



INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM IN AFRICA: PROPECTS AND CHALLENGES IN A DEMOCRATISING CONTINENT

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Abstract

Global practice of investigative reporting/journalism has grown considerably popular since the fall of communism around 1989. The processes of globalization, international aid, and the efforts of journalism groups are some factors that aid in this spread of the practice across national borders. Because it centres on public accountability and ridding society free from crime and corruption, investigative reporting has been termed

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INTRODUCTION Overview of Investigative Reporting

The contemporary practice of investigative journalism dates back the period when American "muckrakers" like Ida Tarbell and her *History of the Standard Oil Company*, Lincoln Steffens and his *Shame of the Cities*. These journalists and their passion for reporting helped set a standard for tough reporting in the public interest, boldly challenging corrupt politicians, members of organized crime, corporate abuse and consumer fraud (Kaplan, 2007). However, the practice got a heightened morale with the Watergate scandal, during which two *Washington Post*

watchdog journalism, critical to development and democratization processes. Adopting a conceptual approach, this paper looks at some of the challenges the practice and its practitioners are facing in developing and African counties. It found among others repressive regimes, undue legal and ethical restrictions, poor training and inadequate facilities, scarce financial resources, and violence against the journalist. The paper recommends that donors and media development community should focus more on capacity building and provide enabling environment for the field to wax stronger in Africa. It concludes that even in the face of difficulty and sometimes apparent danger, journalists in Africa are eager to join the league of courageous investigators who dare powers that be and challenge the status quo in the public interest.

reporters, Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein researched and published reports of grand shame that led to the resignation of the then US President Richard Nixon. The events that brought down the world's most powerful man turned investigative journalists into heroes and their practice a thing of reckon.

It is no longer debatable that the global practice of investigative reporting/journalism has grown considerably popular since the fall of communism, beginning in 1989. Kaplan (2007) identifies some of the common factors that led to and still leading to this exponential growth to include the processes of globalization, international aid, and the efforts of journalism groups. "The field's emphasis on public accountability and targeting of crime and corruption has attracted millions of dollars in media development funding from international donors, who see it as an important force in promoting rule of law and democratization" (Kaplan, 2007).

Since the notable Watergate (which came to be the journalistic nomenclature for major political scandals across the globe, as in 'Dasukigate' or Thabogate) scandal and latter instances in the US and elsewhere, it becomes clear that the widely acclaimed Fourth Estate rank and the operational Watchdog role of mass media can hardly be attained without some form of investigative reporting. In-depth and investigative journalism that goes beyond reporting

the daily events is an essential element of liberal democracies(Joseph, 2016; Kaplan, 2007; Lublinski, Spurk, Fluery, Labassi, Mbarga, Nicolas, 2015). The media are the links between government the people and should provide platforms and opportunity for citizens to know the state of affairs, comment and participate in the governance of their own country. Media professionals in every society are expected to uphold public trust and be a civic watchdog , investigating and uncovering secrets, hidden issues, political and social scandals and make government accountable to people(Anyadike, 2013). To achieve this, as Itule and Anderson (2007) note, demands investigation and in-depth exploration which requires researching, digging deeply, interviewing and writing pieces that can withstand critical scrutiny by powers that be and the law. With a vibrant investigative journalism, corruption can be fought over, impunity among government officials can be checked, society can stay safe of undue exploitative, despotic and repressive tendencies of the political class and beyond (Anyadike, 2013; McQuail, 2005; Okeke, 2007; Skjerdal, 2012; Onyeka Uwakwe, 2015).

Because of its pivotal position in developing and democratizing societies, journalism organisations and institutions such as the Centre for International Media Assistance (CIMA) have decried inadequate support for investigative reporting in these countries, acknowledging that the lack of or inadequate support in this crucial area of journalism is

“a major gap in international media assistance, marked by funding that is largely uncoordinated and episodic and that makes up but a small fraction of that spent on overall media development. Veteran trainers and organizers broadly agree that sustained programs, support of nonprofit investigative journalism centers, and adherence to high standards can produce impressive results both in fostering public accountability and in building a professional news media” (Sullivan, 2012, p. 6).

