global South (Lancaster, 2008; Salar and Lugo-Ocando, 2018). These authors refer to this type of support as 'foreign aid' – a policy tool designed to support media systems and the freedom of the press:

As a voluntary transfer of public resources, from a government to another independent government, to an NCO, or an international organisation (such as the World Bank or the UN Development Programme) with at least a 25% grant element, one goal of which is to better the human condition in the country receiving the aid. (Lancaster, 2008, p. 9)

This kind of aid influences the media via a discourse of bringing modernisation and professionalisation, but also a Western *modus operandi* that directs the supported party into a logic that disregards the realities and the real needs of these countries (Benson, 2018). Salar and Lugo-Ocando (2018) argue that foreign aid impacts the media plurality, which can benefit from introducing new voices in the media ecosystem. Conversely, it can be a kind of soft intervention, through policymaking and orientation, to hegemonic discourse. Analysing these influences is a complex task: First, the information related to such aid is scarce. Second, organisations often assume an aura of neutrality and objectivity around their support for journalism in the Global South, for example, via their complex set of criteria and formats for project proposals.

Other organisations have started to play a significant role in supporting news media worldwide – the big tech and social media platforms. It is not clear whether these corporations use foreign aid as a framework for their own strategy towards journalism and the media industry. Still, the fact is that they are becoming the most prominent players in supporting journalism in Latin America. The effects of this support on news organisations, and especially on collaborative journalism sustainability and evolution, might lead to path-

dependency and resource-dependency. That is, organisations' behaviours are locked into a particular type of habitus, shared culture and practices that is difficult to break away from.

Path-dependency has long been studied by authors in organisational theory and is often described as a *modus operandi* that submits organisations to a peer-to-peer (among other types of dependency, such as from customers) dependence. This does not always lead organisations to the best development of their practices, restricting their movements, innovation and evolution (Barnes, Gartland and Stack, 2004; Kay, 2005).

Resource-dependency occurs when an organisation develops a dependency on other organisation for resources such as capital, materials or practices (Emerson, 1962). This type of behaviour often demonstrates asymmetric power relations and dependency (Johnson, 1995; Casciaro and Piskorski, 2005). Such effects can only be grasped through an in-depth look at the international financial aid structure in Latin American journalism, alongside an analysis of the contexts in which collaborative journalism emerges.

Collaborative journalism has been supported by philanthropy and third-party organisations since its beginning (Chapters 2 and 3; Requejo-Alemán and Lugo-Ocando, 2014; Salaverría et al., 2018). However, there is little information about the institutions and corporations behind this support, their influence and how broad this kind of financial support is.

Even though news organisations face difficult times due to the crash of traditional business models, decreased reputation and power, they still manage to fulfil their role in society. Collaborative journalism in more stable economies is related more to ideas of radical sharing of information and data to access different skills and views. The reality elsewhere is quite different. In countries where freedom of the press is contested, diminished, and attacked, news organisations are prevented from providing the public service that journalism professes. Due to ownership concentration, high levels of governmental, economic, and political dependence and other factors, mass media in Latin America has not fulfilled its social role. Collaborative journalism is a tool to regain ground and redirect journalism to its mission.

This context, alongside the evolution of ICTs, gave space to alternative models of journalistic ventures, such as nonprofit, independent news outlets that position themselves away from the mainstream media and even in opposition to it (see Chapter 3, Chapters 5 and 6). This is a reason why collaborative journalism has evolved differently in the region. The low level of press freedom in the area would be a force against the development of collaborative efforts since collaborative journalism does not enjoy the same friendly environment to evolve as their counterparts in more stable democracies and economies. However, collaborative journalism has gained momentum and is a dominant praxis among independent and alternative media. Nevertheless, the development of collaborative practices has been somewhat different in the region. As stated in Chapter 3, journalism's global crisis has different nuances in other parts of the world. Journalism operates differently in other places, contexts and cultures (Mutsvairo et al., 2021).

These differences are due to many internal and external influences. The internal ones are easier to grasp, such as personal and organisational ethical commitments and procedures. External influences are more difficult to pin down, such as media systems, political, economic, social and cultural environment (Traquina, 2005). One main form of analysing these external factors recognised worldwide is freedom of the press. Many organisations have tried to illustrate the reality in many countries by describing the many effects of the lack of press freedom. For many years, organisations such as Freedom House, Reports without Borders, Article 19, and the Committee to Protect Journalists have denounced the attacks on press freedom worldwide. They have different methodologies to address the issue. None, to my knowledge, consider the quality of journalism produced in the countries and whether journalists are fulfilling their social role. The

evaluations are mainly based on the idea of independence and impartiality of journalists and news organisations, which might not reflect the reality or the needs of different contexts.

However, it matters that even the ‘lowest common denominator’ conditions for the exercise of journalism (i.e., defence of the democratic system, freedom of expression and the press) are not met in many countries of the Global South (Naab and Scherer, 2009, p.374). Understanding this context is important to analyse the data collected for this chapter of the research. As is illustrated, news organisations in countries defined as less democratic or authoritarian do not receive international financial support. Thus, international philanthropic financial support is an important tool for understanding the reality of journalism in Latin America and the emergence of collaborative journalism funding.

Data about financial support to news organisations in Latin America and the Caribbean was collected from the targeted institutions. The institutions are the ones identified in the first two rounds of data analysis and discussion (Chapters 5 and 6). Those chapters identified that the Open Society and Luminate, alongside Google and Facebook, were among the leading institutions and corporations supporting journalism in Latin America. Secondary data analysis was performed to find patterns and verify, challenge and refine the primary data analysis findings in the previous chapters. Finally, data were compared and analysed. The results are discussed in the present chapter.

### **Data analysis procedures and considerations**

The methodologies used to collect and analyse the data in this chapter are described in Chapter 4. It was identified during the first two stages of data analysis and discussion (Chapters 5 and 6) that many news organisations have been unable to sustain themselves and their investigations with only the profits of their work. Many organisations have reported that they rely on philanthropic funds and grants, such as those provided by foundations, big tech corporations and social media platforms. The qualitative data analysis and discussion cited certain organisations as the leading institutions supporting journalism in Latin America, such as the Open Society and Luminate.

In addition, big tech platforms have incrementally increased their financial support to news organisations, collaborative investigations and journalistic products. The main platforms are Google, through its Google News Initiative (GNI) and Facebook, mainly via grants such as the COVID-19 support relief. Google and Facebook have been providing other sorts of support outside these schemes, but very little information is publicly available. Thus, the first challenge presented to the collection of data was to access the information needed to carry out the analysis, especially information related to the amounts donated to each organisation, the criteria involved in the selection processes and the processes in place to ensure rules compliance and deliveries.

Some information was available, mainly the names and countries of the organisations. The philanthropic foundations have made more information available than the big tech platforms have. The Open Society and Luminate provide summaries of their actions as well the total amount of money donated to each organisation. In contrast, Google and Facebook only provide the country and organisation name. Since GNI performs a kind of competition among the many projects submitted, there is more information related to the evaluation criteria and the objectives of these projects. Facebook does not provide any meaningful information.

In terms of monetary value, foundations provide detailed information, while Google and Facebook do not disclose exact amounts and often report mismatched details. The data used for this analysis are reported

on official websites, blogs and calls from the platforms themselves. The selection criteria required that data be published on the official channels of the institutions and corporations chosen for this analysis. The data elements used for the analysis and discussion are 1) country destination of the funding, 2) organisation name, 3) type of funding and 4) description of the project or action.

Certain information about the type of organisation receiving funding was not available in any of the datasets. Therefore, the researcher, based on observation and previous primary research, defined which organisations were mainstream, legacy, traditional and corporate media or independent and other. Available information did not reveal whether the funds or grants were directed to collaborative efforts. Thus, a cross-analysis was necessary with the data collected in the first phase of the present research. In that phase, journalists and news organisations could write the name of the collaborative project in an open-ended question (see Chapter 5). With that information, the researcher confirmed the funding information with some of the interviewees (Chapter 6) and on the websites of the organisations and projects. The steps taken for this analysis were as follows:

1. Collect data from official websites, blogs and calls for financial support for journalism in Latin America and the Caribbean.
2. Cross-check information and data with the primary data, the first (quantitative) and second phases (qualitative) of the present research.
3. Fill in the blanks in datasets, such as country and types of news organisations (legacy or independent) when needed.
4. Analyse and discuss the data.

## **Data analysis and discussion**

The research targeted two philanthropic foundations – The Open Society and Luminate – and two big tech platforms – Facebook and Google. These organisations were selected due to their significant presence in Latin America. Many collaborative journalism practitioners have referred to them as the main sources of financial support in the region.

### **The Open Society Foundation**

The Open Society Foundation focuses its support on independent groups tied to democracy, justice and human rights. The institution was founded by George Soros, a billionaire who made a fortune in funds management and has been a keen supporter of news media organisations and journalistic investigations worldwide (Benson, 2018). According to The Open Society website, their budget to support journalism in 2020 was \$25.8M, of which \$2.4M was sent to Latin America and the Caribbean (*Open Society Foundations—Who We Are*, no date). In the same period, the regions of Africa, Asia Pacific, the Middle East and North Africa received a similar amount of support. The region that received more support in 2020 was Central Asia, Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus, and Turkey, which received almost double the amount of the other regions – \$4.4M. Financial support directed to Latin America and the Caribbean accounted for around \$1.7M in the same period.

The year 2018 had approximately \$3.4M in investments (see Figure 2). The data collected for the present research detail information on journalism support in the region since 2016. According to the data,

The Open Society has invested \$12.3M in the region during the last five years. Most projects supported are under the programme ‘independent journalism’, and the themes ‘journalism’, ‘human rights’ and ‘democratic practices’. Fifty-eight news organisations, foundations, and other organisations related to the news media industry received financial support in 2016–2020. The organisations that received more financial help in this period were El Faro (El Salvador) and El Quinto Elemento and Red de Periodistas Sociales (Mexico).

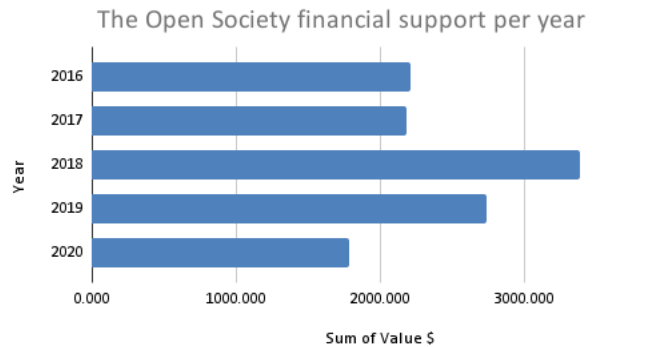


Figure 2 The Open Society financial support per year

It is interesting to note that 2018 was a year of significant turmoil in Latin America. Eight countries conducted national elections that year. The region’s two largest economies, Brazil and Mexico, elected new presidents in 2018. The former is a far-right candidate, Jair Bolsonaro, and the latter, a far-left candidate, Andrés Manuel López Obrador. According to the data, The Open Society made its largest investment in these countries in the same year (see Figure 2). Colombia, the third most populous country in the region, also elected a new president in 2018. However, The Open Society’s pick to invest in the country was 2016 when the government and the revolutionary forces of FARC signed a peace agreement.

Another interesting piece of information in the series is the presence of organisations based outside of Latin America, such as in the USA. This can be explained by the fact that even though these organisations are US-based, the grant applied to projects being conducted in Latin America. Such was the case of The University of Texas at Austin that backed journalism in Latin America via conferences and direct support to form professional associations and content in three languages, including Portuguese and Spanish. One of the interviewees confirmed that the university, which counts several Brazilian and Latin American professors and ex-journalists among their staff, was supporting the creation of a news association in Brazil focused on developing digital journalism. The correlation of these factors is difficult to establish; nevertheless, it gives food for thought.

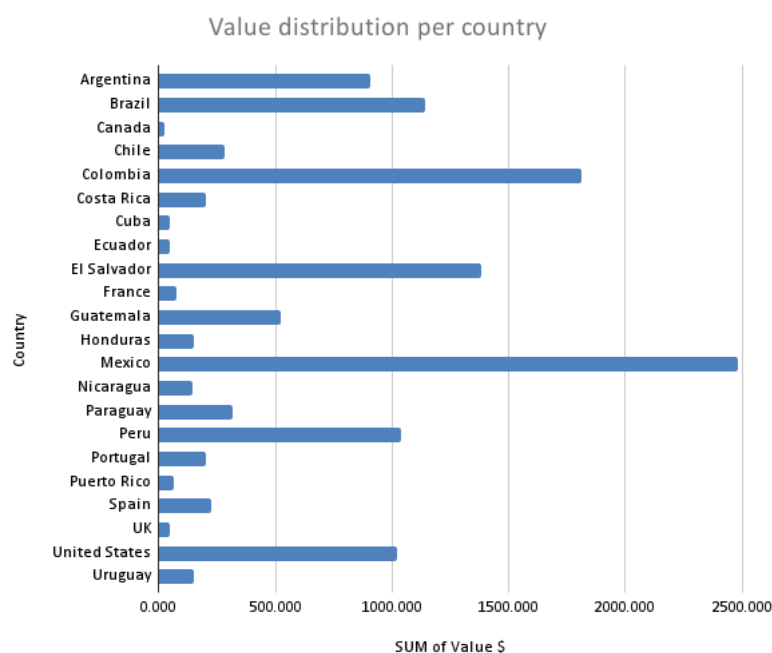


Figure 3 Value distribution per country

Concerning the types of support given by The Open Society, the data indicate a lack of detailed information. However, it was possible to see that the majority of the organisations receive support for projects related to the sustainability and financial strategies. These projects aimed at supporting the organisation’s growth by, for instance, engagement with new audiences. Charity actions was another topic that received much attention. For instance, Agência Mural received financial support to promote educational programmes in the peripheries of Brazil. Even though it is not clear what this entails, through the interview given by the organisation, it is possible to infer that via this type of educational programme, the organisation promotes training and capacitation of their network of journalists from the peripheries of Brazil (see Chapter 6).

