

Investigative Journalism in the Digital Age

A Qualitative Study into the Influence of Digital Investigative Journalism Platforms on the Print Sector in the Netherlands



**university of
groningen**
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Course: Capstone thesis (10 EC)

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Date: 12 July 2021

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Acknowledgements

This Capstone research project was conducted as part of the BSc Global Responsibility & Leadership curriculum at the University of Groningen RUG Campus Fryslân. I want to thank my supervisor Dr. Karsten Schulz for his analytic support during the research project. Next to that, I want to give special thanks to the research participants who dedicated time to share their perspectives on and insights of modern investigative journalism in the Netherlands. Lastly, I want to thank my house mates for contributing to a positive work environment during the Covid-19 pandemic.

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Abstract

This research is an explorative study to investigate journalism in the Netherlands and the relation between digital platforms and the newspaper industry in the context of the digital age. The research question is therefore: “How do web-based investigative journalism platforms influence the business of investigative journalism in the newspaper industry in the Netherlands?” The hypothesis was that web-based investigative journalism platforms keep the newspaper industry upright due to their innovative, adaptive, and collaborative role and presence in investigative journalism in the Netherlands. A qualitative research approach was used, and four (N= 4) in-depth interviews were conducted. Participants were investigative journalists from newspapers (N= 2), a researcher of investigative journalism (N= 1), and an investigative journalist from a web-based platform (N= 1). The results have not demonstrated a direct influence of web-based platforms on the newspaper industry. Rather, indirect influences were observed together with many contextual conditions and characteristics of investigative journalism in the digital age which arise when studying the relationship between the web-based platforms and newspapers. The results show that both web-based platforms and the newspaper industry are innovative, adaptive, and collaborative. Future research could focus on empirical research of web-based investigative journalism platforms in the Netherlands. This research is linked to UN SDG 16 ‘Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions’.

Keywords: *investigative journalism, web-based journalism, democracy, newspaper industry.*

Introduction and problem description

Investigative journalism has the aim “to expose wrongdoing on behalf of the public for the common good” (Carson, 2019, p. 101) and is a time-intensive and costly part of journalism. Thereby, the practice of investigative journalism came under threat when newspaper advertisement revenues fell due to the emergence of the Internet (Wang, 2019; Carson, 2018). Yet, new web-based investigative journalism platforms have been emerging and newspaper companies have extended their product to the online environment (Bruno et al., 2012; Carson, 2018). This raises the question what investigative journalism looks like today, to what extent

it is functioning, what the future may look like, and how the web-based investigative journalism platforms relate to traditional investigative journalism in the newspaper industry.

Research question and objectives

The research question of the research is: “How do web-based investigative journalism platforms influence the business of investigative journalism in the newspaper industry in the Netherlands?”

Research aims:

- Sub Question 1: How is investigative journalism defined?
- Sub Question 2: What is the function of investigative journalism in democracies?
- Sub Question 3: What does the modus operandi look like on web-based investigative journalism platforms and in the newspaper industry?
- Sub Question 4: What may the future of investigative journalism look like?

This study is linked to SDG 16 ‘Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions’, by means of target 16.10 which is stated as ‘Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.’ (United Nations, 2015).

Research scope and limitations

This study is limited to the research context of the Netherlands. The research scope can be described as a combination of a wider scope of themes that are linked to investigative journalism and a focus on investigative journalism in the newspaper industry and on digital platforms. Thereby, this thesis is an explorative study to investigative journalism in the Netherlands in the digital age.

Theoretical framework

How is investigative journalism defined?

Investigative journalism, also referred to as watchdog reporting, is not an unanimously recognized term. Rather, there are many different definitions present and two camps that take a stand on the term itself. While the first camp believes that the term is flawed because being a journalist should mean that one investigates stories, the second camp identifies investigative journalism as a separate category within journalism. Still, both camps agree that some journalistic activities take more research time than others (Carson, 2018).

This Capstone thesis follows in the path of the second camp, as it can be distinguished by characteristics observed by Carson (2018). Carson analysed investigative journalism from the late 19th century till the 21st century and found two characteristics that have remained consistent over time. Firstly, investigative journalism as a type of journalism makes up a very small percentage of journalism (Carson, 2019), and secondly a universal definition of investigative journalism's aim could be "to expose wrongdoing on behalf of the public for the common good" (Carson, 2019, p. 101).

What is the function of investigative journalism in democracies?

Schmitter et al., (1991, p. 76) described democracy by stating: "What distinguishes democratic rulers from nondemocratic ones are the norms that condition how the former come to power and the practices that hold them accountable for their actions." Broadly speaking, the media is sometimes known as "the fourth estate" in the separation of powers of the government; the other branches namely being the executive, the judiciary, and the legislative (Bennett et al., 2007). By increasing transparency of information to the public, the press prevents abuse of power by other branches of government and enables the people to make informed decisions. Therefore, regardless of which definition of investigative journalism one follows, journalism broadly has an inherent role for democracies (Bennett et al., 2007). To state that the role of journalism for democracy is a crucial one for democracy's existence, one could even suggest that journalism *is* democracy, to mark the requirement of both to exist (Shenton, 2009).

However, journalism is different from investigative journalism in two ways. First, Christians et al. (2009) have identified four normative roles of the media: 1) a monitorial role, 2) a facilitative role, 3) a radical role, and 4) a collaborative role. Investigative journalism is very important in the monitorial role as it exposes wrongdoings that affect the public. Therefore, it is more likely that investigative journalism does perform the actual role of "the Fourth Estate" in democracies. Second, the normative functions of journalism, for example journalism as the 'fourth estate', provides an inspiring vision but often differs from the reality when journalism is practiced (Temple, 2008). Temple (2008, p. 19) stated, "the self-perpetuating power of this myth has been quite staggering," when pointing to instances where the media has sided with the government or encouraged a particular viewpoint rather than collecting the facts for the reader.

A caveat here is that the press behaves differently in different countries and this is propounded by one of the oldest works on media theories by Siebert et al. (1956). These four theories are the authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility, and soviet communist approach. Although some of the concepts may be outdated or highly criticized, one concept is still recognized: the responsibility that the media has for society (Christians et al., 2009). When discussing a democracy, the libertarian approach or social responsibility approach would fit best and may be present in media policies. Standing on the perspective of a government, the libertarian approach would aim for a complete separation from government and media to ensure the media's autonomy. However, a social responsibility approach would give the government the responsibility to make sure the media has enough resources to execute its role (Siebert et al., 1956).

Has digitalization altered the nature of investigative journalism?

