**DIVERSE SOURCES, DIVERSE METHODS**

**TYPES OF SOURCES**

**PRIMARY**
- Those that form direct, specific evidence
- Those that relate direct experience

**SECONDARY**
- Published materials, including organizational reports
- Secondhand accounts (“I had a friend who...”)

**TYPE OF SOURCE MATERIALS**

- Human
- Paper
- Digital

**INVESTIGATIVE METHODS/STRATEGIES**

**BASIC**
- Interviews
- Document retrieval
- Observation
- Online search

**OTHERS**
- Highly structured interviews
- Surveys
- Database creation
- Surveillance
- Undercover reporting
- Social science methods (oral history, immersion, focus group, archival research)

**WORK FROM THE OUTSIDE IN**

- Secondary sources
- Primary documents
- Key informants
- Target of investigation
**STORY**
- Ron Paul
- Bulgaria’s secret unit
- India’s rivers
- Danish pharmaceutical firm
- Divorced women in Jordan
- Zambia’s mine workers
- U.S. diploma mills

**MAIN METHODS**
- Newsletters
- Archival investigation + interviews
- Officials records
- Documents + interviews
- Survey + structured interviews
- Undercover + interviews
- Digital + documents + interviews

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**THE PAPER TRAIL**
1. We discover a subject
2. We create a hypothesis & verify
3. We seek open source data to verify the hypothesis
4. We seek human sources
5. As we collect the data, we organize it – examine, compose into a story, and check
6. We put the data in a narrative order and compose the story
7. We do quality control to make sure the story is right
8. We publish the story, promote and defend

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**TYPES OF SOURCES**
- **PRIMARY**
  - Those that form direct, specific evidence
- **SECONDARY**
  - Published materials, including organizational reports

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**BACKGROUNDING**
- What is this issue all about?
- Who are the key players? Where are they?
- What are the key dates and events?
- How is this process or system supposed to work?
- What are the laws and other standards that are in place? Who enforces them?

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**SECONDARY SOURCES: MANY ARE OPEN**
- Newspapers, magazines, periodicals
- Books, journals, specialty publications
- Theses, dissertations
- Archives
- Special collections
- Maps & almanacs

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**PRIMARY SOURCES**
- Everyone leaves a paper trail: From womb to tomb
- Who produces documents: 3 i’s
  - Individual
  - Institution
  - Issue
WHAT DOCUMENTS WILL YOU LIKELY FIND FROM...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Businesses</th>
<th>NGOs</th>
<th>Government offices</th>
<th>International institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

YVONNE T. CHUA / University of the Philippines & VERA Files

SMOKING GUN EVIDENCE

- The strongest evidence—whether paper or human—to back up your hypothesis
- It’s like the murder weapon or eyewitness to a murder presented by the prosecution

YVONNE T. CHUA / University of the Philippines & VERA Files

SMOKING GUN

A super-secret unit that existed in Bulgaria before democracy kidnapped, assassinated or discredited Bulgarian emigrants and “enemies of the Bulgarian state” around the world

Nearly 5,000 pages of secret files from the archives of the Bulgarian secret services during the Cold War

YVONNE T. CHUA / University of the Philippines & VERA Files

RIGHT TO INFORMATION

- Freedom of information = Fundamental human right (Universal Declaration of Human Rights)
- The public’s right to open access to information and to know what governments are doing on their behalf is implicit in freedom of expression (Article 19)
  - Right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas
  - The State does not hold information on its own behalf, but rather for the benefit of all members of the public

YVONNE T. CHUA / University of the Philippines & VERA Files

DOCUMENTS HELD BY THE STATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public records</th>
<th>Nonpublic records</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Should be made routinely available to the public</td>
<td>Access is restricted for national security, privacy, foreign relations, trade secrets and other justifiable reasons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

YVONNE T. CHUA / University of the Philippines & VERA Files
ARE THESE RECORDS PUBLIC OR NONPUBLIC IN MYANMAR?

1. Official government records
2. Proceedings, records, and books of Parliament
3. Foreign loans to government
4. Statements of assets and liabilities of government officials and employees
5. Annual reports of government agencies
6. Biddings, purchases, and other financial transactions of government agencies
7. Contacts and status of government projects
8. Laws of general application
9. Government audit reports
10. Government budgets
11. Election and campaign records
12. Medical records
13. Complaints pending in court
14. Court decisions
15. Birth certificates
16. Marriage certificates
17. Land records
18. Corporate records
19. Business licenses and permits
20. Ordinances and circulars issued by government agencies
21. Income tax returns of government officials and employees
22. Vehicle registration
23. Police incident reports
24. Travel records

CHALLENGES JOURNALISTS IN MYANMAR FACE

EVALUATING DOCUMENTS

- Who's the source? What's his or her motive?
- Who's the author?
- How was the information gathered?
- Is the document genuine? (letterhead, date, language, grammar, style)
- Is it accurate?
- Is it complete? (missing details)
- Is it updated?
- Do I need an expert to help me with technical materials?
- What related documents/information should I obtain to get the total picture?
- Who else should I be talking to for corroboration?

BACK TO YOUR STORY IDEA AND INVESTIGATIVE HYPOTHESIS

- List the documents you need
  - Secondary sources, especially for background
  - Primary sources, to back up your hypothesis
  - Smoking gun evidence, if any
- Who has the documents?
  - List the specific unit/person in the office
- Order your list
  - Number them from the most important