DOSSIER

ETHICAL RISKS, INFORMERS, WHISTLEBLOWERS, LEAKS AND CLAMOR FOR TRANSPARENCY

ROGÉRIO CHRISTOFOLETTI
Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Brazil

ABSTRACT - Leaks and whistleblowers have been increasingly used for the production of large media coverage. Characters like Edward Snowden, Chelsea Manning, Julian Assange and informers of "Operation Car Wash" in Brazil have become not only useful for the process of transparency and accountability, but also signal traps to reporters and newsrooms. In this article, I present the concept of Ethical Risk and I list a number of its forms in contemporary journalistic production, driven by WikiLeaks, Panama Papers and transformations of democratic societies.
Keywords: Sources. Leakers. Accountability. Transformations in Journalism. Ethics.

RISCOS ÉTICOS EM TEMPOS DE DELAÇÕES, VAZAMENTOS E CLAMOR PELA TRANSPARÊNCIA

RESUMO - Fugas de informação e denúncias de delatores são cada vez mais utilizados por jornalistas para a produção de grandes coberturas. Personagens como Edward Snowden, Chelsea Manning, Julian Assange e os delatores da "Operação Lava-Jato" no Brasil tornaram-se não apenas úteis para o processo de transparência e accountability, mas também sinal-izam armadilhas para repórteres e redações. Neste artigo, apresento o conceito de Risco Ético e listo um conjunto de suas modalidades na produção jornalística contemporânea, im-pulsionada por WikiLeaks, "Panama Papers" e transformações das sociedades democráticas.
Palavras-chave: Fontes de informação. Vazadores. Accountability. Transformações no Jornalismo. Deontologia.

LOS RIESGOS ÉTICOS EN TIEMPOS DE INFORMANTES, FUGAS Y DEMANDA POR LA TRANSPARENCIA

RESUMEN - Fugas y testimonios de denunciantes se utilizan cada vez más en la cobertura de noticias. Los personajes como Edward Snowden, Chelsea Manning, Julian Assange y los informadores de "Operação Lava-Jato" en Brasil se han convertido en útiles para el proceso de transparencia y rendición de cuentas, pero también pueden producir trampas a los periodistas y medios de comunicación. En este artículo, presento el concepto de Riesgo Ético y listo una serie de sus formas en la producción periodística contemporánea, impulsados por WikiLeaks, "Papeles de Panamá" y las transformaciones de las sociedades democráticas.
Palabras clave: Fuentes de información. Filtraciones. Responsabilidad. Transformaciones en Periodismo. Ética.

Journalism doesn't work without sources.

Seemingly trivial, the statement reveals a seminal feature of the nature of this practice while it also magnifies a great weakness. It is part of the routine of journalists resort to subjects, organizations and institutions not only to collect data, but also testimonies, confirmations and negatives. It is, then, from the credibility of these sources that means of communication build the basis for a contract of trust with their audiences. As these media offer reports considered credible - and this effort is perennial and rigorous - they reinforce the conditions to also be understood as reliable, which makes people establish with them a relationship guided by expectations and allegiances, for example.

Beyond this almost osmotic process of credibility transfer, media and their professionals rely on third parties to perform their tasks. Strictly speaking, this dependence weakens an activity that is intended to be autonomous. It is worth remembering that editorial independence is a value often invoked by reporters, writers and editors.

Journalism is not essentially a creative activity, where worlds and scenes are invented and creative imagination is the engine for the formulation of narratives. In fiction and in other artistic fields, it is up to the individual to make use of ingenuity and imagination to carve his work. In journalism, according to its canons, the process of writing stories suffers more ties: it should not rely on the fantasy of the narrators and needs to rely on recognized and acceptable references. In literature, fiction reveals worlds and narrative possibilities that can be absolutely (in) credible, but also totally acceptable or even expected. Readers and authors sign a symbolic agreement that places the credibility of the account on another level, in addition to its truthfulness, although likelihood is a powerful ingredient.

In journalism, fiction is not admitted. It dangerously approaches lying, the opposite of what is expected in those reports. It is expected that journalists moderate facts with wealth and precision of details that allow to the publics an experience of proximity of those episodes. It is a speech effect that helps to fill out human expectation for small daily truths, a task historically taken by journalism.

Although it can cover small innovations and comes to dare in styles or languages, journalism is not an individual creative exercise, fruit of idiosyncrasies, thoughts, feelings and actions of a subject or other. Journalism is an exercise predominantly advisory, dependent on others, as noted with easiness in their main goods: news, report

and interview. This dependence of journalism to the sources does not demean the status of their products, which are intellectual productions, results of rigorous work of research, verification, confirmation, consultation and comparison of versions. In this sense, journalism is like science and history, subjects anchored in rigid regimes of truth.

