Reporting Safely: An assessment of risk management practices employed by news organisations in

support of journalists operating in areas of conflict, 2009-2019

By

Mark Alexander Grant (MSc, CSyP)

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor

of Security Risk Management (DSyRM) at the University of Portsmouth.

6th August 2021

Copyright

Declaration

Whilst registered as a candidate for the above degree, I have not been registered for any other research award. The results and conclusions embodied in this thesis are the work of the named candidate and have not been submitted for any other academic award.

Word count: **52,671**

Signature: **_____**

Name: **Mark Alexander Grant**

Date: **6ᵗʰ August 2021**

Acknowledgements

Conducting this research has been a long, challenging, insightful, and at times isolating, experience. Without the enthusiasm and encouragement of those involved in the study, and my inner circle, it would have likely gone unfinished.

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor, Mr. Chris Lewis, for his continual support and guidance, and reassurance that the attainment of this doctorate was possible.

I would like to thank Verena Horne for her expertise and patience as we worked through the editing process. I would also like to thank both Aidan Rogers and Fiona Edwards for being on-hand to brainstorm, theorise and constantly challenge my thinking. I could not have achieved this without their support. Thank you to all of the participants and interviewees that took part in the study; our conversations were a reminder of the importance of the subject matter, and – at times – source of great humour! Finally, I would like to express gratitude to my friends, mother, and daughter. Without their tremendous understanding and encouragement over the past few years it would have been impossible to complete this study.

This work is dedicated to my daughter, Isabella.

Abstract

Since 2009, there have been landmark changes to the way news organisations operate in areas of conflict, driven by challenges related to new technology, increased competition, and the evolution of traditional business models. Although the impact on journalism has been well documented, there has – to-date – been no academic research assessing the effectiveness of risk management frameworks applied by news organisations reporting from conflict areas in light of these challenges. Therefore, this study creates new knowledge; grounded in pragmatism and using a mixed-methods approach. The research examines real world experience, drawing practicable conclusions from the actions, knowledge and perceptions of news organisations and journalists with regard to existing risk management frameworks for conflict zones.

Overall, this research demonstrates that while news organisations have improved their risk management frameworks, they have failed to evolve at a pace to match changes within the media landscape and related emerging risks. The study highlights several areas for improvement within risk management frameworks, notably levels of engagement with the risk assessment process, which is often perceived as a bureaucratic "tick-box" exercise, and the failure by news organisations to capture lessons from previous conflict deployments. The research also identifies several practical challenges and gaps that need to be addressed to ensure that those deployed to conflict zones in non-traditional roles receive the same attention with regard to duty of care as those in traditional roles. This duty of care is a legal and moral requirement for news organisations; failures with regard to duty of care obligations could lead to prosecution or civil suits against risk owners, with a potentially detrimental impact on wider brand reputation. With the expected increase in the utilisation of non-traditional roles in the coming years, this study highlights the critical necessity of further research to assess how this gap, along with the other findings highlighted within this study, can be addressed to ensure the future safety and security of news teams in conflict zones.

Key Words: Risk Assessment, Risk Management, Conflict Journalism, Safety & Security, News Media

Table of Contents

Glossary of Abbreviations

A Culture of Safety Alliance	ACOS
Chemical Biological Radioactive and Nuclear	CBRN
Committee to Protect Journalists	CPJ
DART Centre	DART
Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office	FCDO
Frontline Freelance Register	FFR
Health and Safety at Work Act 1974	HASAWA
Hostile Environment Training	HE
Hostile Environment First Aid Training	HEFAT
Information Security	InfoSec
International News Safety Institute	INSI
Interviewee Participant	IV
Kidnap for Ransom	KfR
Other Palestinian Territories	OPT
Personal Protective Equipment	PPE
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	PTSD
Public Order Training	PO
The Pulitzer Prize Award	Pulitzer
The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999	MHSWR
Video Conference	VC
Volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity	VUCA
World Health Organisation	WHO

Glossary of Terms

A Culture of Safety (ACOS) Alliance – The ACOS Alliance (A Culture Of Safety Alliance) is a coalition of news organisations, freelance journalist associations and press freedom NGOs working to champion safe and responsible journalistic practices for freelance and local journalists worldwide.

Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) – The Committee to Protect Journalists is an independent, non-profit organisation that promotes press freedom worldwide. The CPJ defends the right of journalists to report the news safely and without fear of reprisal.

Citizen Journalist – Citizen journalism can be defined as activity in which ordinary citizens generate non-professional content on breaking events or other news.

Freelance Journalist Safety Principles – A set of safety principles and practices that has been endorsed by international news organisations and freelancers, to allow both parties to work together to protect themselves, their profession and their vital role in global society.

International News Safety Institute (INSI) – A member-based organisation dedicated to journalists' safety. INSI provides news organisations a forum for networking and information sharing and offer security alerts and advisories, workshops, regional meetings and webinar discussions.

