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Rethinking Safety of Journalists

Editors

Kristin Skare Orgeret and William Tayeebwa

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Editorial

Introduction: Rethinking Safety of Journalists

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Abstract
The introductory chapter to the thematic issue, entitled “Rethinking Safety of Journalists,” shows how promoting the safety of journalists is closely related to press freedom. It presents the articles of the thematic issue and highlights how the safety of journalists is no longer a concern of individuals or individual nation states only, but is now also a global concern, whereby the international community is obliged to come to the defense of journalists’ safety.

Keywords
gender; journalism; press freedom; safety of journalists; threats

Issue
This editorial is part of the issue “Rethinking Safety of Journalists” edited by Kristin Skare Orgeret (Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway) and William Tayeebwa (University of Makerere, Uganda).

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Journalists throughout the world are increasingly faced with attacks on their life, their dignity, and the integrity of their work. Whereas only two correspondents were killed during the entire period of World War I, the situation is radically different a bit more than a hundred years later. On average, every five days a journalist is killed for bringing information to the public and there is an increasing tendency that journalists themselves are the aim of violence. The threats range from harassment to arbitrary detention, kidnapping, physical attacks, and in the most extreme cases, killing. This happens against a backdrop of a rising anti-media rhetoric and the discrediting of newsworthy and accurate journalistic reportage as “fake news” (Ireton & Posetti, 2018). Furthermore, the worrying gender dimensions of safety and tactics for censoring and silencing journalists add to the current state of affairs. Threats to journalists occur both online and offline and women journalists are particularly affected by gender-specific forms of attacks, such as sexual harassment and violence. Promoting the safety of journalists is closely related to press freedom as the following quote by the Deputy Director-General of UNESCO reminds us:

> Safety for journalists is a matter of public concern that is wide-ranging. It is vital for those who practice journalism, for their families and for their sources. It is essential for the wellbeing of media institutions, civil society, academia and the private sector more broadly. If we value the free flow of information for citizens, their governments and their international organisations, then the safety of journalists is central. (Henrichsen, Betz, & Lisosky, 2015)

This thematic issue of *Media and Communication* presents fresh research on the current situation of safety of journalists from various regions and countries, as well as reflections on how democratic developments may be safeguarded by finding ways to protect journalists and freedom of speech. The articles presented here both point at some of the most crucial challenges and to ways of addressing them. In doing so, they highlight how the safety of journalists is no longer a concern of individuals or individual nation states only, but is now also a global concern, whereby the international community is obliged to come to the defense of journalists’ safety, thus

warranting evoking the global 'responsibility to protect' (R2P) journalists. As Simon Cottle emphasizes, the protection of journalists "is a matter for all of us as it reaches deep inside the conduct of human affairs in global society" (Cottle, 2017, p. 29).

The last years have also seen an increased awareness and a growth of initiatives and coalitions to push back the threats against journalists. Whereas scholarly works within the field of safety of journalists were rare only a few years ago, we now witness an explosive interest in conventions such as the academic conference on the safety of journalists as part of the UNESCO's World Press Freedom Day's Global Conference, and in the annual conference on safety of journalists at Oslo Metropolitan University. All the articles here were first presented in one of these conferences, both results of transnational academic coalitions.

This thematic issue, entitled "Rethinking Safety of Journalists," encompasses research into how matters of safety influence epistemological news production processes. More specifically, it explores what knowledge journalists have when it comes to different matters of safety.

The three first articles are from Africa, Europe, and Asia respectively. Although the contexts are different, all three articles explore what knowledge journalists have when it comes to different aspects of safety and find some similar traits in how they respond to vulnerable situations. In doing so, all three clearly illustrate that if journalists' access to information is restricted, then the entire society suffers since it is deprived of getting the information needed to make informed decisions. In their article, Gerald Walulya and Goretti L. Nassanga (2020) discuss the increasingly difficult situation of journalists covering political elections in many less democratic societies. Their findings show that Ugandan journalists face more safety and security risks during elections. Some of the key challenges include state harassment, arrest of those considered critical to the state and denial of access to important information. Based on in-depth interviews, the article shows how due to concerns of their own safety, journalists respond to the insecure work environment by engaging in self-censorship, thereby giving biased or limited information to the public. The article identifies gaps that media development agencies can help to close if the media are to play their rightful role in a democratic society especially during electoral processes.

Self-censorship as a strategy of self-protection is also the concern of Sofia Iordanidou, Emmanouil Takas, Leonidas Vatikiotis, and Pedro García's (2020) contribution. Taking the South European situation after the economic crisis as their starting point, the authors show how Greece, Cyprus, and Spain came under a surveillance regime where everything concerning public spending, labour market, and social policy came under a rigorous monitoring of European institutions. A new working environment emerged where many of the experienced and highly-paid professionals were replaced by younger journalists. Through qualitative interviews, the article explores how to what extent the logic of memoranda affected the journalistic practice in the three countries. It shows how journalists operated in a conflictual situation in the forefront of pressures, not only having to manage an extended, stressful and unpleasant situation, but also having to analyze it, sometimes even serve it.

In their article, Mubashar Hasan and Mushfique Wadud (2020) argue that the parameters for evaluating the safety of journalists in an authoritarian state go beyond the conventional, global knowledge of what is known about the safety of journalists. Against a backdrop of increasing surveillance, attacks on journalist by force and legal means in a political climate that is not democratic, the article investigates how Bangladeshi journalists define safety. Based on in-depth interviews with Bangladeshi journalists, the authors explore how the concept of journalists' safety has three intertwined dimensions: First, journalists' safety incorporates avoiding bodily harm; second, in order to remain safe, journalists undertake various tactics including compromising the objectivity of news in a regime where security apparatus and pro-government journalists work in tandem to surveil and intimidate non-partisan journalists; third, such journalists' safety model decreases public faith in media, as media no longer can be said to play the role of a watchdog.

Although studies in the last few years show that being a local journalist in a conflict area is the most dangerous position, the role of local fixers is still under-researched. This is the topic of Kiyya Baloch and Kenneth Andresen's (2020) article. As a backbone of reporting in war and conflicts, fixers are an essential component to the foreign correspondent in conflict zones. Based on data from interviews with local fixers and journalists in Pakistan, the article exposes the many security problems for local fixers. It also shows that the fixers' rights and interests are not guarded by media organizations or the government. Fixers increasingly face censorship by the security agencies and death threats from the militants. The physical threats to journalists in general and to fixers working in militancy-hit areas of Pakistan have increased over the years, and a number of fixers have lost their lives chasing stories for the western media. This study discusses the harsh realities fixers face in the conflict zones of Pakistan where international press lack access due to increasing restrictions imposed by the government, and violence perpetrated against media workers by Islamic State, Taliban, and Baloch separatists.

Samiksha Koirala's (2020) article "Female Journalists' Experience of Online Harassment: A Case Study of Nepal" examines the experiences of women journalists in Nepal in the context of a rapidly growing expansion of the internet. By examining the findings of qualitative in-depth interviews, the article argues that online platforms are threatening press freedom in Nepal, mainly by silencing women journalists. The study also indicates that the problem is particularly severe in a patriarchal society

such as Nepal, as a significant number of incidents of abuse go unreported, largely because of the culture of shame and ineffective legislation. The findings show that some of the women journalists experiencing harassment tolerate the harassment by being “strong like a man,” while many of them stay away from social media platforms to avoid the abuse. The article suggests that individual efforts to tackle the vicious issue like misogyny might not be enough; and collective efforts from legislation of media organisations to empowerment of feminist movements are required to address the issue.

The need to elevate individual attacks to a structural level is also the concern of the next article. Trond Idås, Kristin Skare Orgeret, and Klas Backholm (2020) discuss sexual harassment among Norwegian journalists as a dimension of safety of journalists in the times of the global #MeToo movement. Through a study focusing on sexual harassment among media workers, the article investigates the extent and types of sexual harassment experienced by the editorial staff in Norwegian newsrooms, and what effect such kind of experiences might have on their professional life. The article discusses sexual harassment through three interrelated questions: What is the extent of sexual harassment against journalists? What may coping strategies be? And from the perspective of safety of journalists—how can the newsrooms be better prepared to fight sexual harassment? The results show that female, young, and temporary media workers are significantly more targeted than others. The findings feed into a discussion of what strategies media houses can use in order to be better prepared in the fight against sexual harassment.

One way to prepare journalists themselves to face the increased dangers of the profession is through safety training courses designed to provide journalists with guidance to assess risk and mitigate them. In the article “Reconsidering Journalists’ Safety Training,” Marte Høiby and Mariateresa Garrido V. (2020) ask whether content of such training and guidance is informed by actual threats and risks relevant for journalists working in the field. Through an evaluation of five safety training documents, they identify various aspects of safety addressed in training offered to locally and internationally deployed journalists. They find that the trainings and manuals to some extent address specific variations in context, but that detailed attention towards gender differences in risk and other personal characteristics are not given equivalent weight. They recommend that addressing journalistic practice and personal resources is fundamental to all journalist safety training since it is at the personal, practical, and media organisational levels that the mitigation encourage by these trainings can happenedd.

The two last articles of the thematic issue discuss the way forward for monitoring the safety of journalists globally as a means to prevent attacks on the communicative functions of journalism. In his article, Guy Berger (2020) highlights the potential for increased and more standardised monitoring of the safety of journalists in the light of the specific indicator that has been agreed by the UN as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The indicator concerned treats the safety of journalists as a benchmark for tracking progress on SDG target 16.10, which specifies “public access to information and fundamental freedoms” as a development aspiration. The article argues that inclusion of this indicator in the SDGs provides a universally legitimated framework with strong catalytic potential and that this holds a promise of improved, more comparative, and increased research output. The results of new research stimulated by this development, particularly at country level, could have real impact on the safety of journalists.

The very last article by Jackie Harrison, Diana Maynard, and Sara Torsner (2020) also highlights the SDG indicator 16.10.1 as an important monitoring agenda for the global recording of violations against journalists. The article argues that the need for extensive collection of data on violations against journalists also raises a number of methodological challenges: the lack of conceptual consistency; the lack of methodological transparency; the need for sophisticated data categorization and disaggregation to enable data to be merged from different sources; the need to establish links to understand causal and temporal relations between people and events; and the need to explore and utilize previously untapped data sources. Suggesting a way forward to further strengthen the monitoring of SDG 16.10.1, the article proposes to develop a robust and reliable events-based methodology and a set of tools which can facilitate the monitoring of the full range of proposed 16.10.1 categories of violations, reconcile data from multiple sources in order to adhere to the established category definitions, and to further disaggregate the proposed 16.10.1 categories to provide more in-depth information on each instance of a violation. This, they argue, will ultimately contribute towards better understanding of the contextual circumstances and processes producing aggressions against journalists.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Democracy at Stake: Self-Censorship as a Self-Defence Strategy for Journalists

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Abstract
The media play an essential role of informing and mobilising voters as well as facilitating a two-way communication process between citizens and those vying for electoral offices during elections. This allows citizens to get information on various issues from the contenders, which largely informs their electoral decisions. In most less democratic societies however, this media function is increasingly becoming difficult to fulfil due to challenges journalists encounter during electoral processes. Using Uganda's last general elections in 2016 as a case study, this article discusses the safety of journalists during elections basing on findings from a bigger study on the media coverage of the 2016 elections, supplemented by in-depth interviews with 10 journalists who covered the elections. In addition, the analysis makes reference to the 2016 Uganda Press Freedom Index. Findings of this research show that journalists face more safety and security risks during elections particularly perpetuated by state security agencies. Compared to previous elections, the 2016 elections also recorded the highest number of victims who were female journalists. This article highlights key challenges journalists face during elections, which include: state harassment and intimidation, arrest of those considered critical to the state, and denial of access to important information. Due to concerns of their own safety, journalists have responded to the insecure work environment by engaging in self-censorship, thereby giving biased or limited information to the public. The article identifies gaps that media development agencies can help to close if the media are to play their rightful role in a democratic society, especially during the electoral process.

Keywords
democracy; election reporting; journalists; press freedom; safety; self-censorship; violence

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1. Introduction

> The 'responsibility to protect' and 'the responsibility to report,' profoundly implicate journalists in the practice of their craft and the conduct of civil societies around the world. They should be seen as indivisible, mutually constitutive, and implicate us all in the conduct and safeguarding of journalists. The protection of journalists and their responsibility to report in and from dangerous places, in violent times, cannot therefore be simply seen as a matter to do with 'journalists' or, even more broadly, as simply being about 'journalism.' Ultimately it is a matter for all of us, as it reaches deep inside the conduct of human affairs in global society. (Cottle, 2017, p. 29)

The above statement gives the context within which this article is premised. The safety of journalists as they carry out their 'responsibility to report' is no longer a concern of individual nation states, but is now a global con-

cern, whereby the international community is obliged to come to the defence of journalists' safety, thus warranting evoking the global 'responsibility to protect' (R2P) journalists. The commitment of states to free speech and press freedom has been found deficient and the verdict according to Sarikakis (2017) is that "states have failed to provide for the consistent and systematic protective measures for journalists" (p. 119). This failure can partly account for the increase in numbers of journalists killed every year, especially in wars and conflicts (Cottle, 2017; Orgeret, 2016b, 2016c; UNESCO, 2018a). The global trends and endemic conflicts have contributed to positioning journalists at increased risk and in harm's way (Cottle, 2017). Although there are a few safe havens, Sarikakis (2017) observes that even in stable democracies, journalists remain vulnerable and conditions for journalism and free expression can deteriorate surprisingly fast.

The principle of the R2P was originally meant to be protection of citizens against genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity, taken as a responsibility of the state, with the international community intervening if the state failed. However, this has expanded to the R2P potential victims to mass atrocities and people suffering from avoidable catastrophe (Bellamy, 2010; Global Centre for the R2P, 2015; International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, 2001). Due to the increasing number of journalists facing security and safety threats, this has warranted evoking the R2P beyond individual states to the international community.

Mirza (2009) rightly points out that although there is little evidence that supports the existence of a global public sphere, there is no question that globalising trends are made possible with the help of media at both the domestic and international level. Thus, it is difficult to de-link R2P journalists as a local state mandate to the responsibility of the international community. Indeed, organizations like UNESCO, Reporters Sans Frontiers, Committee for the Protection of Journalists, International Crisis Group, and others, have been actively engaged in advancing initiatives for the security and protection of journalists globally. The situation is particularly delicate where journalists have to report from conflict or war zones. The fact that journalists are often persecuted, threatened or harmed during conflicts, affects their ability to report freely (Frere, 2011; Orgeret, 2016a). There is a trend of increased use of second-hand information through wire services, which information is sometimes difficult to interpret to be relevant to local audiences (Høiby & Ottosen, 2016). When considering safety of journalists, the mind often ponders about killings. As Torsner (2017) explains, while the killings of journalists can be described as the most serious manifestation of danger, there exists a whole range of different types of risks that impact the safety of journalists. These risks often relate to the nature of certain forms of journalism—such as critique of vested interests or views, exposure of corruption, or reporting on conflict that they may become targets of attack.

Emphasising the vital role media play, Ronning (2016) contends that "there is no doubt that the press plays a critical role in all societies, particularly in defending and promoting democracy and citizens' right to be informed and to debate" (p. 44). Apart from media providing information to citizens, another key core societal role is "to discover illegal actions and protect people from corruption through their watchdog function" (Orgeret, 2016a, p. 15). Since we get most of our information and what we know from the media, including social media, the journalists who are largely responsible for the media output, have a key role to play in any society.

The right to access information presupposes that journalists operate in a conducive safe environment, where they can provide citizens with relevant information that enables them to make informed decisions. However, journalists often face challenges and leave out certain information that can pose security and safety threats to them.

Nohrstedt (2016) regrets that the challenges faced by journalists in war and conflict zones are not problematised by mainstream media, so the general public is uninformed about the risks to freedom of information and concludes that "from a democratic point of view, this is a very dangerous situation" (p. 163), or what he terms as a "muted democracy." Echoing the same fears, a UNESCO (2018a) report observes that "imprisonment of journalists for their legitimate work not only fosters a culture of self-censorship but also impinges on the broader rights of society to obtain information" (p. 148). Of particular interest in this article is the period of elections. During this time, the media and journalists are supposed to provide a platform for contenders to reach the electorate. In the same way, through the media, the electorate receive information from contenders, which the voters base on to make their electoral decisions.

The purpose of this article is to examine the safety of journalists in the course of their work in Uganda, giving special focus to the time of elections. During the pre-election campaigns, at election time and immediate post-election period, there is much tension due to contestation of power as stakes are high, with various contenders trying to win elective positions in government. Sparks (2011) views media as valuable assets and argues that winning political power allows a person to influence the stories covered and the way they are covered. He states that this can be exemplified by the high degree of media politicisation in many countries that is a reflection of the belief that control of the media improves chances of holding onto political power, given media's utility especially in competitive struggles, be they economic or political.

For this article, we consider a political struggle with the analysis based on a bigger study on election coverage in East Africa, using the 2016 Uganda elections as a case study. Media being the major channel through

which people within the country and beyond get to know what is happening during election time, it is important to analyse and document the kind of work environment that journalists operate in, as relates to their safety and security.

To put the analysis into perspective, the article first gives an overview of the broader global picture on the safety of journalists.

2. Safety and Security of Journalists at the Global Level

When examining the R2P journalists by the international community, it is important to recognise the changed media landscape and the concepts of both 'interdependence' and 'globalisation,' which have promoted geographical closeness or cultural proximity that has facilitated media to cross borders to create global media systems (Mirza, 2009). This implies that the safety of journalists has to be considered at the local, regional, and the global levels.

Generally, the security and safety threats to journalists have had a negative impact on the way newsrooms operate. In their investigation on security of journalists, Høiby and Ottosen (2016) found that editors were reluctant to send reporters to conflict zones or on "high-risk assignments in regions affected by political tension" (p. 190), and when they did, they kept them out for a short time, meaning there were fewer first hand observations. They argue that this led to degraded quality and quantity of information from wars and conflict areas, which impacted society at the local and international level. Ntulume (2016) echoes similar observations after her analysis of the Ugandan army intervention in the South Sudan conflict, where she finds that most of the news coverage was a reproduction of the leadership standpoint, with few challenging voices explaining that "journalists seemed to tread carefully appearing to prefer to run with information officials provided, than navigate uncertain territory" (p. 58). The same experience is shared by Skjerdal (2013) after his study of journalism practice in Ethiopia, where he found that there was a culture of self-censorship and discourses of fear in the newsrooms with journalists producing and reproducing a subservient reporting style. These observations tally with those of Sparks (2011), who concludes after his study on South African media that media were very far from the ideal of neutral and objective journalism. However, most times these imbalances are brought about by factors beyond the journalists' control, having more to do with the work environment they operate in. In this article, we explore the different threats to journalists' safety in the course of performing their work professionally.

UNESCO is one of the agencies working towards enhancing press freedom and they are regularly engaged in monitoring the media as part of assessing developments in the media industry worldwide. In a recent world report that assessed among others, the physical, psychological, and digital safety of journalists, it was noted that "trends remain extremely alarming" (UNESCO, 2018a, p. 137). The report cites the case of 530 journalists who were killed, with an average of two deaths per week between 2012 and 2016. In addition, the report points out the high levels of impunity for crimes against journalists, with only 10% of the 930 cases of death of journalists between 2006–2016 being resolved, which means that it was only in these cases where the perpetrators of the crimes were brought to justice by a court of law. Out of 930 cases that were registered, 33% were ongoing or unresolved. In at least 55% of the cases, there was no information on judicial follow-up of investigations (UNESCO, 2018a). Comparatively, Western Europe and North America experienced a lesser degree of impunity with 50% of the cases resolved, Africa had only 13% of cases resolved, whereas the Arab states had the highest level of impunity with only 2% of cases resolved. This implies that there are still high levels of impunity of crimes against journalists in most developing countries as most of the cases either remain unresolved/ongoing or there is no information on their judicial process.

3. Work Environment for Journalists in Uganda

Article 29 of the Ugandan Constitution generally guarantees the right to freedom of the media and expression. However, several studies show that the work environment for journalists in Uganda is very restrictive, with journalists facing threats of violence, harassment, intimidation, imprisonment, kidnap, and even death (Foundation for Human Right Initiative [FHRI], 2016; Human Rights Watch, 2016; Ssenoga, 2018; UNESCO, 2018b). These various forms of risk to the safety of journalists do not only limit access to information for citizens but it has "a chilling effect on the ability of Ugandans to critique the president and the government's policies or freely debate critical issues, such as governance and corruption" (Human Rights Watch, 2016, p. 42). The violence can be viewed as part of an ongoing and systematic form of censorship designed to stifle freedom of the press in Uganda (Ssenoga, 2018).

From one radio station (Radio Uganda) and one TV station (UTV) in the 1960s, Uganda has 292 licensed radio stations spread country-wide and 33 operational television stations, mainly in the capital Kampala (Uganda Communications Commission, 2018). With this multiplicity of broadcast stations, one can easily miss-construe this as indicative of a flourishing democracy since citizens ideally would have exposure to more media outlets and better information access. However, this is not the case for Uganda, as was noted in a 2016 pre-election report by Human Rights Watch (2016). The report noted that freedom of the press in Uganda was deceptive explaining that while print journalists in the country's capital, Kampala, may enjoy some relative degree of freedom, journalists outside Kampala—particularly radio journalists upcountry broadcasting in local languages—face challenges often in freely reporting on issues seem-

ingly sensitive to the ruling party. The report further noted that it was common for journalists and station managers to face threats of suspension or dismissal for providing the opposition with a platform, while radio stations faced the threat of closure. Such threats to journalists tend to entrench the culture of self-censorship.

Like the previous regimes, the current government has reacted towards what is deemed as hostile or subversive media coverage the same way as the colonial administration that tolerated no criticisms (Bichachi, 2013). All this done under the pretext of having a "controlled Press as a necessity to preserve national security and unity" (Sekeba, 2016, p. 147). A challenge that journalists face sometimes is the dual loyalty between the professional demands and calls for nationalism or loyalty to the nation. Skjerdal (2013) describes this situation as having competing loyalties, but points out that these are not static but are more often shifting loyalties that involve dilemmas when dealing with issues considered sensitive, leading to self-censorship.

In a survey that among others assessed Ugandan journalists' perception of their work environment, 77% respondents revealed that they were intensely harassed and 23% said they were not. The survey also showed that most journalists faced these security risks relating to their work personally as their media houses often don't have policies to address them. For 80% of the journalists, their media houses had no policies for safety, while only 20% had some policies (UNESCO, 2018b). Due to fear for their personal safety, journalists have taken on self-censorship, rather than to risk the wrath of government and security agencies if reporting on issues considered 'sensitive.' As noted by Ssenoga (2018), journalists in Uganda have borne the brunt of censorship for decades.

The harassment and violence are not only experienced by local journalists but also by foreign correspondents. One such incident was when a Reuters photojournalist, James Akena, who was covering demonstrations demanding for the release of Robert Kyagulanyi (also known as Bobi Wine), a member of the Ugandan parliament and a musician, was beaten, and the video of his beating went viral on social media. President Yoweri Museveni, "tried to explain away the attack saying that it was a case of mistaken identity that the journalist had been mistaken for a camera thief" (Ssenoga, 2018).

It has been noted that while journalists operate under threats daily, the fear to express oneself freely is more pertinent during periods of political contestation or controversy, and restrictions and threats are more pronounced during this time (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung & fesmedia Africa, 2016). When considering the safety of journalists, particular focus is made to journalists covering conflicts of various dimensions including wars, armed conflict, situations of political instability, riots, demonstrations, crisis or tension situations, and election periods. This is a genuine concern as Orgeret (2016c) reveals in her study on challenges of war and conflict coverage. She notes that an increasing number of journalists worldwide have encountered violent aggression while covering civil unrest and demonstrations and some have been killed in the process, which has resulted in an increase of coverage gaps and a growing culture of self-censorship within the media and society. Høiby and Ottosen (2016) came up with similar findings in their study, observing that the security situation for reporters in conflict zones had deteriorated greatly. The duo concludes that "it is evident that there is a close link between lack of security and self-censorship" (Høiby & Ottosen, 2016, p. 183), adding that the increasing problem of impunity has an impact on freedom of expression on a global scale.

Another area of particular concern for the safety of journalists is during investigative reporting. Often times, the people being investigated are influential individuals in government, holding leadership positions in society or with big businesses. These types of people sometimes threaten journalists who try to expose them in the media. Criminal networks are prepared to use extreme violence to contain and control public information and investigations that threaten their interests. Sometimes journalists become targets or indirect victims when seeking to report on such injustices (Cottle, 2017). A case in point is an investigative journalist, Solomon Serwanjja, who was doing an investigative story for NBS Television on big shots selling medical drugs that were supposed to be free to patients in government hospitals. When word leaked about the story, a hunt started for him. After failing to trace his whereabouts, police picked his wife from their home and the journalist had to come out of hiding before his wife could be released (Yiga, 2019). This demonstrates how threats may go beyond the journalists and affect their families too.

Similar to what takes place in other countries where violence is meted out to both male and female journalists, female journalists in Uganda also experience another dimension of this through sexual harassment, which discourages upcoming female journalists. In addition, female journalists are more exposed in conflict settings that are usually dominated by men and this makes them more vulnerable (Orgeret, 2016a). While there are slightly more females than males in the journalism training institutions in Uganda, the newsrooms are male dominated and journalism is still seen as a 'masculine' job. A study by the Uganda Media Women Association that assessed women's participation in the print media found that only an average 20% women are involved in print media journalism (World Association for Christian Communication, & Uganda Media Women's Association, 2015).

A challenge to women covering conflict or wars that Orgeret (2016b, 2016c) identified was the need to have an awareness of cultural norms and practices especially when it comes to how to deal with sources in the field, who would perceive the journalist in her professional capacity and as a woman. The female journalists she interviewed said that they had to develop a situational awareness to be able to recognise certain conversations

deemed inappropriate and sometimes eye contact that could be construed as flirting. These experiences may not apply to the male journalists.

In the next section we present the methodology applied to collect data used in this article followed by the findings of the study.

4. Methodology

The analysis in this article is based on findings from a bigger research project that assessed the press coverage of elections in East Africa's one-party dominant states of Uganda and Tanzania. (Walulya, 2018). In addition to the primary data from the field research, the article supplements this with findings from the 2016 Uganda Press Freedom Index produced by the Human Rights Network for Journalists—Uganda (HRNJ-U). Findings from the above two sources were further supplemented by key informant interviews with a purposively selected sample of 10 journalists, who covered the 2016 elections, out of about 60 journalists who reported on the elections. We chose only 10 journalists because we wanted to extract in-depth narratives from these journalists. Moreover, this was in addition to data from a bigger study that also involved interviewing all categories of journalists who covered elections. Of the 10 journalists, five were broadcast journalists while five were print journalists. Seven of the 10 journalists were male while three were female. This is because Uganda has more male than female journalists, especially the ones covering politics. The exact number of journalists in Uganda is not known because of lack of an umbrella organisation that can register journalists across the country, but conservative estimates put the number at around 1,000. This study targeted only journalists who covered the 2016 elections on a regular basis rather than those who wrote one-off stories about elections. This was aimed at getting journalists with a wealth of experience in reporting elections. To identify these journalists, we conducted a content analysis of newspapers and reviewed radio and TV newscasts that happened during elections to ascertain who the reporters were. In cases where it was not easy to verify which reporters had reported certain stories, editors guided us to the right reporters. The selected journalists belonged to both the state-owned media and privately owned media houses.

We used a semi-structured interview guide to ask the journalists about their experiences during the coverage of elections. On the basis of responses we received from the interviewees, we often probed whenever points of interest were mentioned. All interviews were conducted at the journalists' places of work for purposes of convenience. Interviews lasted between 15 to 38 minutes depending on how much information the sources were willing to share with us. Due to the sensitivity of issues our sources discussed with us, we agreed that we shall not make specific descriptions that may lead to their identification as this could culminate into reprisals such as dismissals. Interviews were transcribed and analysed to identify the themes that emerged.

The HRNJ-U Press Index Report that was used to supplement the qualitative data was compiled basing on reports HRNJ-U received from journalists during 2016 plus cases of media freedom violations that were reported in the media. Other information of unreported cases was acquired through interviewing journalists in different newsrooms, both print and electronic across the country. It should be noted that although the election campaign period takes approximately 90 days in Uganda, the compilation of this report is based on events of a full calendar year. This is because election activities are not only restricted to the official campaign period. The extended period helped in capturing media freedom violation incidents before, during, and shortly after elections.

5. Findings

5.1. Forms of Media Freedom Violations during Elections

During the 2016 election year, HRNJ-U recorded 135 cases of infringement on the right of journalists to report. Most of these cases were assault on journalists by both state and non-state actors (HRNJ-U, 2016). Due to the severity of the nature of assaults, some victims had to stay away from work as they nursed the wounds occasioned on them. Unfortunately, many of the journalists in Uganda are freelancers and have no medical insurance. This means that in crisis situations like these, they are unable to work and sometimes they are also unable to take care of their medical bills.

It is important to note that assault of journalists is not only done by the state security agencies. In a charged election atmosphere, some ordinary citizens also assault journalists they regard as 'biased' against their candidate. For example, in the middle of the presidential and parliamentary elections campaigns on 22 December 2015, supporters of Jacob Oulanyah, the deputy speaker of parliament, beat up journalists covering opposition presidential candidate Kizza Besigye (FHRI, 2016). Other forms of violation of media freedom include malicious arrest and detention of journalists on trumped up charges. Journalists were arrested whenever the police and the army found them covering what is deemed as sensitive issues. One such arrest happened in February 2016 shortly after the winner of the 2016 elections was announced. A female TV reporter, Bahati Remmy, was arrested while reporting live on air. The arrest happened near the home of the leading opposition candidate, Kizza Besigye, who was then under house arrest, as the reporter further explains:

> Journalism is not a crime. It's a public good. Our only crime is, we have the courage to tell stories the way they are…As you can see, we have been arrested by police and they are taking us away to an unknown destination. (HRNJ-U, 2016, p. 44)

Sometimes journalists face more than one form of freedom violation. They are sometimes arrested and at the same time assaulted during and after arrest, as the same journalist further narrated.

> I was covering a story at the home of Besigye, when police arrested and detained me at Kasangati police station. While in the police van, I was beaten and my hair was pulled by police officers inside the van. My cameraman Badebye Godfrey was also hit on the head and he is in severe pain. I was treated in a very inhumane way, even when I surrendered, the policemen kept pushing me around. (HRNJ-U, 2016, p. 44)

The above case is not an isolated incident because many more journalists were arrested mainly by police in other incidents. For example, NTV cameraman Abubaker Zirabamuzaale and reporter Suhail Mugabi were thrown onto a waiting police van while other remaining journalists like Eriasa Mukiibi Sserunjogi of *Daily Monitor* and Abubaker Lubowa were harassed by police while waiting to cover a meeting between two opposition candidates (FHRI, 2016). Other journalists who were arrested while covering elections include two BBC journalists who were arrested while filming Abim Hospital in North Eastern Uganda, which was then in the spotlight for its dilapidated state after a visit by an opposition candidate Kizza Besigye. The two journalists were later released without any charge (*The Observer*, 2016).

Another common form of media freedom violation that happens during elections is denial of access to information or news sources. During election campaigns, security officers sometimes screen journalists and deny access to those they consider to be reporting about the candidate in a critical manner as one journalist explains:

> I wrote a story documenting all the times that the president [Yoweri Museveni] had campaigned past 6pm, which was the time that the electoral commission guidelines set for all campaigns to end. When the story was published, the next day I was told to leave the president's campaign trail under the pretext that they no longer had slots in their convoy for some of us. (Personal communication, Reporter A, April 10, 2019)

Apart from this incident, NTV journalists were also denied access to incumbent Yoweri Museveni rallies for refusing to use campaign video footage produced by the candidate's media team in their news bulletins. In other cases, candidates incited the public against some media houses by alleging that they were biased against them. For example, in the middle of the 2016 campaigns, reporters who were covering opposition candidate Kizza Besigye from the government owned *New Vision* newspaper, told us during interviews that they were forced to remove the newspaper company name and branded materials from the vehicle they were travelling in for fear of being attacked by mobs loyal to the candidate. This followed constant claims by the candidate that this newspaper and its subsidiaries were negatively reporting about him. The candidate had also asked his supporters to boycott buying *New Vision* media products.

Another common form of media freedom violation during election periods, is the malicious damage, stealing and confiscation of journalists' working tools. This normally takes place during scuffles and arrests of journalists. When a journalist is found taking pictures or filming incidents, the police can break the camera using the same clubs they use to assault journalists. In some cases they can confiscate cameras as crime evidences but journalists sometimes never get back their equipment again. There are also cases when the security compels journalists to delete pictures and videos that capture security forces violating the rights of people during elections. There have also been suspicious robberies at hotels where journalists stay during election campaigns. Some leads into these robberies have indicated that they could be motivated by the desire to stop journalists from working rather than the need to take the equipment for other use.

5.2. Perpetrators of Media Freedom Violations

As indicated in the above section, in Uganda, the police that should be charged with protecting journalists is at the same time the leading violator of the rights of journalists. As Table 1 indicates, 61% of all incidents of media freedom violation recorded in 2016 were committed by the police. The majority of these cases were the rampant arrests and assault of journalists. The main reason why the police interfere with the work of journalists, especially during elections is because journalists expose the police's biased tendencies by protecting supporters of the incumbent presidential candidate while suppressing, assaulting, and dispersing opposition supporters.

Another major source of media freedom violation during elections are the members of the public (community) accounting for 17% of all cases reported in 2016. During an election year, attacks on journalists by ordinary people tend to escalate due to the emotions and tension that run high during election periods. Most of the assaults by the public against journalists have happened during scuffles. These assaults are normally a product of accusations of biases against a particular section of journalists. As mentioned earlier, some of these acts have taken place after candidates inciting the public against some sections of the media. A worrying trend in Uganda is that during every election, leading political parties assemble some form of militias (paramilitary groups) that sometimes descend on journalists and other people believed to be opposing their candidate to assault them (Mwanje, 2010)

5.3. Self-Censorship during Elections

On the basis of the above-mentioned forms and sources of media freedom violations, many journalists have re-

Table 1. Perpetrators of media freedom violations.

	Perpetrator	Type of actor	No. of violations reported	Percentage
1.	Uganda Police Force	State	83	61%
2.	Community members	Non state	24	17%
3.	Employer/Radio management	Non state	8	6%
4.	Members of parliament	Quasi state	5	3.7%
5.	Judiciary	State	3	2.2%
6.	Private security guards	Non state	3	2.2%
7.	Uganda Peoples' Defense Forces	State	2	1.5%
8.	Resident District Commissioners	State	3	2.2%
9.	Political party (NRM)	Quasi state	2	1.5%
10.	Local Council members	State	1	0.7%
11.	Uganda Prison Services	State	1	0.7%
	TOTAL		**135**	**100%**

Source: HRNJ-U (2016).

sorted to self-censorship as a strategy to stay safe while covering elections. One of the major causes of self-censorship among journalists covering elections in Uganda is the practice of embedding with candidates. The main presidential candidates normally hire press vans that carry journalists that travel alongside the candidate. Because of this proximity, the journalists' professional judgment sometimes gets corrupted as one reporter explains:

> I have found that sometimes when journalists are embedded with candidates for a long time, they begin to behave as if they are an extension of the candidate's campaign machinery, which sometimes leads to self-censorship. One person with whom I reported on the Besigye campaign in 2015–2016 eventually ended up becoming his personal assistant. Others with whom I reported on Museveni's campaign either became RDCs [Resident District Commissioners], official State House photographers, or media and communications assistants at the president's office. (Personal communication, Reporter B, April 10, 2019)

The above view was shared by another journalist who noted that when you are embedded with President Museveni's campaign team, you are given instructions on what you have to do and if you do not comply with the instructions, they drop you off the campaign trail. One of such instructions is that you must portray the president in a positive light by way of indicating in the story and the pictures that the candidate drew huge crowds wherever he went to campaign.

> There are stories you come across but you cannot write them. For example, one time the President's car knocked a child dead but no journalist wrote that story because it was dangerous. In another incident, President's motorcade knocked three people dead but still no one ran that story. Even if I had written that story, it would still not come out because I work for a newspaper partly owned by the government. (Personal communication, Reporter C, April 15, 2019)

In other cases, journalists self-censor information concerning matters such as police and army brutality against civilians and bribing of voters because they are embedded with candidates. Other information that may be censored by journalists include off-the-record conversations that you are unlikely to refer to while doing your stories because the source did not authorise you to use the information. If you go ahead and use that information nevertheless, you are likely to lose access to more insider information at a later stage of the campaign process. The campaign teams also use access to their candidate as a weapon to kill certain stories. Journalists who are more objective are denied access to the candidate until they 'shape up' while those who tow the party line can interview the candidate as and when they wish.

As evident in the above analysis, both journalists working for government-owned media and those from private media face challenges when it comes to reporting the truth. Government-owned media houses are expected to write stories that glorify the incumbent president. Reporters have to relay what the president says in campaigns no matter whether it is the same promise he has made in the last three elections as another reporter explains:

> The [media owner's] influence is big because you don't have free latitude to write what you may have wanted because you know that if you took a certain angle, it [the story] would not run; they would even tell you to change it. There is one time I was in Arua when Besigye said that Museveni had turned this country into a family project and I finished writing the story. When it reached *New Vision* newsroom, they called me and directed, "change the angle." (Personal communication, Reporter D, April 20, 2016)

The other major cause of self-censorship relates to the economic survival of media houses. During elections, major presidential and parliamentary candidates advertise with media houses. These advertisements become an unwritten contract between the candidate and the media house against critical stories. Government bodies that are usually the biggest advertisers tend to spend a lot of money around this time especially in supplements that show what the incumbent has accomplished. This is intended to solicit favourable coverage for the incumbent:

> In many cases candidates that advertise with the media are given glowing coverage and are less scrutinised. This, in my view is a form of self-censorship. Secondly institutions like Electoral Commission that manage elections also spend a lot of money on advertisement, therefore insulating themselves against critical coverage. I remember during the 2011 campaigns, the ministry of Public Service gave our newspaper a one-off advert worth about 120 million shillings [$32,000]. They insisted that a lead story [related to the advert] be written. The newspaper management complied. (Personal communication, Reporter E, April 15, 2019).