Scope of Investigative Reporting/Journalism

Investigative reporting has a tendency to be misconstrued with in-depth reporting. While the two are conceptually related, the former is by far contextually rigorous and painstaking than the latter. An attempt at defining investigative reporting sets it out as just one form of in-depth reporting, but one that employs certain techniques and special set of skills which must be learned and internalized gradually as a journalist grows on the job. Aina

(2004) attempts to differentiate between the two by identifying (citing Randall, 1996) the three major distinguishing features of investigative reporting to include:

- (i) Original research; researches carried by or with the involvement of the reporter, not summary or piecing together of other's findings or data. It may involve extensive interviewing, comparing facts and figures to identify patterns and connections that no one cares to check or deliberately overlooks.
- (ii) The subject involves potential wrongdoing or negligence but there is no available evidence; this requires time and may involve not only the reporter, but research assistants, who may be colleagues closely supervised by the reporter.
- (iii) Somebody is trying to keep the information secret; investigative reporters dig deep to unearth the secrecy behind what government officials or corporate bodies want to hide. It goes beyond their reach and obtains hard facts that cannot be disputed. These hidden records may be financial paper trail, audio-visual recordings, some personal communication – electronic or print, etc.

Whereas in-depth reporting may share some of the features highlighted above, investigative reporting has distinguished itself for “uncompromising resolve to bring out the hidden agenda in human activities.” The goal of investigative reporting is “to explore excesses and bring out the skeletons...” (Aina, 2004).

In the same vein, the International Centre for Journalists (ICFJ) and the Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA) have emphasized the common features of what makes investigative reporting/journalism a special kind of reporting. Their conception of the practice delineate what forms of journalism could be regarded investigative. The features are harmonized here as under:

- a- Digging deeply into an issue or topic;** as the word ‘investigative’ implies, simply relaying a simple ‘bite’ of information – “Former NSA *Dasuki* has been acquitted and released” – cannot count as investigative journalism. You dig deep to unearth the mystery.
- b- The issue or topic has to be of public interest;** means that either a community will be disadvantaged by not knowing this information, or will benefit (either materially or through informed decision-making)

by knowing it. Although, sometimes what benefits one community may displease another. Reporters need a clear sense of what their mission is and whom they serve, and this can involve heated newsroom debates. In essence, one 'public interest' may conflict with another set of 'public interest' within one community. The reporter in such situation will have to rely on his/her personal ethical judgment to decide on whose side to align the story.

- c- It is a process, not an event;** investigative journalism never provides an instant story. It goes through recognised stages of planning and reporting, and has to work to accepted standards of accuracy and evidence. It shows a pattern of systemic problems, not just one isolated incident affecting one individual.
- d- It is original and proactive;** investigative stories have to be based on the work of the journalist and (where resources permit) his or her team. Tips are not simply reported nor do you just print a document you receive secretly; these are often starting point of your investigation. Contain original work, not leaked investigations from law authorities.
- e- It should produce new information or put together previously available information in a new way to reveal its significance;** if the information, or the understanding of its importance, is not new, then there should not be need for investigation. It rights a wrong and explains complex social problems, often leads to revealing corruption, wrongdoing or abuse of power.
- f- It should be multi-sourced;** a single source can provide fascinating revelations and (depending on who the source is) access to insights and information that would otherwise be hidden. But until the story from that source is cross-checked against other sources – experiential, documentary and human – and its meaning is explored, no real investigation has happened.
- g- Because of its in-depth nature, it calls for greater resources, team working and time than a routine news report;** you will see that many of the case studies of investigative reports are the result of team investigations. In a small, local or community publication with small staff and limited time, money or specialised skills, a journalist may

need to seek grants to support an investigation, and learn to tap the skills of others outside the newsroom to help with specialist expertise.