Great leaks and date leakage

The last decades have shown profound changes in human communicability and sociability. These changes are not only technological but, above all, cultural. Education and journalism are among the most impacted areas because basic concepts such as "knowledge" and "information" are also undergoing significant changes.

In journalism, exchanges go from productive routines to financial sustentation forms, from the emergency of new professional functions to the integration of amateurs in the productive process, going by debates in the extent of deontology, that also include discussions on the role of journalists, sources and publics (CARLSON & LEWIS, 2015; ZION & CRAIG, 2015; WARD, 2015; WAISBORD, 2013, MCBRIDE & ROSENSTIEL, 2014; CHRISTOFOLETTI, 2014). The multiplication of channels of information, technical facilitation, incentives for audience participation in the informative polyphony and the supply of alternative narratives - individually or collectively - have modified the status of sources in journalism (FRANKLIN & CARLSON, 2011; FOWLER- WATT & ALLAN, 2013).

If before it was common for newsrooms to have an instrumental view of sources (to rely on them when necessary, and ignore them at other times), lately, these sources not only have increased their sphere of influence but also, in some moments, taken on a role that dims journalists and their communication means, and that casts shadows over the actual content of the information disseminated. It was like this in July 2010, when WikiLeaks brought out 92,000 US government secret documents about the Afghan war (Domscheit-Berg, 2011); when in October of that year, the same site published another 391,000 files on Iraq War[1]; and the following month when 251,000 orders of US diplomacy were leaked, revealing important chapters of recent geopolitics[2] (LEIGH & HARDING, 2011; El País, 2011; BECERRA & LACUNZA, 2012).

The protagonism of the source also happened in 2013, with reports of Edward Snowden on the actions of the National Security Agency (NSA), which consisted of monitoring US citizens and out of the limits of action of the agency, industrial espionage and even indirect tapping of cellular telephones of heads of State, like Dilma Rousseff, Angela Merkel and Enrique Peña Nieto (GREENWALD, 2014; HARDING 2014).

But the practice of denouncing as leakage or snitching is not a new practice, as we remember Greenberg (2012), returning to the case of Daniel Ellsberg to make an evaluation of these contemporary characters, ranging from Julian Assange and Chelsea Manning to Adrian Lamo. Ellsberg was an information analyst of US government in the 1960s and 1970s when he leaked to The New York Times and other newspapers 17 documents that became part of history as the "Pentagon Papers". The scandal caused by revelations helped precipitate the end of the Vietnam War.

Flynn (2011) discusses the policy and practice of current leaks. Based on Tiffen (1989), she recalls that the leak definition is vague and could mean sources unauthorized transferring information to authorized journalists or sources (with power and influence) using the media to support their claims that, in common conditions, could be archived or ignored. For Flynn (2011), the leakers come into play, motivated to change the landscape that surrounds them with good or bad intentions. They can be effective in correcting injustices and misdeeds, but need to be aware of the risks that this practice currently entails. The arrest of Chelsea Manning - accused of leaking information to WikiLeaks on the episode of diplomacy cables - and requests for Julian Assange asylum (in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London) and Edward Snowden (Russia) signal part of the dangers leakers are subject to[3].

Starting from 2008, leaks have been more frequent and in a particular mode: sources look for in the conventional media an environment of legitimation of their gestures. The partnership between WikiLeaks and the most influential printed media in the world[4] to reveal the cables of US diplomacy was one of the most labor-intensive enterprises regarding the processing of a huge volume of information, its decoding and synchronization for the dissemination on a global scale, according to Harding (2014), from the experience led in the British The Guardian. The impact of WikiLeaks prompted the emergence of similar initiatives, hoping to convince complainants of political media and business to submit complaints that should be

made public. Some did not last long, as is the case of OpenLeaks - an offshoot of WikiLeaks - and Safe House, from Wall Street Journal. Others remain, as are the cases of MafiaLeaks[5], Corporate Leaks[6], FrenchLeaks[7] and ScienceLeaks[8].

Journalistic efforts also try to attract restricted circulation materials and that can motivate investigations and reports, like 100Reporters[9] and FolhaLeaks[10]. The latter was analyzed by Flor (2014) as the "first response of Brazilian media to the new scenario of digital information leaks" On the balance of the first two years (2011-2013), the author points that the project resulted in few concluded reports, although it has received thousands of complaints. This is due primarily to two factors: a) reporters from Folha de S. Paulo leverage the data sent to FolhaLeaks but do not want to share the credit with the project and lose the "paternity" of scoops; b) the newspaper does not value the initiative up to the point of creating an internal environment of convergence of information, which results in little use.

