

**NONPROFIT INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM IN  
EUROPE:  
Motives, Organisations and Practices**

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## Abstract

In the United States of America a recent trend denominated nonprofit investigative journalism has taken place since 1977, when the *Center for Investigative Reporting* was founded. The process has particularly intensified since 2006. With nonprofit investigative journalism is meant “*nonprofit ownership outlets [...] solely engaged in the practice of investigative journalism*” (Lewis 2007a, 7). This study discusses the diffusion of nonprofit centres in Europe. The main focus is on the three cases traced within the European Union countries: the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism*, the *Bulgarian Investigative Journalism Center* and the *Bureau of Investigative Journalism* in the UK. To explore the motives behind their creation, organisational structure and practices, semi-structured interviews have been carried out with some of the founders and members. From categorising and coding their answers, the context and functioning of each centre have been reconstructed and compared. After this first level of comparison, a second level occurs when the European centres are compared with the American. The Bureau presents several similarities with its American counterparts letting individuate an Anglo-American model characterised by analogous contextual elements, structure and foundations’ support. Therefore, it seems possible to talk about diffusion of nonprofit investigative journalism first of all within Anglo-American countries. But there is not just a model. In fact, centres differ in how they are founded, their dimensions, scope, business models and in the strategy they apply to disseminate their findings. In addition, the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism* represents a unique case presenting elements typical not only of the centre but also of the professional association and the network. The Bulgarian case introduces another issue concerning the influence of media assistance in the formation of investigative journalism centres.

During the course of the study two new centres were established in Hungary and Latvia. This clearly shows the existence of the phenomenon mainly in Anglo-American and post-communist countries.

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## Introduction

In this study it is explored the phenomenon of nonprofit investigative journalism as it occurs in Europe. In fact, investigative journalism in the United States of America has been studied a lot (Protess et al. 1991; Aucoin 2005; Feldstein 2006). In the European context, apart from the United Kingdom (De Burgh 2000; 2008), Germany (Redelfs 1996) and France (Hunter 1997), it is not possible to state the same. Particularly, Feldstein (2006) traces three main cycles of intense investigative journalism in the US: during the American Revolution, the Progressive era and in mid-sixties and seventies. In this latter period investigative journalism has emerged also in most of the Western European countries (van Eijk 2005), even if some precursors may have been found earlier in time. The decade between the mid-sixties and the mid-seventies in the US has been characterised by three main stories that are behind the myth and the institutionalisation of investigative journalism: Seymour Hersh's My Lai massacre, Neil Sheehan's Pentagon Papers, and Bob Woodward's and Carl Bernstein's Watergate. From that moment investigative journalism has been institutionalised as a specific journalism paradigm characterised by three elements: the reporter's original work, the choice of a subject of public relevance, and unveiling something someone wish to keep secret. But the creation of a professional association of investigative journalists has represented the main step in this institutionalisation process. In fact, in 1977 *Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE)* was founded and carried out the first collaborative investigation, the Arizona Project. These two main events are central and inspired the future developments of investigative journalism, not only in the US but worldwide. In fact, after having participated in the Arizona Project, two reporters and a colleague of them decided to establish the first nonprofit investigative journalism centre, the *Center for Investigative Reporting* in Berkeley, California. Other centres were founded twelve years later, in 1989: the *Center for Public Integrity* in Washington and the *Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism* in the Philippines. 1989 represents also an important moment for investigative journalism in Europe: in fact, in Scandinavia, after the traditional party ties of the press started to dissolve, journalists looked at other professional models. Their attention was captured by *IRE*: in fact, journalists in Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland created in early nineties similar associations. Another fundamental phase of investigative journalism has regarded the early 2000s, when the at the time directors of *IRE*, Brant Houston, and *DICAR* (the defunct *Danish Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting*), Nils Mulvad, decided to organise the first *Global Investigative Journalism Conference (GIJC)*. At the second

*GIJC* in 2003 in Copenhagen a global network of nonprofits engaged with investigative journalism was established. These years witnessed the appearance of other professional organisations on the model of *IRE* in Central Western Europe, of the *Romanian Investigative Journalism Centre* and starting since 2006 the proliferation in the US of nonprofit centres producing exclusively investigative stories. This latter phenomenon has been at the centre of the academic research of Charles Lewis (2007ab; 2009; 2010; 2011), himself founder of the *Center for Public Integrity*. He basically argues that the necessity for investigative journalism to go nonprofit is mainly due to, initially, the commercial media's "*obsession with profits*" that has taken place in the US since the eighties causing a gradual reduction of journalists in the newsrooms (Lewis 2011, 99). This scenario has pushed journalists to assume a more entrepreneurial spirit and philanthropists and foundations to take action to improve the quality of news. Charles Lewis in its last piece of writing about the subject counts in the US the existence of sixty investigative journalism nonprofits whose thirty-eight had been created since 2006 (2011, 109). It may be considered a new cycle of investigative journalism in the US. This study intends to explore the extent to which nonprofit investigative journalism is occurring in Europe. But before going to discussion, some definitions need to be made. First of all, for '*nonprofit investigative journalism*' is meant nonprofit organisations "*solely engaged in the practice of investigative journalism, which can be defined as "serious journalism that takes a comprehensive, exhaustive look at issues that have significant impact on the lives" of the public*" (Lewis 2007a, 7). Secondly, with Europe, this study implies the countries within the European Union. In some parts an extensive picture of the continent Europe is offered but just to give a more complete overview. The relevance of studying nonprofit investigative journalism is related to its proliferation in the United States. The main characteristic of the US centres is to receive financial support from philanthropic foundations engaged with investigative journalism. The emergence of investigative journalism nonprofits assumes a big relevance. Firstly, it is inserted in the general debate about the future of journalism and new business models for journalism. Secondly, it shows a new entrepreneurial spirit within journalists themselves, becoming from employees, managers or entrepreneurs. Thirdly, its interest and relevance regard a journalism done without commercial pressures just following professional values and standards. This occurs in the framework of a definite journalism paradigm as that of investigative journalism characterised by its defence of the public interest and its journalism role's perception as fourth estate and watchdog of democracy. Therefore, the study will contribute to the existing literature about nonprofit



investigative journalism in the US (Lewis 2007ab; 2009; 2010; 2011), foundations' role in nonprofit journalism (Guensburg 2008; Westphal 2009; Kleinsteuber 2009a; 2011; Friedland & Konieczna 2011), and the global scenario of investigative journalism centres (Kaplan 2007) exploring the phenomenon in Europe.

A preliminary research question consists in: '*what nonprofit investigative organisations exist within the borders of the European Union?*'. The existence of nonprofit organisations solely engaged in the practice of investigative journalism has been traced in very few countries within the EU borders: in Romania, the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism*, in Bulgaria, the *Bulgarian Investigative Journalism Center*, and in the UK, the *Bureau of Investigative Journalism*. The preliminary research has been carried out looking at the little literature available on investigative journalism in Europe, in general (van Eijk 2003; 2005) and its single countries (Redelfs 1996; 2007; De Burgh 2000; 2008; Chalaby 2004; von Krogh 2003), but, especially, at the websites of the main networks and resources for investigative journalism (*Global Investigative Journalism Network*; *European Fund for Investigative Journalism*) and addressing some experts (Manfred Redelfs; Brigitte Alfter; Ștefan Căndea; *Centre for Investigative Journalism* staff). In the Summer 2011 apparently two new organizations were founded, *Átlátszó* in Hungary and the *Baltic Centre for Investigative Journalism* based in Latvia. But it was too late to include these two centres in the study. Preliminary research has also pointed out the existence of several centres in the Balkans and in the Black Sea region. The relevance of this study lies also in distinguishing the phenomenon of nonprofit investigative journalism as it occurs in Anglo-American and in post-communist or transition countries. This latter context interestingly requires further investigation, as it will be indicated in the conclusions of this explorative work. In fact, this study offers many cues for new research topics.

The main research questions about the three European nonprofits at the centre of the study are: '*what are the main motives behind the foundation and the participation to these organisations?*'; '*how have they been structured?*'; and '*how do they work?*'. The three nonprofits will be compared on the basis of these questions and their sub-questions. Another comparative perspective regards: '*to what extent is it possible to talk about diffusion of the US nonprofit model in Europe?*'. The concept of diffusion is defined as "*new ideas (business concepts, etc.) originate in one country but, due to their success, penetrate other regions of the world; they disseminate*" (Kleinsteuber 2004, 71). This is a more general level of comparison between the nonprofit investigative journalism organisations in the US and the European centres. A major example of

diffusion occurred in the field of investigative journalism from the US to Europe consists in the creation of professional association in Northern and Central Western Europe on the model of *IRE*. At its light, it will be evaluated if the same concept may be adopted for nonprofit investigative journalism. In addition, a final more speculative research question wonders: ‘*why nonprofit investigative journalism organisations have not yet diffused in Northern and Central Western Europe?*’.

The structure of this work is as follows: the first chapter discusses the strong connections between liberal democracy and investigative journalism. In the second chapter, the history of investigative journalism in the US will be briefly traced to illustrate the emergence of *IRE*, the *Center for Investigative Reporting*, the first nonprofit organisation solely engaged with the practice of investigative journalism, the *Centre for Public Integrity*, *ProPublica* till arriving at the creation of the *Investigative News Network* formed by sixty-two nonprofits. The third chapter looks at the investigative journalism landscape globally but mainly focusing on Europe. It firstly describes the main diverse traits and traditions in European journalism. Secondly, it talks about the changes occurred in investigative journalism with the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, in former Communist countries and Western Europe. The period is characterised by the emergence of professional associations on the model of *IRE* in Northern and Central Western Europe and since the mid-nineties of nonprofits centres in post-communist countries. In early 2000s, investigative journalists started gathering globally in *Global Investigative Journalism Conferences* and forming a *Global Investigative Journalism Network* exclusively animated by nonprofits, either centres or professional associations from all over the world. Looking at the global picture appears more evidently as the nonprofit investigative journalism exists mainly in Anglo-American countries or in countries that have been shifting from authoritarian regimes to more democratic forms. In the fourth chapter, the explorative nature of the empirical research is illustrated. Its finding are further examined in the fifth, sixth and seventh chapters. Each of these is dedicated to an organisation. It starts from the oldest, the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism*, to the smallest, the *Bulgarian Investigative Journalism Center*, and finally the richest, the *Bureau of Investigative Journalism*. In the eighth and final chapter the comparisons between these three organisations and the US nonprofits will be discussed to consider whether diffusion is possible and whether nonprofit investigative journalism will expand in the future to Northern and Central Western Europe.

## Chapter 1: INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM DEMOCRATIC ROLE

Journalism has developed in time in parallel with the political and social system in which it lies. On a normative level Siebert et al. (1956) are the scholars who firstly offered a classification of theories related to the development of the press within a political system. The paradigm of investigative journalism at the centre of this study has certainly its roots in their libertarian theory of the press (Siebert et al. 1956), and in the embodiment of the role of the fourth estate. This normative model has been also the cradle of the journalism paradigm of objectivity, norm which investigative reporting distances from, though sharing some of its assumptions. In fact, both the libertarian theory and objective reporting have been overtaken and criticised consistently, although they remain major references for journalism standards. In this chapter the investigative journalism paradigm will be contextualised in the framework of these critics.

### 1.1 The press as fourth estate

The libertarian theory of the press, according to Siebert et al. (1956), historically refers to the development of the media industry, especially the print market, in England and in the United States of America. Its postulates come from the Enlightenment and the philosophy of Milton, Locke and Mill. Libertarian principles had taken roots since 1644, when Milton published the *Areopagitica*, advocating for freedom of expression. But the first adoption of these principles occurred only in 1689 with the Bill of Rights. In fact, the libertarian model mainly rotates around the affirmation of press freedom in contraposition with the control exerted by the state till then. Libertarian principles had been recognised throughout the eighteenth century and spread all over the world during the nineteenth. *“Under the libertarian concept, the functions of the mass media of communications are to inform and to entertain”* and to be financially independent (Siebert et al. 1956, 51). This theory argues for an open market with a multiplicity of content in which false information and ill-founded opinions will come out through a self-righting process. Siebert et al. points out that, in respect to the function of the press in the society, the libertarian model distinguishes for *“the right and duty of the press to serve as an extralegal check on government. [...] to be the watchdog over the workings of democracy, ever vigilant to spot and expose any arbitrary or authoritarian practice”* (1956, 56). The essence of what has been named to act as the fourth estate of democracy. *“The term “fourth estate” has been used to refer to the press since at least the early 1800s. It has become shorthand to denote the role of the public media as a pillar on which the smooth functioning of a democratic society rests, together with the*

*other three estates- legislative, executive and judiciary”* (Thussu 2008, 1858).

Normatively a society is said to have a high quality of democracy when its press counterbalances the other powers, defending the public interest and enhancing the debate in the public sphere. The formulation ‘fourth estate’ derives from Thomas Carlyle, a British historian who wrote a book in 1841 about the French Revolution. He attributed to Edmund Burke the identification among French Estates-General of the clergy, the aristocracy and the commoners. Carlyle writes “*Burke said there were Three Estates in Parliament; but, in the Reporters’ Gallery yonder, there sat a Fourth Estate more important than they all*” (in Thussu 2008, 1858). The concept of a fourth estate influencing the political debate was further developed in Britain by John Stuart Mill in 1859 who argued that press freedom was necessary for ‘checking and balancing’ the other three branches of the state as formulated by the libertarian thought. Siebert et al. argue that the establishment of freedom of expression influenced the emergence in journalism of the so-called “*theory of objective reporting*” (1956, 60). This journalism paradigm will be illustrated below. The introduction of other media such as cinema and broadcasting put the libertarian model into crisis for the necessity of some degree of governmental control especially in the allocation of limited frequencies. Theorists have therefore modelled another concept for this evolution of the libertarian approach: the social responsibility theory of the press (Siebert et al. 1956). This idea is related to a commission of inquiry that worked between 1942 and 1947 to analyze the state of freedom of the press in the US and individuate ways of improving it. The final report of the commission “*coined the notion of social responsibility*” (McQuail 2005, 171), which involved the media, the government, the journalists and the audience in an effort of contributing to a better informed democracy. It attributes duties next to rights and establishes freedom not only in negative terms but also in positive. The social responsibility theory of the press is something that has remained more as a programmatic intent than a real model. But its spirit may seem to be related to the emergence of investigative journalism in the sixties and to the institutionalisation of its professional ideology in organisational forms. According to McQuail’s distinction between liberal, social responsibility, professional and alternative media models (2005, 185), investigative journalism might be considered an example of the professional model. In a nutshell this approach assumes that “*the institutional and professional autonomy of journalism is also the best guarantee of an adequate watch being kept on those in power*” (McQuail 2005, 186). Somehow it is a model that might be considered a sub-category of social responsibility: the social responsibility of the professionals. The

social responsibility theory of the press criticises the paradigm of objective reporting. In fact, in the report the commission affirms: “*it is no longer enough to report the fact truthfully. It is now necessary to report the truth about the fact*” (Siebert et al. 1956, 88).

## 1.2 Objectivity and other journalism paradigms

At the basis of journalism there is the question what makes news. The answer is strictly related to the journalists’ role, audience and democracy perception. The concept of paradigm derives from the philosophy of science and indicates “*a shared mindset among researchers about the nature of things and their basic properties. Alternatively paradigms infer relationships between phenomena at a higher level of abstraction*” (Høyer & Pöttker 2005, 10). Thus, paradigm may well indicate journalists’ mindset, being it ‘*norm-based*’. Normatively it has been standardised that what makes news follows the so-called news or objective reporting paradigm. According to Høyer and Pöttker, the news paradigm is compound of five elements: a ‘newsworthy’ event, news values factors, the news interview, the inverted pyramid and journalistic objectivity (2005, 11). The affirmation of objectivity represents for journalism the start of its process of professionalisation (Tumber & Prentoulis 2005, 63): when journalists began to identify themselves as a professional community. It is generally recognised that this process took up in the nineteenth century in the United States of America. Journalism has always been considered as an anomalous profession because it is not centred around a shared specialised knowledge. It has not got so definite and clear borders as other disciplines, such as literature and politics, and generally its practice is not related to a precise educational pattern. In the process of journalism professionalisation objectivity has plugged the gap of exoteric knowledge in journalism. The emergence of objectivity as a journalistic norm is linked to technological developments, such as the introduction of photography, which boosted the idea that was possible to offer a truthful picture of the reality, and the initial commodification of news, due to the introduction in the US of the penny press and the appearance of wire services. The adoption of objectivity in journalism has transformed the public sphere from being dominated by parties to be based on “*a vision of “public service” via impartial and independent reporting*” (Schudson & Anderson 2009, 94). The libertarian theory, as well as the norm of objectivity, particularly characterises the press and the practice of journalism typical of the Anglo-American model. But both have diffused worldwide. Especially, the news paradigm has generally been recognised as the normative standard for journalism.

Høyer and Pöttker affirm: “*long before ‘globalisation’ became a catchword, ideas, styles and fashions etc. originating from abroad were imported and domesticated by ‘adopting cultures’ under the false impression of being local inventions. Diffusion is a normal, often an unseen, process, which evolves at an uneven speed between nations*” (2005, 14). In Europe this has happened at different times and at different pace. For Høyer and Pöttker, in fact: “*England came first, then probably Denmark and the rest of Scandinavia. Germany followed suit in the 1950s and the Central Eastern-European press during the 1990s*” (2005, 15). The fact that the American news paradigm has gradually diffused makes more difficult to trace how the others evolved. In fact, next to objective reporting other paradigms such as investigative journalism and entertaining journalism emerged, especially from the sixties on. They both took the move from a new generation of reporters that after the conformism, which had characterised media during the two world wars and post-war, challenged the norm of objectivity under the influence of the counter-culture of the time and the discontent about the Vietnam War. New journalism, as it was called, has introduced different approaches to journalist’s involvement, subjectivity and literary style in writing. It has opened the way to other paradigms and journalistic sub-cultures. These distinguish themselves in the way they criticise objective reporting, that remains the normative reference for the journalistic profession. Among them, one of the main journalism paradigms in the Western world is that of entertaining journalism consisting in tabloidisation in the print press and infotainment in television. This type of journalism has mainly developed within big media corporations. It corresponds to the preponderance of the commercial side of the media industry that considers news a commodity, audience consumers, and democracy a free market place. The news values for this type of journalism are “*humour, showbiz, sex, animals, crime, and pictures*” (Harcup 2010, 120). The debate around entertaining journalism is mainly centred on its democratic functions, especially that of contributing to an informed public sphere. Some argues that sensationalising and dumbing down result in a public sphere more accessible to the masses. Others believe that this populism degrades the democratic and political discourse.

### 1.3 Investigative Journalism Paradigm

The investigative reporting paradigm in the Anglo-American tradition is based on three main elements: “*the investigation be the work of the reporter, not a report of an investigation made by someone else; that the subject of the story involves something of reasonable importance to the reader or viewer; and that others are attempting to hide*

*these matters from the public*” (Ullmann and Honeyman in Harcup 2010, 97). These features conflict with some of the five elements mentioned for the news paradigm, opposing: events with ‘*facts*’; news values with public interest; and objectivity with “*the reporter’s willingness to adopt the role of accuser challenges the notions of formal balance and impartiality so important to much conventional reporting*” (Harcup 2010, 99). Basically, the investigative reporting paradigm is based on the conception of the reporter as “*a watchdog guarding the public interest*” (Thussu 2008, 1858). But the concept of public interest itself is controversial. In fact, it is used with two very different meanings both by investigative journalism and entertainment paradigm supporters. These latter attribute to public interest the notion of ‘*giving the public what it wants*’ (McQuail 2005, 165); while the first conceives as main subjects to investigate abuses of power, corruption, crime, human rights violations, justice malfunctions, professional malpractice (Aucoin 2008, 2530). Using McQuail’s distinction, entertaining journalism represents a ‘*majoritarian*’ view whereas investigative journalism a ‘*unitarian*’ or ‘*absolutist*’ that leads “*to a paternalistic system in which decisions about what is good are decided by guardians or experts*” (2005, 165). That is why it is also called broccoli-journalism. It is the type of journalism that best embodied the conception of the press as a fourth estate. Kovach and Rosenstiel trace back the origins of this conception to the English civil war of the seventeenth century when there was a brief parenthesis of press freedom and the investigatory publications, the *Parliament Scout* and *The Spie*, emerged during 1643-4 (2001, 141). Investigative journalism main target consists in an audience of citizens. In fact, its function is definitely democratic in exerting the mechanism of check and balance over the three branches of the government. “*Monitor the power and offer voice to the voiceless*” is the title that Kovach and Rosenstiel choose for illustrating investigative reporting (2001). Another fundamental feature of this paradigm consists in its methods and techniques. Usually, there are two main trails to follow: documents and people. Chronology, Freedom of Information requests, to go undercover or use hidden recorders, computer-assisted reporting comprise all the tool box of the investigative reporter. As it will be illustrated in the following chapters, investigative reporting has got institutionalised in many countries as a quite strong sub-professional group within journalism. But still there is some criticism about the term. Especially among the British literature (Harcup 2010; Zelizer & Allan 2010), some argue that investigative journalism is just a pretentious and elitist label for what all journalism is supposed to be. Thussu (2008) individuates in the Cold War ideological conflict the representation at its maximum of

the two main threats to the conception of the media as a fourth estate: on the one hand, state control over media, as it was in communist regimes; on the other hand, wild capitalism belief of letting the market select what is news. Subsequent globalisation has posed other issues at stake. It has opened up a global public sphere but with less guardians of the public interest. In addition, many argue that investigative reporting has dramatically declined since the eighties. Harcup (2010), referring especially to Britain, argues that its cycle consisted mainly in three decades: appearing in the sixties, culminating in the seventies, degrading in the eighties. Both in the US and in the UK, cost-cutting, understaffing, speed-up are seen as the main reasons for the decline. But as Matheson argues, and as it will be here explored, looking “*beyond the dominant model of investigative reporting*” the watchdog is just barking in different ways (2010, 84).

In this chapter the normative assumptions behind the paradigm of investigative journalism have been briefly introduced starting with the libertarian theory of the press and its vision of the press as a fourth estate. This model has been characterised by the institutionalisation of the paradigm of objective reporting that has also marked the process of professionalisation in journalism. From the critiques to the libertarian theory and the norm of objectivity other journalism paradigms have emerged, among which investigative reporting. It is said that these developments have mainly occurred in the framework of the Anglo-American model and its media industry. Therefore, the focus is going to move from a normative dimension to the historical developments of investigative journalism firstly, in the US and secondly, elsewhere.

## Chapter 2: INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM IN THE UNITED STATES

In this chapter a brief history of investigative journalism in the United States is traced, developing a theory conceptualised by Mark Feldstein on the cyclic nature of intense investigative reporting and its quiescence (2006). Waves of investigative reporting in the US have characterised the following decades: 1760s - 1770s, 1902-1912 and 1960s-1970s. After having briefly illustrated these three main periods using the literature by Protess et al. (1991) and Aucoin (2005), the institutionalisation of investigative reporting and the emergence of nonprofit investigative journalism will be more extensively tackled. In particular, the creation, next to the historical *Center for Investigative Reporting* and the *Center for Public Integrity*, of *ProPublica* in 2007, and the establishment in 2009 of *Investigative News Network* is presented in terms of a new cycle of the Muckraking Model, mainly elaborating on Lewis’s writings (2007ab; 2009;



2010; 2011).

## 2.1 Cycles in investigative journalism: from early exposés to the Watergate

The Muckraking Model theorized by Feldstein (2006) builds on what Protess et al. observe rapidly in their book *Journalism of Outrage: “the historical pendulum swung toward muckraking as two mutually reinforcing phenomena converged: the demand for information about societal ills from an alienated, literate population of consumers; and a fiercely competitive national media that sought to supply it”* (1991, 36). In fact, this statement for him captures the essence of the causality behind periods historically characterised by investigative journalism and others by its lack. His main argument consists in: *“investigative reporting reaches a critical mass when both its supply (stimulated by new technologies and media competition) and its demand (by an aroused public hungry for exposés in times of turmoil) is high”* (Feldstein 2006, 113). The public demand for investigative reporting is thus signalled by fundamental transition phases in the economic and political context characterised by social tensions. Investigative reporting supply depends on a competitive media environment, as boosting quality journalism in answer to the existing need. According to this model investigative journalism assumes four stages cyclically throughout history. The first stage corresponds to its maximum when there is both a high demand and a high supply. That happened in the American history three times, according to Feldstein: in the period of the American Revolution; during the first industrialisation; and in the age of the Vietnam War and the 1960s political turmoil. The second category regards a high demand but a low supply. It happens mainly when there are social changes but not competition in the media market. As an example for this stage, Feldstein mentions the Populist and the New Deal eras. The third category consists in low demand but high supply. It is associated with “the penny press” of the 1830s and its sensationalistic coverage or with *“the present day, when the new technologies of cable/satellite TV and Internet Web sites provide a kind of pseudo-muckraking, where titillation is more common than substantive public service journalism”* (Feldstein 2006, 114). The fourth and finale stage is characterised by low demand and supply. These “Dark Ages” occurred mainly twice in mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth century. In a brief excursus, these phases of American investigative reporting are illustrated.

The origins of investigative journalism in the United States are attributed to Benjamin Harris, a publisher arrived to Boston from London in order to avoid jail for having offended the British authorities through his press (Protess et al. 1991; Aucoin 2005;

Feldstein 2006). In 1690 he published *Publick Occurences both Forreign and Domestick*, probably the colonies' first newspaper. In fact, because of his exposé on the infringement of basic human rights in the detention of French soldiers by Native Americans, who were British allies, the Massachusetts authorities immediately ceased his publishing licence. Another precursor of American muckraking is James Franklin and his *New England Courant*, which he founded in 1721. Through his articles on the drawbacks of Puritan church leaders' programme against smallpox, Franklin managed to halt the measure. But refusing the dictate "*Published by Authority*" on his newspaper and being too critical of the policy against piracy, he was, firstly, jailed in 1722. And secondly, his *Courant* was suppressed the year after. According to Aucoin, "*the spirited exposés published by Harris and James Franklin planted the seed of journalism's tradition of exposure on American soil*" (2005, 20). But the early age of exposé journalism recurred in the decade between 1760s and 1770s. Starting from 1769 and for the whole period of the American Revolution, colonial newspapers often reported about the corruption and malfeasance of British officials and their governance, fuelling the rebellion of the colonists. The high public demand of putting an end to British abuses was supplied by their coverage on early newspapers. But after the Revolution, in the 1790s, with the emergence of the Federalist and Republican factions, journalism became strongly partisan. They were the years of the party-press. The publication of exposés and scandals was used as a weapon to hit political rivals. The nineteenth century, especially in its early decades, witnessed infrequent and sporadic exposés. Protess et al. attribute this reduction to a combination of factors such as scarce technology, government measures, demographic trends, the emphasis on political speeches and the emergence of the penny-press. This period, for Feldstein, is characterised by a high supply related to politically driven exposés but a low demand in terms of readership. Since 1870s newspapers transformed in mass media and developed a more commercial approach together with professional standards. Newspapers publishers such as Joseph Pulitzer, William Randolph Hearst, Adolph S. Ochs, E. W. Scripps, Joseph Medill and others supported investigative stories and journalists as Nellie Bly and Ida B. Wells became famous for their exposés. "*The golden age of public service journalism*" (Protess et al. 1991, 34; Feldstein 2006, 109), or "*muckraking*" (Protess et al. 1991, 34; Aucoin 2005, 32) refer to the decade between 1902 and 1912. It overlaps with the period of the American industrialisation and the so-called "*Progressive era*". The public demand for reforms in the corporate sector constituted a fertile ground for exposés. The unveiling of the vicious cycle "*big business corrupted*

*powerful politicians, which resulted in social injustice*” (Protess et al. 1991, 38) reinforced a sense of outrage in the public opinion, which led to corrective measure. In the media sector the supply of exposés was boosted by the introduction in the market of national mass-circulation magazines, the establishment of newspaper chains and news-wire services, innovations such as photography and in printing. The term “*muck-rake*” was coined in 1906, from a speech of the President Theodore Roosevelt<sup>1</sup>. Actually, Roosevelt was known to be friend and close collaborator of some of the most famous muckrakers: Upton Sinclair and Lincoln Steffens. The main magazine that published most of the muckrakers’ work was *McClure’s*. On it, since 1902, Lincoln Steffens, Ida Tarbell and Ray Stannard Baker had published their series on corruption in the local administrations of American principal cities, on the Rockefeller’s Standard Oil Company and on the discrimination of minorities. Muckraking contributed to the progressive myth indicating where there was need for policy reforms or for correcting wrongdoing. For instance, the promulgation of the Pure Food and Drug Act, a measure on safety and hygiene standards in the food industry, had followed the debate aroused by Sinclair’s exposure of the conditions in the industry. Other examples of reforms in relation with muckrakers’ exposés are: antitrust legislation against corporate monopolies, the introduction of income taxes at a federal level for redistributing wealth, the regulation of child labour, workers’ compensation and maternity pension. As the most relevant reforms were achieved, muckrakers, their audience and the public opinion embraced a state of quiescence. By 1917 the muckraking era succumbed. Feldstein writes “*the half century after the muckrakers- from World War I to the Vietnam War- was a kind of “Dark Ages” for investigative reporting*” (2006, 110). During the two wars and the recovery that followed, the country witnessed a rediscovered cohesion around its political and economic institutions in terms both of public opinion and of media alignment: “*objectivity and deference to authority had become the dominant journalistic norms*” (Protess et al. 1991, 45). Aucoin (2005) attributes these “*Dark Ages*” of investigative journalism to the affirmation of the journalists’ professional standards in 1940s and 1950s. Especially, the adoption of the paradigm of objectivity,

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<sup>1</sup> On March 17th, 1906, Roosevelt, recalling a character from the novel by John Bunyans, “*Pilgrim’s Progress*” (1678), said: “*the Man with the Muck-rake, the man who could look no way but downward with the muck-rake in his hands; Who was offered a celestial crown for his muck-rake, but who would neither look up nor regard the crown he was offered, but continued to rake to himself the filth of the floor*” (Feldstein 2006, 106). Many muckrakers at that time considered it an adversary speech as the American President concluded: “*The men with the muckrakes are often indispensable to the well being of society, but only if they know when to stop raking the muck, and to look upward to the celestial crown above them, to the crown of worthy endeavor*” (Protess et al. 1991, 6).

or “*straight reporting*”, had transformed in bias any analytical or critical attempt deviating from the balanced presentation of different sources’ point of view, making sometimes journalists mere note-takers. Key figure in reinvigorating an investigative impulse was Edward R. Murrow, the reporter of the news television programme on CBS “*See it now*”. On March 9<sup>th</sup>, 1954 he broadcasted the first television’s investigative piece targeting US President Joseph McCarthy showing his ““*inconsistencies*,” “*half-truths*,” and “*distortions*”” (Protess et al. 1991, 46). The programme had a big impact in the decline of the consensus around the President.