6. Conclusion: Implications of Self-Censorship on the Credibility of Journalism and Democracy

The restrictive working environment for journalists in Uganda has serious consequences for the growth and relevancy of journalism to society as well as democratic rule. The profession continues to be unattractive to many journalists and aspiring journalists partly because of lack of freedom to report. As a result, more experienced journalists continue to leave the profession in search of greener pastures in NGOs and government agencies.

The continued self-censorship of election news means that citizens go to vote on the basis of biased information. In terms of democracy, this presents a worrisome situation when you have a media system that cannot hold leaders accountable. As Frere (2011, p. 246) has noted, if journalists are not free to report, neither can the electoral process be viewed as free. The infringement on the right to report remains a stumbling block in the way of citizens' right to access information and an obstacle to free and fair elections. Journalists require access to important information to adequately perform the watchdog function.

The harassment of journalists and preventing them from accessing some news sources as well as commercial considerations narrow their reporting scope, eventually leading to unbalanced information as a result of self-censorship. Due to threats and violence highlighted in this article, a sense of fear continues to engulf the media sector that causes reporters to tread with caution.

For a country to enjoy ranking among those with democratic rule, it is not enough to claim observance and respect for press freedom, but these must be seen to be actively guarded. This extends to journalists' safety, which is taken as a pre-condition for free expression and free media (Orgeret, 2016c) and "limiting the principle of free expression in all media is tantamount to undermining democracy" (Ronning, 2016, p. 43). In Uganda, there tends to be more of lip-service to this than actual visible commitment. Speaking from his experience as a former Managing Editor of *Sunday Monitor*, Bichachi (2013), points out that although the state in Uganda might appear ambivalent many times, ultimately it remains one of the biggest challenge to media freedom. He argues that although the National Resistance Movement government may not appear outright hostile to the media like the previous regimes, the paranoia over the media has not been any less. So as Ronning (2016) reasons, the claim that one feels offended by some media is not a reason to limit tolerance or free speech arguing that "to limit this fundamental right is to undermine the very principle of democracy" (p. 50). Thus, for countries like Uganda that do not ensure safety of journalists, one can posit that democracy is at stake.

While all citizens are entitled to enjoy their freedoms, there is particular concern for journalists because of their unique functions they perform in society. Once the freedom of journalists is violated, then freedoms of society have also been violated. If journalists' access to information is restricted, then it is all society that suffers since they are deprived of getting the information they need to make informed decisions. Although national governments are expected to ensure a conducive work environment for journalists, due to working in a globalised media environment, the international community is also expected to carry out the R2P journalists globally.

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Conflict of Interests

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Article

Constructing Silence: Processes of Journalistic (Self-)Censorship during Memoranda in Greece, Cyprus, and Spain

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Abstract
What are to be considered as threats against journalism? Whereas the literature on safety of journalists mainly discusses threats as part of armed conflicts, this article studies how other kinds of conflicts such as economic strangulation and the viability threat represent threats against journalists' work and safety. It argues that acts of intimidation directed against journalists represent an attack on democracy itself as they have the effect of limiting the freedom of expression. The aim of this study is to explore how journalists operate in such a conflict and under such uncertainty, as an implication of (political) pressure caused by the politics of Memoranda in Greece, Cyprus, and Spain. The comparative analysis focuses on possible changes in the processes of message construction and in the journalistic practices of the participants, exploring if, how, and to what extent these changes were imposed to journalists directly or indirectly.

Keywords
European South; journalists; memorandum; safety; self-censorship; silence

Issue
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1. Introduction

What makes journalism a "safe" profession? Does a threat to life, as for instance in an armed conflict, constitute a condition that can lead to the impoverishment of the journalistic content or are there other kinds of "conflicts," such as economic strangulation and the threat to viability, that can intervene in the function of journalism as monitoring? The aim of this research is to explore to which extent the Memoranda in three countries of the European South—Greece, Cyprus, and Spain—functioned as "pressure points" on the journalistic content or to what extent media suppression is an indicator of broader powers of corruption, political control and anti-democratic practices (Hanitzsch & Vos, 2018; Wolfgang, Vos & Kelling, 2019).

2. The Safety of Journalists

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, since 1992, 855 journalists lost their lives. In 2018, in particular, 54 journalists were killed or murdered in the battlefields and 251 were imprisoned. During the decade 2007–2017, 800 media professionals were killed in total; during 2015–2017, 59% of them lost their lives in battlefields, with a 95% of them being local correspondents (Carlsson & Pöyhtäri, 2017). In addition, new media have undoubtedly played an important role in the development of political movements, e.g., in Tunisia and Egypt (Khondker, 2011, p. 678), facilitating and sometimes enhancing the work of journalists (Cottle, 2011) who had been excluded from the regimes. Political volatility arising from such disturbances leads local regimes, who

seek to maintain their power, to actions that afflict independent journalism and the true mission of the media. Journalists are murdered not only to provoke a shock, but also as a means of intimidation. Murder has thus become an effective lever for the activity of terrorist-militia pressure groups, but for some regimes as well, who use it as a means of reducing the control applied to them. Apart from that, technological progress, which can be a blessing for facilitating a professional, can be a curse at the same time, because it makes tracing or even targeting the action or the position of a journalist easier.

Another important source of threat for journalists derives from organized crime, especially in certain countries of Asia, Central and South America, such as Mexico and Colombia, which appear as areas of high risk. Carlsson and Pöyhtäri (2017, p. 12) note that the majority of victims do not come from countries in war, but are involved in the disclosure of information concerning drug trafficking, human rights violations, and corruption.

Even though the "physical" safety of journalists has been widely discussed, less attention has been given to their psychological safety. Psychological safety has been defined as "individuals' perceptions related to the degree of interpersonal threat in their work environment" (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2012, p. 2); as the feeling of being able to "show and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status or career" (Kahn, 1990, p. 703); or a feeling that provides a sustainable psychological path to high performance, even in uncertain environments (Edmondson, 2008). Psychological safety has a positive effect on collaboration (Gratton & Erickson, 2007), experimentation (Madsen & Desai, 2010), on organizational learning and performance (Choo, Linderman, & Schroeder, 2007; Nembhard & Tucker, 2011), self-confidence in the workplace (Edmondson, 1999), while increasing the propensity to share one's knowledge in psychologically safe places (Siemsen, Roth, Balasubramanian, & Anand, 2009). In addition, increased insecurity, especially derived from increasing unemployment rates and perceived job vulnerability, leads to high psychosocial work stress and burnout (Tsai & Chan, 2011). The international crisis that started in 2008 has highlighted the need to focus more on "economic stress" as a crucial factor of psychological insecurity that affects perceived vulnerability, employees' well-being, job satisfaction and performance (Bond & Bunce, 2001; Chalofsky, 2003; Karasek, 2008). Even though scholars have long recognized the threat of job insecurity, unemployment, and underemployment to the psychological safety of employees, less attention has been given on economic stress such as employees' current financial status, their worries on financial issues and the multi-level effects of economic stressors on different socioeconomic levels of analysis (Probst, 2005). Especially in these times of crisis, organizations have been driven by an economic rationalist calculus, while the costly consequences of compromised worker psychological health driven by economic stress have been largely ignored (Dollard, 2007; Johnson, 2008). Even though "economic stress" as a product of the economic crisis has been found to generally have an impact on general stress, anxiety and depression (Viseu et al., 2018), on polarization and "middle class squeeze" (Whelan, Russell, & Maître, 2016) and on personal and social coping resources (Bartholomae & Fox, 2017), little attention has been given on the effects of economic stress on the journalistic practice, especially in the countries of the "European South" and in particular on the perceptions and experiences of the journalists who were expected to operate under the political and economic pressures emanating from the logic of the Memoranda.

In Cyprus, Greece, and Spain, that this article examines, the new working environment that has emerged due to the economic crisis has outplaced the experienced and more highly-paid professionals, resulting in phenomena of insufficient advocacy of the professional relations code and even of the journalist code of conduct, therefore leading to the "pauperization" of also the younger, training journalists. This lack of job security constitutes a source of corruption and self-censorship for journalists, causing an internal, self-fueled crisis. In the case of Cyprus, the press, while covering the demonstrations outside the House of Parliament during the deliberations on Eurogroup decisions, inclined to the deconstruction of the demonstrators and of their demands, legitimizing policies from above (Spyridou, 2015). In general, the autonomy of journalists in Cyprus is at risk because of their dependency on the government, commercial interests and, more recently, job insecurity (Milioni, Spyridou, & Koumis, 2017).

Similar phenomena emerged in Greece as well, where the crisis, up to a certain point, was subserved by the stance of the media (Nikolaidis, 2017). Strict fiscal adjustment, dismissals in both private and public sectors, reduction in advertisements on the press, etc., made lots of journalists accept serious curtailments on their wages, work under the abiding monitoring of the editorial board, and enter a form of self-censorship as they were trying to strike a balance between the correlated systems of politics, economy and media, in order to protect their job (Iosifidis & Boucas, 2015). Additionally, journals and magazines sales figures decreased by 50% between 2012 and 2017 (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2018). Although the life of journalists in Greece, Cyprus, and Spain is not directly threatened, according to the "Reporters without Borders" a new, emerging, form of economic threat seems to have advanced upon them; at least, this is shown in the interviews taken in the context of this research. Apparently, this is not irrelevant to the new state of affairs that late neoliberalism built up in the countries of the European South, which—in the case of Cyprus for example—as noted by Vogiatzoglou (2016), victimized the island, even though two years after the loan agreement some indices shifted towards the correct direction.

3. Greece, Cyprus, Spain: Alliances in Respect to Memoranda and Economic Deficiencies

On August 2018, the termination of the third economic adjustment program for Greece, which accompanied the third loan, put an end to the most economically turbulent period of postwar Greece. The crisis, before derailing in terms of fiscal policy, started in 2008 as a circular recession. In 2010, the Greek government and the creditors proposed choices to eliminate the risk of defaulting on payments, which are to blame for the extremity of the crisis. Greece, which was the first country of the European South to be subjected to the Memorandum mechanism in April 2010, received in total €288.7 billion: 256.6 from European sources and 32.1 from the International Monetary Fund (IMF; European Stability Mechanism, 2018).

Spain acceded to the Memorandum regime in July 2012, for a period of 18 months, and the Program ended in January 2014. The agreement with the EU stipulated that Spain would borrow up to €100 billion, with the exclusive aim of rescuing its banks (European Commission, 2012). Finally, it deployed €38,9 billion for the recapitalization of its commercial banks and €2.5 billion as capital injection for the establishment of Sareb, which according to the Irish model operated as a "bad bank" absorbing the toxic assets of the four nationalized banks (BFA Banca, Catalunya Bank, Banco Gallego, and Banco de Valencia). The metastasis of the deep structural crisis of 2008 in Spain was triggered by the property bubble of the preceding decade, which in turn was the result of irresponsible lending by the banks. Albeit the responsibility of the banks, the condition for the financing of Spain, in the framework of an internal devaluation policy (as it also happened in Greece), was wage reduction and other measures that deteriorated the position of lower-income classes.

Cyprus was the last country to join the rescue mechanism. The Cypriot crisis mostly resembled the Irish and the Spanish ones, because it originated from the banks. In 2011, the ratio of bank assets to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) reached 896%. In 2012, the private debt (of households and businesses) reached 288% of the GDP (Kosmas, 2019). The purchase of Greek bonds on behalf of the Cypriot banks, which were later subjected to a "haircut" following the decision of the European Commission in the context of the 2012 restructuring—without provision for any compensation, although Cyprus was an EU member—transferred the crisis from Greece to Cyprus. Apart from the already known terms of funding, such as wage reductions, privatizations, etc., what was also included in the case of Cyprus was the "haircut" to deposits over €100,000. It was the first time that such a measure was implemented in the EU. Cyprus was subsumed under the rescue mechanism in March 2013; it borrowed €10 billion and exited in March 2016 (European Commission, 2013).

The inclusion of the above three countries in the regime of limited sovereignty that the Memoranda imposed, strengthened the links among them. There are three prevailing similarities: Firstly, in all three countries, the public debt is much higher after their "rescue," contrary to the level it was before the crisis, as it is apparent from Figure 1. Consequently, they are more susceptible to an abrupt shift of the economic cycle.

Secondly, all three countries are under a surveillance regime, as stipulated by the regulation 472/2013 of the European Parliament and Council (European Parliament, 2013). As a result, economic policy (everything concerning public spending, banking sector, labor market, social policy, etc.) comes under the rigorous monitoring of European institutions.

Thirdly, social welfare indices have yet to return to their pre-crisis levels. In Greece, unemployment in 2019

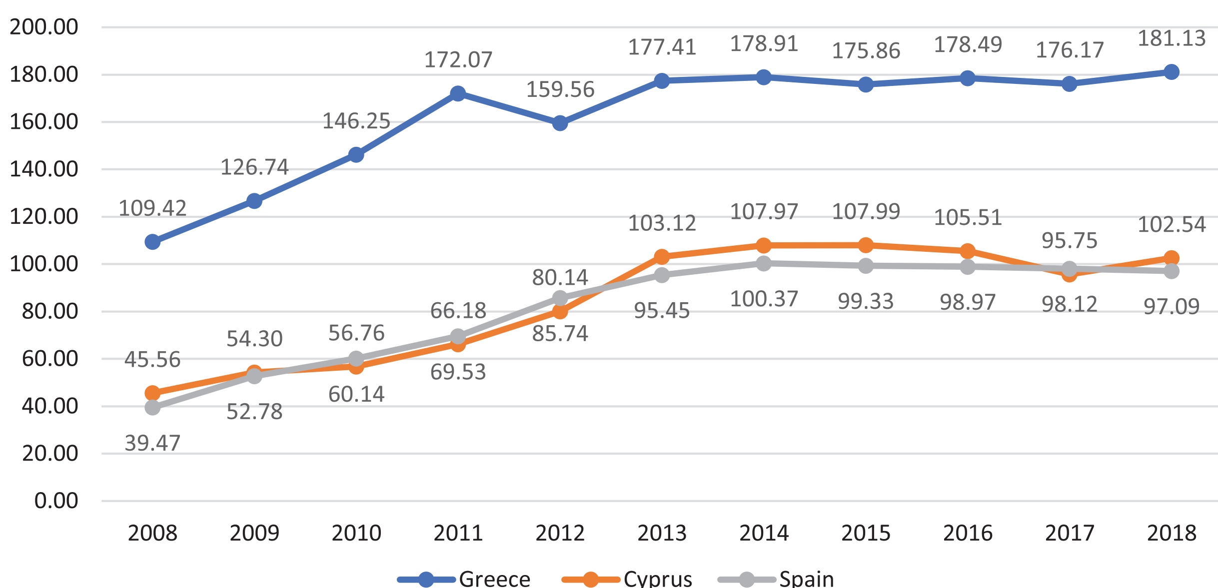

Figure 1. Public debt as a ratio of GDP. Source: European Commission's Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs (2019).

is double than in 2008, wages and pensions are by 40% lower, collective bargaining has been abolished by law, and Greece is the only member state of the EU where the minimum wage is decided by state law. In Spain, in 2018, the unemployment rate was higher than in 2008 (15.3% instead of 11.3%), although during that decade wages decreased and the labor market became more flexible, e.g., in 2017, 90% of jobs were temporary and one third of them lasted less than a week (Alderman, 2019). Furthermore, Spain still had the highest school dropout rate in the EU: 19.9% in 2015 (Villanueva & Vega, 2019). In Cyprus, unemployment in 2018 was more than double in comparison to 2008 (8.4% from 3.7%); in the meantime, a broad program of first-residence auctions is imminent, which will deteriorate the terms of housing for thousands of Cypriots, but will enable the banks to purge their portfolios.

Some common characteristics that run deeper can also be traced in the roots of the economic crisis. No matter what form it took (public debt and banking crisis), it was a crisis that challenged and shook the dominant economic model, that of neoliberalism, as it is demonstrated in financialization and globalization (Duménil & Lévy, 2011). It deteriorated as well, due to the participation of these three countries in the Eurozone, which translated into inability to recourse to traditional measures of monetary policymaking for the management of the crisis (Lapavitsas et al., 2012).

In that context, journalists were in the forefront of pressure, not only having to manage an extended, stressful, and unpleasant situation, but also having to analyze it, sometimes even serve it. On the one hand, they had to cover suicides or school closures and, on the other, cuts on wages and continuing lay-offs, which were an everyday phenomenon. The contrast boiled up due to the fact that economic volatility made the owners and managers of the media more submissive to political and economic authority, in order to ensure their survival. That process raised issues for the "safety" of journalists, not only as a result of a threat to their lives, but also as a psychological after-effect of the extended insecurity climate.

4. Media Landscapes in Greece, Cyprus, and Spain

In Greece, 12 daily newspapers and 20 Sunday papers are in circulation, and six nationwide private television channels broadcast. Newspaper circulation in 2018 amounted to 54.2 million papers from 248.5 million in 2007, and magazine circulation amounted to 20.6 million, from 111.4 in 2007—one year before the crisis hit. Media ownership in Greece is characterized by a very high degree of concentration, indicative of very low levels of media pluralism, a concept that embraces aspects such as diversity in the ownership of media and variety in the sources of information (Leandros, 2010). Circulation figures are topped by the newspapers that belong to media groups owning television channels, radio stations, and websites (horizontal ownership) as well, or even a press distribution agency (vertical ownership). At the same time, diagonal ownership flourishes as well, as the most powerful owners of media groups are also ship-owners or conduct business in the refining and trade of crude oil, construction, tourism, and other industries. The press in Greece is politically active in an intense way, identifying with political parties (Papathanasopoulos, 2005); it comes as no surprise that investigative journalism has significantly shrunk, due to the deep economic crisis.

The Cypriot press shows a remarkable selling decline in both newspaper and magazine. The readership index of the first quarters of 2016 to 2019 is reduced by 4% (from 14.4% to 10.5%), while the GDP of Cyprus is increasing. Four daily and two Sunday political newspapers are printed in Cyprus. One of them (*Haravgi*) belongs to the Communist Party, while the rest of them (*Fileleftheros*, *Politis*, *Alitheia*, *Simerini*, and *Kathimerini*) belong to media groups that also manage other media (radio, magazines, television, websites), a practice gradually abandoned in Europe. It is remarkable that most newspapers were founded with the occupation of Cyprus featuring central on their agendas. Overall, Cyprus seems to rather have freedom of expression and media pluralism, since constitutional and legal provisions protect citizens' rights connected to the freedom of expression (Christophorou & Spyridou, 2017).

Mass media in Spain are characterized by concentration in large private groups, among which Atresmedia, Mediaset España, Prisa and Vocento stand out—we could add others of a more regional scope, such as Grupo Godó, Grupo Zeta, Corporación Voz de Galicia, Editorial Prensa Ibérica, Grupo Joly, Grupo Heraldo, etc. Recently, hundreds of new independent digital projects have been added. The four large corporations are publicly traded on the stock exchange. And their shareholders include large financial corporations, banks, and multinationals. Despite this, the greatest influence on information is politics. The private market is influenced through subsidies and the granting of institutional advertising. This generates controversy, since it leads to public institutions interfering with the editorial lines of the media. Ideologically, Spanish media are divided into two clear axes which should not be ignored. The first, horizontal, has to do with a positioning between the political left and right. The second one, vertical, has to do with the promotion of a unified country versus the promotion of nationalism (Salaverría & Beceiredo, 2018).

5. Methodology

5.1. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis and Journalists

The journalistic profession, and especially the "safety" (physical or psychological) of the journalists, has been approached quantitatively (e.g., Browne, Evangeli, & Greenberg, 2012; Feinstein & Starr, 2015; Levaot & Mark Sinyor MSc, 2013) with less studies focusing on the quali-

tative and in-depth understanding of the journalists' psychological processes and practices generated by feelings of insecurity. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is a distinctive approach to qualitative research, based on the methodological approaches of Smith (1996) and Smith, Jarman, and Osborn (1999) and on the assumption that individuals do not passively perceive of an "objective" reality, but they interpret and formulate their (personal) social reality from their own biographical experiences. The aim of the IPA is to explore in depth the processes of experience, understanding, perceptions and views (Reid, Flowers, & Larkin, 2005). As it is "phenomenological," this approach acknowledges the dual facets of the method (both the participants' and the researchers') and the joint reflections that form the analytic account produced (Osborn & Smith, 1998).

By applying IPA in this study, we aim to provide an in-depth understanding of how the participants experienced the politics of the Memoranda in each country examined. The aim is not to create a representative study, but rather to understand the way in which the Memoranda affected the journalistic practice of the participants.

5.2. Participants

All data were derived from 35 semi-structured interviews (Greece, n = 14; Cyprus, n = 9; and Spain, n = 12). Participants were journalists working in traditional and new media in each country at the time of the Memoranda and had over 15 years of experience in traditional or traditional and new media. Participant information is provided in Table 1.

5.3. Procedure

The qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews, which lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. All participants were given an information sheet regarding the present study, informing them on issues such as assurance of anonymity, the right to withdraw, the interview process, and the goals of the study. After having read the information sheet, participants were provided with a consent form for the study. After signing the consent form, participants were assigned a code with the abbreviation of the country (ParticipantGR01, ParticipantCY02, ParticipantSP03, etc.), the interview began, and participants were paid for their time.

The interviews were conducted with the discussion focusing on the following four focal areas: First, the participant's journalistic experience; the questions were focused on the participants' experiences regarding the journalistic profession and how they were involved in journalism even before the Memoranda.

Second, how the influence of the Memoranda was understood by society and how it affected journalism in general, according to the participants' experiences and views, as well as the influence of the Memoranda on the participants' journalistic practice. This area included questions regarding the recognition of the main influence of the Memoranda in the participants' countries and the idea of "silence," i.e., how and to what extent the influence affected the content they produced.

Third, the understanding of the "pressure points," namely the exact "loci of pressure" that the participants recognized, which interfered with their practice. The "intensity" of this "pressure" was also qualitatively examined to provide a more general comparative overview of the perceived pressure.

Fourth, the approach of using semi-structured interviews enabled participants to discuss issues that were of primary concern to themselves. As such, this study does not provide "generalized" results, but it examines in depth the participants' perceptions regarding the effect of the Memoranda in Greece, Cyprus, and Spain.

5.4. Analysis

All materials from the interviews were analyzed using IPA (Smith, Jarman, & Osborn, 1999), aiming to create concise and mutually exclusive themes that are significant within the transcribed material. Each interview was analyzed individually, and the relevant items and emerging themes were recognized. Connections between the themes led to their ordering in preliminary lists. Master themes for each interview were created and, upon completion, all master themes from all interviews were assembled in greater categories, the super-ordinate themes. All themes were represented verbatim from the original material and the external reliability of the analysis was ensured by an external, independent researcher with extended experience in IPA methodology.

6. Results

Two super-ordinate themes emerged from the analysis: (i) Influences of the Memoranda; and (ii) pressure

Table 1. Participant information.

Information/Country	Greece (n = 14)	Cyprus (n = 9)	Spain (n = 12)
Gender	Male: 9 Female: 5	Male: 7 Female: 2	Male: 7 Female: 5
Age range	37–58	44–61	39–59
Mean age	49	51	47

points. The thematic structure of the analysis is displayed in Table 2.

6.1. Influences of the Memoranda

The first super-ordinate theme of "Influences of the Memoranda" emerged from the answers of the participants regarding how and to what extent the logic of Memoranda affected the journalistic practice at two levels. Firstly, the perception of the participants regarding how the Memoranda affected the "Others" (Table 2, Code 1.1.), and secondly, how the Memoranda affected the "Self" (Table 2, Code 1.2.), that is the participants themselves on their profession. Regarding the first master theme, two sub-categories emerged: financial influences (Table 2, Code 1.1.1.), and influences on journalistic practice (Table 2, Code 1.1.2.). The financial influences mentioned were predominantly negative: "Look, the Memoranda brought redundancies and insecurity everywhere. You could see and feel that financially everything has changed" (ParticipantGR02); "The most important issue is that the financial crisis opened the door to the financial loci to have more influence on society than politicians did" (ParticipantCY06); "In Spain there was a close and complex relation between the financial system and media groups. The Memorandum affected a lot the relationship with the banking system" (ParticipantSP03). From the qualitative analysis, all participants in all countries recognized that the Memoranda had a negative impact on the wider economy in general and the journalistic field in particular. The negative impacts were not only measured financially (cut-offs, lay-offs) but also psychologically, in terms of creating feelings of insecurity.

Influences on journalistic practices (Table 2, Code 1.1.2.) emerged from the participants' replies regarding the effects of the Memoranda on the journalistic practice itself: "The Memorandum changed the whole journalistic landscape. The political system, the IMF, Europe, everyone involved wanted to change the way journalism worked" (ParticipantGR08); "Less recruitments meant lower quality. Today those who say that they are journalists are of lower quality than the older ones, they are cheap labor" (ParticipantCY06). Even though Greek and Cypriot participants all recognized, to a smaller or larger extent, the financial impact of the Memoranda on the journalistic practice, participants from Spain acknowledged less direct impact, though acknowledging some indirect pressure: "There might have been influences on the companies for example, but I don't think that the media have been that affected" (ParticipantSP07). The results in this sub-category point to the influence of the Memoranda regarding the notion of "qualitative journalism." Abramson (2010) recognizes the challenges that journalism faced, to acknowledge the direct and indirect influences especially in times of crisis, and argues that financial cut-downs and lay-offs have a negative impact on the quality of journalism, given also the transformative era of today's media (McNair, 2013).

Influences on the "Self" (Table 2, Code 1.2.) emerged from the answers of the participants in respect to the impact that such influences had on their personal journalistic practice, implying processes of self-censorship: "Well, self-censorship was all around, especially if you worked for a Medium that had a specific 'line.' In case you went against that line, you would be marginalized and lose your job" (ParticipantGR04); "There was generally a heavy 'climate.' I think it lasted just for a while. It was a shock, but I think we soon found our pace" (ParticipantCY05). As ParticipantSP02 remarks:

> In my opinion, I would say insecurity leads to self-censorship. The reasons vary, but I think that, a lot of times, are more related to the prejudices of the journalists, the fear of losing their jobs or the concern about the crisis and its consequences on the media where they work.

Interestingly enough, only the Greek journalists recognized the process of self-censorship directly. Cypriot and Spanish participants mentioned vaguely a connection between financial insecurity and self-censorship but none of them stated directly that they personally have been involved of some kind of self-censorship, despite the fact that they all acknowledged the role of the financial crisis and the effect of the editorial "line" on the construction of the journalistic message. This finding could be interpreted by what Hayes, Scheufele, and Huge, (2006) call "non-participation as self-censorship," namely the fact that journalists avoided to enter a pro- or an anti-Memorandum attitude in order to feel secure in their working environments.

Overall, the Greek participants acknowledged intense influence both at the larger societal and financial level and at the personal level, that is their own journal-

Table 2. Compositional structure of IPA themes.

Thematic Level	Code	Theme One	Code	Theme Two
Super-ordinate theme	1	Influences of the Memoranda	2	Pressure Points
Master themes	1.1.	Influences on Others	2.1.	External Factors
	1.2	Influences on Self	2.2.	Internal Factors
Sub-categories	1.1.1.	Financial Influences	2.1.1.	Troika
	1.1.2.	Influences on journalistic practice	2.2.1.	Government
	1.2.1.	Self-Censorship	2.2.2.	Media Owners
			2.2.3.	Banks

istic practice. Cypriot participants mentioned a relatively mild influence of the Memorandum in most areas and the Spanish participants in their majority did not recognize any direct influence of the Memorandum on their profession and said that, if there was some influence, it was very mild and abstract.

6.2. Pressure Points

The super-ordinate theme "Pressure points" emerged from the participants' replies regarding how and to what extent they felt "pressure" on the journalistic practice. Two master themes emerged: External Factors (Table 2, Code 2.1.), and Internal Factors (Table 2, Code 2.2.). The distinction between "external" and "internal" factors was constructed based on the country, namely whether the "pressure points" were found "outside" their country (e.g., Europe, Troika) or "inside" their country (e.g., government).

Regarding the external factors, from the replies, "Troika" (Table 2, Code 2.1.1.) emerged as a locus of pressure:

> The Troika at first used specific platforms, like in Ireland, for delivering information to journalists. Soon enough, the Troika employed companies for strategic communication. At first, these companies were used just to organize meetings, after a while they distributed the 'non-papers.' (ParticipantGR03)

Also, as ParticipantSP06 stated: "Sometimes, informative meetings have been arranged by the European Commission for journalists. The aim was to explain and to discuss 'off the record' specific movements of the Troika. Especially during the most difficult moments of the crisis with Greece." The Cypriot participants did not feel there was an official pressure by the Troika to the journalists. The interference of the Troika as a direct "pressure point" was mostly and most intensely present in the replies of the Greek journalists. Greek participants acknowledged that "there was a 'core' of journalists, to whom specific directives were given" (ParticipantGR02); that the Troika unofficially organized "Greek–German friendship seminars as an integral part of journalists 'proselytism"' (ParticipantGR13). Interestingly, the Spanish participants recognized the interference of the Troika to Spain as a result of the Greek crisis and as a way to "prevent" the "Greek paradigm" to affect other countries under the logic of the Memoranda.

"Government" (Table 2, Code 2.2.1.) emerged from the replies of the participants regarding how and to what extent government officials interfered directly or indirectly with the construction of the journalistic message:

> Look, the most intense interference was during the Papadimos era. It was direct and lasted until the next government. I was told that I had to start my TV show playing videos that had a positive effect on the market, silly things, for example to show how the Americans threw teddy bears with hearts during a rugby game….Of course, I refused. (ParticipantGR11)

Additionally, "the big issue in journalism is that one has to have sources. And these sources decide how close you will get to them. So, if you wrote something against them, you automatically lost your sources" (ParticipantCY09); "the point is that, in Spain, media, especially the press, but also television, depend on the government, in one way or another. For example, Spanish media groups, for the large part, depend on the licenses which are provided" (ParticipantSP01). Greek participants in general acknowledged a more direct interference of government officials to the journalistic practice, while Cypriot and Spanish participants mostly referred to the "proximity to the source" issue. Greek participants also acknowledged the indirect interference: "If you were not with the government, you were not a patriot. I mean the Memorandum was the patriotic thing to do. If you did not support it, then the government cut you off from the information" (ParticipantGR02). Additionally, Greek participants mentioned direct interference of the Government to the journalistic practice: "People came to the office and said to the chief editor that he [name of the politician] wants you to write this" (ParticipantGR06). Political interference to journalism has been widely discussed (e.g., Milojević & Krstić, 2018; Scullion, Gerodimos, Jackson, & Lilleker, 2013) and also the interference of the government in public broadcasting (e.g., Hanretty, 2011). Interestingly the issue of "exclusion" seems to be present in the replies of the participants, leading to the journalists' conformity to the political elites, otherwise to her/his exclusion from the official (or unofficial) information (Rao & Wasserman, 2015).

"Media Owners" (Table 2, Code 2.2.2.) as a pressure point was also mostly acknowledged by the Greek participants: "If you worked for a big news channel, you could of course not say, or imply, that you are in favor of the drachma and against the euro" (ParticipantGR05); and as ParticipantGR01 also stated:

> My then Director was going to run for Minister under PASOK. Well, he thought that my 'line' was against PASOK, so he locked up my computer! My files! My personal archive that I have been constructing for 12 years! I had to take legal actions to have access to my personal archive!

Cypriot participants replied mostly in the line that "rarely was there direct influence by media owners. At least where I was working I had not heard the owner gave a specific 'line"' (ParticipantCY09), or that "there were some interventions, but indirectly, for example 'if we don't have ads, how are you all going to get paid.' That is, we had to satisfy those who gave us advertisements in order to keep our salary" (ParticipantCY06). Most Spanish participants felt that there could be a "line" from the

media owners, but this was due to the fact that "in general, media adapt to its editorial line" (ParticipantSP03) or "there were certain 'recommendations' or 'indications' from the owners of the media I work in, which we could classify as 'ethically questionable.' However, these 'recommendations' were refuted and put aside from the Editorial Office and the Director of the media" (ParticipantSP07). The major difference between participants' replies is that the Greek participants witnessed a direct interference of the media owners, the Cypriot participants vaguely acknowledged "some" kind of pressure and the Spanish participants either rationalized this interference or replied that mostly these pressures (if present) did not reach them personally.

"Banks" (Table 2, Code 2.2.3.) also emerged as a pressure point, mostly and most intensely by Greek participants: "Of course, if your channel was against the Memorandum or the Government, there would be no more loans for that channel. At the end, it's all about what the banks wanted" (ParticipantGR05). The issue of "loans from the banks" as means of exerting direct or indirect influence on the journalistic message came up in most of the replies of the Greek participants. In some of the replies, "Banks" represented not only the Greek banks, as monetary institutions, but the "bankers" in general: "If you wanted your channel to survive, you had to do what the bankers wanted. Not only the banks in Greece, but the banks in Europe" (ParticipantGR06). This issue derives from the business model of the media, where, especially in Greece, the media are mostly dependent on bank loans. The responses of the Cypriot participants were mixed. The majority of the responses acknowledged a mild to strong interference of the banks, e.g.:

> Since 2010–2011, banks risked going bankrupt, so advertising was scarce, real estate was frozen, as was also the case for cars, then the media had only food advertising. That is, we had a 70% reduction in advertising. So you couldn't write against the banks, as you may well understand. (ParticipantCY02)

But there were also two cases, where the participants felt no interference from the banks: "I don't think banks would tell the media what to write. That is, I have never heard of this" (ParticipantCY11). Additionally, Spanish participants did not mention any direct interference of the banks in the journalistic practice, but most of them acknowledged the power of the banks to indirectly control enterprises through loans.

7. Conclusions

Based on the participants' replies and experiences, concerning the implementation of the Memoranda in the European South, in particular the way anti-Memoranda voices were (self-)"silenced," three focal points emerge in relation to journalism as a profession. The first one concerns the international institutions that imposed the Memoranda. The second one is related to working conditions in general, and the third one to the special working terms of journalists. All three focal points have, according to the respondents' answers, an impact on their perception of "being safe," not only in terms of working conditions, but as a psychological state, mostly derived from perceived (or actual) economic stressors.

The first issue concerns the source of information. According to the respondents in this study the IMF, as well as the European institutions (the EU and the European Central Bank), would use parallel information channels for specific journalists. Parallel to the official and public briefings, that were open to accredited journalists, there were mechanisms addressed selectively to journalists, providing them with privileged briefing. Thus, unequal access to information affected professionals who had no access and placed them in a disadvantaged position regarding the media organization management and the public, risking getting marginalized. Concurrently, it improved the position of those who had acceded to the closed group of the privileged and were perennially provided with feedback, exclusive information, interviews of key players at that time, etc. The criterion for such segregation was almost always political, as enhanced access to information benefited the ones who were willing to communicate the messages of the Troika uncritically to the public. On the other hand, the journalists who were excluded from privileged access to information were the ones who maintained a critical stance, asked discomforting questions, pointed out the inconsistencies of the austerity programs, reminded of the negative implications of imposing similar programs in other countries by the IMF, etc. Moreover, other forms of providing information were extensively used, such as seminars organized by the IMF in its headquarters in the USA, which were characterized as a means of "constructing" the journalists' silence and ensuring their "co-operation." Respondents highlighted similar practices used by the German Embassy in Greece, which organized trips to Germany for Greek journalists selected with non-transparent criteria. Neither the IMF nor the German Embassy ever made the list of the journalists who benefited from such seminars and trips public. The silence they held did not confirm their effort to appear as if operating in a transparent environment of open access to information.

The problem resulting from such instances of unfair influence on journalists is related to their ability to inform the public they address in the most objective and unaffected manner possible, as well as the feeling of job insecurity. The extended use of practices that were characterized as "bribes," especially by organizations such as the IMF, distorts the information and cancels a priori the philosophy, which is implicit with the profession, namely checking and confirming any news before it goes public.

Regarding working conditions in Greece, Cyprus, and Spain, the pressure put on journalists who formed our sample did not differ from the one forced on all other employees. Cuts on wages, unsolicited transformation of

collective agreements to individual ones without the consent of the employees, dismissals, work intensification, elongation of work shifts, work during weekends and at nighttime, and working away from the office without extra compensation, unpaid internships and uninsured work, intimidation at work, were the norm in smaller or larger organizations. The media did not constitute an exception, for one more reason: The economic turmoil that shook media organizations was greater than in the rest of the economy, because the advertisements and the reading public declined sharply. The shrinkage of the mass media sector, despite its importance in the political and public life, remains undiminished and has led to a severe decrease in journalists' income, having a negative impact on their working conditions and performance as well. In such an environment, censorship from the administration offices as well as self-censorship as a means of survival bloomed.

There are, however, some aspects that make the profession of a journalist different and these refer to the degrees of (even a relative) freedom that journalists ought to have in order to properly perform their duty. The practices of the unfair influence of journalists, in this sample, by the Troika (added to practices that may exist in every country) would not have been so effective had their working terms not set the ground for such practices to flourish. Most of the participants in this study referred to incidences such as: discrimination, persecutions, even dismissals on account of journalists' opinions, arbitrary interventions to the content of reporting, even on the commentary, etc. What also functioned negatively according to the participants of this study was ideological terrorism, which in the name of "patriotic duty" expelled any critique as disputing national interests. Similar incidents, which transferred the state of emergency of the country in the journalist profession, showed the absence of a code of conduct that would govern the operation of news agencies, respected by the ownership, the administration, the employees, and anyone else who could be held accountable for it.