But leakers do not necessarily need a "place" to post their denunciations. In general, they seek a channel to spread secrets to be revealed, and that condition can be shown in a more ramified and diffuse way, as it is the case of the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ[11]). It is a network of 190 journalists from 65 countries, established in 1997, to work collaboratively in in-depth investigative reporting. In February 2015, ICIJ published the results of a thorough investigation, which involved 130 journalists from 45 countries, denouncing a great tax evasion scheme operated by the Swiss branch of HSBC Bank. Known as "SwissLeaks"[12], the report showed suspicious account transactions protected by bank secrecy of more than 180 billion euros by 100,000 customers and 20,000 offshore companies. A former bank employee stole documents proving fraud and passed them on to the ICIJ.

In April 2016, a new journalistic effort began to reveal another global scandal: "Panama Papers"[13], a set of 11.5 million documents from the Mossak Fonseca's lawyers Office on financial transactions of 214,000 offshore companies. In addition to that data, there is the identification of names of celebrities, businessmen and even heads of state. The information covers four decades of operation of Mossak Fonseca, totaling 2.6 terabytes of data, analyzed by more than 400 journalists in 107 vehicles from 80 countries. An anonymous source leaked the material initially to the German newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung and then to the ICIJ.

The episodes mentioned here point to an extremely complex reality for journalists regarding the treatment, interpretation and contextualization of huge volumes of data. If it was possible before for a lone reporter to deal with certain revelations, nowadays it is increasingly necessary to automate tasks - using focused programming, intelligent systems and large databases - and join forces with other professionals - working in transdisciplinary networks in consortiums. There are not just technical and operational challenges. Ethical subjects are also introduced to journalists, as we will further on see.

Long tongue and deep throat

The media does not rely only on super leaks. In Brazil, from a close contest in presidential elections in 2014, the news has developed from superlatives to frame a serious national crisis, with political, financial and moral ramifications. Dilma Rousseff was re-elected with a narrow margin of votes (3,28%[14]) and political polarization intensified in the two years after her election victory, dividing the country. Inflation increased alarmingly and nurtured an economic recession. The outbreak of "Operation Car Wash" by the Federal Police and other allegations of corruption in political and business circles have helped create an atmosphere of intolerance in society regarding political mismanagement, diversion of public resources and the historical practices of patronage in political parties and Brazilian political structure.

Information leaks are common elements in the political coverage in Brazil since the early 1990s, during the investigations that led to the ouster of President Fernando Collor de Melo in 1992. If at that time journalists took the leading role in determining stories, with the "Operation Car Wash" the Judiciary sources assumed that role, leaving newsrooms eager for information leakage.

The "Operation Car Wash" was established in March 2014 to investigate a money laundering scheme that could have handled more than R$ 10 billion. The operation brought together elements of the conspiracy to misappropriation of resources in Petrobras, bribe payments by building contractors, involvement of politicians, oil company employees and businessmen, overpriced contracts, among other crimes. By June 2016, more than 600 search warrants were

issued, temporary and preventive arrests were enacted, forceful orders have been entered, resulting in the arrests of powerful businessmen and politicians, an unusual event in the Brazilian courts.

To the Federal Police, "Operation Car Wash" is the greatest investigation of corruption in the history of the country, and can be compared to "Operation Clean Hands", which investigated politicians, businessmen and mobsters in the 1990s in Italy. The actions of the police - widely documented by the PF and the media - have gained spectacular tones with noisy prisons and frequent official calls to press conferences. Under the imperative of fighting corruption, delegates presented the results of phases as if they reported results to society; young promoters gathered evidence to provide reports with a clear purpose of "settling out the country"; and not even sectors of the Judiciary escaped from popular clamor, infected by the climate of civil demand and public morality. In the center of the media attention, members of the Federal Public Ministry and the 13th Criminal Court of the Federal Court of Curitiba - the body responsible for the process of "Operation Car Wash" - were raised to the status of instant national heroes[15].

The duration of the investigation, its scope and the depth of the political damage also gave rise to much criticism of "Operation Car Wash": exaggerated autonomy of the Federal Police (which could reveal the lack of control over a body subordinate to the Ministry of the Justice), politicization of police actions, selective leaks of information, persecution, excesses and judicial abuses.

In the media, the national political chronicle became increasingly police news, creating conditions that nurtured major popular expressions, requests of impeachment of Dilma Rousseff and Vice President Michel Temer[16], criticism against the presidents of the Chamber of Deputies (Eduardo Cunha) and Federal Senate (Renan Calheiros), court battles, widespread disbelief in politics and media dispute over the direction and meanings of the Republic.