Murrow may be considered an anticipator of the next important era of investigative reporting. In fact, “*by 1960s, [...] a new muckraking age was born as a younger generation of crusading journalists challenged segregation, the Vietnam War, political corruption, and corporate malfeasance*” (Feldstein 2006, 111). In the media sphere, the introduction of the Freedom of Information Act, in 1967, together with technological innovations, as photocopying and portable tape-recorders, plus the adoption of groundbreaking techniques, as rudimental computer-assisted reporting, provided new tools for journalists to conduct investigations. Simultaneously, the general lack of confidence in the American administration fuelled by anti-war sentiments and counter-movements prepared the ground for a new emergence of investigative reporting. Three cases particularly characterised this resurgence: Seymour Hersh’s revelations in 1969 around the My Lai massacre in Vietnam; Neil Sheehan’s disclosure on the *New York Times* of the Pentagon Papers, in 1971; and the unveiling of Watergate scandal started in 1972 by Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein on the *Washington Post*. Hersh’s and Sheehan’s investigations unveiled the misconducts and the lack of transparency of the US government in the Vietnam War, its cover-ups and its horrors. Nixon’s attempts to stop the leak of the Pentagon Papers brought to the establishment of Plumbers’ unit with the mission of secretly blocking the leaking of classified information. Members of this covert unit were later involved in the Watergate scandal. This started in 1972 when five burglars broke into the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee, in the Watergate building complex. The *Washington Post* started investigating on the case. Its reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein found out the involvement of the Central Intelligence Agency behind what initially seemed only a burglary. The mission of the burglars was to disseminate listening devices in order to spy Nixon’s political adversaries in view of the coming elections. After the scandal blew up from newspapers, to courts and finally on television, in 1974 Nixon resigned from office due to the evidence of his complicity in the Watergate cover-up, if not in the break-in itself.

It is the unique case in the American history of a President's resignation. But the main significance of the Watergate is within journalism itself. In fact, it still represents the symbol and the myth of investigative reporting. 1974 was nominated the "*Year of the Muckrakers*" by the *Time* magazine because it saw four investigative stories been awarded of the Pulitzer Prize. The seventies were characterised by a strong commitment of news organisations in the "*recruitment, training, and sustenance of investigative journalists*" (Aucoin 2005, 110). Investigative teams proliferated within newspapers and new magazines with an investigative approach were created. Investigative journalism went through processes of institutionalisation and professionalisation.

## 2.2 IRE: institutionalisation of investigative reporting

Ensuing these years of extreme popularity of investigative journalism, *IRE*, *Investigative Reporters and Editors*, was founded in February 1975, as a nonprofit organisation under the law of Indiana. Aucoin (2005) and van Eijk (2003) are the main sources for tracing the history of *Investigative Reporters and Editors*. Everything started in Reston, Virginia, where a group circa thirteen journalists<sup>2</sup> met to discuss about establishing an association. Their intentions were to facilitate collaboration between investigative journalists and at the same time to set the standards of the craft. The name of the association, Ire, recalls the "*sense of outrage*" that investigative journalism should provoke. The participants of this initial meeting agreed on organising a national conference within a year. Thus, on June 18-20, 1976, Indianapolis hosted *IRE* national conference. There were more than 300 attendees. Two main initiatives emerged: the creation of a resource centre at the Ohio State University within 1977 and the so-called Arizona Project. In fact, just a week before the conference colleague and *IRE* member Don Bolles died in a car explosion. He was investigating the extension of the Mafia in the Arizona State but the circumstances of his death were not yet clear. *IRE* initiative was to continue Bolles's work. Robert Greene of *Newsday* was at the helm of the team of thirty-six journalists from twenty-eight different media outlets who participated at the Arizona Project. Their aim consisted in publishing a series of stories on political corruption and organized crime in Arizona. The research part was completed within

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<sup>2</sup> Among them there were: Myrta Pulliam and Harley Bierce of the *Indianapolis Star*; Paul Williams, journalism professor of the Ohio State University; Robert Friedly, director of communications in a church in Indianapolis; columnists Jack Anderson and Les Whitten; David Burnham of the *New York Times*; and Len Downie, of the *Washington Post*.

December 1976 and the twenty-three-part series<sup>3</sup> was ready in February 1977. It was the first and the biggest ever made nonprofit and collaborative investigation in the American history. The Arizona Project meant for *IRE* both a positive burst in its membership both tensions and financial crisis<sup>4</sup>. In October 1976, *IRE* founding member, Paul Williams, also suddenly died. He was the main contact the organisation had with the Ohio State University and his death together with financial difficulties forced *IRE* to close its temporary offices in Indianapolis in 1977 and seek the support of other universities for its projects. In 1978 *IRE* moved to the University of Missouri School of Journalism, the oldest and best-rated journalism department in the US. Consequently, *IRE* members nominated John Ullmann, a Missouri instructor, Executive Director of the association. In 1998 finally the resource centre planned in the first conference was opened and the association started publishing the *IRE Journal*. Another activity of *IRE* consists in the attribution since 1980 of awards for the best investigative reporting. The individuation of the criteria to select and evaluate journalistic pieces was a first step in the formulation of a definition of investigative reporting that *IRE* recognises in: “*It is the reporting, through one’s own work product and initiative, matters of importance which some persons or organizations wish to keep secret*” (Greene in Ullmann and Honeyman 1983 in van Eijk 2005, 17). According to Aucoin, “*it represents the first time investigative journalists established an official and generally agreed-upon definition of their craft*” (2005, 132). Another important contribution *IRE* gave to the practice consists in the establishment in 1989 of the *Missouri Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting* (MICAR) that in 1994 became the *National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting* (NICAR) passing from the Missouri University under *IRE* direct administration. The institutionalisation of computer-assisted reporting represents a further shift of investigative reporting towards a higher professionalisation because of the increased expertise required to its practice. Another contribution in this direction is represented by the discussion *IRE* conducted throughout the 1980s about journalism ethics after a series of embarrassing libel lawsuits due to the application of very low

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<sup>3</sup> It dealt with: “*the structure of organized crime activity in Arizona; the tradition of land-development fraud in the state; drug-dealing, gambling, and prostitution throughout the state; problems in the administration of justice; and ties between Arizona politicians and members of organized crime*” (Aucoin 2005, 154).

<sup>4</sup> Problems started when two reporters of the team broke the agreement initially made by all the participants that nobody would have profited individually from this collective work. Other difficulties started when four lawsuits forced *IRE* to sustain expensive legal costs causing almost the bankruptcy of the association.

standards in their reporting. But the creation and growth<sup>5</sup> of a professional association as IRE “led to the institutionalisation of investigative journalism in American newsroom” (Aucoin 2005, 13) and “facilitated professionalization of journalism in the US on a level and scale that is unprecedented in any other country” (van Eijk 2003, 27).

### 2.3 The nonprofit cycle of investigative journalism

Feldstein notes that, at the end of the sixties and especially during the seventies, “nonprofit organizations devoted to institutionalizing watchdog journalism, such as Investigative Reporters and Editors, the Center for Investigative Reporting, and the Fund for Investigative Journalism<sup>6</sup>, took root” (2006, 111). These three institutions of American investigative reporting may be considered precursors of a phenomenon that has been assuming more and more relevance till booming since 2007. In fact, the definition of nonprofit investigative journalism brings back to a paper written by Charles Lewis in that year on the *Growing Importance of Nonprofit Journalism*. They are “nonprofit ownership outlets [...] solely engaged in the practice of investigative journalism”<sup>7</sup> (Lewis 2007a, 7). In that paper Lewis discusses only two American nonprofit investigative journalism organisations: the *Center for Investigative Reporting*, founded in Berkeley in 1977, and the *Center for Public Integrity*, established by him in 1989 in Washington DC. But a more recent piece of writing of him counts “sixty ‘new and not-so-new non-profit journalism sites/organisations, providing citizens with [...] serious, public service journalism’”. Of these, “thirty-eight [...] had been created since 2006” (Lewis 2011, 108-9). Thereby, it is here argued that this boom of nonprofit investigative journalism organisations represents another cycle in the Muckraking Model. Even if the precursors of this wave were established in other times, many organisations have sprouted up during the years of the global economic crisis. In fact, if Lewis considers as main motives behind the creation of nonprofit ventures the “rising

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<sup>5</sup> *Investigative Reporters and Editors* currently offers: conferences and training, comprehending fellowships and scholarships; a Database Library and training in computer-assisted reporting; a resource centre containing more than 23,250 investigative stories, more than 3,000 tipsheets; the *IRE Awards*; monitoring on the legislation about Freedom of Information and the First Amendment; a job centre; the *IRE Journal* and other publications; a collaborative platform for journalists.

<sup>6</sup> The *Fund for Investigative Journalism* has offered since 1969 research grants to investigative reporters. It was established on the previously existing *Phil Stern’s Fund* and it permitted Pulitzer awarded Seymour Hersh to conduct his investigation on the My Lay massacre.

<sup>7</sup> Lewis adopts Aucoin’s (2005) definition of investigative journalism as “serious journalism that takes a comprehensive, exhaustive look at issues that have significant impact on the lives” of the public” (2007a, 7).

*frustration with the inherent editorial reticence and practical limitations of the commercial news media began to occur in the 1980s and especially the 1990s*” due to “*the corporate obsession with profits*” that gradually has reduced newsroom editorial capacity of 33%, according to a study by Leonard Downie Jr. and Michael Schudson (Lewis 2011, 98-100). But this dramatic situation of American media, especially newspapers, has been even worsened by the economic crisis. This big turmoil has generated the demand for more in-depth journalism able to explain the complex problems global economy is facing. At the same time, the crisis of traditional news outlets has created the conditions for these organisations to experiment new models of doing investigative journalism. Feldstein's theory has the gap of not bringing in any real audience data to support his consideration about the demand. That is also the gap of this study. Certainly, it represents a limit in the analysis. Even the fact that Lewis's list of sixty nonprofit organisations including also some that do not solely practice investigative journalism requires to downsize a little the phenomenon. But still the argument seems plausible. It is relevant to assert that in the US nonprofit journalism has existed since 1846, time when the *Associated Press* was established<sup>8</sup> (Lewis 2010). But the turning point of nonprofit funding for news organisations has been represented by the contribution of foundations to *Public Service Broadcasting (PBS)* and *National Public Radio (NPR)* started in 1980s. In fact, foundations’ support permitted American public broadcasting to perk up from a disastrous economic situation and to be able to improve their programming. From then on, nonprofit journalism has developed in the US especially in the field of investigative reporting, till literally booming in recent years between 2007 and 2011. “*The emergence of a new, non-profit journalism ecosystem of local and national reporting centres*” (Lewis 2011) has been possible because of the existence in the US of many philanthropic foundations and their decision to invest in journalism. There are more than twenty-three foundations of different types that have contributed to the development of nonprofit journalism. But even if very recently the debate among American journalism studies scholars has been focused on nonprofit journalism in general (Lewis 2007ab, 2009, 2010, 2011; Guensburg 2008; Downie & Schudson 2009; Westphal 2009; Brown 2010; Friedland & Konieczna 2011), it must be recognised its special relevance in investigative journalism. In the following paragraphs

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<sup>8</sup> Other illustrious examples comprehend some nonprofit owned newspapers (*The Christian Science Monitor*, *The Union Leader*, *The Day*, *The Anniston Star*, *Delaware State News*) and magazines (*Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, *Mother Jones*, *Harper's*, *Consumer Reports*, *AARP The Magazine*, *National Geographic*).



the main nonprofit investigative journalism organisations will be introduced: the oldest, the *Center for Investigative Reporting*, the biggest, the *Centre for Public Integrity* and the richest, *ProPublica*, and their ecosystem of sixty-two entities, the *Investigative News Network*. The majority of the information illustrated below derives from Charles Lewis's writings (2007ab; 2009; 2010; 2011).

### 2.3.1 *Center for Investigative Reporting*

The *Center for Investigative Reporting* (CIR) brings back to the creation of *Investigative Reporters and Editors*. In fact, it was the collaborative spirit of the Arizona Project to have inspired Lowell Bergman, David Weir and Dan Noyes and their foundation of the centre. Bergman and Noyes took part in the *IRE* project. In the same period, both Bergman and Weir lost their jobs at *Rolling Stones* because its newsroom had moved to New York. In 1977, the three reporters established the organisation and started operating from Bergman's house with a \$3,000 grant from the *Phil Stern's Fund*. Till recently the staff of the *Center for Investigative Reporting* counted a small team of seven people. Nowadays, on the website it is possible to read the biographies of twenty-one CIR employees plus other sixteen working at its state-oriented newsroom, *California Watch*, launched in 2009. CIR has usually had an operational year budget between \$1 and \$2 million. CIR results as a nonprofit, tax exempt 501(c)(3), organisation incorporated in California. Its structure comprehends: the Editorial staff led by Robert Rosenthal, Executive Director since 2007; a Board of Directors, chaired by Phil Bronstein of the media corporation, Hearst Newspapers; and an Advisory Board, headed by Julie Hanna, entrepreneur in the microfinance initiative Kiva. In both bodies the names of CIR founders figure together with others of the likes of Seymour Hersh, Sarah Cohen, Ben Bagdikian, Len Downie and Mike Wallace. The centre counts also on the support of the Law Firm Davis Wright Tremaine LLP and has as Board of Directors Vice President Judy Alexander, libel attorney. The mission of the *Center for Investigative Reporting* has been from its start "*to reveal injustice and abuse of power through the tools of journalism, to provide the public with the information needed to participate in democracy and bring about needed reforms*" (IRS 2009, 1). CIR's main activities are clearly labelled on the documents of the Internal Revenue Service as reporting, documentary production and distribution, and support for freelance reporters in forms of small funds to contribute to investigative projects otherwise unsustainable. On the IRS Return Form published on CIR website the main subject areas of the organisation's scrutiny are enlisted as "*environment, criminal justice, money and politics and*

*government oversights*” (2009, 2). *California Watch*, instead, more specifically engages with “*in-depth, high-impact reporting on issues such as education, public safety, health care and the environment and then publishes its stories in news outlets around the state*” (IRS 2009, 25). But one of the most peculiar characteristics of the organisation consists in its combination of nonprofit funding from foundations and individual donations, with contracts revenues from media outlets. This is reflected in the way the organisation distributes its investigative work. In fact, Lewis writes: “*the CIR modus operandi has always been to release its investigative findings the way a freelance journalist would [...] through major media outlets. As its website describes, “We produce multiple stories from a single investigation – for television, radio, print and the Web – and release them in coordination for maximum reach and impact”*” (2007a, 25). Among its media partners enlisted on the website there are television, newspapers, radio, syndicates and news services, magazines and online. What deserves special notice is the collaboration with the *PBS* programme *Frontline* whose *CIR* has co-produced more than twenty-three television documentaries. The centre’s strategy of distribution is characterised by offering the material exclusively to a single media outlet. In the precious archive of the investigations *CIR* has carried out since its inception, 1484 products are categorised in a friendly database, searchable according to topic, outlet of publication, reporter, date and media format. On the website sixty-four individual donors and foundations are disclosed. Through *California Watch*, the *Center for Investigative Reporting* has adopted new approaches in respect to the changing landscape of journalism. Firstly, it has embraced new models of storytelling based on a multi-platform distribution of the investigative story in order to reach a larger and more diverse audience, therefore drastically revising the previous exclusivity tactic. Secondly, it has enhanced the participation of the citizens, the collaboration and the networking with citizen journalists, organisations, and the foundations themselves.

### 2.3.2 *Center for Public Integrity*

The *Center for Public Integrity* (*CPI*) was established in 1989 by Charles Lewis, the main theorizer of nonprofit journalism and contributor to its trend. The motives behind the decision of initiating a nonprofit organisation ‘*solely engaged in the practice of investigative journalism*’ are well explained in several of his research writings starting from 2007. Basically, Lewis brings his personal experience as an example of that “*rising frustration with the inherent editorial reticence and practical limitations of the commercial news media began to occur in the 1980s and especially the 1990s*” (2011,

98). That was mainly due to the increasing interest from the finance world in the dividends of media groups, privileging commercial revenues to quality journalism. This “*corporate obsession with profits increased throughout the 1980s*” (Lewis 2011, 99). The decades afterwards saw the situation even worsening for the arrival of computers and the Internet that have transformed the news cycle in a 24/7 uninterrupted flow penalizing especially newspapers from being competitive. These changes have resulted since then in two worrisome facts: newspapers have reduced their editorial staff capacity of a 33% (Downie and Schudson 2009 in Lewis 2011, 100), the same for television newsroom; while people working in public relations doubled. In this sense, Lewis had personally witnessed this pattern in the production of *CBS* flagship programme *60 Minutes* where staff and budget were drastically reduced in 1987. The following year he quit *CBS* and dedicated himself to the creation of the *Center for Public Integrity* where he remained at the helm for fifteen year till 2004. Nowadays, *CPI* counts on fifty-two journalists working full-time. It has an annual budget that varies between \$ 4 and \$ 5 million. *CPI* particularly cares for transparency and accountability as its core values. Therefore, it publishes on its website the Annual Tax Returns and in-house Reports. As *CIR*, the *Center for Public Integrity* is a tax exempt 501(c)(3) organisation incorporated in Washington DC. “*The Center is governed by a board of directors, who in turn hires and supervises its executive director*” (*Center for Public Integrity* 2011). At the moment, the Executive Director is Bill Buzenberg and the Board of Directors comprehends twenty-two among journalists and media people. Charles Lewis is one of them. The chairman of the Board is also in this case a law professional, Bruce A. Finzen. In the Board a presence is particularly significant: Arianna Huffington, co-founder and editor-in-chief of the *Huffington Post*. In 2009 she had announced the creation of the *Huffington Post Investigative Fund*. The following year, its staff and project merged in the *Center for Public Integrity* with an additional financial support from the *Knight Foundation*. The centre also comprehends the Advisory Council, which counts eighteen members with variegate expertise. *CPI*’s mission, as reported on its IRS Return Form, is “*to produce original investigative journalism about significant public issues to make institutional power more transparent and accountable*” (2010a, 2). *CPI* has contributed to the establishment of other organisations and initiatives. In fact, in 1997 Charles Lewis created the *International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ)*, “*the first network – now consisting of 100 people in 50 countries – of some of the world’s preeminent investigative reporters working with each other to produce original international enterprise journalism*”

(Lewis 2007a, 2015). Specifically, *ICIJ* carries out big cross-border investigative projects on transnational crime, corruption and power misuse. Since 1998, every two years, *ICIJ* also deals with the assignment of an award for *Outstanding International Investigative Reporting* to noteworthy cross-border investigations. *ICIJ* full-time staff is part of the Center for Public Integrity but it has a separate Advisory Committee.

Another creature of *CPI* is *Global Integrity*, an independent nonprofit started as a centre project which got in 2004 separate autonomy. The idea goes back to 1999 to the collaboration between Charles Lewis, Nathaniel Heller and the South-African political scientist Marianne Camerer about new ways of “*monitoring and reporting on corruption, government accountability and openness around the world*” (Lewis 2007a, 16). *Global Integrity* main products are country reports and analyses on corruption and open governance according to “*a more academic, social science orientation and quantitative methodological component*” (Lewis 2011, 107). In addition to the *ICIJ* and *Global Integrity*, Charles Lewis felt the necessity to found another nonprofit to support *CPI* from legal threats, the *Fund for Independence in Journalism*. The Fund “*was able to raise roughly five million dollars in contributed support, and obtain written assurances from five respected law firms to defend the Center for Public Integrity against future libel litigation, on a case-by-case, pro bono basis*” (Lewis 2008). In 2008 the fund deliberately entered an indefinite period of inactivity and its function has been absorbed in *CPI* capacity. A recent initiative of the current *CPI* Executive Director consists in the establishment of a new online platform launched at the beginning of 2011, *iWatch News*. It is “*the Center's online publication dedicated to investigative and accountability reporting. It provides original and exclusive daily stories as well as in-depth investigations and commentary*” (Center for Public Integrity 2011). At the very beginning Lewis got funding to start *CPI* from “*a foundation, some companies, some labour unions, and a consulting contract with ABC News*” (Lewis 2011, 103). In 1995 the centre deliberated not to accept money from “*governments, corporations, political parties, advocacy organizations, or anonymous donors*”, therefore, they stopped getting money from companies and labour unions (Lewis 2011, 103). The main financial supporters of the *Center for Public Integrity* are foundations like MacArthur, Knight, Ford, Schumann, Carnegie, *Open Society Institute*, Annenberg, Newman, etc, and all donors are disclosed on the centre’s website. Lewis describes *CPI*’s modus operandi as focused on systemic issues “*using a 'quasi-journalistic, quasi political science' approach, in order to publish sweeping reports about government and public policy distortions of democracy which also name names*” (2011, 103). In fact, among the most

popular works of the centre there are the series of books *The Buying of the President* about the people who finance presidential elections campaigns and candidates and their possible conflicts of interests. The hierarchy inside the organisation is well described by Lewis's words: "*no reporting project is initiated or final-approved for publication without the personal approval of the executive director, who functions essentially as both the executive editor and publisher*" (2011, 104). The subjects of its journalism prevalently refer to "*money and politics, government waste/fraud/abuse, the environment, healthcare reform, the financial system, national security and state government transparency*" (Center for Public Integrity 2011). The way the Center for Public Integrity diffuses its investigative products and outcomes differs from the Center for Investigative Reporting: in fact, conversely it doesn't make partnerships or contracts with news organisations, but it presents its findings using the modalities of public communication, basically, press conferences. Thus, no revenues is made on the investigations themselves, they are all distributed for free. Only the *International Consortium of Investigative Journalists* search media partnerships for the diffusion of their stories. Press conferences are usually held at the *National Press Club*. An important way of directly disseminating the findings of CPI investigation to the public has been the publication of books, sixteen in total. But since 1999, CPI has also invested on its websites as tool for reaching his readership. Lewis writes that in its first fifteen years of existence the Center for Public Integrity has published more than 275 reports (2007a).

### 2.3.3 ProPublica

Particularly significant in terms of investment and echo in the nonprofit investigative journalism field is *ProPublica*. Its peculiarity mainly consists in the fact that it has been founded and chaired by its main donor. As Lewis observes: "*Three of newest, most financially robust ventures were founded by donors themselves - ProPublica (Herb and Marion Sandler) in New York, The Bay Citizen (Warren Hellman) in San Francisco, and the Texas Tribune (John Thornton) in Austin, Texas*" (2011, 108). Marion and Herbert Sandler have announced the new venture at the end of 2007. Operations, then, began in 2008. The couple made its fortune selling the Golden West Financial Corporation, a small saving and loan business, in 2006. The Sandler family has engaged in a three-year annual contribution of \$10 million to *ProPublica*. This major involvement of the donors has been criticised by many and poses certain problems in terms of editorial independence but also of Democratic bias. In fact, *ProPublica*

founders have often donated to the Democrats and adhered to the Democratic Alliance. Nevertheless, *ProPublica* declares to work “*in an entirely non-partisan and non-ideological manner, adhering to the strictest standards of journalistic impartiality*” (*ProPublica* 2011). The organisation counts a full-time staff of thirty-four journalists and eight people with administrative tasks. On the website it is stated that 2011 annual budget consists of about \$10 million. The nonprofit in the ‘About Us’ section reflects that “*investigative journalism is at risk*” continuing illustrating the crisis in the publishing business. It reports that “*a 2005 survey by Arizona State University of the 100 largest U.S. daily newspapers showed that 37% had no full-time investigative reporters, a majority had two or fewer such reporters, and only 10% had four or more. Television networks and national magazines have similarly been shedding or shrinking investigative units*” (*ProPublica* 2011). Time and budget constraints are considered other fundamental enemies for reporters at commercial newsrooms to dig deeper into facts. *ProPublica* is registered as a nonprofit 501(c)(3), exempt from taxes, and it is based in New York. Its structure comprehends: a Governing Board, a Journalism Advisory Board and Business Advisory Council. In the first body, Herbert Sandler himself chairs seven directors among whom there is also the Executive Director, Paul Steiger. These organisms are not involved in any phases of the news production until after publication. *ProPublica*’s mission is written on the Annual IRS Return form in the terms of an independent, nonprofit, “*newsroom that produces investigative journalism in the public interest*” and “*focuses exclusively on truly important stories, institutions, using the moral force of investigative journalism to spur reform through the sustained spotlighting of wrongdoing*” (2010b, 2). Apart from the major support of the Sandler family and foundation, *ProPublica* has benefited from other contributions from foundations and individuals. It is interesting to highlight the intention of accepting advertising starting from 2011: “*we are constantly exploring possible new revenue streams, although philanthropy, in large gifts and small, will continue to be our principal source of income for the foreseeable future*” (*ProPublica* 2011). On the organisation Tax Return of 2010 forty-one donors are enlisted and a note states: “*our number of donors exceeded 1300 for the year, up to twelve-fold from 2009, as we raised more than \$3.8 million from donors other than our founders*” (IRS 2010b, 33-34). Reporters’ beats comprehend a huge variety of subjects and indicate a high specialisation within the newsroom. They sweep from Healthcare to Business and Finance, from Education to Energy, from Government spending and accountability to Environment, from Unemployment to National Security. Other more technical

expertises regard the sphere of Computer-assisted reporting, Freedom of Information and government transparency, but also Legal Issues and blogging. Stories are published and distributed trying to reach the maximum impact. That means that the most significant stories “*are offered exclusively to a traditional news organization, free of charge, for publication or broadcast*” (ProPublica 2011). ProPublica’s media partners range from TV “*60 Minutes*” to the *New York Times* including also radio programmes, magazines and online news outlets. On its own website the organisation publishes its investigations under Creative Common licence inviting others to republish the story. For disseminating its work as much as possible ProPublica affirms of engaging in communication efforts to make other media pick its stories. Sometimes partnerships with others “*involve close collaboration between reporters and editors at ProPublica and another news organization. Sometimes they involve multiple partners*” (ProPublica 2011). On its website under the section investigation it is possible to count twenty-four stories. It is important in this case to mention that ProPublica was the first online outlet to win the *Investigative Reporting Pulitzer Prize* in 2010 for its reporting on the consequences of the Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. In a study about nonprofit funding in journalism, its authors, Friedland and Konieczna, argue: “ProPublica is the exception in the field of nonprofit journalism”. That is because “*while it offers an example of what could be done with sufficient funding, [...] it does not represent the future of the field of nonprofit journalism in the U.S., because few if any other organizations are likely to be the recipients of such significant founding gifts*” (2011, 25).