Non-traditional journalists – Freelance and local journalists. Non-traditional roles do not include parachute journalists, foreign correspondents, or any personnel employed as staffers from news organisations headquarters to cover conflict or breaking news on a story-by-story basis.

Primary roles – Journalists directly involved in the physical production side of news gathering; those who capture material to be aired or published on international news platforms. This includes correspondents, journalists, photojournalists, shoot editors, camera operators, photographers, producers and directors.

Secondary roles – Personnel that support the primary team, including risk owners, risk managers, security advisors, safety specialists, fixers, medical advisors and those who provide editorial and logistics support related to conflict area deployments.

Traditional journalists – News organisation staff who are employed as journalists, correspondents, camera operators, directors and producers, often parachuted into the conflicts that they are requested to cover.

Chapter 1 – Overview of Research

1.1. Personal Motivation

My interest in journalism safety and security dates back to a work assignment in 2015, when I supported a freelance news team in Mogadishu, Somalia. I was amazed at the level of risk journalists were exposed to while reporting from conflict areas. As a director of security, I was accustomed to working within a rigid risk management framework and had clear red lines in terms of risk exposure; for the news team in Mogadishu, those red lines simply did not exist. This challenged my initial assumptions about the news industry and led me to consider it in light of my professional experience. Based on my experiential learnings from assignments in conflict areas, I felt that effective and properly implemented risk management processes could improve safety for journalists deploying to dangerous areas. Not only that, but it could potentially pave the way for innovative solutions enabling, and possibly improving, the ability of journalists to operate in such challenging environments. The experience ultimately motivated me to study journalism safety, while actively seeking employment within news organisations.

In 2016, I was employed as a high-risk advisor for international news gathering at the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), where I implemented and tailored a risk management framework for conflict journalists. After deploying with news teams to support them in conflict zones, I sought to develop my strategic understanding of risk management, with the aim of addressing issues in the news industry's risk management processes.

In 2018, I was appointed security director for Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) and Asia Pacific (APAC) at Cable News Network (CNN). While at CNN, I led the development of effective risk assessment frameworks, implemented crisis management processes and mandated training for deploying journalists, to mitigate risks for news teams in conflict zones. However, I struggled to find academic material or tested knowledge to draw upon to support my work. This led me to consider academia as an environment in which to test theories, build a knowledge repository for risk practitioners and produce grounded research with the aim of influencing industry decision makers. The University of Portsmouth provided the environment in which I was able to grow and develop my experience into academic knowledge.

1.2 Introduction

> It's easy, as a journalist, to spend time in a dangerous place and become desensitized to the risks, to want more, to never think that what you have is enough… journalism is as seductive as it is dangerous... The reality is we are not there to solve the problem, we are there to illuminate it. (Ward, 2020, p. 13)

This observation by experienced conflict reporter Clarissa Ward highlights both the attractions and the dangers associated with the profession of news journalism. Conflict journalists – in particular – are often portrayed in popular culture as grittily glamorous and dangerously gung-ho. However, news journalists play a critical role in delivering first-hand accounts of conflict, bearing witness to human suffering, holding power to account and exposing important developments to an international audience. To do this, they are required to travel to some of the world's most inhospitable and dangerous environments, often putting themselves directly into harm's way.

In the decade from 2009 to 2019, at least 289 journalists were killed while covering war and conflict; 203 of those killed were staff directly employed by news media organisations, 86 were freelancers and 242 local journalists (Committee to Protect Journalists [CPJ], 2021). Worryingly, this is an increase in journalist fatalities of more than 36% compared to the decade from 1999 to 2009. The increase was most noticeable for freelancers and local journalists; freelancer fatalities rose by 7%, representing 30% of all journalists killed between 2009 and 2019, while fatalities of local journalists increased by 9%, making up 84% of all fatalities (CPJ, 2021[1]).

The profession of news journalism has never before involved so much personal risk. Journalists are no longer perceived as independent or neutral observers, but are often viewed as a target, prize or "feather in the cap" by a wide range of actors (Armoudian, 2017, p. 53). These changes to the threat level for journalists have had significant impact, resulting in reduced news coverage (including by leading news organisations, such as the BBC and Reuters) of the civil conflict in Syria. Ultimately, the

---

[1] For reference, for the remainder of this paper, the term non-traditional journalists will be used to refer to both freelancers and local journalists.

risk vs reward calculation means that deploying journalists to cover some events is no longer considered viable.

The subject of conflict journalism has attracted a significant amount of academic research, as well as innumerable published first-hand accounts. However, the security measures and risk management processes that the news media industry employs to keep conflict journalists safe have, unsurprisingly, attracted less interest. There is a distinct lack of academic research into this subject area. The result is that very little academic rigour has been applied to existing risk management policies, risk assessments or mitigation measures for news organisations, highlighting a knowledge gap.