This convulsive scenario put informers and selective leaks as important Brazilian news engines. This was due mainly to the fact that the "Operation Car Wash" was driven by the intensive use of plea bargain, benefit to the defendant that accepts to collaborate in investigations by turning accomplices and crimes in to the police. When signed, plea bargains can reduce the sentence of the defendant, allowing him or her to fulfill a sentence in semi-open regime, and in extreme cases even leads to the extinction of a sentence and judicial

forgiveness. Although the instrument has already been existing in the Brazilian legislation since the 1940 Penal Code, plea bargains were extended and updated to be applied in investigations of organized crime groups in 2013, with the enactment of Law 12.850/13 by Dilma Rousseff.

In this way, since 2014, the "Operation Car Wash" has been backing part of its movements with testimonies of indicted individuals who admit their crimes and identify elements that may characterize crimes of others involved. The first whistleblower was Petrobras' former director, Paulo Roberto Costa, whose agreement was approved by the Supreme Court in September 2014. By June 2016, according to the Public Prosecutor's Office[17], 52 whistleblower documents had been signed with justice, plus five other leniency agreements - which allow the collaboration of companies. The informers are executives of construction companies, currency traders, lobbyists, consultants, financiers, directors of Petrobras and its subsidiaries, as Transpetro (Sérgio Machado), a former federal deputy (Pedro Corrêa) and a senator (Delcídio do Amaral).

In statements to the police or media spaces, the higher the position held, the exerted power and influence of the accuser, the most devastating is the damage caused to the ones cited. Lawyers, journalists and commentators on social media came to boast that certain revelations could "overturn the Republic", an expression in a menacing tone that signaled the extension of the political damage of plea bargains and the repercussions these could cause for the national social life.

These characters who make public the information that was previously secret are classified generally as sources, and appear in newspaper reports in categories that contribute (or not) to accredit their revealing speeches. They can be informants or witnesses; or leakers or whistleblowers, so to say when they are not actually informers... A new taxonomy of these sources may be still premature, but what interests us in this article is to reflect upon the relationship between journalists and those sources, and question what professional responsibilities derive from these trust agreements. After all, what ethical problems arise from this to journalists in these relationships? How to deal with them in a context of huge supply of data and intense need of filtering information? How to perform balanced journalistic coverage in complex cases, in full progress, and still meet the social demand for information of public interest?

Whistleblowers are not rare characters in journalism. The most remembered example of investigative journalism in the West was motivated by a number of confidences passed on by an influential informer to a Washington Post reporter in the early 1970. The coverage eventually led to the resignation of US President Richard Nixon, resulted in a book (BERNSTEIN & WOODWARD, 1974) and a film version of "All the President's Men", two years later with Alan Pakula. It is important to note that the greatest leaker was also the most unknown one for 33 years. His identity and motives were revealed in an interview with Vanity Fair magazine and as a book (WOODWARD, 2005).

Investigative journalism pursues these characters, but the opposite also occurs when the source - driven by personal interests - seeks editorial staff. In the case of the Brazilian media, the impact of the statements of informers adds to the treatment of selective leaks of testimony excerpts, telephone intercepts and other details of the process, perpetrated by agents of the Federal Police and the judiciary sectors. The wealth of information - often conflicting - landing on the desks of reporters further complicates the situation, blurring ethical limits to be imposed in dealing with such sources.

In most cases, expertise, legitimacy, representativeness and authority are credentials for a person or organization to be considered a journalistic source. They may work alone or associated, but editorial staff relies on these factors to "choose" who should talk about something. Thus, the epidemiologist is sought by reporters because he can explain the occurrence of Ebola or dengue outbreaks; the survivor is heard because witnessed the tragedy, was there in the middle of the event; the party leader in the Federal Senate is interviewed because his or her speech represents a group; the police chief speaks in a press conference because he leads the inquiry. However, there are more factors beyond these four, such as media reach and its ability to attract new whistleblowers.

Julian Assange, the best known face of WikiLeaks, has shown over the past few years that he is not only an expert in encryption, but also a very journalistically articulated person, skilled in making alliances with big outlets of legacy media and able to inspire the emergence of similar efforts of secret data gathering for subsequent massive disclosure. The same happened to Edward Snowden and senator Delcídio do Amaral, for example, government leader of Dilma Rousseff in the upper house of parliament and therefore authoritative voice in national politics.

Relations between journalists and sources have been the subject of studies from several authors, in an attempt to set the boundaries from one side to the other, and with the purpose of providing grants to assist in professional conduct and compliance with the ethical values of journalists (SANTOS, 1997; MANNING, 2001; SCHMITZ, 2001 SANT'ANNA, 2009).

However, not only the technological conditions that reinforce frequent data floods and accusations prompt a reflection on ethical standards of journalists. Technological changes carry alongside cultural exchanges, and these changes affect not only professionals of information. Sifry (2011) takes as a starting point the existence of WikiLeaks to address what he calls the "era of transparency", an increasingly insistent clamor of today's complex societies. For the author, actions such as the leak site strengthen the movement for transparency of acts of governments and corporations, placing an important concept on society's vocabulary, so fundamental to democracy: accountability[18].