Before the 1980s, still in the analogue world, print newspapers were 'big business' due to large audiences and big advertisement revenues. Then, the digital age arrived with the emergence of the Internet, which disrupted these core revenue models in the newspaper industry. The start of the digital age has had several consequences for journalism: as news became freely available on the Internet, newspaper sales decreased (Carson, 2018). Figure 1 shows the continuing trend of newspaper sales declines in the Netherlands (Commissariaat voor de Media, 2020). Thereby the newspaper industry had to cut back on costs, and this has been a trend that has long continued and feared, because investigative journalism being the most expensive reporting type, cutbacks were first initiated there. Advertisements on the Internet also started appearing due to the commercialization of the internet, however, these generated very little revenue compared to the traditional advertisements in newspapers. Digital advertisements create less revenue than print advertisements. Thereby, newspaper companies had to cut their costs. Unfortunately, investigative journalism is the most expensive part of journalism and thereby its existence came under pressure (Carson, 2018).

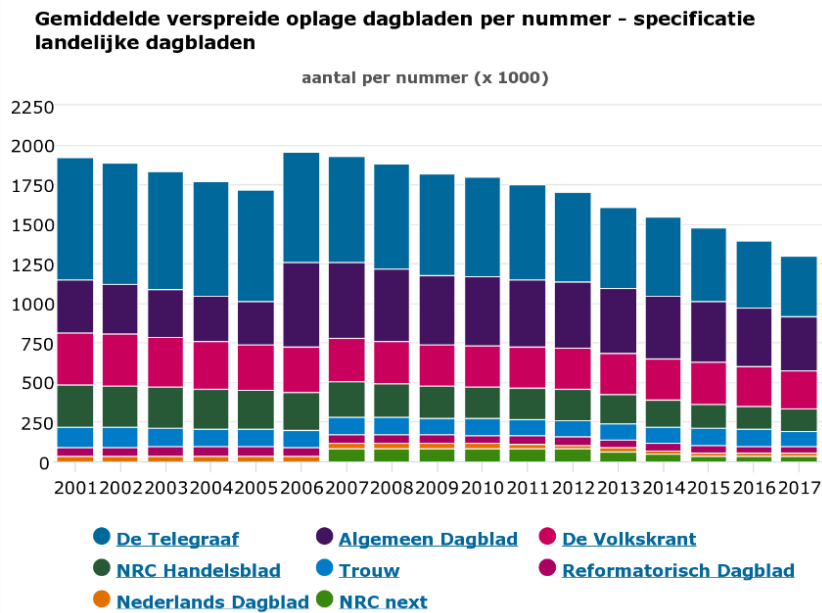


Figure 1. This graph shows a relative decline in the average newspaper sells per newspaper publication per year between 2001 and 2017 in the Netherlands (Commissariaat voor de Media, 2020).

The changes that digitalization caused in this respect caused two camps of thinkers of the future of investigative journalism to come forth: pessimists and optimists. The pessimistic perspective was that people would not want to pay for investigative journalism, and the optimistic perspective was that the investigative journalism companies would sustainably survive when the revenue would be enough to cover the fixed basic costs (Rodríguez Gómez et al., 2016). Wang (2019) reflected on both these perspectives and suggested that the pessimistic perspective also includes a fear that a proud and long tradition will fade away. At the same time, the digital age creates many opportunities for a new *modus operandi* in investigative journalism: one that includes the computer and the cloud (Wang, 2019).

Modus operandi

In the current moment, investigative journalism has not died. The Internet has not only disrupted journalism companies worldwide but has also penetrated the methods of all journalism (Hahn and Stalph, 2018). Models of competition shifted more and more to models of collaboration to increase reach and cut costs (Carson, 2019). From an ontological perspective, digitalisation has changed the *modus operandi* of investigative journalism (Hahn and Stalph, 2018). Digitalisation allowed for easier and better collaboration, information sharing, and data analysis (Carson, 2018).

Social media

Digitalisation has changed the way that information is distributed and consumed (Hahn and Stalph, 2018). For example, social media platforms enable the distribution of information without verification, and thereby bypass the traditional journalistic media. These online podia provide direct free speech. However, social media also creates opportunities for manipulation, disinformation and misinformation and give rise to conspiracy theories and the questioning of facts. Yet, social media do not only give room for free speech, but the algorithms also recommend information that matches the beliefs of the user of the platform (Adams, 2017). This leads to selective exposure and the creation of so-called echo-chambers in which certain viewpoints are repeated (Festinger, 1957). According to the cognitive dissonance theory from Festinger (1957), people are more prone to believe information that is perceived in line with their beliefs and more prone to dismiss information that is perceived to contradict with their beliefs. To resolve such conflicts, people change parts of their behaviour or that information is in line with beliefs and behaviour. In the case of social media, the algorithms avoid cognitive dissonance for the user (Adams, 2017).

Post-truth societies

Social media is ideally suited for spreading disinformation and igniting polarization (Saurwein, 2020). The post-truth crisis is therefore inherently linked to the delegitimization of journalists and science (Adams, 2017). Perhaps the most problematic side of fake news is that it erodes trust in all information; how to know what is true? Not knowing what the truth is undermines democracy and being informed by good information becomes a challenge (Saurwein, 2020).

In that sense, journalists have become combatants defending truth and exposing misleading information or disinformation. On a more positive note, it is not only journalists that try to distinguish fake from truth; various organisations are adopting fact-checking mechanisms and even collaborate on a transnational scale while doing so. Thereby, an information verification movement operates as a counterbalancing force in the post-truth era (Graves, 2018; Saurwein, 2020). Besides, that open-source information from digital sources has also enormous possibilities for investigative journalism (Lewis, 2014). In short, investigative journalism plays a role here in exposing wrongdoings that affect the public. The difference is that the digital sphere has appeared as an extra dimension (Carson, 2018). At the same time, the digital age has increased possibilities for monitoring power and power abuse, by media but

also directly by citizens due to increased possibilities for participation on social media in terms of accountability (Keane, 2010).

Is investigative journalism still able to support democracy?

Digital investigative journalism platforms

In the period between 2000 and 2012, investigative reporting centres multiplied (Carvajal et al., 2012). This development also included digital investigative reporting start-ups emerging throughout Europe (Bruno et al., 2012). However, empirical research on digital investigative reporting start-ups is rather limited (Wahl-Jorgensen et al., 2016). Therefore, Wagemans and colleagues (2016) stressed the need for case studies on digital journalism start-ups, including the practice and perception of journalism on these platforms, and the business models that are present or emerging on them. Wagemans et al. (2016) studied a digital investigative reporting start-up from France called ‘Mediapart’, and Price (2017) attempted a case study on ‘The Ferret’, a Scottish digital investigative journalism platform. Both found that such digital journalism platforms have been emerging as responses to three crises in journalism: an economic crisis, a democratic crisis, and a moral crisis (Wagemans et al., 2016; Price, 2017).

With new ways of funding investigative journalism, the economic crisis is countered. One example are paywalls. However, paywalls are also perceived to be flawed when they exclude people from this high-quality type of journalism if they cannot afford it. As a result, a web-based investigative journalism platform may become an elite product. Other economic models can include subsidies, funds, or donations. However, problems do exist with some economic models. For example, donor-driven journalism, in which journalists’ work is supported by donors which could allow them to influence the agenda of the journalists (Pickard et al., 2014).