#### 2.3.4 Investigative News Network

2009 represents a turning point for nonprofit investigative journalism in the US. In fact, in that year, the *Associated Press* officially announced a deal for distributing to its member newspapers news releases deriving from the investigative stories produced by the *Center for Investigative Reporting*, the *Center for Public Integrity*, the *Investigative Reporting Workshop* and ProPublica. The announcement occurred at an IRE annual national conference crowded by more than eight hundreds participants (Lewis 2009, 18). *Investigative Reporting Workshop* is Lewis’s new ventures<sup>9</sup>. It conducts

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<sup>9</sup> It is based at the American University in Washington DC operating under the university’s nonprofit tax exempt 501(c)(3) status but it seeks direct support for its operations from foundations and individual donors.

investigative projects destined to multimedia publishing either on a national or international level, but it represents at the same time a lab for “*researching and experimenting with new models for creating and delivering investigative projects*” (*Investigative Reporting Workshop* 2011). In this sense the university based initiative started in the Spring 2008 has been fundamental in developing another organisation, the *Investigative News Network (INN)*. *INN* has been founded at a conference in 2009 in New York which was organised mainly by Charles Lewis, “*Bill Buzenberg, [...] and Robert Rosenthal [...], and the conference moderator, Brant Houston, the Knight Chair in Investigative and Enterprise Reporting at the University of Illinois*” (Lewis 2009, 17). In that occasion, the leaders of twenty nonprofit investigative journalism organisations discussed and agreed on a document named the ‘*Pocantico Declaration*’, so-called from the name of the building within the *Rockefeller Brothers Fund*’s location where it was held. The document nominates a steering committee in charge of supervising the initial phase of the creation of a network of investigative journalism nonprofits, and identifies the main goals of the *Investigative News Network*. These basically consist in enhancing the collaboration among its members editorially and in more practical terms. Currently, *INN* is compound of sixty-two nonprofits of which only twenty-one had already come into existence before 2006. In the ‘*Pocantico Declaration*’, “*an urgent need to nourish and sustain the emerging investigative journalism ecosystem to better serve the public*” (*INN* 2009) appears to be the main motive behind the establishment of the network. The sixty-two member nonprofits and this emerging investigative journalism ecosystem have been also at the centre of a study carried out by Charles Lewis at the *Investigative Reporting Workshop* not casually titled, precisely *New Journalism Ecosystem Thrives*. It is “*the first comprehensive analysis of the new journalism ecosystem*” (Lewis 2011, 108). Two nonprofits based in Canada and in Portorico figure both among *INN* members in Lewis’s study, and suggest that the network aims to expand its membership abroad. Lewis prospects “*the network will inevitably become international, as numerous nonprofit news organizations exist around the world, many of them producing outstanding journalism*” (2009, 17). The member organisations are very diverse and some of them, as Lewis recognises, are not specifically engaged with investigative reporting. For instance, “*three of the 60 organizations included in The New Journalism Ecosystem actually fund investigative reporting — the Alicia Patterson Foundation, the Fund for Investigative Journalism and the Investigative Fund at the Nation Institute*” but they are included for their direct involvement in some publishing initiatives (Lewis 2010). A very interesting fact is that



“of the sixty organisations, fourteen are part of universities or separately incorporated but at universities, bringing in an educational dimension of inculcating the journalistic traditions and techniques to a new generation of reporters and editors” (Lewis 2011, 109). In fact, this collaboration with the universities in establishing investigative reporting centres, even if it does not represent a complete novelty, it has assumed a significant dimension in the US. *Investigative News Network* has not yet received his-own tax exempt 501(c)(3) status, therefore it is financially operating under the *Center for Public Integrity*. *INN*’s operational budget plan for 2011 corresponds to a total amount of both revenues and expenses \$851,795. *INN* has four staff members: the Executive Director, Kevin Davis, the Editorial Director, the Director of Technology and the Network Administrative Assistant. And apart from other minor expenses, an important voice in the budget regards the distribution to *INN* members of the revenues from the syndications operated through the network. Next to its core staff, the organisation has a Board of Directors chaired by Brant Houston and formed by other nine directors, among whom there are Charles Lewis, Robert Rosenthal and William Buzenberg. The requirements to join the network for an organisation are: to have nonprofit status, to be transparent about the donors, to practice non-partisan journalism, and to “*apply high journalistic standards for accuracy and fairness and which prevent conflicts of interest that compromise the integrity of the work*” (*INN* 2011). The mission of the *Investigative News Network* as stated in the ‘*Pocantico Declaration*’ is “*to aid and abet [...] the work and public reach of its member news organizations, including, to the fullest extent possible, their administrative, editorial and financial wellbeing. And, more broadly, to foster the highest quality investigative journalism, and to hold those in power accountable, at the local, national and international levels*” (*INN* 2009). But, as Lewis observes, not all the member organisations have the same priorities for the direction of this networking. Some would focus more on the enhancement of the editorial content produced by its members while others on support for the administrative and fundraising part. Main *INN* funders are disclosed on its website. Among other things, *INN* has for the first time “*attempted to organize and syndicate the best, purely investigative reporting output and talent of member organizations*” (Lewis 2011, 109). In fact, on its website all the stories produced by *INN* members converge in a unique online platform on which it is possible to search investigative reports according to topics, regional scope or which organisations produce them. This has been so far the major innovative and collaborative effort occurred in nonprofit investigative journalism in the United States. To a large extent it has revealed the maturity reached in this

context and its transformation in a system able to compensate the gaps existing in the news cycle of commercial news organisation. Nonprofit funding is expanding also to other areas of journalism: especially in local newsrooms. For many it is only a transitional phase to soften the newspapers crisis while searching for more sustainable models. But for investigative journalism foundations money will probably become an indispensable contribution.

In this chapter the history of American investigative reporting has been traced on the basis of the Muckraking Model theorized by Mark Feldstein (2006). After having briefly illustrated the muckraking periods occurred during the American Revolution, the Progressive Era and the late sixties/seventies, more space has been given to the institutionalisation of investigative reporting occurred with the creation of *IRE*. But especially since 2007 investigative journalism centres have sprung up and formalised within the nonprofit sector. A new muckraking age is characterised by a high demand of in-depth understanding of the current global economic and financial crisis and a new supply of investigative journalism with other forms and goals in respect of commercial media. Four major examples of these nonprofits have been illustrated: the *Center for Investigative Reporting*, the *Center for Public Integrity*, *ProPublica* and the *Investigative News Network*, which currently groups sixty-two nonprofits.

### Chapter 3: INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM GOES GLOBAL

In this chapter some elements related to the emergence of investigative journalism on the global stage will be reconstructed. Europe will represent the main focus, and some comparative perspectives will be sketched. Firstly, different models of journalism and the affirmation of investigative reporting in Europe are briefly introduced. Secondly, the appearance in Northern and Central Western Europe of professional associations on the model of *IRE* functionally exemplifies a clear case of diffusion of innovative or successful ideas from other countries. Thirdly, the overview of the proliferation of investigative journalism centres in Southeast Europe will show a more complex situation represented by external influence in the development of these initiatives. The picture additionally enlarges taking into consideration the emergence of a global movement of professionals promoting investigative journalism worldwide and collaborative cross-border projects. Finally, a description of what may be called the European ecosystem for investigative journalism and its main features in respect to its US equivalent will be attempted.

### 3.1 Investigative journalism in Europe

It is not possible to discuss journalism in Europe at the same level as journalism in the United States. In fact, Europe is not a country and requires a further definition. The term Europe itself indicates an entire continent, even if the smallest among the seven, that comprehends the Western part of the Eurasian peninsula till the Ural and Caucasus mountains. In this sense Europe counts fifty sovereign countries (Wikipedia 2011b). These states are all characterised by extremely diverse cultures and histories of which unfortunately in the context of this study very little is known. Therefore, the choice has been to delimit the scope of the research to the twenty-seven member states of the European Union, since a process of integration is already in place and more literary resources on journalism are available. Even then, the journalism landscape in the European Union countries is very variegated and dependent on the various historical and cultural traits of each nation. That influences also investigative journalism in the way it has developed within Europe. It is here possible to briefly identify some common features in respect, for instance, to the Northern American context and some differences according to the existing classifications of Western media systems. A big help in individuating common features of European journalism comes from Williams (2005ab; 2006). Generally, these consist in its close relationship with politics and roots in literature. The political and literary origin of journalism in Europe has influenced: its style, tending to be narrative and to combine facts and opinions; but also its approach, that is often characterised by a tradition of advocacy, and often relies on State and parties for information. The results are usually evident inside the newsrooms, where there are little specialisation and news management and not many levels of hierarchies. But then, within Europe, at least, four different types of journalism cultures exist according to the most prominent classifications of media systems in Europe. Hallin and Mancini's three models (2004) differentiate, within Western Europe, between a liberal, a democratic corporatist and a polarised pluralist model. The first comprehends only the United Kingdom and Ireland, grouped together with the United States, countries in which media have developed as an industry and in a commercial sense. In terms of what they call professionalisation, Hallin and Mancini point out that within the liberal model: *"journalism has developed into a distinct occupational community and social activity, with a value system and standards of practice of its own, rooted in an ideology of public service, and with significant autonomy"* (2004, 217). The democratic corporatist model, instead, extends in Scandinavia and Central Europe, like in the Netherlands, Germany

and Austria. According to the two authors, these “*countries are characterized by an early and strong development of journalistic professionalism*”, nevertheless their media have been strongly connected with “*organized political forces*” (Hallin and Mancini 2004, 170). They are where “*the first unions of journalists were founded [...], and such organizations are very strong today*” (Hallin and Mancini 2004, 171). The polarised pluralist model comprehends Southern European countries. Apart from witnessing the “*integration of media into party politics*” and a “*strong role of the state*” (Kleinstauber 2009b, 62), it is characterised by “*weak consensus on journalistic standards and limited development of professional self-regulation [that] reflect the fact that journalism in the Mediterranean region has to a significant extent not been an autonomous institution, but has been ruled by external forces, principally from the world of politics and of business*” (Hallin and Mancini 2004, 113). To these three models Kleinstauber suggests the addition of a fourth: the post-communist model (2009b, 63). The commonality of this group consists in a past characterised by the so-called ‘Soviet Communism theory’ (Siebert et al. 1956) and a quite recent transformation or transition into democracy (Kleinstauber 2009b, 69). Often it has coincided with the adoption of Western standards in journalism and a sudden liberalisation that has seen the affirmation next to public service television, still usually influenced by the government, of either foreign media groups or local businessmen, not always armed by the best intentions. The identification of these four clusters helps in analysing the developments related to investigative journalism in Europe and not only. Already the description of the common traits of European journalism shows that investigative journalism ideology does not match that much with the European culture. The confrontational and watchdog approach is more typical of the Anglo-American tradition. But the debate concerning the convergence towards the Anglo-American model has become the centre of many scholars’ work (Hallin and Mancini 2004; Tunstall 2008; Preston 2009) and it may apply also to the diffusion of investigative journalism in old Europe. Jean K. Chalaby (2004) and Manfred Redelfs (2007) analyse the connotations of investigative reporting respectively in France and in Germany. Especially, the latter has individuated four variables that may influence the development of investigative journalism in a country: the conception of democracy existing in a country and the role of journalism in its respect; the level of competition in the media sector; the legal framework in which journalism operates; and journalism values and professional standards. Also Chalaby (2004) conduces the scarce development of the craft in France to similar variables. The same does Van Eijk identifying as determinant elements: “*legislation on freedom of expression, libel and*

*access to government information*"; "*country's level of crime and corruption, education, health care, et cetera*"; the environment in which the journalists work in terms of "*size, budget and management*", political affiliation and reporter's autonomy; and values, standards and education of the journalists (2005, 244). These conditions determine the presence and the level of establishment of investigative journalism within national mainstream media.

### 3.1.1 Before 1989

If Harris is considered the precursor of investigative journalism in the United States dating back to 1690, in Europe, and more precisely in Britain, the same position is attributed to William Cobbett (De Burgh 2000, 30). Cobbett's life mainly articulated between the United Kingdom and the US. His animosity against corruption and injustice and reformation stances characterised his *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, published in the UK between 1802 and 1835, costing him several lawsuits and even jail. But it is just after the industrialization of the press in the nineteenth century that investigative journalism had got another important development. In fact, in 1885, William T. Stead, editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, did an undercover investigation about underage prostitution, which cost him a short time in prison but also caused his fame. Apart from such precursors, in Europe a period comparable to the American 'Progressive era' of the early 1900s apparently did not exist. Investigative journalism in Europe has mainly characterised the sixties and seventies depending on the countries. According to the overview on investigative journalism in Europe offered by van Eijk (2005) for the Dutch association *Vereniging van Onderzoeksjournalisten (VVOJ)*, states, such as Finland, Italy and Sweden, saw appearing sporadic investigative pieces already in the fifties, while France, Germany and the United Kingdom in the ensuing decade. The trend had continued in the seventies, but almost everywhere the eighties were the times of most intense investigative reporting. The emerging of this type of reporting mainly happened within major news outlets. In many countries investigative journalism is still mainly a prerogative of both weeklies and national newspapers, as in the cases of Germany, France, United Kingdom and Portugal<sup>10</sup>, or only of national newspapers, as in Scandinavia. Weekly investigative programmes are broadcasted on

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<sup>10</sup> It is possible to drop some titles: *Der Spiegel*, *Stern*, *Die Zeit*, *L'Express*, *Le Canard Enchaîné*, *Le Monde*, *Libération*, *Private Eyes*, the *Sunday Times*, the *News of the World* (till Summer 2011), *O Expresso*, *O Jornal*.

television in Northern and Western Europe, particularly on public service broadcasting, whereas in Britain and Sweden a few cases appear also on commercial television. UK, the Netherlands and Sweden have also examples of investigative radio formats. Investigative desks spread especially in the eighties in countries such as Scandinavia, Britain, Spain, the Netherlands, Germany and France. An example of investigative journalism of European mould is offered by the German Günter Wallraff, famous for his undercover reporting about working conditions and standards in factories, government and media<sup>11</sup>. The emergence of examples of investigative reporting has touched in the years from the fifties to the nineties every country belonging to the previously mentioned liberal, democratic corporatist and polarised pluralist models; while, instead, the states of the post-communist model were still experiencing the Soviet Communist theory.

### 3.1.2 The emergence of professional associations on the model of *IRE*

The fall of the Berlin wall has represented for journalism in Europe the gradual shift from a party press towards a more commercial media market. It was usually characterised by the emergence of new titles in the print sector and by the establishment of commercial broadcasting next to public service. These changes occurred to different extents in each European country but in some cases they enhanced processes of professionalisation in journalism in respect to an increased emancipation from political affiliation. That happened especially in Scandinavia and involved to a large degree investigative journalism. In fact, in Sweden, the 1980s finally witnessed the end of party ties and subsidies to newspapers and “*many initiatives were taken to improve the state of the Swedish journalism*” (von Krogh 2003, 44). Among them, it assumes a particular significance in this context the creation of an organisation on the model of *Investigative Reporters and Editors*. The formation of its Swedish equivalent, *Grävande Journalister*, which means Digging Journalists, was taken up by five Swedish members of *IRE*. In fact, already in 1987, *IRE* membership counted several adhesions outside the US. Torbjörn von Krogh wrote in 1985 an article on the Swedish journalists’ trade union magazine about *IRE*, after having got a scholarship on its premises at the Missouri

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<sup>11</sup> Since 1966 Günter Wallraff had employed infiltration techniques to investigate the tabloid *Der Bild*, whose findings were told in the book *Der Aufmacher* (‘Lead Story’, 1977), and the working conditions of Turkish immigrants. In another publication, called *Ganz unten* (‘Lowest of the Low’, 1985), Wallraff describes his experience in the shoes of a Turkish guest-worker in a Thyssen steel factory and in other contexts (Pilger 2005, 158).

University, wondering about why not learning from the existing experience. The group who founded *Grävande Journalister* exactly retraced the steps of the American organisation, therefore: it firstly organised a conference; then, established the association; got a contract with the Stockholm University for a location and in exchange teaching; set up a prize for investigative journalism and a journal; found sponsors and engaged with professional training. Basically, the only step it did not repeat was the Arizona Project. After this founding phase that took place between 1988 and 1992, the years till 1998 represented the expansion of the organisation. It had especially focused on educational initiatives, among which building resources for investigative journalists and stipends to visit *IRE* seminars in the US and a collaboration with the States around the Baltic Sea to share investigation experiences from each country. In fact, in the meanwhile, other similar organisations sprang up in the neighbouring countries. Actually, a similar Danish organisation preceded of a few months its Swedish equivalent. *Foreningen af Undersøgende Journalistik (FUJ)* was established in December 1989. Danes also looked directly at the US, and *IRE* in particular, as source of inspiration for setting their association up with the aim of carrying out training and exchange of experiences. Another initiative took up in Denmark on the model of an American organisation. In 1996 two journalists at that time working at the *Jyllands Posten*, Nils Mulvad and Flemming Svith, after attending an *IRE* boot camp, founded the association for computer-assisted reporting *Foreningen for Computerstøttet Journalistik*, which established the *Danish Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting (DICAR)*, on the model of *IRE*'s *NICAR*, at the Århus school of journalism (van Eijk 2005, 61). *DICAR*, then, came to an end in 2006. In Norway and Finland, organisations on the model of *Grävande Journalister* emerged respectively in 1990 and 1992: *Stiftelsen for en Kritisk og Undersøkende Presse (SKUP)* and *Tutkivan Journalismin Yhdistys*. But on a global stage Denmark together with the United States is certainly the country that has taken the lead in promoting investigative journalism. In fact, in 1999 Brant Houston, at that time *IRE* Executive Director, and Nils Mulvad, *DICAR* Executive Director, had the idea to organise periodically a *Global Investigative Journalism Conference (GIJC)*. The first two of these conferences occurred in Copenhagen in 2001 and 2003. These gatherings stimulated the formation of new professional associations in other countries. In fact, in those years two other organisations appeared. In 2001, in Germany, *Netzwerk Recherche* was founded. It is difficult to say if it was influenced by the movement behind the *Global Investigative Journalism Conference* or directly by *IRE* or the other organisations emerged in Northern Europe, but certainly *IRE* has been

a major point of reference for it. A member of *Netzwerk Recherche*, Manfred Redelfs, wrote his doctoral thesis about investigative journalism in the US and in Germany (1996), confronting the two landscapes in the field. It indicates a sort of inspiration coming from America, but also the awareness of the differences with the German context. Among *Netzwerk Recherche*'s goals there are: “to improve investigative journalism in media-practice” and “the exchange of information on projects, experiences of investigation” (*Netzwerk Recherche* 2010). With these aims the organisation carries out activities like: training on investigative journalism techniques, mentoring, international exchange with other organisations, conferring an award, advocating for freedom of the press, having annual meetings and offering a stipend to carry out research projects. An association which has been certainly established on the wave of the *Global Investigative Journalism Conferences*, is the Dutch and Flemish *Vereniging van Onderzoeksjournalisten (VVOJ)*. In fact, the organisation was founded between the first two global conferences and it assumed the responsibility of setting up the third *GIJC* that took place in 2003 in Amsterdam. From the second conference in Copenhagen also another organisation stemmed out, the *Swiss Investigative Reporters' Network*. Already from the name there is some assonance with the German equivalent. The Swiss Network was also behind the preparation of a *Global Investigative Journalism Conference*, more precisely in 2010 in Geneva. These are the main organisations emerged in Europe on the model of *IRE*. As evident from what has been written above there have been two major phases for the diffusion of this type the organisations: early nineties in Scandinavia and early 2000s in Central Western Europe. The general transition from party and politicised press towards a more commercial environment in the media sector in Europe has probably increased the attitude of looking at other standards and professional traditions, especially at the US. An exception from the adoption of the *IRE* model consists in the *Centre for Investigative Journalism (CIJ)* in London and its recent sister organisation *Bureau of Investigative Journalism (BIJ)*. To these two nonprofits more space is dedicated in a separate chapter. Here it would be enough to mention that *CIJ* was established in 2003 at the premises of the City University and its main activity has been to organise an annual *Summer School in Investigative Journalism* together with other training activities. The Bureau, instead, came to light in 2009 and it is the only example of nonprofit investigative journalism centre in Western Europe.



### 3.1.3 Diffusion of the *IRE* model

The creation of professional associations of investigative journalists on the model of *IRE* in Northern and Central Western Europe is a good example of what could be studied as diffusion in a comparative approach. Diffusion is particularly relevant in a context in which “*new ideas (business concepts, etc.) originate in one country but, due to their success, penetrate other regions of the world; they disseminate*” (Kleinstaub 2004, 71). Generally, the term indicates a voluntary adoption of innovation. About *IRE* and its European equivalents the process of diffusion has started in Scandinavian countries because of a variety of factors, among which: the strong need of more professionalisation in journalism linked to the necessity of detaching from politics and party ties; the direct involvement of some Swedish journalists in the American organisation; and a pre-existent culture of corporatism, as pointed out by Hallin and Mancini (2004) in their democratic corporatist model. In fact, these organisations on the model of *IRE* spread especially in the countries belonging to this model. In the process of diffusion, however, the newly born associations also adapted the main features of *IRE* to their own journalism culture. Very interesting, for instance, is the issue regarding the name of these organisations and whether to adopt the term ‘investigative’. In fact, in general, in Europe there is a certain criticism of the label investigative journalism because of its elitist and arrogant sound. Van Eijk points out in both his studies (2003; 2005) the different traditions behind the combination of the US model and the journalism culture of the place. To start with the Swedish example, von Krogh reports: “*we had long discussions about the name of this new organization. We were aware that there was a deep scepticism towards the brand underökande journalistik (investigative journalism) among parts of the journalistic community*” (2003, 51). For that the decision went on *grävande journalistik* (digging reporting). Appositely, *Grävande Journalister* has not explicitly defined what it means for digging journalism but, for instance, the aim of the organisation was phrased as to “*promote profound and scrutinizing journalism*”; as well, the prize awarded by the association is said to be conferred to “*journalism that has exposed or described important conditions of which the public was not aware*” (von Krogh 2003, 52). A similar debate occurred in Germany where, instead of investigative, *recherche* (research) was chosen. Manfred Redelfs writes that the American term ‘investigative journalism’ has not a generally accepted

equivalent in German journalism culture (2007, 131)<sup>12</sup>. In other countries the associations have adopted equivalent terms but they changed the definition at their basis. For instance, *VVOJ* adopted in its name the word *onderzoeksjournalistiek*, which corresponds to investigative journalism. But van Eijk reflects as in the Netherlands another term was more rooted to indicate a similar approach to journalism: *onthullingsjournalistiek*, whose connotation resembles *exposé* journalism (2005, 23). But what *VVOJ* defines as investigative journalism is less rigorous than *IRE*'s definition. In fact, it limits to state that is “*critical and in-depth journalism*” and this means: news that would have not existed without journalistic intervention, including also “*interpreting or connecting already known facts in a new way*”; and product of a substantial, either in quantity or in quality terms, journalistic effort (van Eijk 2005, 22). Apart from this debated point, the professional associations of investigative journalists that have developed in Northern and Central Western Europe have in large part followed the steps indicated by the American organisation: they started from a conference; have found a location, even if not all European associations are based at a university; set up prizes and journals; and engaged mainly in offering resources and training for their members.

### 3.1.4 Nonprofit investigative journalism centres in post-communist Europe

Looking, instead, at what has happened in the field of investigative reporting among post-communist countries it is not possible to find a unique pattern. In fact, in some countries investigative reporting has never matured to a high extent while many have developed initiatives in that sense. But the model changes: in these countries there are not professional associations of investigative journalists similar to *IRE* but another type of organisations has appeared. A differentiation certainly must be pointed out. For instance, some of the Balkans have not only seen the end of Communism, but in the years following they have experienced also the war. In former Yugoslavia “*war first broke out in Croatia in 1991, then in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1992 and Kosovo in 1998*” (Coronel 2011, 18). Those years simultaneously witnessed the emergence of a community of investigative journalists and the multiplication of topics to be investigated but the Balkan media have been little equipped to manage the coverage of issues involving not only the shift from Communism to democracy but also war crimes.

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<sup>12</sup> “Für den in Amerika gängigen Terminus „investigative reporting“ fehlt bei uns eine allgemein akzeptierte Entsprechung”.