In the context of the above, and parallel to the new form of journalism safety that emerged from the financial crisis—the one of (self-)censorship and constructed silence—three necessities arise: The first one concerns the public accountability of international institutions for their relationship with the media and publicity. The second one is about the regulation of working relations, since it is now ascertained that the deregulation regime leads to the degradation of human labor. And the third one has to do with the closer monitoring of the code of conduct so that the right to information is respected in times when society needs it most: when, in the middle of the crisis, core values are being overthrown.

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Conflict of Interests

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Article

Re-Conceptualizing Safety of Journalists in Bangladesh

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Abstract

Journalists are currently facing a multitude of threats. Commonly, these are considered in terms of harassment and bodily harms such as incarceration and murder of journalists. In the Bangladeshi case we argue that the parameters for evaluating what constitutes safety for journalists go beyond conventional wisdom. On the basis of in-depth interviews of 23 Bangladeshi journalists, we argue that the concept of journalists' safety has three intertwined dimensions. First, journalists' safety incorporates avoiding bodily harm (imprisonment, enforced disappearance, and so forth), and harassment, as well as economic and career threats. Second, in order to remain safe, journalists undertake various tactics including compromising the objectivity of news in a regime where security apparatus and pro-government journalists work in tandem to surveil and intimidate non-partisan journalists. Third, the tactics used by journalists decrease public faith in the media and the media can no longer play a watchdog role. We argue that one needs to reconceptualize the safety of journalists within these three intertwined dimensions.

Keywords

authoritarianism; Bangladesh; democracy; hybrid regime; journalism; journalists' safety

Issue

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1. Introduction

Safety of journalists has context-specific meanings and implications. For example, a journalist who is working at the *New York Times* in the democratic USA will have different standards for safety (and its preservation) from a journalist working in Rwanda or Pakistan where democratic institutes, norms, and cultures are under pressure. In light of this basic presumption, we sought to find out how Bangladeshi journalists define the concept of "safety." UNESCO (2019) conceptualizes the lack of safety for journalists as "attacks on media professionals often perpetrated in non-conflict situations by organized crime groups, militia, security personnel, and even local police, making local journalists among the most vulnerable." It says that these attacks include murder, abductions, harassment, intimidation, illegal arrest, and arbitrary detention (UNESCO, 2019).

According to Bertelsmann Stiftung, a think tank based in Germany, Bangladesh is a new autocracy (Schwarz, 2018). However, Riaz (2019) differs with this view and argues that Bangladesh is a hybrid regime—a regime that combines democratic traits (election) with autocratic traits (severe political repression). In other words, Bangladesh is not a country that respects democratic principles such as free speech, human rights, and political equality. Within this political climate, the government has made heavy investments in procuring surveillance technology and employs various surveillance techniques to thwart free thinkers and journalists (Privacy International, 2018). As a result, the 2019 World Press Freedom Index placed Bangladesh at 150th out

of 180 countries and Bangladesh is below Afghanistan and Pakistan (Reporters Without Borders, 2019). The Freedom in the World 2019 report said "journalists and media outlets in Bangladesh face many forms of pressure, including frequent lawsuits, harassment, and serious or deadly physical attacks" (Freedom House, 2019). In addition, Human Rights Watch has noted repeated abuse of "section 57 of the ICT Act to prosecute journalists" (Human Rights Watch, 2018a). Section 57 of the ICT Act authorizes prosecution of any person who publishes, in electronic form, material that is defamatory and prejudices the image of the state or a person or causes or may cause hurt to religious belief. A Bangladeshi think tank, Article 19, notes that "in 2017, there were 76 incidents of journalists facing charges under Section 57 of the ICT Act, and in 2018 there have been more than 90 cases brought against activists, media workers, and others" (Article 19, 2018). In 2018, Bangladeshi editors formed a human chain to protest another anti-free speech law entitled the Digital Security Act. The law, called a "black law" by many, could send anyone to prison for 7–14 years who "secretly records government officials or gathers information from a government agency using a computer or other digital device" and "spread(s) negative propaganda about the country's 1971 war of independence and its founding leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman" (Mahmud, 2018b). Against this backdrop of increasing surveillance and attacks on journalists by force and legal means in a political climate that is not democratic, we investigate how Bangladeshi journalists define safety. On the basis of our findings we will discuss safety issues for journalists in the face of ever-expanding censorship, journalists' reactions and defense against safety risks, and how the public views the role of media in the country.

2. Framing the Problem of Safety and the Agency of Journalists in a Hybrid Structure

Goffman has argued, "individuals cannot understand the world fully and therefore actively classify and interpret their life experiences to make sense of the world around them" (Goffman, 1974, p. 24). The individual's reaction to sensory information therefore depends on schemes of interpretation called "primary frameworks" (Scheufele, 2000). In short, framing theory underpins how an interconnected world can be subdivided through particular frames that conceptualize or address an issue. Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley (1997), and Chong and Druckman (2007) argue that framing starts with a conventional expectancy value model of an individual's attitude toward an object or issue. The debate about climate change is a good example in this regard. In this debate there are groups and individuals who believe that changes being observed in the climate are dangerous and therefore want to reduce greenhouse gas emission, whereas there are groups and individuals who believe that climate change is a hoax and, therefore, that there is no need for reducing greenhouse gas emission. This debate demonstrates that individuals form attitudes towards actions as a result of holding a set of beliefs about climate change. The set of dimensions that affect an individual's evaluation of climate change constitutes an individual's "frame in thought" and their attitude to the debate is considered to be a "framing effect" (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 106). In our study, we will need to decipher how journalists frame the problem of safety in Bangladesh against the backdrop of the authority (the state and media owners) systematically subverting free media in Bangladesh. The relationship between journalists and authority in the current age of the hybrid regime is further explainable through agents and structure theory because the frame in thought and framing effect in any consideration of the safety of Bangladeshi journalists is embedded in the power relationship between the agency of journalists and the structure of their society, i.e., the hybrid regime of Bangladesh.

Dowding (2008) argues that individual human beings are agents and their behaviours and attitudes are shaped and moulded by structures of their environment. In this regard Dowding asserts that "both the social or institutional rules and the interests of other people—will structure the behaviour of agencies of biological individuals" (Dowding, 2008, p. 22). How journalists behave in order to remain safe in the face of oppressive political institutions is important to know. However, we should also reinforce the fact that the attitudes of journalists confronting the hybrid regime are conditional on the power relationship between the agents (Bangladeshi journalists) and structure (the hybrid regime; for more, see Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 607).

3. The Media Landscape of Bangladesh

Outlets for journalists have gone through a transition in Bangladesh in the last few decades due to the emergence of satellite televisions and the expansion of the Internet. According to one estimate, in 2017 there were 2,320 newspapers, 1,781 online news sites, 72 radio stations, and 43 television channels in Bangladesh (Bour, Frey, & Rahman, 2017, p. 23). Bour and colleagues also note that there are 17,300 organized journalists working in Bangladesh (Bour et al., 2017). However, this account of the media landscape is not in accord with other estimates, which claim that the total number of private television stations operating in Bangladesh is 30 and the total number of newspapers is 1,191(Azad, 2018; Islam & Jahan, 2019). Despite this question about the precise number of media outlets, it is plausible to conclude that journalism and news are being disseminated through diverse media channels in the country and that many people are working as journalists. However, the quality of journalism in Bangladesh is not encouraging. Elahi (2013), on the basis of a survey of 333 journalists who are based in Dhaka (capital of Bangladesh), in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions, found that journalists' ethical standards are poor and that many indulge

in corrupt practices. Elahi also found that "some journalists and certain sectors of the media imposed self-censorship because of journalists' and editors' personal political bias or the media owner's political position" (Elahi, 2013, p. 197).

4. The Scope of This Study: Safety of Journalists in Bangladesh

Safety of journalists has remained an understudied terrain for scholars and practitioners. In 2014, with the aim of filling this gap, UNESCO developed a ten-point research agenda in line with the 2011 UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, and called for journalists to cooperate with academic scholars (Fadnes, Krøvel, & Orgeret, 2019, p. 2). That research agenda included—"Rights-based issues; Conflict issues; Societal issues; Legal issues; Practitioner issues; Psychological issues; Economic issues; Digital issues; Thematic issues; Educational issues" (Fadnes et al., 2019). Before this push from UNESCO, it was "challenging to examine the issue of safety due to the politically sensitive features of the topic and the need to continuously strive for consensus within a multi-national organization" (Fadnes et al., 2019).

We have found three limitations in previous studies of journalist safety. First, we found that most studies on the safety of journalists stemmed out of conflict and reporting of war zones (Ashry, 2019; Aslam, 2015; Creech, 2018; Düsterhöft, 2013; Eide, Khalvatgar, & Shirzad, 2019; Greppi, 2004; Høiby & Ottosen, 2017; Kim, 2010; Lisosky & Henrichsen, 2009; Relly & Bustamante, 2014; Saboory et al., 2017; Tumber, 2006). Journalists' safety in stable authoritarian or hybrid regimes like Bangladesh hardly gets scholarly attention. Second, we found that the term 'safety' largely is limited to harassment, incarceration, and bodily harms in the small number of scholarly papers written about the safety of journalists in places that are not war and conflict zones (Baker, 2016; Saboory et al., 2017). Some articles talk about arrests of journalists and attacks on news outlet offices (Diedong, 2016; Srinivasan, 2016). A few talk about safety issues that journalists face in the virtual world (Barton & Storm, 2014; Çalışkan, 2019). However, very few talk about broader aspects of journalists' safety including the hazards associated with journalists' need to compromise objectivity in order to remain safe. Finally, in the Bangladeshi context, journalists' safety is a neglected topic as well, as we found only three papers addressing elements of safety of Bangladeshi journalists. For example, Akhter and Ullah (2014) examined the safety issues of local correspondents when covering natural disasters like cyclones, whereas Ahmed (2016) studies the issue of self-censorship in the press. Islam and Rahman (2016) investigated actors behind the suppression of freedom of the press.

As scholarship on the broader aspects of the safety of journalists in Bangladesh is rare, we have surveyed annual reports published from 2009–2019 from Reporters Without Borders, Freedom House, and the Committee to Protect Journalists. We found that these reports are also limited to the conventional concept of journalist safety as they highlight physical attacks, arrests, self-censorship, murder, and laws restricting freedom of speech (for instance, see Committee to Protect Journalists, 2009, p. 13, 2015, p. 7, 2017, p. 1, 2018, p. 21). It is our hope that by expanding the paradigm of the safety of journalists we will encourage scholars and practitioners to rethink the issue of journalist safety in Bangladesh.

5. Research Design: The Method

We employ both qualitative and quantitative research methods to understand how journalists conceptualize safety issues, what techniques they use to remain safe in the face of burgeoning efforts by the government to control the media, and how the public reacts to journalism. To understand how journalists define safety we sent a qualitative, open-ended questionnaire to 30 former and current journalists in October 2019. Among them, 23 replied. As we both had been journalists in Bangladesh, we could, as Palinkas et al. (2015, p. 3) said "identify and select individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest" for our purposive sampling technique. Our questionnaire involved 19 questions (see Supplementary File).

Our logic behind the framing of this questionnaire was embedded in several factors. First, we contextualized the questions based on the recent reports coming out of Bangladesh about the status of the free press and safety of journalists. Reporters without Borders recently observed "serious press freedom violation" in the country as mentioned in the beginning of this article. For example, while covering the road safety movement by Bangladeshi school children in 2018, five photojournalists including one from the Associated Press were severely beaten by men from the ruling party (*The Daily Star*, 2018). A well-known photographer, Shahidul Alam, was arrested and imprisoned for 100 days for offering criticism about the government in an Al Jazeera TV interview during the road safety movement (Ahmed, 2018; Laurent, 2018). Therefore, a key frame that dominates our questionnaire is rooted in exploring connections between the suppressive nature of the regime and journalists' perceptions about their safety (for example, see Supplementary File, questions a to f). This approach is also justified through agency and structure theory as mentioned above, since we believe it is impossible to understand the agencies of journalists living in Bangladesh without acknowledging that their agencies are molded, shaped, and reshaped by the authoritarian political structure of Bangladesh. Following Schlosser (2015) we consider agencies to be the capacity of journalists to act as journalists and we again note that the concept of safety is embedded within journalists' agencies. As previously mentioned that professional bodies for measur-

ing quality of democracy downgraded Bangladesh for being an authoritarian regime, we believe that the safety of journalists working in Bangladesh is dependent on the agents guarding the authoritarian government structure; hence we have framed our questions in this manner. Finally, we followed Stanford University Professor Jon Krosnick, who received a life-time achievement award for outstanding research by the American Association for Public Opinion Research, in choosing open-ended questions. In his opinion "open ended questions prove to be more reliable than closed questions and in lots of different studies of validity, open questions prove to be superior to closed questions" (Vannette & Krosnick, 2018, p. 443). Our selection of words in our open-ended questions was "simple, direct and comprehensible" and we avoided any jargon, as suggested by Vannette and Krosnick (2018, p. 444).

To protect the safety of the journalists participating in this research we did not record their names. Out of the 23 respondents, 7 are no longer working as journalists. Four of the ex-journalists said they switched jobs out of insecurity, one said that he/she is teaching journalism now rather than working as a journalist, one said he/she is pursuing higher studies, and one is now working as a social media strategist for a public relations company. Seven respondents said they had been journalists for 20 to 30 years, 9 respondents said they had been journalists for 10 to 20 years, and the experience range of the rest of the respondents was between 3 and 10 years. Positions of the respondents in the journalism industry included: broadcast journalist, assignment editor, sub-editor, diplomatic correspondent, social media coordinator for news media, assistant editor, special correspondent, executive editor, editorial assistant, news editor, senior reporter, bureau chief of a foreign news agency, editor, and news chief. We believe the diverse background of our respondents in terms of their experience and positions are representative of the journalism sector of Bangladesh. A drawback of our research, however, is that our sample is not free from gender bias, as only three of the respondents are female. We further acknowledge that our purposive sampling strategy may not be free from bias as we only reached out to journalists who we know. One difficulty that we encountered was that in analyzing their responses we had to rethink our own safety and carefully consider what to write and what not to write, who to name and who not to name.

Our social media content analysis was targeted at investigating peoples' perceptions about Bangladesh's media during a 2018 student movement for reforming the quota system in government jobs (Mahmud, 2018a). The government first used force to quash the protest. Against that backdrop, student activists and supporters raised questions about the fairness of the Bangladeshi media in covering that event. Activists and students in favor of the movement have accused the media of bias. In their opinion, the media was protecting the interests of the government when some of the news reports vilified leaders of that student movement as Islamists and opposition party activists.

A student platform called *Sadharan Chhatra Adhikar Sangrakshan Parishad* (the platform for protecting rights of general students) led that quota reform movement. That platform has a Facebook group with 1,094,663 members. After joining the group, we searched group posts and critical comments about media and journalism. When we searched for the Bengali phrase *Holud Shangbadikota* meaning "yellow journalism" in English in the group, we found a total of 200 posts addressing topic related to credibility of journalism. We have selected 50 posts and comments and encoded them. We only selected Facebook posts that appeared during the 2018 student movement as we wanted to understand the public's perception about the media at this time. The posts were categorized thematically based on the following criteria: (a) accusing the media of presenting incorrect/false information about the movement; (b) accusing the media of being biased towards the government; (c) provided a personal narrative of the movement that contradicted the media representation; (d) TV talk show videos labelling student activists as Islamists and opposition activists; (e) photos demonstrating general acceptability of the movement among students while denouncing media coverage. Posts were selected on the basis of their popularity (at least 300 likes) and presence of comments from other users (at least 100 comments).

A year after that movement, in 2019, we asked the following two questions to the general public: (1) To what extent do you think the news you read in Bangladeshi media is true and accurate; and (2) to what extent do you think the news about Bangladesh you read in foreign media is true and accurate?

We shared this survey on our Facebook pages in September 2019 via a Google document and asked random people to participate. Our questionnaire included options to provide both open-ended and close—ended answers, i.e., a respondent could mark "yes" or "no" and there were options for them to write further. In total, over a period of a week, 139 respondents filled out the form. They came from diverse backgrounds including student, teacher, businessperson, engineering professional, physician, rights defender, information and communication technology professional, public relations professional, and government service worker.

6. Finding 1: Journalist Responses—Bodily Threats, Psychological Threats, Digital Threats, and Censorship

An overwhelming majority of the journalists (21 out of 23) identified physical threats including bodily harms such as being arrest, imprisonment, and enforced disappearance as key safety concerns. Psychological insecurity stems from living in constant fear of becoming a victim of bodily harm, losing a job, or being bullied or harassed by pro-government journalists. In the words of a respondent:

> No one is safe in this country. The law enforcing agencies could pick up anyone and enlist them as criminals. Within this milieu journalists are more vulnerable. In the past 5/6 years many cases were filed against the journalists. Pro-government party members have beaten journalists when they wish, and they are still doing it with full impunity. For that reason, I feel insecure all the time; because of this insecurity I refrained from publishing my personal political thoughts in social media. (Personal communication)

Such concerns are not unfounded as at the time of writing this article, in a Bangladeshi district Sylhet, a journalist was picked up by plain-clothed law enforcement officers, and in the aftermath, 56 local journalists filed a general diary to local police station fearing their security (Manab Zamin, 2019). In Bangladesh, general diary is a legal form of registering concern that incidents are happening or likely to happen within the jurisdiction of a local police station.

Another journalist, who used to work as an editorial writer in a leading national daily and who left the job for the fear of his safety, recollected his trauma during his time as a journalist in the following way:

> I did not feel safe. My family was terrified about my safety as I used to pen critical columns in the newspaper where I used to work. The feeling of insecurity was heightened whenever an article was published in the newspaper. In the night I was worried that law enforcers would knock the door to pick me up, and in the day I was anxious to get a call from security officials. (Personal communication)

However, not every respondent feels insecure as one respondent said, ‘I do not think the situation is so bad that journalists should feel insecure; rather I would say journalists have created an unjustified fear for themselves and apply self-censorship’ (personal communication). Even this sceptical statement is an endorsement that journalist community in Bangladesh is engulfed with fear and insecurity.

At the time of conducting our research, a deep threat of losing jobs engulfed the Bangladeshi media scene. The Bengali service of the British Broadcasting Corporation reported, without mentioning an actual number, that private TV channels and radio stations were laying off officials and journalists; a private TV channel had closed operation of its news section (Kollol, 2019). The Germany-based Bengali news service, DW Bengali, reported that 25 journalists were fired from Bangladesh’s top Bengali newspaper (DW Bengali, 2019). Such scenes have had an impact on journalists and they live under a relentless psychological pressure rooted in job insecurity (and thus economic insecurity), as illustrated by the following response, “now for us, economic security has become a major issue. For this reason, big portions of journalist community do not want to pursue objective journalism or represent all facts in a story (personal communication).

Another respondent opens up a different avenue in which one can see journalists’ fear of losing jobs, and/or being bullied and harassed, as connected to compromising objectivity of news. The respondent said, “if we lose our jobs, there will be a campaign by the pro-government journalists against us as anti-national, anti-state, terrorists. For this reason, to remain safe, we sometimes refrain from telling the truth” (personal communication).

There was also a perception of digital threats, including fear of phones being tapped or digital surveillance. Human Rights Watch reported that the Bangladesh government has embarked upon an “intensive and intrusive surveillance and monitoring of social media” (Human Rights Watch, 2018b). “I don’t feel safe anymore. I am in constant fear that my phone is being tapped and my journalism is being under constant watch by people in the security agencies,” said a respondent (personal communication).

Media houses that are deemed to be critical about the government have also been targeted. A journalist working for the leading English newspaper, *The Daily Star*, said:

> As has been documented, pressure from the government came upon *The Daily Star* in an indirect way—our advertisers were squeezed. As a result, big telecoms stopped advertising with the newspaper, while other companies constantly cited the government’s disapproval of the newspaper as a reason to not give advertisements. This has significantly hampered our ability to cover [sensitive] issues such as military affairs, among other matters. (Personal communication)

Another respondent said the list of people and organizations who journalists can’t scrutinize is getting longer. In that respondent’s view, 10 years ago only the family members of the top political leadership and elite intelligence agency were protected from scrutiny; now it is frequently the case that journalists can’t report on powerful ministers and advisers. Not only that, the respondent said, “we can’t even write about mid-career police officials because fact-based investigative reports are not being tolerated” (personal communication). Another respondent, a former journalist who left the profession out of frustration after 15 years said, “partisan editors and media owners with political ties are deterring objective news” (personal communication). Another respondent who used to work for a local television channel said that a top wing of the government maintains a list of pro-government and anti-government journalists. He was labelled as anti-government and his promotion was halted; eventually he had to leave the country. Later, at the same television channel, some of his colleagues tried to pursue sensitive stories objectively and they were also labelled as anti-government. However, it is beyond our scope to validate these claims.

7. Finding 2: Journalists Reactions and Defence against Safety Risks

In order to cope with fear, insecurity and threats, journalists are adopting multiple defence mechanisms that compromise the quality and objectivity of news. Sometimes, to remain safe, they choose not to report.

Against this backdrop, our research recorded a disturbing yet evolving practice in which journalists promote the administrations' agenda or apply self-censorship on sensitive issues to remain safe. For example, one respondent said:

> Some journalists just work as part of the government PR machinery and the security agencies because they know that they will gain financially through their reporting. And on occasions when they stumble upon a report that can seriously damage the government's reputation, these journalists just kill the story or don't even mention its existence to their news editors and newsroom managers. (Personal communication)

One respondent explained why he had to leave the profession as a result of his quest for pursuing what he deemed objective journalism:

> I believe I was driven out of objective journalism. The current situation is not at all supportive for objective journalism in Bangladesh, because you need to be a party loyalist; more clearly, you have to support the ruling party polices and their rules. In another way, you need to be a pro governmental journalist, where you are allowed to dig into the positives of the regime. (Personal communication)

There are differences among our respondents about whether journalists are forced to get involved in this practice, as some said there are journalists who are enthusiastic about promoting the government agenda out of self-interest, whereas others said they are forced to promote the government agenda. One respondent pointed out that "if journalists do not promote government agenda the government simply cuts off access" (personal communication) referring to two top newspapers in Bangladesh not having access to the Prime Minister's press conference. When they do try to report the truth, they are increasingly met with in-house censorship. One crime reporter who was investigating extrajudicial killing of alleged rapists found out that a government agency was behind the killings. The reporter reached this conclusion by tracing the license plate of a vehicle that was used to kidnap one victim. However, when his report was published, he saw the editor had erased the name of the government agency that had registered the vehicle.

8. Finding 3: Diminishing Public Faith in Media

Wanta and Hu (1994) have argued that the success or failure of news media's efforts to educate, inform, pursue, and influence media audiences can often depend on the audiences' overall perception of media credibility.

In our analysis of social media posts we found that a general perception in the public that journalists do not provide people with accurate news. In all of our selected posts, group members were labeling journalists as "yellow journalists." One popular post argued that: "The country is heading in a bad direction because of 'yellow journalism."' Another said, "when journalists cannot provide us with true and accurate news, how can we have trust in media?" A third post reads "we should boycott the journalists who spread fabricated news after compromising their moral and conscience." The person did not clarify what he meant by 'boycott.'

In our survey about media credibility, of 139 respondents, only one individual agreed that he/she gets accurate news from Bangladeshi media outlets (see Table 1).

By contrast, a total of 33 respondents (23.9%) agreed that they receive accurate news about Bangladesh in foreign media outlets. 71 respondents (51.4%) partially agree that they get accurate news from foreign media outlets about Bangladesh (see Table 2).

In response to a question about the credibility of media outlets in Bangladesh, most respondents said that they think local news outlets are biased and tend to hide news. One respondent said, "Bangladeshi TVs have zero credibility" (personal communication). Another respondent said, "now all the journalists can be bought by money" (personal communication). In response to a question about why they think foreign media outlets tend to provide them with true and accurate news, one respondent said, "they are not directly con-

Table 1. Public perception about credibility of the local media in Bangladesh.

	Question: Bangladeshi owned media outlets are credible and provide you with objective news	Results in percentage (%)	Number of respondents	Total respondents
1	Strongly Agree	0	0	139
2	Agree	0.7	1	
3	Partially Agree	28.3	39	
4	Partially Disagree	5.1	7	
5	Disagree	30.4	42	
6	Strongly Disagree	35.5	50	

Table 2. Public perception about credibility of international media in Bangladesh.

	Question: Western News outlets in Bangladesh (such as BBC, AFP, DW, AP) are credible and provide you with objective news about Bangladesh	Results in Percentage (%)	Number of respondents	Total respondents
1	Strongly Agree	5	7	139
2	Agree	23.7	33	
3	Partially Agree	51.1	71	
4	Partially Disagree	8.6	12	
5	Disagree	8.6	12	
6	Strongly Disagree	2.9	4	

trolled by the government. Owners of these media are not beneficiaries of the present government" (personal communication).

9. Discussion

Our findings demonstrate that for Bangladeshi journalists, safety encompasses job security, self-censorship, avoiding bodily harm (imprisonment, enforced disappearance, and so forth), avoiding harassment, and opting for agenda promotion of the government. A second crucial finding is that journalists compromise the objectivity of the news to maintain personal safety. Almost all of our respondents (except those who are working in foreign media) said that it is nearly impossible to pursue objective news reporting on certain issues due to the existence of what we call a "censorship machine" in Bangladesh. We describe this censorship effort as a machine because it has many processing tools (such as intimidation by the security and political apparatus, harsh laws, etc.) and the objective of these tools is to produce a finished product—finely processed news. This processed product is not a true reflection of the facts as some facts have been censored by the censorship machine. In this regard names of two key government offices were cited by the journalists repeatedly but we are not naming them. Various agencies within the security establishment (some of which are well known for suppression of human rights and free speech), partisan media owners, repressive laws like digital security act, and fellow partisan journalists are all involved in the censorship machine.

Finally, we find that the impact of the censorship machine on journalists in Bangladesh has contributed negatively to the public perception of the credibility of journalism. The steps that journalists feel they must take to ensure their own safety is implicated in dwindling media credibility. This paradigm is a consequence of a censorship machine conditioned by the hybrid regime. As a result, the media is no longer playing the role of the Fourth Estate in the country. In our view, this observation by James Carey fits the Bangladeshi case very well, since Bangladesh now is not democratic: "When democracy falters, journalism falters, and when journalism goes awry, democracy goes awry" (Carey, 2007).

The Bangladesh story however is applicable to a wider global pattern as more than one third of the world's population live in declining democracies in which authoritarian, hybrid, and populist regimes are rising who clamp down on the free press (Hodal, 2019; Lührmann & Wilson, 2018, *The Economist*, 2018). Only 13% of the world's population now enjoys a free press, and press freedom is under severe threat even in democracies (*The Economist*, 2018). In non-democracies—in Africa, Middle East and Much of Asia—most governments are adhering to the Chinese model of suppressing free media. They favor the sophisticated censorship of the Beijing model which is premised on the idea that "prosperity can be achieved without a free press" over the Western model which values "strong and consistent associations between unfettered media and vibrant democracies" (*The Economist*, 2018). These findings paint a depressing outlook, and indicate that the safety of journalists should be a matter of continuous public discussion in the coming days. Our Bangladesh study demonstrates the need for expanding the framework of safety of journalists by incorporating journalists' defense mechanisms and their impact on the public. A cause for concern regarding Bangladeshi journalists, however, is that previous research has suggested that journalists are more unsafe in hybrid regimes like Bangladesh than in a pure autocracy. Hughes and Vorobyeva (2019) found that countries with hybrid regimes are by far the most dangerous environment for journalists as power holders have incentives to violently suppress critical press coverage. They reached this conclusion after analyzing 1812 killings of journalists from 1992 to 2016. Such findings offer insight as to why journalists we interviewed in Bangladesh are compromising their own integrity to remain safe while living and working in a hybrid regime.

10. Conclusion

Fear dominates the responses we received and it was an eye opener for us. Although we both were insiders at some point of our lives as both of us have worked as journalists in the country, now we are outsiders. Before this research we had some idea that local journalists were going through some difficulties, as we maintain close con-

tacts with our journalist friends in Bangladesh and follow current affairs. However, we did not have a clear picture about the magnitude of fear and the prevailing feelings of insecurity until we conducted this research.

Through our research we believe that we are justified in putting forward three major arguments: (a) Safety of journalists in Bangladesh is a broad concept as it includes opt to government agenda promotion alongside of the conventional wisdom about journalists' safety; (b) when journalists feel unsafe, there are serious implications for the quality of journalism, as compromising objectivity to maintain personal safety is a common phenomenon in the Bangladeshi context; and (c) the compromise of objectivity in order to preserve safety results in the erosion of media credibility in the eyes of the public. So what does it mean for Bangladesh and its practice of journalism? In our view, the prevailing model of journalist safety is detrimental not only for the journalists' health and well-being, but also for the growth of journalism as a profession.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the authors (unedited).

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Article

Reporting in Conflict Zones in Pakistan: Risks and Challenges for Fixers

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Abstract
As a backbone of reporting in war and conflicts, fixers offer essential assistance to the foreign correspondent in conflict zones, also in Pakistan. With valuable local knowledge and contacts, fixers can arrange travel to secure entry of foreign correspondents into conflict zones in addition to securing interviews with otherwise unattainable figures, while offering reliable translation services. Pakistani media, despite being one of the largest and most developed in South Asia, remains under the strict control of powerful military establishment and government, while seeming to mirror the overarching government sentiment with a distinct lack of research-based news. Challenging this state of affairs, local journalist fixers seek to conduct research and investigative journalism, making them an attractive asset for western correspondents travelling to Pakistan. Based on data from interviews with local fixers and journalists in Pakistan, this article reveals the many security problems for local fixers in the Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa regions in Pakistan. It also shows that the fixers' rights and interests are not protected by media organizations or the governments. Additionally, fixers face increasing censorship from security agencies and death threats from militants. This study discusses the harsh realities fixers face in the conflict zones of Pakistan where international press lack access due to increasing restrictions imposed by the government, and the violence perpetrated against media workers by the Islamic State and other radical groups, like Taliban and Baloch separatists.

Keywords
conflict zones; fixers; journalism; Pakistan; security

Issue
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1. Introduction: The Need for Fixers in Pakistan

When armed men stormed a five-star luxury hotel in Pakistan's restive Balochistan province in the southern port city of Gwadar in May 2019, the attack quickly triggered international media coverage. News organizations from across the globe, such as Xinhua News Agency, Al Jazeera, BBC, and CNN, provided media coverage from the impoverished coastal town in Pakistan's troubled southwestern province of Balochistan (BBC, 2019).

As audiences from across the world followed live coverage of the attack through videos, photographs, and soundbites, it was the local fixers who worked behind the scenes, risking their lives to provide live coverage of the attack for foreign correspondents stationed in Islamabad and New Delhi. Foreign correspondents were not granted free access to the conflict zone located in the Balochistan province, which borders with Iran. For such access, they would require a special permit called 'No Objection Certificate' (NOC) granted by the Ministry of Interior in Islamabad. These permits are rarely issued to foreign journalists, as such making them totally dependent on locally based media workers to cover this terror attack. Local fixers like Behram Baloch sourced valuable information from this remote corner of Pakistan. He alone coordinated information with more than a

dozen foreign correspondents, spending his days meeting and interviewing top government officials, Chinese labourers working at the port, local people, and even the leaders of the separatist movement that took responsibility for the attack. If local journalists from larger cities of Pakistan like Lahore, Karachi, and Islamabad visited the city aftermath of the attack, they had to approach Bahram to arrange their meetings with government officials and local ethnic Baloch people. Those writing copy for international press agencies were standing tall on the shoulders of unknown giants like Behram Baloch.

Acknowledging such crucial importance to journalistic practice in Pakistan, this article examines the underlying challenges and risks fixers face. A fixer is a media practitioner who helps foreign reporters arrange interviews, while navigating and providing the broader context to the story at hand (Murrell, 2015; Palmer, 2019). The foreign correspondents we interviewed for this study defined fixers as "resourceful media workers." In the Pakistan context, Professor Altaf Khan describes fixers as "a reporter from within conflict zones who have the job of providing the raw material for stories to be published in Western media" (Khan, 2019). In Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan and northern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) provinces, fixers work with the constant threat of violence from country's powerful military, drug mafia, Islamist extremist such as the Taliban, and ethnic Baloch separatists (Aslam, 2015).

Fixers in these provinces live in a high-risk environment. Pakistan's fixers face immense pressure and some of them even have lost their lives merely for contributing stories to international media (Khan, 2019). These bordering regions operate under media blackout where the local journalists, let alone foreigners, must show great caution while reporting. Normally, foreign journalists are not allowed to move outside of the capital city Islamabad without permission, and they are required to hold the NOC to travel to Pakistani conflict zones (Khan, 2019). Consequently, they rely on fixers to report stories. Fixers risk their safety contributing to international media by interviewing controversial Afghan and top Al-Qaeda militants for a "handsome amount" (Beck & Delmenico, 2017).

To understand the dangers fixers encounter chasing stories for western media agencies in Pakistan's remote but troubled regions, we have framed the following research questions:

1) What risks do fixers face when working with foreign correspondents in Pakistan's troubled provinces?
2) How do local authorities and foreign correspondents treat their local counterparts?
3) How and why are fixers threatened during their work for the western media in Pakistan's volatile regions?

2. Background and Literature: Journalists and Fixers Working in Pakistan's Troubled Areas

2.1. Theoretical Framework: Fixers, Journalism, and Professionalism

An analysis of security issues for fixers in Pakistan can be theoretically grounded in a discussion of why fixers operate in dangerous areas, and how and why foreign reporters depend on them. In this regard, a discussion on framing the work of fixers is important. During the last few years, fixers have become the centre of attention in international journalism. In a special issue of *Journalism Studies* published in 2019, entitled "Reporting Global while Being Local: Local Sources of News for Distant Audiences," multiple studies investigated the interaction between international reporters and local 'helpers' or fixers. In one of the articles, Hoxha and Andresen (2019) map some of the research about the global importance of fixers. They show that this cooperation between international reporters and fixers has been crucial to global news reporting for a long time. Previous studies conducted in the Middle East (Murrell, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2015; Palmer & Fontan, 2007), locally in Palestine (Bishara, 2006), Kosovo (Andresen, 2008, 2009, 2015; Paterson, Andresen, & Hoxha, 2012), and in Pakistan (Khan, 2011, 2016, 2019) pinpoint how, on an international scale, the highly unrecognized influence of the local fixers on news reporting from the field matters. A major reason why fixers are crucial is to avoid what can be framed as 'parachute journalism,' which is itself a rather loaded term used to describe journalism where international reporters spend a short time in a conflict area, working in situ for a few days, before moving on to the next conflict:

> In their efforts to gather information quickly, parachute journalists are in danger of missing facts, aspects of culture and nuances in their stories (Lundstrom, 2001; Hamilton, 2004). The parachute journalist necessarily depends on local assistance, normally in the form of a temporarily hired local person with some knowledge of journalism, an ability to translate, and good local contacts. Palmer and Fontan (2007) define fixers as an additional relay point in the process of mediated communication. Globally, fixers have impacted the content and form of international news correspondents' work more than the public has been aware of. (Hoxha & Andresen, 2019, p. 1735)

Drawing on the realization of the importance of fixers, a pressing question emerges of why this practice was mostly ignored in journalism studies for a long time. We suggest that a reason might lie in a traditional western view of journalism, that the western practice of the profession has dominated the international news scene and input from fixers might be viewed as practical as best, and not so much in terms of producing content

itself. However, journalism research is more diverse today. Mark Deuze (2005) points in his well-known article "What is journalism?" to the critical perspectives on journalism, e.g., especially Schudson (2001), who questions the traditional values of objectivity and detachment as absolutes. In fact, Deuze (2005) dismisses these perceived western ideal-typical values as obsolete in a modern global world and claims that it is hard to keep to them in a global and more fluid news age. According to Deuze (2005), these traditional, mostly western values, gain different meaning in different circumstances and are more a matter of journalists' self-representation than anything else. Therefore, we need to study how journalism is practiced in order to investigate this matter and to see changes in the perception of journalism to analyze how journalism is produced in extremely difficult circumstances. There is value in Deuze's (2005, p. 458) arguments that the best way to uncover the journalists work is by studying them in their daily work:

> The analyses of the ideal-typical values of journalism, and how these vary and get meaning in different circumstances, have shown that any definition of journalism as a profession working truthfully, operating as a watchdog for the good of society as a whole and enabling citizens to be self-governing is not only naïve, but also one-dimensional and sometimes nostalgic for perhaps the wrong reasons. It is by studying how journalists from all walks of their professional life negotiate the core values that one can see the occupational ideology of journalism at work.

Thus, this current study of fixers in Pakistan is also a contribution to a deeper understanding of journalistic professionalism in a difficult area. The study uncovers threats and practice of journalism that is different from realities in the west. A classical western concept of journalistic professionalism is linked together with values such as 'freedom,' 'objectivity,' and 'independence' (cf. Easterman, 2000; Kumar, 2006; Price, Noll, & de Luce, 2002; Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009). However, in recent times, a growing body of journalism research has challenged the classical western domination of defining professional journalism. Where does this discussion stand? Beate Josephi (2007, p. 300) discusses imperatives and impediments of a possible professional model that can be internationalized, arguing that "the impediments are that no models exist to date which could be implemented around the world." Although she refers to Splichal and Sparks' (1994) research showing that journalism students worldwide have a desire for independence and autonomy, this is a long way from a single journalism model. Additionally, Curran and Park emphasize that values in journalism vary from autonomy and independence to journalists as a tool for politics (Josephi, 2007). Furthermore, Barbie Zelizer (2004, p. 576) points out that:

> Research outside the Anglo-American orbit, which has so far shaped the dominant journalistic concepts, is now challenging these paradigms….What has long been hailed as the 'professional model' centering on the ideal of the objective reporter, is now seen as just that: a model upheld but rarely attained. The question therefore is, why should a model stay a model of it so far removed from what is actually practised in newsrooms around the world?