Developments in the Dutch media landscape

A study conducted for the Dutch Ministry of Education Culture and Science found that investigative journalism in the Netherlands has become marginalized in the sense that investigative journalism on a local and regional level is more and more lacking. At the same time, there is a development taking place which transcends responsibilities of various governance themes from the national to the local level. In essence, this decentralization of governance would require more watchdogs on the local scale, yet local journalism does not have the means to ensure that currently (DSP, 2018).

In conclusion, the methods of conducting investigative journalism may have changed, but the aim has remained the same (Carson, 2019). By revealing hidden truths, investigative journalism facilitates democracy: when a scandal is revealed, society is informed and will be able to raise their voice to keep the powerful accountable. In this light, Price (2017) notes that digital investigative journalism may be innovating so that it can restore traditional journalistic values which have been disturbed by the negative consequences of digitalization as described above.

Therefore, the hypothesis that arises from this literature review is that web-based investigative journalism platforms may keep the newspaper industry upright due to their innovative, adaptive, and collaborative role and presence, and are thereby able to support the democracy in the Netherlands.

Methodology

Study context

This study was conducted in The Netherlands. It is centered on the work of Dutch investigative journalists from the print newspaper industry, as well as web-based platforms. For practical reasons, time constraints and the COVID-19 pandemic context, the data collection process took place through three phone call conversations and one video-conference call using the Zoom platform. The data collection process took one month, during May 2021, and was held by one student, the author of this thesis, alone.

Study design

To better understand the influence of web-based investigative journalism platforms on the business of investigative journalism in the print media sector in the Netherlands, this research is mostly qualitative. For this cause, semi-structured interviews fit best to gather in-depth information from four key interviewees. The design cycle used was developed and described by Hennink et al. (2010). The research questions were formulated alongside a literature review. The research question was refined throughout this process. A hypothesis with a conceptual framework was developed to guide the analysis of the data and the interpretation of the results.

Data collection methods

Literature review

First, secondary data was collected by means of an extensive literature review conducted to deepen the understanding of the knowledge produced around investigative journalism, and what is debated upon today. Quickly it became clear that scientific articles on investigative journalism is limited as few scholars focus on studying investigative journalism as a special discipline within journalism. Thereby, the scope was broadened to also include the struggles and debates around journalism as a whole in the digital age. As a result, literature on the role of watchdog media in today's democracies has been a major thread in the literature review. Scientific articles and books were broadly searched for and identified on Google Scholar, SmartCat, and individual journals using the keywords "investigative journalism" OR "investigative reporting" OR "watchdog journalism" OR "watchdog reporting" OR "digital media platforms" OR "digital journalism". Later, the keywords were specified to specific keywords such as "business model" OR "sustainable" AND "digital journalism" OR "fake news" OR "social media" AND "journalism".

Interviews

To support answering the main research question, the collection of primary data was necessary. Qualitative methods were considered, and four semi-structured interviews (N=4) were held with investigative journalists and an expert of investigative journalism to obtain specific insider information. Data were collected by conducting those in-depth interviews with investigative journalists from the printed media sector (N=2), an investigative journalist from a web-based platform (N=1), and an expert who conducts research on investigative journalism for the government (N=1). The interviewees were selected to reflect a diversity of backgrounds, ages, genders, experiences, workplaces, and interests. However, it still enabled the student to look for common characteristics and differences that appeared across such a diverse study population. The interviews were executed in an open and empathic way. This resulted in an empathetic way to enable the interviewees to feel motivated and inspired to tell their story and inquire into their personal and professional beliefs, feelings, and convictions. To structure the data collection during the interview phase, an interview guide with basic interview questions and guidelines was prepared. The questions in the interview guide were framed based on the information gathered during the literature review. By formulating specific questions before hand, a rhythm was created and the answers flowed naturally, with information that could be coded for later processing, comparison, and analysis. The interview protocol contained an introduction, a set of opening questions, core questions and closing questions and remarks. The interview guidelines' main function was to anticipate the questions which answers were of

interest for the research and support the interviewer in semi-directing the conversation. Thereby, this also allowed to further extend the interview guide. The final interview guide can be found in the appendix. The order in which the questions were asked differed between the participants to enable following logical threads in each of the interviews. The influence of the interviewer and interviewee and their interaction should be considered when processing the results as well as the conditions in which the interviews have taken place. Due the pandemic, all interviews have been conducted by means of Zoom or mobile phone. These modes of communication were selected to accommodate the interviewee's preference. The interviews each lasted for around thirty minutes. Initial contact between the interviewer and the interviewee was part of the trust building and ethic approach of the research process.

The personal situations of the interviewees differed also quite a lot. Some were in very quiet places while other were in busier settings. Based on these circumstances and the various backgrounds, the interviews can be seen as dynamic. With their permission, the interviewees have been digitally recorded, with the guarantee that after transcription of the interviews, the recordings were deleted, and the transcripts were anonymized. All identifying files have been deleted upon completion of the thesis. Since all interviewees are Dutch, the language of the interviews was also Dutch. The transcripts were not translated to English as this would risk losing implicit messages due to translation.

Data analysis

Anonimization

Thus, after transcription and anonymization, the Dutch transcripts were analysed. In line with the recommendations gathered and formulated by Hennink et al (2010, ch. 9 p. 214), information that could reveal the identity of the participants was removed. These identifiers were replaced by a code, such as: [name], [workplace name], [location], [age], [newspaper name], [web-based platform name], [job title]. A number has been added to make a distinction between newspaper names, so that it gives some context to the interviewer's response. However, a number was only pointing to the same newspaper or platform within one transcript; they are different between transcripts. This way, ethical principles were being safeguarded while preserving details (Hennink et al., 2010, ch. 4). Other codes present in the transcripts were [audio unclear], which points to a lack of clarity in the audio recording of that section or couple of words. The participant's specific age in years was removed by one of the following broad categories: [20-30 years old], [30-40 years old], [40-50 years old], [50-60 years old],

[60-70 years old]. For efficiency reasons, the codes have been placed in English already at the time of creating the Dutch transcripts.

Thematic analysis

The answers were coded and clustered by means of a thematic analysis, of which the link can be found in the appendix. The thematic analysis was done by identifying themes and codes and categorizing sections in the interviews under these codes to enable an analysis of the main themes and codes (Clarke et al., 2017).

Data quality and study limitations

The strengths of this primary data collection method by using semi-structured and in-depth interviews are that the data obtained was varied and rich. The different backgrounds and experiences also contribute to cover a relevant area of the field at stake, which was deemed sufficient and useful data for the purpose of this research. The limitations of the methods were the limited number of professionals interviewed, and the combination of the broad scope of questions that were asked together with the limited time of the interviews. Indeed, the sample at stake is rather small. The student was aware that this leaves room for subjective and individual bias. By applying consistent interview guideline, preparing enough relevant, deep, encompassing and specific questions, it was considered that this risk has been reduced. In addition, considering the time constraints, in order to leave room for proper data analysis, applying a coding and clustering process, four interviewees were held a minimum amount acceptable in this case as the point of saturation was achieved, meaning no new insights were gathered apart from repeated insights. The student minimized the risks of interviews cancellation by scheduling them ahead of time, respecting punctuality, and empathic communication. Finally, the limitations of distance-based interviews and the way digital means may seriously influence the type of information shared was acknowledged. Nonetheless, due the pandemic, many people are already proficient and used to working and communicating remotely.