According to Brevini, Hintz & McCurdy (2013), accountability, a public display of zeal and respect for the common good, is a highly valued element in journalism, and strengthened by increasing initiatives of public transparency. The consortium ventures between IT reporters and collectives, that result in major leakages, are very relevant. In 2011, we already pointed out WikiLeaks as "the most potentially transformative element of journalism since Twitter", "beginning a growing and irreversible trend of partnerships (...) that can assist in the process of uncovering information of public interest", finally, "an exuberant example of how hacker ethics and journalistic deontology converge" (CHRISTOFOLETTI; OLIVEIRA, 2011, p. 95.). The multiplication of leakage sites, the consolidation of journalistic research networks, the emergence of whistleblowing as a driving force of news production in Brazil nowadays and the leakage of selective data in this same context set a unique occasion to gather elements that help to improve political and journalistic processes.

Volume, distance and ethical risks

The conditions mentioned in the previous sections help to build a complex landscape for the performance of journalists, greatly increasing the degree of difficulty to fulfill the duties expected by the

various publics and other groups of interest. The demand requires products and services supported by socially relevant information, carefully investigated, built with balance and backed by contexts that allow understanding and deepening of the questions involved. The satisfaction of these conditions depends not only on the application of making news techniques, but also on the assumption of a set of ethical values, in accordance with journalistic canons.

As it was already pointed out, prevailing technological and cultural settings disrupt journalistic bases practiced in the 19th and 20th centuries, precipitating a greater emergence of what I call Ethical Risks. I define the term as a set of undesirable conditions that weaken the process of producing news reports, that might undermine the credibility of reporters and editors, compromise the quality of information and distance journalism from the horizon of its actual realization. Hastiness, work overload, technical unpreparedness of professionals, precariousness in the conditions of production, technical impossibilities of treating raw materials, among other factors, alone or in combination contribute to those risks. Note that these Ethical Risks are often mistaken by errors and missteps in an ethical plan, but they mainly concern to the conditions and possibilities that lead to such failures. These are situations and contexts that that might generate errors, inconsistencies and informative incompleteness. It is importantly to discern that these Ethical risks are not exclusive of contemporary journalism, as some of them already occurred in previous stages of this professional activity. However, what I notice is that two current aspects contribute as powerful catalysts for the emergence of these ethical risks: the volume of data to be dealt with and the distance that separates journalists from information sources.

The last decade showed that major information leaks that rendered relevant news coverage were backed by monumental amounts of data. There are not only thousands of pages of a report, but millions of cells in hundreds of worksheets that might generate another significant amount of data combinations and associations. The so-called Big Data is not a creation of marketing to sell additional memory in computers or disk space in computer clouds. It is a global reality that will determine the success or failure of human efforts to manage knowledge in an era of extreme abundance of data.

Journalists and industry organizations are also being challenged to handle this issue. In some reports, it is no

longer possible to treat humanely data volumes. We need to develop programming solutions to refine data, organizing them hierarchically and establishing connections between them. We must seek new forms of human-machine interface to understand hidden realities in that amount of numbers and names , properly confirmed and then repackaged in the form of journalistic products suitable for consumption. Leigh & Harding (2011) describe how The Guardian had to change part of their routine work in 2010 to prepare its share in the reporting pool on the documents of US diplomacy. There were 251,000 dispatches, involving thousands of names, covering another thousand of topics dealing with complex and diverse political contexts. Just to read and to be familiar with the entire material, it would take years of work of many people. Therefore, the newspaper implemented a set of measures to optimize the resources it had. Investigative reporters were shifted to dedicate fully to that assignment. Computer professionals have joined the team, writing specific codes to filter and process data, generating a database of primary information. Then it would be necessary to check the versions of the reports, seek contradictions with other sources, add dispersed stories in a more understandable context, structure the reports and define a strategy for publication and monitoring the repercussions. It would also be necessary to keep such operations confidential - to ensure the scoop and the commitment of a coverage within a consortium - and coordinate time for other journalistic partners to disclose the leakage synchronously.

In this case and others already mentioned, the volume of data does not only ensure consistency in the disclosure of facts, but it is also a key element for some ethical risks. The challenge of crosschecking is the most immediate one. That is, do newsrooms have enough professionals to check the correctness and accuracy of information when we are working on a range of terabytes? The ICIJ responded to this challenge by engaging nearly 400 reporters to stay busy with the 11.5 million documents of the first batch of Panama Papers. But such effort is not always viable. Thus, not checking is a dangerously constant ethical risk in situations with large amounts of data. The impossibility of verifying information by a news room's own means is itself a problem of technique and journalistic ethics, to the extent that compromises the integrity of a report and tarnishes the reliability of the reported content.