The value of objectivity as a central part of a model has been criticized (Schudson, 2001, 2003), as well as value-neutrality (Deuze, 2005). The European discussion on journalism raises journalists' preferred values and ideas over objectivity norms (Donsbach & Klett, 1993). De Burgh (2005, p. 2) emphasizes "that the old fallacy that all journalisms were at different stages on the route to an ideal model, probably Anglophone, is passé." Furthermore, Stephen Reese (2001) problematizes attempts to create an international standard of journalistic professionalism. He argues that the growing urge to do so stems from the fact that journalism is a growing academic field and an increasing number of scholars have received formal training in journalism. There is, therefore, a growth of transnational, comparative studies attempting to find a global view on journalism: "This transnational view of the profession has found the social survey a natural methodological approach, allowing scholars to make general descriptive statements about the nature of these journalists and their adherence to certain professional tenets" (Reese, 2001, p. 174).

In the case of fixers in Pakistan, a challenging question arises of how a 'non-western' Pakistani fixer helps to raise professionalism in western reporters' work. Furthermore, how does local knowledge merged with international experience produce credible journalism? To investigate this, we need to understand the challenging context for this news production, in addition to changes in the profession.

2.2. Pakistan as a Journalistic Hot Spot

The roles of fixers in international journalism are changing. As the nature of conflicts has changed, so have the dynamics of the reporting from war or conflict zones. Moreover, the role of the fixer has evolved from translators to investigators, mediators, and embedded journalist. Fixers have become increasingly professionalized through cooperation with foreign reporters (Hoxha & Andresen, 2019). After the US invasion of Afghanistan, Pakistan became a frontline state against the war on terror, providing logistical support to the International Security Assistance Force and NATO. The US invasion triggered a doctrinal shift in Pakistan's regional policies, leading to the Pak-Afghan bordering areas becoming the site of attraction for European and American media (Baerthlein, 2006). However, due to the sensitivity of the area, journalists face increasing restrictions (Khan, 2019).

Furthermore, the low-level separatist insurgency of Balochistan in the southwestern part of Pakistan has sparked much media attention from the West, especially after the launch of the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship of 52 different megaprojects under construction in Pakistan. The multibillion-dollar infrastructure and energy investments include energy projects, construction of power plants, and the development of road and railway network for establishing a corridor from the northern Chinese province of Xinxiang to Gwadar in Pakistan's restive Balochistan province. The corridor will connect Gwadar to northern China for trade purposes, but the most important element is the construction of the communication infrastructure in Pakistan (Ibrar, Mi, Rafiq, & Karn, 2016, pp. 434–439). CPEC has received much criticism from the West and fierce resistance from ethno-Baloch nationalists after its launch Chinese workforce had come under attack several times (Hameed, 2018), also reported in the strategic port city of Gwadar in May 2019 (BBC, 2019). In order to avoid media attention to growing anger, Pakistani authorities restricted western media workers from accessing this region.

Moreover, the security situation for media workers in this region has deteriorated alarmingly in recent years. The Committee to Protect Journalists (2018) noted: "The military has quietly, but effectively, set restrictions on reporting: from barring access to regions including Balochistan where there are armed separatism and religious extremism, to encouraging self-censorship through direct and indirect methods of intimidation, including calling editors to complain about coverage and even allegedly instigating violence against reporters".

2.3. Roles and Risks for Fixers

From regimes to militant groups and Islamist hardliners, there is a tremendous pressure on fixers. Additionally, they are rarely supported when they find themselves in trouble for the work they do for international media outlets in conflict zones. In foreign correspondence particularly, fixers play an important role "on the ground," arranging interviews that otherwise could not be undertaken by the foreign correspondent due to lack of access and lack of knowledge of the local environment (Yong & Rrahmani, 2018).

With the passage of time, the role of the fixer has also widened on account of the more complex nature of journalism in the conflict zones. For example, in Pakistan, a fixer also pitches story ideas to foreign correspondents; therefore, some of them self-identify as producers or full-time journalists. Researchers have focused on the varied tasks and role of fixers as they complete in different parts of the world and the dangers they encounter in the field (Armoudian, 2016; Cottle, Sambrook, & Mosdell, 2016; Hannerz, 2004; Paterson et al., 2012; Tumber & Webster, 2006). For example, fixers interpret elements of non-verbal communication, serve as cultural translators and news gatherers, assist the out-front reporters, book hotels and arrange transportation, find interview subjects, secure access to government officials, and cover dangerous locations (Hoxha & Andresen, 2019; Murrell, 2019; Plaut & Klein, 2019). Foreign correspondents don't just rely on fixers to facilitate the story, but it is often the fixer that unearths and reports the story (Murrell, 2010; Paterson et al., 2012).

While some of these media workers take pride in their role in fixing tough challenges, others dislike the term 'fixer' because of its association with unskilled workers, whereas others prefer being called journalist-fixer (Palmer, 2019, p. 3; Plaut & Klein, 2019). In Pakistan, some fixers dislike being called fixers and identify themselves as fulltime journalists. The job of a fixer differs from area to area in Pakistan. In larger cities like Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi they work as translators; however, in the conflict zones, they also secure interviews with notorious militant leaders. In most of the cases, fixers are not credited, but they are typically well-paid compared to local income standards (Murrell, 2010; Paterson et al., 2012).

Mostly, fixers are approached by foreign correspondents on sensitive matters in Pakistan. Fixers interviewed for this study claimed that some foreign journalists perceive the local fixers as mere instruments to attain their objectives and then drop them without further thought. It is more like a post-colonial approach, outlined by Plaut and Klein (2019, p. 1700): "Post (anti) colonial approaches offer tools to better understand the ongoing process of maintaining global hierarchies within the practice, and production, of global journalism."

3. Methodological Approach: In-Depth Interviews

The findings of this study are based on qualitative in-depth interviews which were conducted between March and April 2019. We adopted purposive sampling techniques, engaging with prominent journalists and fixers in Pakistan, to identify foreign correspondents and fixers who report or had reported for the international media in the Balochistan and KPK provinces. Locating the fixers proved arduous, as most do not make themselves available for interviews out of the fear of the treatment meted out to them as a payback for their reporting in the field. The interviews with fixers were conducted via an end to end encrypted application WhatsApp using the corresponding author's personal contacts in Pakistan. The security challenges and the treatment they receive from the authorities and militants has been crucial focus of this study. Foreign correspondents largely rely on fixers from these areas because, as stated in the introduction, they are rarely issued a NOC, a fundamental requirement to visit Balochistan.

In line with the main research questions, we developed a semi-structured interview guide where we asked the following questions to the fixers: (a) What was your first experience working as a fixer?; (b) What help do you

get from your foreign colleague when you encounter a serious security problem?; (c) What are the specifics of being a fixer in Pakistan? Correspondingly, we asked the foreign correspondents to answer the following: (I) How do you or your organization help fixers when they encounter any challenge?; (II) What effects do fixers have on your work?; (III) What key challenges do fixers face in Pakistan's militancy-ridden areas like Balochistan and KPK? The answers to these questions were included in the research design to consider key components of the main research questions of this study related to challenges and risks they face while reporting from these two provinces.

Interviews were conducted in Urdu and English languages separately. The Urdu interviews were later translated and verified by the authors. Upon on the request of two fixers, transcriptions of their responses were shared with them. The identities of our respondents are kept anonymous due to security concerns.

4. Findings: Increasing Risks and Decreasing Help

Through qualitative interview analysis of the data from the interviews, we have identified 6 main findings presented in the sub-sections below.

4.1. The Risks Are Increasing for Fixers in Pakistan's Militancy-Ridden Areas

In recent years, Pakistani fixers have experienced increasing risk in performing their tasks, feeling trapped between state and non-state actors. Respondents interviewed say they are persecuted and fear for their security in chasing stories for the western media. Based on the interviews for this project, it could be concluded that working in an environment without minimum security and an absence of law and order means exposing yourself to risk. The security situation in Pakistan's northwestern KPK region, which once was the hub of Taliban activities, and like the current situation in Yemen and Syria. While working, fixers explain that during work they typically face intimidation and endure threats and abuse, all intended to reduce the impact of their work and ultimately to silence them completely. The fixers say they often face significant discontent and hopelessness when reporting on a story which involves the government and armed groups. One of our interviewees explained that "only because of your journalistic works in this region you could easily be whisked away, targeted or killed. Unfortunately, in most of the cases, the killers enjoy impunity" (Personal interview with a fixer).

Both fixers and foreign journalists say that when reporting from areas where militants operate openly, with reference to the porous border with Afghanistan and Iran, there are increasing security risks and this is a reason they never receive permission to visit such areas. One foreign correspondent, who covered Balochistan and KPK provinces, explained:

> The authorities never like the ones who without its permission trespass into Balochistan and tribal region in the north which is clandestinely declared as a no-go area for the international media. The law enforcement agencies and insurgent groups have committed massive human rights violations in these regions, especially in Balochistan. In these areas, people accuse the military of enforced disappearances and killing political activists. This is a reason why authorities restrict foreign journalists from entering Balochistan. In the north, there are militant groups being sheltered by the Pakistani government that it uses as a proxy against Afghanistan and India. (Personal interview with a foreign correspondent)

Western Journalists say they face harassment while visiting Balochistan, shown in the way of creating legal hurdles, for example requiring a NOC, which is hard to get. Many of our respondents say that working on assignments relating to militancy, terrorisms, and security issues in southwestern and northwestern provinces means exposing yourself to greater security risk, heightened when working among locals. One of the major irritations of local fixers, particularly in northern Pakistan, is that most of their journalistic achievements are overshadowed by the foreign correspondents who hire them for this arduous work.

4.2. Pakistani Military Threatens Fixers

From the data collected through interviews it is evident that fixers and foreign correspondents face serious threats to their personal security when reporting from Balochistan and KPK provinces. While threats come from the Islamist militants, Pakistani military, and intelligence agencies, a local fixer interviewed from Quetta, the provincial capital of Balochistan, says that the least acknowledged threats they face in the province are that of the military, particularly the Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI), the country's powerful spy agency. Sharing his first experience while working with a foreign journalist he said he was placed under strict surveillance for more than two years only because he worked with a foreign correspondent in Quetta on stories that involved central government and Islamist and Baloch insurgents:

> I know that the authorities don't permit foreign correspondents to visit and report from Balochistan. In rare cases when they allow them, they are followed by at least personnel from three to four security agencies. They demand details of the interviewees sometimes personal information of the respondents. Under such circumstances, no foreigners like visiting Balochistan but they rely on us [fixers]. When I was a fixer for a foreign journalist for the first time, I became suspicious. The intelligence agencies started following me. I visited them [agents of intelligence agencies] every day to prove that I am not serving a foreign agenda. It took

> me two years to prove that. (Personal interview with a Quetta-based fixer)

In Balochistan, ISI responds severely to journalists who are critical of the central government's policies. This sentiment is echoed by the foreign correspondents we interviewed, who indicated that the risks of arbitrary detainment, detention, or imprisonment increase significantly when reporting from Balochistan. The province has been the epicentre for sectarian outlets and Taliban armed groups since the US intervention in Afghanistan in 2003, when it is believed that the leaders of the Afghan insurgent movement then moved to Pakistan, specifically in the western district of Quetta. The province is also a hub of separatist activities and lethal counterinsurgencies. Western journalists indicated that this was one of the reasons why the powerful military establishment seeks to prevent foreign journalistic activity in the province. This opinion was purportedly affirmed when two Indian journalists were expelled from the country in 2014 for reporting news stories about Balochistan (Boone & Baloch, 2016). For western correspondents, Balochistan still remains a no-go area. A western journalist said: "Balochistan remains a no-go area for foreign journalists. In case a foreign correspondent enters the province without informing the authorities, he or she might be expelled from the country" (Personal interview with a foreign correspondent).

4.3. There Are Frequent Physical Assaults on Fixers

Attacks on the journalist fraternity have become a norm in Pakistan, which is reflected by Pakistan's World Press Freedom Index ranking which Reporters Without Borders (RSF) publish annually. The country ranks 142nd out of 180 countries (RSF, 2019), recognizing Pakistan as one of the toughest and most dangerous areas for journalists in the world. Our interviewees agree with this ranking. According to Amnesty International (2014), journalists in Balochistan face even greater harassment, and this at the hands of political parties and intelligence agencies. These threats are considered much more severe than those of the various militant organizations.

The western journalists interviewed agree that working as a fixer for a foreign media outlet can make you an easy target in this remote, tribal, and impoverished region of Pakistan. A foreign correspondent told us that one of his fixers was kidnapped by law enforcement agencies from northern Pakistan in 2014 and suffered serious mistreatment. This happened as a reaction to the US drone strikes in North and South Waziristan regions. When we asked the fixer about the consequences he suffered after helping the foreign reporter, the experiences he shared were heartbreaking:

> I was kidnapped for documenting sensitive issues like Taliban brutalities, and I was in illegal detention by law enforcement agencies. I know that this was because of civilian casualties caused by US drone strikes. I was picked up by secret agencies several times. I was tortured, handcuffed, and faced threats from the Taliban for years and in the end, my own media organization abandoned me. (Personal interview with former fixer)

Nevertheless, fixers in Balochistan and KPK play a significant role in providing access to international correspondents in these remote, but volatile regions. With reference to the theoretical discussion earlier in this article about journalistic professionalism that grows out of the cooperation between local fixers and international reporters, we observe that the fixers we interviewed said they try to report in a balanced way about the suffering of local people. They experience militancy, terrorism, religious extremism, and political upheavals in their daily life, while in return they are threatened, kidnapped, tortured, and left unprotected by the media outlets they work for.

A Baloch fixer from Gwadar related how many western journalists have been coming to the port city since the launch of the CPEC and typically these leave after completion of their assignments. The fixers, however, bear the consequences of the western journalists' anti-China style of reporting:

> I always push my foreign and national counterparts to try to keep a balanced approach while reporting any story from Balochistan so that we continue to bring untold stories. But they do what they like. And in return, we pay the price for that. Many of us had been tortured, threatened and forced to give up journalism only because of anti-China stories by the westerners. Even I know people who have been first accused of being foreign agents and then tortured by unknown people. Unfortunately, culprits in such cases enjoy impunity. (Personal interview with a fixer)

Journalism in Pakistan generally, and in its Balochistan and KPK provinces in particular, has become a more dangerous practice in recent years. Research undertaken by the Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editor and Freedom Network shows that 133 journalists have been killed in Pakistan since the year 2000 (Rehman, 2019; Rehmat & Khattak, 2019). The fixers we interviewed from Balochistan claim that this number represents only the high profile cases that have been spotlighted in mainstream media. They say that there have been many other cases of torture, harassment, intimidation, and narrow assassination attempts among fixers, which are rarely reported upon.

4.4. Islamist Threats Against Fixers and International Reporters Are on the Rise

Foreign correspondents and local fixers say they are not only threatened by the government and political parties, but they also face continual threats of violence from religiously motivated groups such as the Taliban and

the Islamic State of Khorasan. Sectarian outfits such as Lashkar-E-Jhangvi (The Army of Jhangvi) and other religiously motivated groups are also guilty of this. A western journalist describes Balochistan as an information "black hole" for the media due to threats posed by hardline Islamist and law enforcement agencies:

> We apply for NOCs and don't receive replies for months. It is very difficult to obtain a NOC and visit Balochistan. Balochistan is sort of a black hole where there is no real possibility to visit and report as we do in other countries in this region. I have tried visiting Balochistan twice. But it is difficult, and I have been denied NOC. There are fixers who provide inputs on the ground situation. However, they feel insecure due to numerous threats and intimidations they receive every day from the government and hardline Islamists. (Personal interview with foreign correspondent)

Sharing his experiences of helping a western media outlet, a local Baloch fixer says he had been detained and interrogated by the country's intelligence services in the province for attempting to interview leaders of Quetta Shura (the notorious Quetta Shura is composed of leaders of Afghan-based Taliban believed to be based in Quetta):

> When you are chasing a story in Balochistan, especially for foreign media that involves security issues, militants and government push their narrative and in many cases that seems impossible. Government officials never like it that the insurgents' narrative is being written and the insurgents never like the government narrative. If you fail to do so, any of them can label you a foreign or military agent and kill you. We are caught between insurgents and the military. (Personal interview with fixer)

Foreign correspondents in Islamabad we interviewed agree that working on a story that involves the country's security issues and Taliban activities can raise serious outrage. A foreign journalist explains:

> The fact of the matter is that religious tolerance, unfortunately, has been reduced to nothing due to some state policies and overwhelmingly by the pervasive extremist elements within the society who continue to unleash terror in the name of religion without anybody keeping them in check. (Personal interview with a foreign journalist)

The Baloch fixer mentioned earlier, who tried to interview the leader of the notorious Quetta Shura, says that on one occasion he was taken away by the country's powerful intelligence directorate of the Military Intelligence in 2006, while his associate foreign colleague was physically abused for covering a political uprising against the central government in Balochistan. He says that arbitrary detention has become part of his journalistic life. Journalists and fixers say the Pakistani state has zero-tolerance for journalists trying to meet with leaders of Islamist militants and Baloch separatists. According to a foreign correspondent, other than the political and security affairs of the country, a critical challenge that remains off limits to the media is the insecurity of religious minorities in Balochistan and KPK provinces, especially Shiites Hazaras, an ethnic group that has suffered persecution at the hands of Islamic State in Afghanistan and Balochistan.

Working on a story that involves the insecurity of Shiites Hazaras can raise outrage from Islamist and religious parties. From time to time, this pressure makes journalists compromise their professional standards, leading to self-censorship. Fixers from the Balochistan and KPK provinces said that most of the time they avoid critical reporting when it involves religious-based terrorism. Hindus and Christians are ostracised by the people, and their loyalty to the country is doubted. In this tense environment, the fixers said they cannot truly help the foreign correspondents who are in search of certain news. The same fixers also realize that as soon as a story is completed, the foreign correspondents will move on, while the extremist elements within the country will not spare them and rarely, they receive any support from their foreign counterparts in case of any trouble. Several of the foreign correspondents we interviewed, however, don't agree with this claim. A former *The Guardian* journalist we interviewed who until recently covered Afghanistan and Pakistan explains:

> When things do go wrong, *The Guardian* will spend time and resources trying to get journalists out of trouble. Two of my fixers were kidnapped twice in Afghanistan when I worked there and senior executives at *The Guardian*, including the editor, were involved in trying to get his release.

4.5. There Are No Real Safe Zones for Fixers

Pakistan today is deemed as one of the most feared countries for journalists due to the series of killings by state and non-state actors that have taken place in Balochistan and KPK provinces. Many of these have been fixers or little-known media workers and were not highlighted by the mainstream media or civil society. The fixers and foreign correspondents who were interviewed for this study say Pakistan's Balochistan and KPK provinces hit by violent insurgencies and Islamist militancy are the hardest places for media workers to work. Talking about lack of safety training, a Pashthun fixer explains that "in a place where there is no rule of law one can blindfold and kidnap a fixer with impunity even in a crowd, and it makes things harder to work without safety training" (Personal interview with a fixer).

A London based investigative correspondent who covers terrorism, religious militancy, and politics from

Pakistan, says safety remains a key challenge for them. She stated that many fixers in Peshawar are self-censoring due to direct threats to their lives. She says that when she was working on an investigation in Peshawar it was challenging to find a fixer that would be willing to work on such a contentious subject as that of Dr. Shakil Afridi (the doctor who unearthed Osama bin Laden's location). In her words, the fixers were very concerned about the security agencies, especially the powerful intelligence agencies who have been known to apply significant pressures on journalists and fixers to dissuade them when covering difficult issues and working without fixers on such subjects is challenging. She said the most challenging aspect of working in Pakistan is accessing comments from law enforcement agencies. These are the most challenging milieu due to the precarious nature of corruption, and it can be very stressful, such that only an experienced fixer can accomplish such tasks. The value of having a fixer in dangerous areas cannot be underestimated. In answering a question on what effects fixers had on foreign corresponding, she states that:

> A fixer has a positive influence on our work. When covering human interest stories in remote provinces in the country it is very helpful to hire a fixer. The impact on coverage is significant and the nuance and unique insight can only be possible with the assistance of a local fixer. (interview with a foreign correspondent)

4.6. There Is Hope in Mutual Learning Between Fixers and Journalists

This last finding shows that there is some hope in times of despair for fixers in Pakistan. Despite facing problems and threats, fixers from Pakistan's remote but troubled areas say that they get professional growth by working with foreign correspondents in Pakistan. There is a mutual learning outcome between foreign journalists and local fixers. This suggests that the cooperation between reporters and fixers also produces positive results. Fixers we interviewed have told us that they learn various reporting techniques from their foreign peers. There is also economic gain from fixers working with their international counterparts. One fixer from northern Pakistan says:

> Many of us do not know about investigative reporting, research methods, and new techniques of reporting. While working with a foreign journalist, we learn various reporting techniques. They provide resources, guidelines, money, and other tools to utilize them and gather information. Working alongside a foreign journalist, who has decades of experience covering wars and conflict, can enrich our reporting skills. (interview with a fixer)

This echoes findings in other studies about the relationship between fixers and their foreign counterparts (Hoxha & Andresen, 2019; Yong & Rrahmani, 2018), which state that besides earning money, fixers also gain professionalism. Our informants agreed and say by working with the international correspondents, they are becoming more professional and getting a higher income, but seldom get recognition for their challenging and risky assignments. In addition, foreign correspondents from Islamabad say in our interviews that they enjoy working with their local fixers. Thanks to this, they gain access to no-go areas and controversial militant leaders.

5. Conclusion: Despair and Hope

This current study shows that Pakistan is of major interest to international journalists due to western military engagement in Afghanistan. Pakistan's no-go areas for foreign media practitioners, which border Afghanistan, primarily remain a centre of coverage due to western engagement in neighbouring Afghanistan. However, as western journalists face heavy travel restrictions, they hire local fixers to achieve their goals. Although it can be ascertained that fixers, particularly in Pakistan's more troubled regions, face serious security risks from state and non-state actors, still, many say in our interviews that they wish to continue carrying out dangerous and brave work. The question remains, however, for how long this will be the case when their security isn't guaranteed.

As discussed in this article, the impact of fixers on international media coverage is significant and is rarely acknowledged. Media outlets covering the region can only access hotspots with the assistance of a local fixer. However, for many, the reward for fixers rarely outweighs the associated risks. It is due to the efforts of fixers that western media are operating from Pakistan's militancy-hit areas. Fixers rarely have insurance and there are no laws to protect them. This article revealed that fixers have been tortured and harassed, and in some extreme cases, have been killed. The fixers are placed in a dilemma for their security, because neither the international journalistic laws protect them nor the very media outlets or the correspondents who hire them in the first place provide protection for them.

On a positive note, the mutual relationship of the foreign correspondents and the fixers has evolved from exploitation to become mutually beneficial. Thus, there is a relationship forming that produces professional journalism. Still, fixers are deprived of the rights and privileges which cover the foreign correspondents. The credit or byline for such risk-laden reporting only goes to the foreign correspondent. In return, the foreign journalists pay local fixers a handsome amount of money for their reporting. Thus, the efforts a fixer makes and all the risks a fixer faces are often discarded. Finally, it is our hope that fixers will gain more credit and recognition. The fixers are, perhaps surprisingly, often equally professional in the tasks, as they maneuver in difficult terrain in Pakistan. Due to this, they must be given more protection and considered as valuable in international reporting in risky areas.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Female Journalists' Experience of Online Harassment: A Case Study of Nepal

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Abstract
This study examines the experiences of female journalists in Nepal in the context of rapidly growing expansion of broadband Internet. By examining the findings of the qualitative in-depth interview of 48 female journalists, it argues that online platforms are threatening press freedom in Nepal, mainly by silencing female journalists. The study also indicates that the problem is particularly severe in such a patriarchal society as a significant number of incidents of abuse go unreported, largely due to a culture of shame as well as ineffective legislation. Over the course of this article, I have attempted to show how social issues raised by second-wave feminism and online feminism are similar. The findings show that some of the female journalists experiencing harassment tolerate it by being 'strong like a man,' while many of them avoid social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook to keep free of such abuse. The study also suggests that individual efforts to tackle the vicious issue of misogyny might not be enough and collective effort from legislation, media organisations, and feminists is required to address the issue.

Keywords
female journalists; gender; harassment; journalism; Nepal; online harassment; online participation

Issue
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1. Introduction: Online Misogyny and Women

Digital media have become an important aspect of journalism. Journalists are using social media to find news sources, share news stories, and to engage with audiences. Feminist scholars have argued that digital platforms can help to bring women's concerns and feminist voices into the mainstream media (Baer, 2016; Carter Olson, 2016). However, there has also been an increase in rampant online misogyny (Ging & Siapera, 2018; Reporters Without Borders, 2018). The term online harassment is synonymously used for other terminologies such as cyber-bullying, gender-trolling (Mantilla, 2013), and is defined as a practice where an individual or group use the Internet to harass, harm, or ridicule another person using either a fake or real identity.

Female journalists across the world are facing discrimination and harassment in the workplace and in public. In addition to existing barriers, personal attacks via online comments, threatening emails, and social media posts represent a serious threat to the participation of female journalists. Even in countries that are relatively safe for journalists, online misogyny is becoming the norm for many female journalists (Adams, 2018). While the Internet is an important tool for journalists to acquire and disseminate information, it is also being used for practices such as public shaming, cyberstalking, and intimidation, among others. Early feminist Internet scholars (Hayles, 1999; Plant, 1996) were optimistic about the digital platform's potential to surpass gender-based discrimination in interactions. However, it was quickly apparent that the online world was not resistant to discrimination or abuse. Various studies (Bartlett, Norrie, Patel, Rumpel, & Wibberley, 2014; Nadim & Fladmoe, 2019) show that online harassment has stronger effects on women than men.

The digital platform has created a forum of free expression, contributing to a democratization of the public sphere (Ash, 2016). The Internet has also a unique opportunity to challenge the extent of male social dominance. However, various threats associated with technologies are silencing the diverse voices needed for a well-functioning democracy. Some studies (Harris, Mosdell, & Griffiths, 2016; Henrichsen, Betz, & Lisosky, 2015) contend that gendered assumptions are present even in cyberspace making it challenging to obtain gender equality.

As online interaction has been normalized as a part of journalists' routine in the age of digital journalism (Chen & Pain, 2017), the Internet is also creating a new sphere in which female journalists are likely to face harassment. Many journalists are expected to have an online presence and converse with the public through social media, however, those conversations often become misogynistic (Chen & Pain, 2017). It is also contended that online harassment has further increased with the emergence of social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter (Hackworth, 2018, p. 52). An analysis of reader comments within *The Guardian* newspaper's online content shows that articles written by female journalists received a higher proportion of hateful comments (blocked by moderators as a proxy for abuse and dismissive trolling; Gardiner, 2018).

A study by Demos, a think-tank in the United Kingdom, found that "journalism is the only category where women received more abuse than men, with female journalists receiving roughly three times as much abuse as their male counterparts" (Demos, 2014). Many female journalists today are experiencing harassment on the Internet because of their gender (Adams, 2018; South Asia Media Solidarity Network, 2016). Similarly, a poll of the International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF, 2014) found that two-thirds of respondents reported facing intimidation as well as violent and sexual threats online in response to their work.

Journalists should not have to work in fear due to their job or gender. However, resistance to female journalists in male-dominated industries such as the news media is not a new phenomenon. Feminist media researchers from all around the world have long emphasised the issue of female journalists' safety, particularly the issue of harassment in the workplace and in public (Joseph, 2005; Ross, 2004). The majority of recent studies have examined texts used in online abuse. However, there have been limited studies concerning online harassment and the experiences of female journalists. The studies are even more limited in the case of developing countries such as Nepal because Internet-related issues are often ignored as a 'first-world problem.' This study aims to examine Nepalese female journalists' experiences of online harassment, seeking to determine whether such cases of harassment are of a personal or professional nature. In addition, this research focuses on how such incidents impact the work experience of female journalists (in terms of reporting and expressing their views online) and journalism as a whole.

1.1. Background: The Nepali Context

The Internet has become vital for journalists to do their job across the globe, and Nepal is no exception. Internet penetration which was less than 10 percent, around a decade ago has now reached more than 67 percent of Nepal's population as of August 2019 (Nepal Telecommunications Authority, 2019). Not only has the number of Nepalese online news portals reached 1,380 (Press Council of Nepal, 2018), journalism as a whole is moving into the digital space. It may be contended that the changes that have taken place in journalism practices make the issue of online harassment of journalists, mainly women, increasingly important.

The majority of journalists have access to broadband Internet, and while this has facilitated their day to day reporting, it can also make them vulnerable to online abuse. Nepal continues to face widespread gender-based discrimination and it is clear that these problems are being replicated online. Incidents of online-based crime have almost doubled in 2019 in Nepal, compared to the previous year, according to statistics of Metropolitan Police Division (2019, as cited in Manandhar, 2019).

Following the end of the decade long armed conflict in 2006, the number of women is rising in male-dominated fields such as the military, politics, and journalism. According to the Federation of Nepali Journalists (2017), the number of female journalists has increased to 18 percent, from around five percent in 2005. Despite this, participation in and representation of women in journalism is such that it continues to be a masculine domain (Koirala, 2018). The point of departure of this article is that online harassment poses an additional threat to the participation of women in a male-dominated profession such as journalism. Although gender trolls may have individual motivations for harassment, Mantilla (2015) opines that widespread misogyny found on websites perpetuate a distinct form of violent gender abuse within Internet culture.

Despite the evidence, experiences of online harassment have not yet been studied in much detail. Although the scope of the study is limited to Nepal, it may be that the Nepali experience proves relevant in countries with a similar socio-cultural background. Various studies also show that gender and media matters reveal more commonalities than differences (Joseph, 2005; The World Association for Christian Communication, 2015).

2. Theorising Gender, Media, and Technology

To examine the experiences of online harassment, this article draws on the broader context of feminist theories, media, and technology. As presented above, problematic features of old media have transferred onto new

media as well. Emma A. Jane (2016) contends that there is a similarity between contemporary gendered cyberhate and key social problems (namely rape, domestic violence, and workplace sexual harassment) addressed by second-wave feminists. It may be contended that gendered online harassment is a reflection of the cultural understanding of gender and women's inferior place in society. Gendered online hate is rooted in "old" misogynistic discourses that insist on women's inferiority to men (Jane, 2014).

Early feminist Internet researchers were deeply divided by the utopian or dystopian nature of online spaces. Many early studies of cyberfeminism tended to either demonize or celebrate the potential for online feminism (Schulte, 2011, p. 729). However, most of the feminist interventions into new media at present have always offered a way to balance the hyperbolic utopic and dystopic framings of technologies (Shaw, 2014, p. 1). However, much scholarship conceptualizes online abuse as something different from a real-world problem. In a country like Nepal, where the digital world is still a new phenomenon, harassment and abuse of the Internet fail to draw attention. The technologically deterministic approaches focus on the differences between online abuse and physical harassment due to the former's anonymity and the lack of accountability online; stressing the need to regulate online activities. I argue that what happens in the 'virtual world' is experienced in the real world by real people, making it a serious issue. Some scholars such as Megarry (2014, p. 47) stress the need for online harassment to be conceptualized as a practice which excludes women's voices from the (digital) public sphere. This brings us to the explanation of Shaw (2014, p. 2) who contends that similar to all racism and sexism, it arises from a position of privilege created via the same historical events that made "tech culture" a particular form of masculine culture. Similarly, a study by Dale Spender (1980, as cited in Adams, 2018, p. 4) has shown that abuse can result in exclusion from the public domain. It may also weaken democracy as women are prevented from exerting influence in the culture (Byerly & Ross, 2006).

Various studies on gender and media show that women are still discriminated against and are denied fair representation (Byerly, 2016; Byerly & Ross, 2006). There is a link between women's participation in a male-dominated area such as journalism and the sexist abuse they encounter (Adams, 2018). British author Sadie Plant (1996) discusses how the "digital revolution" marks the decline of masculine hegemonic power structures, as the Internet is a non-linear world which cannot be ordered or controlled. Previous studies have shown that in any sphere, men fear a loss of power when women pushback a boundary for gender equality (Beard, 2014; Megarry, 2014, p. 48). Individual responsibility, ignoring the abuse, or even denying the truth that there is abuse, are some of the central themes discussed by women as they talk about their experience of online abuse (Ahmed, 2016; DiCaro, 2015). These responses illustrate the arguments of postfeminist media culture within which female journalists operate. Drawing from the post-feminist discourse, Rosalind Gill (2007) emphasises autonomy and free choice whereby women are "called on to self-manage, self-discipline." These discourses of individualism diminish gender politics as various forms of discrimination are "framed in exclusively personal terms in a way that turns the idea of the personal-as-political on its head" (Gill, 2007, p. 153). Similarly, in the early 1960s, rape, domestic violence, and workplace sexual harassment were trivialized and mocked, often being regarded as a personal matter (Citron, 2014, p. 22).

The gender hierarchy poses a difficult problem for female voices which goes beyond the public/private divide. Speaking in public is considered to be deviant to the traditional role of women and various studies have shown that women who do not conform to their traditional gender roles are disproportionately targeted for harassment (Megarry, 2014, p. 49).

I argue that gender-based harassment is intended to reinforce the patriarchy, where women are expected to be a submissive victim. Despite the similarities between online and offline misogyny, its anonymous nature and its potential to rapidly travel to a vast audience make tackling online harassment a greater challenge (Gagliardone, Gal, Alves, & Martinez, 2015). I contend that there is a need to address the new theoretical challenges raised by the digital age in feminist scholarship.

Drawing from various feminist media theories, I argue that hegemonic masculinity allows men to maintain hierarchical status over women as men continue to rule the world of news media. The concept of hegemonic masculinity has been used in feminist media studies to explain men's power over women. The theory also has been used to explain men's use of violence to legitimize traditional gender hierarchies. I contend that online harassment can also be considered as a form of violence to suppress female journalists. Feminists also contend that sexual harassment (online or offline) are a result of a deeply entrenched patriarchal gender system that discriminates against women and favours "a dominant normative form of masculinity" (Uggen & Blackstone, 2004, p. 66). While the study attempts to examine the findings of the study in relation to more than one strand of feminism, it relies heavily on the argument of second-wave feminism. Drawing from the arguments of second-wave feminism it may be contended that individual experiences of online harassment are linked to sexist power structures, meaning the 'personal is political.' While there is a growing body of work exploring online harassment, there remains limited empirical or theoretical insight into the impact of such harassment. The analysis presented here focuses on the nature of the harassment and its impacts. This will allow me to further explore how the experience of abuse intersects with aspects of gender equality, press freedom, and identity politics.

3. Methods

This research is feminist in nature as it mainly focuses on the experiences of women's harassment. A topic often marginalized in academic research. As a former journalist, I was curious to examine what was the nature and impact of online harassment on women's professional and personal lives. I have employed qualitative analysis to explore the following research questions: 1) What is the nature of online harassment as experienced by female journalists in Nepal? 2) How has it impacted their personal and professional lives? 3) What strategies are being adopted to combat the issue? Qualitative in-depth interviews were carried out with some of the analyses being enriched by my previous experience of working as a journalist in Nepal. The interviews were semi-structured—we followed an interview guide in order to get answers to the same questions from all interviewees, while also being able to adapt to the particularities of each interview.

3.1. Qualitative In-Depth Interview

Qualitative in-depth interview is one of the traditional forms of data collection. One of the main advantages of this method is it maximises data quality while minimising nonresponses. In-depth interviews are often used to seek information in highly sensitive projects (Lavrakas, 2008). While 26 interviews were conducted by the author personally, the remaining 22 were conducted with the help of a research assistant. The research assistant joined me for around ten interviews to become familiar with the approach and focus of the interview. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed later. A research assistant also helped me in the process of transcribing the interviews. 48 female journalists based in two major Nepalese cities—Kathmandu and Pokhara—participated in this study. Most of the female journalists identified themselves as news reporters and few as editors or news coordinators. Majority of the reporters were working with political and business departments. The respondents included representatives of 12 different Nepalese media institutions, including online, television, radio, and print.

Before adopting the interview as the method of this study, I attempted to conduct an online survey of around 120 journalists. The initial aim of this research was to reach the widest possible range of journalists. While few of the respondents returned the questionnaires, many of them were reluctant to participate even with a month-long deadline. This was not surprising given the busy nature of newsrooms and the sensitive topic in a comparatively rigid culture. Only 22 journalists filled in the form after several follow-ups. I used the findings of the online survey to further refine my interview questions. Otherwise, the findings solely rely on the in-depth interviews of the 48 journalists. The survey was also important to identify potential participants for the interview. It helped me in the process of purposive sampling. While the survey could have been more representative, I had to go with personal in-depth interviews which may have self-selection bias. As the objective of the study is not simply to quantify the problem but also to contribute to on-going efforts in combating the issue of online harassment, I opine that the study has benefitted from the method of a qualitative in-depth interview with semi-structured questionnaires. Despite the obvious fact of selection-bias, in the second attempt, I went for the in-depth qualitative interview with purposive sampling. As it only covers only four percent (n = 48) of the country's total number of female journalists, the findings should be treated with caution. This research does not claim that it is representative of the industry as a whole. However, it aims to offer a deeper insight into female journalists' responses to abuse.

This study aims to examine the experiences of female journalists faced with online harassment and to assess how it has affected them and the news industry. While harassment was not measured in absolute terms, journalists' own assessment (never, sometimes, often) was used. Subjects were divided into age groups of 21–25, 26–30, 31–35, 36 and above. Of these, the larger number were in the 21–25 age group. The questionnaire had nine multiple-choice questions with the option to comment (in some questions) with four of them being open-ended. In cases where the subject reported not having been harassed four questions were skipped meaning they were asked only nine questions. The duration of the interview was 20 to 45 minutes and was conducted mostly in their offices, colleges (in case of those who were also studying in universities), or in coffee shops on a few occasions. The interviews took place between 20th February and 18th August 2019. All the participants were asked the same series of questions, with follow-up questions. While participants from various types of media organizations are included in the survey, only two cities, Kathmandu and Pokhara, were included due to time and resource limitations.