An emergent topic is the safety of journalists and news organisations. Support was given to organisations focused on combating attacks, promoting training, and monitoring the risks of attacks against journalists and news organisations. One example is the support given to the Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism (Abraji) that promotes a project called ‘Tim Lopes’ (named after a journalist who lost his life while reporting on criminal organisations). The project mapped attacks on the press. Another example is an organisation in Mexico, Propuesta Cívica, that via the support was able to offer journalists ‘legal representation and accompaniment of cases of journalists at risk for their work and families of victims’ (*Propuesta Cívica*, no date).

Support for conferences is a common topic among the grantees. These conferences include La Conferencia Latinoamericana de Periodismo de Investigación (COLPIN; a.k.a. The Latin American Conference on Investigative Journalism) which gathers investigative journalists from around the region to showcase their work and promotes networking and training. Investigative journalism is an important topic among the supported projects. Some are directly related to collaborative journalism and cross-border collaborations (e.g., CLIP, from Costa Rica) that received support to create their network and do collaborative investigation. Another grantee is Consejo de Redacción, which promotes collaborative



journalism through their own grants and financial support, as discussed in Chapter 6. See Figure 4 for topics supported by The Open Society.

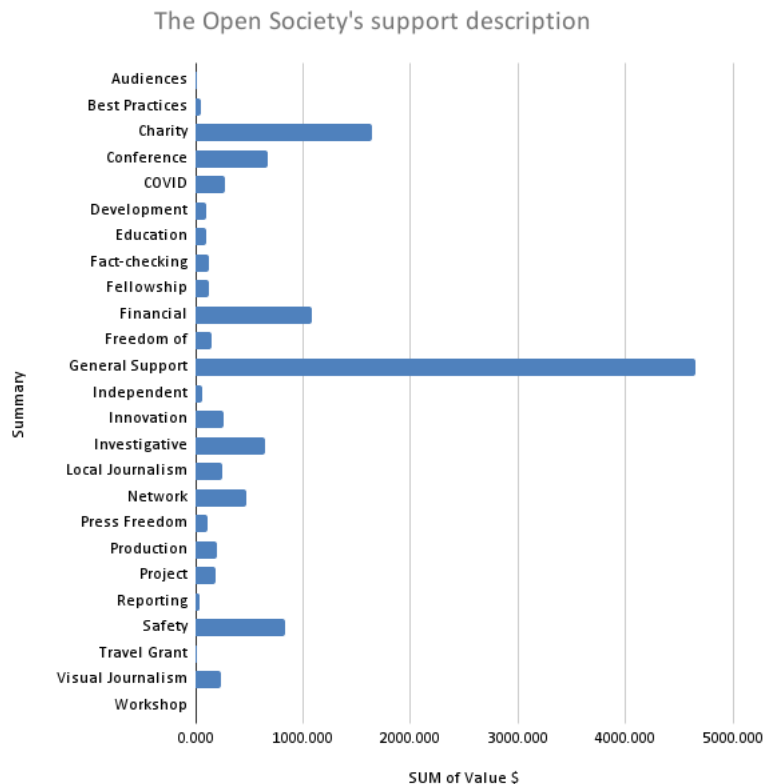


Figure 4 The Open Society's types of support

## Luminate

Luminate Group was established in 1995 by Pierre Omidyar, the founder of e-Bay, an e-commerce company. It supports organisations worldwide that are committed to social justice, transparency, democracy and civil rights. According to the official information, the organisation focuses on empowerment and collaboration through financial support and hands-on collaborations for policymaking and advocacy. According to the data collected for the present research, Luminate has been supporting news organisations in Latin America since 2011. Luminate has invested almost \$31,7M in Latin America in civic empowerment, data & digital rights, financial transparency and independent media.

Independent media is one of the impacted areas that received the most financial support during this period. Most organisations related to journalism and collaborative journalism are under the 'independent media' impact area. Some are under other umbrellas, such as Poder, from Mexico, that received support to build a structure of financial transparency available for the public and promote investigative journalism. Another organisation that has received support under the 'data & digital rights' impact area is Instituto de Tecnologia e Sociedade do Rio de Janeiro (ITS, a.k.a. Institute for Technology & Society of Rio de Janeiro). ITS has participated in many Brazilian collaborations, especially those related to data journalism and technological support for the safety of journalists and news organisations, such as Portal Catarinas (see Chapter 6). The organisation helped Portal Catarinas when they were attacked and their website shut down. As with The Open Society, Luminate supports long-term relationships with nonprofit organisations, many

of which are aided by both institutions (e.g., FLIP from Colombia; Abraji from Brazil and CLIP from Costa Rica). Another similarity with The Open Society is that 2018 was the year of highest investment in the region (Figure 5).

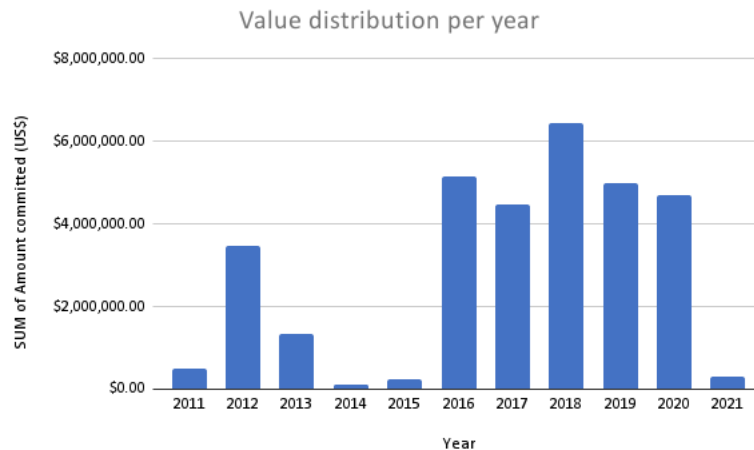


Figure 5 Luminare's investment by year

Brazil had highest level of support (Figure 6). As with The Open Society, the US received significant financial aid. The International Centre for Journalists (ICFJ) received the largest amount: to support SembraMedia (a Latin American organisation focused on Spanish speaking media in the region), for conferences and to build tools and a structure of financial support for independent and nonprofit news media in the region. One example of ICFJ practice is the programme Velocidad, which focuses on funding and giving consultation to news organisations producing content in Spanish and Portuguese (*Velocidad: Promoting Independent Digital Journalism in Latin America*, no date).

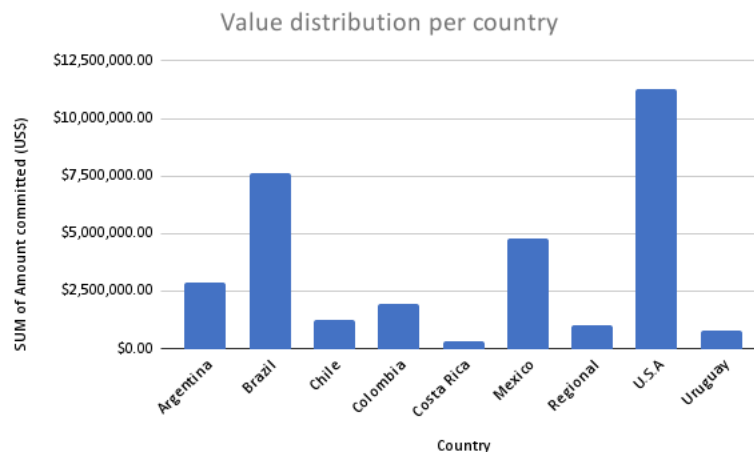


Figure 6 Amount of Luminare's support per country

The most significant values were invested in organisations with projects related to civil rights (Figure 7). These projects are mostly connected to objectives of the engagement – enabling citizens and governments to establish communication channels and promote political participation. The second position is occupied by the support of organisations to develop their business models. Support for projects related to democracy is mostly directed to institutes such as the Update Institute. The institute supports investigative journalism and technological platforms, such as the project Monitora from the organisation

AzMinas, from Brazil. The project involved five other news organisations from different regions in the country and focused on monitoring attacks against female city hall candidates (*MonitorA - AzMina*, no date).

Fact-checking projects also received attention from Luminate. The largest amount was directed to Chequeado, from Argentina. The organisation helped coordinate LatamChequea, the largest repository of COVID-19 data in the region (*LatamChequea - Coronavirus*, no date). Regarding support to collaborative and investigative journalism, most grants were destined to well-established organisations such as Poder, from Mexico; Agência A Pública, a Brazilian-based investigative outlet and Global Integrity, a USA-based nonprofit organisation ('What We Believe', no date). The projects supported the continuity of the organisation's work, developing technologically sustainable business models.

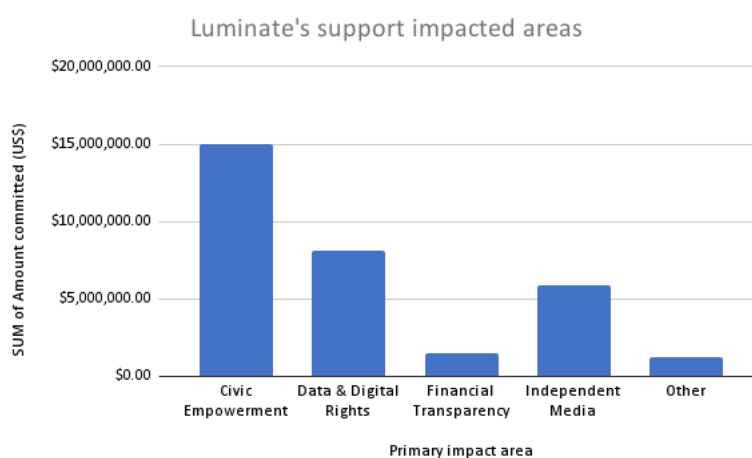


Figure 7 Impacted areas of investment

## Google News Initiative

Large tech organisations play a crucial role in journalism's traditional business models crisis, causing concerns about the future of the journalism industry (Rashidian *et al.*, 2018). Much has been said about the threat imposed by the big five media platforms—Facebook, Amazon, Apple, Netflix, and Google (FAANGs)(Flew, 2020). However, as Rashidian *et al.* (2018) argue, there has been an increasing integration of such platforms with the journalism industry, influencing journalism production. Google and Facebook are often called a duopoly because they receive more than half of all spending on digital ads (Rashidian, 2020). Regulations are being discussed and implemented in several countries to put more responsibility on tech platforms, as they built their business models based on the media's content (Bell, 2019; Smith, 2020). In response, the tech companies have begun a new movement that seeks to establish a healthier relationship with the media (Newman *et al.*, 2019; Rashidian *et al.*, 2019). Prior studies believe that there is a twofold reason behind this movement: First, because these Silicon Valley companies see that they are killing the producers of the content necessary for their business. Second, because of worldwide public pressure for regulation (Bell, 2019).

It is difficult to know how much these big tech companies really invest to save news organisations. Recent announcements account for an investment of approximately four million euros that Google directed to Latin American news projects (Pires, 2019). There is no data related to the total amount given to news

organisations and how this support has been distributed. The support to collaborative journalism is even more difficult to trace since grants and funds are direct to solution-based organisations and are often related to tech innovation, business model development and audience building, not to journalism’s purposes, such as those supported by foundations. To overcome the lack of data, all the information about the GNI since its beginning in 2019 was collected. The analysis was carried out in a dataset powered by the researcher. The data collected for in this research illustrate that GNI has granted funds for 51 projects – 30 (58.82%) in 2019 and 21 (41,18%) in 2021. Additionally, these projects were concentrated in 11 Latin American countries (see Figure 8). Most of these awarded projects were concentrated in South America, with Brazil (20) and Argentina (11) leading.



Figure 8 GNI’s grants distribution in Latin America

To meet the objectives of the present research, news organisations were classified as legacy media, such as traditional newspapers or independent media, or organisations that are mostly digital natives, nonprofit and/or alternative media. This classification was based on the previous discussions in the theory as well as in the primary data analysis and discussion chapters (see Chapters 3, 5 and 6). Legacy and independent media have received almost equal support from GNI, as illustrated in Figure 9. However, in 2021, most of the grants were directed to projects submitted by legacy media. The support to legacy media is more recurrent in Brazil and Argentina (see Figure 9). However, in Brazil, independent media is still the majority in the series, while in Argentina, the legacy media is the majority.