The inability of journalism teams to cover the totality of the stories embedded in mountains of data generates two ethical risks: a biased coverage, which contributes to delicate pre-trial procedures. In practical terms, if a newspaper cannot cope with the many accusations inculcated in the extensive primary material, it will have to choose one over the other, generating imbalance and possible injustice. Operation Car Wash is criticized by political groups that identify the prevalence of attention to certain characters and illegalities by part of the reporters and authorities. Selectivity allows distortion and focus shifts, another ethical risk catalyzed by the large volume of data.

Another temptation of reporters and editors in the daily treatment, disposal and structuring of information is the fetish for data, as if they were a goal in themselves, generating an ethical risk of hermeticism. Contextualization and efforts to explain more complex subjects are part of the journalistic production process which pursues broad and diverse coefficients of public information. If a given report faces uneasy consumption and assimilation, the work of the journalistic translation was not accomplished.

The large volume of data can cause two undesirable ethical risks: the abandonment of basic ethical concerns and the loss of interest in coverages extending for a longer time The first concerns the possibility of newsrooms, when facing a large amount of data, concentrating on spreading such information, ignoring or forgetting ethical requirements such as not naming and disclosing the whereabouts of sources, for example, which may increase the risk of threats and stalking. Guided by the paradigm of radical transparency, WikiLeaks activists did not bother with such details in the early leaks of warlogs in Iraq and Afghanistan. Caring for these guarantees was a requirement of the editors who negotiated with Assange to cover the diplomatic cables, which caused additional tasks to the teams and consequent delays in the dissemination of reports.

The infrastructure of journalism organizations and their capability to assign teams to monitor cases as major leaks or complex operations such as the coverage of "Operation Car Wash" will be crucial to avoid another ethical risk: exhausting the media itself and its professionals after very long coverages, requiring energy, concentration and patience. Abandoning the case when not properly completed is still a possible outcome even due to a drop in the audience's interest on the subject. Strategic planning, editorial

independence and journalistic conviction are ingredients to avoid such a risk.

But the vast amount of data in newsrooms is not the only factor that provides possibilities of error and ethical slip. The distance created and maintained between sources and reporters in the case of major leaks and whistleblowing operations also acts in this direction.

Most often, journalists do not have access to the identity or origin of the primary material of the denunciations. That is because there are information systems that separate the sources, and there are legal and police structures that prevent a more direct communication between such parties. Encryption and legal entanglements reinforce a detachment of reporters and sources, and this dissociation is a breeding ground for new ethical risks.

The first one is the passivity and accommodation of journalists. As data is leaked or denunciation excerpts reach news rooms, we observe the predominance of an informative flow of one way only. The first step is provided by the informant, which elicits the potential for dissemination. A common dangerous situation is the receiving of the material by the journalist, who turns to be satisfied and focuses on the data treatment, with the priority of publicizing it. The distance will prevent occasional challenges to the source, for example, last minute confirmations or observing contradictions in the accounts. It is not known the origin, extent, reliability or conditions for obtaining spreadsheets sent to the reporter's email address, and the source often may not have the opportunity to answer those questions. His or her condition is a passive one, facing the flow of information and its acceptance points to another ethical risk: lack of control in the journalistic input. That is, journalism is guided by the demand from sources (and their interests that may coincide or not with the interests of the public) and no longer by the demands of the reporter, from whom this initial motivation should come from.

Another consequence of the excessive distance between source and journalist is the bad habit of delegating trust. Therefore, because a reporter has no access to primary data, relies on the authority interposed between them or the system that makes the material reach him or her. The denunciation begins to have the support of the Federal Police, who engaged in collecting testimonies and ended up leaking excerpts of a denunciation. The reporter does

not question the way the testimony was obtained, which facilitates its disclosure, since it abandons the stage of verification or checking. Ironically, almost cynically, Holiday (2012) draws attention to the dangers of delegation of trust as one of the most commonly used tactics for the manipulation of information by the media. This ethical risk points to the absence of mechanisms and filters of control in newsrooms, which could prevent mistakes and injustices, for example, and signals the precariousness of the production of some professional processes.

The same can happen when data is published on WikiLeaks website or a major news magazine. The reporter links the whistleblower to its publicity in a strategy prompted by hasteness, laziness or carelessness. Subsequently, calls on cynicism, transferring the responsibility for the information to third parties, as did TV Globo in the face of criticism of the massive disclosure of a telephone intercept between former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and the President of the Republic, Dilma Rousseff, in March 2016, one of the most acute episodes of Brazilian political crisis[19]. During the live broadcasts of public demonstrations, it was impossible for TV crews to prevent the chorus of "people are not stupid, down with Rede Globo!", and slogans were heard by viewers. The reaction was immediate. In the evening news, embarrassed hosts read a short text[20] to justify the action in the coverage of the crisis: "the press does not make phone taps or conducts investigations in the name of justice and the police". The argument is partially correct, since such arrangements are not expected from the media. The suppressed side in the speech is that journalists and the media should respond by their publishing, should sustain and ensure what they offer as accurate reports of facts.