4. Findings and Discussion

These interviews with female journalists largely confirmed what had been found by previous studies—that female journalists face harassment and abuse mainly due to their work and gender. Adding to previous studies which have been based mainly in the first world, most of these incidents were not reported in light of there being a lack of proper policy as well as other cultural factors.

Respondents were asked if they have ever faced any sort of online harassment. As many as 67 percent (n = 32) said that they have experienced some sort of abuse online. Only four percent (n = 2) said that they had experienced the abuse repeatedly. Participants could choose the options: never, sometimes, or often. The higher number of victims may be mainly because of the country-specific factor as journalism is considered a masculine profession with more than 80 percent of the workforce

being male. The findings indicate that the widespread inequality and discrimination against women which remains in Nepali society is increasingly being replicated online (Koirala, 2019). Also, part of the problem is that Nepali culture largely sees men's sexism as something innate rather than deviant. Eve teasing, sexists jokes, and even domestic violence are culturally accepted in the physical world (Koirala, 2018). Consequently, sexism is deemed 'normal' and the sexist behaviours and comments continue even in the digital world.

Comparison between age groups shows that women in the 21–25 age group are more likely to report having received harassment than their older colleagues. The findings show that 82 percent (n = 18) of female journalists in this group have experienced sexual and non-sexual insults or threats online compared to only 50 percent (n = 2) of women journalist above 35. The findings coincide with the results of other studies (Everbach, 2018) that younger female journalists are most likely to face harassment. While the harassment is experienced by the participants of all age groups, McLaughlin, Uggen, and Blackstone (2012, as cited in North, 2016, p. 8) argue that women in higher positions are frequently harassed compared to women in a subordinate position. However, the findings of this study suggest that journalists in junior positions (74 percent, n = 28) are more likely to face abuse online than their senior counterparts (44 percent, n = 4). These findings may be partly justified with the data of the age group which also suggests that younger female journalists are more likely to be harassed. The data, however, contradict the hypothesis of McLaughlin, Uggen, and Blackstone.

Similarly, comparisons between the types of news media organization showed another pattern of harassment. The data indicate that female journalists working with online news portals (90 percent, n = 10) and television (80 percent, n = 12) were more likely to face harassment compared to those working in radio (50 percent, n = 6) and newspaper journalism (37 percent, n = 3). This may be partly due to the nature of their work, which keeps them online more frequently and makes them easily identifiable by the audience compared to journalists from radio and print media.

4.1. Nature of Harassment

The other question asked was what sort of harassment the female journalists encountered. Respondents were allowed to select more than one option if needed. Out of 32 who responded to this question 20 journalists (62 percent) stated that the harassment was sexist in nature which involved comments about physical attributes and gender. On the nature of harassment, 48 percent of respondents (n = 15) stated that the harassment was sexual in nature. They reported having received rape threats, nude photos, and other harassment of a sexual nature online. The studies (Kaur, 2012; Robinson, 2005) on gender and harassment indicate the use of sexual harassment/violence is considered a legitimate and expected means to reaffirm that the public and private positions of hegemonic masculinity which exist in the physical world also exist in the online world.

Although this study did not include the experience of male reporters, the gendered and sexual nature of harassment indicates female journalists are more likely to experience abuse than their male colleagues. Women face sexual harassment more often than men, irrespective of their profession. Studies show that most of the harassment towards men occur in the form of name-calling and attempts to embarrass; however, for women, the most common forms of harassment were sexual in nature (Stroud & Cox, 2018, p. 293). Seven of the respondents (22 percent) also stated that they had also faced physical threats online. Two of them were rape threats and the other five featured abduction and physical attacks.

Drawing from feminist media theories, I argue that hegemonic masculinity maintains that women don't belong in public spheres such as news media, and this study confirms that barriers continue to prevent female journalists, from being as accepted as their male counterparts. One of the senior reporters of a daily business newspaper stated:

> We have a long way to go in creating equality in our society and gendered treatment inside news media organisations and sexist comments of the audience is just a part of it….Our society still expects us to see in traditional roles…cooking, taking care of the home. (Interviewee, 17 February, 2019)

4.2. The Platform of Online Abuse

Respondents were also asked where (on which online platform) they faced harassment. Out of 32 who responded to this question, 20 individuals singled out personal messaging apps and 18 identified social networking sites. Five respondents said that Email was the platform for harassment whereas only two mentioned online news comments. A large number of female journalists are facing harassment via personal messaging apps such as Viber and Whatsapp. It suggests that most of the harassment is private in nature. Studies (Adams, 2018; Usher, Holcomb, & Littman, 2018) of the western world indicate that harassment was more common in the form of trolling and public posts. The findings of the interview suggest that such practices were less frequent in Nepal's case. Nevertheless, some of the journalists acknowledged that they have faced nasty comments in public posts. While the Nepali news media have started moderating online comments, news stories shared on social media platforms continue to receive hateful comments, mostly misogynistic.

Journalism is Nepal is largely dominated by men. Female journalists in Nepal face various forms of discrimination regarding their salaries and promotion prospects (Koirala, 2018, p. 225). It is worrying that more than

two-thirds of female journalists face harassment online. Worse still, most of this harassment is sexual in nature and hardly reported. Participation of female journalists in Nepal is limited to 18 percent of the workforce (Federation of Nepali Journalists, 2017). Men always have dominated journalism and when women enter this sphere, they challenge men's power and control (Everbach, 2018). Online harassment might be one of the ways to resist women's entry into journalism.

4.3. Offenders of Online Harassment

The next question of the interview tried to identify who the perpetrators were. Unlike the findings of other studies (Adams, 2018; IWMF, 2014) which suggest a larger number of offenders tend to be male colleagues/bosses, only 15 percent (n = 5) of the online-based abuse was committed by their male colleagues or males in a senior position. More than 62 percent (n = 20) of the abuse was from someone who could not be identified. Around 22 percent (n = 7) of the respondents stated that the harassment was from news sources or people they knew on a personal level. Three respondents also stated that they had been asked for sexual favours in exchange for a news story via email and Facebook messenger. One of the respondents stated that the person was a senior officer at the ministry: "He was not direct but the implied meaning of the email was what will I get in exchange for this news story. Can you and I go somewhere quiet and romantic for a drink to discuss it [the information for news] further," she quoted him as saying (personal communication). Ammu Joseph's (2005) research with female journalists also found that character assassination, touching, and demands for sexual favours were some of the types of harassment reported by the female journalists. While the medium for harassment has changed over time, the findings indicate that male news sources feel entitled to sexual favours in exchange for news stories.

The study shows that most of the harassment was coming from anonymous users and 18 percent of the online harassment incidents were from male colleagues. One of the participants stated that in most of the instances harassment had come from an unidentified account and she never bothered to find the perpetrator. She said:

> If I had tried to find out the offender, maybe I could….I just wanted to forget the incident and move forward…I thought I would be devastated if I find out the offender was someone I know at a personal level. (personal communication)

The findings indicate that the anonymity provided by the Internet gives perpetrators greater courage to humiliate their victims. Most of their interactions take place in public spaces, surrounded by many people, whereas in online conversation they find the 'privacy' which they lack in their offices.

4.4. Influence of Online Harassment

Studies have shown that experiences with online harassment can incite fear and other emotional symptoms. It is argued that it can also lead individuals to become more cautious in expressing their views (Gelber & McNamara, 2016; Nadim & Fladmoe, 2016) and silence journalists (Henrichsen et al., 2015). I contend that online harassment of women is a form of sex discrimination that may cause short-term as well as long-term harm. It is meant to silence and humiliate women who try to enter male-dominated spaces (Barak, 2005; Vitis & Gilmour, 2017). To examine the influence of online harassment, the respondents were asked how the harassment impacted their personal and professional lives. The majority of the respondents who received abusive messages reported that it had a significant impact on them. Most of the respondents who received harassment repeatedly stated that they found the experience 'traumatic.' One of them (television presenter/reporter) discussed how the repeated incidents were discouraging her from continuing in the profession:

> I have encountered repeated harassment about my looks and physical attributes from unknown people online….One of them was also a rape threat….The comments can be so vulgar that I am hesitant to share the details…this makes me very conscious about myself….I struggle to concentrate on my reporting and find myself discouraged. (Interviewee, February 20, 2019)

A political reporter shared her experience of being a target from an opponent party while reporting a news story concerning 'shut-down protest.' Because of the repeated incidents of similar harassment, she stated that she was considering changing career shortly. She said:

> I received several messages on my Facebook and Twitter, most of them in the form of private messages. It included physical threats and some of the comments were also sexist in nature….I am so frustrated that I want to leave this profession. (Interviewee, July 22, 2019)

Five of the respondents said that they considered changing their career at some point after facing harassment. This is particularly alarming given that participation of female journalists is already low in Nepal. With an increasing number of media houses, there is tough competition for opportunities. However, female journalists argue that the work environment is not 'women-friendly' and the experiences of the online world are adding to their woes. One of the Pokhara based news reporters highlighted how repeated sexist comments were an additional burden to bear on top of her high workload:

> I've tried my best not to let cyber-bullying impact my news reporting but there are many occasions when

> I feel discouraged….While I know my job has been so easy because of the Internet…online experience is just adding problems to our already challenging profession. (Interviewee, July 22, 2019)

While the trolling and bullying online was usually from people they did not know or from fake accounts, respondents had also received such abuse from someone within their circle. One of the radio correspondents in her late twenties says:

> Harassment makes it uncomfortable to cover a specific area if your harasser is your news source….I know it was an important news story but I simply dropped the story as covering it meant to reach the same person [offender] time and again. I have experienced harassment in a face to face interview too but it just gets nastier and unbearable when it is online. The harassment is more indirect in physical communication…they [news sources] imply certain things like they want 'something' in exchange for news…it is not very direct. (Interviewee, February 21, 2019)

The majority (60 percent, n = 19) of the female journalists who have faced harassment said that they have limited their online activities or been more cautious while sharing or posting something on social media platforms. Three of them reported abstaining from controversial topics while two of them dropped a news story, following an incident of online harassment.

The comments reveal that the abuse was affecting their opinion and journalistic content. Participants reported that they avoided particular topics such as women rights, feminism, and corruption to 'save' them from the possible bullying. Most of the participants stated that they were practising "self-censorship" in terms of content and style. One of the reporters also said that she prefers being anonymous in controversial stories.

One of the senior reporters of a Pokhara based local newspaper states:

> There are times, I write, post, edit, and post and delete. As I report on issues related to gender, my posts and news stories seem too angry many people….Because of the repeated incidents of intimidation online as well as offline, I prefer to limit my online presence, particularly on Facebook and Twitter….Most of the time they [offenders] attempt to shut us down in the name of "saving our culture." (Interviewee, July 22, 2019)

4.5. Combating Online Harassment

This study also examines the mechanisms used by female journalists to curb such abuse. Emma A. Jane (2016, p. 2) suggests that combating online harassment requires a combination of individualism as well as collectivism—in what could be described as a hybrid of second- and third-wave approaches. The third-wave of feminism began in the 1990s as a backlash against the second-wave of feminism and began to apply feminist theory to a wider variety of women in terms of colour, sexuality, and other characteristics. Some of the popular strategies have been around hashtag campaigns such as #Metoo and #Everydaysexism. However, most of the strategies shared by the participants were more individual in nature. This indicates that there is a lack of solidarity when it comes to the issue of harassment. Nevertheless, the findings show that the female journalists with greater experience were more aware of the need to report the issue and also had developed strategies on dealing with the abuse. Respondents were asked: What strategies do you (as a woman journalist) use to avoid/minimize incidents of harassment online or to help you deal with the abuse? Participants were allowed to pick more than one option and were asked to add additional strategies if they had one.

Out of the 32 responses received, 20 (62 percent) mentioned ignoring the abuse. The majority of them suggested that they had to develop a 'thick skin' to cope with the harassment. One of the online news reporters pointed out that the major strategy was to be strong hearted like a man. She went on to say that although online abuse was unacceptable the easiest way seemed to be just to ignore as if it had never happened (personal communication). This indicates that some of the journalists are adapting to become "one of the boys" (Melin-Higgins, 2004, p. 199); embracing this strategy and rejecting their female gender to fit in with the masculine normative is highly likely to impact news production by reducing the diversity of voices.

Only two of the respondents said that she informed her employer so that they might take action. Likewise, 14 (44 percent) of them also mentioned that they had deactivated their accounts or had kept offline for a time. Being forced to stay away from the Internet means their voices were silenced.

Three of the respondents said that they had discussed the issue in the forum of female journalists or amongst themselves. None of them mentioned reporting it to the police. It may be mainly because offenders continue to enjoy impunity in the absence of any strict laws relating to cyber-harassment or the male-dominant culture of the news media which allows perpetrators to operate freely.

Two of the respondents also reported the abuse to Facebook. This indicates that at least some female journalists are aware of how to seek help from online platforms to stay safe. The other questions were included to examine how news media organisations were addressing this issue.

Respondents were asked if they thought their organisation was helping them (and their colleagues) to cope with cyber harassment. Only four out of 48 respondents stated that they were positive about their organisations' approach against harassment online as well as offline. The majority of them expressed doubt that their media

house was equipped to deal with such issues.

One of the respondents working in an online news portal said:

> Nobody has ever talked about it [any sort of harassment]. We [female journalists] still hesitate to report it to our boss if we are harassed physically. So, reporting online harassment might be ridiculed. Many of us are not even sure what extent of harassment is bearable and what should be reported….Organisational policies on such issues would have helped but we don't have one that deals with cyber-attacks. (Interviewee, February 26, 2019)

Only one of the respondents reported having stayed on the sidelines while reporting a news story on domestic violence. Three other of the 32 respondents stated they had dropped a news report or avoided reporting on a particular issue due to their fear of abuse. Quantitatively, the number might not seem huge. However, these findings show a trend where harassment is influencing women on a professional and emotional level with increasing numbers of female journalists limiting their activities online as a coping mechanism against harassment. The underreporting of online harassment suggests that 'the culture of shame' and the apparent hegemonic masculinity is forcing female journalists to remain quiet. The victim-blaming culture is another aspect of Nepali society which results in many victims, including those in journalism, preferring not to disclose such incidents.

The findings suggest that female reporters are remaining silent for fear of being shrugged off by their seniors. Female journalists are making conscious decisions to maintain low profiles and steer clear of issues likely to ignite cyberbullying. Based on this study, female journalists have mostly been bullied via social media—mainly Facebook—possibly to its status as one of the preferred social media platforms.

Most of the respondents stated that they were trying to curb the issue of harassment on a personal level. I argue that there are no personal solutions to this. Only collective action can bring about a permanent reduction in, if not an end, to gender-based harassment. Following the "Me Too movement" (a large movement against sexual harassment and assault in which media began reporting widespread harassment by powerful male figures), the potential of social media to strengthen the reach of women's activism by bringing women's concerns to the mainstream media (Carter Olson, 2016) is being explored. However, in Nepal's context, there is still a long way to go as journalists who are responsible for exposing such issues are shying away from reporting the issue of their own harassment.

5. Conclusion

This article shows that female journalists are being subject to online abuse, forcing many of them to be silenced. The experiences of female journalists indicate that the Internet sustains sexist abuse, objectification of women, and male hegemony. For most of the women who participated in the research, abuse actually worsened due to their work in the news media industry. The online abuse is not only negatively affecting women's lives, but also their journalism. I contend that if women's voices are excluded (or silenced) due to online harassment, it becomes a threat not only to the exercise of free speech but also to the functioning of democracy itself (Nadim & Fladmoe, 2019, p. 12). The research indicates that online harassment is forcing women to be marginalised from the media industry (Byerly & Ross, 2006, p. 231).

The article has demonstrated that online harassment is making female journalists cautious when expressing their opinions. The findings also indicate that female journalists keep these incidents private which partly explains why Nepali society is unaware of this issue's prevalence. The plurality of voices is one of the key indicators of a democratic society. During the decade-long conflict, the safety of journalists was at a record low due to deaths, disappearances, and a number of physical attacks. While the safety situation has improved since the end of the armed conflict, the experience stated above poses serious questions regarding the safety of journalists and press freedom in Nepal.

Online harassment may have numerous consequences including psychological, financial, and even physical. As the findings indicate, after facing online abuse, journalists become cautious for their own safety, forced to self-censor, or stop reporting entirely, and even change their profession. Globally, there is an increased demand for digital safety to curb incidents of such abuse, however, at present, few tools are available to help journalists. In Nepal's context, as the study indicates, the majority of journalists lack the basic knowledge to create a safe digital space.

According to the respondents, news organisations in Nepal lack policies on digital security or even against harassment. Besides law enforcement and adequate laws against digital harassment, journalistic training to promote awareness of the tools and strategies to cope with harassment are also likely to be important. Similarly, feminist interventions—crucial in combating online harassment—have largely been absent in Nepal's case. As a result, there was no solidarity in the efforts against harassment with most choosing an individual strategy for a common problem.

The findings presented here should encourage more research into the gendered nature of online harassment. More detailed studies are necessary to examine the impacts of such harassment. I have situated the issue of online harassment particularly concerning the 'second-wave of feminism' which presents women as a homogenous group whose interests are represented by a single politics. While there are some advantages to representing women as a single group, it may be challenging to address the issues of misogyny in cyberspace.

While the focus of the study is on gendered harassment, it has ignored the experiences of women of particular castes, religions, as well as other categories. Future studies should include the experiences of female journalists from particular racial groups, castes, ethnic groups, or religions for an adequate exploration of online harassment. Theoretically, future research may benefit from broader arguments of feminism beyond the identity politics approach.

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Conflict of Interests

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Article

#MeToo, Sexual Harassment and Coping Strategies in Norwegian Newsrooms

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Abstract
This article, through conducting a study of the sexual harassment (SH) of media workers, investigates the extent and types of SH experienced by the editorial staff of Norwegian newsrooms at the time the #MeToo campaign arrived in Norway, and what effects such experiences have on journalists' professional lives. We are also interested in what Norwegian media houses are doing to address these challenges. The leading research question consists of three interrelated parts: To what extent are journalists exposed to SH? What coping strategies do they use? How can newsrooms be better prepared to fight SH, from the perspective of the safety of journalists? A mixed methods approach, which combines findings from a quantitative questionnaire with qualitative in-depth interviews, was used to answer these questions. The findings show that female, young, and temporary media workers are significantly more frequently targeted than others and that those who had experienced SH handled the situation using avoiding strategies to a significantly greater extent than those who had only been exposed to unwanted attention experiences. The findings feed into a discussion of what strategies media houses can use to be better prepared in the fight against SH.

Keywords
coping strategies; female journalists; journalism; newsrooms; safety; sexual harassment

Issue
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1. Introduction

On October 15, 2017, actor Alyssa Milano, in a tweet, urged all women who had experienced sexual harassment (SH) to use the hashtag #MeToo in social media. In the next few days, the #MeToo movement was born by millions of women worldwide sharing their stories using this hashtag. In Norway, many were surprised by the extent of SH in what is often considered to be one of the most gender equal countries in the world. #MeToo cases relate to SH and abuse cases in asymmetric power relations, for example between employer and employee. The #MeToo campaign brought about a radical change of norms, with societies through #MeToo starting to see SH as a structural problem that needed to be taken seriously. The research on SH has also escalated in the wake of the campaign, with studies investigating the impact of #MeToo from the feminist, sociological, journalistic, legal, and medical perspective, including the impact on mental health outcomes (see e.g., Rees, Simpson, McCormack, Moussa, & Amanatidis, 2019; Wexler, Robbennolt, & Murphy, 2019).

The Norwegian media was a key player in the dissemination of information about the #MeToo campaign. The media is, however, at the same time made up of institutions and workplaces that are at times characterized by asymmetrical power relations. In this article, we investigate the consequences of SH at work on media workers from a psychological/mental health perspective. This is the first Norwegian study that focuses specifically on the SH of media workers.

2. SH and Coping Strategies

SH is defined as being unwanted sexual attention (UA) that is perceived by the recipient as being offensive, and which exceeds the individual's coping resources or threatens their well-being (Fitzgerald, Swan, & Magley, 1997; Isdal, 2016). Lack of mutual consent is the element that defines SH. Unequal power relations, difficulties escaping a situation, and repetitive behavior add to the seriousness of a SH situation (Orgeret & Vike Arnesen, 2019). The definition of SH covers a wide range of behaviors, these ranging from unwanted comments and sexually charged staring to sexual assault and rape. A common way of systematizing the content of the term is to divide SH into physical, verbal, and non-verbal. Power is a key concept in this context. Power can be defined as being one person forcing their will upon another regardless of the wishes or interests of the other person (Matthiesen & Olsen, 2018), the centering of the #MeToo campaign on SH as a misuse of power further reflecting this. Such situations are often characterized by a hierarchical relationship of power between the persons involved and contextual factors such as repetitive behavior and low risk of perpetrator consequences (Sletteland & Helseth, 2018).

The definition of SH is a topic of controversy. It is both a legal and a phenomenological concept: "Whereas legal definitions need to take the legislatures and judicial decisions into account, the phenomenological experience of harassment is determined solely by the experience of the victim" (Nielsen, Bjørkelo, Notelaers, & Einarsen, 2010, p. 253). SH is prohibited by Norwegian law (Act Relating to Equality and a Prohibition Against Discrimination, 2018). It is, even so, "a primarily psychological experience best understood from a cognitive grounded stress (coping) model rather than from a strictly legal framework" (Fitzgerald et al., 1997, p. 25). SH may therefore be associated with a reduction in job satisfaction, lower levels of commitment to an organization, withdrawal from work, physical and mental ill health, and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (Willness, Steel, & Lee, 2007). The explanation that SH, particularly repeated incidences, induces feelings of discomfort that over time may lead to distress, can explain many of these effects (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012). The field of research of workplace bullying and harassment has expanded greatly in recent years. So have the number of studies of the long-term detrimental effects of this upon targets' health and well-being (Hogh, Mikkelsen, & Hansen, 2012). We, in this study, follow the distinction between levels of SH presented by Matthiesen and Olsen (2018) and distinguish between UA and SH. Matthiesen and Olsen (2018) define UA as being situations that result in negative perceptions, and SH as being situations which relate to the enforcement of power. UA covers a number of different types of inappropriate behavior in which the perpetrator experiences the attention as good and in which the target experiences this as being negative. An example is receiving unwanted sexual approaches. Where the target manages to cope with the situation by telling the colleague to stop giving this attention, such behavior can be experienced as being unwise or inappropriate without being offensive. If the target does not, however, manage to communicate this, or if the perpetrator continues the behavior despite negative feedback, then there is a risk that the target's self-esteem will be harmed, which may result in a feeling of being sexually harassed, humiliated, and victimized (Matthiesen & Olsen, 2018). The seriousness of the harassment is, of course, closely related to the targeted person's interpretation of the experience. This interpretation may also be closely related to her or his vulnerability, which in turn may be affected by, for example, previous experiences of sexual abuse or/and harassment (Kleppe & Røyseng, 2016; Nielsen et al., 2010).

The severity and manifestation of personal reactions are, furthermore, closely related to the targeted person's coping strategy. Coping is a widely used term in psychology and "refers to attempts to neutralize stress, or as any action that protects people from being psychologically or emotionally harmed" (Scarduzio, Sheff, & Smith, 2018). Coping strategies are often divided into two major types: problem-focused and emotion-focused. Emotion-focused coping involves managing the emotional responses to stressful situations. Problem-focused coping involves taking control of the stressor, for example removing the source of the stress or removing oneself from the stressful situation. One way of removing a stress source is to report the harassment to the target's company, and letting the company solve the problem. Leaving the company or the department in which the perpetrator works is also a way of removing oneself from a stressor. This is an avoiding coping strategy (Carroll, 2013). Previous research has indicated that SH and UA can have severe negative effects upon both the person targeted and the company, the effects being determined by the coping strategy chosen by the victim. Some coped by reporting the harassment to the company, others left the company (Kleppe & Røyseng, 2016). Studies have shown that there is a lack of a culture of reporting SH (Benavides-Espinoza & Cunningham, 2010). The fear of retaliation and of the burden that can follow reporting managers and colleagues for SH are also common reasons for not acting (Buchanan, Settles, Hall, & O'Connor, 2014).

Vohlídalová (2015) links the lack of awareness of and reactions to SH to a gender ideology that actively legit-

imates SH. She argues that an example of legitimation may be the tendency to trivialize and belittle SH and its impact on targets, to prevent forms of behavior that are legally defined as being SH being defined as such. This is further reflected in the tendency to shift the solution of SH from the institutional (i.e., organization action) to the individual level, an important aim of the #MeToo movement being to move this focus back from the individual to a structural and institutional level. The increasing tendency of seeing these threats to women in newsrooms as a safety issue is also part of a trend focusing more on a structural level than on the individual one only. Furthermore, Nadine Hoffman, the Deputy Director of the International Women's Media Foundation, stresses the importance of not dismissing SH as a workplace or human resources issue. She instead argues that SH must be treated as a safety issue and be taken as seriously as the dangers of reporting from hazardous locations and being targeted because of the coverage of an organization or an issue. She also states that if these issues are not addressed, then the impact will go beyond those involved leaving the industry out of frustration or concern for their safety (Hoffman, as cited in Young, 2019).

3. The Norwegian Scene

Norway has a well-organized work environment. Tariffs and working conditions are regulated by national and local collective agreements between employer organizations and the trade unions. This includes the media sector. Around 90% of the 9000 or so professional journalists in Norway are members of The Norwegian Union of Journalists (NJ). One out of ten journalists are freelancers, the remainder being temporary or staff employees. Around 45% of journalists are women. Most editors are members of The Association of Norwegian Editors (NR), which has around 800 members, one third being women (NJ, 2018; NR, 2019). The Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK), Norway's public service broadcaster, has 3000 employees and is the largest media company in Norway. Around 1700 NRK employees are NJ members. The commercial television broadcaster TV2 is the second largest media house in Norway and has around 750 employees, 340 being NJ members. The next media houses ranked by size are the traditional newspaper houses of Schibsted, Amedia, and Polaris Media. These own around 70% of the 225 local, regional and national media houses (Norwegian Audit Bureau of Circulations, 2019; Norwegian Media Authority, 2019). The daily media consumption per inhabitant in Norway is, for a country with a population of less than 5 million, one of the highest in the world (Statistics Norway, 2019).

Employer and employee organizations in the media sector have cooperated since 1980 to conduct of a number of national surveys on working conditions. Harassment, threats, and violence were major issues for editors and journalists in the 2012 survey. However, the inclusion of SH in newsrooms in the questionnaire was not even thought about until the #MeToo campaign hit Norwegian media companies, the campaign impacting this sector as hard as other parts of working life. Media organizations responded by launching a web-based survey in 2017. All media employees were invited to participate in this national investigation of SH in the media sector.

The primary goal of the #MeToo campaign was to uncover SH in the workplace that is characterized by asynchronous power relations. This type of hierarchical power can emerge in the media sector between managers or other superiors and journalists, particularly between superiors and temporary workers. Media organizations have undergone a considerable number of reorganizations and staff downsizing rounds in recent years, the use of temporary workers consequently increasing (Grimsmo & Heen, 2013). This provides an additional reason for looking into this issue. The survey also focused on differences due to gender, age, and employment status. How targets/victims cope with unwanted attention was also a topic of investigation. The survey therefore also examines the extent to which different demographic groups chose an offensive strategy of reporting harassment to the company, or a defensive coping strategy of avoiding the perpetrator.

The major findings of the survey describe the extent of SH and UA in media companies and were presented in December 2017 (NJ, 2017). The survey revealed that 4% of journalists and editors had experienced SH in the previous six months, while 23% had experienced at least one type of UA at work in the same time period. One out of five cases were, furthermore, typical #MeToo cases in which the perpetrator was a company superior. The percentage rates for SH reported in these finding may be considered to be low. They are, however, four times higher than those recorded in a similar study of Norwegian working life in general (Nielsen et al., 2010). Media organizations followed up the results by implementing concrete action plans that were aimed at changing attitudes to and sharpening awareness of SH.

Little attention was, however, given to the coping strategies of targeted journalists in the initial data analysis, and in subsequent debates and implemented actions. Coping strategies, however, represent a major issue. We therefore decided to carry out a separate analysis of those who reported harassment to their company and those who chose an avoiding strategy. The first analysis showed only 14% of SH incidents were reported to media houses (Idås & Backholm, in press). Female journalists reported more frequently than male colleagues. SH that involved superiors (the #MeToo cases) was reported less often than cases that involved other colleagues. The most common reason for not reporting was that the targeted person did not consider the incident to be serious enough to be reported. The second most common reason for not reporting was the fear of consequences/retaliation (Idås & Backholm, in press).

In this study we will, however, investigate the issues of SH and coping strategies in more detail and explore

how Norwegian media houses address these challenges. We in particular investigate media workers who chose a defensive coping strategy (avoidance), by both looking into demographics (gender, age, and employment) and by investigating whether the perpetrator's position in a media house influenced the target's coping strategy. The leading research question therefore consists of three interrelated parts: To what extent are journalists exposed to SH? What coping strategies do they use? How can newsrooms be better prepared to fight SH, from the perspective of safety of journalists?

4. Methods

A mixed methods approach was used to investigate the three interrelated research questions. The first part of the article presents findings from a quantitative questionnaire survey of Norwegian journalists and editors. The second part discusses aspects of these findings through qualitative in-depth interviews with editors and journalists who covered the #MeToo campaign in Norwegian media houses. The two methods were therefore employed sequentially, findings from the survey informing the qualitative interviews.

4.1. Participants and Procedures

The questionnaire for this study was launched in November 2017, just a few weeks after the #MeToo campaign arrived in Norway. It was distributed by email to all working members of NJ ($n = 6303$) and NR ($n = 730$). A total of 3626 journalists and editors responded. The respondents were asked whether they were members of the NJ or the NR. The 3143 respondents who stated they were a member of NJ were considered in this study to be journalists. The 499 who stated they were a member of NR were considered to be editors. The response rate was 50% for NJ members and 68% for NR members (see Table 1).

We furthermore selected 12 interviewees from six major Norwegian media houses for qualitative in-depth interviews. The media houses were chosen to provide a mix of national and regional houses, and different types of ownership. The interviewees were purposively selected. All had covered the #MeToo campaign. This was not a necessity for being able to say something about how newsrooms could be better prepared to fight SH. This subgroup was, however, chosen because discussing SH with journalists who had covered issues relating to misuse of power, UA, and SH in the light of the #MeToo campaign, could provide a more nuanced content. Some of the interviewees had answered the quantitative questionnaire. This was not, however, a precondition for being selected. The interviews lasted between 30 and 45 minutes and were carried out at the media houses in Bergen and Oslo. They were semi-structured. We followed an interview guide to ensure we obtained answers to the same questions from all interviewees. We also pursued the particularities of each interview. The interviews took place between May and October 2018. They were recorded and later transcribed. We were particularly interested in using the qualitative interviews to obtain comments on the quantitative findings and answers to the third research question, which is how newsrooms can be better prepared to fight SH.

4.2. The Questionnaire: Measures

The questionnaire was constructed by taking items from other Norwegian studies on SH, and by developing a number of items specifically for this study. The Bergen SH Scale (BSHS) has been used to measure SH and UA (Einarsen & Sørum, 1996). BSHS is a validated scale and has been used in a number of studies on SH in Norwegian working life (Kleppe & Røyseng, 2016; Nielsen et al., 2010). Using BSHS in this study allows the results of the #MeToo survey to be compared with other studies. The scale consists of two parts. Part 1 measures exposure to UA using an inventory of 11 items that assess the following types of SH: unwanted verbal sexual attention, unwanted physical sexual behavior, and sexual pressure. The respondents were asked how often they had been exposed to each behavior in their present workplace or at a work-related social event in the last six months. Response choices were: 0 = Never; 1 = Once; 2 = 2–5 times; 3 = More than 5 times; 4 = I don't know; and 5 = I don't want to answer. A sum score was calculated for those who responded 0–3 for each of the eleven questions, giving a possible range for the sum score of 0–33 ($n = 3226$). Those responding 4 or 5 were excluded from the analysis. The items showed satisfactory internal consistency in this study (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.71$). Part 2 asks whether the respondent had been exposed to SH at work in the last six months, without a concise definition of SH being presented. The response alternatives were: 0 = No; 1 = Yes; 2 = I don't know; and 3 = I don't want to answer. The data from those responding 0 or 1 were used ($n = 3591$).

Table 1. Demographic data.

Member of	NJ $n = 3144$	NR $n = 499$	Total $n = 3627$
Female	52%	33%	49%
Age	± 43 years	± 48 years	± 44 years
Staff employees	82%	99%	85%
Temporary employees	9%	0.4%	8%
Freelancers	9%	0%	8%

4.3. Who Was the Perpetrator?

To investigate the type of perpetrators in #MeToo cases in SH incidents in Norwegian newsrooms, we asked the question: "Who was behind the harassment or abuse that you were exposed to?" Response alternatives were: 1 = A workplace manager; 2 = A workplace colleague; 3 = Another colleague; 4 = Another person I met at work; 5 = Another person; 6 = I don't know; and 7 = I don't want to answer. The categories were reconstructed to: 1 = A workplace manager; 2 = A workplace colleague; and 3 = Another person. 1346 respondents selected one of these alternatives. Alternative 3 consisted of the original categories 3–5.

4.4. Coping Strategies

We investigated how respondents coped with SH/UA by using a scale that was developed by the Work Research Institute to study hate speech against Norwegian journalists and editors (Hagen, 2015). Using this scale allows data relating to the harassment/threatening of editorial staff by the public to be compared with journalists/editors who have experienced SH and/or UA from superiors and colleagues. The question was: "How were you affected by the harassment or abuse?" The scale consists of 13 items that cover the psychological distress and consequences related to what we in this study label "avoidance." The options were: 1 = I have changed work tasks to less visible ones; 2 = I have thought about quitting my job; 3 = I have refrained from tasks; and 4 = I have changed job.

A score was constructed based on these options to indicate the range of avoidance subtypes. The scale was: 0 = No reactions; 1 = One type of reaction; 2 = Two types of reactions; 3 = Three types of reactions; and 4 = Four types of reactions (possible range = 0–4; $n = 853$). No respondents reported all four types of reactions. A dichotomous variable was also constructed, the response alternatives being 0 = No and 1 = Yes (score on at least one of the four alternatives in the original scale).

4.5. Statistics: Analysis

Categorical and dichotomous variables were analyzed using Crosstabs and Chi-square tests. Combinations of categorical and continuous variables were analyzed using an independent t-test and between-groups analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Three demographic groups were used in the study: gender; age; and type of employment (Table 1). All were dichotomized. Age was dichotomized into 0 $<$ 36 years ($n = 927$) and 1 $\geq$ 36 years ($n = 2699$) and employment into 0 = Temporary employees ($n = 288$) and 1 = Staff employees ($n = 3045$). The 22 respondents who answered "I don't know" and the 271 respondents who responded "Freelancer" were not included in the analysis, as it can be argued that they are not a part of the day-to-day life of the newsrooms.

A categorical scale was constructed to analyze the differences between those who had experienced harassment: 0 = No harassment ($n = 2773$); 1 = Solely UA experiences ($n = 716$); and 2 = SH experiences ($n = 137$). Another categorical scale was created to investigate differences between those who had never previously experienced harassment (0 = No harassment; $n = 2773$) and those who had at least one experience of UA or SH (1 = UA/SH; $n = 853$).

5. Results: The Questionnaire

We present here the main findings and results from the first part of the study (the questionnaire). The results of the frequency analysis are presented in Tables 1–7. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

3592 respondents responded to the single-item question about SH. Of these, 137 (4%) claimed that they had been exposed to SH at work in the last six months, 97 of these (71%) being "in-house," and involving 29 managers (22%) or 68 colleagues (50%). The perpetrator was someone else in 40 of the cases (29%). Frequency analysis indicates that female journalists had been more frequently exposed to SH by managers or colleagues than male journalists/editors (Table 2). Journalists younger than 36 had been more frequently exposed to SH than colleagues

Table 2. Frequency of experienced SH in last six months.

Role of perpetrator:	All	Manager	Colleague	Others
All $n = 3591$	4%	1%	2%	1%
Female $n = 1753$	7%	1%	3%	2%
Male $n = 1838$	1%	0%	1%	0%
$<$ 36 years $n = 910$	8%	1%	4%	2%
$>$ 36 years $n = 2681$	3%	1%	1%	1%
Temporary $n = 284$	10%	1%	7%	1%
Staff employee $n = 3023$	3%	1%	1%	1%

Notes: A Chi-square-test indicated that there was a significant difference between the sexes for SH: χ^2 (1, $n = 3225$) = 61.24, $p < 0.001$. This test also indicated a significant difference in SH scores between the age groups, χ^2 (1, $n = 3225$) = 42.13, $p < 0.001$, and between temporary and staff employees, χ^2 (1, $n = 2993$) = 33.34, $p < 0.001$.

≥ 36 years, and temporary workers more frequently exposed to SH than staff employees.

5.1. UA

Almost one in four respondents (23%) reported having been exposed to at least one type of UA at work in the last six months. Of the 843 editors and journalists who had been exposed to UA, 454 (54%) had experienced more than one of the 11 types included in the survey, while 557 (66%) had experienced one of the types more than once in the last six months.

The scores for the different types of UA are presented in Table 3. The survey indicates that "Unwanted comments with a sexual content" and "Unwanted comments about clothing, body, or way of living" were the two most frequently reported types of harassment. "Unwanted requests/demands for sexual services with the promise of rewards," "Unwanted requests/demands for sexual services with threats of punishment or sanctions," and "Sexual assault, attempted rape, or actual rape" were the least reported types of harassment.