Misrepresentation/ Myths of Investigative Reporting

From the points aforementioned, a good picture of what constitutes investigative reporting has emerged. But, often by identifying what something is not, one gets a better conception of what it is. Under this subheading, some common myths or what could be termed misrepresentations about the practice and status of investigative journalists are highlighted. These myths are outlined in various publications/ manuals developed by Center for International Media Assistance, International Centre for Journalists, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Media Programme. They include the following:

1. *It is glamorous and can be career-defining to the point of celebrity.*

It is common believe among some journalists and others that investigative reporting is glamorous and can raise the rank of the reporter to celebrity. Wake up! Reality shows that investigative journalism is hard, boring and sometimes dangerous work.

2. *Journalists are bigger than the stories they report.*

Investigative journalism is a public service, not an ego trip, and being an investigative journalist gives you no right to flout professional ethical standards.

3. *The investigative journalist is a kind of Lone Ranger.*

From a film-making point of view, it is practical to have one hero because action can revolve around a single individual. In reality however, investigative journalism is not sustainable unless it is a team effort.

4. *Investigative journalism is mainly driven by the private media.*

Partly, this is true. But there are also well-known examples where government-owned media have undertaken ground-breaking investigations against government.

5. *Investigative journalism focuses only on bad news.*

The priority for communities and the media that serve them is to discover and correct wrongs. But investigative journalism

also has a role in uncovering positive news. For example, counteracting unbalanced, negative images of people or communities could form the basis of real and good investigative stories. Besides that, it is this type of investigative journalism – also known as ‘muck-raking’ – that makes the public unhappy. Simple scandal-mongering may have no purpose beyond appealing to people’s nosiness about the private lives of others. To be worth investigating, a scandal must go beyond personal misbehaviour into issues that truly affect the public interest.

6. *Investigative reporting is simply good reporting.*

This definition comes out of the traditional view of journalists as ‘watchdogs’, whose mission is to sniff out wrongs, point fingers at those to blame, and report in a way that brings about change. And that is certainly part of their role. It is important that corrupt individuals are stopped. But if an investigative report does not look beyond the criminals to the faulty system that permits such behaviour, it has simply cleared the ground for a new crop of crooks to do exactly the same thing (and has possibly taught them how to do it better). An investigative story needs to identify underlying problems and alert those who can close exposed loopholes. If those in power fail to do so, a further investigative story is needed to find out why. So, while investigative journalists must draw on all the skills of good reporting – observation, research and the determined pursuit of answers – these criteria alone do not completely define their work, nor make it distinct from other professions (Forbes, 2005; Hunter, 2011; Kaplan, 2007; D. Sullivan, 2013).

Investigative reports: The Africa Experience

Some few notable cases or instances of investigative reporting in Africa will be cited under this subheading to lend credit to the African journalists' contribution to social change and good governance in the democratization processes. Generally speaking, due to myriad of challenges the African journalists face (which shall be detailed later in this paper), investigative reporting has not been as popular and fully harnessed relative to developed democracies (Anyadike, 2013; Forbes, 2005; Hunter, 2011; Joseph, 2016;

Kaplan, 2007; Lublinski et al., 2015; Skjerdal, 2012; Sullivan, 2013; UNESCO, 2013). Notwithstanding, there have been spectacular cases of investigative reports across the continent, shaking institutions and individuals, mostly in the power circle. Only few examples will be mentioned here for reference purposes as the cases are so numerous to be reviewed in this paper whose focus is on challenges of investigative reporting. A reference to the source of the story is provided after each case for readers who may seek details of the story and how it unfolded:

Case 1: Killing Soccer in Africa

Forum for African Investigative Reporters (FAIR), a network of more than 180 journalists, editors, veterans, investigative trainers from around 40 different African countries launches an investigation into what it calls “Stealing Soccer Development Money” project following an assault on their member in Cameroun. The project investigates soccer administrators’ handling of soccer funds (FIFA grants, donations, state direct funding) in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Cameroun, Ivory Coast, Kenya. After more than a year of painstaking investigations, the team found massive corruption scandals involving soccer administrators in these countries, the then CAF President, and surprising cover up by FIFA officials. The team published its reports in a number of media across the continent and it generated public outcry in particularly the countries concerned. Governments in those counties attempt sacking soccer officials indicted in the reports, but each time FIFA steps in to cover up for the corrupt officials (UNESCO, 2013).