While TV Globo "does not make phone taps or conducts investigation", the company decides whether and how to disclose wiretapping content and process steps. In this case, the broadcast network aired an incomplete audio of the conversation, editing the material and discarding a previous section heard before the actual dialogue, while other media, such as UOL, aired it in its full length. The editorial choice features a decision - to publish - and with it the burden of criticism and questioning, which shows the failure of transferring responsibilities.

***

I have listed a set of ethical risks in current coverages that rely on whistleblowers and leakers of information. The colossal volume of data can lead to the inability to check it, biased coverage, prejudgments and occasional inequities, misuse of focus and hermeticism, the withdrawal of practices of caution, basic ethics and loss of interest in longer coverages. Distance between journalists and sources (of denunciation or leaking) also carries ethical risks, such as passivity and lack of motivation in newsrooms, lack of control in the journalistic input, delegation of trust and the transference of the reporter's responsibility to the source.

This mapping can serve as a warning to the media and its professionals in pointing out occasional traps that undermine journalistic credibility, precisely in coverages of both scope and importance. The mapping also designs ethical concerns primarily in the following of topics and issues of high, collective interest, such as citizenship, transparency of public acts, the strengthening of democracy and the development of protective devices, as is the case of journalism.

*This paper was by Ana Paula França Laux and revised by Danilo Rothberg.

NOTES

1   Available at: <https://wardiaries.wikileaks.org> Accessed on: April 2, 2016.

2   Available at: <https://search.wikileaks.org/plusd/> Accessed on: April 3, 2016.

3   Chelsea Manning was sentenced to 35 years in prison in August 2013. Julian Assange is housed in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London since June 2012. Snowden is in exile in Russia since August 2014.

4   *The New York Times, The Guardian, El País, Le Monde e Der Spiegel.*

5   Available at: < https://www.mafialeaks.org> Accessed on: April 2, 2016.

6   Available at: < http://corporateleaks.org> Accessed on: April 2, 2016.

7   Available at: <https://www.frenchleaks.fr> Accessed on: April 2, 2016.

8   Available at: <http://scienceleaks.blogspot.com.br> Accessed on: April 2, 2016.

9   Available at: <https://100r.org/wa/> Accessed on: April 2, 2016.

10 Available at: < http://folhaleaks.folha.com.br> Accessed on: April 2, 2016.

11 Available at: < https://www.icij.org/> Accessed on: April 5, 2016.

12 Available at: < https://www.icij.org/project/swiss-leaks> Accessed on: April 5, 2016.

13 Available at: < https://panamapapers.icij.org/> Accessed on: April 5, 2016.

14 According to the Superior Electoral Court, were 54 million (51.64%) votes in the 2nd round of the contest against 51 million Aécio Neves (48.36%).   <http://www.tse.jus.br/eleicoes/estatisticas/estatisticas-eleitorais-2014-resultado> Accessed on: April 6, 2016.

15 Judge Sergio Moro gained international notoriety, was publicly acclaimed and was even named as 13th world leader by Fortune magazine. Disponível em <http://fortune.com/worlds-greatest-leaders/> Accessed on: April 4, 2016.

16 A removal process was introduced in Congress, but the allegations that supported had nothing to do with the investigations of "Operation Car Wash".

17 Available at: <http://lavajato.mpf.mp.br/atuacao-na-1a-instancia/resultados/a-lava-jato-em-numeros-1> Accessed on: Jun. 16, 2016.

18 The clamor for more transparency and accountability collides with

concerns about a rebalancing of power in contemporary condi-
tions (BAUMAN et al., 2015; GOLDFARB, 2015),especially if the
debate is between the spheres of public and private. For this rea-
son, influential sectors of cyberactivism operate the binomial "full
transparency of the powerful and complete privacy for the weak"
(ASSANGE et al., 2013).

19 More in <https://objethos.wordpress.com/2016/03/20/ponto-de-
vista-grampos-e-as-responsabilidades-da-midia/> Accessed on: April
9, 2016.

20 Available at: <http://gente.ig.com.br/2016-03-17/rechacada-por-
manifestantes-globo-se-pronuncia-a-imprensa-nao-produz-grampos.
html> Accessed on: April 10, 2016.

REFERENCES

ASSANGE, Julian; APPELBAUM, Jacob; MÜLLER-MAGUHN, Andy;
ZIMMERMANN, Jérémie. **Cypherpunks**. São Paulo: Boitempo, 2013.