In addition, GNI chose projects from legacy media in Colombia and Bolivia. In 2019, Argentina brought *peronismo* – the political populist movement founded by Juan Perón in the 40’s – back to power. In contrast, Brazil elected a far-right president who has been associated with the rise of authoritarian regimes in the region. A *coup d’etat* took power from the first indigenous person to be elected president in Bolivia, Evo Morales. The Primavera Colombiana (a.k.a. Colombian Spring) took to the streets of the largest cities to protest corruption, noncompliance of the peace agreement with the FARC, climate policies and many other demands (Wasserman, 2020) to the government of Iván Duke, a centre-right politician.

The year 2019 saw great social and political unrest and provided the backdrop for the first year of GNI in Latin America. Latin American independent news organisations often pose themselves as counter-hegemonic and in opposition to traditional and legacy media, which they believe are aligned with the power and the establishment (Requejo-Alemán and Lugo-Ocando, 2014; Salaverría et al. 2018). Legacy media in Latin America has been accused of being clientelist, conservative and in opposition to any form of progressivism and leftist governance (Hallin and Papathanassopoulos, 2002; Guerrero and Márquez-

Ramírez, 2014). Thus, even though it is challenging to tie Google directly to the support of populist and far-right movements in the region, the data show a dangerous tendency of Google to support news outlets aligned with authoritarian regimes in Latin America. This can be demonstrated by its preference to support legacy and mainstream media that are traditionally aligned with power as well as the countries in which this support is prevalent.

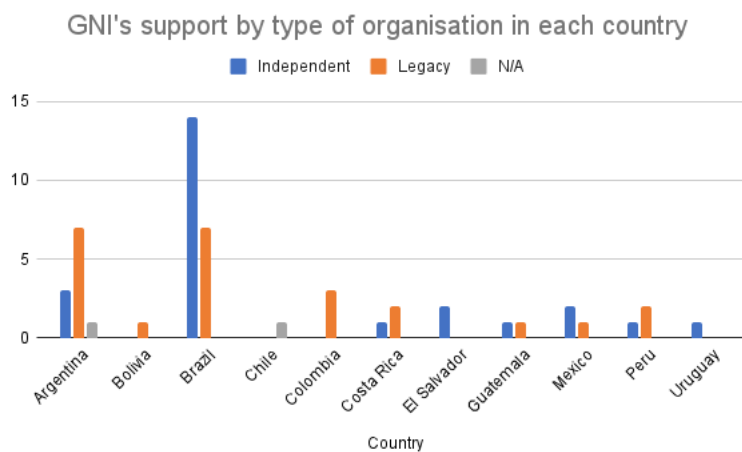


Figure 9 Type of organisation by country

The grantee projects description analysis made it possible to build a series of analyses that cover the types of projects awarded. A closer look at the description of the projects and solutions that news organisations submitted to Google classified them into two levels of analysis. The first one is dedicated to identifying the type of solutions, whether focused on a revenue stream, technological innovation or audience building. The second level of analysis focuses on the objectives of each solution, whether to improve production or audience reach.

For clarity purposes, the analysis was separated into three graphs. In Figure 10, it is possible to see that most of the projects and solutions are related to technological innovation, such as software and apps. Helping organisations with their watchdog role, to product improvement and the increase of audience reach are also concerns of GNI supported projects, as also illustrated in Figures 11 and 12. In the two editions of GNI, technological innovation received grants to help organisations develop many projects but mostly related to the improvement of investigative reporting and to the monitoring function of journalism. All the projects related to investigative journalism effectiveness and capability were classified as ‘watchdog’ projects (see Figures 11 and 12).

Such is the case of Congresso em Foco, from Brazil, that developed a technological tool monitor all federal parliament movements, such as bills, government budgets and even the presence of parliamentarians in votes at the national congress. The organisation developed a free, public database. According to the interviewee, the project would not be possible without support from GNI. However, the grant discontinuity puts at risk the sustainability and of the project (see Chapter 6). Many projects related to technological innovation are related to fact-checking production, such as the development of bots and tools that help fact-checkers decide on what to verify and the development of artificial intelligence to monitor social media.

The ConfereAI project objective was to create an automated fact-checking system enabling the public to verify the possibility of content being misleading or even fake. According to the interviewee, the project was carried out during a time when the newspaper partner of the university that created the methodology

was suffering from financial losses, which made them dismiss many journalists. Thus, without the money of GNI, the project would be impossible. Now, as in the example above, the project is at risk of not being able to continue.

These examples show patterns of previous studies that none of these grants directly benefit the same organisations (e.g., Rashidian 2020). Google has the power to determine which newsrooms receive support and for how long. In terms of technology innovation solutions for audience engagement, a smaller number of projects are focused on building diversity of voices in the market and in the content produced by the outlet. Also, audience engagement solutions focus on improving public access to information and technology to trace consumers behaviour and experience in the websites. The majority of the organisations awarded in this category are legacy media, including the largest media corporation of Brazil, Rede Globo. Another legacy news organisation that was awarded in the same category is *O Estado de S.Paulo*, one of the most traditional newspapers of Brazil, known to be positioned on the right side of the country's political spectrum. Another is *La Nación*, the largest newspaper in Costa Rica.

Projects associated with new ways to generate revenues are the second most granted in the GNI, as illustrated in Figure 10. This classification has many solutions focused on building membership and subscription programmes. It is possible to infer that the focus of this type of project is on diversifying business models and sources of income through audience engagement, new tools and processes. One of the projects is directly related to collaborative journalism and the establishment of a culture of product in small and independent newsrooms. According to the project's description, the awarded organisation plans to create guides and case studies to support other organisations in their innovation processes. Another organisation that, through a GNI grant, plans to support other news organisations to improve their sources of income is Periodistas de a Pie, from Mexico. The organisation was awarded to develop a platform that enables the audience to pay for the content of many news outlets in the same place (Juarez, 2019).

The only organisation in the series that was awarded in a project not involving technology solutions for business models diversification and improvement, was the Brazilian independent news outlet Agência Pública. The organisation was awarded to create project Reload (see Chapter 6). The project focused on producing content for young audiences in Brazil, collaborating with other independent news outlets. According to one of the interviewees, the money from GNI was essential to building the base of the Reload project but was not enough to generate income for the partners. In summary, the projects awarded by GNI in Latin America are focused on technological solutions. The ones related to the revenue stream, business model diversification, and improvement are still very concerned with innovation. It is possible to infer that the projects and solutions awarded fulfil a need for innovation, but they are not sustainable in the long run. Consequently, organisations spend much time and energy on innovative projects and solutions and not enough on building a business strategy for their sustainability.

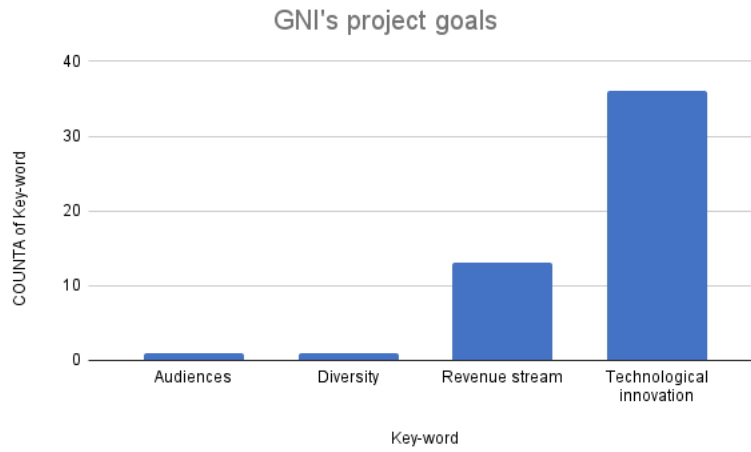


Figure 10 GNI's projects goals (first level)

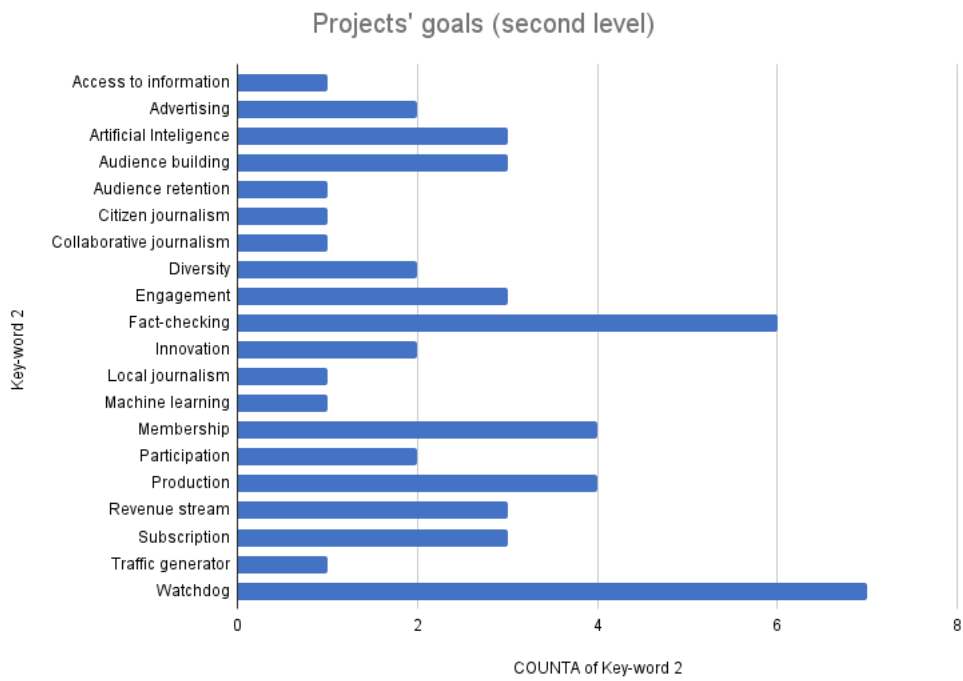


Figure 11 Grants awarded by keyword (second level)

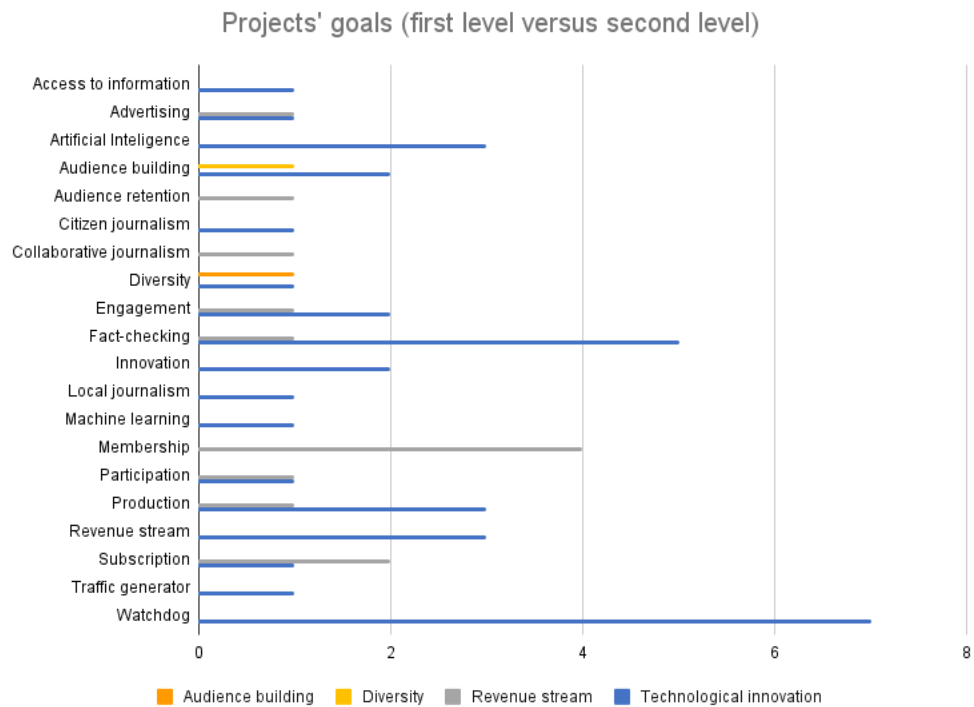


Figure 12 First level versus the second level

## Facebook

Google and Facebook were the major donors of COVID-19 grant relief to journalism in 2020 (Rashidian, 2020). According to the author, both companies have announced investing US\$ 300M in programmes to support journalism during the pandemic. However, it is difficult to ascertain the exact amount given by these corporations to journalism. Google is not transparent about its programme, making available only a short description of the projects submitted and the names of the organisations but very little about the value of the grants and the compliance of the news organisations to rules and financial reports. In the same way, Facebook reports only generic information related to the programme. The only data available about Facebook’s programmes to support journalism is on the COVID-19 relief programme, which accounts for US\$ 2M to organisations in Latin America (Gurfinkel, 2020). Google and Facebook are major journalism funders (Rashidian, 2020); however, their level of transparency is low compared with traditional foundations. Nevertheless, it was possible to gather data from Facebook COVID-19’s grant relief to Latin American news organisations for the present research, which is symptomatic because it reveals what Facebook’s commitment to journalism relies on. As illustrated in Figure 13, Facebook grants were awarded mostly to legacy news media organisations in Latin America:



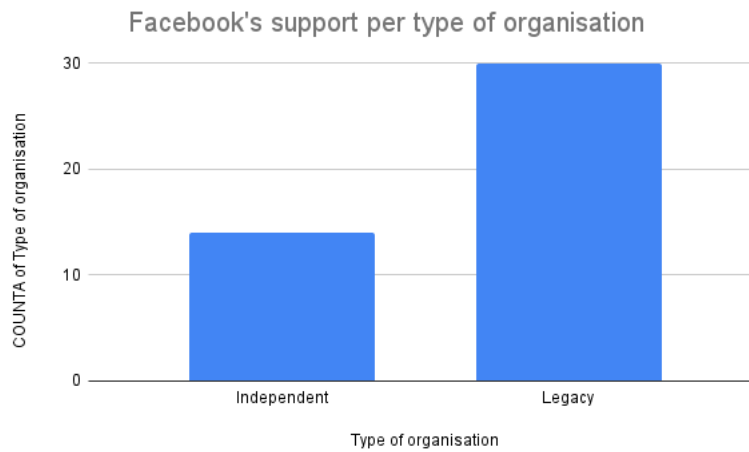


Figure 13 Facebook's grants by type of organisation

In terms of distribution by country, the majority of the organisations awarded are legacy news media, as illustrated in Figure 14. Brazil and Argentina received more support, but in both countries, grants were directed to legacy media more than twice as often. In many countries, only legacy media has received support – Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Peru and Uruguay. In a few cases, only independent media was awarded, such as in Bolivia, Paraguay and Ecuador.