Case 2: Bethal, Corrupt Government Policy

The Story of **Bethal**, a March 1952 investigation by Henry Nxumalo of the South African magazine *Drum* (his nickname was ‘Mr Drum’) under apartheid, into the conditions of contract labourers on farms. However, censorship was in force, and the security police kept a close eye on *Drum* journalists. Budgets were limited and access to official records beyond published documents such as laws and statutes was not a right. From street talks that the contract labour system was corrupt; that workers did not have full information and were trapped into contracts on farms where they were starved, abused and ill-treated, Nxumalo disguised himself as a labourer and was recruited for the job. He used a combination of human sources, his own experience and

observations, and paper sources (the relevant laws and contract papers) to build up his story. And he managed to tell a great deal of hard-hitting truth without compromising his sources or throwing wild accusations that could have put the survival of his magazine at risk. He balanced human accounts of individual suffering with broader analysis of how the contract system broke laws and amounted to abuse. Despite the restrictions on what could be written, the story made an impact on popular consciousness that still survives today among old people who read it in their youth (Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2010).

Case 3: Toxic Waste on African Soil

Two reporters working with *Fraternité Matin*, a publication in Cote d'Ivoire chose to go back to a story about toxic waste dumping in Abidjan by the Probo Koala cargo vessel in 2006. They had noticed that people in the waste dump area were apparently living normally, without the expected health problems or abnormal death rates. After digging deep, their investigations led them to discover that international reports had been kept hidden by the government. These reports stated that the waste was not toxic but rather suggested preventive analysis of the water and the soil in the future. The reporters also found corruption, flaws in contracts and financial abuses. Other news media went on to report irregularities in the management of the toxic waste dump. The president later dismissed one of his ministers. Overall, these reports raised public awareness that certain things had gone wrong. However, the government chose not to reopen investigations into the matter (Lublinski et al., 2015).

Case 4: Prisongate South Africa

What came to be known as Prisongate 2006 in South Africa follows investigative stories by reporters Adriaan Basson and Carien du Plessis of *Beeld* and *Die Burger* newspapers found. They launch investigation into how prison contracts were awarded and executed, considered as one of the fertile grounds for cronyism and corruption. Their series of stories was published between 31 March 2006 and 1 December 2006. The Prisongate series was awarded the prestigious Taco Kuiper prize for investigative journalism in 2007. It was described as the stuff of powerful, thorough and ground-breaking reporting. The stories were by a meeting of Parliament's portfolio committee

on correctional services, which questioned the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) about a multi-million rand tender awarded to Bosasa group of companies to install new televisions in all the country's prisons. Bosasa was an unknown player in the security industry and serious questions were asked about the enormous successes of this inexperienced company. Some of the most important impacts of the stories include Linda Mtši's (National Commissioner for Correctional Services) resignation months before his contract with the DCS ended; an investigation by the Public Service Commission (PSC) into Mtši's private business interests; investigations by the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) and the Auditor General (AG) into the tenders awarded by the DCS to Bosasa; the appointment of a new, highly qualified chief financial officer at the DCS (Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2010).