Of the 843 reported incidents of UA, 485 (58%) occurred in-house. A manager was involved in 89 (18%) of these cases, a colleague being involved in the remaining 346 (82%) of in-house cases. The results presented in Table 4 indicate that female journalists were more frequently exposed to UA than male colleagues, that those below 36 years were more frequently exposed than older colleagues, and that temporary employees experienced UA more frequently than members of staff.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the UA scores for female and male journalists/editors. There was a significant difference between the female and male scores ($M = 1.07$, $SD = 2.29$ vs. $M = 0.33$, $SD = 1.18$; t [2245.37] = 11.38, $p < 0.001$). This test on age groups also indicated that there was also a significant difference between respondents below 36 years and those ≥ 36 years ($M = 1.12$, $SD = 2.29$ vs. $M = 0.54$, $SD = 1.62$; t [1095.60] = 7.79, $p < 0.001$). A t-test for significant differences in UA-scores also showed a significant difference between the scores of temporary employees and staff employees ($M = 1.03$, $SD = 2.14$ vs. $M = 0.63$, $SD = 1.73$; t [272.24] = 3.69, $p < 0.001$).

Table 3. Frequency of UA in last six months (split on 11 items).

Have you experienced	Never	Once	2–5 times	> 5 times
Unwanted comments about clothing, or body, or way of living (*n* = 3558)	88%	5%	5%	1%
Other unwanted verbal comments with sexual content (*n* = 3516)	86%	5%	7%	3%
Pictures or objects with sexual content, which you experienced as undesirable or unpleasant (*n* = 3583)	98%	2%	1%	0.1%
Being the object of rumors with a sexual content (*n* = 3436)	97%	2%	1%	0.1%
Sexually charged staring or glances, which felt uncomfortable (*n* = 3506)	93%	2%	3%	1%
Unwanted telephone calls or letters with sexual content (*n* = 3610)	98%	1%	1%	1%
Unwanted physical contact with sexual suggestions (*n* = 3592)	93%	4%	2%	0.3%
Unwanted sexual approaches that you experienced as uncomfortable, but which did not contain promises of rewards or threats of punishments or sanctions (*n* = 3595)	97%	2%	1%	0.1%
Unwanted requests/demands for sexual services with a promise of rewards (*n* = 3614)	99.7%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Unwanted requests/demands for sexual services with threats of punishment or sanctions (*n* = 3615)	99.7%	0.1%	0.1%	0%
Sexual assaults, attempted rape, or actual rape (*n* = 3627)	99.9%	0.1%	0%	0%

Table 4. Frequency of UA in last six months (score on at least one item).

Role of perpetrator:	All	Manager	Colleague	Others
All *n* = 3626	23%	4%	10%	6%
Female *n* = 1777	34%	8%	17%	12%
Male *n* = 1849	13%	2%	5%	2%
< 36 years *n* = 927	35%	5%	17%	13%
> 36 years *n* = 2699	19%	4%	8%	7%
Temporary *n* = 288	37%	6%	19%	12%
Staff employee *n* = 3045	22%	5%	10%	7%

5.2. Harassed by Who?

The study indicates that 22% of those who reported SH/UA have been harassed by a manager, 48% by a colleague, and 31% by someone outside the company (Table 5). A Chi-square test for independence indicated that there was a significant difference between the age groups and the role of the perpetrator (manager, colleague, or other), χ^2 (2, n = 706) = 8.37, p = 0.015. Chi-square tests for the other two demographic groups did not indicate significant variations: gender χ^2 (2, n = 706) = 3.17, p = 0.21; employment χ^2 (2, n = 645) = 2.44, p = 0.30.

5.3. Coping

Of the 853 who had experienced SH/UA at work, 123 (14%) reported reactions that can be interpreted as being a desire to avoid the perpetrator. The most typical reaction was considering changing job (7%), changing job (4%), or abstaining from duties (5%). The sum scale for avoidance was higher among those who had experienced SH than those who had only been exposed to UA experiences (Table 6). A one-way ANOVA analysis of variance indicated a significant variance in avoidance between those without SH/UA experience, those who solely had experienced UA and those who had experienced SH, F (2, 3623) = 97.0, $p < 0.001$. A post-hoc comparison (Tukey HSD test) was used to identify where the differences between the groups occurred. The comparisons indicated that the mean score for the "no harassment" group was significantly different (p < 0.001) from that for those who had experienced UA (M = 0.03, SD = 0.22 vs. M = 0.16, SD = 0.49) and SH (M = 0.03, SD = 0.22 vs. M = 0.32, SD = 0.061). The comparison also indicated a significant difference between the avoidance scores of those who had experienced UA or SH (M = 0.16, SD = 0.49 vs. M = 0.32, SD = 0.061).

A further one-way ANOVA analysis was conducted to explore the impact of the role of the perpetrator (manager, colleague, or other) on the variance in avoidance for respondents who had experienced SH/UA (n = 853; Table 7).

The test indicated a significant variance in avoidance for the three perpetrator groups F (2, 703) = 8.0, $p < 0.001$. A post-hoc comparison (Tukey HSD test) was used to identify where the differences among the groups occurred. The comparisons indicate that the mean score for those harassed by managers (M = 0.38, SD = 0.69) was significantly different from those harassed by col-

Table 5. Harassed by who (SH+UA)?

Role of perpetrator	Manager	Colleague	Other
All n = 706	22%	48%	3%
Female n = 548	22%	47%	32%
Male n = 158	22%	53%	25%
< 36 years n = 272	16%	52%	32%
> 36 years n = 434	25%	45%	29%
Temporary employee n = 90	16%	53%	31%
Staff employee n = 555	23%	49%	28%

Table 6. Frequency of use of avoiding coping strategy.

Type of harassment	SH+UA	SH	UA
All n = 853	14%	26%	12%
Female n = 611	17%	28%	14%
Male n = 242	7%	14%	7%
< 36 years n = 327	16%	27%	12%
> 36 years n = 526	14%	26%	12%
Temporary employee n = 106	13%	11%	14%
Staff employee n = 671	14%	30%	11%

Table 7. Avoiding coping strategy and harassed by who?

Role of perpetrator	Manager	Colleague	Other
All n = 706	29%	15%	13%
Female n = 548	31%	17%	14%
Male n = 158	20%	8%	8%
Temporary employee n = 90	50%	10%	7%
Staff employee n = 555	24%	15%	13%

leagues ($M = 0.19$, $SD = 0.50$) and others ($M = 0.16$, $SD = 0.49$). There was no significant difference between the mean scores for avoidance for those harassed by colleagues and others. This indicates that SH/UA by a manager had a significant negative effect on the working relationship. For example, that the journalist left or considered leaving the company because of the manager's behavior. The study did not indicate similar effects if the SH/UA perpetrator was a colleague or someone outside the media house.

6. Results: Qualitative Interviews

In this section, we look more closely into how the findings from the questionnaire and the central results from conducted interviews can be used to strengthen media houses in their fight against SH. Neither journalists nor editors are neutral interviewees. They are strategic decision makers who need to justify their conclusions. Nevertheless, the interviews provide interesting insights into aspects of how the safety and well-being of media workers were reflected in newsrooms. We presented to the journalists, during the interviews, the findings that relate to the research question: "To what extent are journalists exposed to SH?" Female media workers are significantly more frequently the target of UA and SH than their male colleagues. Those aged below 36 are more vulnerable than those above. Temporary employees are more exposed than staff employees. The interviewees expressed that these findings to a great extent reflect their experience of their lived realities within their respective newsrooms. Most of the media workers were, however, surprised at the high figure of 23% of media workers experiencing one or more unwanted experiences in the last six months:

> The findings from the questionnaire research question "What coping strategies do they use?" showed that one of four who had experienced SH coped with the situation through avoiding strategies such as considering a change of job or change of department (Table 6). The findings indicated that those who had experienced SH handled the situation by using avoiding strategies to a significantly and much greater extent than those with solely experienced unwanted attention. Both of these groups to a much greater extent considered a change of job or had already moved to another employer than those without SH/UA experiences. 11% had left or considered leaving their job due to SH or unwanted attention. The interviewees found these numbers "shocking" when presented with them. The numbers indicate that newsrooms with a SH/UA culture are at risk of losing valuable employees. Some said that they saw this as "a wake-up call." (Personal communication, 2018)

The interviewees explained, when discussing how newsrooms can be better prepared to fight SH from the perspective of safety of journalists, that their media organization had after #MeToo evaluated their rules and routines, and that the reporting routines had been evaluated and communicated to all staff members:

> Of course, there is a lot we should have done earlier. There is a lot to learn from the #MeToo campaign....This is not to say that SH was fully accepted previously, but the way we treat it has changed. (Personal communication, 2018)

A number of interviewees explained, when discussing coping strategies, that they knew of someone who had changed their field of work due to SH. A few also said that this was a part of a broader picture that they had not reflected on much until now. One argument that was brought up in the discussions was the need to look at the consequences of the harassment in a socio-economic perspective:

> Women have to find new jobs, workplaces need to train new employees. We have to consider this as a problem for the entire workplace culture and for society, not just for the individual. (Personal communication, 2018)

At an almost philosophical level, there were discussions in some newsrooms of "what is not there," or rather of "who is not here," and what this may imply for the quality of journalism:

> I've been thinking a lot about it during the #MeToo campaign. Who we have lost, not necessarily only in our field, but also in the film industry, academia, and in politics. I have talked about writing a story about it. But so far this has not materialized. I have to try to get hold of those who simply quit or could not stand it anymore because of SH. The important voices we lost...it is so sad. It is definitely one of the consequences. (Personal communication, 2018)

Some journalists explained that they had seen the tendency for women to leave the scene due to a "rotten culture." The interviewees also expressed that the support of co-workers and superiors, and a culture of trust and justice, made it easier to stand up to those who harassed:

> We should not underestimate the value and the power of the social meeting points in the journalistic and cultural field. These are places where a lot of important exchange takes place, which impact the professional life. It is crucial that everybody feels safe there. (Personal communication, 2018)

The findings also indicated that the SH/UA avoiding effect was significantly stronger among employees who had been harassed by a manager than for those harassed by a colleague at the same level or someone outside

the company. This tendency was particularly significant among temporary employees, with 50% of those who had experienced SH/UA by a manager responding that they considered changing or had already changed job. Fear of retaliation was a major reason for not reporting an incident and for choosing an avoiding strategy. The findings indicate that more than one out of five SH/UA cases took place within an asymmetric power relation (Table 5). The ratio of managers to employees is about 1:10 in Norwegian newsrooms (based on the number of members in NJ and NR). Managers are therefore clearly overrepresented as abusers in the statistics.

7. Conclusion: The Way Forward

All the interviewed journalists, when discussing how to move forwards and to be better prepared to fight SH and power abuse, stressed the importance of raising awareness. A good example of this was the editor-in-chief of a leading national newspaper who, in his welcoming address to new temporary summer employees in 2018, stressed the routines for reporting SH. This was the first time such information had been given to interns. This emphasizes the importance of healthy working relationships and of being able to trust your co-workers and superiors. Some, however, felt that a great deal of focus was centered on raising awareness among young media workers, whereas awareness probably most needed raising among the older generation. The need to consider UA and SH as being a problem of the entire workplace culture, and not just of the individual, was also frequently mentioned in interviews. Some stressed the value of female mentors of a certain age. It was seen to be problematic that female journalists above 30 in many areas became tired of an "unhealthy culture" and avoided social meeting spaces, whereas male colleagues continued year after year. Some furthermore thought finding a balance between the seriousness of power abuse, without demonizing all men, was challenging. The taboo relating to the SH of men was also a topic that deserves more attention (15% of those who experienced SH in this study, $n = 137$, were men). One hypothesis is that the avoidance effect is even higher among men exposed to harassment. We therefore need to acknowledge the barriers that may prevent a man from disclosing his experiences, such as social expectations about what it means to "be a man.''

We have seen that the threat of reprisals was the major reason for choosing a defensive strategy to SH. 26% of respondents who had experienced SH reported that it had impacted their journalistic work. This means that these journalists will make professional decisions based not on journalistic quality, but on protecting themselves. We here see some clear parallels with the concept of self-censorship in journalism. In this, journalism and the media are driven not by editorial concerns, but by fear. It is commonly argued that there can be no press freedom or independent journalism when fear of retaliation stalks a newsroom (White, 2014).

Suppressing (young, female) voices through SH is also a way of censoring important contributions to the public sphere. The effect of journalists choosing avoidance, leaving the profession, or choosing beats in which they will be less visible is a loss to media houses and to the public sphere. We have seen how self-censorship operates in relation to journalist security and freedom of expression. We have also seen how, particularly for female journalists, misogynistic attacks can create a chilling effect that silences their voices and creates a deterrent to freedom of expression that ultimately erodes freedom of the press. Preventing SH is closely linked to knowledge and awareness. It is easier to reject the trivialization and belittling of SH when we are aware that such actions exist, and of its impact on targets.

The findings of the questionnaires and the interviews stress the importance of having both a policy and a culture that emphasizes that UA is not tolerated. The findings indicate that newsrooms with a negative social climate and a culture of SH/UA are at risk of creating psychosocial problems, longitudinal consequences, and of losing valuable employees. The potential for strengthening the cohesion and working environment of the editorial staff by implementing a SH action plan was emphasized. So too was good information channels and the social support of co-workers and supervisors.

#MeToo has been called the biggest thing that has happened since women were given the right to vote. In Norway, the movement has breathed new life into the 22-year old ban on SH. There is no doubt, based on the backdrop of SH being illegal and a zero tolerance for this type of behavior in the media industry, that media houses and media organizations still have important work to do in this area. Thanks to the #MeToo campaign, the issues of the SH of media workers and their coping strategies are now increasingly seen as structural problems and not just as individual level problems. This means that these issues can and must be reacted to at an organizational level, and be increasingly investigated in terms of what they indeed are: threats to the safety of journalists.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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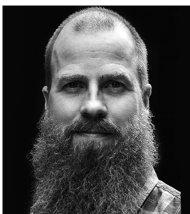

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Article

Reconsidering Journalist Safety Training

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Abstract
Safety training courses and manuals are designed to provide journalists with guidance to assess and mitigate risk. In this article, we ask whether content of such training and guidance is informed by actual threats and risks relevant to journalists working in the field. Departing from our own previous research about threats and dangers faced by journalists working in conflict zones or covering dangerous beats, and a review of the literature addressing the issue of safety manuals for journalists, we evaluate the content of five safety-training documents. Of these, two are descriptions of internationally-focused safety courses, two are safety manuals produced for a national audience, and one is a handbook focusing specifically on safety for women reporters in the Arab region. The purpose is to identify various aspects of safety addressed in training and manuals offered to locally and internationally-deployed journalists—and illuminate how they may differ in focus and approach. Through a comparison of the content of the selected manuals and course descriptions, we conclude that these trainings and manuals to some extent address specific variations in context, but that detailed attention towards gender differences in risk and other personal characteristics are not given equivalent weight. The international training focuses excessively on physical environment issues (such as those of a 'hostile environment'), while the manuals with national or regional focus are practice-oriented and largely take a journalistic point of departure. We argue that training and manuals can benefit from considering both these aspects for risk assessment, but recommend that addressing journalistic practice and personal resources is fundamental to all journalist safety training since it is at the personal, practical, and media organisational levels that the mitigation encouraged by these trainings can happen.

Keywords
conflict reporting; hostile environment training; journalist safety; safety training; war journalism

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1. Introduction

Despite awareness and a growing concern about the threats and dangers faced by journalists covering wars from the battlefield, dangerous assignments related to politics, corruption, and human rights issues are the ones for which most journalists have lost their lives (Committee to Protect Journalists, 2019). Foreign war correspondents have been scrutinized in (Western) research, but less attention has been paid to the numerous local journalists covering conflict in their home environment. At the same time, globalisation, technological advancement, and new media development is changing the scenery, posing new threats to journalists' safety (Høiby, 2016, 2019a, 2019b; Høiby & Ottosen, 2018). Globalisation and new technology are also blurring the division between local and distant assignments. Investigative projects increasingly happen through collaborative consortiums cutting through geographical borders, cultures, and contexts. Consequently, risks and

threats in one area transit to another in which they may not have appeared before. Another such often-neglected part of journalists' safety is legal risks. It is usually underestimated how understanding the legal environment in which journalists are going to operate, prepares them to better defend themselves and to avoid legal persecution (Garrido V., 2017a, 2017b). These are all issues that demand more attention from a journalist's safety perspective. That said, our approach to journalist safety is not to place the responsibility onto media organisations and journalists alone. Yet, it is important to keep in mind that training and manuals are constructed to secure individual safety; they do not aim to challenge the structures of any society with a long-term objective. Therefore, in this article we treat them as efforts to mitigate a problem that is rooted in society, and must be considered in the light of the weaknesses of our social institutions and structures.

Through previous research, the authors of this article have investigated threats and dangers faced by journalists in countries across the world (Uganda, Tunisia, Nigeria, Nicaragua, Venezuela, the Philippines, Nepal, and Norway), and found deficiencies in training manuals to tackle safety issues previously mentioned. This article analyses five safety manuals and training content descriptions provided by two major international trainers (AKE and HEAT) and three local ones, from the Philippines, Venezuela, and the Arab region (the latter focusing specifically on gender issues). These are purposely selected, and the aim of this article is merely to discuss and present some aspects of the potential discrepancy in content embraced in training and advice to journalists. The sample does not provide a comprehensive picture of journalist safety training on the market but indicates the focus of some training manuals and courses available to and used by journalists and trainers in these regions.

Research suggests that safety issues depend on context in geography and culture, but also journalistic practice and type of assignment (Garrido V., Høiby, & Mitra, 2019). Among the manuals and content descriptions we have analysed, the 'international' ones appear to have taken geography and environment well into consideration but put less emphasis on the type of story and information involved in the assignment. The 'local' training manuals, on the other hand, appear to place the journalistic project and individual characteristics at the centre of attention. The reason for this may be that the producers of local safety training and/or manuals were journalists themselves, while the producers of the so-called hostile environment training were not. And it may not be surprising that the manual offered to women journalists was produced by a woman and published by an association of women journalists.

Therefore, our research questions for this article are:

> RQ1: To what extent, and how, does our sample of training manuals and training content descriptions address the safety issues facing local and international journalists today?
>
> RQ2: How do the manuals and content descriptions in our selection overlap or differ from each other in content and/or focus?
>
> RQ3: How are issues related to contextual variations, legal issues and digital issues addressed?

Throughout the article, we argue that training should take into consideration local contexts (such as regime type, state cohesiveness, and social institutions), globalization, technological advancement, legal issues, and differences in journalistic practices, ethics, and media organizational routines. We conclude in this article that while journalists may have much to gain from insights to the battlefield, training designed to meet the safety requirements for journalists may have something to learn from the journalism profession. Gender differences in threats and dangers appear critically absent but it is imperative to address them in both.

2. Theory on Journalist Safety Training and Manuals

In *Risky Assignments: Sexing "Security" in Hostile Environment Reporting* (2007), author Carrie A. Rentschler discusses the constructions of 'risk' and 'security' in post-9/11 training manuals for non-embedded journalists preparing for assignments in so-called hostile environments. Rentschler analyses how what she terms "training documents" (i.e., manuals) "translate ideas about risk and reporting, through the language of choice, into sexed and gendered prescriptive cues about securing professional comportment in the field" (2007, p. 257).

Among the documents that were analysed in the study was a 105-page text titled *Practical Guide for Journalists* published by Reporters without Borders (RSF) in 2002, aimed at preparing journalists for war reporting. Rentschler notes that like other "texts of its kind," the guide "draws its interpretive framework from the linguistic coffers of risk management" and focuses heavily on health and life insurance, first aid procedures, the avoidance of minefields and recognition of weaponry (Rentschler, 2007, p. 257).

The author's main criticism of the documents analysed, however, is not on the training contents per se, but the masculinised and securitised form of presentation in training documents. She emphasises the "culture of risk awareness" addressed by the General Secretary of the International Federation of Journalists' 2003 training manual titled *Live News: A Survival Guide for Journalists* (cited in Rentschler, 2007):

> There is an interesting story here to tell of the current post-feminist, neo-liberal context in which some of the dangers of journalism are being defined and managed through client relationships between the news industry and the private security industry—relationships that become especially clear when

> articulated through training manuals. (Rentschler, 2007, p. 258)

While Rentschler points to the skewed presentation of gender in some of these manuals, such as the male heroism and female victimisation exhibited in their use of photos, the manuals also fail to address the risks women journalists face in the field. She concludes that "security training by-and-large acts as if sex and gender matter little to the practice of journalism, despite its sexed and gendered frameworks for portraying risk and safety" (Rentschler, 2007, p. 274):

> And feminists continue to remind us that war and other hostilities are always gendered and raced realities, as are the calls for security that seek to address them. As neoliberal tools that re-inscribe sexual and gendered power relations onto the bodies of reporters and news photographers, this analysis warns us that discourses of security are never simply about how to be safe in an increasingly threatening world. (Rentschler, 2007, p. 275)

In the same fashion, a more recent study investigating the effectiveness and user satisfaction of journalist safety training (here defined as hostile environment training or hazardous training), points to a significant gender gap in overall satisfaction between women and men as the most imperative finding (Slaughter, Newman, Brummel, & Drevo, 2018). Through a survey of 247 journalists, men ($n = 131$) reported higher satisfaction than women ($n = 116$) on all four measures included in the study, which were: 1) overall satisfaction; 2) whether they would recommend the training to others; 3) satisfaction with the trainers' knowledge; and 4) the content's sensitivity and accuracy concerning gender and diversity threats (Slaughter et. al, 2018, p. 53).

Thus, an idea that should not be underrated in this discussion is that the private security industry is a growing (and very profitable) business that profits more from continuing to fuel such aspects of securitisation, heroism, and masculinisation than from addressing the realities and needs that can be met with expertise that already exists within the media's own industry. We therefore suggest that what appears as a shortcoming of sensitivity towards gender, is in fact rather a symptom of the field from which their competence derives—the security industry—shaped by military and highly masculinised approaches (see e.g., Barkawi, Dandeker, Wells-Petry, & Kier, 1999).

The first problem in relation to safety training is not necessarily the nature of the training but the fact that very few receive any form of safety training or equipment at all (Høiby & Ottosen, 2015, 2016). But as safety training is increasingly offered to journalists at least in the larger companies, the type of training they receive is important to underscore. It is reasonable to believe that training designed by larger companies offering courses to diverse fields of occupations, such as NGO workers, profiled business officers travelling to danger zones and so on, would lack necessary insight to the occupational aspects of safety for journalists and the very issues that increasingly put members of the press at extra risk.

2.1. Findings from Previous Research: The Threats Journalists Face

Because the aim of training is to avoid the materialization of threats, it is necessary to describe the different types of threats that journalists face. However, we must clarify that it is not possible to present a complete and exhaustive list of threats because they change and adapt to social realities. In addition, threats depend on the environment in which journalists operate, and vary from country to country. In most cases, the threats journalists experience is the result of their reporting; hence, for the purposes of this article, we consider as threats any attempt seeking to diminish journalists' possibilities to perform their job.

In the 20th century, threats were physical, which explains why most of the safety training focused on this aspect. Physical threats have not changed much, and they include murder, kidnapping, forced disappearance, arbitrary arrests, prosecutions, and deportation (United Nations General Assembly, 2012). They continue to exist, and their occurrence depends on other factors like political affiliation (e.g., El Salvador), social unrest (e.g., Nicaragua), so-called "drug wars" (e.g., Philippines), complex humanitarian crisis (e.g., Venezuela), or post-conflict situations (e.g., Nepal).

Threats and dangers faced by journalists conform to a spectrum of different causes and motives (Høiby, 2019b). They can be targeted attacks on singular journalists, in retaliation for published work or in an attempt of hindering disclosure of illicit activity; or, they can target an entire media outlet to send a message and try to diminish critical coverage. They can be accumulated by continuous and/or long-lasting exposure to the physical field where events related to war and conflict occur—such as elections, demonstrations, poor resilience to natural disasters, areas with poor access to health care, etc. In general, the potentially deteriorating safety conditions for journalists relate to an increasingly globalised world and conglomerated media.

In the 21st century, we are observing that digital threats coexist with physical threats. They are increasing all over the world and they depend on the local context too (Henrichsen, Betz, & Lisosky, 2015; UNESCO, 2018). The most common digital threats are related to mass surveillance, vulnerabilities in the system for data storage and publication, and complex digital attacks that involve limitations to access digital platforms and data mining, and that produce a breach in the privacy of the journalist, the media, and the audience (UNESCO, 2018). For example, in Venezuela, journalists consider social media hacking, Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks against their internet-based platforms, verbal at-

tacks, and even the approval of regulations that seek to control the creation and dissemination of digital content as serious threats. However, in some cases, journalists do not take appropriate measures because they do not know the digital tools they can use or because they do not have access to them (Garrido V., 2017c). For that reason, we also assume that training should entail a focus on digital threats to provide journalists with the necessary tools for protection.

In addition to those scenarios, there is an increasing tendency to harass women in social media through "stalking, hate speech via graphics or text, cyber mobbing, revenge porn, unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion" (MacKinnon, Hickok, Bar, & Lim, 2014, p. 172). The threats and harassment against women are documented to be of a more sexualised character (Chen et al., 2018). In some cases, threats extend to their relatives, especially their children or spouses (Garrido V., 2017c). Nonetheless, these forms of threats have also changed, and UNESCO indicates that women journalists also face public shaming, hate speech, cyber-bullying, trolling, doxing, and cyber-stalking (UNESCO, 2018, p. 156). The consequences of the threats are innumerable, but in highly hostile environments, it is possible to observe an increase in self-censorship. In Venezuela, journalists considered this practice necessary to avoid the closure of the media; to increase the possibilities to acquire the permissions needed to buy newsprint, new equipment, and spare parts; and to diminish the possibilities to receive verbal attacks (Garrido V., 2017c). Therefore, we also assume that training that does not consider gender is inadequate.

Moreover, legal threats are a reality in several parts of the world. Legal mechanisms that were designed to protect journalists can be used to legally harass journalists, and to impose several limitations to the exercise of journalism. Ambiguous regulations on the plurality of the media, control and even the protection of other's rights, allow authorities to make arbitrary interpretations of the law, and apply them to threaten media outlets who are critical or who oppose government's policies (Garrido V., 2017c). For this reason, we also considered references to legal mechanisms as a criterion to assess the selected training manuals.

3. Method

Although we, the authors of this article, train both students and practising journalists in safety issues ourselves, we have investigated other sources to evaluate the content of training courses and manuals that are available on the market. Information about courses is in general hard to acquire. One of the reasons that explains the lack of information is the competition among trainers. To disclose detailed information about the content can affect their business model because many of them profit from making a personalized offer and from having direct communication with interested people. Another reason that may explain why information is not available is the concerns about leaking information that can potentially jeopardise the security of participants or insurance aspects. In consequence, we chose and assessed a small sample of training course descriptions and safety manuals that are digitally accessible to a larger audience and that we knew have been used in each region. While this sample is limited in providing a clear insight into the content of training, especially so for the ones we only have a course description, they do indicate something about the general focus.

Altogether, the sample consists of two course descriptions, two safety guidelines and one safety handbook. We consider the three latter documents to be sufficient as study objects for this purpose, while the two first—the course descriptions—only provide a very limited glimpse of what their training (which usually last between four and seven days) actually contains but that allows us to make the comparison between international and local training. Therefore, it is with great caution that we comment on the potential fulfilment or neglects of these. It is important to underscore that the true contribution of this study is however not limited to the analysis of these manuals and course descriptions in isolation, but the evaluation of the full sample in relation to our previous analysis of threats and risks journalists face in the field.

The sample content descriptions and training manuals that we have analysed are as follows:

- *AKE Working in Hostile Regions* (UK): cross-national focus (UK, Canada, Australia, and Thailand). Used and developed by the organization for their training courses;
- *Hostile Environment Awareness Training (HEAT*; Norway): international focus. Used and developed by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC);
- *What if…? Safety Handbook for Women Journalists* (Arab region): gender focus. Used by the International Association of Women in Radio & Television (IAWRT) and developed by the journalist Abeer Saady;
- *Philippine Journalist Safety Guide—A Handbook for Filipino Journalists* (Philippines): local focus. Used by the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines and developed by the organization with the assistance of Internews;
- *Practical Guideline for the Protection of Journalists* (Venezuela): local focus. Used by the local organization *Espacio Público* and developed by its journalists.

For the analysis, we considered who produced them and when they were produced or published, what their main purpose seems to be and its target audience (and whom they are accessible to). In relation to the content, we evaluated what safety issues they addressed and how. Thus, we focused on the identification of the types of threats they considered, the solutions offered, and references to the context in which journalists operate and to their per-

sonal characteristics. On this last point, we paid attention to issues related to gender, ethnicity, or other personal characteristics, as well as to aspects of journalism (the story, assignment, media ethics, etc.), legal issues, and digital development. Then, we used that information from each training course description and safety manuals to make a comparison and answer the main research questions of this article.

3.1. Sample Description

3.1.1. *AKE Working in Hostile Regions* Training

The organization advertises this training in its website as a course "designed to assist individuals, teams and organisations to prepare for and manage risk whilst living and working in, complex and sometimes hostile environments" (AKE International, 2019). The organisation indicates that through the use of a "mixture of lectures, discussion groups, workshops and practical simulations and exercises" participants would be prepared to work in hostile environments, identify physical threats, develop techniques to mitigate risk, and provide medical assistance if needed, and to function effectively for long periods of time in these environments (AKE International, 2019).

A special report on "Journalism in Hostile Regions" published by the organization indicated that they also provide "24/7 crisis response and in-country support services" (AKE International, 2017). In that report, they specified that they have trained journalists in Afghanistan, China, Egypt, Mexico, Sudan, South Sudan, and Ukraine (AKE International, 2017). It is noticeable that in the same report the organization stated that "together with bespoke reports prepared by regional experts from AKE's Intelligence department, journalists are provided with tailored risk analysis and mitigation strategies" (AKE International, 2017).

The group appeals to the media industry and the general media user population with the argument that now anyone using a smartphone can be taken for a journalist, and that this assumingly puts 'everyone' at greater risk.

In their course description, there is no mentioning of gender issues or other individual characteristics, nor to journalistic tasks or threats. However, from the mentioned report, it is possible to observe that the AKE training does focus on regional and national differences in context and demonstrates high awareness of the variety in the environment that can potentially affect the journalists. Awareness of the situation for foreign journalists in China and the inclusion of attention to travel documents and allowances indicate that they do specialise on contextual factors for journalists in designated areas. This focus appears somewhat tailored to journalists operating internationally and travelling to specific areas about which AKE can offer training. Attention to legal issues (beyond the retrieval of legal documents and allowances for access) is not indicated, and digital threats are not specifically addressed (AKE International, 2017).

3.1.2. The NRC's HEAT Course

A course offered to humanitarian workers, media personnel and private sector companies whose staff travel to or live in high-risk environments for longer periods is the NRC's Hostile Environment Awareness Training (HEAT). HEAT is "a form of high fidelity stress exposure training that combines theory with high-stress and highly realistic simulation training" (NRC, 2019). The organization indicates that, in this five-day training, participants gain the knowledge and skills needed to manage real threats.

Their teaching methodology includes the use of "a mix of advanced theoretical and practical sessions of simulated exercises" (NRC, 2019). The content description does not necessarily reveal everything included in the training, and it is possible that they hold other elements not mentioned in the description. What is outlined is that, at the end of the training, participants should have "a firm grasp of" managing basic first aid and psychological first aid, personal safety and security, safety and security mindset, communications equipment, capture and captivity, behaviour under fire, threats in the field, fire safety, basic negotiation skills, understanding how to build individual situational awareness in high risk environments, and unexploded ordnance, and improvised explosive device (IED) threats (NRC, 2019).

The description does not reveal specific attention to legal or digital threats, concerns related to ethnicity or gender, or other individual characteristics, nor to journalistic tasks or threats.

3.1.3. The IAWRT Safety Manual

IAWRT published the Safety Handbook for Women Journalists in 2017 with the support of the Norwegian Union of Journalists and UNESCO. The handbook is written by Abeer Saady and it is available and free to download at IAWRT's website.

The publication seeks to provide to female journalists working in conflict areas a "concrete and practical handbook, with advice and recommendations on security and safety" (Saady, 2017, p. 1). The content is structured around three main areas: physical safety, digital safety, and psychosocial safety—emphasizing those situations in which gender plays a determining role.

It starts by encouraging female journalists to make risk assessments, and utilise simple questions to initiate and guide the process, such as, what are the possible threats? When and where can they happen? Who can be perpetrators? To answer those questions, it requests journalists to consider their personal circumstances in relation to the environment in which the journalists work (or will work). It considers issues related to religion, race, nationality, education, language, clothing, equipment, political views, type of work (undercover, independent, embedded, etc.).

Many of the safety tips relate to physical safety; however, it includes recommendations on digital safety to

avoid surveillance and theft of both devices and data. This manual also provides advice to deal with survivors of the conflict, and self-care to deal with the trauma generated by being in a conflict zone and covering the events related to it. It is noticeable that it devotes a full chapter on ethical safety decisions, which seeks to help the journalists in deciding whether or not to help those involved in the conflict or to publish the information gathered.

The manual considers legal issues too. It recommends being aware of the regulations applicable to journalists, particularly those related to libel and defamation because they vary greatly from country to country. On this point, it makes specific recommendations to managers and freelancers, like keeping the phone of a local lawyer or knowing labour regulations to obtain the protection given by law.

3.1.4. The *Philippine Journalist Safety Guide—A Handbook for Filipino Journalists*

This safety guide is a training manual published in July 2018 by the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines. It is free to download from the internet, making it accessible to all journalists disregarding employment status and income. The manual is developed in collaboration and partnership with Internews, and is presented as an online self-help resource for journalists who already find themselves in a hazardous situation, or are planning for a dangerous assignment—alternatively also for journalists seeking basic practical knowledge on media safety (National Union of Journalists of the Philippines, 2018, p. 2).

The manual provides “practical tips for Filipino journalists, modified for Philippine coverages and context. It also includes pointers for women, who face two-fold risks and threats when on assignment” (National Union of Journalists of the Philippines, 2018, p. 5). It covers four main aspects: issues before the assignment (Chapter I), issues during the assignment (Chapter II), threats related to the specific topics (Chapter III and IV), digital risks (Chapter V), dealing with trauma and stress (Chapter VI), and legal issues (Chapter VII).

It starts by requesting journalists to make a risk assessment by answering basic questions about the assignment (topic, location, sources), and it provides recommendations on each of the mentioned areas that can be followed by any journalist. It takes into consideration traditional ‘hostile environment’ threats such as kidnapping and IEDs, but also newer aspects like surveillance, digital attacks and legal harassment. Although there is no specific chapter on gender or other personal characteristics, it does make specific recommendations for women and asks the journalist to consider “age, ethnicity, religious beliefs or nationality and those accompanying you” when making the risk assessment (National Union of Journalists of the Philippines, 2018, p. 8).

3.1.5. *Practical Guideline for the Protection of Journalists*: The Venezuelan Manual

The Civil Society Organization *Espacio Público* (Public Space) published this manual in 2016 as part of their program to protect journalists in Venezuela. They indicate that the main purpose of the text is to provide journalists with an action plan for cases related to digital and physical safety, and tools to cover social unrest, initiate legal procedures, and to obtain assistance (*Espacio Público*, 2016, p. 7). Any interested person can download a digital copy from their website, but they also printed it for those who participate in their training.

It is noticeable that they provide a glossary of terms that includes concepts of aggression, attack, threat, censorship, deaths, administrative restrictions, legal restrictions, intimidation, and legal and verbal harassment. This inclusion helps them to establish the baseline of what is considered in the manual and provides journalists with the language needed to refer to the situation that they are facing in an appropriate manner.

The manual does not make specific considerations in terms of gender and ethnicity, but it does consider personal characteristics for the identification of threats. In fact, the guideline starts with the consideration of digital threats, and poses different questions to journalists (i.e., where is data stored, who has access to your digital devices, who knows your password) to facilitate the evaluation of threats and the identification of vulnerabilities, so they can decide which one is more suitable to mitigate risks from a catalogue of tools.

When it comes to personal safety the guideline indicates that journalists are exposed to aggression, impediments to access places, arbitrary confiscation of equipment, destruction of materials, and even retaliation for disseminating information (Espacio Público, 2016, p. 21). However, they do not consider aspects of journalism (the story, assignment, media ethics, etc.) for the identification of threats. The manual only makes a list of recommendations for journalists who cover social protests that includes aspects related to clothing, equipment for physical protection, attitudes toward protesters and security forces, the environment in which the protest will take place, and a list of recommendations for what to do in case of attacks.

Based on the list of situations that journalists can face, the manual considers the Venezuelan legal framework, including constitutional rules and criminal law, and provides different suggestions on how to act in case of the materialization of any of those threats. For example, it advises journalists to request protection measures in case of arbitrary detention (Espacio Público, 2016, p. 29).

4. Findings from Analysis

After reviewing the content of each of the course descriptions and safety manuals, we find several differences between those with international focus and those

with a local focus and consequent narrower target audience. The first one is the availability of information about the content.

The international course descriptions do not provide an extensive explanation of the contents covered during the training, which impedes us from making a detailed comparison of the threats and issues addressed. However, it is possible to affirm that the two international trainers place the emphasis on physical safety. They do not offer much information regarding digital or legal threats and do not clarify how they address risks directly related to gender, ethnicity, and religious or political beliefs. On the contrary, local trainers consider all those elements. Each of the local manuals provides specific information on how journalists must assess personal characteristics to determine the risks and prepare for covering conflict. Their manuals demonstrate that they possess a deep understanding of the context in which they operate, and for that reason, they can offer appropriate tools and advice for journalists who take the training or simply access the local manual for self-study.

It is noteworthy that neither the international course descriptions nor the local manuals are designed to address specific situations. The assessment of risk is limited to hostile environments, but it is not clear what type of environments they are considering. From the available information, we can affirm that international trainers seem to focus on violent and armed conflicts, while local manuals consider periods from peace to social unrest and violent conflicts. For this reason, we can affirm that international training focuses on specific situations for a limited period, and local manuals are meant to be used for any type of assignment and during any situation.