This knowledge gap has restricted the evolution of journalism safety at a time when, not only are journalists being targeted more frequently, but the news media landscape is undergoing significant changes to the way it operates. The increased reliance on new media as a resource and communication tool, alongside the diminishing importance of traditional conflict journalism and increased use of freelancers and local journalists, has exacerbated emerging risks, such as the targeting of journalists in kidnap for ransom (KfR) incidents. The result is a perfect storm – both the likelihood and potential impact of violent incidents involving conflict journalists have increased. These increased risks to journalists, risk owners and news organisations have been accompanied by heightened demand to understand the liabilities emplaced on all parties, especially in relation to duty of care obligations. As well as personal safety and duty of care issues, the heightened likelihood of an incident has potentially dramatic consequences for news organisations, creating new risks around brand and reputation.

The aim of this research, then, is to reduce the knowledge gap between academia and risk industry practitioners with regard to the safety of journalists. The intention is to encourage the implementation of more effective risk management processes by journalists, risk owners and news organisations, and make practical recommendations.

1.2a - Research Aims and Objectives

The aim of this research is to conduct an exploratory study into the risk management frameworks used by news organisations between 2009 and 2019 to keep journalists and support staff

safe on deployment to areas of conflict. Specifically, it will explore perceptions of these processes, the level of engagement with them, and practical experiences of implementation before, during and post-deployment.

1.2b - Objectives

1. To assess the perception of risk management frameworks and assessments used by news organisations;

2. To determine if the safety measures used by news organisations are adequate to mitigate the risks that conflict journalists face;

3. To add to the existing body of knowledge regarding the risk assessment process for journalists, while highlighting areas for additional research;

4. To identify key recommendations to improve safety for journalists.

The study will explore these questions using Morgan's (1998b) mixed methods approach to research. This allows for an initial quantitative phase of exploration that reduces researcher bias and ensures the findings are based on empirical knowledge. The second qualitative phase of the study will allow the researcher to extrapolate the initial findings, before reflecting on outcomes and making practical recommendations.

Research subjects will be journalists and other news team support staff who deployed to conflict zones, including but not limited to Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Yemen and Libya, between 2009 and 2019. This decade was chosen due to the number of conflicts covered by news organisations in this period that involved heightened risks for journalists and, in some cases, their direct targeting. The decade also involved significant changes to the way news media operated that impacted safety and security; these included: an increasing reliance on social media; a leap in the amount of available information and data; improvements in technology; changing structures within news organisations; and the increasing use of non-traditional roles, as opposed to professional conflict journalists, to cover conflict. These factors made this ten-year period the most tumultuous in recent news coverage history.

In light of this changing media landscape, a key focus of the study will therefore be the increased reliance on local resources and non-traditional roles by news organisations. By focusing on emerging risks and changes to news gathering, the research will attempt to address the practical challenges associated with ensuring that those deployed to conflict zones in non-traditional roles receive the same attention with regard to duty of care as those in traditional roles.

1.2c Structure of Thesis

After an initial introduction to the research topic, the second chapter concentrates on the available literature, providing an overview of the academic and grey literature used as reference throughout. The literature review focuses on three key areas. The first explores changes to the modern media landscape, especially challenges associated with economic constraints, the increased availability of information and reliance on non-traditional roles. The second section will assess the existing academic literature around risk considerations for journalists, concentrating on cultural theory and the changing risks for conflict journalists. The final section focuses on two specific areas where risks changed for deployed journalists between 2009 and 2019, namely KfR and embedding.

The third chapter sets out the research methodology in more depth. It begins with a short examination of relevant research philosophy and sets out the epistemological and ontological bases for the research. Afterwards, it outlines the reasoning behind the adoption of a mixed methods approach. This chapter also outlines in more detail the methodology used for the quantitative and qualitative phases.

Chapter four analyses the results of the quantitative survey data, including visualisations of data in the form of charts and tables. It extracts key initial findings with regard to participants' perceptions of and engagement with risk management processes for conflict deployments. The chapter concludes by highlighting a number of areas for further examination in the qualitative research phase.

Chapter five is an in-depth examination of the results of the qualitative phase interviews, which were conducted based on the themes identified for further research in the first phase. It presents the findings in six themed sections:

1. Non-traditional roles and their impact

2. The application of control measures

3. Risk owner considerations

4. The risk assessment

5. New considerations

6. Contingency planning, crisis management and lessons learnt

The conclusion draws together the main findings of the research project. It examines their potential implications, for both news organisations and individuals, drawing out key recurring themes of the research. Most importantly, the conclusion includes practical recommendations to improve safety and highlights additional areas of academic research that would build upon the findings of this study. The study concludes with a discussion of the study's limitations and a reflection on the overall research experience.