Case 5: Shameful Certificate Forgeries

In Nigeria, the practice of investigative reporting has been gaining momentum since the days of the *Dele Giwas* to the present. In the recent past, one could recall the efforts of the *News* and *Tell* magazines. Aina (2004) acknowledges some of what could be regarded as investigative reporting instances in Nigeria. In the fourth republic in 1999, the *News* and *Tell* magazines exposed the massive case of certificate forgery which brought down the then Speaker of the House of Representatives, Salisu Buhari. Weeks later, the *Tell* magazine follows up on the Senate President, Evans Enwerem, with another accusation of certificate falsification. This, along with other political events, lead to him losing his seat at the upper chamber of parliament. Prior to that there was the case of his predecessor, Dr Chuba Okadigbo who also had to be removed from his seat as senate president for allegation scandalous activities and irregularities by the same *Tell* magazine in May, 2000 (Uwakwe, 2015).

These examples notwithstanding, the efforts of online media – *Premium Times* and *Sahara Reporters* in the area of investigative reporting in Nigeria are notable in nation building and process of democratization. Investigative reporting has been widely believed to be major catalyst to growth and development of democratic societies as nations move away from closed system mode of operations to a more open and transparent one which can be assessed even from outside its shores (Lublinski et al., 2015; Sullivan, 2012).

Challenges/Barriers of Investigative Reporting

Unlike the case with some other journalism reportorial fields, investigative reporting is faced with myriad of challenges the world over – from developed to developing societies (Coronel, 2009; Martin & Justin, 2010). This is largely

due to its potentialities in checking political and corporate excesses and impacting on an overall process of social change in society (Forbes, 2005). The challenges and barriers to investigative reporting are relative to regional contexts. While there may be a few barriers that may infringe on practitioners and the practice globally the same way, a host of other challenges affect the practice of investigative reporting in some countries or regions in more peculiar ways relative to others (Coronel, 2009; Martin & Justin, 2010). Thus, challenges and barriers to investigative reporting are discussed in this paper with particular reference to developing countries, making a case for Africa and Nigeria where necessary.

Diverse literature (Aina, 2004; Forbes, 2005; Lublinski et al., 2015; Sullivan, 2013; Sullivan, 2012; Uwakwe, 2015; Yushau, 2009; Martin & Justin, 2010; Dunu & Ugbo, 2014) have identified a number of ways, factors and situations that hamper the practice of investigative reporting in developing countries especially. They include among others legal restrictions, authoritarian governments, financial problems and corruption, dearth of proper journalism training, violence against journalists, government and private sector secrecy, lack of access to information, bureaucracy and logistical problems, lack of editorial support, poor staffing in media organisations, timidity and fear of reprisals, poor data storage and record keeping, ethical and professional limitations, reluctant sources, poor working conditions, funding problems.

The factors and barriers to investigative reporting aforementioned could be grouped under three broad categories: challenges related to skills and training the investigative reporter; barriers relating to freedom of information law and unclear legal/ethical framework; challenges related to funding and editorial support. Each of these three broad classes of challenges to investigative reporting will be discussed as separate subheading under which bullet points related to each are highlighted.

Challenges of Training and Skills of the Investigative Reporters

The first pillar of building an investigative reporter is to offer the basic and specialized training in journalism which prepares the individual reporter to acquire requisite skills in investigative reporting. Because of its dangerous nature, investigative reporting is often born out of passion of the reporter. Although passion is intrinsic, adequate and quality training could build strong

self-efficacy in the reporter. Common areas of concern in training the investigative reporter include the following:

- ***Inadequate and Unequipped journalism training institutes;*** journalism training institute in most African countries and Nigeria are, besides being inadequate, ill-equipped with modern training facilities. Modern investigative reporting is largely data driven and uses a lot of computer-assisted reporting (Joseph, 2016; Kaplan, 2007; Lublinski et al., 2015). In Nigeria for instance, a substantial number of practicing journalists and a pool of graduates from training institutes lack advanced computer skills and knowledge of digital technologies required of a typical investigative reporter. Most times journalists interested in this area of reporting have to depend on training offered by international donor organizations and foreign nations which is often rare to come by.
- ***Lack of on-the-job training opportunities;*** until recently, there has been dearth of experienced investigative reporters, editors from whom novice journalists could receive inspiration and learn the job. Most local media outfits are uninterested in pursuing difficult, time consuming and capital intensive investigative projects, due to poor revenue bases and overdependence on government subventions and corporate advertisements. Editorial management in these media organisations would naturally be reluctant to finance investigative reports that have the potential of exposing shady deals of benefactors. The implication is that investigative reporting becomes unpopular and new generation of journalists only read about it in the books.
- ***Poor staffing in media organisations;*** due to financial constraints and sometimes exploitative tendencies, media organizations, both government-owned and private, hire limited number of staff reporters, editors and other news crew. As a result, aspiring investigative reporters are assigned duties which limit the time and opportunity needed for them to follow investigative leads for months, sometime years. This hamper the development of skills and expertise in the area; so in most media outfits, one hardly finds an investigative reporting specialist. There are instances of some private media organizations in Nigeria for example, who do not pay

their staff reporters, indirectly encouraging them to accept bribes and other forms of gratifications (Yushau, 2009). This practice compromises integrity and credibility of the reporter and of their employers to venture into investigative reporting.

Challenges of Freedom of Information and Legal Restrictions

Investigative reporting is data-dependent, information consumptive and facts reliant. Unfretted access to information is thus desirous of any investigative reporter. This informs partly the global struggle for the adoption of Freedom of Information Act or Law (FOIA). Besides the FOI which provides legal backing for access to information held in government, there are other forms of mischievous legal restrictions that impede the activities of investigative reporters, particularly in developing and African countries which are yet to be totally free of authoritarian governments. Some of the common barriers to investigative reporting under this subheading will include:

- ***FOI law;*** started in Sweden in 1766, the US in 1866 and much later in 2000 African countries began to adopt the FOI. Nigeria had the longest campaign for FOI law to become an act (1997-2011). However, as is the case with laws in Africa, it is one thing to have them passed and it is another to have them fully implemented. Even with FOIA in place in Nigeria, journalists still find it difficult to access information critical to their investigations as some of the bureaucratic processes involved are sometimes stringent. There is also the problem lack of clear judicial precedence of where the law applies; does it apply to the federal government alone or including the states. There seem to be sheer lack of knowledge of the law among journalists and the citizens in most African countries (Dunu & Ugbo, 2014).
- ***Legal restrictions;*** investigative reporting is greatly hampered by laws that tend to limit freedom of the press. Laws such as Official Secret Act, sections on exemptions in the FOI (information regarding diplomacy, national security, personal lives of public officials, privileged people, etc) hinder investigative journalists from accessing certain information of need in an ongoing investigation, or prevent witnesses and government officials from offering useful tips.
- ***Weak judicial system and journalism associations;*** in the event of abuse of power or violence against journalists, a strong judiciary and

vibrant journalism associations provides safe haven for the journalist. In most developing countries of Africa and Nigeria in particular, the journalist can be guaranteed of safety. Investigative reporters in these parts of the world operate in constant fear of reprisals, timid and afraid of investigating certain powerful people, corporations and issues.

- ***Ethical and professional limitation;*** base on the individual journalist's knowledge of press laws and social responsibility, ethical decisions are made. Because of the nature of their job, investigative journalists must learn to take, well-informed and courageous decisions in the field. They must be able to independently determine what is of public interest, set priorities straight be ready to face tacit opposition to their disposition often from among their colleagues and seniors. Investigative journalists in this part of the globe would naturally be lacking in this aspect due to all the factors highlighted above.

Challenges of Financial Resources

Financial resources are crucial to establishing and sustaining activities of media organisations. The media industry is generally capital intensive. Even though relatively cheaper media technologies are becoming widespread, cost of producing media products are increasingly skyrocketing. Investigative reporting is about the costly form of journalism. This is particularly true of investigations that can stretch across national boundaries, take long times, months or years to complete. The demand for huge funding under such conditions cannot be overemphasized. The specifics of how this affects investigative reporting are discussed below:

- ***Lack of or inadequate investigative tools, logistics;*** even if trained and skilful in the act of investigation, reporters need certain basic tools of the trade to work with; they need logistical provisions in the field and back at the station. These should only be provided by their stations and employers. Where investigative journalists cannot get the requisites tools, there can never be investigative reports. Most media proprietors and managers in most parts of the developing world are subscribing to the profit-making media models, thus making it financially irrational for them to support investigative reporting which has little or no physical return-on-investment value.