Results

Investigative journalism

Investigative journalism

Throughout the interview, the participants approached investigative journalism in overlapping ways, however, one respondent specifically reflected on the word ‘investigative journalism’ to highlight that investigative journalism adheres to journalistic rules:

“Investigative journalism is actually a bit of a weird word. Every journalist should do research.”

Another participant reflected on the development of investigative journalism throughout history and stated:

“The core task remains to uncover the truth at all costs.”

Among all participants, investigative journalism was described as a type of journalism that tries to uncover complex and hidden stories and therefore demands a lot of time and money. One respondent made a symbolic comparison to describe the time element:

“I think it lies between the daily, fast news and science in, with which I’m saying: it’s not a PhD, but it can sometimes take a couple of months to research one topic.”

Two participants connected their work to system critique:

“And the goal of investigative journalism is, to my opinion, to address to deeper underlying systems”.

Furthermore, the participants characterized investigative journalism as a practice that exposes hidden and complex stories. Two participants connected the core and impact of investigative journalism to the Dutch Allowance Scandal (Toeslagenaffaire), which one participant referred to as:

“To expose things which those in power in politics rather not see exposed, and yes, it can make things change.”

At the same time, while the participants did not clearly identify for whom the stories were produced, one participant suggested a sense of empowerment for the people who take note of their products:

“So, because of that system criticism, and from how something works, I think: when people know how something works, they can also change something about it.”

Developments

The participant had a positive attitude towards the quality of investigative journalism in the Netherlands and a moderate positive attitude towards factors that enable investigative journalism opportunities in the Netherlands. Factors that were attributed to these qualities and opportunities were increased skills and knowledge among journalists due to diverse educational opportunities, good journalistic level in relation to the powers, and an interest for investigative journalism stories. One participant mentioned that there is a current interest in investigative journalism stories and that they are not directly read by everyone, but rather attract a certain audience, stating:

“You just notice that among at least a certain [...audience...], there is an interest in in-depth, more complex and longer stories that are well investigated. So yes, that always gives me courage.”

One participant identified that newspapers realize that investigative journalism can have economic value:

“The added value of one medium to distinguish itself from another medium or the one newspaper from the other newspaper, is that you invest in investigative journalism, and newspapers are realizing that a lot more.”

Three participants identified the increased subsidies for investigative journalism and local journalism created by the Ministry of Education and Culture and Science and other funds and perceived the financial climate of investigative journalism to be positive currently. However, one participant noted that such developments should continue structurally to ensure a sustainable future for investigative journalism.

One participant the power of funds to offer a guiding role in digitalization and collaboration of bigger projects. Another participant identified the investment in local investigative journalism to be positive, arguing that local knowledge can be better deployed when there is collaboration. This participant stated:

“There is a lot of knowledge at journalists in the region, at local journalists. So if you share that, if you collaborate as national medium with local media, which should happen more, then you can also share information and complement each other.”

One participant mentioned that much attention goes to making stories attractive for the audience, especially given the competition of attention in the digital world, but also that the digital world increases the stages on which stories can be told, by stating:

“We invest more energy in presenting nicely with different storytelling ways.”

Social media and fake news

When asked about use of social media for investigative journalism outputs, participants described the power of social media to be two-sided; useful for audience reach, but too powerful at the same time. All participants identified social media as platforms to distribute investigative journalism stories on, and different social media were used, and interactive options. In terms of social media's power, one participant stated:

“You end up in the forest of influence, as soon as you put your finger on it.”

Another participant stated:

“The only thing you can do really well is the dissemination and also the collection of information.”

Two participants mentioned that social media teams deal with social media, and that their social media teams put the investigative journalism formats in different formats on different social media to target different groups, to help distribute the investigative journalism stories and increase audience, in which some social media are more helpful than others. One participant discussed the power of social media and the opportunity to stay more independent of those by working with investigative journalism own websites and that journalists may play a role in changing social media's revenue models. One participant mentioned Google who is setting up a journalism fund. When asked about the output of investigative journalism stories, one participant [newspaper] stated:

“Editors don't do that themselves. We have a kind of social media team for that. But that is just putting the link on different places in different storytelling forms.”

Two participants directly addressed fake news when asked about threats on the Internet. One participant mentioned that fake news has always existed, and another participant mentioned that giving attention to disinformation creates more attention to that disinformation. When asked about investigative journalism's role in countering fake news, both participants stated to adhere to journalistic principles. One participant [newspaper] stated:

“By continuing what we do now, so: writing down the truth. So, we work with journalistic principles; an adversarial process.”

Another participant [web-based platform] mentioned the benefit of online platforms to provide easy citations, by stating:

“What we also do often is citation at just about everything that would need a source [...] That is of course also the benefit of online, that can be done very easily. [...] I think it also helps a lot when people can check it themselves as well.”

Power from governments and companies

When asked about the role of the government for investigative journalism, one participant stated:

“I think the role of the government in protecting the press freedom is mostly that they answer questions of press.”

Another participant noted a trend in decreased transparency and increased polishing of communication from the government in the way that government officials, by stating:

“More and more, there comes a wall around, towards the citizen, so everything is transferred in bite-sized chunks.”

To improve this problem, the participant suggested that journalists should be able to get closer to governance officials.

When asked how to support the financing of investigative journalism as a government, three participants stated that subsidies should come from funds, and that platforms or organizations should not directly be financed by governments, to ensure as much independence as possible.

One participant tended to believe any dependency relationship creates a tension, by stating:

“It is more of a principled tension; there is a dependency relationship. [...] I imagine myself a theoretical situation in which the government in the Netherlands says: ‘NOS, you must you have to cut in half if you don’t do this and that more’. [...] So, there is an inherent tension in the dependency relationship between a journalistic medium and the party where they are dependent on.”

Difficulties

When asked about current experiences of difficulties in investigative journalism in the Netherlands, various difficulties were identified although three participants identified different issues. One participant identified the issues of the limited amount of money for conducting investigative journalism and too much closeness between parliamentary journalism and politics. Another participant described the issue of delays in the execution of WOB-requests and especially dramatic delays in the execution of the Open Government Law during the Covid-19 pandemic, by stating:

“From the Ministry of Health, it was decided that because so many WOB requests were being done, those would be [...] sent outside all at once. But because of that, there was a delay of a year and I find that also problematic. Because of that, [...]the journalist cannot do its job well.”

Another participant described the vulnerable position of freelance investigative journalists, especially in terms of judicial and economic security, by stating:

“Imagine, I work at a company, I am an employee, and you are a student, and we would work together on an investigation. The moment something happens, say, we are threatened; then I can lean on the support of my company. The company will say, come in, we will make sure we get help. But you don't have that because you are a student. That's the difference.”