1.2d Research Findings

The critical findings from the research can be loosely grouped around the themes of perception, engagement and practicalities, in line with the research question. With regard to perception, crisis management support offered by news organisations was broadly viewed positively. The majority of research participants felt their news organisations looked after them and provided a commensurate level of support during deployment to areas of conflict. Nevertheless, this research identified a number of critical gaps, including the lower level of support perceived to be available for individuals in non-traditional roles as compared to those deployed in traditional roles. The lack of training available to counter emerging threats in modern conflict journalism, including information security and social media management, was also highlighted as a gap in current risk management processes. This research

suggests that risk management processes are yet to be adapted – or are not being adapted quickly enough – to effectively manage the changes affecting the media industry.

The second key finding was linked to levels of engagement with risk management processes, especially the risk assessment, which was routinely characterised as a bureaucratic "tick-box" exercise. This served to highlight the potentially problematic attitude towards risk among conflict journalists and news teams, which has the potential to hold back effective engagement with organisational risk management processes. This lack of engagement potentially limits the benefits of risk mitigation processes in terms of the reduction in security incidents.

The research highlights some practical measures to improve safety across the industry. Specifically, there is urgent need to develop a standardised risk assessment framework for conflict journalism, agreed mandatory training norms and more effective collection and communication methods for lessons learned in areas of conflict.

The research conducted is the first of its kind into risk management for conflict news. As such, it covers a broad range of topics, which means that not all aspects can be covered in depth. However, the research adds to an existing body of knowledge, contributing to academic knowledge and practice by highlighting areas where the risk management framework could be improved and by providing practical recommendations to improve journalist safety in light of changing industry practices. Most importantly, the research is intended to help facilitate the urgent and valuable work of those that gather news, and bear witness to difficult and dangerous environments, such conflict areas.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

2.1 - Introduction

The available academic literature on current security practices applied within journalism is minimal, specifically with regard to extrapolated risk management practices across the industry. This presented a significant challenge throughout the research, especially as the available literature is almost exclusively written by journalists about their experiences in high-risk areas. Cottle (2000, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2013 & 2016), Sambrook (2010, 2016), Moorcraft (2016) and Allan (2006) comprise the foundational academic literature, which is supported by first-hand accounts of conflict journalism by Simpson (2016), Colvin (2012), Ward (2020), Kiley (2009), Bell (1997), Lyon (2011), Bowen (2006) and many more. Therefore, this thesis used a mixture of risk and security-related academic literature, as well as industry papers from organisations such as the CPJ, International News Safety Institute (INSI) and the DART Centre for Journalism and Trauma (DART). This literature review is written as an argumentative analysis of existing literature on journalism security and the risk mitigation applied in conflict areas. This review demonstrates that, while there is a significant amount of literature surrounding journalism in areas of conflict, a critical gap is apparent; that of safety and risk management for news teams deployed to conflict zones. There are few academic studies on risk reduction and mitigation measures for journalists or the broader risk assessment processes adopted across news organisations.

The first section of this literature review will define a journalist, the current economic environment in which media operates, the technological advances shaping news media and changes to traditional news media roles. This will provide a foundational understanding of the modern media landscape, highlighting the paradigm shift for news organisations since 2009. It is only possible to explore the level of risk to journalists in depth after taking these factors into account.

The second section examines risk considerations that must be taken into account when planning to deploy journalists to conflict areas. This includes examining cultural theory and its application to journalists who chose to deploy to conflict zones. The section will then discuss the significant changes to risks for news organisations since 2000, specifically for deployed journalists. By investigating the available literature around impunity and censorship, modern media communications and the evolution

of training, it will explore pivotal changes in the media landscape, while highlighting the lack of evolved risk management strategies to counter new threats. This section concludes by examining mental health risks for journalists and how news organisations consider their accountability with respect to this issue.

The third section looks at literature highlighting the trend towards increased targeting of journalists in conflict areas. Within the past decade, decisions around news media conflict zone deployments have been influenced by high-profile kidnappings (Picard & Storm, 2016), the withdrawal of Western forces from conflict zones and the proliferation of state and non-state actors that journalists must engage with to ensure freedom of movement. The section focuses on two significant changes, KfR and embedding. Both involve considerable threat-to-life risk, which now takes primacy in operational deployment risk considerations for news organisations.

The literature review concludes that significant technological, operational and geopolitical changes have increased the level of risk that journalists are exposed to. However, the review found very little in the way of either academic or widely shared operational risk management strategies that consider and mitigate these new risks. The significant gap in conflict zone risk management literature contributes to a lack of understanding or measurement of security risks affecting news teams deployed to these locations. Indeed, the majority of relevant information is found in after-action reports published by third-party organisations, including NGOs and humanitarian organisations. This highlights the pressing need for a proactive industry-wide effort to better understand risk management issues in modern journalism practice.