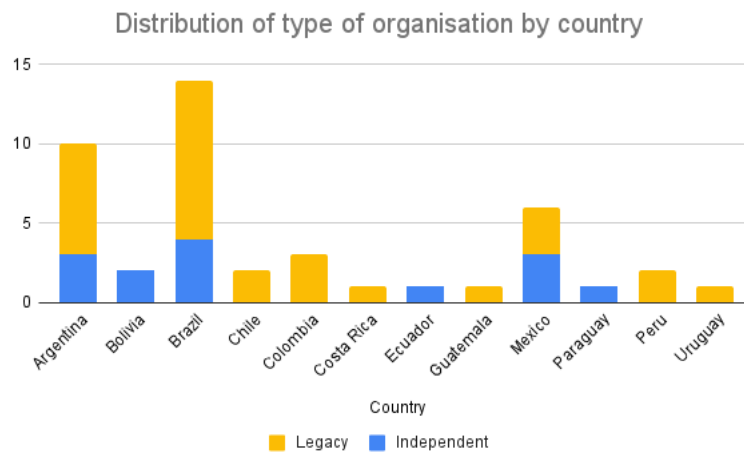


Figure 14 Distribution of type of organisation by each country

Through this data, it was not possible to analyse all the projects submitted to Google, The Open Society and Luminate. However, it is possible to detect a preference of tech corporations to subsidise more organisations from legacy news media than the foundations have done. Programmes are more concentrated in South America. It is interesting to note the alignment of such programmes to the platform's strategy, especially in the case of Facebook, to grant organisations that are historically most affected by their own policies and business models. Big tech corporations and platforms drove the crisis of traditional journalism based on advertising since they redirected these investments from news media organisations to their platforms (Tran, 2017).

Although there is little information available about the financial support given by Facebook to news organisations in Latin America, the data collected for this research illustrate that the Facebook programme

to support journalism in the region is aligned with their own commercial strategy by prioritising support to legacy media in the largest markets. According to the Statista Research Department, traffic on the Facebook platform increased during the COVID-19 in countries such as Brazil at a rate of 37%. Governments in Latin America also increased their Facebook communication to their citizens an average 36% (Statista Research Department, 2021). In summary, while trying to convince journalists and news organisations that tech corporations and platforms are helping journalism through direct financial support, these corporations are, in reality, pushing their own commercial strategies.

## **Conclusion**

The data analysis and discussion demonstrated that international financial support is still very scarce, reaching only a tiny fraction of news organisations. This data confirms the results of Chapters 5 and 6 where it was illustrated that most news organisations in Latin America conducting collaborative journalism are still far from being sustainable. It was also discussed that small and independent organisations face challenges writing complex projects to apply for grants and funds. They also complained about the time spent on this type of work, which is not paid. The analysis also presented evidence that financial support from international foundations and tech and social media platforms are fundamentally different: International foundations seek long-term relationships and focus on independent and nonprofit news organisations. Tech and social media platforms focus on news organisations' technological orientation and commercialisation. They also rely on mainstream for-profit media rather than on independent media.

Long-term relationships with independent news organisations are the most striking evidence that foundations follow a strategy aligned with foreign aid strategies. As argued by Lugo-Ocando (2020), this strategy is characterised by the transfer of knowledge, skills, capital and services while hiding a more dubious objective, which could be defined as a form of soft power in the market. However, their influence is relatively low since they have been supporting a minimal number of news outlets in the region. Nonetheless, the fact that they mostly support news organisations that are considered more influential in their markets (e.g., *The Intercept* and *Agência Pública*, in Brazil; *Nomada*, in Guatemala and *CLIP*, in Costa Rica) demonstrates a clear preference for journalism that focuses on investigative and original reporting. However, these organisations are also more aligned with international organisations, such as Wikileaks and ICIJ.

Those organisations are the elite of independent news organisations in their region. As discussed in Chapter 6, the mainstream collaborations are often characterised by great journalistic achievements, but they also pose dangerous homophilous and endogamous behaviours which are characterised as forms of association based on preference, tendency and similarities among practitioners. These organisations demonstrate a great capability of working together since they share a set of codes and processes. However, they also establish power relations and control, which is contrary to the ideals of collaboration and solidarity. Even though foundations might not be able to influence large markets such as Brazil, Mexico and Argentina, their financial support in smaller markets could mean an impactful change in the market landscape and the media system (Lugo-Ocando, 2020). In summary, this chapter present evidence that foundations, following foreign aid models of supporting regions under developed or in development, are perpetuating a discourse of replication of liberal democracies and commercial logic of the journalistic industry and markets, confirming, therefore, the arguments of Lugo-Ocando and others that denounced the practice.

Even though these two corporations demonstrate practices specific to their objectives, such as the preference for technological solutions to journalism and legacy and mainstream media, they use the same models and strategies as the international foundations. This is demonstrated by the description of the projects, the type of organisations they support, the size of the markets and their own influence in these countries. Contrary to the foundations, big tech corporations prefer shorter and specific relationships with media partners, at least in terms of direct funds and grants. This might be in line with their commercial strategies; however, it is difficult to trace since these organisations lack transparency.

Another point of concern is that many of the countries of the region received little, if any, financial support from the foundations and corporations analysed in this chapter. A single organisation in Cuba received support from The Open Society Foundation, in 2017. In Nicaragua, only one organisation received support from The Open Society in 2017 and 2018. Honduras experienced the same situation.

The case of El Salvador is slightly different. El Faro, an investigative independent news outlet, is the only journalistic organisation that received support from The Open Society. This occurred in 2019, the year which also elected president Nayib Bukele, declared to be ‘the coolest dictator’ (Youkee, 2021). It is possible to observe a correlation between the countries that received financial support and the reported levels of freedom of the press in the region, such as the case of Cuba and Venezuela, and more recently, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Honduras (RSF, 2021).

Finally, it was observed that most organisations that received financial support are conducting or are part of collaborative journalism efforts. Unfortunately, the data do not indicate this directly because of the projects’ lack of information and description. This finding was only possible by crossing information between the data gathered in this chapter and in Chapter 5 and 6. For instance, approximately 80% of the organisations supported by The Open Society are currently performing collaborative journalism investigations. Most of these organisations are conducting mainstream collaborations, characterised by impactful investigations and high levels of control and power struggles (see Chapter 6). Thus, even though there is evidence of indirect support to news organisations conducting collaborative investigations, the support is still concentrated in the hands of a few organisations that are influential in their countries.

It can be inferred that international financial aid represents a dangerous solution to journalism funding in the region. Even though this is a kind of financial support that few have the luxury of denying, it could result in resource-dependency with its four consequences: 1) Restricting the capability of organisations to innovate, 2) distancing these organisations from their communities and audiences, 3) increasing commercialisation and concentration of the market and 4) increasing the penetration and influence of big tech corporations in journalism and society.

In conclusion, the data and the discussion illustrate a dangerous path towards what I call ‘the business of supporting journalism’. Rather than focusing on the issues journalism faces in Latin America (e.g., media concentration, lack of diversity and distance from journalism’s social role) the financial support, especially that given by big tech platforms, is orienting journalism towards commercialisation and the development of technological solutions to sustainability.

## Chapter 8 – Conclusion

*Remember professional ethics*

*When political leaders set a negative example, professional commitments to just practice become more important. It is hard to subvert a rule-of-law state without judges. Authoritarians need obedient civil servants, and concentration camp directors seek businessmen interested in cheap labour.*

*(Snyder, Timothy 2017. On Tyranny – Twenty Lessons from the twentieth century)*

This study provided a critical perspective on emerging new forms of journalism following the technological transformation and the digitalisation of the media. Among these new models is collaborative journalism (CJ). This study has expanded the understanding of CJ by arguing that CJ is a form of doing journalism that contributes to delivering a normative mission and values to society. It was also argued that this attachment to normative journalism is even more necessary in nondemocratic and authoritarian contexts and less developed economies. Hence, this study contributes to the research on collaborative journalism and journalism by demonstrating that normative journalism commitments are widespread in Latin America among CJ practitioners. Moreover, it was illustrated and argued that different media systems offer a different set of constraints to CJ practitioners. Therefore, Latin America, with its diverse and complex historical, economic and political context, offered this study a unique perspective on the emergence, development and evolution of CJ in various contexts, especially in nondemocratic and authoritarian contexts and less developed economies.

First, this study has outlined the most significant literature on CJ and the main narratives surrounding the topic, such as concepts and definitions, the emergence of the practice, possible reasons for it, the motives that led journalists and news organisations to collaborate as well as the main characteristics, processes, benefits and challenges. The main findings of this first stage of the study is that CJ is defined as a practice where journalists from different news organisations, universities, NGOs and other actors are united in a journalistic editorially coordinated endeavour that otherwise would be impossible. To be able to analyse the practice in various contexts, I assembled the practice's main features: network structures, horizontal decision-making processes, co-creation and editorial coordination. These features are distinctive of CJ practice and were later used as a framework to analyse and evaluate collaborative journalism practices, processes, commitments and norms.

The main contributions of the literature review to this study are (i) the identification that previous definitions, typification and descriptions of processes and commitments of CJ are missing empirical evidence, (ii) the identification of the lack of a theoretical framework of analysis, discussion and critics, especially in terms of its norms and values, (iii) the identification of a gap in the analysis of the contextual factors shaping the practice in different contexts, (iv) the identification of four main features of CJ's practice and (v) a new concept of CJ that reflects the centrality of normative journalism, was used to inform the research questions and locate the study.

This study also was able to outline the two leading theories that I argue challenged previous assumptions of CJ's definition, focusing on CJ practitioners' commitments, processes, practices, norms and values. A need was identified for normative journalism roles, functions and performance acknowledgement and reflection. This theoretical framework demonstrated the main contextual elements shaping journalism and, consequently, CJ in Latin America by analysing the media market structures, the political parallelism, media workers' level of professionalism and the relationship between the state and the media market. The

comparative media systems (CMS) discussion was expanded with another dimension of Latin American media ecosystems: the constant state of violence and attacks against the media that threatens individuals, organisations and journalism as an institution. Combining these two central theories provided the research with the required interpretative tools and a unique view of the phenomenon.

The main contribution of this theoretical framework to the study was a complete view of the phenomenon and the internal and external factors shaping it. Another contribution was illustrating the role of alternative, nonprofit and independent media organisations in the pursuit of delivering normative roles and functions of journalism in society. The chapter also contributed to the growing body of research that indicates the need to understand the contextual factors that impact and influence practitioners' commitments, values, processes and practices by demonstrating that normative journalism is still influential, especially in nondemocratic and authoritarian contexts, developing economies and different media systems.

This study offered a unique and extensive methodological framework to analyse collaborative journalism in different contexts and examine practitioners' commitments, practices, processes, benefits and challenges when conducting CJ. Through a mixed-methods approach, using primary and secondary data analysis in quantitative and qualitative reasoning, this study provided CJ research and journalism studies with a framework to empirically examine emergent forms of journalism in the digital era, especially CJ.

For starters, the quantitative research (Chapter 5) carried out in primary data presented a profile of the professionals and organisations involved in collaboration in Latin America, offering insights into their motivations and processes while collaborating with other organisations. This stage of the empirical research was composed of 34 variables grouped in 8 categories: demography, types, duration and scope, process, motivation, sustainability, participation, technology and security. The survey was answered by 120 news organisations from 15 countries in Latin America.