That is probably one of the reasons why “*in recent years, independent investigative reporting centres have emerged throughout the Balkans, providing alternative means with which to tackle serious issues*” (Coronel 2011, 20). It is difficult to identify and introduce all these realities because they are many and not all of them have an active website. Some seem particularly solid and established, others inactive, some others are directly run by Western organisations. Remaining in the Balkan area, *Digging Deeper*, a manual for investigative journalists affirms the existence of centres in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia and Serbia (Coronel 2011, 20). In particular, it refers to, chronologically: the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism (CRJI)*, the *Investigative Journalism Centre* in Croatia, the *Center for Investigative Reporting (CIN)* in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the *Balkan Investigative Reporting Regional Network (BIRN)* based in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the *Center for Investigative Reporting (CINS)* in Serbia; and the *Bulgarian Investigative Journalism Center (BIJC)*. In fact, *CRJI* was established in 2001 simultaneously with the launch of the *Global Investigative Journalism Conferences*. *CRJI* will be examined in detail in a following chapter. The Croatian centre, instead, is more difficult to trace. It seems associated with the name of a single journalist. Actually, probably it has merged in *Netnovinar*, a training centre for investigative journalists, started by another organisation, *Mediacentar*, based in Sarajevo since 1995. Initiated and run by the *Open Society Fund of Soros Foundations*, *Mediacentar Sarajevo* does not deal only with investigative journalism but it more generally supports journalism. *CIN*, also based in Bosnia-Herzegovina, was established in 2004 by Drew Sullivan, on behalf of the New York University *Department of Journalism* and the *Journalism Development Group LLC*. Sullivan currently only advises the centre and holds the position of advising editor of *Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP)*, which was founded in 2006 by *CIN* and *CRJI*. *OCCRP* consists in a network of centres and journalists in the Balkan region working on cross-border projects related to organised crime. Another organisation was founded in 2005 and it has its headquarters in Bosnia-Herzegovina, *BIRN*. The peculiarities of the *Balkan Investigative Reporting Network* are several. To start with, it “*emerged in 2005 through the localization of an international programme run since the early 1990s by the London-based Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR)*” (Coronel 2011, 20). Then, *BIRN* is not really a centre and does not exclusively deal with investigative journalism. In fact, it “*consists of individual member-organizations, registered in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Kosovo, Macedonia, Romania and Serbia*” (*Balkan Insight*). In 2006 *BIRN* expanded in Albania, Croatia and Montenegro and in 2007 it

established a parallel company in Serbia *BIRN Ltd* “to support the development of its sustainability strategy and income-generating activities” (*Balkan Insight*). Its main project is an online publication, whose main language is English, *Balkan Insight*. But it also organises training for investigative reporters in the region, in particular for two years now it has run a *Summer School of Investigative Reporting*. CINS in Serbia was founded in 2008 by *Nezavisnog Udruženja Novinara Srbije (NUNS)*, the association of Serbian independent journalists, and also belongs to the *OCCRP* network. *BIJC* also took up in 2008 but this organisation will be later illustrated. In addition to these, many other centres are listed on the websites of the main investigative journalism support organisations. For instance, among the members of *OCCRP* it is possible to find, apart from the already mentioned organisations and a few newspapers as *Novaya Gazeta* and the *Kyiv Post*: *HETQ* in Armenia, *re:baltica*, *Atlatszo.hu*, *SCOOP-Macedonia*, *MANS* in Montenegro. The latter organisation consists in a developmental NGO not exclusively dedicated to investigative reporting. *SCOOP-Macedonia* probably indicates the *Macedonian Center for Investigative Journalism*, founded in order to “produce and support investigative stories, train and encourage journalists to work on investigative stories” (*Macedonian Center for Investigative Journalism* 2010). Probably, this is the same centre the Danish organisation *SCOOP* economically supports in the country. In fact, *SCOOP* is a Danish organisation supporting investigative journalism in Eastern and Southeastern Europe launched in 2003 by *FUJ* and the *International Media Support*, an NGO active in the field of media assistance. On July the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011 in Hungary the centre for investigative journalism *Átlátszó* was established denouncing as “mainstream media in Hungary has become a toy of political and economic interest groups, and it is often not the journalists, but the owners of the media and the circles behind them who decide what can be published, what can become an issue in a publication” (*Atlatszo.hu* 2011). *Re:baltica* probably refers to the new *Baltic Center for Investigative Journalism* announced in September 2011 and based at the University of Latvia in Riga. A small note explains: “in August of 2011 a group of journalists from Lithuania, Estonia and the U.S. launched the Latvian-based *Baltic Center for Investigative Journalism*. The new Center started its operations in August and is currently working on three journalism projects” (1). This centre affirms to be an answer to the decline in press freedom registered in the recent years by the ranking organisation *Freedom House*. *HEQT* in Armenia is the online publication of the *Investigative Journalists NGO*, operating in the country since 2001. Still more centres are enlisted on *SCOOP* website. Remaining within the European continent, at its borders there is the

*Caucasus Media Investigations Center (CMIC)* in Azerbaijan, which was established in 2005. Going to Russia the *Agency of Journalistic Investigations (AJUR)* has operated in St. Petersburg since 1996. Contrarily to the majority of the organisations mentioned, which often have exclusively an English version, its website is only in Russian. But on the *VVOJ* publication about investigative journalism in Europe (van Eijk 2005), it is possible to get some more information. In 2005 *AJUR* had sixty employees among whom twenty-five journalists. It “*runs a press agency, a website, and a weekly magazine; all of them specialized in criminal affairs in St. Petersburg and surroundings*” (Rottenberg 2005, 163). Its work is very rigorous and professional to the point that to supplement its sources of income *AJUR* offers services as detective agency and consultancy bureau. Together with the newspaper *Novaya Gazeta*, *AJUR* is one of the few examples of investigative reporting in Russia. In fact, after a few years in early nineties of lively press freedom, since 1996 journalism landscape in Russia has worsened and worsened, threatening legally and physically independent voices as the murder of *Novaya Gazeta* journalist, Anna Politkovskaya, in 2006 exemplifies. Firstly, media became the battlefield for oligarchs to “*struggle for the ownership of state property*” (Rottenberg 2005, 158), through the publication of compromising information, kompromat, under the facade of investigative stories. Secondly, “*Putin’s administration has become more and more authoritarian. Putin has put federal television under his control*” (Rottenberg 2005, 164). Another organisation in the *SCOOP* list is the *International Research and Exchange (IREX)’s Broadcast Training Center ProMedia Foundation* in Bulgaria that since 1998 has offered training programmes and TV productions, whose some concerning investigative journalism. In Serbia another centre appears to be directly related to *SCOOP*, because founded by its coordinator for Serbia in 2000, *Mediafocus Serbia Center for Investigative Journalism*, which, at least from its online website, seems mainly to deal with training. In 2003 also Moldova took up its centre, *Centrul de Investigatii Jurnalistice (CIN)*, initiated by two press associations. Finally, other two reporting organisations are in Ukraine: the *Agency of Investigative Reporting in Rivne*, started in 2006, and the *Center of Investigative Reporting in Crimea*. Ukraine is also important because it is the place where *SCOOP* was initially conceived. In fact, it was a Ukrainian lawyer, Valentyna Telychenko, who was puzzled by the fact that journalism in Ukraine was not improving, in spite of the huge amount of money poured in the country for training purposes by Western media assistance organisations. She wondered about a project, which could help journalists in transition countries to actually put into practice what they learnt in the numerous

training courses received as media aid. “*Scoop is now active in 13 countries in the Balkans and Eastern Europe and has been involved in establishing similar organizations in the Middle East (Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism, ARIJ) and West Africa (Programme for African Investigative Reporting, PAIR)*”, *SCOOP* former manager Henrik Kaufholz writes (2011, 44). But apparently, funding for the Balkan region is going to halt at the end of 2011. What *SCOOP* mainly does is to offer research grants to individual journalists or teams to pursue complex investigations. The budget of the grant change according if the application presented has a national or transnational scale. Grants cover only research expenses like travelling costs, the purchase of documents and phone calls. Henrik Kaufholz continues: “*since its founding, Scoop has supported the work of reporters and editors involved with more than 400 investigations*” (2011, 44). *SCOOP* supports also the creation of organisations as centres or associations and the organisation of training but only when the need and the idea expressively come from local journalists. Together with *SCOOP* other recurring donors of investigative journalism centres are *IREX*, *Soros Foundations*, *USAID*, *Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)*, diplomatic authorities as embassies or foreign departments of the US, Britain, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and Switzerland. Among the centres named here four are in European Union member states: the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism*, the *Bulgarian Investigative Journalism Center*, the *Center for Investigative Journalism Átlátszó* in Hungary and the *Baltic Center for Investigative Journalism*. The first two will be examined more in details in the part of this study dedicated to empirical research. The last two organisations emerged at a too advanced stage of research, therefore, it was not possible to look at them in-depth.

### 3.2 Global Investigative Journalism Network

Along to these organisations of investigative journalists developed in the US and in Europe, many others came up in the rest of the world. The majority takes part in the *Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN)*, which was created in 2003 in Copenhagen at the second *Global Investigative Journalism Conference*. It has started with an organising statement signed by thirty-five nonprofits engaged with quality journalism in different countries, in which the aims and the steering committee of the network were set up. It foresees only the participation of nonprofits and till now it has been based on an informal coordination among members mostly centred around the people in the steering committee in charge of organising conferences, supporting the

establishment of centres, associations of investigative journalists and networks. Meanwhile the sixth *GIJC 2010* in Geneva and the seventh *GIJC 2011* in Kyiv, the membership of the network counted sixty-two organisations. Among them there are not only groups explicitly engaging with investigative reporting, some are NGOs committed to increase the quality of journalism standards. At the last conference in Kyiv the meeting of *GIJN* discussed, apart from the organisation of the next global conference in Brazil in 2013, hosted by the Brazilian association, *Associação Brasileira de Jornalismo Investigativo (ABRAJI)*, about the eventual establishment of a more structured organisation behind the network and the proposal of a global centre. Among the members of the network there are organisations from all over the world, also investigative journalism centres. The *Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ)* represents one of the firsts. It was initiated in 1989, the same year of the *Center for Public Integrity*, after having witnessed that the end of “*the corrupt and repressive regime of Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos*” (Lewis 2007a, 29) and the shift to a free press had not meant anything better than routinely day-to-day news coverage. *PCIJ* grew till culminating in 2000 when it “*produced several investigative reports which were later used as evidence for the impeachment proceedings against President Joseph Estrada, who was removed from power in 2001*” (Lewis 2007a, 30). Its model resembles *CIR*’s to which it had probably looked at before foundation: in fact, its funding is based on foundation grants, revenues from books or contracts with media organisations and individual donations. Foundations money mainly comes from the US, from organisations like *Ford Foundation* and *Soros’s Open Society*. Other centres solely engaged in producing investigative reporting have developed more recently in Chile and Ghana: respectively the *Centro de Investigación e Información Periodística (CIPER)* and the *Ghana Centre for Public Integrity (GCPI)*. Since 2007 also the *Khoj Patrakarita Kendra*, or *Centre for Investigative Journalism (CIJ)* in Nepal has started producing investigative stories even if its main focus would have been since 1996 offer training, mentoring and fellowship to promising investigative journalists in the country. But organisations as *IRE* also spread around the globe. One of the firsts, *Instituto Prensa y Sociedad* was initiated in 1993 in Peru with the aim of promoting investigative journalism. In Mexico in 1995 the *Centro de Periodistas de Investigación* started from a branch of *IRE* journalists and it is still affiliated to the US association. Other similar organisations were established in 2000s probably influenced by the *Global Investigative Journalism Conferences*. In 2002 the already mentioned *ABRAJI* was founded. In 2006 *Consejo de Redacción (CdR)* moved its first steps in Colombia. Other examples have a

more regional dimension like the *Forum for African Investigative Reporters (FAIR)*, established in 2003 with the involvement of journalists from six different African countries. In 2005 a similar regional initiative was started in Arab countries based in Jordan. *Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (ARIJ)* is “funded by the Danish Parliament under a two-year programme, the organization was established by Arab media activists and media organizations, in cooperation with the Copenhagen-based *International Media Support (IMS)* and the *Danish Association for Investigative Journalism (FUJ)*” (*Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism*) to offer research grants to support journalists in investigative projects.

### 3.3 The contemporary ecosystem for investigative journalists in Europe

According to what explored in the previous paragraphs it is possible to identify a sort of ecosystem for investigative journalists in Europe. This is formed by several types of nonprofit organisations: professional associations on the model of *IRE*, investigative reporting centres and funds offering research grants appositely to investigative journalists. These nonprofits do not exist in each country. As seen above, professional associations of investigative journalists are present only in the countries belonging to the democratic corporatist model. Investigative journalism centres, instead, have developed either in the UK, the major European example of the liberal model, either in countries belonging to the post-communist model. Funds offering research grants to investigative journalists are less common. In certain cases, professional organisations themselves get funding to provide research grant, for instance *Netzwerk Recherche*. There are, then, funds and foundations at a national level specialised in granting investigative projects. In the heart of Europe there is the Belgian *Fonds Pascal Decroos*. The main activity of the fund is supporting economically research projects administrating some money coming from the governmental authority of the Flemish community. It was established in 1998 and, apart from awarding grants, it has contributed to initiatives as: *Wobbing Europe*, a “journalistic platform about Freedom of Information legislation (FOIA)”, “a Dutch-speaking blog that reflects on the media”, “a platform that collects Flemish media research”, “a post-academic course in *International Research Journalism*” and the series of debates in Brussels called *Mediacafè (Pascal Decroos Fund for Investigative Journalism)*. The *Pascal Decroos Fund for Investigative Journalism* has covered a fundamental role in the creation of another fund for investigative journalists existing at a European level: the *European Fund for Investigative Journalism*. This initiative started its operations in 2009 basically



supporting cross-border investigative projects involving European Union countries. Before 2011, *journalismfund.eu* launched three application calls receiving altogether sixty-five applications and awarding thirteen grants for a total of €50,374. Of these thirteen, only one project was not completed. In general the applications granted consisted in teams averagely of three or four journalists. A total of thirty-five reporters were involved in the selected projects. The countries most frequently investigated were Bulgaria and the United Kingdom, followed by Belgium and the Netherlands. Ukraine was for sure the non-EU country mostly implicated. Both the two funds award individual journalists and not news outlets or organisations, but to be freelance is not a requirement. The *European Fund for Investigative Journalism* is supported by the Belgian fund and had found its seed funding through the *Network of European Foundations*. Interestingly, between 2009 and 2010 the European Union itself launched a pilot project consisting in research grants for small teams of investigative reporters to work on cross-border stories within the EU countries. But after controversies in respect of the role of the European Commission in the selection of the proposals the project was abandoned. At a national level, instead, another organisation that supports through grants investigative journalism was founded in 2001 in Hungary, the *Göbölös József 'Soma' Foundation*. It is a foundation dedicated to the memory of an investigative journalist who died in 2000. Among its activities it confers an award, stipends and legal support to investigative journalists in the country. A foundation of this type exists also in Turkey, the *Uğur Mumcu Investigative Journalism Foundation (um:ag)*, dedicated to the investigative reporter Uğur Mumcu's sudden death in an explosion whose people behind have not been yet individuated. Um:ag, established in 1994, mainly focuses its activities in the field of education and training in investigative reporting. Generally, the existence of philanthropic foundations, similarly to the ones active in the US, seems to takes place to a much more limited extent in Europe. But examples exist in the UK, for instance, where centres for investigative journalism have encountered foundations' support. In Germany, instead, foundations themselves (Friedland & Konieczna 2011) have recently debated the issue of philanthropists funding journalism (Kleinstaub 2010; 2011). But it is also true that in the European context a culture of public funding is more rooted than that of philanthropy. Some nonprofit initiatives have occurred to a certain extent at a European level. Among them a very interesting project, even if at the moment it seems a bit stuck, is called *IRENE, Investigative Reporters Network Europe*. It emerged in 2007 and after a year of activity it has been witnessing a moment of standstill. It defines itself as “a consortium of investigative journalists in several

*European countries*” (IRENE 2007), working together on projects involving European Union legislative processes, particularly in the fields of “*health(-care), environment, food production and -safety, crime, education, immigration, transportation and work(-place)*” (IRENE 2007). Marleen Teugels, main referent for the project, explains: “*the idea of a cross-border network has grown in 2003, when Ides Debruyne, director of the Pascal Decroos Fund, Luuk Sengers and myself brainstormed during the VVOJ conference in Utrecht (2003). Since then we launched the Irene website and did several cross-border projects as test-cases*” (2). Apparently, the main problem encountered consists in a lack of funding to develop a business model to sustain the organisation work. Other interesting nonprofit investigative projects involving a European dimension comprehend: the *EUobserver*, that starting on November 2011 should publish “*a special series of investigative reports to shed light on some of the lesser known or more complex areas of European Union activities*” with the support of a foundation (*Euobserver.com* 2011); and the NGO *EU Transparency* that through Freedom of Information requests and data analysis investigates and tracks EU farm and fish subsidies publishing on online collaborative and cross-border portals, *Farmsubsidy.org* and *Fishsubsidy.org*.

### 3.4 Nonprofit: between media assistance and business model

Investigative journalism has seen since 1989 the proliferation of different types of organisations outside the US borders. Since 1989 in Europe and in particular in Scandinavian countries professional associations of investigative journalists on the model of *IRE* have developed. In the Philippines the first nonprofit investigative journalism centre outside the US was established in the same year. The creation of the centre was the contribution of some Filipino journalists to the transition from a repressive regime to a free press landscape considered not yet completely satisfactory for their expectations. In Europe 1989 has meant the shift towards a less ideological contraposition within society and therefore for many countries the dissolution of the party press and the emergence of professional standards in journalism. The end of Communism in Eastern European countries and the rapid liberalisation of the media which had followed it, for many cases created conditions similar to the ones experienced in the Philippines in which transitions from authoritarian regimes to more democratic forms has not been completed and has not meant independent and quality reporting. Some countries in the Balkans also experienced the war. Post-communist countries have been the recipients of media assistance programmes mainly from the US,

Northern and Central Western European countries, both from governmental agencies and private foundations. This poses some questions in relation to the establishment of nonprofit investigative journalism organisations. In fact, as already considered, in these realities there are no professional associations but only centres. Some centres have been established by donors themselves, others are genuinely initiatives of local reporters and others have probably been founded to get access to media assistance programmes to realise small and even personal projects. Some scholars point out some controversial elements. For instance, Matheson argues: “*state aid money from the West [...] funds investigative centres in some countries. Worse, some of these organizations have been tentatively linked to security services*” (2010, 89). Another critique to Western media aid comes from Miller: “*the export of media in the American style was a hallmark of Cold War modernization theory. Then, as now, development experts sought to replicate the U.S. media system, claiming it to be a necessary means of democratization*” (2011, 39). He refers to the training programmes offered as Western aid firstly since early nineties in Eastern Europe, and secondly, in the peace-building interventions in Southeast Europe and Africa. Many centres are the results of this training and the lack news organisations where to apply the Western values they learn, as the idea behind *SCOOP* testifies. Some centres have emerged in countries with a high level of corruption, even in the media sector, and this is a main motive for journalists to initiate such an organisation. A problem for the centres seems to find structural or long term funding. Kaplan states “*as with much international assistance, however, this funding appears largely uncoordinated and episodic, with an impact difficult to measure, and it has left both funders and recipients at times frustrated*” (2007, 9). The difficulty lies in supporting organisations genuinely created by local journalists without encouraging the formation of empty shells or imposing Western ideology.

In this chapter, after a brief introduction to the issues related to journalism and investigative journalism in Europe, the focus have been the changes for both Northern and Central Western Europe and post-communist countries after 1989. Particularly interesting phenomena in investigative journalism consist in the diffusion in democratic corporatist countries of professional associations inspired by *IRE* and in post-communist countries of investigative journalism centres often supported by media aid. Different types of nonprofits dealing with investigative reporting have emerged worldwide and since 2000s have gathered together firstly in global conferences and secondly in a global network. In the meanwhile the investigative journalism landscape

in Europe has been changing, with the emergence of different types of nonprofits: professional associations, research grants funds and reporting centres. Especially at a European level cross-border nonprofit projects have emerged. Issues related to media assistance influence involve those investigative journalism centres emerged in post-communist countries.

## Chapter 4: EXPLORING NONPROFIT INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING IN EUROPE: QUESTIONS AND METHOD

The previous chapters have framed the core subject of the study. This chapter introduces the empirical research that has been carried out about the three nonprofit investigative journalism organisations within the European Union borders: the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism*, the *Bulgarian Investigative Journalism Center* and the *Bureau of Investigative Journalism* in London. Below the explorative nature of this work and the main research questions at its basis, the qualitative methods used to gather the data and to analyze it will be briefly illustrated.

### 4.1 An explorative study

At the centre of this study there is the exploration of the nonprofit investigative reporting organisations existing within the borders of the European Union. Whether it is possible to talk about diffusion in respect to the US phenomenon and to what extent is the main paraphrased research question of the research. It is important to reassert the choice of considering only the twenty-seven member-countries of the European Union. This is because of practical reasons. In fact, as seen above, many nonprofits investigative reporting centres are based in the Balkans and in Eastern Europe. In this research context there is not the capacity of examining all these organisations in details. Therefore, the choice of focusing on fewer examples in a more diversified landscape assumes a greater interest in wondering why this type of nonprofits exists only in Anglo-American or in transition countries. A problem encountered in this explorative study consists in the fact that the nonprofit sector differs a lot in regulations and types of organisations country by country. This poses difficulties in searching and comparing organisations in different contexts. These nonprofits also vary a lot: some are very informal, others more structured. It makes it very difficult to distinguish the active ones and those that only exist on paper. Another limitation of this study lies in the dynamism of these structures. In fact, meanwhile carrying out the research, at least, two new centres have been founded within the EU countries and the organisations at the centre of

this study may have already changed a lot. After having sampled the groups at the centre of the study more specific research questions have been formulated: what the main motives behind the foundation and the participation to these organisations are; how they are structured; and how they work. These represent the core of the following three chapters where each nonprofit will be examined according to this trace. In particular each research question has a set of sub-questions corresponding to the dimensions of comparison between the groups. They are schematised in a table in the Appendix. These questions are drawn on the trace Charles Lewis uses to introduce the four nonprofit investigative journalism centres in his paper *The Growing Importance of Nonprofit Journalism* (2007a), in combination with Preston's theory on influence on news making (2009, 6-12). Finally, the findings from each group will be compared among themselves and with the examined literature on US similar nonprofits. The conclusive discussion about the results includes also two expert contributions to try to answer why nonprofit investigative journalism has not occurred in Northern and Central Western European countries and what the future will be like.

## 4.2 Research strategy and design

At the basis of the current study there is a qualitative approach that could have been treated using different research perspectives. Being this explorative research to a certain extent the development of the concept of nonprofit journalism started by Charles Lewis (2007ab; 2009; 2010; 2011), the coding and categorising of data coming from semi-structured interviews already offers a relevant contribution to the existing research on the subject. So, that was the method that has progressively revealed to be the most appropriate in order to answer to the research questions. These put in relation levels of personal experience and meaning with the social processes occurring within the organisations. Thus, different levels of sampling have taken place in the research design. Firstly, the organisations were chosen. They have been mainly considered as groups. Secondly, a representative sample of persons has been selected on the basis of feasibility and appropriateness. The plan was to interview for each organisation five members: two founders and three staff or joining members, but it did not work out in practice. The only organisation for which this quota of respondents was reached is the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism*. Only two participants answered to the questions regarding *Bulgarian Investigative Journalism Center*: the founder and one collaborator. It was also not possible to reach that quota of interviews for the *Bureau of Investigative Journalism* in London. The distinction between founders and members

was not too appropriate because of the complex structure of the organisation. Thus, for the Bureau two interviews were carried out with the ‘founders’ trace and one with the ‘member’ set of questions. The different proportions of the samples for each group might be a problem but they reflect the establishment and dimension of the organisations. The Romanian centre is the oldest and biggest nonprofit among them, the Bureau is the most structured and with the biggest capacity in terms of production while the Bulgarian centre is the more informal of the three. In the Romanian and Bulgarian cases gatekeepers have given access to the respondents. While in the Bureau’s case the gatekeeper approach did not finally work out and it was replaced by direct contact with the potential interviewees. Respondents were firstly approached by email in which the opportunity for a face-to-face interview was asked. The semi-structured interview has been carried out when possible in the cities the organisations were based: Bucharest, Sofia and London. The office of the Bureau was the only one visited because the other centres have not an office. A third level of sampling, finally, occurred in the data analysis in the process of coding and categorising of the interviews.

The research has been designed from the beginning as a comparative study between similar professional groups. The comparison is made at several levels. The first level of comparison exists within the group sampled. In fact, each interviewee’s set of answers has been compared with others of the same organisation to build a more realistic picture of the centre. The second level consists in comparing the different groups. A more general level of comparison is made in relation to the nonprofit investigative journalism scene in the US as described through the literature in Chapter 2. The dimensions for these comparisons are also schematized in the Appendix. The level of generalisation in the analysis, therefore, gradually increases in relation with the scale of the comparison. The interviews were carried out according to two different interview guides: one for the founders and one for the members with some similar questions. The length of an interview on average varied between twenty minutes and one hour. Each interview was then transcribed and sent back to the respondent for validation. Then, the transcripts of each organisation were coded and categorised according to the dimensions already exposed. About writing, one chapter for each organisation recounts its motives, organisational structure and practices. In the final chapter, the comparison between the three different nonprofits takes place with references to their American counterparts.

In this chapter the explorative nature of the empirical research, its qualitative approach and its design have been briefly described. For a schematised version of the research

questions, the comparative levels and the methods employed to individuate the main findings it is suggested to have a look at the Appendix.

## Chapter 5: ROMANIAN CENTER FOR INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

The *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism*, in Romanian, *Centrul Roman pentru Jurnalism de Investigatie (CRJI)*, is the oldest nonprofit investigative reporting centre existing in the European Union member countries. In the next lines, the history, the context which the centre has developed in, the motives which brought to its foundation and journalists to adhere to it, the organisational structure and funding, and the ways *CRJI* operates will be examined through the analysis of five interviews gathered with two of the founders, Sorin Ozon and Ștefan Căndea, and three members, Adrian Mogoș, Cătălin Prisăcariu and Petru Zoltan, together with the existing literature on *CRJI* (Lewis 2007a, 34-7; Kaplan 2007; Larssen 2010; Căndea 2011).

### 5.1 History

In 2001, Ștefan Căndea, Sorin Ozon, Mihai Vasile and Paul Cristian Radu established the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism*. At that time they were working as journalists, and Vasile as photo-editor and photographer, in the investigative department of the national newspaper *Evenimentul Zilei* in Bucharest. Ștefan Căndea remembers:

*"In 2001, when we founded the centre, we had three examples in our mind. They were: Investigative Reporters and Editors, in the US, that is a professional organisation [...], a sort of resource centre for journalists; ICIJ, the International Consortium for Investigative Journalists; and the [...] Philippine Centre for Investigative Journalism, [...]. That was the idea but we've never looked to copy one of these. We were just looking at their different models and trying to see what could work back home" (3).*

With those examples in mind the Romanian journalists developed autonomously their own project. For two years they tried to do that taking advantage of their good position in the newspaper, as Sorin Ozon explains:

*"When we decided to start with CRJI, we were hired at Evenimentul Zilei (in 2001 it was the biggest daily newspaper in Romania) and we were just working on an investigative TV broadcast with hidden camera. It was about only dangerous topics related to organised crime. This show was co-produced by the newspaper where we worked. It was something new for Romania. But we made only the first two episodes and we resigned" (4).*

The main reasons for that were that the journalists did not receive compensation for their work and certain articles, instead of being published, were used for making profits in not licit ways. Thus, in 2003, the four reporters quit the newspaper and decided to work independently as freelancers under the centre brand, mainly working for Western media because in Romania there is no freelancing market. In this sense the credibility of the brand has always represented a fundamental aspect for *CRJI* founders. In order to

build such credibility, the selection of the members of the organisation has been very careful. In fact, corruption and low professional standards are the main problems of journalism in Romania. To avoid corruption within the centre, in 2004 and in 2010, two recruitment phases occurred. The first was inspired by the Arizona Project, which celebrated the foundation of *IRE*. The setting of the Romanian version was the port city of Constanta, famous for its corruption. Fifteen journalists from all over the country, after two months of previous research, spent two weeks in Constanta, working on the field on stories and having them published. After this project, ten out of the fifteen reporters became members of *CRJI*. In the second phase of membership enlargement, Sorin Ozon and Ștefan Căndea travelled across Romania to interview potential members, finding other five or six good elements. At the same time the organisation expanded its network regionally and internationally: in 2003, in Copenhagen, at the second *Global Investigative Journalism Conference*, *CRJI* was among the founding members of the *Global Investigative Journalism Network*; and in late 2006, the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism* contributed to the establishment of *OCCRP- Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting*. Another way to certify the credibility of the centre has been the submission of its members' investigative work to international awards. Among other activities the *CRJI* deals also with "*advocacy related to freedom of expression or on legislation related to journalists' access to information*" (5). In fact, the centre is active in the *Convention of the Media Organizations in Romania (COM-ROM)*<sup>13</sup>.

## 5.2 Context

All the members of the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism* point out the corruption and low quality of journalism and media landscape in the country. The majority of their concerns are media ownership, low salaries and low standards of journalism. For Cătălin Prisăcariu, "*the problem is: in Romania in the last twenty years, there were not too many media owners that analyse media as a business in itself. The most important media owners are politicians and businessmen, and in some cases politicians and businessmen in the same person*" (6). The NGO *Active Watch- Media Monitoring Agency*, member of *Reporters without Borders*, writes in the 2010 report on

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<sup>13</sup> An initiative established at the end of 2002 in the framework of the *Freedom of Expression- FreeEx Program* by the NGOs: *Media Monitoring Agency (MMA)*, *Association for the Protection and Promotion of the Freedom of Expression (APPLE)*, and the *Centre for Independent Journalism*.



press freedom: *“the term “mogul” has become established in recent years to define the major media owners in Romania. The word usually defines a person with great financial power, gained from businesses other than the media, who sometimes is also a politician or who supports political organisations, through his products”* (Ganea, Popa & Ursulean 2011, 18). In this sense the main controversial media moguls in the country are Dan Voiculescu and Sorin Ovidiu Vîntu, both businessmen and owners of media groups, both active in television and print. Dan Voiculescu is a politician, senator for the Conservative Party, and the owner of several businesses in different sectors. Among them there is the media group *Intact*<sup>14</sup> (Ulmanu 2007, 421). Sorin Ovidiu Vîntu is also involved in a series of different businesses, which in more than one case cost him legal problems and convictions. In 2003, he started establishing a media empire which *“at its peak, included several TV and radio stations, newspapers, weeklies, magazines, online platforms, publishing houses, and print media distribution companies”* (Câdea 2011, 8). His group, Realitatea-Cașavencu *“underwent dramatic transformations in 2010. Tensions arose around the financial difficulties of the group and the publication of transcripts of telephone conversations of Sorin Ovidiu Vîntu with some of its employees. Transcripts of the discussions revealed Vîntu’s abusive involvement in editorial content”* (Ganea, Popa & Ursulean 2011, 16), *Active Watch* reports. Cătălin Prisăcariu him-self, apart from being member of the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism*, is among the sixteen journalists who in March 2010 quit the paper *Academia Cașavencu*, which belongs to Vîntu’s group, to found a new satirical weekly, *Kamikaze*, denouncing editorial pressures and censorship (Ganea, Popa & Ursulean 2011, 16). Adrian Mogoș and Petru Zoltan highlight as in Romania, especially in print media, the income of a journalist consists in about €400 and that with such a salary corruption in journalism is very frequent. Corruption occurs in the measure that influential people can offer journalists money to stop or to start investigations in order to save their own or to ruin their enemies’ reputation. And this custom must be summed up with the fact that *“after the revolution in ’89, it didn’t matter if you were a taxi driver, or a constructor, or an engineer or a scientist, all were doing journalism”* (7), as Adrian Mogoș explains. So, the old generation of journalists has not developed very high professional standards. Whereas, the new generations, not having good journalism programmes at the university, as Petru Zoltan and Cătălin Prisăcariu remark, because

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<sup>14</sup> It comprehends the commercial TV stations *Antena 1*, *Antena 3* and *Euforia*, plus the newspapers *Jurnalul National*, *Financiarul*, *Saptamana Financiara* and *Gazeta Sporturilor*

mainly theoretical, not up-to-date, or with teachers who have just studied on books, simply adopt what they learn in the newsroom by older colleagues. Ștefan Căndeș (2011) indicates several phases the Romanian media landscape went through in the last three decades. A first phase occurred immediately after 1989, when Communism collapsed and ‘*a new elite*’ of former secret service agents and informants assumed powerful positions, also in journalism, protecting their interests mainly through control over information. In this environment investigative journalism has been used for many years as “*a cover for blackmail, advertisement racketeering, and disinformation campaigns*” (Căndeș 2011, 6). Another phase is represented by the early years of the country transition to democracy, during which there were always strong connections between media owners and ‘*the Communist propaganda machine*’ also in the way the work was carried out. It is important to stress that this transition has been accompanied by substantial media assistance aid from Western countries but “*without much noticeable positive effect on the quality of its journalism*” (Căndeș 2011, 10). The third phase is characterised by the emergence of local oligarchs or ‘moguls’, as defined before, who use the media to protect themselves and their businesses from possible inquiries. Since Romania has joined the European Union direct pressures on the media has been substituted by “*frequent attempts by members of Parliament to sneak in ridiculous pieces of legislation that would put a leash on journalists [...] the only reason such laws have not passed is that we have strong nongovernmental organisations that act as legislative watchdogs*” (Căndeș 2011, 10).