The analysis further indicate that international training courses are similar in content and target audience. In relation to content, they focus on physical and psychological preparation to operate in hostile environments. They simulate hostile environments to teach journalists how to make better decisions under stressful situations, and they provide training on first aid to ensure that journalists know how to act in case of physical injuries. In fact, they even use similar methodologies and highlight the ‘real-life’ aspect of their training. Because of this content, and from what they advertise on their websites, we can affirm that their target audience is journalists who speak English and have not worked or have limited experience working in hostile environments. It is noticeable that information is available in English, and in the case of AKE International training can be conducted at their centres in the UK, the US, Canada, Australia or Thailand; while the HEAT Training is offered in Norway, Kenya, and Jordan.

Likewise, regional manuals have similar audiences (local journalists) and similar methodologies. The three manuals under analysis use questions to make journalists reflect on their situation, which is also used to make the corresponding risk assessment. The classification of threats and the suggestions given demonstrate that they seek to address the threats that local journalists face. These manuals take special consideration of contextual variation and digital threats. For instance, they provide tips on how to avoid physical aggressions in times of social unrest, like when to use the press emblem, keeping digital data safe by using password-protected devices, and avoiding arbitrary detentions by being aware of the regulations that can and cannot be used against them. It is also noticeable that recommendations related to legal issues tend to be similar. They recommend journalists to know the legal framework that is applicable to them to avoid risks and even add specific references to libel or defamation laws.

The fact that gender is considered in binary terms must be highlighted. Local manuals make specific references to female journalists, but not to LGBTI journalists, while the description of international trainers does not even mention how they address differences between men, women, or LGBTI journalists or staff.

Our sample of training manuals and training content description indicates that they address safety issues faced by local and international journalists; however, the treatment of threats differs greatly between international and local trainers. International trainers emphasize physical safety over digital or legal threats, while local trainers focus on the overall safety of the journalist. Even though they only overlap with the consideration of physical threats, they differ on the content, the focus, the audience, and the methodologies used to train journalists and media staff.

5. Discussion

Based on our findings, we argue that local manuals are significantly different in focus and aim, from the content description of the two international training courses considered in this study. The main difference lies in the journalistic processes tied to threats and dangers, such as an assessment of the actors involved in the assignment and the story that is about to unfold. This may be a result of the significant fact that the three manuals from the Philippines, Venezuela, and the Arab region were designed and written by journalists.

Yet, it is noticeable that the only point they have in common is that international course descriptions and (one of the two) local manuals show a lack of consideration of threats related to gender. This is problematic because “women journalists wage a war on two fronts: the war to survive, and the war against the system. They are under pressure to prove themselves, and as a consequence, they may subject themselves to greater danger” (Saady, 2017, p. 7). The Philippine manual pays attention to gender, signifying that these issues truly have surfaced on the ground.

Moreover, as indicated in the sample description section, the fact that the Philippine manual and that the IAWRT manual direct specific concerns at the journalists’ individual characteristics, such as gender, ethnicity, na-

tionality, etc., is very relevant. Although training should emphasise that their safety at work is not mainly their responsibility, journalists would gain from having knowledge about how they may contribute to enhance their personal and professional safety. Personal and professional safety may depart from different institutions but are not inherently split in practical terms; for the individual, the result is usually the same. In the two international course descriptions, the individual's safety appears to be considered from an evaluation of their surroundings, but the personal characteristics of an individual must be accounted for in the context of those surroundings. It is at the personal, practical, and media organisational levels that mitigation can happen, because the journalists themselves cannot easily alter the environment and society.

This is also true for digital safety. As the Venezuelan manual specifies, "in the first place, the responsibility of digital safety falls on users" (Espacio Público, 2016, p. 12). Journalists using digital platforms must know the details needed to improve their digital safety, including aspects related to whom they communicate with and through which internet platform. Journalists must consider the type of digital devices they use, and issues related to connectivity, to better assess where and when they can use them without incurring risks that they are not prepared to mitigate.

Journalists have their own strengths and weaknesses to conduct their work, and each of those capabilities plays an important role in assessing risks. Issues related to the environment in which they are going to work are important because they serve to mitigate risks, but they are not enough. Training manuals and courses need to consider personal aspects (gender, religion, ethnicity, etc.) to provide journalists with the tools they need to remain safe. In addition, as the Philippine manual indicates, "safety protocols and even practices have needed to be adjusted with the constantly changing situation, and why journalists need to constantly review the practices and mechanisms that help them keep safe" (National Union of Journalists of the Philippines, 2018, p. 1).

6. Conclusion: Context is Too Important to Ignore

Safety training is designed to teach journalists how to make better decisions in order to remain safe. Yet, we argue that to make them useful for the context in which the journalists are working, it is necessary to consider the type of risks journalists might face in their specific context. The content of local manuals considered in this research demonstrates that threats are complex because they can manifest in the digital and the physical realm and affect a variety of people (i.e., family members, sources, fixers, media). These manuals also suggest that most of the risks faced by journalists are not limited to war zones; on the contrary, they occur in non-armed conflict situations.

Nevertheless, safety training for international journalists travelling across the world to report is largely influenced by so-called hostile environment training, often including first aid and field exercises in hostage-taking and training in recognizing weapons and IEDs. While this is still relevant for any person considering entering a conflict zone, we argue that journalist safety relies heavily on understanding the dangers that may appear, for example, during an investigative project or periods of social unrest. There are several reasons to reconsider the foundations on which such training is developed and performed. Perhaps local and international safety training for journalists can gain from including perspectives of each other. Journalism is embedded into the process of globalisation, and cross-national projects revealing, for example, international corporate exploitation and corruption could gain from understanding both geographical and cultural variations and story-related aspects of safety.

For that reason, and in accordance to our findings, we argue that training should take into consideration local contexts (such as regime type, state cohesiveness, and social institutions), globalization, technological advancement, legal issues, and differences in journalistic practices, ethics, and media organizational routines.

Being prepared to assess and manage the environment is surely helpful to remain safe in a 'hostile environment.' However, unlike soldiers, journalists are deployed to engage with people in that environment as their sources and a military or any other non-journalistic approach to a hostile environment can compromise the journalistic task of reporting social injustice. Moreover, journalists have to negotiate both for access to information and for their own protection as they acquire that information. Thus, safety is something that can be trained through a (journalistic) practice focus. The journalist is central to journalist safety. Ethics training and proper organizational routines and investment are additionally important to enhance their safety. While journalists and editors are limited in altering societal challenges due to political restraint, economic imperatives, and market demands, they may influence individual capacities, practices and organizational routines. We argue that this capacity, in the case of journalism, lays closer to the journalistic practice than the 'hostile environment' they are set to navigate and that the media industry therefore may contribute significantly in training their own staff as opposed to, or in addition to, hiring expertise from outside the profession.

Conflict of Interests

Dr. Marte Høiby is currently a board member of the Norwegian chapter of the International Association for Women in Radio and Television (IAWRT). The authors declare no further conflict of interests.

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Article

New Opportunities in Monitoring Safety of Journalists through the UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda

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Abstract
This article highlights the potential for increased and more standardised monitoring of a range of aspects of the safety of journalists. This is in the light of a specific indicator that has been agreed by the UN as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The indicator concerned treats the safety of journalists as a benchmark for tracking progress on SDG target 16.10, which specifies "public access to information and fundamental freedoms" (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, n.d.), as a development aspiration. Inclusion of this indicator in the SDGs provides a universally legitimated framework with strong catalytic potential. All this holds a promise of improved, more comparative, and increased research output, as compared to the previous situation. The results of new research stimulated by this development, particularly at country level, could have real impact on the safety of journalists.

Keywords
journalism; monitoring; safety of journalists; Sustainable Development Goals; UNESCO; United Nations

Issue
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1. Introduction

To move beyond fragmentary understandings of safety of journalists, we need comprehensive information that covers the breadth of the issue, and which also allows for the in-depth analysis of causes, consequences, and correctives over time. Such information is indispensable for awareness-raising and capacity-building, as well as for devising and operating mechanisms to ensure the effective protection of journalists and prosecution of their attackers (Berger, 2017). However, what information is relevant to the 'safety of journalists'? The 2012 UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity (UNESCO, 2012a) treats 'safety' as a wide-ranging concept, covering both offline and online dimensions (UNESCO, 2019a). The implementation strategy of the UN Plan elaborates safety as "a broad category that extends from preventive, protective and pre-emptive measures, through to combating impunity and promoting a social culture which cherishes freedom of expression and press freedom" (UNESCO, 2012b). In both documents, a gender-sensitive orientation is taken, in response to distinctive issues concerning the safety of women journalists who are subjected to double attacks—not just as journalists, but as women doing journalism.

If 'safety' covers a range of issues, then this raises the question of how these may be assessed at a more granular level, perhaps in the form of a generic typology. Relevant to this endeavour is how the advent of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) opens the way to new opportunities for defining and researching the safety of journalists in current times. The SDGs reflect change to a certain concept of 'development' which had long been critiqued for having a blinkered focus on technology, infrastructure, and economics. As a result of extensive advocacy, including by UNESCO and the Global Forum for Media Development, the 193 UN Member States that agreed to the SDGs accepted a more holistic approach. Thus, as an integral part of 'development,' they included Goal 16 which is summarised as

"peace, justice and strong institutions" (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs [UNDESA], n.d.). The underlying assumption is that for development processes to be sustainable, relevant actors should recognise the interdependence of goals like poverty reduction on the one hand, and peace and justice on the other. For example, armed conflict runs counter to ending poverty—hence the relevance of building peace as part of integrated package. Likewise, the absence of justice and effective institutions fuels tensions which in turn threaten peace. Significantly, the inclusion of the concerns of Goal 16 in the SDGs is not just an issue of theoretical conceptualisation of 'development'; it also has material impact on national development strategies, and on international financing for related activities—including even on the potential for funding of research into the safety of journalists.

The SDGs are elaborated in the form of more specific targets that underpin achievement of the goals. These include target 16.10 which envisages achieving "public access to information and fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements" (UNDESA, n.d.). The particular target is not only an end in itself—i.e., integral to what counts as meaningful 'development.' There are also synergies between effective public access to information and strengthened freedoms and targets such as 16.3 (access to justice), 16.5 (anti-corruption), and 16.6 (transparent and accountable institutions). Target 16.10 can further be a means to advancing with other SDGs such as on health, gender equality, and the environment, which depend in large part on information access—which in turn is linked to issues such as freedom of expression, press freedom, and safety of journalists.

Going further, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) has agreed a package of indicators for measuring progress in reaching the SDGs. This includes two particular indicators for 16.10. One indicator examines the changing state of legal guarantees for access to information and their implementation (see UNESCO, 2019a). The other indicator, numbered as indicator 16.10.1, includes the safety of journalists. It reads: "Number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, trade unionists and human rights advocates in the previous 12 months" (UNDESA, n.d.). It is immediately apparent that the extent of all these cases can tell us something significant about 16.10 on access to information and fundamental freedoms (and indeed also about the wider state of justice and strong institutions as conditions for sustainable development). Especially relevant to this article is the specification of journalists and media personnel in the agreed wording.

Indicator 16.10.1 is important because the putting into place of research into, and reporting on, the journalistic component of this benchmark can help to enrich the ecosystem for investigating issues around the safety of journalists. This research can make a practical difference to journalists and society by strengthening norms about safety, and by enabling evidence-led and effective measures to prevent attacks and to punish perpetrators. Expressed colloquially, it is a 'big deal' to have the safety of journalists, and the monitoring thereof, recognised within the UN's current development agenda which will run until 2030. This gives journalists' safety a particular framing that is both significant conceptually and politically, thereby enabling new opportunities to cast light on its relevance as an issue to society, both by advocates and by news media (see Pukallus & Harrison, 2015). It further offers new prospects to mobilise funding to research the topic and to set in place, in an informed manner, the institutional systems needed to ensure that journalists can work without fear.

Within the UN system, global reporting in terms of indicator 16.10.1 started in 2016, with UNESCO compiling information on one of the data points (i.e., killings of journalists and media workers). These data are sent on to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), which has the status of 'custodian agency' for reporting on target 16.10.1. UNESCO and International Labour Organization (ILO) are recognised as "contributing agencies" to the indicator monitoring (UN Statistics Division [UNSD], 2016a).

A continuing challenge, however, is for the indicator to be taken up at national level, and to serve as a framework to strengthen local data-collection and reporting efforts. At the same time, the UNGA, UNESCO, and the Human Rights Council (UNHRC) urge that, in relation to the SDG Agenda, each individual government take seriously the matter of monitoring of the range of crimes against journalists. Thus, the UNGA (2019) in its 2019 Resolution A/C.3/74/L.45/Rev.1 repeats its call (first made in 2017) for "regular monitoring and reporting of attacks against journalists" and for "collecting and analysing concrete quantitative and qualitative data on attacks or violence against journalists, that are disaggregated by, among other factors, sex" (see also UNESCO, 2017a; UNHRC, 2018). Some states, ranging from Sweden through to Colombia, have mechanisms in place to exactly perform such monitoring and reporting (see also International Media Support, 2017). Evidently, a mechanism for monitoring is not the same as a methodology, and vice versa, but both are essential if systematic, credible, and regular data is to be produced over time.

2. Operationalisation of the Indicator

The SDG 16.10.1 indicator comprises five gross attacks on human rights—killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention, and torture. Assessing the extent of these crimes (also with a gender-lens) as visited upon journalists can help identify the extent to which a society enjoys "public access to information" (UNDESA, n.d.) and respect for human rights and freedoms. Framed within SDG 16, this indicator further points us towards assessment of the fulfillment of duty by the State in en-

suring that fundamental freedoms are protected in accordance with justice, the rule of law, and strong institutions, or whether impunity prevails for those who perpetrate the designated violations. It enables us to engage with the argument by Harrison and Pukallus (2018) that "the 'Politics of Impunity' is a policy of governance whereby impunity is used as a political tool by the state and state-sponsored actors to achieve journalistic self-censorship.''

Operationalising indicator 16.10.1 involves defining its terms and justifying these definitions in terms of international human rights standards. The UN Human Rights body OHCHR operates a classification system for human rights violations which underpins its Universal Human Rights Index (OHCHR, n.d.). This resource has relevance for the analytical understanding of different kinds of attacks as visited on journalists, and therefore upon what data might be collected in researching the various dimensions of the subject. There is also further elaboration within the discourse of the SDGs, in what is termed the "metadata" about the indicator (UNSD, 2018a). A useful way to understand this metadata was signaled at a workshop on the indicator convened by UNESCO and OHCHR in Geneva in July 2017 (UNESCO, 2017d), namely a framing in terms of 'who did what to whom, where and when, and with what effect.'

As regards the 'who' committed the violation, the metadata state that this may be state actors or others acting under government authority or with its complicity, tolerance, or acquiescence (all of whom should refrain from all violations of rights). It may be non-state actors (where the state retains an obligation to protect individuals against such abuses of rights by such third parties). Therefore, the indicator can cover all violations perpetrated by an agent of the State, as well as by those where the State fails to adequately investigate, punish, or redress abuses committed by non-state attackers. The issue of who perpetrated the attack becomes key for understanding the threat matrix against journalists (and protection mechanisms), as well as for the issue of ending impunity along the chain of actors engineering such crimes.

As regards the 'whom,' within the elaboration of the term 'journalists' in the metadata the term is taken to cover everyone who observes, describes, documents, and analyses events, statements, policies, and any proposition that can affect society, with the purpose of systematizing such information and gathering of facts and analyses to inform. This designates generic journalistic functions and it includes community media workers and so-called 'citizen journalists' when non-specialists momentarily play that role.

"Associated media personnel" (UNSD, 2018a) is not elaborated in the metadata, but the reference logically includes others working in the value chain of journalism production and dissemination, such as broadcasters, publishers, administrative staff, fixers, translators, and distributors. It can be noted that this broad conceptualisation of 'whom' aligns with the perspectives generally agreed by UNESCO Member States and also features, in varying forms, in several UN decisions. In the reminder of this article, 'journalists' is used to include 'associated media personnel.'

In terms of 'what' has been done to violate safety, the metadata include legal definitions of the aspects of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention, and torture. These key violations are also correlated with criminal codes used under the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS), developed by the UN (UN Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2015a).

It is relevant to unpack some of these definitions as they bear on research into the safety of journalists, as the categories are not as straightforward as might otherwise be assumed.

One example is the term "arbitrary detention" (UNSD, 2018a), which according to the metadata, refers to any arrest or detention not properly based on grounds established by law, nor conforming to legal procedures. Complementing this definition, one can also here point to UN definitions, where the phrase designates detention without due process and safeguards, as outlined in Article 9(1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the definition of "arbitrary deprivation of liberty" (UNHRC, 2012) developed by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. Significantly, the UNGA (2013), in resolutions such as A/RES/68/163 and others, has condemned all attacks and violence against journalists and media workers, mentioning inter alia arbitrary detention. In addition, the UNHRC (2016) in Resolution A/HRC/RES/33/2 urges all states to release arbitrarily detained journalists. The Council of Europe (2016) uses the formulations of "arbitrary arrest, unlawful detention." It will be easily apparent that making the judgement call about specific cases can vary, and that the necessary evidence may not be readily available. This underpins UNESCO's approach to NGO data on this matter, and the organisation's qualification that while considering the matter as part of safety of journalists, it is hard to obtain sufficient data to establish which cases of incarceration may be for reasons other than legitimate journalism (see UNESCO, 2014; UNESCO, 2018b).

Killing is defined in the metadata as any extrajudicial execution or other unlawful killing, but again this is not simple to operationalise. The issue of intention is signalled by the indicator metadata which necessitates that the envisaged and confirmed cases are those where a killing was either motivated by the victim engaging in activities as a journalist, or which were met by a failure of due diligence on the part of the State similarly motivated by the victim or associate engaging in activities as a journalist. Intentionality is also present in the ICCS schema, where killings are disaggregated into different categories, one of which is elaborated as "intentional homicide related to political agendas, including killings by terrorist groups with a political agenda, political as-

sassination, and targeted killing of journalists for political reasons" (UNODC, 2015b).

The complexities around establishing intention in relation to the victim's journalistic role help explain why there are diverse data available on killings (such as shown in a database compiled by Sarikakis, 2017, and likewise by Torsner, 2017). Such diversity in verified cases can relate in part to official statistics, including ICCS relevant data. Additionally, while police data count charges, suspects, victims, and incidents, court data may comprise cases, convictions, and sentences. Some NGOs limit cases to those where there is a link to journalism, as is the methodology of the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and Reporters Without Borders (RSF), although they differ in some cases. CPJ (n.d.) considers a case "confirmed" as work-related only when reasonably certain that a journalist was murdered in direct reprisal for his or her work; in combat or crossfire; or while carrying out a dangerous assignment. Cases involving unclear motives, but with a potential link to journalism, are classified as "unconfirmed" and CPJ continues to investigate. They do not include journalists who are killed in accidents such as car or plane crashes. RSF (2018) states:

> We gather detailed information that allows us to affirm with certainty or a great deal of confidence that the death, detention, abduction, or disappearance of each journalist was a direct result of their journalistic work. In regard to the number of deaths, we distinguish as much as possible between journalists who were deliberately targeted and those who were killed while reporting in the field. We do not include a journalist in the round-up if we are still investigating their death, detention, abduction, or disappearance because we are not yet confident that it was linked to their work.

The tally of the International Federation of Journalists (2019) is based on aggregating "targeted, bomb attacks and cross fire killings" and it also notes "accidental deaths." As noted by Elliott, Elbahtimy, and Srinivasan (2012) and (Mosdell, 2016), the International News Safety Institute concern has included media ancillary staff (drivers, translators, and security personnel) and this group's report for 2019 includes 'citizen journalists' (International News Safety Institute, 2019). In contrast, CPJ has a much tighter focus, thereby producing lower totals than does the Institute.

It is evidently difficult in many cases to establish—especially in a short space of time—whether a given journalist's death for apparently unrelated reasons (e.g., apparent traffic accident, robbery, suicide) was actually motivated by the victim's journalistic activities. This is partly why UNESCO monitoring does not prejudge the issue. This position is on the basis that the organisation's mandate for monitoring is to ensure that journalists are not killed with impunity, and that the rule of law is upheld in regard to all cases. This means that UNESCO operates from a standpoint that all unnatural deaths of journalists should be the subject of an official probe in which there is the investigative and legal competence to attribute the cause of death. The figures of killed journalists as recorded each year by UNESCO can be complemented, where requested by a state, with official information based upon judicial process about whether a particular fatality is demonstrated to be without link to journalistic activity.

Recognising that there is thus a diversity of approaches to safety of journalists by different actors, triangulation across the different data sources requires attention to what criteria are used to identify diverse cases. Equally, where there are shared points between systems, it is possible for researchers to develop a composite picture drawing from the range of available information. At the same time, the SDG metadata, informed by the Universal Human Rights Index and ICCS frameworks, offers a typology of more standardized and generic categories, and it enjoys UN endorsement. This makes it an authoritative and central point that researchers can consider. It also has unique potential impact, and not only on killings of journalists but also on the raft of other kinds of attacks.

3. Status of the Indicator and Scope for Elaboration

The UN Statistical Commission has worked with UN agencies to develop a tier system for the global indicators. As part of this process, indicator 16.10.1 was initially categorized as a Tier III indicator (UNSD, 2016a), meaning that it was originally viewed as either having no established methodology and standards, or, that its methodology and standards were still being developed and/or tested (UNSD, 2016b). OHCHR initiated efforts to upgrade the tier rating for this indicator, working with UNESCO and ILO (UNSD, 2016c), and this partnership succeeded to secure reclassification as a Tier II indicator in November 2017 (UNSD, 2018b). Accordingly, 16.10.1 is now classified at the level of indicators which have conceptually clear, established methodology and standards available but data are not regularly produced by countries. This revised status could enhance prospects for national level uptake of this indicator as part of country-level monitoring and reporting on SDG 16.10, which would then begin to elevate the indicator for Tier I. The status of top tier (Tier I) of SDG indicators requires that data are regularly produced for at least 50 percent of countries and of the population in every region where the indicator is relevant. This might be possible in at least a number of interested countries.

Within this focus of securing data at country-level, there are also a number of areas where research in relation to 16.10.1 can be further elaborated, and even in places where the five most gross attacks on the human rights of journalists are not experienced, but where other kinds of crimes against them are committed and go unpunished.

Impunity for attacks on journalists is not explicitly listed in indicator 16.10.1. But it is logically linked, for example, in the dramatically high number of fatal attacks that go unpunished (nine out of ten; see UNESCO, 2019b) which is widely regarded as a factor in feeding further killings. Hence, mapping trends in reductions or increases in attacks also needs to take account of the situation concerning trends in impunity for these attacks. This provides a more comprehensive and medium-term perspective for making progress on safety of journalists, and it highlights linkages between "public access to information and fundamental freedoms" (SDG 16.10) and other parts of Goal 16 such as target 16.3 which specifically seeks to "promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all" (UNDESA, n.d.). For these reasons, UNESCO's contribution of data for global monitoring of 16.10.1 for the UN includes impunity figures.

There are also several types of attacks not explicitly referred to in the terms of indicator 16.10.1's list of five gross violations and abuses of human rights (killing, torture, etc.). Attacks such as harassment, intimidation, assault, and cyber-attacks are evidently very serious in terms of journalists exercising their freedom of expression and facilitating public access to information. These kinds of attacks can therefore certainly be considered to be relevant to monitoring 16.10 and how the indicator is interpreted. Indeed, UN resolutions increasingly draw attention to the panoply of attacks and violence. For example, in its 2019 Resolution A/C.3/74/L.45/Rev.1, the UNGA (2019) stated it was:

> Deeply concerned by all human rights violations and abuses committed in relation to the safety of journalists and media workers, including killing, torture, enforced disappearance, arbitrary arrest and arbitrary detention, expulsion, intimidation, harassment, online and offline threats and other forms of violence.

The resolution further:

> Condemns unequivocally all attacks and violence against journalists and media workers, such as torture, extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrest and arbitrary detention, expulsion, intimidation, threats and online and offline harassment, including through attacks on, or the forced closure of, their offices and media outlets. (UNGA, 2019)

The resolution further expresses alarm "at instances in which political leaders, public officials and/or authorities denigrate, intimidate or threaten the media, including individual journalists, which increases the risk of threats and violence against journalists" (UNGA, 2019).

Also significant is a clause which also condemns the specific attacks on women journalists and media workers in relation to their work, such as gender-based discrimination and violence, including online and offline sexual harassment, intimidation and incitement to hatred against women journalists (UNGA, 2019).

It may be further noted that a spectrum of types of attacks has been recognised in other UN positions which also go beyond the five explicitly listed in the wording of the indicator. For example, the Human Rights Committee General Comment 34 on Article 19 of the ICCPR states that "the harassment, intimidation or stigmatization of a person, including arrest, detention, trial or imprisonment for reasons of the opinions they may hold, constitutes a violation of article 19, paragraph 1" (UNHRC, 2011). As regards the ICCPR Article 19.3, General Comment 34 affirms that under no circumstances "can an attack on a person, because of the exercise of his or her freedom of opinion or expression, including such forms of attack as arbitrary arrest, torture, threats to life and killing, be compatible with article 19" (UNHRC, 2011).

A case can be made that all these issues could be addressed through the phrase "other harmful acts" (UNSD, 2018a), which although not among the five categories cited explicitly in the indicator, is elaborated in the metadata. There, the phrase is explained as referring to acts by direct or indirect agents of the State which cause harm or intend to cause harm, and which are motivated by the victim engaging in activities as a journalist (or trade unionist or human rights defender). Harm covers, according to the metadata, acts correlating to various ICCS codes such as sexual violence, threat, coercion, and acts intended to induce fear or emotional distress, including harassment. It further adds acts that trespass against the person, including invasion of privacy (UNSD, 2018a). Relevant here is that recent UN resolutions, including that in 2019 A/C.3/74/L.45/Rev.1, identify unlawful or arbitrary surveillance or interception of communications as a risk to their safety (UNGA, 2019). In other resolutions, the UN has regularly condemned surveillance as having a chilling effect on freedom of expression, and UNESCO and UNHRC have noted the adverse impact on confidentiality of journalistic sources in particular. Surveillance as part of "other harmful acts" (UNSD, 2018a) could intersect with ICCS Code 0211 (referring, inter alia, to the invasion of privacy).

Not explicitly referred to in the metadata document, but potentially also relevant to "other harmful acts" (UNSD, 2016b) are ICCS codes for cases of bullying in the workplace (020811), bullying outside the workplace (020819), cyber-bullying (0208), and cyber-stalking (02082).

Attacks such as forcing a journalist into exile (tracked to an extent by CPJ), and seizure/confiscation of kit, are not as easily correlated with the ICCS framework, but connections could be possibly drawn so that actors—especially at national level—might decide to optionally include such additions (where relevant) to the interpretation of "other harmful acts" (UNSD, 2016b).

Amongst the ICCS codes, the issue of 'threats,' which could be interpreted as expressions of intent to cause

harm (as per the metadata) would appear to call out for particular attention. Tracking the issue could help establish, for instance, the extent of correlations between death threats and actual journalists killed. The experience of Italian NGO Ossigeno (n.d.) has shown some way forward in collecting and verifying data on threats. The results can give more impetus at country level to protection mechanisms, as well as help to strengthen advocacy to end impunity for threats that serve to intimidate and obstruct journalists in their work to make information public.

In overview, the metadata for 16.10.1 affords within the SDG monitoring framework, attention to a range of attacks in addition to the five categories cited in the wording of the indicator. This is recognized in a resolution at the UNHRC in 2018 (Resolution A/HRC/39/L.7) that calls upon:

> States to strengthen national data collection, analysis and reporting on the number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention, torture and other harmful acts against journalists and associated media personnel, in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal indicator 16.10.1. (UNHRC, 2018)

In its 2019 Resolution on safety of journalists A/C.3/74/L.45/Rev.1, the UNGA (2019) has echoed this wording. It is in this light that one can take note of a 2019 study by civil society groups that serves as a 'shadow report' to official SDG monitoring processes, in regard to eight Latin American countries (Voces del Sur, 2019). This work expands beyond killings and the other human rights violations cited in the indicator, and also gives attention to "aggression and attacks," "stigmatizing discourse," "access to information," "judicial procedures against media outlets and journalists," "abuse of state power," "juridical framework contrary to standards," and "internet restrictions" (Voces del Sur, 2019); the study further assesses gendered dimensions where relevant. Such initiatives illustrate how the agenda of the SDGs enables comprehensive and action-oriented research into the safety of journalists, keeping in mind as well the value of a gendered analysis. In countries where journalists are not subjected to the most gross violations or abuses of human rights, the "other harmful acts" (UNSD, 2018a) still call out for monitoring. In this sense, the SDG 16.10.1 opportunity has universal utility.

It is further worth observing that there appears to be potential for research using indicator 16.10.1 and "other harmful acts" (UNSD, 2018a) to link up with crime statistics at national levels. This would entail data arising from institutional practice of official agencies that use the ICCS systems and which might be persuaded—in the interests of SDG reporting—to disaggregate when victims are journalists or associated media personnel (or trades unionists and human rights defenders).

4. UNESCO'S Monitoring of Safety in Relation to Operationalising Indicator 16.10.1

UNESCO's mandate for monitoring journalism safety, limited to the data points of killings and impunity, predates SDG indicator 16.10.1. However, it provides a basis that in terms of which the organisation now also feeds information into SDG monitoring at global level. The tracking by UNESCO also contributes to the Universal Periodic Review process at the UNHRC as well to the governing bodies at UNESCO itself.

The mandate stems originally from Resolution 29 'Condemnation of violence against journalists,' adopted at the 29th General Conference in 1997, which invited the Director-General to "condemn assassination and any physical violence against journalists as a crime against society" (UNESCO, 1997). This finds continuing partial expression in regular media statements by the Director-General about killings as they happen, and it enables UNESCO to produce annual comparative totals. These are accompanied by ongoing mandates from the intergovernmental council of the organisation's International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), to include information on judicial follow-up to the killings of journalists (see UNESCO, 2018a).

Torsner (2017, p. 133) observes that UNESCO's monitoring of killing and impunity "is useful for advocacy about the need for the state to fulfil its duty in providing protection and prosecuting the perpetrators of fatal attacks on journalists," but signals further that "this alone has its limitations if the goal is to try to understand the nature, dynamics and consequences of threats (some of which culminate in killings) and to describe shifting trends in journalism safety."

The constraint in UNESCO's role appears to be less of a political issue than a practical one. As regards the 1997 mandate, to date the issue of "any physical violence" (UNESCO, 1997) has not been systematically monitored at global level, nor uniformly condemned or otherwise reported upon. It would appear in principle, that this wording in the organisation's mandate could at least include "torture" as well as "kidnapping" and "enforced disappearance" (UNSD, 2018a). It could also include "assault" or "attempted murder" (UNSD, 2018a) which are variables that can be correlated with ICCS codes mentioned in the SDG metadata.

What "any physical violence" (UNESCO, 1997) does not cover is the category of non-physical attacks on journalists—such as through intimidation (online or offline) or digital disruptions and intrusions (such as DDOS attacks or unwarranted surveillance, content interference, or disproportionate blocks/filters). However, also significant is Resolution 53 of UNESCO's 36th General Conference in 2011 which provides for the Secretariat to:

> Monitor, in close cooperation with other United Nations bodies and other relevant organizations active in this field, the status of press freedom and safety

> of journalists, with emphasis on cases of impunity for violence against journalists including monitoring the judicial follow-up through the Intergovernmental Council of the IPDC and to report on the developments in these fields to the biannual General Conference. (UNESCO, 2011)

The wording of this 2011 mandate includes "the state of press freedom" (UNESCO, 2011), which increasingly is affected by issues such as digital attacks, harassment and intimidation, and arbitrary detention, which are not directly covered by the two earlier mandates mentioned above.

At the same time, the immensity of monitoring all these issues at global level, while both possible in terms of the UNESCO Member States' mandates to the secretariat, as well as the SDG metadata, is beyond the practical capacity of the organisation. Relevant to mention, however, are country-level research instruments. One of these is comprised by UNESCO's country-based Media Development Indicators (MDIs) assessments which have been done in more than 20 countries in the past ten years (UNESCO, n.d.). These studies use a research standard endorsed by UNESCO's IPDC. The relevant section here is mainly under key indicator 3.13 "journalists, associated media personnel and media organisations can practice their profession in safety," covering "threats, harassment, surveillance, physical attacks, unlawful detentions" (UNESCO, n.d.). The "threats, harassment and surveillance" (UNESCO, n.d.) categories do lend themselves to particular national level assessments, although methodologies for assessing these raise questions. It may be noted, however, that the Council of Europe's platform for accredited NGOs to report problems like "threats" (Council of Europe, 2020), etc., does give a self-reported measure. By its nature, however, covert surveillance of journalists in particular is hard to monitor.

In selected countries, national monitoring of the safety of journalists can also be synergized with the specialized UNESCO/IPDC Journalists' Safety Indicators (UNESCO, 2015b). The Journalists' Safety Indicators studies assess the state of journalists' safety and the issue of impunity by discussing safety across many axes. These include surveillance or trailing, harassing phone calls, arbitrary judicial or administrative harassment, aggressive declarations by public officials, or other forms of pressure that can jeopardise the safety of journalists in pursuing their work. In addition, these indicators assess the actions of various stakeholders in promoting a safer environment for media workers.

Thus, both the MDIs and the Journalists' Safety Indicators offer opportunities at national level to feed into country-based monitoring and reporting systems on SDG 16.10.1. This mitigates that UNESCO does not systematically have a granular monitoring at global scale of the other forms of attack beyond killings as listed in indicator 16.10.1 and "other harmful acts" (UNSD, 2018a). These existing approved research instruments, and the wider mandates, can be useful for actors in individual countries linking up to the SDGs opportunity.

5. Putting Focus on Elaborated Monitoring at the National Level

A meeting of experts concerning indicator 16.10.1 at UNESCO in May 2018 was premised on the idea of assessing the potential for actors involved in monitoring safety to align and expand their work on the range of attacks as per the metadata. At the same time, the concept note for the occasion also took cognizance of a counter argument that rather than spreading resources on monitoring and reporting on additional attacks, priority instead be given to ramping up co-operation around killings and impunity. At the same time, the note further observed that under SDG's monitoring scenario, countries also have the opportunity to elaborate their own indicators. Also reflected in the note was the question of whether global work could contribute at national level, to building domestic capacity (possibly on a multi-stakeholder model) in the form of sustainable local mechanisms for monitoring attacks and impunity (e.g., based in national statistics commissions, human rights commissions, justice ministries, or other bodies).

Encouragement for action at the country level was a major outcome of a global consultation on the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity in 2017 (UNESCO, 2017b, 2017c). It is also evident in a decision taken at UNESCO's 206th Executive Board in April 2019, which encouraged Member States to develop national information, prevention, protection, and prosecution systems, "as well as reporting on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicator 16.10.1 including, where relevant, at the upcoming review during the High-Level Political Forum in July 2019" (UNESCO, 2019d). Also relevant is a decision by the IPDC in November 2018 which called for "enhancing current monitoring in collaboration with UNESCO's Institute of Statistics (UIS) as appropriate, in order to align and reinforce synergies with the methodology of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) [of the UNHRC] and the overall reporting on SDG 16.10.1" (IPDC, 2018). Such enhancement and its synergies with the UIS may hold potential for strengthening national level initiatives.

UNESCO is not directly involved in national level SDG monitoring or reporting, which is a voluntary issue for each Member State. Each year, a number of states volunteer to report to the UNGA about progress in a mechanism called the 'Voluntary National Review.' In addition, a number of countries operate mechanisms for ongoing assessment for their domestic purposes, such as reporting to parliament or the government.

Of significance to this monitoring is a suggestion made at the 2018 expert meeting at UNESCO. This was that UNESCO should supplement its Journalism Safety Indicators with a model data collection template to offer to actors at national level. Following this, UNESCO has de-

veloped a voluntary guideline as a contribution to the UN Development Programme's technical assistance to states in SDG monitoring (see UN Development Programme, 2019). This guideline indicates explicitly that the offered options may also be of value to civil society and media actors seeking to work with governmental SDG-monitoring processes, and/or wishing to produce shadow reports. The options cover data points for assessing the safety of journalists through examining relevant laws, policies, personnel, and the existence of a monitoring system on the subject. Further, as regards the range of attacks, the data points include "killings," "credible threats," and "intimidation," as well as indicator 16.10.1's reference to "enforced disappearance, kidnapping, arbitrary detention and torture" (UNSD, 2018a) with the corresponding ICCS categories.

6. Way Forward

A focus on national level possibilities informs the guide by the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (2019) which notes:

> The UN Agenda 2030 calls on States to establish their own concrete national and sub-national indicators for tracking improvements, as well as to establish national review and accountability mechanisms. Civil society can play a crucial role in monitoring and advocating for progress. For example, in some countries, implementation plans are developed with civil society; in others, civil society prepares alternative monitoring reports.

As regards academia in particular, under the frame of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, UNESCO in 2015 initiated a Research Agenda for Academics with a list of ten suggested research topics on safety issues (Berger, 2018; UNESCO, 2015a). This pre-dated the adoption of the SDGs, however it remains relevant to research linked to indicator 16.10.1. A number of publications have emerged directly or indirectly in response to the Agenda and to safety of journalists within the SDGs (see Baker, Murrell, & Martin, 2018, who published a special edition of the *Australian Journalism Review*; Brambila & Hughes, 2019; Carlsson & Pöyhtäri, 2017; and Fadnes, Skare Orgeret, & Krøvel, 2019, with a special edition of the journal *Conflict and Communication Online*). According to the latter, at least 14 articles relevant to the UNESCO Research Agenda were published in *Journalism*, *Journalism Practice*, *Data Journalism*, and *Journalism Studies* in 2016, 2017, and 2018. There is certainly scope at country level to use the Agenda to further operationalise the wider remit of "other harmful acts" (UNSD, 2016b) against journalists.