2.2 - Modern Media Structure and New Challenges

News organisations' operational and business models have been tested significantly over the past decade. In 2000, Cottle commented that "news organisations, for the most part, are in business to make profits and all compete for readers and audiences" (p. 19). Although the underlying priority for news organisations has not changed, the increased use of social media coupled with technological advancements has forced them to change their modus operandi (Khajeheian et al., 2018). The rise of social media and concurrent consumer demand for free online content (Levine, 2011) has reduced

audience appetite for news delivered by traditional media organisations, impacting their revenue streams and prompting a reduction in resources for news coverage. In addition, fierce competition among traditional media outlets, new social media platforms and smaller, boutique media companies have compounded these challenges. Indeed, Price et al. (2008) note that, "technological change is part of a new media landscape that has rendered older definitions and contexts of international broadcasting insufficient" (p. 151). The change in consumer habits has forced editors and journalists to operate with a cost-effective mindset, potentially reducing the focus on safety during deployments.

This section will discuss the structural challenges affecting news organisations and economic factors driving organisational change. Specifically, it will expand on one of the key factors driving change: increased publicly available information and how news organisations manage this risk to credibility. Finally, it will explore traditional roles in journalism and how these have changed since 2000 due to technological advances, and other organisational and operational factors.

2.2 a - *Change in Definition*

The Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers (Leach, 2013) defined journalists as "any natural or legal person who is regularly or professionally engaged in collecting and disseminating information to the public via any means of mass communication" (Susi, 2019, p. 215). However, the Council in 2011 urged states to expand on this definition as "the scope of media actors has enlarged as a result of new forms of media in the digital age". The UN Human Rights Committee in the same year supported the decision to include new actors when defining journalism, calling it "a function shared by a wide range of actors including professional full-time reporters and analysts as well as bloggers and others who engage in forms of self-publication in print, on the internet and elsewhere" (UN Charter on Human Rights, Paragraph 44).

While this UN definition encompassed the new broader range of actors that deploy and produce content, they did not offer any distinction between the layman and the professional working in an ethical manner for an accredited news organisation. Journalism ethics sets apart professionally trained journalists from those who are untrained and record events on an impromptu basis using widely

available technology, often operating without the reputational and moral constraints of news organisations. Journalism ethics, first conceived in the 19th Century in the United Kingdom, emphasised that all journalists should conduct themselves according to five ethical pillars (Scanlon, 2020) :

1. Accuracy and fact-based communications

2. Independence

3. Fairness and impartiality

4. Humanity

5. Accountability

In light of this distinction, the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers (2000) definition will be used throughout this thesis. This definition has been selected to support the broader research aims, as it separates professionally engaged journalists from those who operate in the capacity of citizen journalists and those not contracted by news organisations at the time of their deployment. One of the aims of this thesis is to highlight emerging risks and the mitigation measures used to counter these risks within news organisations. As such, only those journalists who work within, or are contracted by an accredited news organisation will be defined as a journalist. Citizen journalists, local journalists and non-contracted freelance journalists will be referred to collectively as "non-traditional", to differentiate between those employed directly by news organisations in more traditional roles.

2.2 b - *Economic Challenges*

International news coverage is costly and seldom pays its own way (Sambrook, 2010). The persistent reduction in the audience for news coverage and related economic pressures means that major Western news organisations have reduced the number of bureaus they operate and correspondents they employ over the past 30 years (Sambrook, 2010). However, even so, traditional news sources are expected to remain important. For example, despite being unprofitable, Sky News (UK) is maintained because it is perceived to enhance the profile and prestige of the wider network (Couldry, 2012).

Moreover, conflict remains a relatively more valuable area of news coverage, because it increases viewership/readership, elevating advertising income for commercial news channels or newspapers. However, recent protracted conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq elicited less public interest because media coverage was perceived as following a pre-set and often scripted narrative; Moorcroft (2016) notes that "Afghanistan was not a media war in the same way as Vietnam" (p. 154). Moreover, these difficult conflicts have reduced the political appetite in the West for foreign military interventions. This has directly impacted advertising revenue and, as a result, international news budgets.

Increasing public reliance on the internet for news, coupled with social media platforms that allow citizen journalists to release free content online, has added to competition for advertising revenue and financial strain on traditional news organisations. This has forced them to adapt by shifting resources away from international news towards breaking and in-depth domestic coverage. Sambrook (2010) stated that, in the late 2000s, foreign news budgets were cut, removing fixed costs and diverting funds to support reactive coverage and investment in digital technology. However, public broadcasters, including the BBC, were able to maintain a more robust international presence than their commercial rivals due to the differences in their funding structures.

Financial pressures for non-publicly funded news organisations have also been driven by corporate ownership and the priority accorded to guaranteeing shareholder value. CNN and Time Warner's 1995 merger, which resulted in greater scrutiny of Time Warner's share price and financial ratings, marked a significant shift in this regard (Shankleman & King, 2000). This shareholder focus, coupled with the erosion of advertising revenues, has intensified financial difficulties for news organisations globally.