### 5.3 Motives

Many of the problems characterising the Romanian media landscape are linked with the motivations of the founders of the centre to establish CRJI. For instance, Sorin Ozon indicates censorship one of the main motive behind the idea of the centre: “*We used to work for many newspapers and the censorship has forced us to find a new way to work professionally and express freely. The only formula was to become freelancers. But, to legitimise our journalistic work, we had to build a professional association*” (8). Also Ștefan Căndeș mentions censorship and misuse of his and his colleagues’ investigative work as one of the impulse behind the creation of CRJI, supported by the consciousness that “*in every newsroom, censorship (and reporters’ self-censorship) was widespread—and it was aimed squarely at the work of investigative reporters*” (Căndeș 2011, 7-8). But Ștefan Căndeș introduces two other motives for the development of an organisation outside the mainstream media: “*it was, firstly, a resource issue; and, secondly, also all*

*observation was that they [newspaper management] could not protect us in genre" (9).* So, the initiative was and still is also related to the belief that through the creation of an independent centre it is possible to offer more support to investigative journalism in terms of time, money, sources, travels, and the protection among honest colleagues who share important and delicate information. However, the main motives of the three members for joining of the organisation are quite diverse. Adrian Mogoş became a member in 2004 after he was invited to participate by Ştefan Căndea, with whom he previously worked at *Evenimentul Zilei*. So, the reason might have been firstly personal, based on reciprocal esteem and trustworthiness between the two journalists. Now Adrian Mogoş is involved in several projects and activities within the organisation. Cătălin Prisăcariu also joined *CRJI* in 2004. He was based in Iaşi, at that time, in the Eastern part of Romania, and he heard about the centre probably through the national weekly he used to work for. He applied. In fact, to become member was necessary to work as an investigative journalist and be recommended by other participants. *"The main goal for me was to attend workshops concerning investigative journalism"*, Cătălin Prisăcariu confesses: in fact, *"for about two or three years, I just went to some workshops most of them abroad: Norway, Bulgaria, Amsterdam"* (10). Petru Zoltan got to know the centre for the first time at a meeting for investigative journalists in Bucharest in 2005, where there were some *CRJI* members, but joined the organisation only in 2008. The reason was *"this NGO for investigative journalists is very important. It has resources for journalists"* (11). And his interest concerns especially the quality of investigative journalism supported by *"twenty journalists all willing to help"* (12). For Petru Zoltan the main advantage of being a member consists in sharing with all the others the contempt for corruption in journalism and the focus on important stories. Cătălin Prisăcariu confirms the importance of having *"colleagues that understand your work"*, that do *"the same things as you do; people that understand what an investigative story is, what you need to do, who you need to talk to, what the risks are"* (13). He agrees with Adrian Mogoş about other two advantages the centre offers: independence and freedom from editors and owners in regards of the scope and scale, the timeline, the budget of a story; and the opportunity to work and be connected internationally. As Adrian Mogoş explains: *"my gain from joining the centre is in participating to larger stories and meeting people outside Romania, journalists, good journalists, who can also help you with information from their country"* (14). And he continues: *"it was like a door for me. Because of all the connections that Ştefan [Căndea], Paul Radu, Sorin Ozon have, they put all of us in connection with all those people. This is the best thing"*

(15). This means also sometimes to earn extra money working as a fixer in Romania for foreign media and journalists. For Ștefan Căndea members' benefits are:

*"we can provide resources and we know [...] where to find the information or the databases that are available and access [to some of them]. We provide them a place to meet and discuss investigative journalism in connection with colleagues from abroad. And we help them to get to all these regional or international workshops or conferences [...]. And then, it's our credibility, because [...] we've established ourselves as good investigative journalists outside our country and outside our really corrupt media landscape. And that's also a point for them, because they also could publish under our brand"* (16).

Both Sorin Ozon and Ștefan Căndea insist on the advantage of being totally independent from any pressure by media owners, editors-in-chief, or advertisers. As Sorin Ozon states: *"we can express ourselves freely and choose our own topics and work times"* (17). But it is not all a bed of roses. One of the main problems recognised by Ștefan Căndea, Adrian Mogoș and Cătălin Prisăcariu regards the dependence on grant donors and the short term nature of the funding. *CRJI* has not an office and members pay from their pocket for accounting services or the Internet connection. Another matter consists in the number of non-journalistic activities investigative journalists do in the centre *"in terms of fundraising or project proposal writing, administrative and financial reports"* (18). As Adrian Mogoș says: *"I don't like to be involved in any kind of administrative stuff. I'm not a journalist to do that"* (19). And obstacles, according to Sorin Ozon, derive from the fact that the centre sets *"high standards and choose only sensitive issues. Obstacles come both from the authorities and colleagues from the guild"* (20).

## 5.4 Organisational structure

Legally the Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism is a *"non-governmental, not-for-profit organisation based in Bucharest"* (Lewis 2007a, 34), a NGO in the form of association. *"The board is formed by a president and two vice presidents. But all the decisions are taken by vote with participation of all members. This model revealed after we combined the classic NGO structure and the structure of a newspaper"* (21), Sorin Ozon explains. He had been the president of the organisation since its establishment in the October 2001 till the end of October 2011. In fact, at the moment Ștefan Căndea has become from vice current president. Among the other members there are some informal roles according to their expertise. For instance, Petru Zoltan is responsible for the relations with minorities and other Romanian NGOs. There are also: a member who keeps the relations with foreign NGOs, another specialised in photo and video and a lawyer who screens the articles before they are published. But as Cătălin Prisăcariu suggests *"there is no rigid structure: [...] we just meet when we have to work on*

*something and beside what there is to do*" (22). Also Adrian Mogoş jokes: *"we are more friends than members of an organisation"* (23). At the beginning the centre was formed only by the founders. The initial project has involved not only journalists but also photographers. The selection of the members is a fundamental aspect and is carefully carried out directly by the founders or through certain requirements in order to trust who enters the organisation. These are to be an investigative journalist and to be recommended by other members. Ştefan Căndea affirms:

*"we don't want to be hundreds or thousands of members. The organisation just really wants to appear a strong and dynamic network. And we took in some journalists who after a year were not doing journalism anymore or they were doing not so great journalism, so, they cannot be our members. It's a sort of an ongoing process: whom you want to work with, and for other journalists, why they would come with us"* (24).

Currently, the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism* comprehends twenty-four journalists of whom about ten are based in Bucharest, according to Cătălin Prisăcariu, *"most of them working for national media outlets institutions, especially for newspapers, but we also have some offices in the country, in the main cities. Every office consists of one, two journalists"* (25). Apart from the founders the rest of the participants in the NGO are not freelancers. In fact, as already mentioned, Cătălin Prisăcariu is the Deputy Editor-in-chief of the recently born weekly *Kamikaze*, while Adrian Mogoş works as Head of the Investigative Department of *Jurnalul National*, the same department in which also Petru Zoltan works. As Adrian Mogoş states: *"I would rather prefer to be a freelancer than working for the newspaper. But this is the other side of the coin. I'm still staying with the newspaper even though I have a low salary because of the name of the newspaper"* (26) and the reach the position offers you when you work as a fixer or when you want to disseminate some stories. The main activity of the organisation is producing investigative stories and products, but apart from that, the centre is also active in *"advocacy related to freedom of expression or on legislation related to journalists' access to information"* (27) and to a less extent in training. The journalistic work of the centre include also *"fixing, translating, documenting for foreign crews coming here, especially TV stations and big newspapers in Western Europe coming here to document some stories and have some interviews"* (28), as Cătălin Prisăcariu mentions. In addition, being *CRJI* part of regional and global investigative journalism networks and support organisations, some members also represents the centre in these contexts. For instance, Adrian Mogoş till October 2011 was the representative for *CRJI* in the board of *OCCRP*. Ştefan Căndea, instead, is *"the cross-border coordinator for SCOOP"*, *"part of the board of this European Fund for Investigative Journalists"* and *"part of ICIJ, International Consortium of Investigative*

*Journalists*” (29). Some members of the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism* belong also to *IRE* while the whole organisation is a founding member of the *Global Investigative Journalism Network*. Some members of the centre were awarded with several fellowships<sup>15</sup>. In the field of freedom of expression and legislation on Freedom of Information the centre works with the NGO *Active Watch- Media Monitoring Agency*, using also its premises for operative meetings, and the *Romanian Chapter of Transparency International*. With these organisations and other twenty-four from all over the country the Romanian centre participates in the activities of the *Convention of Media Organizations in Romania*, in which Petru Zoltan is its referent. About training Ștefan Căndea confesses: “*We did some training with journalists, but less and less. And I see that training is actually the biggest problem of the media assistance industry, because it doesn’t help that much to train journalists in a sort of hit and run basis. It is much more useful to train students, because they are not already working in a newsroom*” (30). So, now, the focus is mainly in teaching investigative techniques to the Bucharest University and organising Summer Schools in the country. This extremely dense network of activities and projects and people reflects the informal dynamism of an organisation started from the idea “*that each journalist who operates under the brand of our centre would do it independently. And if he does trainer work or if he makes some profit out of being part of our network, he should put something back in the organisation in terms that we could sustain our website and pay an accountant and so on*” (31), as Ștefan Căndea explains. Generally, the model at the basis of *CRJI* is a combination of nonprofit and forprofit activities. Going more in details to explore the way the organisation gets funded, according to its former president, the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism* requires a year “*around €4,000 - €5,000 just to be kept alive*” (32). Sorin Ozon describes the financial resources of the centre: “*We do not have a permanent financing. Usually we write a project and apply it where it fits. For example, if we have a project on organised crime we apply for funding it at OCCRP. If we want to develop a project where we want to do training we will apply to USAID or the Soros Foundation*” (33). Ștefan Căndea specifies:

“*at the very beginning, the donors would be organisations like USAID or OSI; and then, there were embassies for the US or UK or France or Germany, they had these local programmes on media development and civil society, that we accessed to do small projects. And those projects always had different components because you could not just ask for*

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<sup>15</sup> In fact, Adrian Mogoș was a *Balkan Fellow for Journalistic Excellence* in 2009, Paul Cristian Radu was *Knight Fellow* at the *Stanford University* in 2010, while Ștefan Căndea *Nieman Fellow* at the *Harvard University* in 2011.

*money to do journalism. You always have to ask for something else and do journalism as well” (34).*

To this regard Ștefan Căndea points out at some issues within the media assistance industry: “*Most of the programmes are too bureaucratic and they actually don’t ask the people on the ground what they need. They just give general lines and they say you should do this or this and that. And you have to file for projects to fulfil their requests, but also to do what you really need to do on the ground*” (35). An even more complicated paragraph is dedicated to the *European Union*. In fact, *CRJI* participated in projects funded by *PHARE*, an *EU* programme managing pre-accession funds destined to new and candidate member countries, together with the *Romanian Chapter of Transparency International* and *Active Watch*. In these cases there were several components involved in the projects and the participant NGOs split administrative and journalistic tasks according to the nature of their organisations. More difficult, instead, is the access to *EU Structural Funds*, as Sorin Ozon wonders: “*if we want to apply for larger funds, we are rejected because we do not have experience running these funds. But how to get experience if you never receive?*” (36). Adrian Mogoș also points out the difficulty to apply for these funds for their co-financing rule requiring too high personal investments. *EU* and other media assistance funds have been gradually reduced since Romania has joined the *European Union*. For instance, the Danish project supporting investigative journalism in Southeast Europe, *SCOOP*, has stopped financing directly Romanian journalists. However, *CRJI* members can still apply to *SCOOP* for transnational investigative projects involving journalists in non-EU neighbouring countries. Looking at the statistics of *SCOOP* and the *European Fund for Investigative Journalism*, *CRJI* members have always applied just for transnational projects but more frequently before 2007. In fact, it results that *SCOOP* in 2006 funded three projects related to the centre: *Energy Brokers*, *Transdnistern* and *Gazprom*; while, more recently, only one project in 2009 about *Slavery in the EU* involving also journalists in Moldova and Ukraine. The same story has been also the only one supported by *journalismfund.eu*. There are also some internal rules in regards from whom to accept money: for example, the centre does not accept funding from Romanian sources (Lewis 2007a, 37; Căndea 2011, 7) and from “*sources that we will maybe deal with in the future*” (35), Adrian Mogoș says. Thus, they mainly stipulate freelance contracts with Western media. As Cătălin Prisăcariu observes: it is important to be known in the international investigative journalism environment in order to be contacted for fixing or other assignments, especially for the members who are freelancers and make a living out of it. That brings back the initial concept of credibility as one of the foundation of

the organisation. But in terms of transparency the centre does not offer any document on its website to understand the financial flow related to its activities. It seems that nobody has a fixed salary from the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism* but everybody if entrepreneurial enough may benefit from its membership. In 2010 *CRJI* received support from the *Open Society Institute* for the realisation of a new website currently online, obtained thanks to Paul Cristian Radu, who applied for it while he was studying at Stanford. On this new website Adrian Mogoş counts a lot in respect to the future of the organisation: *"after we will launch this new website, we really intend to structure more, in the sense that, at least the few of us who are fully involved will have a topic to deal with. For instance, I want to take care about Freedom of Information Act, writing stories, putting on the web all the decisions regarding this legislation here in Romania"* (37). And while Sorin Ozon is not too positive on the future of the centre mentioning the problem of few financial resources especially on a long term basis. Ştefan Căndea, just back from his Nieman Fellowship in the US, seems having a lot of ideas and projects he would like to experiment in Romania. His priority is to separate the journalistic activity from the administrative tasks, like fundraising, project and report writing, internal communication, involving new people for that maybe also on a freelance basis. Secondly, he plans to search for a business model for the centre to make it function more regularly without counting on donors: *"We have a good network, we know people, we know where to find the information, but we don't have resources to do it on a regular basis and there is a lot of work to be done in our region"* (38). That is something also Sorin Ozon surrenders: *"In the beginning, we didn't intend to develop a business. Now we think more and more about this"* (39). And in relation to what he has got to know in the States that he would like to experiment in Romania, Ştefan Căndea reveals the idea of creating through *CRJI* a local watchdog newsroom for the Black Sea area, on the model of the new organisations developed in the US, like *California Watch*. More in general the perspective for him is about *"experimenting with publishing and gathering information models"*, something the centre has already done in these ten years, somehow forced by external conditions, and now *"everywhere, everybody is trying to see what business model might be sustainable to do this outside the mainstream media"* (40). This shows how *CRJI* constantly looks at what happens in other countries and take inspiration.

## 5.5 Practices

In ten years of existence *CRJI* members have carried out more than a hundred



investigations. The way the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism* works at its stories is summarized by Sorin Ozon in five steps: the selection of the subject; the allocation of journalists and resources for the single project; the search for funding; the work itself; and the publication of the findings. In the initial step, Sorin Ozon explains: “we meet regularly, discuss and make a list of topics. Criteria are, in order of importance: topics that in general media avoid due to censorship or high costs, of general interest and up to date” (41). Ștefan Căndea considers it a sort of ongoing process: the centre generally monitors certain areas and this automatically generates some stories. So, on the one hand, there is a constant observation and gathering of information on topics of interest in the region and its organisation in databases; on the other hand, sometimes, new subjects come out from the need of digging more into new facts or situations. Ștefan Căndea jokes: “The problem is not that we do not have topics, that we do not have enough stories. There are so many stories around that we cannot do actually because we do not have the capacity. There is an abundance of topics, of stories, that we want to investigate, but there are not the resources to do it” (42). Everybody agrees on the fact that corruption and especially organised crime are the main subject areas of the organisation, not only for choice, but also because almost all sectors and actors in the region, from politics to environment to corporate, are touched by these problems. For example, Adrian Mogoș has dealt in his work with “corruption in football, tobacco, trafficking, including trafficking of human beings, slavery” (43). Cătălin Prisăcariu reflects: “capitalism in Romania is quite young: twenty-one years is not a long time at all to understand real capitalism. We have a lot of former Securitate officers, the former Communist secret service, being politicians right now or public figures or parliamentarians. And the Communist bad habits are still active. So, a lot of corruption cases are in facts good for stories” (44). Other two important subjects for the centre are human rights and media. Particularly, about media *CRJI*, in partnership with the *Centre for Independent Journalism*, *HotNews.ro*, that is the Association of the Publishers of the Online Press, and *Media Monitoring Agency*, and with the financial support of the *Embassy of the United States* and the *Romanian Ministry of Justice*, has realised the website *mediaindex.ro*. It is an online database “where [...] you can search by media organisations or by region, you can see what the media index, who owns it and what other businesses they have. But it is not an updated database. [...] This is another type of approach because you create a tool for people to use by themselves” (45), Ștefan Căndea says. As Adrian Mogoș points out usually the stories have for criteria the fact of involving other countries apart from Romania, to be cross-border, in

order to be more interesting to be read also elsewhere. This is very much related also to funding issues: in fact, especially in Europe, the existing funds for investigative journalism cover especially cross-border investigations and their expenses. Internally to the centre there is no a clear-cut specialisation of the members in different areas of interest. But that is something Ștefan Căndea affirms they are working at, especially in the field of public spending or conflicts of interest or even according to territorial levels. What Adrian Mogoș complains a bit of is the fact that *“we are not like a group in the sense that we have a brainstorming every week to see what we can do. Maybe, if somebody has an idea you can ask others if they want to join you”* (46). But the centre’s model of news production is not characterised by a strong hierarchy. To describe better how it works Ștefan Căndea compares *CRJI* and organisational models of criminal groups: *“if you compare organised crime groups [...] models, it would be: the Italian model, with a strong hierarchy and with a head of the group; and the Russian model, where you have this star organisation with individual cells. I think we are closer to this last one. We have the centre but we have these cells working independently in a way”* (47). This is also the strength and the source of dynamism of the centre. But these cells working to different stories operate in team: firstly, to have more sources of information; secondly, for security reasons, because sharing with other colleagues the same information helps the journalists not becoming target of criminal groups. In fact, both Cătălin Prisăcariu and Petru Zoltan insist on the dangers related to many topics *CRJI* members deal with. And indeed *CRJI* journalists face many risks, especially because the main technique they use is going undercover, often using hidden cameras. That is mainly *“because you do not have a police investigation, or a prosecutor investigation on a lot of topics, you have to start somewhere. And our start is this more classical approach based on observation”* (48), Ștefan Căndea explains. Then, computer-assisted reporting represents the second main technique the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism* adopts, especially to create and work with databases. Also Freedom of Information Act requests are an important instrument to carry out investigations. These two latter techniques have especially been improved and updated through the exchange occurring internationally at the global conferences or at other workshops or through collaborations among foreign colleagues. Collaborative transnational journalism in itself seems interpreted as an innovative technique. Another fundamental phase of the news production in *CRJI* consists in the publication of the findings of their research. Apart from publishing on the centre website *“the main idea is to spread the story”* (49), as Adrian Mogoș says, *“to be present in as many places as we*

can” (50), using Ștefan Căndea’s words. In order to be able to do that the centre usually cross-publishes its findings producing more versions of the same story for different formats and different publics: online, print, TV or radio; local, national, regional or international. In the best option: *“if we pre-finance the story, then, we have the luxury not to look for people who would pay for the story to have it published, so, we will look only for publishing partners who have not money and they will just run the story”* (51), Ștefan Căndea explains. In this case the centre has a complete independence in individuating the publishing strategy. For big cross-border projects the story is usually cross-published in several countries. Otherwise, nationally the organisation may count on a series of partners, especially national newspapers, where some of their members or colleagues work as editors. For instance, in the case of *Jurnalul National*, Adrian Mogoș, the Head of the Investigative Department, admits: *“some of the stories cannot be published on my newspaper because of the ownership. But a large percentage, I can say 80 or 90% can be published in my newspaper, which is, according to the rating agency, the first one. So, it is a good opportunity”* (52). But Sorin Ozon recognises a difficulty: *“It is quite complicated to choose where to publish, because sometimes a newspaper or a TV station have different interests on our subjects. [...] Practical we have to do two investigations: one on our topic and one on the method to distribute the articles”* (53). The website of the centre and the centre itself is not very well known in Romania, especially outside the circle of journalists, as both Adrian Mogoș both Cătălin Prisăcariu note. It represents an important resource for journalists as stressed by Ștefan Căndea, but as Adrian Mogoș says: *“we as names we are known but the centre is not”* (54). On that Cătălin Prisăcariu adds: *“the funny thing is that some of us are more well-known outside the country than inside the country because they travel a lot. [...] We are mainly focused in activities, it’s funny, outside the country than inside the country because you cannot have money from here, clean money”* (55). Petru Zoltan and Adrian Mogoș register little interest from the Romanian readership in the stories the centre carries out. *“But, internationally, [...] they appreciate my and my colleagues’ stories”* (56), Adrian Mogoș observes. Sorin Ozon seems more positive in considering the impact of CRJI stories in Romania: *“In general, all our stories have a significant impact because we choose special topics. After we publish the articles, and the ice gets broken, all media wants to create a debate and be seen by the public in the centre of events”* (57).

In this chapter the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism* has been introduced

from its start in 2001 when three journalists and a photo-reporter founded the NGO inspired by *IRE*, *ICIJ* and *PIJC*. They wanted to have more resources and protection and to improve the quality of journalism standards in the country. The corrupt media landscape pushed them to build a strong credibility around the centre brand and to market its work especially abroad. Motives to join the organisation consist in independence and editorial freedom, sharing high professional standards, the opportunity to be connected with investigative journalists from all over the world. Difficulties in the development of the centre are related to the shortage of money, especially long term funding, plus dealing at the same time with administrative and journalistic tasks. *CRJI* is mainly active in producing investigative stories, advocating on the issues of freedom of expression and information. Its structure is very simple and informal. It combines nonprofit and forprofit activities. The network of the centre is internationally wide. In ten years it has produced more than a hundred investigative stories mainly about organised crime, corruption, as well as media and human rights, usually cross-border projects in the Balkan area. The main techniques *CRJI* uses are undercover observation supported by hidden cameras and CAR. News production is decentralised but articulated in small independent teams. *CRJI* tries to cross-publish its stories.

## Chapter 6: *BULGARIAN INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM CENTER*

This chapter will introduce another organisation situated within the Black Sea and the Balkan region: the *Bulgarian Investigative Journalism Centre (BIJC)*. It is a smaller and more recent NGO with many connections with the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism*: firstly, for its proximity; secondly, because it is also part of *Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project* and the *Global Investigative Journalism Network*; and thirdly, the two organisations do themselves network to investigate regional stories. The founder of the *BIJC*, Stanimir Vaglenov, and his colleague, Alexenia Dimitrova, help reconstructing: the history of the centre, in which context it has developed, why it has been founded, why it can be worthy to collaborate with this organisation, how it is structured, how and on which subjects it works. Both journalists are prominent reporters in Bulgaria<sup>16</sup>. The two interviews are integrated with other

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<sup>16</sup> In fact, Alexenia Dimitrova is Special Correspondent Department Analyses Public Opinion and Investigations at *24Chasa*, the second best-selling daily after *Trud*; while Stanimir Vaglenov is the Executive Director of the Information and Online Services Department for *Newspaper Group Bulgaria*, company in charge of both *24Chasa* both *Trud* websites.

articles and texts related to Bulgarian investigative journalism (Muelenaer 2005; Vaglenov 2011) and media landscape (Tabakova 2007).

## 6.1 History

In Bulgaria the first NGO to be established dealing in part with investigative journalism seems an organisation called *ProMedia* founded in 1998 directly by the American development institution *International Research and Experience (IREX)*. *ProMedia* engages mostly in training and TV production through its *Broadcasting Training Centre* and *ProMedia Productions*. Among its TV-products, the weekly programme *Na Chisto* (Clean State), broadcasted at least until 2009, is considered an interesting example of investigative journalism. Another organisation came to exist in 2001. It was called *Bulgarian Association of Investigative Journalists* or *Investigative Journalists' Association*. In 2005 the organisation counted between twenty-five to thirty members coordinated by a steering committee compound by the well-known investigative journalists Yovo Nikolov, Zoya Dimitrova, Ana Zarkova, Velislav Rusev and Hristo Hristov (Muelanaer 2004, 56). The *Investigative Journalists' Association* is reported to used to organize the *Best Investigative Article* award with funding from the *Guardian Foundation*, and courses, beside a website with the English translation of investigative stories. The award was certainly run from 2002 to 2005. Both our respondents for the *Bulgarian Investigative Journalism Center* were also part of this previous organisation. Stanimir Vaglenov was actually among its founders but he quit the association after some months. In fact, he claims that the organisation had never been active. Certainly, the *Investigative Journalists' Association* did not have long life even if probably it still exists on paper: some quarrels between members and the controversial and unexpected shift of one of the founders, Zoya Dimitrova, from journalism to be the spoke-person of the *Bulgarian National Security Agency (DANS)* definitely killed any good intentions. The *Bulgarian Investigative Journalism Center* finally came into life in April 2007 and launched in 2008. It has been founded basically because a formal organisation was among the requirements in order to apply for funding to the *Netherlands Embassy*, in the framework of *Small Embassy Projects Programme (MATRA/KAP)*, with the project "*Investigative Journalism classes*". The description of the project states: "*elaborating and piloting a class in investigative journalism at the Sofia University*" (*Netherlands Embassy in Sofia, Bulgaria* 2010). The application had been granted funding for the period between 2008 and 2010. It had allowed Stanimir Vaglenov and Alexenia Dimitrova to teach *Investigative Journalism* as visiting lecturers to the students of the

Department of Journalism and Mass Communications at the St. Kl. Ohridski for two academic years and to write the *Handbook with Practical Tips for Journalistic Investigation*. Being its founder an active collaborator of the *Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project* and a member of the *Global Investigative Journalism Network*, the organisation has automatically resulted part of these two networks. On the level of investigative productions the centre works in a very informal way, mainly recognising as its-own co-products the stories developed in cooperation with other centres or journalists of other countries. This level very much depends on the founder and Executive Director of *BIJC*, Stanimir Vaglenov, the main point of contact between the twelve members of the organisation.