The main findings are that (i) CJ is a wide-spread practice in Latin America, (ii) most collaborative projects are conducted among peers between two or more news organisations (iii) decision-making is mostly horizontal in collaborative projects, with some level of coordination between participants (iv) specialised knowledge and expertise motivate most collaborations (v) the majority of the organisations are not always able to sustain themselves (vi) community participation is a strong characteristic (vii) technology has been an enabling force in collaborations (viii) CJ has been able to support organisations on safety issues. In summary, collaboration in Latin America has a strong relationship with national communities and social issues, performing a relevant social and normative journalistic role in society.

The qualitative analysis of the interviews (Chapter 6) advanced in previous analyses demonstrated that normative journalism plays a vital role in CJ, as identified in the quantitative data analysis. It also contributed to answering the research questions by identifying enough evidence to support the argument that CJ indeed helps underpin normative journalism mission and values in society and democracy. This section demonstrated that the widespread criticism of journalism and journalists is oriented by an ideal of how journalism should be practised and whom it supposes to serve, which shows relevant ties to normative journalism and the role of journalism in society and democracy. Moreover, these values and missions are more relevant to CJ practitioners in countries under less democratic, nondemocratic and authoritarian regimes.

The qualitative research also demonstrated that specific characteristics helping to underpin these missions and values include a focus on communities, social issues, horizontality and an overall commitment to social transformation and the social role of journalism in society. Hence, this finding demonstrates the alignment of CJ's practitioners with normative roles and functions, such as the monitoring, facilitative,

informative and even the radical role, as suggested by Christians et al. (2010) and other scholars (Hanitzsch, 2007; Mellado, 2012; Hanitzsch *et al.*, 2019b). Therefore, using the features provided in the literature (Chapter 2) and other elements found in the quantitative analysis (Chapter 5), the qualitative research (Chapter 6) provided this study with a typology of CJ: cooperative, mainstream, community, networked and activism collaborations, which is described in detail in the next section of this chapter (refer to section ‘CJ typology’). Finally, this section demonstrated that financing CJ efforts and journalism, in general, is a significant concern among practitioners, demonstrating that philanthropic financial support from foundations and big tech companies plays a vital role in the issue.

To investigate financial issues and implications of philanthropic donation in journalism, Chapter 7 demonstrated that foundations and big tech companies’ financial support of journalism in Latin America has followed a dangerous path toward what I call ‘the business of supporting journalism’. Thus, these organisations are pushing their agendas rather than focusing on the issues that journalism faces in the region (e.g., media concentration, a lack of diversity and distance from journalism’s social role). It can be inferred that international financial aid represents a dangerous solution to journalism funding in the region. Even though this is a kind of financial support that few have the luxury of denying, it could result in path and resource-dependency with its four consequences: 1) Restricting the capability of organisations to innovate, 2) distancing these organisations from their communities and audiences, 3) increasing commercialisation and concentration of the market and 4) increasing the penetration and influence of big tech corporations in journalism and society.

In summary, these findings confirm the necessity of normative journalism and comparative media systems theoretical approaches to better understand the CJ phenomenon. Thus, this study’s principal theoretical implication and contribution are (i) demonstrating the relevance of NJ and CMS to CJ research and (ii) demonstrating this relevance for journalism studies in less democratic and authoritarian regimes and less developed economies. Nevertheless, a closer look into the research questions provides a complete understanding of the study findings and contributions.

## **Conclusions about research questions**

*Research question: Does collaborative journalism contribute to the normative role of journalism in society?*

The study demonstrated that CJ in Latin America is about restoring, reforming and restating journalism norms and mission and giving back the voices and narratives of journalism to whom it supposes to serve. It means that CJ is concerned with fixing the profession and its social function and returning a voice to those who need journalism most: society. CJ unites many practices and journalistic formats under its umbrella, such as investigative, fact-checking, citizen, alternative, participatory and community journalism. These practices have obvious objectives that include social transformation, democracy, freedom of the press and expression and plurality and diversity, as evidenced in this study’s data collected and analysed. Chapter 5, 6 and 7 demonstrated empirically that CJ practitioners also translate these commitments into actual practices via a set of processes and characteristics that help to underpin these commitments, such as the focus on social issues coverage, horizontal decision-making processes, the creation of shared and networked spaces and structures, and collaborative funding, including strengthened relationships with communities and a commitment to the representativity of marginalised communities and people.

One of the more significant findings to emerge from this study, identified in Chapter 2 as a gap in the research and later confirmed in the empirical part of the research, is that CJ practitioners understand and are committed to collaborative journalism as a model and practice of the profession that restates and restores normative journalistic values and missions to society. Moreover, these commitments are the basis of deciding to collaborate, explaining why journalists and news organisations collaborate and the commitments, practices and behaviours they enact for a chance to perform a kind of journalism in which they believe.

Moreover, I argue that journalists and news organisations conducting collaborative journalism investigations have a robust ideological attachment to professional norms and values despite the many cultural, political and economic contexts and other external factors that impact and influence normative journalism functions, roles, boundaries and performance. These factors are the main reasons journalists and news organisations choose to collaborate, determining how they do so. Finally, I argue that in authoritarian, nondemocratic states and developing democracies, such as many found in Latin America, the commitment of journalists and news organisations to normatively good journalism is imperative due to numerous constraints, including state intervention and control, the concentration of media markets, the role of mainstream and legacy media in maintaining and promoting elitist, detached and power alignment, the lack of political parallelism, and the overall situation of ongoing violence and attacks against media practitioners.

Thus, I argue that CJ is committed to restoring, reforming and restating normative journalism norms and values in society towards social transformation, diversity and plurality, especially in contexts of less freedom of expression and the press.

Research sub-questions:

- a) *Is it appropriate to include the normative role of journalism within the definition of collaborative journalism?*

Indeed, there is evidence to corroborate this finding and to answer to this question. Throughout this study, I argued that not including normative journalistic values and missions into CJ's definition might damage the image and notions surrounding collaboration due to mass media's possible capture of efforts that privileges corporative and commercial over social objectives and orientation. Moreover, the insertion of normative norms and values might help dissolve professional bubbles and elitism within the profession. Introducing normative journalistic values and missions to the definition is a constant reminder to determine whether journalism fulfils a social and democratic need or a corporative one.

Furthermore, in nondemocratic and authoritarian contexts, normative journalism commitments and practices are transformed into tools to fight back regimes of exception. As demonstrated in Chapter 3, normative journalism's norms and values change according to ideological constructions and cultural contexts. These rules and standards also change over time according to external and internal factors. However, some patterns were explored in that chapter: the norms, roles and functions that help society identify and legitimise the profession. These are the basis of the professional identities by which journalists distinguish themselves from other professionals and how they evaluate, criticise and judge other journalists and forms of journalism, contributing to the need to establish collaborative and shared spaces of production, such as those found in CJ efforts and networks.

These assumptions were later confirmed and supported in the empirical part of the research, especially in the qualitative data analysis and discussion (see Chapter 6). Chapter 6 identified that CJ has many

meanings to journalists and practitioners. However, commitments to normative journalism, its mission and values and its role in society were guiding principles for most interviewees.

CJ in Latin America is about restoring the role of journalism in society and promoting democracy. It is also about giving voices to the voiceless, empowering communities and establishing a more democratic communication with communities. Above all, practitioners do not distinguish between their mission, values and practices. Many practitioners interpret CJ as producing a kind of journalism that they believe is noncompetitive, shared and committed, translated into procedures and association choices, such as partnering with other news organisations, professionals from different industries, universities and, most importantly, communities. Mainly, CJ is an ethos, a form of thinking and acting that goes beyond the boundaries of the profession, based on the professional principles of diversity and plurality. Hence, these missions, values and norms are decisive for association choices and formats, investigative focuses and topics to be reported, processes and forms of perceiving results and impacts.

In summary, I argue for sufficient evidence to support the introduction of normative journalism missions, norms and values into the definition of CJ. Thus, the phrasing of CJ's concept suggested in the literature review (Chapter 2) fits these findings:

#### Collaborative journalism

1) is a form of doing journalism that takes advantage of network structures connecting journalists, news organisations, professionals from other industries, universities, communities and other social actors;

2) promotes co-creational and shared spaces;

3) makes decisions horizontally by network members;

4) is editorially coordinated by a group or individual focused on administrative and logistics of a journalistic project, effort or endeavour; and

5) is normatively committed to the practice and performance of good journalism.

*b) Does normative journalism translate into commitments, practices and processes in different contexts, for example, democratic and authoritarian contexts and poorer, less developed nations?*

The literature review (see Chapter 2) demonstrated that in more stable democracies, CJ practitioners face several challenges. However, these journalists operating in more stable social, economic and political contexts are offered more liberty in association and certainty of freedom to work. Moreover, these media systems are highly commercialised, and media corporations dominate the market. There is power parallelism between the media and the political and economic leaders and high levels of professionalism (see Chapter 3). In contrast, as demonstrated in Chapter 3, in Latin America and other regions and countries that do not enjoy the same environment, CJ practitioners must reinforce their values and mission daily to overcome challenges and continue their work.

As demonstrated in Chapter 5, CJ practitioners have seen that their commitments and practices, alongside a close relationship with peers, communities, advocacy groups and activists, are not an option but a survival tool, particularly for those living under less democratic, nondemocratic autocracies and authoritarian regimes. Moreover, as demonstrated in Chapter 6, despite the many types of integrations, associations and organisations, most organisations reveal a deep concern for the state of the media ecosystem, the market and a commitment to plurality, diversity and other values and obligations to society.



Over half the respondents and research participants currently live and work in countries in the region considered less democratic, such as autocracies and dictatorships, where freedom of the press is at risk (RSF 2021). Moreover, Latin American countries have alternated democratic and nondemocratic regimes throughout their history (Obijiofor, Murray and Singh, 2017). This reality explains that CJ’s motivations, benefits and risks do not change consistently throughout the region’s different political and social contexts. Instead, they demonstrate different levels of importance.

For instance, in countries where press freedom is lower, most projects are mainstream and transnational, investigating collaborative journalistic endeavours, as pointed out in Chapter 6. This outcome is due to the many constraints to their work, especially security issues found in these countries. In contrast, CJ practitioners in countries with more freedom of expression and the press tend to engage in more community-based and national efforts, as indicated in the table below.

*Table 40 Scope of collaborative projects versus Freedom of the Press Index (RSF, 2021)*

Country (from very serious situation to difficult situation in Latin America, according to Freedom of the Press Index 2021 - RSF)	National	International	Local	Regional
Cuba	67%	67%	0%	100%
Nicaragua	0%	100%	0%	0%
Venezuela	67%	100%	0%	33%
Brazil	74%	42%	39%	42%
Mexico	13%	75%	25%	25%
Guatemala	100%	50%	0%	0%
Colombia	56%	44%	19%	25%
Bolivia	50%	100%	0%	0%

The qualitative data analysis and discussion (Chapter 6) and the desk research (Chapter 7) explain these findings. First, in the qualitative section, it was possible to confirm with interviewees that, in the case of Cuba, the nonexistence of local investigations is due to the lack of a collaborative culture among journalists. Furthermore, because the state owns most news outlets, the independent and alternative media is still establishing itself. Thus, the incipient independent and alternative media ecosystem might be a cause of why collaborative journalism in the country is restricted.

The case of Nicaragua is considerably more extreme. The state has persecuted journalists and news organisations; thus, moving investigations from one country to another has been a primary strategy of collaborative journalism practitioners in continuing their investigations. Thus, transnationality in these cases is not an option but a necessity. In addition, according to the data available in the region from philanthropic and foreign aid agencies, such countries face significant restrictions to access this kind of financial support from their governments, the foundations, and the big tech corporations. This could explain why journalists and news organisations might be forced to internationalise their investigations.

As the quantitative data analysis and discussion (Chapter 5) demonstrated, one-third of the practitioners working on collaborative efforts have faced a threat or attack due to their work. In the

qualitative data analysis and discussion (Chapter 6), safety issues and threats have prevented journalists from working on specific investigations or, at least, worsened their life. Finally, in the desk research (Chapter 7), it was possible to see that many projects received financial support from foundations to strengthen, create, and monitor attacks and threats against journalists and the media. On a more positive note, collaborative journalism has been used to help protect, create better defence mechanisms, train professionals and organisations, and build safety protocols and networks that allow journalists and investigations to move safely. Thus, the low levels of press freedom and freedom of expression in Latin America have been pushing journalists and news organisations to find new forms of work, and collaborative journalism has been a reliable working model for journalism's protection, training, and defence.

As argued in Chapter 2 and confirmed in Chapter 5, CJ is characterised by a series of practices and processes embedded with participatory, shared, collective and cooperative ethos. I have identified the leading practices as indicative of the translation of collective commitments to journalism practise: (1) the establishment of network structures that connect and (2) the promotion of co-creational and shared spaces in which (3) decisions are made horizontally but (4) coordinated by people and teams focused on logistical and administrative tasks in the efforts. These leading practices were essential to empirically discuss the CJ practice, as demonstrated in Chapters 5 and 6, where it was possible to identify different levels of adherence to the leading practices depending on the project type, the covered topic, the project length and the organisational type involved in the effort. These findings were vital in outlining the many types and forms of CJ in different contexts.