In addition, case studies could document non-fatal attacks, such as threats of death and other physical harms to journalists and their families in a given society—and then assess if such data serves as a reliable predictor of a threshold for when violent acts actually get committed (see also Torsner, 2017; UNESCO, 2019c). Researching the local impact on the psychological health of reporters is also important (see Jukes, 2015). Subnational research is a further area that produces valuable insights (see Brambila, 2017). In 2012, Elliott et al. remarked that local journalists constituted over 80 percent of journalist deaths during the previous decade (see also UNESCO, 2019b), which again draws attention to understanding national and subnational contexts, and indeed to whether there are any relationships within each of these environments between the extent of fatal and non-fatal attacks occurring there.

Case studies might also feed into other national opportunities for SDG monitoring and reporting. The data could also enrich research events on the safety of journalists such as those to date which have accompanied UNESCO's global World Press Freedom Day conference in Helsinki (in 2016), Jakarta (in 2017), Accra (in 2018), and Addis Ababa (in 2019), and events around the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists (IDEI) which is commemorated each 2 November. There is also the opportunity of the annual conference organised by Oslo Metropolitan University, which is timed around IDEI. Presented by the University's research group called 'Media, War and Conflict,' the event marked its fifth edition in 2019 (MEKK, 2019). The 2018 gathering addressed the 'with what effect' aspect of 'who did what to whom,' by investigating links between attacks on journalists and the practice of self-censorship (see Berger, 2018b).

In addition, the Centre for the Freedom of the Media at Sheffield University (n.d.) has created a Facebook-based journalism safety research network, and along with others has organised special panels at annual conferences of the International Association for Media and Communication Research. Additional data relevant to 16.10.1 may emerge from the Worlds of Journalism (n.d.) study consortium, which previously surveyed 27,500 journalists in 67 countries, and which has now decided to include safety-related questions in their next round of global research.

In summary, there is much momentum and there is also much potential for research at national level to become part of making history in harnessing efforts to the opportunity of SDG 16.10.1. This can also help develop standard categories and data sources that can facilitate comparisons from year to year and improve potential for aggregation of data across countries. The outputs can help ensure the knowledge needed for achieving safety of journalists. In turn, this can help inform change so as to progress public access to information and fundamental freedoms, as well as to power momentum in each concerned country towards achieving peace, justice, and strong institutions, and the synergies between these objectives and the rest of the SDG agenda.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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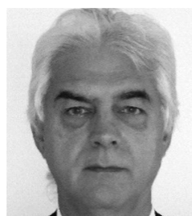

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Article

Strengthening the Monitoring of Violations against Journalists through an Events-Based Methodology

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Abstract
Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicator 16.10.1 proposes an important monitoring agenda for the global recording of a range of violations against journalists as a means to prevent attacks on the communicative functions of journalism. However, the need for extensive collection of data on violations against journalists raises a number of methodological challenges. Our research shows the following issues must be addressed: the lack of conceptual consistency; the lack of methodological transparency; the need for sophisticated data categorisation and disaggregation to enable data to be merged from different sources; the need to establish links to understand causal and temporal relations between people and events; and the need to explore and utilize previously untapped data sources. If we are to strengthen the monitoring of SDG 16.10.1, we propose to develop a robust and reliable events-based methodology and a set of tools which can facilitate the monitoring of the full range of proposed 16.10.1 categories of violations, reconcile data from multiple sources in order to adhere to the established 16.10.1 category definitions, and to further disaggregate the proposed 16.10.1 categories to provide more in-depth information on each instance of a violations. This, we argue, will ultimately contribute towards better understanding of the contextual circumstances and processes producing aggressions against journalists.

Keywords
events-based methodology; monitoring; safety of journalists; Sustainable Development Goal

Issue
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1. Introduction: The Problem of Adequate Monitoring

The UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity states that recent years have shown “disquieting evidence of the scale and number of attacks against the physical safety of journalists and media workers as well as of incidents affecting their ability to exercise freedom of expression” (UN, 2012, p. 1). Perpetrators of these attacks span both state and non-state actors, such as formal government representatives and security forces as well as organized crime groups, militia, terrorist, and extra-state political groups. The types of attacks include “killings, death-threats, disappearances, abductions, hostage takings, arbitrary arrests, prosecutions and imprisonments, torture and inhuman and degrading treatment, harassment, intimidation, deportation, and confiscation of and damage to equipment and property” (Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe, 2012, p. 1). Research shows that journalists are typically targeted because of their work in holding power holders to account, for example when exposing corruption and organized crime and reporting in conflict zones (Horsley & Harrison, 2013; IFEX, 2015; UNESCO, 2018a). Attacks are carried out in a variety of societal contexts that range from conflict and war zones, increasingly fragile states or vulnerable regions, countries

undergoing political or economic shocks, and in relatively stable countries (Asal, Krain, Murdie, & Kennedy, 2016; Bjørnskov & Freytag, 2016; Brambila, 2017; Collinson, Wilson, & Thomson, 2014; Cottle, Sambrook, & Mosdell, 2016; Gohdes & Carey, 2017; Riddick, Thomson, Wilson, & Purdie, 2008; Taback & Coupland, 2006; VonDoepp & Young, 2013; Waisbord, 2002, 2007). Risk and hazard exist in both conflict and non-conflict situations and, worryingly, threats that intensify risk and hazard have more recently migrated to on-line (Betz, Lisosky, & Henrichsen, 2015; Reporters Without Borders [RSF], 2018; UNESCO, 2018b).

Other factors affecting the incidence of attacks are also being recognised. These include gender (Ferrier, 2018; UNESCO, 2018b), the type of news medium the journalist works for, the beat covered, or if the journalist is local, foreign, and/or freelance (UNESCO, 2018b). Problematically, the majority of intimidatory and violent acts against journalists and freedom of expression are committed with impunity, meaning that the violations have no legal consequences and that perpetrators go unpunished (Committee to Protect Journalists [CPJ], 2019a; Horsley, 2011; Parmar, 2014; UNESCO, 2018b). Considering the multi-layered nature of problems of journalism safety, any efforts to address safety threats ultimately depend upon our ability to understand and measure the complexities and dynamics of journalistic risk and hazard.

The international community has increasingly come to recognise the safe practice of journalism as a prerequisite for sustainable and human rights-centred development. This is acknowledged not least in the SDGs Agenda, within which the occurrence of violations against the safety of journalists has been included as an indicator of Target 16.10, which aims to “ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms,” by recording “verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists and other harmful acts” (Human Rights Council [HRC], 2018) through indicator 16.10.1. Indicator 16.10.1 will therefore be used to assess overall progress to the wider SDG 16, which seeks to “promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels” (UN, 2019).

While the SDG agenda in this way opens up a path for the potential universal monitoring of violations against journalists, the requirements in terms of comprehensive data collection raise a number of methodological challenges that currently stand in the way of generating the data needed to achieve the formulated monitoring goals. Ultimately, adequate monitoring of occurrences of attacks on journalists is essential for understanding the complexity, scale, and nature of these problems and thus “a crucial step toward establishing an empirical evidence base that can serve to tailor interventions aimed at safeguarding journalists and their work” (Torsner, 2017, p. 129).

In short, these methodological challenges can be described as twofold. First, the availability of reliable quality data on a range of abuses is an issue. Here it is important to emphasise that the gathering of data on any type of abuse against journalists and the verification of its accuracy is a tremendously challenging undertaking that is being diligently carried out by a range of civil society actors. This process often involves having to gather data in the field from volatile and/or conflict-ridden societies (IFEX, 2011, pp. 20–22), and in contexts where powerful actors and vested interests are able to conceal or prevent information related to attacks on journalists from coming to light (RSF, 2019; Sullivan, 2018). Furthermore, institutionalised local mechanisms that could facilitate the systematic collection of data on abuses may be under development or completely absent in many contexts. Importantly, this extends beyond conflict situations to include developing and developed democracies (Pöyhtäri, 2016, p. 177; UNESCO, 2015). Moreover, data collected by local civil society organisations are rarely compiled into a common repository of data that can be used towards the monitoring of indicator 16.10.1 or for structural cross-country comparison or the domestic analysis of trends (see Gasteazoro, Gómez, & García, 2019, for an example of a regional initiative to monitor 16.10.1).

Secondly, the empirical measurability of indicator 16.10.1 is also a pinch point. The UN statistical commission, which is overseeing the work on operationalising the indicators, initially argued that the 16.10.1 measurement had some weaknesses and ranked it as a Tier III indicator (the weakest category). While being based on “internationally agreed standards [that] include UN Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/27/5; UNGA Resolution A/RES/69/185; UN Security Council Resolution 1738; UNESCO Executive Board Decision 196 EX/Decision 31; and the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity” (UN, 2016, p. 55), the Tier III ranking of indicator 16.10.1 meant that no “established methodology and standards” existed for the indicator or that “a methodology/standards” were in development (UN, 2018, p. 3). Work has since been undertaken to “refine the methodology and expand the data collection scope of the indicator” and as a result, indicator 16.10.1 has been upgraded to a Tier II indicator (UN, 2018, p. 30). It is thus now regarded as “conceptually clear [with an] established methodology and standards available but data are not regularly produced by countries” (UNESCO, 2018c, p. 2). Consequently, even if a methodology for measuring and capturing data on threats and attacks against journalists is developed, the problem of limitations when it comes to access to reliable data still remains. Any attempt to improve monitoring should therefore ideally address the issue of generating quality data and establishing a methodology for systematising and comprehensively measuring safety threats concomitantly.

In practical terms, this article is concerned with methodological development aimed at contributing to

the concrete measurement of the delineated 16.10.1 categories of violations against journalists. This immediate utility-oriented goal is, however, interlinked in important ways with a more overarching research agenda focusing on the task of developing methodologies of measurement to strengthen current data gathering so that it captures the contextual complexity necessary to understand problems of safety in a more comprehensive way. From a sociological perspective, understood to encompass the methodical examination of society, social interaction and patterns (Allan, 2006), generating understanding of the phenomenon of safety violations as complex is at the very heart of what the article seeks to contribute towards. Whereas "[f]actual research shows how things occur…sociology does not just consist of collecting facts" (Giddens, 2009, p. 10), sociology is concerned with "why things happen" (Giddens, 2009, p. 11) for the purpose of making sense of factual observations. Lacking a ground-level understanding of the facts of how violations against journalists are manifest in the real world will ultimately prevent any broader analysis into why the world is so constituted, and consequently how the causes and wider societal consequences of attacks on journalists should be assessed. It is thus against the background of such a wider line of inquiry, of tracking not only the incidence and nature of violations themselves (their manifestation), but also their causes and consequences that the methodological groundwork in this article is conducted (Torsner, 2019).

The challenges to achieving this are diverse and substantial, as addressing them requires that statistics on violations against journalists are not only systematically recorded as high-level categories of information—such as counting the number of killed or imprisoned journalists within a country on a yearly basis. Indeed, such information needs to be recorded in a way that can provide a disaggregated understanding of the context of each violation. This would also need to allow for the disaggregation of risk factors through the macro, meso, and micro sociological levels of analysis (Giddens, 2009; Ritzer, 2011) and therefore understanding an environment hostile to free and independent journalism as arising from a continuum of patterns of influence emerging from interactions and "articulations between systems and actors, between structures and practices" (Ferreira & Serpa, 2017, p. 3, 2019).

The 16.10.1 indicators ultimately produce categories of information that allow for the identification of the number of times journalists have been exposed to a specific type of violation (killing, arbitrary arrest, and so on). However, any comprehensive monitoring must be approached holistically, taking into account the multi-dimensional nature of safety problems as not only consisting of manifestations but also causes and consequences that go beyond the immediate consequences suffered by the individual journalist as a result of an attack. Indeed, such consequences influence the practice of journalism, for instance by giving rise to practices of self-censorship (Clark & Grech, 2017; Harrison & Pukallus, 2018), as well as for society more broadly as journalistic voices are silenced.

Whereas this would require the systematic study of risk as produced by social actors including the state, economy, the law, and the institution of journalism itself, the aim of this article is narrower in terms of its particular focus on the improvement of the monitoring of violations of the safety of the individual journalist. Nevertheless, the article does so through the lens of sociological holism with the aim of preparing the ground for establishing a monitoring methodology that allows for the recording and subsequent understanding also of the reasons why violations occur and how the implications of such violations for society at large should be understood. To this end the events-based approach developed in this article meets this requirement of holism by serving as a tool for a more systematic and disaggregated methodological approach to generate and systematise information on violations against journalists.

To show how this is achieved, the article will first diagnose the limitations with extant data that is being used to track and record violations against journalists for the purpose of 16.10.1. Second, it examines possibilities for establishing an events-based methodology for monitoring SDG 16.10.1 in a way that generates high-quality data and allows for the merging of diverse information through the establishment of an ontological categorisation scheme.

2. Current Data Limitations Preventing Comprehensive SDG 16.10.1 Monitoring

To understand the empirical and methodological limitations of existing data we examined a selection of data sets that provide examples of international, regional and national level monitoring of violations against journalists (see Appendix 1 in the Supplementary File). We then studied the extent to which the categories of information recorded by monitoring organisations cover the five main SDG 16.10.1 violations categories (killings, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention, and torture) as well as the sixth category of 'other harmful acts' (added to the categories of violations through the adoption of the Human Rights Council Resolution in 2018; HRC, 2018). Our findings show that there are three key areas that must be addressed to achieve effective monitoring of SDG 16.10.1 and to better understand the contextual circumstances producing attacks against journalists. These include: a) the issue of data coverage; b) the issue of data reconciliation and disparate definitions; and c) problems of data categorisation and systematisation.

a) The issue of data coverage

Our research shows that the violations category of killings is recorded in all data sets covered. Although illustrated here through a representative sample, the conclu-

sion that killings are the violation most commonly monitored is consistent with findings presented elsewhere (see e.g., Torsner, 2017, 2019). Whereas the monitoring of lethal attacks against journalists is absolutely essential since it captures the most serious form of violation of journalistic expression, the argument here is that it is necessary to widen current monitoring to include the full range of physical and non-physical attacks perpetrated against journalists. This ultimately points to the need to respond to wider lines of inquiry such as uncovering how different societal contexts produce certain types of violations against journalists; sub-national and regional variations in violations; the types of violations facing different categories of journalists; and the range of responses to attacks (e.g., from families, peers, news organisations, civil society, and states). While these investigations lie beyond the scope of this article, it is nevertheless the aim here to build the foundations for these explorations by establishing a methodological infrastructure that enables such analyses to be conducted from the data. Indeed, any such wider analytical assessment on the nature and scope of challenges to the safety of journalists using only data on lethal violations "as a single indicator of risk" (Torsner, 2019, p. 128) may lead to incorrect conclusions with regards to trends and their real manifestation (see e.g., Landman & Carvalho, 2010, p. 50). If we look beyond the category of killings to the other SDG 16.10.1 categories, we see that there are substantial differences in the coverage of incident types, with certain categories of violations being recorded by some organisations but not by others. Importantly, this points to the disparate nature of categories that are used to record violations. The fact that data sets covering a specific national context (such as *La Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa*) tend to record a wider range of categories than those covering international statistics (represented here by the CPJ) indicates the need also to facilitate the incorporation of data collected in a local context when monitoring SDG 16.10.1.

In addition to limitations related to data range and coverage, conceptual inconsistencies between different data sets are also preventing comprehensive monitoring of 16.10.1. Examining the data on lethal violations reveals that a number of definitional, methodological, and verification-related considerations lead various monitoring organisations to differing approaches when it comes to how, when and why they record a killing in their tallies, for example who is considered a journalist (only professional journalists, or also citizen journalists and bloggers). These considerations cause yearly statistics on killings within a country to differ between organisations (see e.g., IFEX, 2011; Sarikakis et al., 2017; Torsner, 2017).

b) The issue of data reconciliation and disparate definitions

Our findings also show that there is a lack of conceptual consistency across data sets, with numerous definitions being used to describe the same type of violation. Given that the rationale for the guidelines on the metadata for indicator 16.10.1 provided by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is based on human rights provisions (such as the right to life and liberty), making extant data compatible with definitions adopted for monitoring 16.10.1 is key, and underlines the problem of conceptual inconsistency with extant data which also does not expressly adopt the 16.10.1 definitions. These definitional challenges become particularly clear when considering the category of 'other harmful acts' (HRC, 2018) where the disparate nature of definitions used makes any attempt to harmonize different data sets in a way that adheres to the 16.10.1 categorisation far from straightforward.

c) Problems of data categorisation and systematisation

Whereas generating more data on a wide range of different types of violations is key to strengthening the monitoring of 16.10.1, we also argue that improving monitoring is not simply a matter of gathering more data of the kind that already exists. Rather, methodological development is also needed with regards to data categorisation and systematisation. This can be illustrated through the statistics on instances of lethal violations which are commonly recorded as counts of the number of yearly occurrences of killings within a country. These figures are accompanied by varying levels of detail about the incident and its surrounding circumstances. In some cases, only the bare minimum facts (that a killing has occurred) are recorded, at least in structured form, while in others, a wider picture is put together. In most cases, a large amount of additional information is left as unstructured qualitative free text, which currently serves no purpose in terms of classification and wider monitoring efforts, but could be extremely useful to more systematically understand the bigger picture and to identify causal, temporal, and other relations between events, such as investigating the escalation of threats into full-scale killings.

From the perspective of trying to contextualise and understand why and how journalist murders occur, the recording of detailed information that goes beyond statistics that count the number of killings is thus particularly important. The CPJ records categories of information related to a killing, such as the type of perpetrator involved (e.g., military, political, or government actors), the types of topics covered by the journalist (e.g., corruption, human rights, or war), as well as whether they received threats prior to being murdered. CPJ also records the status of the judicial investigation into a killing through the categories of 'complete impunity,' 'partial justice,' and 'full justice' (CPJ, 2019b). While such further disaggregation of information related to a killing is very valuable, we argue that there is a need to systematically record additional sub-categories of information providing more in-depth information on each instance of a violation, which could for instance be used to map

how acts of intimidation against a journalist might escalate into lethal violence.

In the following section, we develop a proposal for addressing these outlined data limitations by using an events-based methodology rather than the traditional person-centric approach, and demonstrate how such a methodology can effectively improve existing monitoring of violations against journalists.

3. An Events-Based Methodology for the Improved Monitoring of 16.10.1

Within social science analysis, events are commonly studied social phenomena ranging from macro social events (e.g., regime changes and civil unrest) to micro events affecting an individual (Landman & Carvalho, 2010). For the purpose of this article, an event is essentially understood as a violation of the rights of a journalist. By responding to the questions of what happened, when, and who was involved, an events-based measure can provide descriptive or numerical summaries of human rights events (Bollen, 1992, p. 37). Accordingly, the data can be disaggregated at the level of the violation, as well as at the level of the person (the individual journalist), which allows for the contextualisation and recording of related information in an in-depth manner. This may include: information about key actors involved in a violation and their interrelationships (victim, perpetrator, and witnesses); the time and place of the violation; and the systematic recording of multiple violations experienced by the same victim (e.g., detention, torture, and killing), or a single violation experienced by multiple victims (e.g., a bombing). This is illustrated in Figure 1, which shows an excerpt from a BBC (2018) report on the murder of Maltese journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia.

Applying the event-based approach, all the facets of this narrative statement can be represented, allowing for both the notion of a hierarchy of events (i.e., an event can contain sub-events) and the notion of chains of events (which can be causal and/or temporal). This can be achieved by categorising each incident (an overall scenario which involves one or more journalists) as an event which may contain further sub-events (e.g., torture during imprisonment) and which may have links to other sub-events (such as death resulting from the torture). In this way, multiple violations of a single person can be represented in a connected way, as well as the same event happening to multiple people. For example, the Caruana Galizia case could be represented as shown in Figure 2.

Having illustrated how an events-based approach can facilitate the uncovering of deeper explanation and understanding of what happened and why it happened in a particular context, the article will now investigate how

> *The family of murdered Maltese anti-corruption journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia is demanding an independent public inquiry because she had suffered years of intimidation.*
>
> *She was killed by a car bomb near her home in October. Her widely-read blog accused top politicians of corruption.*
>
> *One of her sons, Paul, said three pet dogs were killed and attempts were made to burn down the journalist's home.*

Figure 1. Excerpt from BBC report of the death of Daphne Caruana Galizia. Source: BBC (2018).

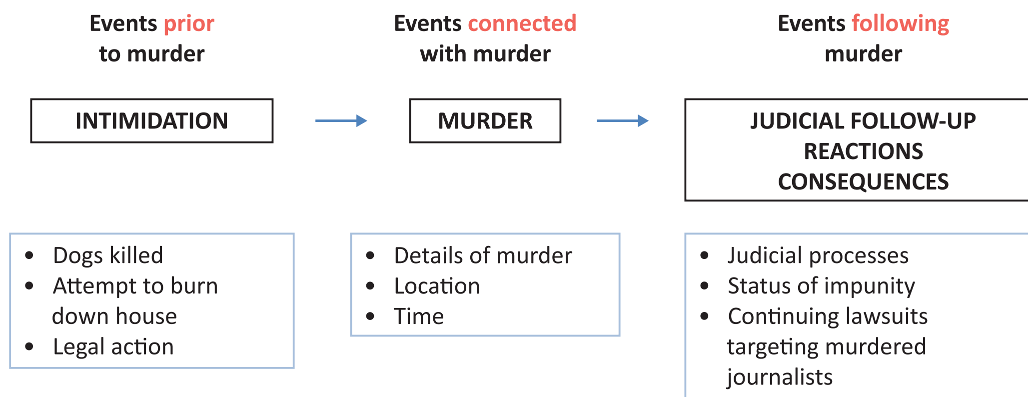

Figure 2. Event-based representation of the case of Daphne Caruana Galizia, with an 'intimidation' event containing separate sub-events of 'dog killing' and 'home burning attempts,' followed chronologically (though not necessarily causally) by the 'murder' event (the car bomb), and subsequently by various judicial follow-up events. Note: Each of these events has a number of features attached to it (not depicted), such as the name of the victim, a date, and time.

the events-based approach combined with an ontological classification scheme can address several problem areas identified in the initial data review.

3.1. How Can Developing an Events-Based Methodology Improve the Monitoring of Violations against Journalists?

As illustrated, the events-based approach provides a way to deal with the complex nature of a human rights violation and its recording, by putting the violation itself at the centre and allowing for its in-depth description. What might be considered a single violation (such as a killing) might upon closer examination be interrelated with several other events (such as various forms of intimidation in the case of Daphne Caruana Galizia). This is important in order to understand the progression of events: It is critical to know whether killings typically appear in isolation or as the final act in a series of violations gradually increasing in severity, and similarly to understand whether threats or more minor incidents gradually escalate into more serious ones. To deal with these types of relations between event types and for their categorisation, we use a shallow ontology as a form of hierarchical classification system. Gruber (1993, p. 199) originally defined an ontology as "an explicit specification of a conceptualization." In simple terms, an ontology can be considered as essentially a hierarchical structure with general categories at the top level, branching out in more specific subcategories at lower levels, as shown in Figure 3, where 'shooting' is a more specific subcategory of 'physical attack,' which is itself a subcategory of 'abuse.'

There are several important things to note about the use of an ontology as a classification system. First, an ontology is typically a directed acyclic graph, not a tree, which means among other things that categories can be represented in multiple places simultaneously (multiple inheritance). For example, 'bombing' could be a subcategory of both 'murder' and 'collateral target.' Second, it enables information to be represented at varying levels of granularity. Some databases record quite broad categories (e.g., Mapping Media Freedom does not distinguish between arrest and imprisonment) while other information sources have more specific categories, making a clear distinction between those two things. This has the advantage that information can easily be aggregated in different ways, depending on the level of specificity required (e.g., one can look at all abuse as a single unit, or one can look specifically at all psychological abuse as a subset of this). In its simpler forms, ontological classification is compatible with a spreadsheet structure and can be used to create aggregated datasets that can then be semantically searched via potentially complex queries (see e.g., Maynard, Funk, & Lepori, 2017; Maynard, Roberts, Greenwood, Rout, & Bontcheva, 2017).

3.2. The Use of a Classification Hub as a Means to Merge Disparate Data Sources

To help mitigate these issues, we propose the adoption of an ontology as a central hub which enables the mapping of different categorisation schemes. We should note, however, that there is no real concept of a single correct ontology—as with the existing categorisation schemes used by the monitoring organisations, an ontology offers a subjective viewpoint. A good ontology is therefore one which adequately meets the needs of the situation and data. On the other hand, an ontology offers a flexible approach which solves the problem of non-commensurability by enabling mapping to existing categorisation and classification schemes.

As we see from the Appendix 1 in the Supplementary File, different monitoring efforts may use different terms and classification systems. For example, one monitoring effort may consider online hate speech to be a particular kind of psychological threat, along with other verbal abuse, while another may consider it a particular kind of online threat along with doxxing, online censoring, etc. Similarly, one may use the term 'assassination' while another may use the term 'murder'—these may or may not represent the same set of events. Ideally, a standardised set of terms and schemes should be used by everyone, but a prescriptive strategy that dictates preferential terminology and classifications is simply impossible to enforce, and is highly problematic. Thus, we suggest a more flexible solution that allows monitoring organisations and researchers to enhance the existing data by mapping to an ontology-based solution.

As we have already mentioned, existing categorisation schemes for both killings and other acts of violence against journalists are insufficient for our purpose, because they are not comprehensive and because they differ widely, resulting in incommensurable data.

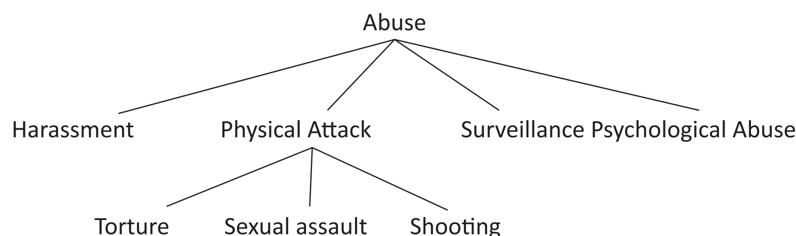

Figure 3. Simple partial ontology showing the relationship between (a selected set of) different kinds of abuse.

Bearing in mind that we do not wish to impose a new subjective classification scheme, we turn instead to existing well-defined schemes from the fields of human rights and crime—namely HURIDOCS (Dueck, Guzman, & Verstappen, 2001) from the former (see Table 1) and International Crime Classification Scheme (ICCS; UN Office on Drugs and Crime, 2015) from the latter (see Table 2).

UNESCO has already started to investigate the ICCS in this respect (see guidelines on the metadata for indicator 16.10.1 provided by the OHCHR, 2018). We therefore propose there should be mapping to both schemes via an intermediary set of terms/classes, as shown in the Supplementary File. For example, currently there are no specific classes in either scheme for many of the kinds of violations we want to monitor, e.g., cyberbullying has only the general class (threat, harassment, psychological assault); exile has a specific class in HURIDOCS but not in ICCS (where it just falls under 'other deprivation of liberty') because it is not specifically a crime. The linking of existing classification systems to definitions of human rights violations such as HURIDOCS also helps to establish a link to the 16.10.1 category definitions. Crucially, such a link is currently lacking in current monitoring. Our approach therefore has the potential to embed 16.10.1 monitoring into the sustainable ongoing and institutional practice of official agencies such as HURIDOCS, assuming that it is possible to disaggregate victims in terms of their link to journalism.

A further benefit of adopting a semantic form of categorisation using an ontology-based classification system is that it enables representation at different levels of granularity and easy exchange between different datasets. As we have seen from the table in Appendix 1 in the Supplementary File, some schemes do not make subtle distinctions. Where this information is available (either through the existing scheme or through analysis of additional data on the event), our approach will enable us to make fine-grained distinctions; where it is not, we can simply assimilate data at a lesser granularity.

In Figure 4, we show a possible conceptual structure for mapping between existing categorisations, text, and databases. On the left we see information from a CPJ database. Blue boxes denote (existing) categories in the various schemes, with blue arrows connecting categories together, while red boxes denote instances of records. Thus, in the CPJ database we see an instance (Record 01) which is some text about the journalist Abay Hailu. In that database, the event has been categorised as 'Dangerous Assignment.' The horizontal blue arrow maps this cate-

Table 1. Excerpt from HURIDOCS classification scheme for killings, showing code, and description.

01	Violations of the right to life
0101	Direct actions which violate the right to life
010101	Deliberate killings of specific individuals
01010101	Summary execution
01010102	Extra-judicial execution outside any legal proceedings
01010103	Legal execution (capital punishment)
01010104	Politically-motivated killing by non-state agent(s)
01010105	Murder (deliberate killing which ought to be seen as a common criminal act)

Table 2. ICCS categorisation of acts of killing.

Section 01 Acts leading to death or intending to cause death			
Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Crime
0101			Intentional homicide
0102			Attempted intentional homicide
0103			Non-intentional homicide
	010301		Non-negligent manslaughter
	010302		Negligent manslaughter
		010321	Vehicular homicide
		010322	Non-vehicular homicide
0104			Assisting or instigating suicide
	010401		Assisting suicide
	010409		Other acts of assisting or instigating suicide
0105			Euthanasia
0106			Illegal feticide
0107			Unlawful killing associated with armed conflict
0108			Other acts leading to death or intending to cause death

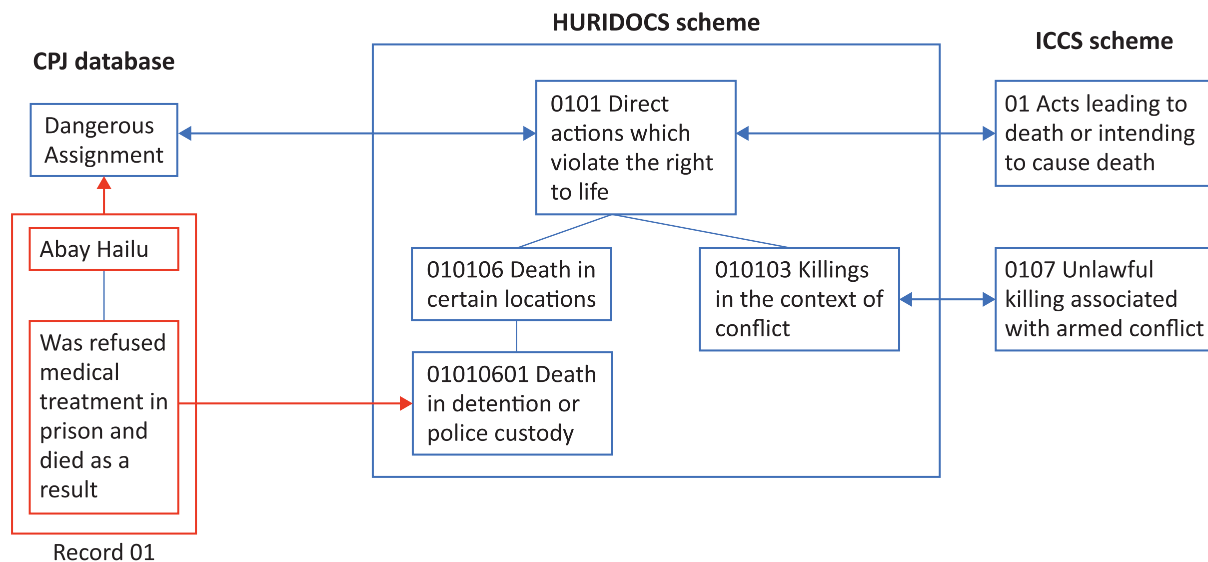

Figure 4. A conceptual structure for mapping events.

gory from the CPJ database to the HURIDOCS category 0101 (direct actions which violate the right to life) in the centre of the picture. This might seem an odd mapping, but HURIDOCS has no category that really fits 'Dangerous Assignment' specifically, so we map it at the highest level, which equates just to 'killing.' The HURIDOCS scheme depicts a couple of sub-classes of Category 01, such as Category 01010601. This can be linked with the textual description of Abay Hailu's death from CPJ—either manually or by automated Natural Language Processing tools—because both describe death in prison. On the right-hand side of the picture, we also show how one might link other schemes such as ICCS to the hub. Rather than linking directly from the CPJ record to ICCS, we simply link ICCS categories to HURIDOCS categories where possible, so that by extension, we can deduce the link from an instance of an event to the ICCS (and other classification schemes). This minimises the amount of work needed each time a new event is added. So we can map ICCS Category 01 'Acts leading to death or intending to cause death' directly to HURIDOCS Category 0101, and we can link ICCS Category 0107 'Unlawful killing associated with armed conflict' directly to HURIDOCS Category 010103 'Killings in the context of conflict.'

It is important to note that the scheme also enables the mapping of multiple sources of information together. Figure 4 shows the addition of the information from the free text description about Hailu's death, but we can add as many other sources as we want, such as additional news reports, information recorded in other databases, or even from social media. Discussion of this is beyond the scope of this report, but methods for information extraction and information mapping can be used to pull together the information into a single coherent representation. Finally, we touch briefly on the inter-related issue of information verification.

3.3. Verification of Information

Indicator 16.10.1 also specifies that cases must be verified. This means that reported cases should contain a minimum set of relevant information on particular people and incidents, which have been reviewed by mandated bodies, mechanisms, and institutions, who in turn have found reasonable grounds to believe that a violation took place. One of the most critical problems in the monitoring of data on killings—and other forms of violence against journalists—is connected with the validity and reliability of this data. Many factors can affect the counts of violations and thus confuse the data, such as the differences in what to count. For example, the CPJ only considers cases where a direct link to journalism is proven, while others, such as RSF, count also prima facie links and unproven cases.

The reporting of killings and other events may be inaccurate due to deliberate disinformation, such as adjusting the numbers of harmed journalists, not reporting that a journalist was harmed, or falsely reporting that a journalist was not harmed. It may also simply be misinformation due to rumour, uncertainty or confusion (such as using different names for the same person), or due to differences in definitions and data collection methodologies (see for instance IFEX, 2011). Enormous research effort has recently been put into developing methods to recognise and categorise various forms of false information in news reports and social media (del Vicario et al., 2016; Kim, Tabibian, Oh, Schölkopf, & Gomez-Rodriguez, 2018; Tucker et al., 2018), and there are a number of research projects addressing this issue, such as WeVerify. Investigations into fake news and false information have also been undertaken by both the UK government (House of Commons, 2018) and the European Parliament (2019).

In this research, we focus on methods to deal with inaccurate or incorrect information. We propose to address the notion of information verification in our monitoring approach by developing a range of mechanisms for automatically assessing the likelihood of correctness. For this we can consider features such as the number of sources reporting the event, the nature of these sources (some sources are known to be more reliable than others), the similarity between the reports, and the nature of this similarity. We propose to address the notion of information verification in our monitoring approach by developing a range of mechanisms for automatically assessing the likelihood of correctness. For this we can consider features such as the number of sources reporting the event, the nature of these sources (some sources are known to be more reliable than others), the similarity between the reports, and the nature of this similarity. We recommend including measures of: number of sources; type of sources (news, social media, eyewitness reports, etc.); reliability of the sources (a number of initiatives are focusing on this, such as the Global Disinformation Index, 2019; the Journalism Trust Initiative, 2018; and Media Bias Fact Check, 2019); and content reliability (for instance, a number of tools are being developed currently for verification of news, debunking, and fact-checking).

Finally, when the information in two or more sources conflicts, their reliability is inherently questionable, and this can be an additional factor to consider. In order to determine whether two records of an event can be matched or merged, we can consider each feature's importance (see Postma, Ilievski, & Vossen, 2018).

4. Conclusions

In response to the current limitations with data that is being gathered on violations against journalists on the national, regional, and international levels, and the range of challenges in monitoring the 16.10.1 indicators, this article has suggested that an events-based methodology adopting an ontological classification scheme provides a new means to map disparate data sources relating to attacks on journalists. Such an approach represents a way forward in improving our understanding of the manifestations of violations against journalists as it captures the real world complexity of these violations, while simultaneously making it possible to adhere to existing norms and schemes without trying to impose unwanted restraints on those who collect information in the field (often under adverse conditions) and organisations who maintain records of violations for monitoring purposes. We therefore propose to realise this event-based approach by means of methods and tools that aim to strengthen ongoing monitoring efforts by facilitating processes to generate, categorise, and systematise data on a wide range of violation types. This article provides a starting point and roadmap for envisioning and designing prototype tools and associated methodologies that we ultimately hope will contribute towards building a comprehensive evidence base to understand how and why violations occur in more depth, while also contributing towards addressing and redressing problems of safety in a more efficient way. Through this approach, there is no requirement for any current monitoring efforts to modify their practices, but rather, we propose there could be enhancement of their data through the use of text analytics and more complex classification and mapping schemes. This data enhancement applies equally to individual local monitoring efforts and to global, more encompassing schemes.

Nevertheless, there are a number of challenges and assumptions to be considered. First, an events-based methodology is a relatively fundamental change in thinking, which may not appeal to all. Second, local monitoring organisations must be open to ideas about collaborative working practices to improve monitoring efforts, which may involve sharing of data. Third, even if tools are provided, there is no guarantee that they will be used by relevant stakeholders. While the approach that we propose is only meant to serve to enhance existing information, it does require additional effort to use and understand. Related to this, it is important to understand that the use of automated tools is not without risk, particularly if not taken in its proper context. Natural language processing is certainly not infallible, and mistakes will be made by automated tools. Thus, there is an important element of caveat emptor. The same applies to verification tools, which again should only be used as a guide and not a solution; for example, a risk of inadvertent exclusion and inclusion applies if tools/accreditation are implemented and become de facto statements of trust across diverse information sources.

Moving forward, we see two key avenues to pursue. First, improved monitoring is required: Based on the needs and priorities of the community of monitoring organisations and/or individual or groups of monitoring civil society organisations, tools should be developed to address issues of data generation, categorisation and systematising, both for the systematic monitoring of 16.10.1, and for strengthening the monitoring capacity of local civil society organisations. Second, improved research and analysis of violations against journalists is required, addressing the need for data tools that can facilitate the comprehensive analysis of shifting safety trends for the purpose of better understanding the nature and dynamics of safety threats.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the authors (unedited).

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