The reduction in the number of international news bureaus has impacted new agencies' ability to share safety resources, increasing costs and the risk exposure for journalists operating in areas of conflict. For example, in 2010, most international news organisations had a physical presence in the Afghan capital Kabul. However, by 2019, only a handful of international bureaus remained in the city. As the on-the-ground presence reduced, the professional support available to news organisations also

became limited, with many agencies reportedly instead relying on freelance or local resources to remain informed of local developments – something unimaginable in 2010.

Indeed, the squeeze on budgets for foreign and conflict zone news reporting raises important questions about how evolved risk management strategies and mitigation measures are to be funded. Anecdotal evidence suggests that reduced budgets have resulted in closer scrutiny by news organisations of the costs associated with deploying safety advisors with news teams. Budgetary concerns could also impact the provision of training and safety equipment. As such, it is critical to understand how risk mitigation has been affected by reduced resources; a question that will be explored further in this research.

2.2 c - *Increase in Available Information*

Wahl-Jorgensen et al. (2016) found that the use of social media platforms and services by news organisations had exponentially increased risks to journalism integrity. Journalists increasingly rely on the internet and social media sites, such as Twitter and Facebook, for their information rather than source networks and on-the-ground connections. With budgets shrinking, newsrooms run the risk of being overwhelmed by the amount of available information, and potentially lack the resources and skills to check, verify and analyse this information effectively (Anderson, 2011). Editorial decisions can be negatively impacted by information overload, potentially reducing the effectiveness of the coverage and making it harder to set reasonable parameters amid competing demands.

When editorial information overload occurs, the "risk vs reward" element is brought into question. In one example, a BBC news team risked their lives to get to a position in Mosul to cover the start of the break into West Mosul, only for the report to be edited down because of national stories (IV001[2]). This decision resulted because there was a large amount of information deemed to be of public interest competing for limited airtime. Historically news organisations would focus on conflict zones during primetime; however, the sheer volume of information available to editors has increased the sense

---

[2] IV is the method used to reference interviewees. The reference IV is followed by the interviewee number. This will be explained in further detail in Chapter 3 – Methods.

that a little of everything should be covered. Given this reduced airtime, the reward vs risk is no longer viable in all cases, especially when citizen journalists and social media can provide real-time on-the-ground footage and commentary.

Information overload also increases physical risks for deployed teams, who rely on information to make informed decisions. Additional time and resources are required to verify the vast amount of information now available to journalists; as such, proper verification is not always possible. Journalists can be overwhelmed, with new information resulting in changes to plans. This often requires "dynamic" risk assessments to be carried out under time pressure, without clear information to accurately assess the evolving risks.

Although the information deluge is often viewed unfavourably, Kathleen Carrol, former executive editor of Associated Press, highlighted in a 2010 interview (Sambrook, 2010) that it also has positive benefits; she noted that despite the reduction in international bureaus, this was balanced by new tools and information to assist journalists. Sambrook (2010) expanded on these potential positives, noting that "as old models of international newsgathering suffered, new models, have been spawned" (p. 27). While there has been a change in how information is received, processed and verified by news organisations, there has also been a shift in the methods used by journalists and roles they play in deployments.

2.2 d – *Non-Traditional Media Roles*

Although commercial news organisations have reduced their foreign newsgathering budgets, the demand for coverage, including of conflicts, persists. The literature shows that organisations have increasingly outsourced newsgathering to non-traditional roles to overcome budgetary restrictions. This approach is seen as a credible risk mitigation strategy by news organisations, who view it as transferring risk from editors and management. However, this attitude has also been characterised as an abdication of responsibility with regard to safety by news organisations (Salamon, 2019).

The reduced reliance on traditional staff roles was highlighted by Spinner (2014), who stated that most redundancies from news organisations between 2000 and 2012 were camera operators or other

visual journalists. However, the demand for visual news did not diminish, and freelancer photographers were used to fill this gap.

Sambrook (2010) highlighted that news organisations also increasingly relied on non-traditional journalists in place of experienced foreign correspondents or "parachute" journalists (experienced journalists rapidly deployed to cover specific incidents). The deployment of non-traditional journalists to cover breaking news was favoured due to ease and effectiveness, and because it was considered less risky than sending "well-known faces" (Schmickle, 2009). Zelizer (2017) directly attributed this change to the rise of civilian journalism and use of social media.

Sambrook (2010) elaborated on the pros and cons of the parachute approach to deployments with respect to risk management. Parachute journalists have been accused of producing news without context; they spend significantly less time in conflict areas and therefore have less risk exposure, especially compared to non-traditional journalists, who are often local residents. This reduces the likelihood of risk inertia, which can become a challenge for journalists operating full-time in conflict areas, who may become accustomed to the environment, take additional unwarranted risks and lack the safety handrails available to parachute journalists. The reliance on non-traditional roles is viewed as representing a loss of experience and wisdom by Keller (2013), who notes that freelancers are "often untrained and too often unsupported" (p. 3).