In summary, even though CJ practitioners share many of their practices and processes with their counterparts in more stable democracies and economies, commitments, benefits and challenges of CJ in Latin America and nondemocratic and authoritarian contexts demonstrate another set of priorities related to normative journalism roles and functions in society.

- c) *Does collaboration differ in large and small organisations and their business and sustainability models? Do these factors differ in democratic or authoritarian contexts and poorer and less developed nations?*

This study found that small and nonprofit news organisations have generally been closer to communities and civil organisations, such as advocacy groups and movements. Nevertheless, the data demonstrated that for-profit news organisations have been more sustainable in financing their investigations and having their professionals sustain themselves with only journalistic work. It was possible to verify that organisations operating in the more restrictive contexts of less democratic and authoritarian regimes face more constraints, such as safety issues and less access to philanthropic and international funding, than their counterparts in more democratic countries.

As discussed in Chapter 7, CJ practitioners and news organisations have found in the collaborative network a form to circumvent the complex philanthropic environment and overcome the lack of financial support in the region. Thus, even though elite organisations in Latin America receive more philanthropic support and international financial aid from foundations and big tech corporations, they also promote other forms of collaborative investigation and reportage through financial schemes based on solidarity and network alliances. The data also demonstrated that big tech corporations' international financial aid privileged more mainstream and legacy media than independent nonprofit news organisations, revealing a clear commercial strategy. This concentration on mainstream and legacy media, particularly from Facebook, could be seen as a form of softening reactions from the major players in the region against their role as news intermediaries.

Much was said throughout the data analysis and discussion regarding the role and the relationship between collaborative journalists, practitioners, and news organisations, particularly the small ones, and legacy and mainstream media. It was demonstrated that, even though the relationship presents many challenges, mainstream and legacy media are still essential allies of collaborative journalism for many reasons. Such reasons include the amplification of reporting, audience reach, and the change in narratives towards the recognition of minorities and communities. Nevertheless, the data also demonstrate a tendency for these organisations to choose to collaborate in specific projects, such as mainstream collaborations and fact-checking coalitions.

Data were able to demonstrate that collaborative fact-checking shares a set of commitments and practices with other types of collaborative efforts, such as horizontal decision-making processes, editorial coordination, and the establishment of co-creational and shared spaces. However, it was also revealed that the fact-checking practice seems to attract more mainstream and legacy media than other forms of collaboration. This tendency was observed in many countries, such as Peru and Brazil, where the Covid-19 media coalitions were able to rely on excellent adhesion with the countries' most prominent news outlets. Alongside fact-checking coalitions, mainstream collaborations also tend to have more appeal to mainstream and legacy media. This could be explained by several factors addressed throughout this study and the literature and theory chapters (refer to Chapters 2 and 3).

First, as Field Hamilton (2016) stated, it is difficult for news organisations to capture the value of investigative journalism. Investigative journalism is an extended form of journalism that is often expensive and time-consuming; thus, news organisations challenged by financial constraints will think twice before engaging in these efforts. In mainstream collaborations and fact-checking coalitions, these costs are diluted among many organisations. Organisations also benefit from the work that others have already undertaken and from the exchange of skills, technology, and other elements. Second, outstanding investigations and fact-checking projects present less risk of damaging relationships with advertisers and authorities. Third, even though there is an agreement that mainstream and legacy media portray a close relationship with power in Latin America (see Chapter 3), these organisations are still part of an informative ecosystem in which audiences and their needs again become a priority.

It should be remembered that these organisations are the ones that decide what to report and what is supposedly more critical for their audiences to know; thus, they choose what to publish. This is part of journalistic work and does not differ from small, medium-sized or larger organisations; however, it does differ from organisational and journalistic commitments. Mainstream collaborations and fact-checking coalitions radically share data and information, but that does not mean that journalists and news organisations also report on them extensively. This discussion could be addressed with the support of agenda-setting theories, the political economy of journalism, and the value of the news; however, this is not the central theme of the present research, and the data did not cover such issues. Thus, I limit the discussion to indicate the tendency and its possible explanations. However, it is not the objective of the research to investigate the causes and implications of such decisions. In summary, the data demonstrated the tendency of mainstream and legacy media to privilege mainstream collaborations and fact-checking coalitions due to economic and power issues. Nevertheless, mainstream and legacy media are a part of the information ecosystem and essential allies of collaborative journalism in Latin America to reach significant audiences, share reputation, and amplify impacts.

The study also demonstrated that news organisations in less and nondemocratic countries, with few exceptions, are restrained by the lack of funding. However, new collaborative funding schemes have started to play an essential role in overcoming the situation. Nevertheless, the dependency of news organisations

on philanthropic and big tech companies' grants and funds is a dangerous path toward what I call 'the business of supporting journalism'. In this path, foreign aid models of support journalism push their agenda rather than focusing on the issues journalism faces in Latin America. The financial support, especially those given by big tech platforms, is orienting journalism towards commercialisation and technological solutions to sustainability.

Thus, although commitments to collaborative journalism norms and missions are widespread in the region, small and nonprofit news organisations, most of the organisations conducting CJ efforts, struggle with sustainability. Furthermore, in less democratic and authoritarian countries, news organisations face even more restrictions, especially concerning access to international philanthropic funding. Nevertheless, collaborative funding schemes are emerging as a possible long-term solution.

## **Collaborative journalism typology**

The main contribution of this study is the identification of similarities and singularities of collaborative journalism in various contexts, especially the influences of these factors on CJ's concept and the central role that normative journalism must play in the concept due to these different circumstances. This study outlined the main features of CJ and how they play a crucial function in analysing CJ's practices, processes, commitments, benefits and challenges. These features were essential to inform the present study to build a typology of CJ:

### **Networked structures**

CJ takes advantage of network structures characterised by high levels of connectivity and sharing ethos.

### **Horizontal processes**

These decision-making processes are the basis of noncompetitive, nonhierarchical and decentralised networks.

### **Co-creation**

This feature is characterised by different levels of co-creation of content and the creation of shared spaces of work, distribution and information, including skills, technologies and knowledge.

### **Editorial coordination**

This network role is responsible for logistics, the administration and coordination of collaborative efforts with different levels of control.

These features were then analysed, combined and expanded in the empirical part of the research, leading to the discovery of other elements that also shape CJ. They included (1) duration (ongoing or temporary), (2) agreements (official or informal contracts), (3) project scope (from international to local), (4) topics of coverage (from politics to environment), (5) motivations for collaboration (for specific projects carried out by organisations), (6) relationships with communities (communication levels and channels), and, (7) organisational challenges (such as sustainability and security). This analysis led to the creation of a list of types of collaborations:

### **Cooperative collaborations,**

characterised by high levels of independence and horizontality with low levels of editorial coordination and integration,

**Mainstream collaborations,**

characterised by low levels of integration and co-creation and a medium level of editorial coordination,

**Community collaborations,**

characterised by a bottom-up approach to collaboration, with high levels of co-creation and horizontality,

**Network collaborations,**

characterised by low levels of co-creation and horizontality but lacking effectiveness and specific goals, and

**Activism collaborations,**

characterised by low levels of independence and horizontality with high levels of co-creation.

The typology analysis also identified the main benefits that CJ can provide practitioners. At an individual level, CJ offers the capability of journalists to be recognised by their work, peers and society. At an organisational level, brand credibility, visibility and reputation are perceived as beneficial. Furthermore, the exchange environments and the defence of journalism and its mission are professional benefits at the societal level through policy-making influence and social transformation. Hence, CJ has distinguished itself among other emerging journalism practices in the digital era.

Finally, the study identified the primary forms of sustainability and business models of the organisations conducting CJ, determining that most organisations and network members cannot sustain themselves with journalistic work. Therefore, philanthropic funding and big tech grants play a crucial role in what I have called ‘the business of supporting journalism’. Thus, these institutions and corporations promote their commercial and political agendas rather than trying to solve the main problems of journalism in the region. In this context, this study also found that this type of financing support is scarce in Latin America, especially in nondemocratic dictatorships and autocracies, which might be one of the reasons for the emergence of collaborative peer-to-peer financial schemes.

## **Limitations**

The main limitation of this study is that, although the number of participants is considered high and representative in general terms, the representation of some countries is much less than expected compared to the participation of other countries. For instance, while Brazil significantly participated with 54 respondents, other countries, such as Nicaragua, Guatemala and Ecuador, had only one or two respondents. This discrepancy can be explained by external factors, such as technological inequalities in the region, the size of media markets in different countries and, in the case of Nicaragua, the persecution that Daniel Ortega’s authoritarian government has been carrying out against the press. Thus, considering the conditions listed above, external factors are the main ones limiting this research.

Moreover, women’s participation in some countries is a significant study limitation. Since this problem concerns the market size and the size of news organisations reached via the survey, this issue could affect the results. However, even with a lack of representation of women in some countries, the study reflected the increasing participation of women in collaboration, especially concerning the lines of command in these efforts with collaborative projects.

Moreover, the study is limited by a lack of information and transparency regarding big tech corporations, symptomatic of a broken system that takes advantage of secrecy and complex grant criteria to avoid legal actions. However, although the study lacked information from these organisations, it was possible to recognise that big tech corporations are pushing an agenda in the business of supporting journalism: the commercialisation and technification of journalism as a solution to audience reach and business models.

### Implications, significance and contribution

The study lays the groundwork for future research into CJ in various contexts, especially in less developed economies, economies in development and less democratic, nondemocratic, autocracies and authoritarian regimes and countries, which is the most extensive set of countries globally. It provides the first comprehensive assessment of the practice in these contexts, establishing a quantitative and qualitative framework for detecting CJ practitioners’ types, characteristics, commitments, practices, norms and values. This study also adds to the growing body of research indicating that media systems, political regimes, economic development, political parallelism, levels of professionalism, media ownership concentration and state interventionism are relevant to understanding and underpinning normative journalism functions, roles, boundaries and performance in different regions, countries and cultures worldwide.

This empirical investigation is the only one that examines the impact, influences and limitations of normative journalism commitments and performance in CJ. Moreover, the study has been one of the first attempts to examine thoroughly the contextual factors and dimensions shaping CJ, the media systems influence, limitations and influences in the exercise of practice that I argue will serve as a theoretical and empirical framework to analyse CJ in Latin America, the Global South and everywhere in the world.

To summarise the study’s contributions, Table 1 offers a panorama of the supported theories, evidence and methodologies of the research and the study’s development from them to present new information and knowledge about CJ.

*Table 41 Summary of the study’s contribution*

	<b>Supported</b>	<b>Developed</b>	<b>New</b>
<b>Theory</b>	Supported normative journalism theories to analyse and discuss the many influences of journalism roles, functions, boundaries and performance effects and commitments on CJ practitioners’ norms, values and practices; supported comparative media systems theory to analyse different influences of media systems in various countries shaping the practice and the decision/option to collaborate as well as the limitations posed by specific contextual factors, such as news	Developed a normative journalism and media systems theoretical framework to analyse and interpret the data collected for the study and the analysis; discussion, interpretation and critiques of the concepts and definitions of CJ, including internal and external factors shaping the phenomenon	Development of a theoretical framework to analyse the practice of collaboration in the professional journalism ecosystem, the market and the journalism industry; this study also develops a theoretical framework to analyse and understand the evolution and development of CJ in various contextual realities

	safety, media ownership concentration and state intervention		
<b>Empirical Evidence</b>	Supported empirical evidence of CJ as a new form of conducting journalistic investigations in news media organisations, their work and processes and their commitments, benefits and limitations	Developed a framework of empirical analysis of these kinds of arrangements in the media ecosystem; typification of the models and practices of collaboration; identified commitments, practices, norms and values	New empirical evidence on the practices of CJ everywhere, but especially in the context of less developed economies and nondemocratic, authoritarian and democracies in development
<b>Method</b>	Supported existing and well-established methodologies, such as surveys, in-depth semi-structured interviews and desk research to investigate, examine and criticise the phenomenon of collaboration in journalism	Developed a methodological framework to access and create knowledge of the phenomenon of collaboration in journalism, focusing on commitments, practices, processes, benefits, limitations and risks	Addition of new methods to the existing and increasing number of investigations and studies on CJ and journalism in various contexts
<b>Context</b>	Supported previous research with accurate data and empirical knowledge over a new phenomenon known as CJ, especially in the context of less developed economies and nondemocratic, authoritarian and democracies in development	Developed a framework of analysis for future studies on CJ and journalism practitioners to work better and more conscient of their benefits and limitations	Addition of substantial information about the phenomenon to the body of knowledge of journalism studies and practitioners by offering an overview of the practice, highlighting the forces influencing, limiting and shaping the performance of CJ in different contexts
<b>Knowledge of practice</b>	Supported the body of knowledge on the topic, its best practices and benefits, and risks, challenges and the external and internal forces that shape CJ, its evolution and development, especially in the context of economies in	Developed a definition of CJ that reflects the body of knowledge, commitments, practices, norms and values supported and performed by practitioners and the	Recommend the establishment and appreciation of normative journalism commitments, norms, functions and roles in society to perform CJ in its maximum capacity and generate value for society

	development and nondemocratic and authoritarian regimes	value added by the phenomenon to journalism as practice and as an institution	
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## Further research

CJ efforts are characterised and embedded in the ethos of the hipper connected and networked structures of today’s society, which translates into a decentralised, horizontal, co-creational and participatory practice and process. These network structures bring a vital benefit related to the connection between participants of projects and efforts. Nevertheless, power relations appear to determine access and control within the networks.