Modus operandi

Collaboration

When asked about collaborations in investigative journalism, the participants tended to believe that collaborations were common in both newspapers and web-based platforms. One participant stated:

“The financial climate is at this moment extremely favorable and that also translate into very nice, very nice project, very nice organizations that arise and partnerships.”

One participant (web-based platform) noted that the choice for collaborations can also be influenced the output possibilities:

“I collaborate regularly with other journalists. I do notice that it is easier to collaborate with journalists or platforms who don't compete directly. [...] In terms of competition it makes more sense because a story can be told in different ways. [...] Then you have the same story but in different formats, I always find that very beautiful.

All participants mentioned the increase of reach to be a benefit in collaborations. One participant described a hypothetical collaboration between a web-based platform and a newspaper:

“Well, [platform] for example, has an idea, a plan for a particular story and brings it to the editor-in-chief of [newspaper] or at another medium and says: “Are you interested?” “Yes,” says [newspaper] then, “from now on, also one of our investigative journalists [...] will join”. [...] So then, they, [platform], not only have the online platform, but also the printed platform of [newspaper] at their disposal.

One participant noted that collaboration requires organization:

“So, what you see, and especially in the collaboration between for example a digital platform and a newspaper or a television program, is that it also demands organization. It has also been said that if you look at how that is organized, [...] it is often someone who really does the organization, so a project leader.”

One participant (newspaper) noted that collaborations within the newspaper also occurs:

“By the way, we also collaborate very often with colleagues from the news editors”.

Web-based platform

When asked about the participants' perspective on digital investigative journalism platforms, two participants [web-based platform] and [newspaper] mentioned that investigative journalism stories on web-based platforms are longer and include more details. Where newspapers are stuck to a maximum number of words, web-based platform do not have such limitations and therefore are inclined to write longer articles. The infinite amount of space can be negative for the audience.

One participant [web-based platform] perceived that web-based platforms are better adapted to the digital world as they are online. The participant perceived that web-based platforms have more engagement with their audience than newspapers and receive more tips than newspapers. In terms of business models, participants mentioned different ways in which investigative journalism can be funded. The business model where members pay for the stories by means of a certain monthly tariff was perceived positively. Here, the bigger the audience, the lower the

price can be. Participants perceive web-based platforms to have a future as they expected people to want to pay for digital quality journalism.

“Look: the time of printed media, the newspaper, is a bit disappearing because a lot of people, youth mostly, never have a printed newspaper in their hands. <They> absorb all the news online. [...] I think that is a golden future for investigative journalism.”

Newspaper

When asked about the perception of newspapers in the digital age, participant mentioned that newspapers have also shifted to online in various dimensions and that there is an age gap in terms of who reads printed newspapers. One participant noted that print newspapers may disappear but that printed investigative journalism books may continue to exist. One participant noted that traditional investigative journalism in newspapers has a wider reach as they have more people subscribed. One participant mentioned that investigative journalism on a local and regional level is absent or very little represented in local and regional newspapers.

One participant identified an accountability threat that may result from freelance journalism on local or regional levels, by stating:

“Independent journalism, which are often journalists who also have to work as freelancer. And then you will see that freelancers also start to work for governments and then you get a kind of gray area. [...] So you see that journalists also become dependent on governments for their income.”

Another participant [newspaper] mentioned that the pandemic substantially increased the number of subscriptions at the newspaper company. Next to that, investigative journalism also had an economic value in the sense that it gives the newspaper an identity, which has economic value.

Two participants [newspaper] described the context of the modus operandi at the newspaper. One participant described this as:

“We have of course a production process right, which has a fixed daily rhythm. [...] there belongs a sort of wave motion of energy to. So many editors with whom I work who work at the news editor, also must run shifts, and those are production shifts, those are stories that must be made for the print newspaper. Those also appear online, but there is a sort of rhythm in it. I

can imagine this plays a different role or less of a role at an online editor where you have sort of a more continuous process. [...] Our tradition is paper.”

One participant [newspaper] mentioned that the newspaper is digital-first, meaning that the newspaper appears online earlier. At the same time, the participant stated that the printed newspaper continues to play a leading role for the newspaper’s organization.

Diversity

When asked about the female-male ratio in investigative journalism, the participants tended to believe this was about equal, due to the large number of young female investigative journalists entering the field. However, participants tended to believe that there is not enough cultural diversity in investigative journalism. One participant summarized this as:

“It is generally the White, in the Netherlands born man or woman.”

Two male participants identified investigative journalism as a difficult occupation in terms of language and practice and tended to believe this was the reason that cultural diversity was low. One participant identified a way to overcome this:

“It is a difficult part of the field: I hope, think, that at a certain moment, yes, when more people with a migratory background enter journalism, this will also happen with some delay to investigative journalism.”

Two female participants particularly reflected on the presence of women at the workplace, and concluded that women are not represented everywhere:

“But it is economics and that is a topic where more men are involved, so perhaps more thought should be given to the prior education about how to involve women in financial education.”

Two participants were asked about ways that investigative journalism can reach younger people [20-30 years old], and both addressed the online focus of younger people. One participant (web-based platform) stated:

“What we see is that online platforms of course already have a slightly younger audience than newspapers and such. So, I think just the fact that it’s online, that it can make a difference.”

Another participant [newspaper] stated:

“The newspaper [newspaper], that goes for any newspaper, also tries to reach young people via the website.”

One participant addressed the need for more young investigative journalists:

“You need to make sure that the content also appeals to younger target groups, so it is necessary that you need many young people in investigative journalism who know [...] what they are interested in. So, the old grey man like me have to make way.”

Future

Decentralization

When asked about the possible effect of decentralization of governmental decisions on investigative journalism, all participants emphasized the need for investigative journalism in the local region.

“If you look at decentralization, that all kinds of tasks go from The Hague to the region, then it is of course very important that you have a much better insight of it and that you get a much better grip on it.”

“I think actually an opposite movement is going on; that there is actually reasonable poverty in investigative journalism in the region. Simply due to lack of money, at many of those local media. [...] it all becomes much more important locally, and with the decentralization, [...] I think it is just important that someone can keep an eye out there.”

“That’s why you see on local level more and more decisions being made that directly affect citizens, that more and more important topics are executed on local level. That should also mean that journalists and the journalistic investigation on local level also important are. But you actually see that on the local level and on the regional level, that independent critical journalism and the investigative journalism, that these take place less.”

“To support local democracy, more locally critical journalism and investigative journalism must be possible.”

Possibilities for support

The participants identified multiple possibilities for supporting investigative journalism in the Netherlands. These included more transparency from the government, studying how other countries support the practice of investigative journalism, protecting press freedom, a continuation of people that pay for investigative journalism, provinces or municipalities setting up independent journalism funds, setting up local media centers for collaboration of journalists on certain themes, big media companies investing in judicial safety of freelance journalists, strengthening public education of journalism by setting up a master for investigative journalism, education specifically on data journalism including organizations such as Bellingcat.