## 6.2 Context

From the interviews with Stanimir Vaglenov and Alexenia Dimitrova, the Bulgarian media landscape does not seem too adverse to investigative journalism, on its contrary, Alexenia Dimitrova, for instance, affirms: “*investigative reporting in Bulgaria is going very well but in Sofia. In small local media, I could not say so*” (58). So, the point does not appear to be, like in the Romanian case, a media system requiring investigative journalism to be done outside the mainstream media because of their corruption. Conversely, it looks like in Bulgaria media outlets give space to investigative stories. Even if they do not promote or finance directly these pieces, news media leave them to the reporters’ initiative. In this sense the relevance switch from building an independent and credible organisation, to getting funding to cover the expenses of bigger cross-border projects or to improving the journalistic standards teaching investigative techniques to the young and middle generation of reporters. But this vision can be also biased by the fact that both Stanimir Vaglenov and Alexenia Dimitrova have a good full-time position in a leading newspaper group. In this sense it is better to integrate some of their comments with scientific literature available in English on the Bulgarian media landscape. Somehow what appears very different from the Romanian context is the strong presence of foreign ownership. In the print market the German media group *Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung (WAZ)* had dominated the scene from 1997 to 2010 with a peak of share equal to 41.7% (Tabakova 2007, 317). The German company, owner also of both *24Chasa* and *Trud*, sold all its Bulgarian assets in 2010 to *BG Printmedia*, a company based in Bulgaria but in majority owned by an Austrian group. However, Tabakova points out: “*Trud, 24 Chasa and Dnevnik collect over two thirds of the advertising in newspapers. In the case of the other newspapers, advertising and*

*sales are not the only source of funding. They are either completely owned by business circles, related to political parties, or easily influenced by political forces and business circles*” (2010). It may indicate that for the journalists of these smaller newspapers things do not go so smoothly as in the bigger groups. In broadcasting the two main television stations apart from the public service *Bulgarian National Television (BNT)*, formerly state television, are *bTV* owned by Murdoch’s *Balkan News Corporation* and *Nova Televisia* established by the *Greek Antenna Group* (Tabakova 2007, 319) and in 2008 bought by the Swedish *Modern Times Group (MTG)* (Tabakova 2010). Another recent player is the US company *Central European Media Enterprises (CME)* that, always in 2008, became the owner of some TV stations, among which *TV2* (Tabakova 2010). In the radio market there are four main foreign groups: “*the Irish Communicorp Group, SBS Broadcasting Group (Scandinavian Broadcasting System became in 2007 a part of ProSiebenSat.1 Media AG), US Emmis Communications, and News Corporation Group (owned by Rupert Murdoch)*” (Tabakova 2010). Thus, it is possible to argue the media ownership situation in Bulgaria is very different from the one in Romania. The most reasonable pressure on journalists in this context seems to be advertising, therefore it is possible that censorship occurs to a minor extent than in Romania. Apart from this the Bulgarian situation resembles the Romanian especially in respect of journalists’ salary. In fact, in the country report about Freedom of the Press, *Freedom House* mentions: “*Pay levels for journalists have been consistently low, and the recession has only worsened journalists’ financial difficulties. Even at leading outlets, many hold second jobs, and some double as media advisers for political campaigns*” (2011). This could suggest that corruption in journalism is also very probable in Bulgaria but maybe out of media organisations themselves. Concerns exist about other possible means of intimidating or influencing journalists: violence and legal threats. In fact, *Freedom House* registers some serious attacks towards journalists during 2010 including a murder (2011). The report also denounces: “*Defamation is punishable by large fines, and government officials have filed suits against journalists, but the courts tend to favour press freedom in such cases*” (*Freedom House* 2011). These two weapons can actually provoke self-censorship for journalists in many cases. Like in Romania, the role of NGOs seems crucial in improving “*freedom of speech, the media professionalization and raising the level of journalism*”, particularly active on this front are *Access to Information Program, Media Development Centre, Centre for Independent Journalism* (Tabakova 2010). In 1999 non-governmental media organisations established the *Bulgarian Media Coalition (BMC)*: a forum for advocacy

and debate about media policy and journalism standards, whose latest developments date back to 2006, and whose work has been deeply rewarded. Particularly interesting is the NGO *Access to Information Program*. In fact, this organisation has been working since 1996 advocating for improving Freedom of Information Act in Bulgaria, encouraging journalists and citizens in using the current legislation and most importantly supporting who actually requests access to public documents. But these NGOs certainly for a large part depend on media assistance programmes. Programmes that, as Alexenia Dimitrova points out, since Bulgaria has joined the European Union have shrunk or concluded, without meaning that the problems for which they had begun do not exist anymore. To conclude it is possible to cite a final passage of Stanimir Vaglenov's article on the *Nieman Reports*, Spring 2011 edition:

*"Today I feel that journalism in Bulgaria can be conducted in the same way as it is in Western Europe or the United States. What creates a distinction is the substantial lack of resources for Bulgarian journalists. Another problem remains the ineffective judicial system, which fails to provide a legal environment that is sufficiently protective of the rights of Bulgarian journalists"* (2011, 38).

### 6.3 Motives

A better climate within the media system does not necessary reduce the need of investigative and quality journalism. In fact, as Stanimir Vaglenov explains: in the shift from Communism to democracy *"private business was created from the very beginning. And a lot of connections were created between private business, state business and organised crime"* (59). Particularly, Stanimir Vaglenov has been following since the start of capitalism the patterns of the new Bulgarian entrepreneurs: what they used to do before 1989, who their partners are, how they started their business. He narrates:

*"Some of the richest Bulgarians now, started in connections with very strange people twenty years ago. And now, of course, a lot of them were killed and some of them became very rich. Part of them, maybe 10%, has very clear business at the moment. But we know who they were in fact, and it's interesting for us to follow what kind of activity they have at the moment"* (60).

Both Stanimir Vaglenov and Alexenia Dimitrova point out the fact that, now that Bulgaria is part of the European Union, it is very important for investigative journalism to monitor the European Funds in the country, especially, in whose hands they end up. They both worked on stories in this regard: Stanimir Vaglenov in collaboration with the NGO *EU Transparency* for the project *FarmSubsidies.org*; while Alexenia Dimitrova was approached by the *Financial Times* to investigate about Structural Funds in the country. So, the general situation in respect of corruption and organised crime per se requires investigative journalism to be kept strongly in place. In this sense to have a centre assumes its relevance, as Alexenia Dimitrova affirms, in raising *"money for investigation [because] different programmes in the United States and in Europe give*



money only to centres” (61). In fact, if before Bulgaria had joined the EU it was possible to access some funding to do cross-border projects as single journalists, since 2007 those programmes have stopped, leaving only few funds for NGOs. The main reason behind the establishment of the *Bulgarian Investigative Journalism Center* in 2007 was the possibility to access some funds of the *Netherlands Embassy* in Sofia “for courses of investigative reporting at Sofia University. And the only way to try to take this funding was to create an organisation, a centre. That’s why we created the centre. And we won the project” (62), Stanimir Vaglenov tells. For Alexenia Dimitrova training in investigative journalism is extremely important in Bulgaria, especially “in small local and regional media because in these poor regions the problems are tremendous: the conflicts of interests between business and the society, corruption at a local level” (63). And she argues that especially for the middle generation of reporters that is not able to speak English there is the need of some “transformation of knowledge from the West to the East” (64). Both Stanimir Vaglenov and Alexenia Dimitrova had been involved in training activities even before the creation of *BIJC* between 2004 and 2006 as local trainers in the EU *PHARE* programme *Technical Assistance for Improving Professional Standards of Journalism* realised in collaboration with *BBC World Service Trust*. Among other interventions the project delivered training to six hundreds mid-career journalists working in small regional local media around six regions in the country. Stanimir Vaglenov and Alexenia Dimitrova themselves participated to training schemes abroad in their careers. Stanimir Vaglenov was invited in 2002 by the US State Department in the United States for a month where he attended training in investigative journalism. Alexenia Dimitrova counts a large amount of experience as fellow, participant, speaker and trainer in different regional and international schemes, seminars and conferences<sup>17</sup>. This “world knowledge of investigative reporting and experience” (65) she and Stanimir Vaglenov gained, particularly within the *Global Investigative Journalism Conferences and Network*, which they have participated since 2001, represent for Alexenia Dimitrova something important “we could transmit to Bulgarian young journalists” (66). She also affirms to have “very much suffered that throughout of the years there is no in Bulgaria a good working investigative reporting centre” (67) because as an investigative journalist she would like to be part of a larger team and co-

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<sup>17</sup> Her international experience started in 1991 with a Fellowship in *Writing Business News* at *Reuters* in London to continue with a year Fellowship in 1996 at the *World Press Institute* in the US in *American Studies*, another at the *Missouri University* in *Investigative Journalism* and in 2006 a Master class in *Transparency Reporting* at the *University of Minnesota*.

produce competitive stories to distribute strategically to media outlets.

## 6.4 Organisational structure

Those are the presuppositions for the existence of the centre. Then, in practice things are a bit more complicated. The *Bulgarian Investigative Journalism Center* formally is registered under Bulgarian law as a mutual benefit foundation. This implies a very simple mandatory structure formed by “*one managing body that can be either a director/ manager or a management board*” (Bulgarian Centre for Not-for-Profit Law 2009). Thus, *BIJC* structure consists mainly in the Executive Director in the person of Stanimir Vaglenov and a network of twelve members spread all over the main Bulgarian cities. The point is that at the same time when Stanimir Vaglenov established the *Bulgarian Investigative Journalism Center* and started lecturing at the Sofia University he also became the Head of the Department of Information and Online Services for *Newspaper Group Bulgaria*. This latter development in Stanimir Vaglenov’s career strongly influences the structure of the centre because it consists of a full-time position with many responsibilities. Therefore, it has reduced his availability to build a real organisation. Stanimir Vaglenov explaining why he had not created the centre before, even if it was something it had been in the air for many years, affirms: “*If you want to have a real structure, you need to hire people, to involve some people in this idea, to try to find financing, to try to manage this organisation. I had no time for this*” (68). The same situation applies also with the centre in place: “*Unfortunately, we are still very busy and it is impossible to have a real centre, I mean, with an office, with a lot of people who work only on this*” (69). So, the model Stanimir Vaglenov offers is a virtual centre, an informal network of potential collaborators in connection also with the other investigative journalism centres, especially in the Balkan region. The training activity of *BIJC*, instead, seems more concrete, less virtual. The members themselves are, according to the founder, in large part students who participated in the courses taught by Stanimir Vaglenov and Alexenia Dimitrova. Alexenia Dimitrova describes her role in the organisation as “*a personal one. Stanimir [Vaglenov] the founder of the centre invited me as a friend, as a colleague who he has known for many years and he has trusted for many years. I think so. And he thinks I am professional and he invited me to be part of his activity, mostly training activity*” (70). Her involvement in the *Bulgarian Investigative Journalism Center* can be summed up in the visiting lectures at the Sofia University for the course on *Investigative Journalism* with focus on new media and the handbook for investigative reporters in Bulgaria. The project at the Sofia

University was also the only funding so far received by the organisation amounting to €7,000 for the two year programme. Stanimir Vaglenov thinks it would not be too difficult to find other finances at least for a start up phase of the organisation. “*But if you start, then you should find another funding and another and another. I have no time to do this. I have no even skills as a manager. I am a professional journalist, not a manager. Of course, I can do this, but this is not normal work for me. And if I want to have good managers for the centre, I should pay them*” (71), he confesses. The products of this virtual centre are mainly individual collaborations on cross-border projects with regional networks or other centres, like OCCRP, the *Bosnian Center for Investigative Reporting*, the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism*, the *Investigative Journalism Center* in Croatia and the *Macedonian Center for Investigative Journalism*. Stanimir Vaglenov mentions also strong connections with the US and Denmark. The latter especially for *SCOOP*, which Stanimir Vaglenov was part of for five years, while in the US he probably refers to *Global Integrity*, thus consequently to the *Center for Public Integrity* in Washington. Compensations for these activities are mainly at a freelance or voluntary level for the single journalist involved without any financial contribution to the organisation. In the near future the *Bulgarian Investigative Journalism Center* does not seem to intend to change its minimal structure. Stanimir Vaglenov does not appear very sure: “*if I have to stay in a big media organisation like this [Newspaper Group Bulgaria] or to become a freelancer and to start improving my centre and to search for more funding and so on. But it’s not easy because, at first, I’m not sure if I’ll survive*” (72). But generally speaking about the future of investigative journalism he believes that it will be mainly in big media organisations because they are the only ones that have the money to support investigations. This already shows the lack of confidence in implementing the centre. Alexenia Dimitrova seems to be surer that nobody “*would leave their well-paid jobs to maintain that centre*” (73).

## 6.5 Practices

Stanimir Vaglenov explains the very informal mechanism behind the investigative stories carried out under the brand of the *Bulgarian Investigative Journalism Center*: “*I have some colleagues here in Sofia, I have correspondents, or let say, part of our team of the centre, in the town of Burgas, this is on the sea-side, one of the biggest Bulgarian town, in Varna and in Plovdiv, the second biggest town in Bulgaria. And when we have a special case, a case of special interest, we are making a team and working together*” (74). This description of the centre modalities applies also to its cooperation with

journalists in other countries and well represents Stanimir Vaglenov's vision of virtual centre. And it is the Executive Director of *BIJC* that decides, according to the project and whom he retains more appropriate, whom to involve in the investigations. One of the criteria for its choice is: *"I am trying to give especially to young people the possibility to connect with journalists from all around the world, because [...] you have to be part of networks to have good pieces of investigative journalism"* (75).

Communication among the journalists involved in a story project occurs mainly through the Internet, mainly Skype, with the help of special tools and software used, for instance, to encrypt messages. The main subjects this virtual centre works on are organised crime and corruption, and to a less extent politics and corporate wrongdoing. About organised crime Stanimir Vaglenov points out as recently the situation in Bulgaria has changed: in fact, there is less evidence of criminal groups' assaults on the streets or minor criminal activities. Now these groups *"are trying to take money from the State budget or the European Union with different techniques. We know how they are doing this and we are following different cases"* (76), Stanimir Vaglenov states.

A new important tool Stanimir Vaglenov is using to represent and organise his findings is Google Fusion for the creation of interactive maps starting from data. In fact, working mainly with online platforms, visualisation tools become very important in conveying more effectively important data or findings. The publication of the investigations of the virtual centre occurs in large part on the websites of the two big newspapers Stanimir Vaglenov manages. He affirms: *"I have the chance to have an audience, readers, more than 120,000 every day. And as Chief-Editor, in fact, of this big media, big for Bulgaria, [...] I have no problems with publishing. I can publish and I do everything I want"* (77). But especially cross-border stories usually are published also in other media in other countries. An interesting example of this is represented by a story, which came out from the collaboration with *FarmSubsidy.org*, the project of the NGO *EU Transparency*. Stanimir Vaglenov and his student and colleague Tsvetana Balabanova analysed with Excel and other computer-assisted reporting techniques thousands of data obtained in Brussels about the EU farm subsidy beneficiaries in Bulgaria. And they found out that *"one of the deputy Ministers of Agriculture, who was in the previous government and he was in charge for European subsidies especially for agriculture [...] gave a lot of money to his daughter. She was the biggest receiver of European money for agriculture for 2009 as a private person"* (78). This scandal was published firstly on the *24 Chasa* and *Trud* websites and print versions. Afterwards, the news was republished all over Bulgarian media. And it appeared in English *"in a lot of European*

*newspapers and Internet sites, like Euobserver and a lot of others, some very big media, and on the Guardian, partly”* (79), Stanimir Vaglenov states. The story ended up with the introduction of a new piece of legislation, which forbids that Ministers receive farm subsidies. This is a good example of the informal way the centre operates in collaboration with other NGOs helping its younger members in building contacts outside the country. But especially it well exemplifies the possible distribution of the story findings abroad if relevant. The *Bulgarian Investigative Journalism Center* has also its-own website but there are not many information on it. In fact, the organisation as it is structured cannot sustain the costs of updating the site with the investigative stories it has produced. So, it is not actually possible to examine an archive with the investigations of the centre. According to Stanimir Vaglenov *BIJC* has produced since its establishment circa fifty products.

In this chapter, the history, the context, the motives, the organisational structure, the practices of the *Bulgarian Investigative Journalism Center* have been illustrated. *BIJC*’s foundation has been preceded by other nonprofit organisations dealing with investigative journalism: *IREX* has run since 1998 *ProMedia*; while in 2001, the *Bulgarian Investigative Journalists’ Association* appeared for some time. Finally, in April 2007, Stanimir Vaglenov founded the *Bulgarian Investigative Journalism Center*. The media landscape in which this organisation has developed is characterised by a massive foreign influence in the ownership of news outlets that let suggest more Western standards in journalism. Its main motive was the requirement of an organisation in order to realise through funding from the *Netherlands Embassy* the project *Investigative Journalism classes*. *BIJC*, apart from the course at the *Sofia University*, carries out its investigative activity in a very individual and informal way. Basically, the Executive Director, Stanimir Vaglenov, coordinates twelve members spread in the main Bulgarian cities. The organisation per se does not have any gain. The only funding it has ever received were the €7,000 of the *Netherlands Embassy* in Sofia for visiting lectures. It has never been possible to establish a real structure for the centre because its founder is a full-time journalist. But still this virtual centre offers the opportunity to Stanimir Vaglenov and some of his students and colleagues to collaborate and network with other NGOs in the region, in the US and Denmark. This virtual centre of Bulgarian journalists has so far contributed to more than fifty investigations, according to its Executive Director, with main subjects organised crime and corruption. Basically, when there is a particular project Stanimir Vaglenov involves

other colleagues and makes a team. The final findings are then published on the newspaper websites that Stanimir Vaglenov manages. Cross-border projects may also get published in other languages in other countries.

## Chapter 7: *BUREAU OF INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM*

The organisation that is going to be introduced in this chapter completely changes our landscape both in geographical terms and in the approach to nonprofit and to journalism. In fact, its legal status is nonprofit but it is structured more as a company and it works as a production house. The *Bureau of Investigative Journalism (BIJ)* is also peculiar because it is located in the same city and in the same university of the *Centre for Investigative Journalism (CIJ)*. These two separate nonprofits define themselves sister organisations and they are both based at the City University in London. In this chapter, their history, context, motives and practices will be illustrated through interviews with: Gavin MacFadyen, Director of the *CIJ*, key idea man and member of the Editorial Advisory Board of the *BIJ*; Iain Overton, Managing Editor of the *Bureau*; and Rachel Oldroyd, its Deputy Editor. Their contributions will be integrated with other literature: Dasselaar (2005), Lewis (2007), Wring (in Donsbach 2008) and De Burgh (2001; 2010).

### 7.1 History

The history of the *Bureau of Investigative Journalism* starts with the creation of the *Centre for Investigative Journalism (CIJ)* in 2003. Gavin MacFadyen, together with Michael Gillard (Wikipedia 2011a), established *CIJ* in order to run a *Summer School in Investigative Reporting* for which they had received grants from the *Lorana Sullivan Foundation*. Since then, *CIJ* has organized a three-days annual Summer School at the City University in London. In 2005 the Centre has constituted itself as a Company Limited by Guarantee, a type of corporation often used in England and Wales for nonprofit organisations. The office of the centre has always been located in the premises of the City University, another important sponsor of *CIJ*. In fact, Gavin MacFadyen has been lecturing as visiting Professor at the City Journalism Department since 1996 where he has also contributed to launch the *Investigative Journalism Master's* programme. In 2007 the *Centre for Investigative Journalism* was registered as a charity with the *Charity Commission*. Getting charitable status basically means to be recognised as a philanthropic organisation with aims of public benefits and it confers to these entities some reliefs and exemptions from taxation. Around *CIJ*, its Summer School, and the

training it offers worldwide, an increasing number of journalists and other professionals have gathered and assumed different roles in the organisation. In fact, the *Centre for Investigative Journalism* as a Company Limited by Guarantee has a board of trustees who supervise its activities, several advisors, trainers and speakers. Among the trustees Elaine Potter is the Chairwoman. Elaine Potter, herself an investigative journalist who worked in the seventies with the *Insight* team of the *Sunday Times*, is the co-founder with her husband, David Potter, of the *David and Elaine Potter Foundation*. This is an important sponsor of *CIJ* since 2005 and the actual initiator of the *Bureau of Investigative Journalism*. In fact, in the late months of 2009 *TBIJ* came into life. While the main activity of *CIJ* consists in training and in building resources for investigative journalists, the *Bureau of Investigative Journalism* has been founded to solely produce investigations on the model of a production house. The organisation established as a Company Limited by Guarantee has started with a donation of £2,000,000 for its first five years, lavished by the *Potter Foundation*. The main inspiration in this sense has come from *ProPublica* and its single backer model, being both organisations founded and funded by only one family. The initial phase of *TBIJ* is intertwined with another project. In fact, in June 2009, Stephen Grey, a military correspondent famous for his investigation about CIA Extraordinary Rendition, and Martin Bright, currently political editor of the *Jewish Chronicle*, got together with other experienced investigative reporters to form the *Foundation for Investigative Reporting*. After a few meetings they launched an initiative called *Investigations Fund*. At the beginning there was some confusion between *TBIJ* and the *Investigation Fund*: in fact, in certain articles it seems that the *Bureau of Investigative Journalism* was supposed to be run by the two above mentioned journalists or that the *Investigations Fund* was supported by the *Potter Foundation*. Apparently Stephen Grey and Martin Bright initially proposed themselves as Managing and Deputy editors of *TBIJ* after the announcement of the Potter's donation. But the founding members of the Bureau preferred to launch an open call to recruit someone who would run the nonprofit company. The other organisation, *Investigations Fund* has disappeared. For Gavin MacFadyen that represents actually a pity because the existence of another centre would offer a productive competition. Instead, after few months to select the Managing Editor and set the operation up, the *Bureau of Investigative Journalism* was officially launched in April 2010. In its first year the organisation worked out major investigations as the collaboration with *Wikileaks* for making broadcast products on the Iraq War Logs and a detailed database on the destination of the European Structural Funds in partnership with the *Financial*

*Times*. Thanks to these stories the Bureau was awarded for the former with the *Amnesty Digital Media Award* and for the latter with the *UACES Thompson Reuters Reporting Europe Prize*.

## 7.2 Context

The United Kingdom, as described in the first chapter, has been the cradle of the libertarian theory of the press and subsequently of the notion of the fourth estate. In fact, “*England was the first European country to abolish censorship, conceding press freedom as early as 1695, when Parliament did not renew the Printing Act*” (Wring 2008, 5222). Therefore, journalism in the country is similar and intertwined with the United States in many aspects. These two Anglo-American countries are, in fact, famous for being the homelands of the media industry. But the UK in particular is also where public service broadcasting started and where, traditionally, journalism is divided in quality and popular press. Particularly, Wring describes this media system as “*a hybrid model of ownership and control*” because characterised by, on the one hand, a newspaper market exclusively privately owned, and on the other hand, broadcasting regulated and controlled in large part by the State (2008, 5222). Investigative journalism can be traced back to William T. Stead. He is retained the first British investigative journalist especially for his undercover investigation about underage prostitution in 1885 (De Burgh 2001, 2010; Dasselaar 2005). But the major times for investigative journalism in Britain are indicated as the “forty years” starting in 1960s and booming in the 1990s (De Burgh 2010). The investigative work of *Sunday Times Insight* and *Private Eye*, for print, and *World in Action*, a programme of *Granada Television*, has characterized the first decade. In the eighties new formats were created, like *BBC File on Four*, and many investigations, especially on *News of the World*, targeted the Thatcher’s government. The nineties witnessed a proliferation of investigative programmes particularly on television. “*An unsystematic trawl of a database for 1995 (Programme Reports, 1995) suggests that in that year alone on UK terrestrial television there were 300 discrete programmes that could be classified as investigative*” (De Burgh 2010, 61). According to Harcup (2010) the eighties represented a first degradation of investigative products while the nineties their gradual decline. De Burgh (2010) notices that during the “Blair years” media shifted from an initial expectation of more integrity on the side of the new government to experience an even greater contraposition and interference of politics in journalistic investigations. An example of the new Labour government’s confrontational attitude towards uncomfortable



journalism is represented by the Gilligan affair. Also Gavin MacFadyen refers to the case. He indicates this episode, which brought to the resignation both of the Chairman of the *BBC* Governors, Gavin Davies, both of the *BBC* Director General, Greg Dyke, and of Andrew Gilligan himself, as the cause of the still current fright of the *BBC* to be critical and attack the government. Back in 2003, the defence correspondent Andrew Gilligan suggested in the *Today* programme on *BBC Radio 4* that the government ‘sexed up’ the dossier on Iraq’s mass destruction weapons (MDW) inserting the claim that Iraqis were able to deploy MDW in forty-five minutes. Gilligan based his accusation on a senior source that later Parliamentary investigators identified in the government scientist David Kelly. Kelly was found dead and accounted to have committed suicide. On his death the Hutton inquiry reported and blamed the *BBC* of groundlessness for its challenges to the government. Following the Hutton report in 2007 the *BBC* was reformed. The Board of Governors was dissolved while *BBC Trust* was established to monitor the work of the corporation. Even if still in late 2004 no weapons of mass destruction had been found in Iraq, Lashmar affirms: “*the Hutton affair left the BBC vulnerable*” (in De Burgh 2010, 201). And this is also what Gavin MacFadyen argues. But according to him the lowest level of British television has been touched by *Channel 4* with its live broadcasts of surgeries in the programme *The Operation: Surgery Live*. Actually, in 2007, *Channel 4* planned to broadcast masturbation contests with the title *Wank Week*. The idea generated controversies and critiques about the deterioration of the television content and it was withdrawn. But these are only two major examples to support Gavin MacFadyen’s argument that if the quality of journalism and media products is particularly bad, the main fault is principally of big media corporations. And in fact, interview respondents have pointed out new features and gaps associated more generally to the recent developments of the media industry. Among them they mention the proliferation of content in a 24-hours uninterrupted cycle of news accompanied by a reduction in the purchase and expenditure for information. That is due to the large amount of free media now available and the ubiquity of press releases and dispatches, that reduce the time and the capacity for mainstream media to invest in long term and expensive investigations. De Burgh writes: “*With the huge increase in media of many different kinds which has followed from digitalisation, all have to compete for attention, such that the stories have to be more gripping, so that they compete with drama, and the cutting has to be faster to compete with commercials*” (2010, 91). But according to Iain Overton, it is occurring a gradual and promising sea-change consisting in:

*“Newspapers who are creating pay-wall content are realising that there has to be to some degree a shift. When you put pay-barriers up in front of you and your audience, then, you cannot just respond by having conventional news reporting. You also need something extra to conventional news reporting. [...] Investigative journalism suddenly has developed much more powerful cache and draw to unique users. And particularly, if you are going to be charging a premium to visit your website, you need unique content. And that is where investigative journalism comes into this for. So, increasingly, there are two pools to quality content and that is: quality commentary and opinion, and quality investigations, whereas wire service, reportage and general news is so ubiquitous now” (80).*

But he also introduces an important deterrent to investigative journalism represented by its litigious nature. This is again more specific to the British case where libel laws are, using again Iain Overton’s words, *“Draconian [...] and] probably the most rigorous and unfair libel laws in the whole world [...]. [For that] Britain has become the libel capital of the world. And it is an absolute travesty” (81)*. In fact, he explains that, according to these laws, the publisher has to prove to have published true information while the complainant just claims that his reputation has been damaged without any required proof. Certainly, this inhibits investigative journalism and indicates why in Britain there are outlets that profit from quality journalism but, on the one hand, like the *Economist* or the *Financial Times*, prefer to focus more on analysis in order to avoid litigious problems. Or, like the *Sunday Times* or *Channel 4 Dispatches*, some exclude analysis but are more contentious and tend to be more sensational and commercial in their stories in order to back up themselves from possible legal actions. In the time of the interviews a huge scandal has shaken British journalism. It has particularly involved illegal techniques used by the tabloid *News of the World* to investigate celebrities and public figures. In an investigation of the *Guardian* it was disclosed that *News of the World* used to hack and tap phones to get scoops. Following the scandal the Sunday paper has been shut down while an interesting debate has opened up among journalists. In fact, firstly, questions about the definition of public interest, ethics in investigative journalism and accountability of the media have been discussed among professionals. Secondly, a *Select Committee on Communications* of the *House of Lords* has started an inquiry on the future of investigative journalism after the scandal inviting stakeholders to send their contribution between July and September 2011. The collected evidence contains submissions of all traditional media from the *BBC* to *Channel 4*, from Alan Rusbridger of the *Guardian* to the *Bureau of Investigative Journalism*. Actually, the inquiry of the Committee has started from the assumption that *“the phone hacking scandal has led to the closure of Britain’s best selling tabloid newspaper and the traditional business models for journalistic content are under threat as a result of economic and technological changes” (Parliament UK)*. Therefore, it intends to *“consider new business models to pay for the skills of serious reporting and what role*

*citizen and participatory journalism might play in the future of investigative journalism” (Parliament UK).*

### 7.3 Motives

The frustration of the members of the *Centre for Investigative Journalism* for not being able to work as investigative journalists was the most practical and urgent motive to set up the *Bureau of Investigative Journalism*. As Gavin MacFadyen tells: “*there was a lot of frustration that we were not doing what we really wanted to do, which was investigative reporting. So, the Bureau was founded*” (82). Elaine and David Potter established their foundation in 1999 to support developments in five areas: civil society, human rights, education, research and arts. Their meaning of civil society comprehends “*the pursuit for greater transparency, greater knowledge, greater exposure of corrupt organizations and the powerful doing wrong*” (83). This has shifted since the creation of the Bureau in “*the analysis of what could be a financially sustainable model of investigative journalism*”, as Iain Overton explains (84). Rachel Oldroyd offers a first-hand experience of the changes in big newspapers as the *Mail on Sunday* where she worked till becoming the Deputy Editor of the Bureau. Her decision to start this experience in such a new type of media organisation has been motivated by the need of a change after thirteen year working in the same newspaper and having noticed that “*the funding was becoming less and less and less for long term investigations. And the focus on long term investigations was increasingly being lost*” (85). In addition, she had the consciousness that “*on a news-desk or in another newspaper essentially the issues I was having at the Mail on Sunday would apply*” (86). About the main advantages and disadvantages of doing investigative journalism in a nonprofit organisation Gavin MacFadyen limits saying: “*potentially, it’s better than a forprofit organisation because it is not commercially motivated. It’s motivated only by the journalism. That’s its best*” (87). The argument behind this statement appears to be the idea that there is not an ideal business or governance model for journalism: “*it depends on the political battle in the country. If you think you have a better chance to produce more honest and open journalism or truthful journalism with the private sector, you would do it there. If you do with the public sector, you would do it there. But it is what you think it is best at that time*” (88). Drawbacks of investigative journalism done in nonprofit organisations do not differ and cannot be worse than the censorship you may encounter in mainstream media. Iain Overton, instead, actually retains that the pure nonprofit model in investigative journalism might undermine the final impact of a story, either implying “a

*devaluation of the quality of the product*” for giving away content for free, or becoming too self-indulgent or developing a “*journalism for journalists rather than journalism for the people*” (89). In this sense the model Iain Overton is testing with the Bureau mixes nonprofit and forprofit elements. In this combination, philanthropic funding permits to investigate those topics that are not commercially appealing but relevant to society. In fact, engaging with the topics nobody deals with avoids the organisation simply replicating what is already on mainstream. More specifically about the strengths of the Bureau, Rachel Oldroyd highlights: “*we do an investigation for the sake of the journalism, for doing the investigation*” (90). This is possible also because the organisation is completely platform independent and each time it decides the strategy for releasing its findings across different formats. The Bureau’s news production represents quite a novelty in the British landscape because it is pretty internationally focused and it partners also with foreign media organisations as *Al Jazeera* and presumably in the future *ZDF*. A weakness of working in such an organisation may be the risk of losing contact with the bigger context for being too focused on a single story without having an environment as in traditional newsrooms in which there are constantly news updates.