Furthermore, these relations can be challenged by introducing new news actors, particularly communities. While these social connections provide people with several advantages and spaces for sharing and exchange, they create cooperation clusters, reinforcing individual goals and lone-wolf investigative traditions. Thus, future research on CJ should consider the networked reality’s impacts, influences, risks and benefits within collaborative practices.

Moreover, financial support from philanthropic foundations and big tech companies is a significant issue in the Global South. Many journalistic products and projects of independent, nonprofit and even more traditional, legacy and mainstream media organisations depend on significant funding and grants. Thus, it is expected that the impacts and influences of this financial support will have further developments. However, it is possible to see a risk that journalists and news organisations are aware of but cannot avoid.

Associated with the funding issue, the emergence of alternative and collective forms of funding created by news organisations might have tremendous impacts in the long run. I have argued that networks create these models of peer-to-peer financing to circumvent the sustainability crisis of most news organisations worldwide. This study identified the tendency but did not explore it in-depth; thus, I argue that there is an opportunity for future studies to analyse such schemes and critically evaluate them and their capability of solving the financial issue, determining whether they are sustainable and the possible implications for journalism business models and CJ.

As suggested in this chapter, further analysis of the relationship between mainstream and independent media outlets in collaborative networks is needed. As found in this study, these relationships are marked by an apparent attraction of mainstream media to collaborate in fact-checking and other mainstream collaborative efforts, such as the Panama Papers, than other more community-based endeavours. This situation highlighted in this study can be further analysed by considering the media systems and the evolution of professionalism, state and market dependence and other factors possibly contributing to this reality. Finally, future research could benefit from applying the empirical and theoretical frameworks developed in this study to confirm, challenge, criticise, compare and expand the knowledge of the CJ phenomenon in other countries, regions and contexts.

## Final comments

This study demonstrated that CJ is a journalism phenomenon that promotes, reinforces and reforms normative journalism norms and values in society. It is a practice of journalism that takes advantage of a



networked society (see, e.g., Van Der Haak, Parks and Castells, 2012; de la Serna, 2018; Alfter and Căndea, 2019; and others), using its structures to connect and share with peers, communities, universities, advocacy groups, NGOs and other professionals and actors, while being influenced by it. It is characterised by co-creational and horizontal processes that are editorially coordinated and focus on the coverage of topics and information that are (1) too large in scale that no individual would be able to report (Sambrook, 2018) and (2) are largely ignored or misrepresented in corporative media (Mesquita and Fernandes, 2021).

Moreover, experienced journalists practising CJ face many internal and external constraints in the profession. The internal ones related to the ICTs developments and the crisis of traditional business models have significantly impacted normative journalism missions and values and journalism professional boundaries, performance, functions and roles. The external ones concern the contextual factors and dimensions in which CJ evolves but is also influenced by. These factors in the context of this study range from media ownership concentration and state intervention to a constant state of violence against the media and news practitioners.

In summary, this study demonstrated that CJ is firmly attached to ideals of sharing, cooperation and noncompetitive journalism' practice and the restoration, reform and reinforcement of normative journalism functions, roles and values. This study was drawn from the experiences of journalists and news organisations in Latin America, resulting in an analysis of the emergence of the practice of CJ, critically challenging its previous definitions, characterisations, descriptions and typifications. These analyses and perspectives are valuable tools to discuss CJ's emergence, development and evolution in nondemocratic and authoritarian regimes, economies in development and everywhere. As stated in this chapter's opening from Snyder (2017), professional commitments and rules are essential to combat tyrants; thus, the concept of CJ as envisioned in this study is a constant reminder of journalism's social commitments, functions and roles in society and democracy.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Email for electronic survey (in English)

Title: Survey: ‘Collaborative journalism affordances and challenges from across different countries and news organisations in Latin America’

Hello, I'm Lucia Mesquita (Jolt, ResearchGate), researcher and former Brazilian journalist. I am writing a research report funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program on collaborative journalism in Latin America. Something that I hope is important to you. I think we really need to know more about the role collaboration plays in the news ecosystem. I chose you to be involved because of your experience with collaborative efforts and active participation in this ecosystem. I know you guys are extremely busy, but it's a short survey. The survey will be open until the end of April.

Click here to join!

Participate in the most comprehensive collaborative journalism dataset in Latin America.

This survey takes no more than 15 minutes. You also have the chance to deepen the discussion in an individual interview with the researcher who investigates the practice of collaboration in news organizations in Latin America.

Please read the support material on Data Protection carefully and, in case of doubt, contact the researcher:

Lucia Mesquita

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JOLT ETN | <http://joltetn.eu>

FuJo: Institute for Future Media and Journalism | <http://fujomedia.eu/>

DCU School of Communications | <https://www.dcu.ie/communications/>

## Appendix 2: Informed Consent

English text:

‘Collaborative journalism affordances and challenges from across different countries and news organisations in Latin America: concepts, types and critics’

Online survey consent form:

I understand that the purpose of the research; “Resources and challenges of collaborative journalism from different countries and news organizations in Latin America” is to gain an insight into my motivations, processes and practices in relation to collaborative journalism. I am aware that the survey will take approximately 15 minutes, and that I will also have the opportunity to engage with the researcher in an interview lasting approximately 1 hour (information listed at the end of this form).

\*This project has benefited from funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Framework Program under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Grant Agreement No. 765140

\*Required

I agree to participate, and I understand that I can opt out and have my data deleted. \*

Yea

No

As possibilidades e os desafios do jornalismo colaborativo em diferentes países e organizações de notícias na América Latina

Formulário de consentimento para pesquisa online:

Eu entendo que o propósito da pesquisa; “Recursos e desafios do jornalismo colaborativo de diferentes países e organizações de notícias na América Latina” é obter uma visão sobre minhas motivações, processos e práticas em relação ao jornalismo colaborativo. Estou ciente de que a pesquisa levará aproximadamente 15 minutos, e que também terei a oportunidade de engajar com a pesquisadora em uma entrevista com a duração de cerca de 1 hora (informações relacionadas ao final deste formulário).

\*Este projeto se beneficiou de financiamento do Programa-Quadro de Investigação e Inovação Horizonte 2020 da União Europeia ao abrigo da convenção de subvenção Marie Skłodowska-Curie n.º 765140

Lucia.mesquita@dcu.ie (not shared) [Switch accounts](#)

\*Required

Eu concordo em participar, e estou ciente de que posso pedir para desistir e ter meus dados deletados. \*

Sim

Não

Next Clear form

Figure 15 Informed consent

## Appendix 3: Plain Language Statement

### Collaborative journalism affordances and challenges from across different countries and news organisations in Latin America: concepts, types and critics

Lucia Mesquita  
Early Stage Researcher | Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow at Dublin City University  
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Dublin 9,  
Ireland

\* This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 765140

#### The project

This research aims to examine the phenomenon of collaborative journalism across different countries and news organisations in Latin America. The specific objectives are: (1) Conceptualise collaborative journalism across different media systems, and organisation types (define it and where they came from and where are they going to); (2) Understand how collaborative journalism relates to journalistic practice in Latin America (3) Understand how collaboration may impact the journalism of the future specifically in Latin America.

#### Your rights

Under data protection rules, individuals have a number of rights, including:

- The right to be informed of what happens to personal data relating to you
- The right of access to personal data relating to you, and to obtain a copy
- The right to rectification if an error is contained in the personal data relating to you
- The right to the erasure of personal data relating to you (in certain circumstances)
- The right to restrict processing of personal data relating to you (in certain circumstances)
- The right to data portability
- The right to object to the processing of personal data relating to you (in certain circumstances)
- Rights in relation to automated decision making and profiling

These rights are available where the applicable criteria are met and subject to certain exceptions under data protection law. For example, it may not be possible to comply with a request to erase data where DCU has a legal obligation to retain records, or where it is necessary and proportionate to keep such data for the purposes of defending legal claims, and/or to protect the vital interests of a data subject.

To exercise your rights, or if you have any questions in relation to your personal data, you may contact the DCU Data Protection Unit at: [data.protection@dcu.ie](mailto:data.protection@dcu.ie). For further information, please visit: DCU Data Protection Unit. General information on how DCU collects, uses, and discloses personal data, and on your data protection rights, is available on the DCU Privacy Policy.

You also have the right under data protection law to complain to the Data Protection Commission (see [www.dataprotection.ie](http://www.dataprotection.ie)), but we ask that you please contact us in the first instance so that we can resolve any issues arising.

#### Data processing

Additionally, the data will be processed following the Open Science Principals. The project No 825227 will complete its role by April 2022. After the end of the present research and the project which this research lies under, raw data

will be anonymised, and stored in a cost-free data repository such as [Dataverse](#), [Dryad](#), [figshare](#) or [Zenodo](#) (see Open Science Training Handbook <https://open-science-training-handbook.gitbook.io/book/>).

### **Consent form and general instructions**

The participant will be required to fulfil a “Consent Form”, can complete an electronic survey and will have the opportunity to engage in a supplementary interview. For the electronic survey, the time-commitment expected is of about 15 minutes and the interviews about 1 hour.

No risks are expected to rise from the completion and participation of the participants with this research. However, any participant can withdraw their participation at any point, and they also can count with the support of the researcher. Withdrawal is accompanied by the destruction of any information related to the participant.

No personal benefits are expected from the participation of the participant in this research. Like any other scientific research, the overall benefit of the research is the increase of knowledge around the phenomena, the consciousness of the issues and practices raised, and contribution to a more informed community and society.

The researcher engages to strictly comply with all rules following Irish Law regarding the protection of personal privacy and the EU General Data Protection Regulation. You may request access and, if needed, correction of these data. All activities of the Principal Investigator for this research project are under the Irish Data Protection Commissioner's jurisdiction on Privacy (<https://www.dataprotection.ie/>) who can also be contacted if any problems arise.

At any point, you can contact the principal researcher of this study, Lucia Mesquita via [lucia.mesquita@dcu.ie](mailto:lucia.mesquita@dcu.ie), the direct supervisor Jane Suiter via [jane.suiter@dcu.ie](mailto:jane.suiter@dcu.ie), with any questions, complaints or further information on the study. For possible complaints or other concerns related to this study's ethical aspects, you may also contact the Research Ethics Committee at Dublin City University via [rec@dcu.ie](mailto:rec@dcu.ie).

### **Data Protection/Privacy Notice (Personal Data – GDPR Compliance)**

By participating in the research “The affordances and the challenges of collaborative journalism across different countries and news organisations in Latin America: concepts, types and critics”, you will be submitting your personal data to DCU. As such, DCU is the Data Controller and must comply with data protection rules under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018. Data protection concerns the safeguarding of privacy rights of individuals in relation to the processing of their personal data and personal data means any information relating to an identified, or an identifiable, living individual (e.g., name, email address, contact details, consent form, research files etc.). DCU, as a Data Controller, is responsible for the personal data you provide, based on your freely given and informed consent. You can withdraw your consent at any time, through the contact details below.

The categories of personal data which we will collect from you as part of this project are mainly related to the name of the organisation that you work for or you are part of, your professional role and background. Personal data that you submit to DCU through the present research will be used for formal publications (e.g., the thesis, research articles, and policy papers) as well as publications that are aimed directly at journalists' communities (e.g., best practice guidelines).

All data collected will serve the main purpose of conceptualizing, categorising and understanding the main affordances and challenges of collaborative journalism in general, but more specifically in Latin America. The personal data you provide will be held for a period of two years after which it will either be deleted in full or suitably anonymized. Personal data provided as part of this study will be held safely and securely in accordance with the DCU Data Privacy Policy, meaning password protected files; folders on firewall-protected DCU network drives; access limited only to specified researcher and supervisor.