On the points mentioned above, one participant stated:

“The Open Government Act is being abused by the government through all kinds of documents. We have all kinds of recent examples of this: by refusing documents or blackening them or whatever. I think the government should go to Sweden to see how publicity is there. It’s very fast, you get the pieces very quickly and there is almost never anything blacked out except people’s private things.”

Another participant mentioned that journalists should have the facilities to conduct investigative journalism, by stating:

“The same difference lies in obtaining data; that demands a lot of effort from a journalist. You need to have that time, and you need to have the entrances, for example when you want to do a WOB-request. Therefore, if you say it is important to have good investigative journalism products, then it is also important that the journalists who are involved in that, have the time and the facilities.”

Expectations for the future

Questions that asked the participants about their perception on the future of investigative journalism in the Netherlands, identified possible positive and negative trends to play out. One participant marked the collaborations between local groups and national investigative journalists arising in the current moment as one that could continue. Another participant marked a possible blowback for investigative journalism may another financial crisis hit after the pandemic, as it may result in people exiting their journalism subscriptions. One participant

argued that as more people call themselves investigative journalists, this allows them to specialize more and offer more depth in journalism.

When asked about the future of the newspaper, participants tended to believe there was a future for the newspaper. One participant stated:

“I think that just like paper books haven’t disappeared, paper newspapers also won’t disappear. [...] I do think that the emphasis is more and more on online.”

Participants tended to believe that there is a future for newspapers online. One participant stated:

“I don’t think that at a certain point it’s done with the newspaper, perhaps with the paper version at a certain moment, I don’t know that, but yes, they are also already further. It is not the case that [web-based platform] is going to outrun them all now just because it is an online platform.”

Another participant identified a difference in capacity that may exist between newspapers and web-based platforms:

“I already do see changes also especially at the big newspapers. They just employ a lot, so they can just put a group on a podcast, they can make videos, yes I think in that way, [...] you can make good online content.”

Discussion

This thesis has been an explorative study to investigative journalism in the Netherlands through a democratic lens. Three themes were selected to guide the analysis: A), how is investigative journalism understood and what threatens it, B) the modus operandi of current investigative journalism in the newspaper industry and on digital platforms, and C) an outlook on investigative journalism in the future with hopes and threats.

A) Investigative journalism

The results show that the participants identified the same core values of investigative journalism. This is in line with the findings of Hanitzsch et al. (2019) that while political-economic, cultural, and social contexts can diversely differ between journalists resulting in different experiences of journalism, it is still the case that journalists still adhere to the same core normative functions and practices of journalism (Hanitzsch et al., 2019).

The results show that social media has an important role in the distribution and reach of investigative stories and in the engagement with audiences. However, the participants also identified that the dependency on social media can be a pitfall as social media companies have a lot of power. This is in line with Adams (2017) who exposed the contradiction of social media being platforms that enable distribution of information, but also give room to fake news and the delegitimization of journalists and science. As a counter force, participants identified that journalism still has the power to tackle fake news. This corresponds to Richardson (2017) who describes good journalism as the antidote to fake news.

Another result was that participants connected a positive economic climate for investigative journalism to a current positive outlook on investigative journalism. This economic climate has also been supported with government subsidies and other funds including a recent investment in local journalism (Ministerie van OCW, 2021).

The results showed a negative perception on the execution of WOB requests by the government and that the government has been involved in delaying WOB requests for their own benefit. Yet, the participants also identified that the government has an important role in protecting press freedom and that governments should be transparent. According to Reporter Without Borders (2021), press freedom was relatively good during 2020 in the Netherlands. However, the inadequate and delayed execution of WOB requests resulted in the Netherlands dropping from place 5 to place 6 in the World Press Freedom Index (Reporters Without Borders, 2021).

This trend during the pandemic is in line with other governments who have suppressed press freedom for the sake of combatting disinformation (Cuillier, 2020; Simon, 2020). Coronavirus misinformation has even resulted in harm on a physical level while politics has played an integrative role in how to act on coronavirus. Thereby, Napoli (2020) argues that misinformation of health and politics are merging.

The results showed that there is a worry about the judicial and financial security of investigative journalists who work as freelancers. Participants mentioned that this security gap could be accommodated by government support, although in a way as independent as possible. Still, participants identified a role of the government in safeguarding the safety of journalists. Lee-Wright (2012) notes that freelance journalists lack institutional support compared to journalists with permanent salaried employment as staff. Therefore, in case of a claim of defamation, freelancers might not be insured to go to court or might not have access to legal support. The implications are therefore that freelancers are more exposed to risks, for example in terms of

physical safety but also in terms of legal safety (Lee-Wright, 2012). In the report, shows that around half of investigative journalists in the Netherlands are self-employed (DSP, 2018). At the same time, Gollmitzer (2014) suggested freelancers therefore might try to avoid investigations that have bigger legal risks, merely because of their consciousness of possible risks and the lack of financial tools in case risks become reality. On the flip side, freelancers experience greater autonomy and perceive that this leads to more job satisfaction (Gollmitzer, 2014; Mathisen, 2017). Still, their choice of topics to investigate will be restricted due to economic considerations linked to the risks described above, thereby limiting autonomy (Das, 2007).

B) Modus operandi

Participants mentioned that collaborations exist between web-based investigative platforms and newspapers or other media outputs and that these collaborations require organization. Besides that, the results also showed that the current financial climate supports these collaborations. This is interesting as one could also expect that collaborations would function as a way to cut costs (Price, 2017). Schaffer (2013) drew lessons from digital journalism start-ups in the US, which include that those digital start-ups need to have a business mindset to survive, that working with the journalistic values alone will not enable them to survive, and that new content needs to show up frequently to get enough attention to be noticed on a consistent basis. The business mindset includes that the platform has multiple income flows, for example from training. Therefore, journalistic platforms require also other skillsets than regular journalists. The problem with the need for frequent updates is that investigative journalism is time-consuming and that such publications occur less often (Price, 2017). In this light, empirical research on business models for digital investigative journalism platforms can support other platforms to survive and thrive (Wahl-Jorgensen et al., 2016). Collaborative journalism in terms of co-operations can bring trust in journalists back (Siapera et al., 2016).

The participants identified the benefits that digital platforms may have in the business of investigative journalism. The results showed that digital platforms provide better transparency as hyperlinks to sources can be proactively provided. Thereby, digital platforms may be better able to respond to the moral crisis in journalism as one can check while reading the article where the data came from (Wagemans et al., 2016; Price, 2017). The results also showed that the participants perceived web-based platforms to be better in providing attractive visuals. Adams (2017) has further emphasized that journalists can succeed if they are transparent and

clear in their evidence and use of methods and if they provide attractive visual storytelling (Adams, 2017).