#### 7.4 Organisational structure

The *Bureau of Investigative Journalism* legally is registered at the Companies House as a private company limited by guarantee with no share capital and use of limited exemption. According to its certificate of inception dated 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2009 the structure of the organisation is very simple. It consists of two founding members, David and Elaine Potter, two directors and the company secretary. The *Bureau of Investigative Journalism* has not yet been registered as a charity but it aims to. Its main activity consists in “*solely to produce high quality investigative journalism, long form journalism*” (91). To better accomplish this aim the organisation has an Editorial Advisory Board that advises at the same time the Trust and the Managing Editor about the editorial policy and performance. This Board is formed by six journalists, among whom Iain Overton, the Bureau’s Managing Editor and Gavin MacFadyen, and it is chaired by Ray Fitzwalker, executive producer of *Granada’s World in Action*. But the core of the nonprofit is the Bureau’s full-time staff which comprehends apart from the Managing Editor: Rachel Oldroyd, the Deputy Editor; Angus Stickler, the Lead Reporter; and the Head of Operation. In addition, about fourteen freelancers collaborate on short term projects. There are also some interns recruited through the City University

undergraduate and postgraduate courses. In fact, *TBIJ* and the City agree on: “*they give us a very, very low peppercorn rent and in return we take on an educational capacity where we do lectures. And in addition we take on an all variety of interns [...] and we take on a huge number of ex City graduates*” (92), Iain Overton explains. Gavin MacFadyen adds another advantage of being based at a university: it “*has an intellectual community that we can draw upon*” (93) to carry out the investigative work on several subjects. According to Gavin MacFadyen the model of the *Bureau of Investigative Journalism* is a mixture of the American type of nonprofit funding and “*a British independent television company. [...] You have a core team and then you have a lot of freelance people. You grab them when you need them. Which is a good idea financially, not a good idea editorially. Editorially, it is weak because you do not build an in-house capacity to do real investigations, to train people make them better all the time*” (94). The business model of the Bureau is undergoing a five-year testing phase in which it is experimenting the compensation of its nonprofit element through staying competitively on the market. The surplus value *TBIJ* offers to the market consists in offering stories and angles, which purely commercial media would avoid for their high costs, complexity or controversy. The combination of nonprofit and commercial elements is something Iain Overton particularly insists. His recruitment as Managing Editor of the Bureau occurred through an advert on the *Guardian* followed by an interview with a Committee appositely formed, probably by the Editorial Advisory Board. His role consists in acting as the front, going to meetings, selling, marketing, branding the Bureau. The Deputy Editor, instead, does more the in-house work, coordinating the operations and guiding the journalists. Both Iain Overton both Rachel Oldroyd affirm the uniqueness of *TBIJ*. In fact, the former points out: “*we are fairly unique in the way we try to cross the gap between both being commercial and not commercial. And to that end we have experimented with a all variety of funding models*” (95). Rachel Oldroyd explains: “*Nobody has ever done this before, apart ProPublica. ProPublica are different. They focus primary on the web. We focus primarily on doing investigations and then handing to other organisations to publish. They are very different models*” (96). Financially, the *Bureau of Investigative Journalism* is prevalently based on the £2,000,000 coming from the *Potter Foundation* that it is supposed to manage in this five-year testing phase. But the organisation has received also smaller donations from the *Green Park Foundation*, *Stamp Out Poverty* and *Oxfam*. Gavin MacFadyen confesses: “*We are hoping that another family will join. It’s like a medieval court. But it’s a useful one. And if the other family joins, then, the*

*Bureau is here for a long time and becomes very stable*” (97). Conversely to the Romanian and Bulgarian centres, the core staff of the Bureau receives an allowance and the freelancers a fixed amount of money per project. On the website the annual salary of the Managing Editor is disclosed together with the special relationships the Bureau has with the City University, *Google* for email and document sharing and the law firm *Simons Muirhead and Burton*. This is another signal of the different nature of this organisation in respect with the previous two analysed in this study. Somehow, the level of transparency of the country is reflected in the organisation disclosures. In the first year of activity the Bureau’s overall spending amounted to £1,500,000, of which £1,000,000 belonged to the core funding and £500,000 to money *TBIJ* gained from its commercial operations. With this expenditure the Bureau produced “*three half-hour documentaries, two one-hour documentaries and a 45-minute radio documentary*” (98). This is the proof for Iain Overton that “*if you actually look at the amount of money we spend on the Bureau and the amount of news impact that we have had, we probably are one of the best value-for-money organisations for news in the country*” (99). The agreements with commercial partners vary depending on the project. For instance, Iain Overton tells as in the collaboration with the *Financial Times* they split the work and covered their part with a formal commission from *FT*. In general the form of commission represents the most frequent type of contract *TBIJ* usually gets. It can be just to cover up production costs and then to give away copies or press releases for free or on a per-article-basis, sometimes with the possibility of doing multi-collaboration with different platforms media, as print and broadcasting. The main offer the Bureau proposes to its partners for doing collaborative journalism is “*to bolster their media in return for sharing the by-line and also being able to leak the content across a variety of other paid-for platforms*” (100). But what Iain Overton underlines as a very frequent problem is that “*the amount of time, efforts and resources needed to invest in the initial investigation are not covered by the existing financial parts available*” (101). The network of the Bureau is mainly British and formed by mainstream media news organisations. The *Centre for Investigative Journalism*, the Bureau’s sister organisation, is more involved in collaborating with other investigative journalism organisations and it belongs to the *Global Investigative Journalism Network*. Gavin MacFadyen explains: “*we do a lot because we are training people all around the world. [...] We go to conferences and speak at them and do training there because that is what we are supposed to do. Whereas the Bureau can only talk about itself in a way, which is good, but it is of a limited appeal*” (102). The Bureau actually participated in the *Global*

*Investigative Journalism Conference 2011* in Kyiv where Iain Overton moderated and intervened in some panels, while Rachel Oldroyd was among the speakers at the *European Broadcasting Union Radio News Conference 2011* in London. Participating in conferences and debates make the organisation more valuable. Engaging with the debate among professionals about journalism is something the organisation is willing to do more in the future as increasing lecturing and training. The Bureau has also started collaborating on an investigative project with the *Forum of African Investigative Reporters (FAIR)*. Iain Overton affirms that *TBIJ* is very open to collaborate with others but it depends on the offer that must be evaluated singularly. For the moment their focus is more directed to partnerships with British or International mainstream media as "Channel 4, ITN, the BBC, Al Jazeera Arabic, Al Jazeera English, the Daily Telegraph, Journeyman Pictures, Le Monde, the Financial Times and the British Medical Journal" (*Bureau of Investigative Journalism*). Rachel Oldroyd also talks about negotiations for a future possible partnership *ZDF*. Gavin MacFadyen points out, the Bureau is "*in terms of production [...] much bigger than everything in Europe. The Bureau was the biggest thing in Europe by far*" (103). But there are also several difficulties for the Bureau to face in the immediate future. For Gavin MacFadyen the biggest mountain to climb is the *Charity Commission* in order to get charitable status because otherwise the organisation has to pay 40% of their income in taxes. Especially, considering the libel climate in the country to count on little finances would be deleterious. "*Therefore, the charity battle is very important. If they loose, they will have to reconstitute themselves as an entirely new organisation, with new principles and a new way of doing everything*" (104), Gavin MacFadyen argues. Another suggestion the *CIJ* director has for the future of the Bureau is to "*hold people long enough inside the organisation to educate them, to train them*" (105). About the financial situation of the organisation, instead, Iain Overton believes positively that "*the technology will overtake the holes in the funding gap*" (106). He looks confidently particularly in the future developments occurring in respect to the Internet and new forms of micropayments. Basically, he argues that if the costs of watching a documentary online will lower to reach 10p or 20p, it would constitute an interesting new market area that would also overcome geographical and language barriers. So, Iain Overton foresees that:

*"the ultimate future of the Bureau will be a combination of finances from self-publication, finances from collaborations and other people investing in our projects, and finances from philanthropists. And I hope that a combination of all three will keep us alive at least for the next four years, which is our ultimate five-year-plan to see at the end of the five years what are the best financial models to go forward for a small company like ourselves"* (107).

Actually, the Bureau is sponsoring a PhD student at the City University to investigate

sustainable business models for investigative journalism.

## 7.5 Practices

The *Bureau of Investigative Journalism* carries out its investigations on the basis of its own agenda. In general, the idea develops among the members of the organisation. When the story assumes a certain extent it is illustrated to the commissioning editors of the news outlets the Bureau wants to involve to see if they are interested. Sometime it happens to have suggestions or a tip-off from external sources. But the way the journalism is conducted is not different from mainstream media organisations, as Rachel Oldroyd explains. The main difference “*is just the freedom to let an investigation take as long as it takes*” (108). That is always within budgetary constraints and an appropriate deadline for the development of the story. Usually, a story idea is generated by a leak or a tip-off or taking a theme or a field that requires investigation because nobody has yet looked at it. Then, there is a trail of consulting documents and build up data and a trail of talking with sources. After the decision of the subject, there is the approval of the board of trustees, which the editorial staff is accountable to. The assignment is usually carried out by a team of two: a senior and a junior members. “*So, there is a lot of teaching and training on in the organisation as well. And if we need an extra specialist, a language specialist for example, or somebody who has a specialism in or knowledge of a specific niche, we will bring him in as a consultant*” (109), Rachel Oldroyd continues. The hierarchy in the Bureau is well defined as it is commonly in British news organisations. The Managing Editor is accountable for the editorial part and decides on the subjects the Bureau will work on. The Deputy Editor, instead, supervises and supports the story assignments. For the rest, apart from the leading reporter, *TBIJ* counts on several freelancers and regular interns. The main areas the Bureau investigates are “*health, human rights, open society, which is the call for greater transparency in governments, and corporate watch, which is looking at corporations that are behaving badly*” (110), Iain Overton describes. For each area of interest the Bureau counts on a numbers of journalists specialised in the different fields: business journalists, health reporters, human rights specialists, data journalists. As Gavin MacFadyen states the Bureau is “*heavily influenced by database journalism. So, we spend a lot of money analyzing data from the government to see if there are interesting stories. And there always are. A lot of our stories come from there*” (111). But the organisation uses all the techniques available to investigative journalism. Iain Overton explains how sometimes the stories are based on single sources and then



expanded to see if the issue is systemic. Other times, instead, they start from a collection of a consistent series of reports on the subject contextualised through the use of expert sources. To these techniques Rachel Oldroyd adds: undercover work, Freedom of Information requests, Companies House material, the forensic analysis of company accounts. *“It is really horses for courses: every single story requires a different sort of methodological approach”* (112), Iain Overton concludes. Rachel Oldroyd describes the strategy of the Bureau for publishing and distributing its stories as platform and publication neutral. Therefore, *TBIJ* sometimes automatically involves some news organisations as partners in the story from the beginning because of the subject. Other times, instead, the Bureau will start the investigation and, at a certain moment, it will wonder about the format and the possible media outlets which to pitch the story. Rachel Oldroyd enumerates the Bureau’s products of its first year: *“for TV, three long form documentaries, five news pieces, a hour long news piece packages. Then, we have loads of print-pieces. And we have done radio short documentaries. We have done web projects. So, we’ve literally done all platforms”* (113). The main Bureau’s partners have been so far the programmes *BBC File On Four*, *BBC Panorama*, *BBC Newsnight*, *Channel4 Dispatches*, *Channel4 News* and in addition to *The Financial Times* also *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Sunday Times*, *Le Monde*.

In this chapter the history, context, motives, organisational structure and practices of *TBIJ* have been analyzed. Its establishment is intertwined with another nonprofit based at the City University, *CIJ*. In fact, in 2009, *CIJ* Chairwoman Elaine Potter and her husband David Potter created the Bureau with a donation of £2,000,000 on the model of *ProPublica* with the idea that investigative journalism is a key element for empowering the civil society. The general deterioration of television products and recent trends in the media industry as the proliferation of contents and the standardisation of news are the main motives behind the creation of the nonprofit, together with the perception that newsrooms less and less fund long term projects. Formally the Bureau is incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee with the aim of getting charitable status. The trust, an Editorial Advisory Board and the core staff comprehending Managing Editor, Deputy Editor, Lead Reporter and Head of Operations form *TBIJ* structure. The Bureau, then, counts on a freelance capacity. The model is a mixture of the American nonprofit funding and the British production house combining nonprofit and commercial elements. The Bureau’s news production is characterised by less time and money constraints and by being platform and publication

neutral. Its subject areas are health, human rights, open society, corporate watch.

## Chapter 8: NONPROFIT INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM IN EUROPE

After having examined the three organisations at the centre of the study in this chapter comparisons, firstly, within the Europe and, secondly, with the American landscape of nonprofit investigative journalism will be attempted. Then, the focus will move on discussing whether it is possible to talk about diffusion of the nonprofit investigative journalism centre model in the cases examined and in the broader European context. Till, finally, some speculation about why centres of this type have not yet emerged in those countries, which, instead, have adopted professional organisations on the model of *Investigative Reporters and Editors* and about future perspectives will be attempted.

### 8.1 Between advocates and non-lucrative media outlets

It is impossible to compare the three organisations examined above without pointing out some evident substantial factual differences. First of all, the legal status of the three nonprofits already presumes different organisational structures both for the different legislation of the nonprofit sector in each country both for the more or less articulated structure the founders may have chosen for their centres. British regulation for charities and companies limited by guarantee requires a very clear structured and articulated organisation with several bodies and with some features similar to a normal company. Among other things companies limited by guarantee are regularly registered at the Companies House while charities are listed on a public database on the website of the Charity Commission where also all their documents are available. This level of accountability and transparency in the nonprofit sector certainly helps in the creation of organisations with clear and long term intents and vision. But, or maybe only due to language issues, it does not seem the same for the other two countries. The status of NGO that different types of associations gain does not require a very articulated structure and a high level of transparency on the activities of the organisation. A clear example is represented by the Bulgarian case where the legal form of association appears a kind of empty shell. The legal spectrum of choice available to those who are willing to start such a venture depends also on the number of founding members. An association usually is not meant to comprehend only one person. The three organisations differ to a high degree in the way they were founded: the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism* was established by four colleague journalists who wanted to experiment solutions for themselves and other colleagues to work according

to high professional standards in their national corrupt media landscape; the *Bulgarian Investigative Journalism Center* by one journalist in order to apply for funding to teach investigative techniques at the university; and the *Bureau of Investigative Journalism* by its two main donors in cooperation with an entourage of several people interested in experimenting new sustainable models for investigative journalism. The resources these three organisations could count on to start with also are profoundly incomparable. In fact, the London organisation has started up with a donation of £2,000,000 to administer over five years from a family foundation, that of its founders. The Romanian centre survives continuously applying to single funds or media assistance programmes without having been able, so far, to get long term funding. While the Bulgarian centre has simply not been interested in other funding opportunities apart from the one offered by the *Netherlands Embassy* which enabled its founder to begin the course at the University of Sofia. It is also interesting to point out that the activities of the three centres vary from almost exclusively dealing with producing investigative stories plus some additional commitment to the debate around open society and quality journalism and little training, as in the case of the Bureau, to advocacy for freedom of information and being the watchdog of media ownership, as in the Romanian case. The level of networking also seems very different: *CRJI* and *BIJC* certainly have many more connections and collaborate more often with nonprofit organisations in other countries than the *Bureau of Investigative Journalism*. That is certainly stimulated by the number of nonprofits in the Balkan region and by the common problems the area has in regard of organised crime and corruption. But these were just some preliminary remarks in respect to the discussion around the three central research questions about the motives behind the creation, the organisational structure and the practices of these centres. Some attempts of answering will be sketched in the following paragraphs. The reasons for the establishment of these organisations in respect to the media landscape in their countries are very different. Both the Romanian centre and the Bureau were set up as a result of their founders' dissatisfaction with the investigative journalism carried out in mainstream media in their countries. But this frustration concerns different aspects: for *CRJI* it is about corruption within the media industry; while in the British case it regards commercial pressures and political fears, as suggested in the case of the *BBC* after the Gilligan affair. Behind the establishment of the Bureau there is also the liberal ideal of the Anglo-American culture that investigative journalism is a key element for an open society and therefore it cannot be left completely in the hands of commercial influences. Another level that seems to be very influential on investigative journalism both in the

UK both in Bulgaria, whereas to a less extent in Romania, consists in legal threats, especially in relation to libel. These threats influence the way media outlets carry out investigative journalism and imply nonprofit centres to individuate a strategy to minimise them or have some sort of back up for legal expenses. In the Romanian context the fact that there is no market for freelancers has been also an important factor to stimulate the creation of a brand internationally recognised as credible and as such able to get some funding, commissions and fixing contracts from abroad. Another motive behind the creation of *CRJI* lies in the dangerous environment journalists operate in, because of the sensitive interests at the centre of their investigations, which they amend to working in group. In addition, *CRJI*'s foundation has aimed at offering resources to other colleagues to improve the quality of professional standards in the country described as very low both as they are taught in universities both as they are practiced in newsrooms. In fact, the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism* is not only a nonprofit producing investigative stories but it represents at the same time a professional association, relatively closed in terms of membership access, and a NGO advocating for freedom of information. The low salaries for print journalists in Romania may offer another reason to join the organisation because the centre permits to get occasionally extra jobs as fixer with compensations according to Western standards. In the Bulgarian case the idea of doing the training in investigative journalism at the Sofia University is linked to the fact that there is a lack of transmission of Western professional standards to the young and middle generations of journalists. Among the advantages of doing investigative journalism in a nonprofit organisation, the members of both the Romanian centre and the Bureau have highlighted the possibility of being independent from any editorial, advertising and commercial pressures. Romanians have individuated other positive aspects in: the possibility to reach a certain credibility internationally for their work and ethics; sharing some professional values and standards with their colleagues of the centre; the international connections and network the organisation offer. In the discussion about the strengths of a nonprofit in the case of the Bureau somehow the possibility to experiment new dynamics has emerged as: being completely platform independent and neutral; offering a wider international focus while maintaining the British standards; and recognising that investigative journalism takes time and might not always bring concrete or extraordinary results. In terms of disadvantages, *CRJI* members have mainly talked about practical issues related to being journalists but having to deal with administrative tasks or fundraising. But the lack of a long term funding seems to be the main problem for the development of the

organisation. For the Bureau, instead, the weaknesses of being a nonprofit are not only practical: to be purely nonprofit poses some risks of devaluating the centre products and to become journalism for journalists and not for the people; while, receiving money from foundations at worst may also result in situations of censorship or interferences; and being too focused on investigations may distract the journalists and the organisation from the context that the daily flow of news offers. Coming to the way the three centres are structured and funded it is difficult to find similarities apart from their theoretical models. In fact, as pointed out above, the *Bureau of Investigative Journalism* has a very structured organisation based on three separate levels: editorial, management and the trust. It counts on a consistent long term donation and smaller grants mainly coming from British private foundations. In addition, it also gets revenues from different types of contracts with media organisations, mainly commissions. It is based at a university, which provides an office, interns and an intellectual capacity to the organisation. It has sponsorships for certain services and itself sponsors a PhD student to research sustainable business models for investigative journalism. On the other hand, the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism* has been active for ten years now and a reason for this has been its informal and flexible structure. In fact, the dynamism of the centre is due to the fact that each member of the core group works independently on different projects. Every project has to search for sources of funding. Something similar between *CRJI* and *BIJC* is the very light structure consisting in only the Executive Director in the Bulgarian NGO and in a president and two vices for the Romanian centre. But differently, the Romanians are a group of twenty-four journalists and photo-reporters among whom some hold informally representative and specialised offices. Commonly, both *TBIJ* and *CRJI* count on some legal consultancy, either inside the organisation in the Romanian case, or outside in the Bureau's. The access to the organisation is closed in all three experiences but at a different level: in Romania there is a standard procedure to be admitted in the centre, which consists in being introduced by a current member and to prove to work as an investigative journalist; in Bulgaria the twelve collaborators have in common to be either students either colleagues of the founder and Executive Director; in the UK membership coincides with employment and therefore occurs through a recruitment process. Staff members at *TBIJ* are remunerated, varying from full-time to freelance to intern. The extensive use of external freelancers in relation to the single project is pretty distinctive of the Bureau in comparison with the other centres. Both the Romanian and the Bulgarian centres have not a real office but both have collaborators located in the main cities of their countries. Compensation for

their members probably would depend case by case according to the commission or the budget available for the project. The funds that support the costs of these two organisations come either from media assistance programmes or in the Romanian case also from members' contribution when they have got some money using the centre brand, especially in training activities. Programmatically, the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism* does not accept money from Romanian donors. Both the theoretical business models of *CRJI* and *TBIJ* consists in a combination of nonprofit and forprofit activities with the common condition that in case of exceeding profits they will be reinvested in the organisation itself. The model for *BIJC*, instead, is simply that of a virtual network doing collaborative journalism. But actually, all three nonprofits do collaborative projects. The type of organisations the Bureau collaborates with consists mostly in news organisations while *CRJI* and *BIJC* mainly with other NGOs for investigative projects or on freedom of information initiatives. All centres are linked to a certain extent to universities holding some courses or lectures about investigative techniques. The ways the three organisations work present many more similarities. Certainly, the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism* and the *Bulgarian Investigative Journalism Center* deal with similar subjects, especially in respect to organised crime and corruption, and the same region, the Balkan area. In fact, in the region organised crime and corruption touch almost every sector of public life. Both collaborate with, and *CRJI* even co-founded, *Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project*. The Bureau mainly engages with health, human rights, open society and corporate watch. 'Human rights' is also among the subjects of *CRJI* together with media that is, instead, uniquely mentioned. Dealing *BIJC* only with collaborative projects and coming often these collaborations from abroad, the news production of the Bulgarian centre is rather simple. It consists in teams, generally comprehending some young journalists, working on a same project under the coordination of the Executive Director, usually through the Internet. Also in the case of *CRJI* the majority of the stories is cross-border and involves other countries in the region. The choice of focusing especially on transnational projects is, on the one hand, a matter of regional interconnectedness of certain phenomena and of increasing interest for the readers, but, on the other hand, it is related to the availability of more research grants. In all three organisations investigations are carried out in small team. *TBIJ* and *BIJC* consider it as a sort of policy for training purposes while *CRJI* more a security measure. The Bureau and the Romanian centre have also similar processes to select topics choosing issues of public interest which mainstream media had not yet looked at. But *CRJI* relies to a less

extent on leaks or tip-off than the Bureau. All three nonprofits extensively use computer-assisted reporting or practice data journalism in their investigations. The Romanian centre characterises for employing to a large degree undercover techniques or hidden recording due to the little integrity, transparency and openness of the society in which it operates. *TBIJ* and *CRJI* differ a lot about the level of hierarchy within the organisation: in fact, *TBIJ* has a precise hierarchy on the model of Anglo-American newsrooms, whereas *CRJI* is characterised for being deliberately decentralised. Specialisation is at a high degree within the Bureau while on its way at the Romanian centre. For what concerns publication strategies all three organisations deal with online platforms in the measure that the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism* and the *Bureau of Investigative Journalism* publish their findings on their websites and in some cases they make apposite ones to give particular relevance to some of their work. The *Bulgarian Investigative Journalism Center*, instead, benefits of the fact that its founder and Executive Director manages the online version of the two main newspapers and publishes there its stories. But all three organisations, according to the case, get published on other websites or media outlets. The online dimension implies to work with visualisation tools or with a multimedia approach. But depending on the story and on commercial contracts or agreements, *CRJI* and *TBIJ* release their findings in several formats. *TBIJ* works a lot with television and radio preparing itself also the video material while *CRJI*'s major experience is in print but it offers sometimes its research to TV outlets. In both cases sometimes the findings are given away for free. *CRJI* especially does it when the research has been pre-financed. But basically both organisations try to sell their stories to mainstream media. In the case of the Bureau, sometimes media partners are involved from the initial stage of the investigation, other times later. In some occasions the organisations offer the exclusivity, other times the same stories is published in different formats in different media outlets also in different countries. The aim is usually to have the biggest reach as possible.

To summarize: the main differences between these three centres lie at the organisational level, in terms of legal status, structure, funding, and they are all influenced by the context in which they develop. The two more interesting examples are the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism*, with its ten years of experience, and the *Bureau of Investigative Journalism*, with its year and a half. For many aspects these two organisations represent two antipodes. But they have in common the dissatisfaction about how journalism is doing in their countries, the willing to experiment new business models, the idea of combining nonprofit and forprofit activities, the way they

disseminate their findings. On the other hand, they diverge a lot for the context they come from and in which they operate. Social context and resources influence the motives behind the creation, the type of structure, the range of activities, the subjects at the centre of the investigations, some of the techniques the nonprofits employ to investigate and the choice of the outlets where to publish. Differences that mark the two nonprofits consist in, for the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism*, its decentralised structure, networking ability and its inspirational models somehow reflected in its diverse activities: at the same time professional association, advocate and reporting centre. The *Bureau of Investigative Journalism*, on the other hand, is characterised in respect to the other two centres analysed by benefiting from being based at a university and having an approach that is directed to the market, especially British. Its main donors are also its founders and the resources it can count on permit to the organisation to have a remunerated staff and to function in a way similar to a commercial enterprise, but with the advantages related of being nonprofit in regards to editorial choices. In this sense, in the scope of this study, two models of nonprofit centres come up: one that tends to introduce some elements of nonprofit into the market, *TBIJ*; and the other some market and professional associative elements into a NGO, *CRJI*. The *Bulgarian Investigative Journalism Center* represents a different case being its organisational structure almost nonexistent. It consists in a NGO created with the aim to get some opportunities offered by media assistance programmes. It is not certainly the only example and, perhaps, it indicates for media aid donors the need of some revisions in their requirements for applications or in their verification processes. Another impression in regards to *BIJC* wonders whether a centre brand may offer more visibility for internationally networking. But the creation of a simple brand may be alternative for informal groups to empty associations.