Freelancers.

A freelance journalist is "someone who is self-employed and sells their services and [or] work to a variety of employers without a long-term commitment to any of them" (Walters, Warren, & Dobbie, 2006, p. 14). Sambrook (2010) highlighted that the opportunities for freelance journalists to make an essential contribution to international news were greater now than ever, due to the advent of low-cost digital technology. However, Moorcroft (2016) noted that the risk versus reward was not always balanced for freelancers, who may risk much for very little financial reward. Although many freelancers lack experience, they frequently work in hostile environments due to the consistent demand for news from such locations (Keller, 2013). Freelancers lack the support mechanisms in place for those

employed by news organisations. Moreover, Hughes (2015) has highlighted that significant numbers of freelancers are directly targeted because they are perceived as 'soft' targets.

Notably, coverage of the Syrian conflict after 2011 was outsourced almost entirely to freelancers, with a few exceptions (Feinstein, 2015). During the conflict, technology, such as geo-location monitoring, social media profiling and satellite tracking, were used by non-state and state actors to target journalists. These risks made news organisations nervous about sending journalists into ungoverned areas. Emma Beal, a British journalist, highlighted these risks in an interview for an article in the New York Times (Keller, 2013), stating that as a freelancer in Syria, "you just fall into a black hole" and have no support. In Syria, freelancers were killed in higher numbers than any other media personnel, with 79% of journalists reporting feeling that risks had increased since 2004 (INSI, 2014). For those freelance journalists who take extreme risks and survive, it can often exacerbate the problem (Spinner, 2014, para. 29), resulting in a sense of invincibility.

One way that news organisations have attempted to manage risks for freelancers is to demand that they complete specific training before being contracted. Freelance journalists often choose not to represent one single news organisation, in order to retain editorial independence and the freedom to work on stories and in regions that they are passionate about (Spinner, 2014). As such, there is a tendency to limit the amount of training they are offered; why would an international news organisation pay significant sums for a freelancer to complete Hostile Environment and First Aid Training (HEFAT), only for a competitor to benefit from their reporting? Furthermore, Slaughter (2017) found that freelancers often struggled to fund safety training independently; 81% admitted that they did not have up-to-date hostile environment training, and only 9% paid out of their own pocket (p. 6). This highlighted the perpetual cycle of difficulties that freelancers face: they require experience and training to be deployed, but need money to attain training, and only with training can they gain the necessary experience. Freelancers also reported concerns over the lack of safety equipment available from news organisations, the cost of insurance offered by a limited number of providers, and the lack of operational support once deployed. Many relied on their social networks to overcome these problems.

In response to these concerns, a coalition of organisations, including the A Culture of Safety (ACOS) Alliance, in 2015 endorsed a new international freelance protection standard, the Freelance Journalist Safety Principles. The principles include guidance for freelance journalists on dangerous assignments and for news organisations deploying freelancers to such environments. This was seen as a positive industry-wide step towards protecting freelancers. News organisations are now required, in principle, to provide information sharing, training, insurance and communications initiatives to freelance journalists (DART, 2015). However, the principles are not enforceable, so the extent to which they are followed remains unclear.

Citizen Journalists.

The citizen journalist is another non-traditional media role that has grown in importance as news budgets have shrunk. Citizen journalism is defined as an activity in which ordinary citizens generate non-professional content on breaking events or other news (Allan & Thorsen, 2009; Blaagaard, 2013). It is now commonplace to use the term to describe aspiring media professionals that use mobile phones and social media channels to record images of unfolding drama and cataclysmic events (Pantti et al., 2012). Such material is often uploaded in real-time and directly consumed by audiences on social media, bypassing traditional broadcasters.

News organisations have an important role in ensuring a quick yet sufficient verification process for material received from citizen journalists. However, this can be challenging due to the 24/7 nature of news. Indeed, citizen journalists provide a competitive advantage for less established and arguably less credible news outlets, who often "break" news more quickly, as they do not follow the stringent verification processes enforced by traditional organisations. This has reduced reliance on traditional media, as citizen journalists and bloggers are now able to "generate content, on the same scale as conventional news organisations" (UN Human Rights Council, UN General Assembly, 2011). Citizen journalists now play a key role news coverage, often "turning a passive audience into participants in the process of media production" (Robinson, 2011, p. 141).

Moorcroft (2016) highlighted that many traditional journalists resented the phrase "citizen journalist", as they did not consider the role to involve professional journalism. Moorcroft preferred the

term "electronic witnesses" as a description of people who recorded historic events on portable digital equipment, given the limited interpretation involved. Sambrook (2010) shared this view, stating that "you have witnesses with the means to communicate, it's not journalism" (p. 45). Cottle (2003), meanwhile, emphasised the critical importance of the "objectivity" practised by professional journalists in warding off criticism (p. 23). Nevertheless, the rise in citizen journalism supported by increased social media usage and free online content posited by Parmar (2015), has, in fact, been accompanied by a reduction in viewership for traditional media, such as BBC, CNN and AFP.