Participants mentioned that there is an increased willingness to pay for investigative journalism and that quality pays off. Additionally, one participant specifically mentioned that the investigative side of a newspaper is what makes the brand. Rodríguez Gómez (2015) found that investigative journalism at a newspaper indeed gives a newspaper prestige.

Another result was the perception that web-based platforms have more engagement with their audience than newspapers and receive more tips for stories than newspapers. It may be that the engagement between platforms and their audiences lead to a better understanding of their audience. According to Schaffer (2013) and Price (2017), both an understanding of audiences and taking action upon that knowledge would be crucial for a web-based investigative journalism platform to survive.

In terms of diversity, a consensus among the participants was that many young female investigative journalists are entering the field and thereby contribute to a more equal gender distribution. Yet, the results also showed that cultural diversity was perceived to be very limited in the workplace. Papaikonomou et al. (2018) conducted a study into inclusive journalism in the Netherlands and found the same results.

The results also showed that newspapers are shifting to online environments where they offer different outputs besides the physical newspaper. Besides that, the results showed that the modus operandi of investigative journalism is stuck to the production process of newspapers, being described as a fixed wavy rhythm. A further result was that young people are very limitedly represented as subscribers to the printed newspapers.

C) Future

While the participants argued that the demand for investigative journalism has increased during the pandemic due to a higher demand for news, Zalan (2020) has actually witnessed an economic decline of journalism industries all over the world due to the pandemic. The results showed that there is a lot of insecurity into the financial situation of investigative journalism in the future. In this respect, Carson (2019) also suggested there can be a ‘profit controversy’ point in which investigative journalism is not only conducted for its societal value but also for the economic incentive.

Participants identified a lack of investigative journalism on the local level and a very small representation of investigative journalism on the regional level and suggested that investments should be more to fill this gap. This is in line with recommendations made by DSP (2018) which advise to invest in local journalism and investigative journalism in a sustainable way so that long-term security of quality journalism can be ensured. Their argumentation is similar to Rodríguez Gómez et al. (2016) in the way that it cannot be expected that people will pay for journalism products. Therefore, the ‘free’ identity of the Internet should remain to allow people access to information that addresses the common good (DSP, 2018). Recently, the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science has released a new plan for investing in local journalism (Ministerie van OCW, 2021).

Considering the trend of decentralization of governance themes to the local level, all participants identified the lack of investigative journalism on the local level as problematic. The means are lacking to ensure the special monitorial role of media on the local level that investigative journalism can provide (Christians et al., 2009; DSP, 2018). It may be that drawing further attention to this issue will lead to more investments in local (investigative) journalism. According to Lindgren et al. (2020) studied the effect of studies of local journalism on policy and found that studying it, finding the discouraging findings and presenting them to policy makers can result in the issues being put higher on the policy agenda.

Limitations

This research contains some limitations. Firstly, there are limitations in the execution of the study. Four interviewees were involved which can be seen as a minimum number. Another limitation is the scope of the research. The scope was broad in relation to all topics addressed, and narrow when seen as a study of one European country.

Conclusion

The research question in this thesis was:

“How do web-based investigative journalism platforms influence the business of investigative journalism in the newspaper industry in the Netherlands?”

The results have not demonstrated a direct influence of web-based platforms on the newspaper industry. Yet, indirect influences of web-based platforms on the newspaper industry were perceived to take place because of collaborations between web-based platforms and newspapers. Rather, it was observed that many contextual conditions and characteristics of

investigative journalism in the digital age arise when studying the relationship between the web-based platforms and newspapers. The hypothesis was that web-based investigative journalism platforms keep the newspaper industry upright due to their innovative, adaptive, and collaborative role and presence in investigative journalism in the Netherlands. Although this thesis demonstrated that web-based investigative journalism platforms are innovative, adaptive and collaborative, so is the newspaper industry too. Therefore, the hypothesis cannot be confirmed. Yet, the need and importance for local and regional journalism may be especially important when global challenges are being tackled on local levels, like is brought forth by the UN SDGs. Therefore, considering Shenton's (2009) 'journalism is democracy', it can be said that this thesis has shown that local democracy therefore also requires local accountability.

Future research

This research was an explorative study to investigative journalism in the Netherlands and the relation between digital platforms and the newspaper industry in the context of the digital age. Further research could focus on the governance of investigative journalism, the economic value of investigative journalism. There are several gaps that follow from the findings of this research. It would also be highly interesting to see how the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted investigative journalism, including a better examination of press freedom, funds, and how subscriptions of digital platforms and newspapers were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. In the context of a changing media arena, deepening and widening the empirical research agenda could contribute to understanding how investigative journalism can be better supported. To do so, more case studies could be done to digital investigative journalism platforms in the Netherlands.

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Appendix

Interview guide

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Onderzoeksproject: Onderzoeksjournalistiek in Nederland

Achtergrondinformatie:

- Mijzelf introduceren (studie, richting, 3^{de} jaar)
- Capstone thesis

Hoofddoel: Het doel van dit interview is een beter begrip krijgen van huidige onderzoeksjournalistiek in Nederland, en de verhouding tussen internetplatformen en de printsector, door de ogen van onderzoeksjournalisten en onderzoekers van (onderzoeks)journalistiek.

Doelen:

- Beter begrijpen hoe onderzoeksjournalistiek functioneert in Nederland vanuit het perspectief van mensen uit het onderzoeksjournalistieke veld van online platformen en kranten.
- Thema's verkennen zoals macht, overheid, democratie, samenwerking, financiering, diversiteit, kansen, bedreigingen, toekomst, decentralisatie, ontwikkeling.

Interview Procedure: Introductie van het onderzoeksproject delen samen met het doel, manier waarop het semigestructureerde interview zal worden uitgevoerd en opgenomen, en delen dat de data zal vertrouwelijk worden behandeld en geanonimiseerd en verwijderd nadat de thesis is gepresenteerd. Ik zou graag het interview willen opnemen. Interview is vertrouwelijk en de data wordt geanonimiseerd. Geeft u consent voor dit interview en de audio-opname ervan? Heeft u nog vragen?

Interviewvragen

Leeftijd:

Relatie tot onderzoeksjournalistiek:

Werkervaring:

Introducerende vragen

Q1: Wat is uw relatie tot onderzoeksjournalistiek in Nederland?

- Wat is uw ervaring met onderzoeksjournalistiek?

Onderzoeksjournalistiek

Q2: Hoe ziet u zelf onderzoeksjournalistiek? Wat is uw benadering van dat woord?

Q3: Hoe vindt u dat democratie en journalistiek zich tot elkaar verhouden in Nederland?

Q4: Onder welke omstandigheden kan onderzoeksjournalistiek de democratie ondersteunen in Nederland?

Q5: Wat zou u nu zien als bedreigingen zien voor onderzoeksjournalistiek?

Q6: Op welke manier biedt de onderzoeksjournalistiek tegenwicht tegen nepnieuws?

Modus operandi

Q7: Hoe verhouden de online en onderzoeksjournalistieke platformen zich tot, nou ja, wat is kunnen noemen traditionele onderzoeksjournalistiek in kranten?