***If participants have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact:***

The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Research and Innovation Support, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-7008000, e-mail [rec@dcu.ie](mailto:rec@dcu.ie)



#### Appendix 4: Questionnaire's categories, variables, format and labelled variables

Table 42 Questionnaire's categories, variables, format and labelled variables

Category	Variable Description	Variable format	Labelled Variable
Demography	What's your nationality?	Open-ended	Nationality
Demography	What country do you live/work in?	Open-ended	Country of Residence/work
Demography	How old are you?	Multiple choice	Age
Demography	I identify my gender as ...	Multiple choice	Gender
Demography	What is your professional training?	Multiple choice	Educational Background
Demography	Which organisation are you answering this questionnaire for? Type of organization:	Multiple choice	Organisation type
Demography	What is your current role in the organisation for which you work?	Short open-ended	Role
Demography	How big is the organisation?	Multiple choice	Size
Demography	What is the corporate social function of the company/organisation?	Multiple choice	Corporate Name
Demography	What is your role in this project?	Multiple choice	Role in the Project
Types, Duration and Scope	Who do you (and/or your organisation) collaborate with?	Mark as many as apply	Types of collaboration
Types, Duration and Scope	Topic of the collaboration	Mark as many as apply	Topics

Types, Duration and Scope	What is the scope of the collaborations?	Mark as many as apply	Scope
Types, Duration and Scope	What is the duration of the project (or projects)	Multiple choice	Duration
Process	What is the decision-making process in the project?	Multiple choice	Network
Process	What kind of agreement have you (and/or your organisation) entered into with the other entities or professionals involved in the collaboration?	Multiple choice	Agreement
Process	Who decides who to collaborate with?	Multiple choice	Decision-making
Process	Which is the working process?	Multiple choice	Workflow
Motivation	How do you think collaboration is benefiting you and the organisation you work with?	Mark as many as apply	Benefits
Motivation	Why did you (and/or your organisation) decide to collaborate with other organisations? To have access to ...	Mark as many as apply	Motive for collaboration
Motivation	What motivated the creation of the project?	Mark as many as apply	Motive for the project
Sustainability	How do you (or your organisation) finance the project?	Multiple choice	Financing
Sustainability	What are the organisation's business models?	Mark as many as apply	Business Models
Sustainability	Which models should the organisation focus on in the coming months?	Multiple choice	Investment
Sustainability	Are members of the network able to support themselves only with the revenue generated by journalistic work?	Multiple choice	Sustainable

Participation	Would you say that the collaborative projects in which you (and/or your organisation) participate have a relationship with the community?	Multiple choice	Relationship
Participation	If there is a relationship with the community, how does it happen?	Multiple choice	Channels
Technology	What platforms, software, and applications do you use to chat and work with others on the network?	Mark as many as apply	Technology
Security	Do you feel protected by the collaboration network when conducting reports or in your work in general?	Multiple choice	Protection
Security	Do you think the network provides sufficient information, training and support on security?	Multiple choice	Information
Security	What tools and processes are in place for your protection?	Multiple choice	Tools and processes
Security	Were you a victim (or your organisation) of attacks during or due to a collaboration project?	Multiple choice	Victim
Security	If so, could you say that collaboration was essential to resolve or lessen the attack's impacts?	Multiple choice	Collaboration Role
Security	If so, how was the network able to help you?	Mark as many as apply	Support

## Appendix 5: Questionnaire's categories, variables, groups, changes to groups and description

Table 43 Categories, variables, groups, changes to groups and description of changes

Categories	Variable name	Variable description and format	Groups	Change to groups	Changes description
	Nationality	Open	N/A	N/A	N/A

Demo graphy	Country of residence/work	Open	N/A	N/A	N/A	
	Gender	Multiple choice	Female Male Genderqueer / Nonbinary Prefer not to say Other	N/A	N/A	
	Age	Multiple choice	18-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 56 or more Rather not answer	N/A	N/A	
	Educational background	Multiple choice	Social Communication Journalism Multimedia Audio-visual Law Social Sciences Other	Communication	Includes communication with qualification in journalism (following the partners of higher education in many countries of Latin America)	
				Other	Includes all other higher education majors	
	Organisation type	Multiple choice	TV/Radio Digital Native News Agency Newspaper Magazine Other	Others	Includes freelancers and collectives	
	Role	Short open-ended	CEO/Founder and Director	CEO/Founder and Director	Includes chair, president, “in-chef” of innovation, administration, etc.	
				Editor/Editor-in-chief and Coordinator	Editor/Editor-in-chief and Coordinator	Includes social media, customers, audience and project management coordinators, etc.
				Content creator	Content creator	Includes social media, content, video producer, audio producer, etc.
	Role in the project	Multiple choice	Coordination Data and information collection Fieldwork Report Production of video, audio or multimedia	N/A	N/A	

			content Data analysis and visualisation Other:		
	Size	Multiple choice	Small (up to 5 people / organizations) Medium (from 5 to 20) Large (more than 20) Varies by project	N/A	N/A
	Corporate name	Multiple choice	Nonprofit For-profit NGO Other	N/A	N/A
Types, duration and scope	Types of collaboration	Mark as many as apply	Other news media organisations Universities Communities Advocacy organisations Other:	Universities	Includes scientific institutions, labs
				Others	Includes collaboration with companies of other industries
	Topics	Mark as many as apply	Politics Health Human rights The technology Finance / Economics / Business Environment Science Housing Gender and race Combine multiple	Other	Includes religion and education
	Scope	Mark as many as apply	National International Local Regional	N/A	N/A
	Duration	Multiple choice	Continuous / open (indefinite) Temporary - 1 month (around) Temporary - 6 months (around) Temporary: one year or more	N/A	N/A
Processes	Network	Multiple choice	All of us in the organisation The editorial team The network we are part of Other:	N/A	N/A
	Agreement	Multiple choice	Verbal Contract or any other formal agreement No formal agreement Other:	N/A	N/A
	Decision-making	Multiple choice	Horizontal (without hierarchical)	N/A	N/A

			coordination) Horizontal (with coordination) Vertical (like a traditional newsroom) Other:		
	Workflow	Multiple choice	Partners create content separately and share it Partners work together to create content Partners share content/data/resources at the organisational level Other	N/A	N/A
Motivation	Benefits	Mark as many as apply	We are reporting better We have more sources, resources and information We are getting more audience We are receiving information from different and more places Other:	N/A	N/A
	Motive for collaboration	Mark as many as apply	Tools Data and information Expertise / specific knowledge Technical abilities (skills) Sources Funding Other: For safety Broader audience/coverage reach	N/A	N/A
	Motive for the project	Mark as many as apply	A common agenda We are used to working with this group of people We needed people in remote locations We required skills that we didn't have at home The subject we work with requires this Other:	N/A	N/A
	Financing	Multiple choice	With resources from the organisation itself	N/A	N/A

Sustainability			<p>We seek external support (partners/crowdfunding / etc.) for our projects</p> <p>We apply for funds (grants/scholarships) that already have specific projects</p> <p>A mix of the previous ones</p>		
	Business Models	Mark as many as apply	<p>Collaborative financing (Crowdfunding)</p> <p>Government-sponsored cultural incentives</p> <p>Cultural incentives promoted by private philanthropic institutions</p> <p>Partners / Associates / Members</p> <p>Advertising Sale</p> <p>Sale of products and services</p> <p>Content production</p> <p>Signature</p> <p>Events</p> <p>Education</p> <p>Resources of the organisation's own members</p> <p>There is no funding</p> <p>Financing by project</p> <p>Other</p>	N/A	N/A
	Investment	Multiple choice	<p>Collaborative financing (Crowdfunding)</p> <p>Government-sponsored cultural incentives</p> <p>Cultural incentives promoted by private philanthropic institutions</p> <p>Partners / Associates / Members</p> <p>Advertising Sale</p> <p>Sale of products and services</p> <p>Content production</p> <p>Subscriptions</p> <p>Events</p> <p>Education</p> <p>Other:</p>	N/A	N/A

	Sustainable	Multiple choice	Yes always Yes, most of the time Not always No	N/A	N/A
Participation	Relationship	Multiple choice	Yes always Yes, most of the time Not always Never	N/A	N/A
	Channels	Multiple choice	We have an open hotline with the community We produce events to listen to and contact you We have regular meetings We have no formal action Other:	N/A	N/A
Technology	Technology	Mark as many as apply	Google Docs (and other Google apps) Slack Telegram Whatsapp Dropbox Airtable Technology (software/application) developed by the collaboration network or a partner Other:	N/A	N/A
Security	Protection	Multiple choice	Yes always Yes, most of the time Not always No I prefer not to say Other:	N/A	N/A
	Information	Multiple choice	Yes always Yes, most of the time Not always No I prefer not to say Other:	N/A	N/A
	Tools and processes	Multiple choice	Direct line Juridical support Technical support I prefer not to say Psychological support Other:	N/A	N/A
	Victim	Multiple choice	Yes No I'd rather not say	N/A	N/A
	Collaboration role	Multiple choice	Yes always Yes, most of the time Not always	N/A	N/A



			No I prefer not to say		
	Support	Mark as many as apply	Through psychological support Through professional support in terms of work Through training Through new and safer work processes Through new and more secure tools, software and technology in general Prefer not to say Other:	N/A	N/A

## Appendix 6: Research Ethics Committee Document

Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath  
Dublin City University



Ms. Lucia Mesquita  
School of Communications

Dr Jane Suiter  
School of Communications

21<sup>st</sup> January 2021

**REC Reference:** DCUREC/2020/249  
**Proposal Title:** The future of journalism is collaborative  
**Applicant(s):** Ms. Lucia Mesquita & Dr. Jane Suiter

Dear Colleagues,

Further to expedited review, the DCU Research Ethics Committee approves this research proposal.

Materials used to recruit participants should note that ethical approval for this project has been obtained from the Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee.

Should substantial modifications to the research protocol be required at a later stage, a further amendment submission should be made to the REC.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Geraldine Scanlon'.

**Dr Geraldine Scanlon**  
Chairperson  
DCU Research Ethics Committee



**Taighde & Nuálaíocht Tacaíocht**  
Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath,  
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## Appendix 7: Semi-structured in-depth interviews guide

What does it mean to collaborate?

What are the practices in place when collaborating?

As an organisation (what is at stake when decides to collaborate; how to choose to whom to collaborate; what are the expectations and the reality of collaborating; what are the preparations, allocation of teams or personal, the contract/agreement type; strategies and cultural aspects involved; financial dimension, such as how to support the initiative, what are the opportunities related to it)

What does it mean to collaborate in terms of professional journalism?

How are these practices different and similar to other more traditional practices in journalism's profession?

Who is involved in the newsrooms' meetings? Who has the last word? What are the dynamics of newsrooms meetings?

What are the types of journalism coverage more suitable for collaborative journalism efforts?

Does collaborative journalism suit all needs in journalism coverage?

When they look for sources (do they have their own? do they share a database?)

When writing (do they write alone and then share? do they are responsible for one part of the report? do they write four/six/eight hands?)

What does it mean to collaborate in terms of relationships with communities and audiences?

How do they know their communities?

How do they reach them?

How do they maintain it?

Do they measure the impacts? How?

What does it mean to collaborate in terms of work and labour relations?

What are the working processes in a collaborative network?

What are the work/labour arrangements (contracts; agreements; legal aspects) in place?

What does collaboration action in terms of technology?

What are the levels of usage/dependency of technological apparatuses, such as open and proprietary software?

How are social media platforms used in terms of construction of the news, dissemination, relation with communities etc.?

In terms of platform dependency

In terms of financial support, do you ever receive money from platforms (Facebook, Google) for journalistic purposes? How did you use them? Do you think that might be bad for your organisation in the future? Do you think that could harm the media ecosystem in your country?

In the construction of narrative perspective, how dependent is your work from platforms (from the collection of data, to search for a source, to get ideas for an article etc)? Do you think this is influencing the way that you tell a story? Do you think that might be bad for your organisation in the future? Do you think that could harm the media ecosystem in your country? How does the logic of each platform affect your narrative construction?

In terms of the distribution of content, how do you use platforms for distribution? Do you adapt your content? How does the logic of each platform affect your distribution strategies?

In terms of technology, what are the tools/software that you use to collaborate? Do you think your work would be possible without tech tools, software and systems? How do you decide which tools to use and who decides?

What does it mean to collaborate in terms of financial support?

Does collaboration make it easier to access financial support?

Do you form a collaborative effort for specific calls of financing, or you create the action first and then look for suitable financial options?

If there is a financial aspect related to social media platforms (e.g., Google News Initiative, Facebook News Project), how is this represented in business models strategies, how is this approached from the point of view of organisational culture when analysing possible dependencies and influences?

Do organisations feel more confident when applying for grants?

Do they see more opportunities for support?

In terms of financial support, what are the business models options? Who is involved in these decisions and strategies? Who follows the development of strategies? Do you achieve the break-even? In the future, what are the financial support that you are going to concentrate on? Why? Is there any form of financial support that you would not accept? Why?

What does collaborative journalism mean to you?

What is your professional background?

Why did you decide to collaborate?

As an individual perspective (as a journalist, as another actor, such as an academic, a researcher, a teacher, a student etc, what do I bring to the collaboration? Personal skill and expertise?)

How do you decide with whom to collaborate?

How do you decide which topics to cover in a collaborative network?

What are the working processes in a collaborative network? Who decides what topics to cover? How are decisions made? Some topics depend on larger or smaller groups, is that a significant issue?

In your perception, how different collaborative journalism is from the traditional practice of journalism?

Are you currently part of a collaborative network? How would you describe the network that you are part of?

What are you working on right now that you're excited about?

What is the self-perception of participants in terms of: reputation, credibility, transparency, independence and relation with communities?

When sharing skills, what are the skills provided by the network? What is missing? Who provides them?

Do you have any further comments or would like to add anything else?