BAUMAN, Zygmunt; BIGO, Didier; ESTEVES, Paulo; GUILD, Elspeth;
JABRI, Vivienne; LYON, David; WAKER, R.B.J. Após Snowden:
repensando o impacto da vigilância. **Revista Eco-Pós**, vol. 8, nº 2,
pp. 8-35, 2015.

BECERRA, Martín; LACUNZA, Sebastián. **WikiMediaLeaks**. Buenos Aires:
Ediciones B, 2012.

BERNSTEIN, Carl; WOODWARD, Bob. **All the President' s Men.** Simon &
Schuster, 1974.

BREVINI, Benedetta; HINTZ, Arne; MCCURDY, Patrick (ed.) **Beyond
Wikileaks:** implications for the future of communications, journalism
and society. New York: The Palmate Macmillan, 2013.

CARLSON, Matt; LEWIS, Seth C. **Boundaries of Journalism:**
professionalism, practices and participation. Routledge: New York, 2015.

CHRISTOFOLETTI, Rogério; OLIVEIRA, Cândida. Jornalismo pós-WikiLeaks:
deontologia em tempos de vazamentos globais de informação.
Contemporânea, Vol. 9 nº 2, pp. 86-100, 2011.

CHRISTOFOLETTI, Rogério. Preocupações éticas no jornalismo feito por
não-jornalistas. **Comunicação e Sociedade**, vol. 25, pp. 267 – 277,
2014.

DOMSCHEIT-BERG, Daniel. **Os bastidores do WikiLeaks**. Rio de Janeiro: Campus-Elsevier, 2011

EL PAÍS. **Las revelaciones de WikiLeaks**: Los Papeles del Departamento de Estado. Madrid, 1 de febrero de 2011.

FLOR, Guaíra Índia. **O jornalismo em tempos de WikiLeaks**: uma análise do Folhaleaks e da Folha de S.Paulo. 2014. Master's thesis (Master in Communication)- Postgradutation Program in Communication, University of Brasilia, Brasília, 2014.

FLYNN, Kathryn. The Practice and Politics of Leaking. **Social Alternatives**. v. 30, n. 1 pp.24-28, 2011.

FOWLER-WATT, Karen; ALLAN, Stuart (eds.) **Journalism**: New Challenges. Centre for Journalism & Communication Research – Bournemouth University, 2013.

FRANKLIN, Bob; CARLSON, Matt (eds.) **Journalists, Sources and Credibility**: new perspectives. Routledge: New York-London, 2011.

GOLDFARB, Ronald (ed.) **After Snowden**: privacy, secrecy and security in the information age. New York: St. Martins's Press, 2015.

GREENBERG, Andy. **This Machine Kills Secrets**: how WikiLeaks, Cypherpunks and Hacktvists Aim to Free the World's Information. London: Virgin Books, 2012.

GREENWALD, Glenn. **Sem lugar para se esconder**. Rio de Janeiro: Sextante, 2014.

HARDING, Luke. **Os arquivos Snowden**. São Paulo: Leya, 2014.

HOLIDAY, Ryan. **Acredite, estou mentindo**. São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 2012.

LEIGH, David; HARDING, David. **WikiLeaks**: a guerra de Julian Assange contra os segredos de Estado. Campinas: Verus, 2011.

MANNING, Paul. **News and news sources**: a critical introduction. London: Sage, 2001.

McBRIDE, Kelly; ROSENSTIEL, Tom. **The new ethics of journalism**: principles for the 21st Century. Sage-CQ Press: Thousand Oaks-London, 2014.

SANT'ANNA, Francisco. **Mídia das fontes**: um novo ator no cenário jornalístico brasileiro. Brasília: Senado Federal, 2009.

SANTOS, Rogério. **A negociação entre jornalistas e fontes**. Coimbra: Minerva, 1997.

SCHMITZ, Aldo Antonio. **Fontes de notícias**: ações e estratégias das fontes no jornalismo. Florianópolis: Combook, 2001.

SIFRY, Micah. **Wikileaks and the age of Transparency**. Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2011.

TIFFEN, R. **News and Power.** Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1989.

WAISBORD, Silvio. **Reinventing Professionalism**: journalism and news in global perspective. Polity Press: Cambridge-Malden, 2013.

WARD, Stephen J. **Radical Media Ethics**: a global approach. Wiley Blackwell: Oxford, 2015.

WOODWARD, Bob. **O homem secreto**. São Paulo: Rocco, 2005.

ZION, Lawrie; CRAIG, David. **Ethics for digital journalists**: emerging best practices. Routledge: New York, 2015.

Rogério Christofoletti holds a PhD in Communication from the Universidade de São Paulo (USP). Profesor at POSJOR/UFSC and researcher in CNPq. rogerio.christofoletti@uol.com.br