- ***The effect of commercialization in media production;*** the trend towards profit-making means media outfits are out to attract high revenues in advertising profits. It is only logical to think that no media manager would sponsor or support a form of journalism that brings it into collision course with corrupt politicians and corporate bodies who most often are the sources of advertisement revenues that accrue to media organisations. Thus journalist who may be interested in this area of reporting would soon realize that it is against the house policy of their employer to even criticize certain interests because of their business link with the organization or to some powerful members of the management.
- ***Poor working conditions of the journalist;*** journalists who lack basic means of sustenance cannot be investigative reporters. Poor financial condition of the reporter makes him/her susceptible to accepting offers by corrupt people to drop investigative projects. Journalists in Africa and Nigeria is underpaid, poorly paid and in some instances totally not paid. This could partly explain why most practicing journalists will be looking for more lucrative and better paid jobs in public relations, financial and corporate organisations. Investigative reporting thrives only under conditions where the journalist passionately considers the practice as a lifetime career and is reasonably satisfied with his/her working conditions as in case of journalists in the US, UK and some other parts of the developed world.
- ***Ownership structure of media organizations;*** in most societies the elite class own and to a large extent control the media industry. These same elites form the political ruling class, the business economic class whose illegal activities and interests are usually the target of investigative reporters. Consequently, some hidden, uncodified organizational objectives are subtly enshrined among workers who gradually internalize them and they form a kind of organizational culture which approves indirectly of all the atrocities of the ruling elites. So, a new reporter with full vigour to pursue a career in investigative reporting is socialized within the subsisting culture and soon he/she simply 'join them where you cannot beat them.' And if a journalist works hard through the ranks and eventually made it to

positions of authority, they are integrated into the elite class. It dawns on them only to reinforce the status quo.

Besides what has been discussed in the previous paragraphs, investigative journalists operating in different parts of the world and in Africa may be facing some peculiar form of challenges and hindrances in their way to discharging their duties as professionals. The aforementioned however has encapsulated much of what is obtainable in literature sources on the subject. Most of what is discussed here were practical experiences of practicing investigative reporters in different parts of the world, but predominantly experiences of African journalists.

Recommendations

In light of the challenges and barriers to investigative reporting in Africa, UNESCO, international journalism associations, investigative journalism institutes and forums have offered a number of suggestions as to how investigative reporting and reporters can overcome some of these challenges. However as Sullivan (2013) notes,

"more than any area of journalism, investigative reporting relies on passion. Journalists cannot spend six months of their lives risking danger and lawsuits while laboriously digging through tens of thousands of documents unless they have a true desire to instigate change, correct injustices, or tell the hard truth" (p. 33).

The greatest source of motivation for the investigative journalists is their passion. Investigative reporters therefore, haven overcome some of the challenges they grapple with in their line of work, they still need positive passion to sustain them to the end of every investigative project, and to the end of their career. To better the practice in Africa and other developing countries, this paper adopts the recommendations (paraphrased and verbatim) offered by various literature sources (Anyadike, 2013; Coronel, 2009; Forbes, 2005; Freire, 2010; Itule & Anderson, 2007; Joseph, 2016; Lublinski et al., 2015; Martin & Justin, 2010; Mustapha-koiki & Ayedun-aluma, 2013; Nwabueze, 2005; Skjerdal, 2012; Stiftung, 2010; Sullivan, 2013; Sullivan, 2012; UNESCO, 2013). Most of these are recommendations and suggestions reached at major international gatherings on investigative reporting and incorporated into training manuals. They include that:

- The tools for professional development are plentiful: long-term training in which veteran journalists teach at universities, are embedded in newsrooms, or act as regular mentors and advisers; short-term intensive workshops; fellowships and exchanges between African journalists and their counterparts in other parts of the world; funding media centers and professional associations; commissioning guidebooks and other training materials; and distance learning, through online courses. Veteran trainers say the lessons are clear from 20 years of work in the field.
- Invest in long-term professional development. Lasting change in newsroom culture will not happen in a few months, it comes gradual.
- Keep training as practical and as hands-on as possible. Bringing the newsroom into the classroom and working one-on-one with reporters can yield impressive results.
- Ensure that news managers and owners are supportive. It does little good to train reporters who return to their newsroom only to find zero interest by their bosses in doing watchdog journalism. A concerted effort of journalism training bodies must involve media owners and managers.
- Routinely incorporate an ethics component into training, with an emphasis on issues of corruption and conflicts of interest within the profession.
- Tailor the training to the country and culture. Workshops on covering corruption and human rights will have trouble being effective in oppressive countries, but basic reporting seminars on business, health, and women's issues can lay important groundwork. Take the cultural background into consideration when conceiving training ideas.
- Train the trainers. Create a cadre of mentors who can teach their colleagues and establish a tradition of professional reporting.
- Insist on international standards, including multiple sourcing, accurate reporting, getting both sides to an issue, and correcting errors. Some long-time trainers would also welcome a discussion on the characteristics of good journalism.
- Instead of short-term, generalized reporting skills workshops, put advanced reporters into intensive classes on finding, tracking, and documenting organized crime and corruption.

- Fund independent centers where reporters can work for extended periods under experienced editors with high professional standards.
- Follow established safety protocols when dealing with dangerous figures.
- Make use of technology to help expose corruption, and network with colleagues regionally and globally for support, sources, and strategies. Ultimately, it will be smart, courageous journalists, working with honest cops, prosecutors, political reformers, and others, who will pull back the blanket of corruption on so many societies.
- Nonprofit investigative reporting centers have proved to be viable organizations that can provide unique training and reporting, while serving as models of excellence that help to professionalize the local journalism community. (xiii) The centers are part of an expanding global network of training institutes, reporting organizations, journalism associations, grant-making groups, and online networks that have great potential to effect change. Different programs will be appropriate for different regions and markets.

Conclusion

The forgoing has shown that investigative reporting can be demanding, risky, expensive, and controversial even in the most democratically free societies. Promoting its practice in developing and democratizing nations of Africa opens it to more difficult challenges which include repressive regimes, undue legal restrictions, and corrupt media proprietors, lack of professional standards, financial resources and access to information. Critical areas of intervention expected of media developers are in the aspects of funding and training in investigative reporting. Innovative and extended sources of funding needed to be found; new models to sustain the expansion of investigative reporting by nonprofits and NGOs needed to be explored. More practical, story-based training should be developed base on a country's needs and capacity while mentoring local investigative editors should be made a priority. Ways should be found to connect the expertise of the small number of proven investigative editors in the Western media, who are generally wary of development NGOs and governmental donors with the crop of new and emerging investigative enthusiasts in Africa..

In spite of all these challenges, a pool of courageous journalists, eager to learn new skills and pursue months/years-long investigations, and challenge powerful forces continues to grow. Indeed, the global spread of investigative journalism is a success story that the media development community should be proud of. Network of Investigative journalists (like FAIR) engaged in enterprise journalism now exist in countries and societies which hitherto had no trace of such a decade ago. They consequently they are impacting on issues of fight against corruption, accountability, and democratization. Global networks of practicing investigative reporters are sharing tips and techniques in more interesting ways. With little increase investments in some of key areas, donors in media development projects will be sure of better results in the depth and width of investigative and watchdog journalism over the next few decades.

The interest to take up and the passion to sustain a career in investigative reporting is fully ripe in Africa, what is lacking is just the proper mentoring and right inspiration.

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