- Denkt u dat er een verschil zit in verbinding met het publiek of de lezer bij online platforms en kranten?

Q8: Kan de krantensector de web-based platforms nog wel bijhouden?

- Of op welke manier moeten we dat zien?
- Welke ontwikkelingen ziet u zelf in de onderzoeksjournalistiek bij de bij de krant?

Q9: Wat zijn bedreigingen voor onderzoeksjournalistiek in de printsector?

Q10: Wat is de invloed van nieuwe digitale platformen op onderzoeksjournalistiek in kranten?

Q11: Wat denkt u zijn manieren waarop de onderzoeksjournalistiek kan functioneren op eigen websites?

- Op welke manier kan de onderzoeksjournalistiek zichzelf in stand houden of innoveren op eigen websites?

Q12: Op welke manier worden samengewerkt tussen platforms en kranten?

- En hoe werkt dit soort samenwerkingsverbanden dan?
- Hoe gaat dat dan praktisch in zijn werk, dus die web-based met traditionele kranten, die samenwerking?
- Denk je ook dat er een verschil is tussen hoe er wordt samengewerkt bij de krant bijvoorbeeld en hoe er wordt samengewerkt bij die echt alleen online platformen?

Q13: Hoe kiezen jullie een onderwerp? Kiezen een onderwerp voor wat geschikt zou zijn voor de mensen die het lezen, de consument dan eigenlijk, of op een andere manier?

- En op welke manier kiest u dan een onderwerp? Of denk ut ook dat u soms eerder een bepaald onderwerp kiest of ja hoe kijkt u daartegenaan?

Q14: Samenwerking tussen journalist en burger. En hoe denkt u dat deze verschilt tussen de web-based onderzoeksjournalistiek en echt de kranten?

Q15: Hoe zit het qua diversiteit en inclusiviteit in de onderzoeksjournalistiek qua onderzoeksjournalisten?

- Denkt u ook dat dat effecten heeft op de onderwerpen die gekozen worden?

Q16: Wat ziet u verder als bedreigingen voor onderzoeksjournalistiek specifiek in de in de print industrie? Dus kranten.

Q17: Zetten jullie ook informatie op andere sociale media of op welke manieren nemen jullie daaraan deel?

Verdienmodellen

Q18: Hoe kijkt u aan tegen de relatie tussen de overheid en (onderzoeks)journalistiek?

- De rol die de overheid heeft in het waarborgen van uh, de persvrijheid bijvoorbeeld? En dat kan, ja, omdat je ook ziet dat er verschillende financiële fondsen zijn?
- Op welke manier zit die spanning daar?
- Wat zijn dan voorbeelden, of aanbevelingen, die u zou doen om de relatie beter te maken, of zodat de journalistiek beter zijn werk kan doen?
- Maar welke rol of welke verantwoordelijkheid voelt u voor de overheid, voor het waarborgen van de veiligheid of hoe gaan ze daarmee om?
- Welke rol de overheid zou moeten spelen in het in het geven van bijvoorbeeld financiële juridische steun? Ja, juridische steun, dus niet per se het financieren van de onderzoeksjournalistiek zelf, maar het financieren van van de juridische kant?
- Wat is dan de verhouding tussen de overheid die fondsen beschikbaar maakt en onderzoeksjournalistiek die daarvan profiteert? Hoe is die relatie is? Nee, ik bedoel er is zo'n gezegde, van wie betaalt, die bepaalt.

Q19: Stel, er komen meer van die platformen, op welke manier zou dat gefinancierd moeten worden, zodat die kritische houding behouden blijft?

Q20: Wat denkt u dat de manieren zijn waarop de financiële kant van onderzoeksjournalistiek zich aan het ontwikkelen is?

- Wat zijn manieren waarop deze verdienmodellen zich ontwikkelen in de onderzoeksjournalistiek?

Q21: Als we het hebben over online, over platforms waar waar bijvoorbeeld een paywall voor zit, over waarbij de leden zelf onderwerp kunnen aan kaarten, hoe beïnvloedt dit aan de democratie of de journalistiek?

Q22: Hoe kijkt u tegenover de nieuwe investering in lokale en regionale onderzoeksjournalistiek?

- Heeft het ook effecten of consequenties voor de onderzoeksjournalistiek?

Sociale media

Q23: Op welke manier denkt u dat onderzoeksjournalistiek kan deelnemen aan dit soort sociale media platformen, echt de grote platformen en bedrijven?

- Op welke manier kan de onderzoeksjournalistiek ook deelnemen aan de globale sociale media platformen?

Q24: Zit er een prijs aan vast aan het aan het bereik dat dat je kan hebben via deze platformen, door de algoritmes en soms heb je ook inhoudelijk censuur? Zit daar een prijs aan vast?

- Zit er dan ook een prijs aan aan het bereik je kan hebben door aan deze platformen deel te nemen? En prijs, ja, ik bedoel symbolische prijs door de algoritmes of ehm, ja, echt de censuur die kan optreden?

Toekomst (afsluitende vragen)

Q25: Welke rol speelt de ontwikkeling van decentralisatie voor onderzoeksjournalistiek? Is daar ook een verschuiving of zijn er ook ontwikkeling voor journalistiek?

- En decentralisatie van dat nou ja, van wat je ziet met met de overheid dat veel thema's steeds lokale en regionaler worden aangepakt. Denk je ook dat dat effect hij heeft, ook op journalistiek, onderzoeksjournalistiek?
- Heeft decentralisatie van heel veel onderwerpen en thema's ook een effect op die lokale, regionale onderzoeksjournalistiek die nu eigenlijk niet heel veel vertegenwoordigd is?
- Dat onderwerpen steeds meer lokaler of regionaler behandeld worden, denkt u dat decentralisatie ook een effect heeft op onderzoeksjournalistiek? Van thema's, dus dat steeds meer thema's lokaal en regionaal behandeld worden in het bestuur?

Q26: Ziet u nog andere mogelijkheden waarop onderzoeksjournalistiek ondersteund kan worden?

Q27: Op welke manier kan onderzoeksjournalistiek de jongere doelgroepen bereiken?

- Leeftijdsgroep 18 tot 30?

Q28: Hoe ziet de toekomst van onderzoeksjournalistiek eruit in Nederland? Of welke verwachtingen heeft u?

Q29: Hoe kan in de toekomst een soort van die veiligheid gewaarborgd dat meer kan worden?

Q30: Wat zou u zien als mogelijkheden voor onderzoeksjournalistiek?

Q31: Hoe ziet uw ideale toekomstbeeld van onderzoeksjournalistiek eruit?

Interview transcripts

Link to anonymized transcripts:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1mD_tejoq5ug6Gav2F8alsU_TFGedDjuZTSNIQfRyzUE/edit?usp=sharing

Thematic analysis

<https://1drv.ms/x/s!AmY8fTfApUuqhl0qkL7Twi1yfWkR?e=88xQcV>