## 8.2 Anglo-American nonprofits and *CRJI*

Looking at the organisations described in the chapter about investigative journalism in the US, especially in the part about the nonprofit wave, and comparing them with the European nonprofits analysed above, clearly some quite obvious considerations emerge. In the US all centres mentioned have the same legal status, a similar structure, an office and count on several philanthropic foundations some exclusively dedicated to journalism others family based. All the US centres quoted have on their website their operational budgets, annual tax return forms and reports. The reasons behind their creation appear to range from having directly experienced the reduction of personnel, or



the closure of certain media outlets, or being concerned with the quality and quantity of investigative journalism as done by mainstream media. What those organisations really differ in is in their foundations, dimensions, scope, business models and dissemination of their findings. For instance, *ProPublica* for what concerns its foundation has many similarities with the *Bureau of Investigative Journalism*: in fact, they have been both established by their main donors, who also hold some positions in the organisation. In this sense a difference consists that while Herbert Sandler chairs the Governing Board of *ProPublica*, Elaine and David Potter are simply members of the trust behind the Bureau. Generally, some features of the *Bureau of Investigative Journalism* are quite similar to its American counterparts, in terms of structure, philanthropic support, a certain level of transparency, its subject areas and contextual elements. For example, what mainly differentiates *ProPublica* and the Bureau are their dimensions and the entity of the initial donation. Generally, philanthropy in Europe is not so rooted as in the US, even if probably the UK represents the best example. The Bureau has got almost a tenth of *ProPublica* initial fund to administer over five years against *ProPublica*'s three years. Also its full-time staff represents a tenth of *ProPublica*'s. In terms of business model the two organisations are slightly different: the Bureau is based at a university and combines nonprofit funding with commercial contracts with news organisations. Counterbalancing nonprofit with forprofit elements is a key aspect of the Bureau's policy. *ProPublica*, instead, usually gives away its stories for free also when it partners exclusively with mainstream media. But since 2011, it has been selectively accepting advertising, introducing a commercial element to its model. The level of specialisation is also quite different between *TBIJ* and *ProPublica*: in fact, the former counts on a wide freelance capacity with different expertise from which it draws on, according to the project; while *ProPublica* has a broad range of specialisation in-house among its beats. Another point of variance between the two organisations consists in the focus of their investigations: in fact, the Bureau seems to be more internationally oriented than *ProPublica* that mainly deals with stories set in the US. The Bureau's collaboration and location at the university have some similarity with other US investigative journalism nonprofit, first of all the *Schuster Institute for Investigative Journalism* established in 2004 at the Brandeis University in Massachusetts. According to Charles Lewis's new journalism ecosystem, among the sixty nonprofits he has considered, fourteen are based or are near a university, around the 23% of the total (2010). Therefore, this proximity between investigative reporting centres and university seems to be a growing trend. Also Ștefan Cădea of *CRJI* in his interview referring to his experience in the US as a

Nieman Fellow mentions the potentials of experimenting new business and reporting models the collaboration with the university offers as something he would like to replicate in Romania. The academic environment, in fact, provides the opportunity for reporters to experiment and to journalism students to learn the best practices before getting into a newsroom. In addition, it is prestigious for the university itself to host investigative journalism initiatives. The main references for the founders of the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism* initially were *IRE*, the *International Consortium of Investigative Journalists* and the *Philippine Center of Investigative Journalism*. But some of its features resample more those of the *Center for Investigative Reporting* in California. In fact, its establishment and its business model based on freelance contracts present some similarities. Both centres were founded by investigative reporters who had previously already worked together and for different reasons had decided to start an experience of co-working as freelancers under a common brand and often in teams. Both organisations looked at the Arizona Project as source of inspiration. They both started very small and have grown to count more than twenty members on a basis of some sort of recruitment processes. Both *CIR* and *CRJI* sell their stories to news organisations to disseminate their findings. But certainly there are big differences between the two: *CIR* has an office, regular donations from individuals and foundations within the country, the traditional American structure formed by the editorial staff, a Board of Directors and an Advisory Board; it regularly employs its staff members and has also published books. On the other hand, *CRJI* has some features typical of a professional association for its legal status, the fact of remaining anyway open to the acceptance of new members on the basis of professional requirements and engaging also with advocacy for freedom of information. It has no regular financial sources for long term support and relies mainly on foreign donors or media contractors. *CRJI*'s decentralised news production model is also among its specific features together with its networking activity. In 2009 *CIR* launched a new project at a state level called *California Watch*, for which a separate team of thirteen reporters and five editors work in three different spots around the state. Since the same year *CIR* has also contributed to the *Investigative News Network* as a founding member organisation showing also a commitment to networking initiatives among other journalism nonprofits. *California Watch* has been another source of inspiration for Ștefan Cîndea of the Romanian centre after his year in the US as Nieman Fellow. In fact, another project he would like to test in the Black Sea region is a sort of Black Sea Watch. Certainly, *CRJI* consistently differs from US centres for its context and the

subjects it has to deal with and also the extensive use of undercover techniques. Actually, *CRJI* represents a very unique case in many ways. Among them there is also its ability to look at experiences in other contexts and to adapt some of their innovative stances to the very particular Romanian media landscape. This somehow suggests a distinction between *CRJI* and an Anglo-American model of investigative journalism nonprofit. The latter is characterised by motives related to commercial pressures, a journalism context of advanced professionalism, an elaborated type of nonprofit internal structure, a culture of philanthropy, traditional hierarchical and specialised news management, rooted principles of freedom of information and transparency, a remunerative media industry. But within this Anglo-American landscape certain organisations appear more unique. For instance, the *Center for Public Integrity* represents a pretty unequalled model in terms of dimensions and ability in generating other nonprofits, as its sister organisations *International Consortium of Investigative Journalists*, *Global Integrity*, the *Fund for Independence in Journalism*, and in promoting the creation of other investigative reporting centres and the *INN* network. This seeding ability belongs also to the Romanian centre. Besides, the two organisations collaborate mainly through *ICIJ*. The amazing thing of *CPI* regards its progresses from starting from scratch with only one person supported by a few colleagues to the fifty-two full-time journalists that today work in its newsroom plus the people behind *ICIJ* and *GI* around the globe. *INN* network is very unique too and it has not equivalent in the European landscape. Among its aims it considers to embrace organisations out of the United States as it is already happening for Canada and Puerto Rico.

### 8.3 Is it possible to talk of diffusion?

As already written in the chapter dealing with the diffusion of professional associations on the model of *IRE* in Europe, the European and the United States landscapes present huge differences in terms of internal political and cultural diversity and unity. In the case of *IRE*, for instance, there is a unique association for all the American states while in Europe only certain countries at a national level have adopted similar organisations of investigative journalists, adapting the *IRE* model more or less to the culture of their country. In the case of nonprofit investigative journalism centres the situation seems to be more diversified already within the US. Next to the two historical organisations, the *Center for Investigative Reporting* and the *Center for Public Integrity*, recent years have seen springing new centres up all over the country till arriving to the formation of a network including more than sixty nonprofits. It is possible to say that the nonprofit

model is diffusing at first and at its highest extent within the United States themselves presenting a wide range of different models. These depend mainly on: the founders of the organisations, if they are the donors themselves or professionals animated by the need of a new type of news production; the collaboration or not with the university; the business model, if it is purely nonprofit or if it has some commercial elements, like advertising or media commissions or other contracts; the deals it does to spread its stories or findings, for free, in exclusive, through public relations activities, directly to the public through books or websites. Starting from *CIR*, every new centre has set its way up having in common: the legal status, tax exempt 501 (c)(3); the basic type of structure, Editorial staff, Board of Directors, Advisory Board; some foundations' contributions in varying proportions; the subject areas they deal with, generally government accountability, corporate responsibility, health, environment, education, labour, military, etc; the way they look at them, through Freedom of Information requests, computer-assisted reporting, etc; professional standards; some degree of dependence on mainstream news outlets to disseminate their findings; the general feeling that the quantity and quality of investigative journalism in the media is deteriorating. Among the two major examples encountered in Europe, the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism* and the *Bureau of Investigative Journalism*, the second represents a clearer case of diffusion for its declared source of inspiration, *ProPublica*, and its actual similarities with that organisation, although there are some elements also of other models. The Romanian centre, instead, has several level of diffusion being its sources of inspiration three different organisations, and not only American, as one is *PCIJ*. Its sources of inspiration indicate three very different organisational types: the investigative reporting centre (*PCIJ*), the professional association of investigative journalists (*IRE*) and a network structure for cross-borders projects (*ICIJ*). To these levels the founders of *CRJI* have added also the dimension of advocacy creating a very unique combination. Probably, the model of the *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism* already is or will become itself object of diffusion in other countries, especially in the Balkans and in the Southeast European region. *CRJI* is very much characterised for its networking which represents for it a matter of necessity for its dependence on foreign support and contracts. *CRJI* in respect to the Anglo-American model has a more grassroots approach, less formal and structured but powerful in its dynamics. Apart from *TBIJ* and *CRJI*, it is early to talk about diffusion on the European side. The emergence of the Hungarian *Átlátszó* and *Baltic Centre for Investigative Reporting* let think about an intensifying of the phenomenon but the

countries in which these organisations are set remain within the post-communist illustrated in the third chapter. Considering as diffusion only the voluntarily adoption of the nonprofit model, not all the centres emerged in post-communist countries present this feature. Those countries usually tend to have problems of corruption, organised crime and democratisation processes, thus, investigative reporting there assumes a very important progressive function. But it is also true that in those countries after the Cold War Americans and Europeans have attempted to strongly influence democratisation processes through media assistance, usually consisting especially in training for journalists. In some Balkan countries media development people themselves have established investigative reporting centres, or media assistance programmes have stimulated their creation through funding policies. For instance, the *Bulgarian Investigative Journalism Center* is an example of an organisation appositely made to get some opportunities from media assistance programmes. In this case it is impossible to talk about diffusion. Like the Bulgarian centre the impression is that there are other NGOs behind which there is no real structure or active members other than their founders, not for bad intentions, but maybe just to be able to realise a single project or to have more visibility. In this sense it is important to evaluate case by case before talking about diffusion in post-communist countries. It is relevant also to evaluate if a nonprofit model for investigative journalism is sustainable counting mainly on United States based foundations supporting investigative journalism all over the world. The analysis of media assistance influence in nonprofit investigative journalism in post-communist countries is an interesting topic to be further investigated, as well as possible nonprofit investigative journalism models in countries without a long philanthropic tradition.

#### 8.4 What about the rest of Europe?

In this research the establishment of nonprofit investigative reporting centres has been traced among European Union countries in Romania, Bulgaria, United Kingdom and more recently in Hungary and Latvia. Here some speculation about why this type of organisation is not taking place in the rest of the EU countries will be sketched with the help of two expert contributions. In fact, especially within Northern and Central Western European countries, as examined in the third chapter, professional associations on the model of *Investigative Reporters and Editors* diffused between 1989 and 2003 almost everywhere. Conversely, in these countries that Hallin and Mancini (2004) group under the democratic corporatist model, no investigative journalism centres have

appeared. A motive for that certainly lies just in the corporatist tradition of these countries characterised by an advanced journalism professionalism, especially in terms of strong professional organisations, trade unions and journalism education. This cultural factor is more or less mentioned by both experts who helped to identify some possible reasons for this not yet occurred diffusion. In fact, Brigitte Alfter, Director of the *European Fund for Investigative Journalism*<sup>18</sup>, and Margo Smit, Director of *Vereniging van Onderzoeksjournalisten*<sup>19</sup> kindly offered their contributions in the direction of understanding why nonprofit investigative journalism centres have not developed yet in Northern or Central Western European countries. About professional associations Brigitte Alfter writes:

*“In several of the Nordic countries and Germany [...] you have a vibrant community of journalists, who organise themselves in membership based associations aiming at sharing experiences and developing methods. They meet regularly, they talk, they share information regularly. Through these sharing mechanisms investigative journalism methods and inspiration are carried also to smaller publications, local and regional media as well as to other publications, where no investigative journalism departments are established”* (114).

Margo Smit mentions the labour union and association tradition as a probable factor that has influenced the adoption in the Netherlands and Flanders of the *IRE* model of organisation of investigative journalists. A motive both point out for the nonexistence of nonprofit centres in many EU countries consists in the lack of need for them perceived by the journalists in that region. For Brigitte Alfter probably this need misses because *“investigative journalism is carried out within existing media, thus allowing journalists to focus on carrying out their work rather than spending their time on organising centres, fundraising, inviting board meetings, publication options etc – which really is outside the focus of journalistic research”* (115). Instead, Margo Smit has the impression that *“since until fairly recently, journalism in Western and Northern Europe was a profitable business, journalism itself as well as readers and viewers did not think there was a need to look for nonprofit centres. Only in fields where the interest was not so big (such as the EU, look at the EU Observer) were nonprofit centers active”* (116). In fact, some nonprofit investigative journalism projects occur on a European level, as mentioned in chapter three. NGOs as *EU Transparency*, *EUobserver*, or the trial phase of the network of journalists *Investigative Reporters Network Europe (IReNE)*, are trying to plug up the gap concerning quality journalism on such under-investigated

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<sup>18</sup> But also manager of *SCOOP*, co-founder of *Farmsubsidy.org*, *Wobbling in Europe*, blogger on *EUobserver*,

<sup>19</sup> Both experts are also freelance investigative journalists and members of the *International Consortium of Investigative Journalism*.

dimension as the European Union. As Brigitte Alfter affirms “*in several of the Nordic countries and Germany you have investigative teams at the large media*” (117).

Consequently, the satisfactory situation of journalism in mainstream media does not seem so frustrating to push journalists to create an independent organisation. Margo Smit, referring to the Netherlands and the Flanders, adds to this picture:

*“a large lack of knowledge and virtually no experience in working with nonprofit centers. Papers and other media organisations are reluctant to deal with them, for the reason they do not know the trustworthiness of the information and the stories, not knowing the people who work there, and a genuine belief it is the news organisations themselves that should do the job”* (118).

Money and resources may indicate another difficulty in establishing such centres for the fact that, as mentioned above, in Europe there is not a relevant tradition of philanthropy. Usually state subsidies have been more significantly employed to support media but according to the fourth estate approach to investigative journalism, the “*never bite the hand that feeds you*” principle would see the watchdog function at risk in case of accepting state subsidies. Another risk, as in the case of the pilot project of the European Commission for research grants for cross-border investigations, may consist in interferences on the editorial content. In this sense the individuation of possible sources of funding is another key factor to explore in an eventual future diffusion of investigative journalism centres in European Union countries. Brigitte Alfter indicates three possible sources to take in consideration: geostrategic money, business players, whether there are conditions of low corruption and transparency, and funding from organisations or institutions supporting the European integration. Looking at the future perspectives for the diffusion of nonprofit investigative journalism centres, according to Margo Smit, they will develop, according to Brigitte Alfter, they may if there will be the need for them. Apparently some democratic corporatist countries have started debating whether to establish an investigative journalism centre. Brigitte Alfter mentions Germany. Margo Smit let think that in the Netherlands or Belgium are talking about a similar initiative. Brigitte Alfter also refers to some other interesting cases: the experience of the *Danish Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting* and its success in raising professional standards in Danish media, whether offering them services of data analysis, whether training journalists; and the initiative of the Norwegian *SKUP* consisting in supporting media without investigative teams with external assistance to carry out particular research. These examples show another approach: “*it is the centre coming to the media rather than the media republishing the centres’ research*” (119). Margo Smit points out some changes in the media environment, referring to the Netherlands, which sounds quite similar to the concerns of some initiators of Anglo-

American centres:

*“Now that the pie is not so large anymore, and journalists still want to publish the stories, we are slowly getting acquainted with the phenomenon of asking funds and sponsors and donors for the means to keep doing our job. Also, since more and more areas become underreported (like the EU was from the start) other organisations like NGOs are jumping in to close the void. Journalism is only just now realising they are giving up their profession to others outside the field” (120).*

Assessing whether there is a need for investigative journalism in the European Union countries to be done outside news organisation and more specifically in the nonprofit sector is not among the aim of this study. Therefore, an analysis of the level of original investigative reporting requires further research. As further investigation deserves the role of campaigning NGOs in investigating certain issues often forgotten by media.

In the course of this chapter, two comparisons have been presented: firstly, between the three investigative journalism nonprofits within the EU at the centre of the study; and secondly, with the same context in the US. These are based on the answers to the main research questions about the motives, the structure and the practices of the three nonprofits examined in details and the information gathered on their US counterparts. Two major models have emerged: the Anglo-American nonprofit type, which consists in a sort of non-lucrative media outlet specialised in investigative reporting that slightly varies between the US and the UK, especially in terms of legal status, dimensions, territorial focus and the employment of freelancers; and *CRJI*, which represents a quite unique case for its combination of several functions and levels of activities. *BIJC*, instead, may belong to a model of organisations created ad hoc to access media assistance programmes. To the question concerning whether it is possible to talk of diffusion considering the emergence in Europe of nonprofit investigative journalism organisations it has been answered no, for the moment. The Bureau may represent a case of diffusion of the *ProPublica*’s model. But it seems necessary to examine case by case. In fact, diffusion of the nonprofit model at the moment is occurring firstly in the US where different models characterised by variable features have developed. Finally, the chapter speculates about why nonprofit investigative journalism has not yet occurred in those Northern and Central Western European countries with *IRE*-style professional associations, and whether there are perspectives in this sense thanks to the contributions of the directors of *journalismfund.eu* and of *VVOJ*.

## Conclusions

The study mainly discussed, first of all, a distinction between nonprofit investigative



journalism organisations in Anglo-American and in post-communist or transition countries. The theoretical assumptions for this distinction are rooted in what Thussu (2008) identifies as the two main threats to the journalism role's perception as the fourth estate typical of the investigative journalism paradigm. On the one hand, state control over media, as in authoritarian countries, and, on the other hand, commercial pressures, as in wild capitalism, undermine the watchdog role of journalism as emerged in the framework of liberal democracy. These two extremes have found their maximum representation in the ideological conflict at the basis of the Cold War. Similarly, nonprofit investigative journalism organisations have mainly developed in Anglo-American and post-communist countries. Considering, for instance, the motives at basis of the establishment of the centres that have been illustrated in this study they differ: for Anglo-Americans, in the need of creating an organisation that produces investigative journalism without commercial constraints in terms of time, budget, advertising; while, for post-communist country, the scene seems more variegated, but generally they present problems in the other direction of not having a pure media market but some kind of control exerted by influential groups. In the Romanian case the main motives behind its foundation have been censorship and misuse of the investigative work of the four founders due to the general corruption of the media landscape. In Romania journalism seems to be used to protect the personal interests of media owners, businessmen and politicians, not those of the public. But there might be many other different motives behind the creation of the centres in post-communist or transition countries.

These two different models of nonprofit investigative journalism, Anglo-American and post-communist, are not based only on distinct motives, but they present considerable divergences in respect to their structures and practices. This is linked to the second main argument of this study related to the concept of diffusion. In fact, it has been argued that if it is definitely possible to talk about diffusion for what concerns the emergence of professional associations in Europe on the US model of *Investigative Reporters and Editors*, it is not possible to sustain the same for nonprofit investigative journalism organisations. Also, currently investigative journalism centres have been extensively diffusing within the United States themselves and their development has not been following just a single model. All the American organisations that have been here described have very different features, especially for what concerns their establishment, dimensions, scope, business models and the strategy they apply to disseminate their findings. Among the three European cases analysed in this research, the *Bureau of Investigative Journalism* presents direct connotations of diffusion because it clearly

resembles for many aspects its American source of inspiration *ProPublica*. The *Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism*, instead, does not represent a simple diffusion of a specific model of nonprofit but takes several elements from different organisations and types: the centre, the professional association and the network. Instead, in the case of the *Bulgarian Investigative Journalism Center*, it is not possible at all to talk about diffusion for its creation in order to apply to some media assistance funding to realise just a single project. This indicates the need of revising some media aid requirements and processes. Besides, the influence of media assistance on the establishment of some centres in the post-communist countries poses some questions whether that might be considered diffusion or it would require another concept. In this framework a final argument regards those so-called democratic corporatist countries that have adopted the *IRE* model of professional investigative journalists' association but not that of the nonprofit centre "*solely engaged with the practice of investigative journalism*" (Lewis 2007a, 7). Very approximately, that might be connected to social democracy and its model leaning to the social responsibility theory of the press, or to the rooted tradition of corporatism of these countries, especially in the forms of labour unions and associations, as correctors of capitalism degenerations. In fact, it seems that in these countries there is not the need for investigative journalism to be done outside mainstream media.

Thus, in the course of this explorative study several topics, which would require further research, have emerged. Firstly, it has been noticed a certain lack of knowledge about the development of investigative journalism in Europe, both at a national level, apart from the UK, Germany and France, and in a comparative perspective. Secondly, the diffusion of professional associations on the model of *IRE* in Northern and Central Western Europe deserves more detailed attention. Thirdly, the extent and the way in which European mainstream media carry out investigative journalism requires comparative studies. Another issue to be researched regards the emergence of nonprofit centres in post-communist and transition countries, especially, trying establishing the role of media assistance programmes in their creation. Media assistance itself would be an interesting subject about its motives in supporting investigative journalism in certain countries and not in others. Finally, sustainable business models for investigative journalism seem to be a very hot topic of research at the moment. This study would recommend approaching this field of research individuating the major variables adopted by the existing models of investigative journalism nonprofits and testing their best combination.

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# APPENDIX

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## MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

The Investigative News Network (INN) is devoted to providing investigative and public service journalism in a new media environment. A consortium of more than 50 nonprofit news organizations, INN members' reporting ranges from local to national to international issues. The Network's mission is to develop and sustain through its members the highest quality watchdog journalism to benefit a free society.



**Figure 1** INN Member Location Map

<http://www.investigativenewsnetwork.org/sites/default/files/inn-map-letter-092711.pdf>

Research Questions	Sub-questions	Level of Comparison	Method
<i>What nonprofit investigative organisations exist within the borders of the European Union?</i>		with Lewis's (2007) definition and examples and the other nonprofit types	Internet search and help of experts
<i>What are the main motives behind the foundation and the participation to these organisations?</i>	What elements of the context may have influenced the formation of such organisations?	between the answers given by each member of a single organisation and between organisations	Coding and Categorizing of material from Semi-structured Interviews supported by Online Questionnaire
	What are the main advantages and disadvantages of being a nonprofit investigative reporting organisation?	between the answers given by each member of a single organisation and between organisations	
<i>How have the organisations structured?</i>	How are the organisations structured and funded?	between the answers given by each member of a single organisation and between organisations	
	What are the models of the organisations?	between the answers given by each member of a single organisation and between organisations	
<i>How do these organisations work?</i>	How and on which subjects does the organisation carry out investigations?	between the answers given by each member of a single organisation and between organisations	
	How does the organisation spread its findings? What partnerships does it instaurate with mainstream news organisations?	between the answers given by each member of a single organisation and between organisations	
<i>To what extent is it possible to talk about diffusion of the US nonprofit model in Europe?</i>	What is the role played by experience abroad? Have the founders of the organisation looked at other experience abroad as source of inspiration? What ones and in what terms?	between the answers given by each member of a single organisation and between organisations	
	How important is networking for the organisation existence and functioning?	between the answers given by each member of a single organisation and between organisations	
<i>Why these types of organisations are mainly diffused in Anglo-American or transition countries?</i>	Why in Northern Europe the network or the professional association of investigative journalists model is more diffused in combination with a few funds for single projects?	between the answers given by Experts	Coding and Categorizing of material from Expert Contributions

**Table 1** Research questions, sub-questions and methods

Dimensions	Categories	Founders	Staff or joining members	Sub-research questions	Theoretical concepts
<b>Motives</b>	<i>source of inspiration</i>	Have you and your colleagues looked at other experiences as sources of inspiration? Which ones? What have you taken from them? Have you established contacts?	Why have you become an investigative journalist and what are the main experiences that have brought you in this direction?	<i>What is the role played by experience abroad? Have the founders of the organisation looked at other experience abroad as source of inspiration? What ones and in what terms?</i>	<i>Diffusion</i> (Rogers 2003 in Dearing & Kim 2009, 1299-1303)
	<i>for founding or for collaborating/working</i>	Why have you decided to found the organisation?	How and why have you started collaborating/working for this organisation? Has it occurred in relation to any particular event?	<i>What are the main motives for founding and joining or working in a nonprofit investigative reporting organisation?</i>	<i>Individual Influences</i> (Preston 2009, 7-8)
	<i>in respect to the media system</i>	What are the idea and the story behind the foundation of the organisation? How did that occur? In relation to which events?		<i>What elements of the context may have influenced the formation of such an organisation?</i>	<i>Political-Economic Factors</i> (Preston 2009, 10-12)
	<i>advantages and disadvantages</i>	What do you think is the advantage and disadvantage for investigative journalism to be done in nonprofit organisations?	As an investigative journalist what do you think the advantages and disadvantages to work in a nonprofit organisation instead of a mainstream media are in general and in your country?	<i>What are the main advantages and disadvantages of being a nonprofit investigative reporting organisation?</i>	
<b>Organisation</b>	<i>legal status</i>	How has the organisation formally been registered as?		<i>What is the model of the organisation? How is it structured and funded?</i>	<i>Organisational Influences</i> (Preston 2009, 9-10), <i>Nonprofit Investigative Journalism Models</i> (Lewis 2007)
	<i>structure</i>	How is the organisation structured? How have you set this model up?	What does exactly your role consist in? What are your main tasks and responsibilities?		
	<i>membership</i>	Who work, participate in or collaborate with the organisation? How do you choose them? What kind of background and expertise must they have?	Do you see your participation/work in the organisation as a job or as something to improve the quality of journalism or of democracy?		
	<i>other activities (training)</i>	What does the organisation do? Does it offer also training?			
	<i>funding</i>	How is the organisation funded? What are its costs and what its sources?			



	<i>model</i>	Have you thought to create a proper business model around the organisation or was it secondary to your intents?	How does the organisation work according to you? What do you think are the main positive and negative aspects of the way the organisation functions?		
	<i>future perspectives</i>	How do you see the future of the organisation? Is it solid? What are the main problems the organisation faces?	How do you see your future in the organisation?		
	<i>network</i>	How does the organisation relate with other national and international investigative journalism organisations?	Has the organisation given you the opportunity to do interesting exchange, conferences, training and collaborations with other colleagues? Would you mind to mention some particularly significant cases?	<i>How important is networking for the organisation existence and functioning?</i>	
Practices	<i>news production</i>	How does the organisation produce investigative stories? On which basis? According to which model, routine? How and who decides what is worthy to be investigated? According to which principles?	How is an investigation usually carried out? What are the main steps from the idea to the publication?	<i>How and on which subjects does the organisation carry out investigations?</i>	<i>Media Routines and Norms (Preston 2009, 8-9), Nonprofit Investigative Journalism Models (Lewis 2007)</i>
	<i>hierarchy and specialization</i>		Is there specialization and hierarchy in the news-production? What are the main roles in it?		
	<i>subjects</i>	Does the organisation focus particularly on certain subjects?	What are the main subjects that you have investigated for the organisation?		
	<i>techniques</i>	What are the main sources and techniques used to investigate them?	What techniques and sources have you used?		
	<i>strategy of distribution</i>	How are the findings of the investigative work published and distributed? In what format? Through what channels?		<i>How does the organisation spread its findings? What partnerships does it instaurate with mainstream news organisations?</i>	
	<i>partners</i>	Does the organisation count on the support of news organisations?			

**Table 2** Research design