Due to this trend, news organisations have been stranded between credibility and speed; they must remain relevant, maintain integrity and continue to break global news stories. This has the knock-on effect of placing additional pressure on those who gather material; it pushes many traditional journalists into high-risk situations to get the exclusive and demonstrate their value. Moreover, the advent of citizen journalism has been blamed for eroding journalistic integrity, creating disdain and increasing political polarisation, often exacerbating the risks for traditional journalists, especially when reporting on host nation governments (Luo & Harrison, 2019). Specifically, the inability of actors to distinguish between citizen journalists and traditional media can result in life-threatening situations. This has a significant impact on operations in conflict areas and regions where reporting is highly censored (Jiang, 2016).

White (2016) countered these arguments, stating that the rise of the internet and citizen journalism could bring many opportunities, including the "revival of transparent and accountable journalism" (p. 213). Simon (2017) agreed, writing that citizen journalism could be a powerful tool to hold governments to account as "anyone with a smartphone can commit acts of journalism [and] it is impossible to jail them all" (para. 12). These new forms of journalism can provide greater access and a different perspective, allowing the audience to gain deeper understanding of the realities of conflict; "What was once foreign, is now better known" (Sambrook, 2010, p. 47).

Continual technological improvements, following Moore's Law (Gustafson, 2011), means that the number of global citizens with direct access to equipment and the ability to broadcast news is going to continue to increase. These advancements will remain a double-edged sword for news media

organisations, as they will also drive demand for live or near real-time reporting. This raises the question of how this could increase risks for all journalists, whether traditional or citizen.

2.3 - Evolving Risk Considerations

The risk levels and threats associated with deploying journalists to conflict areas are of critical concern to news organisations, as they can impact both staff safety and company reputation. This chapter will investigate the literature around two key elements that impact their decision-making in this regard; the culture of risk within journalism and the changing level of risk that journalists are exposed to. Only by coupling an effective analysis of the approaches to risk within journalism, with an understanding of the evolution of existing risks, can news organisations provide commensurate mitigation.

2.3 a - *Risk Culture in Journalism*

Journalism is a high-risk occupation (Cottle et al., 2016), involving an ever-increasing number of hazards, threats and risks. Additional resources and bespoke security measures are often required to ensure freedom of movement – more so in conflict areas. That conflict journalists operate in high-risk areas is the accepted norm; this risk acceptance and appetite form the cultural understanding for journalists.

The term "cultural theory" was first coined in 1966 by British anthropologist Mary Douglas, who posited that individuals choose what to fear and how much to fear it. Defining cultural theory, Douglas (1985) noted that the "notion of risk is cultural assumptions, and these are shared conventions and expectations rather than individualistic judgements or cognitive aide for the individual decision-maker" (p. 80). Dake and Wildavsky (1991) supported this, noting that cultural theory is often used to "predict and explain what kind of people will perceive which potential hazards to be how dangerous" (p. 42). Looking at the culture of groups allows for a broad understanding of their collective risk appetite.

The signs, language, values and expected behaviours are accounted for in cultural theory as areas that can impact collective risk. Astonishingly, as Lupton (1999) noted, there has been little interaction between areas of inquiry such as media, sociology and sociocultural theories of risk. However, it is notable that journalists that operate in conflict areas are broadly viewed as deviating from what is considered "normal behaviour" to other media professionals, often operating with a distinctive risk logic. Those covering conflict rarely attempt to systematically assess true risk, with many experienced journalists basing their risk appetite on personal knowledge and experience gained from multiple deployments, anecdotal stories told by peers and organisational learning. As such, they display a distinctive cultural understanding of risk.

Bargdill (2006), argued that risk was human responsibility rather than preordained by group behaviour, as implied in cultural theory; therefore, if journalists apply their own risk mitigations, negative results would be due to individual actions. Lupton (1999) expanded on this, stating that "we think of ourselves as exercising a high level of control over the extent to which we expose ourselves to danger, therefore as culpable for becoming prey to risk" (p. 4). Several other scholars disregarded cultural theory as an effective method for capturing appetite and approach to risk. Sjöberg (1998) noted that the empirical support for cultural theory was surprisingly meagre. Boholm (1996) reinforced this, stating that the predictions of risk in relation to cultural theory could not be considered proper hypotheses or be used to understand the collective approach to risk, as "a person's own estimate of risk may be very different from the 'objective' estimate" (p. 72). Oltedal et al. (2004) also stated that the importance of cultural theory may be overestimated.

While acknowledging these criticisms, this study broadly agrees with the applicability of cultural theory to studies of risk in conflict journalism, and it will be used as a framework where relevant throughout. The collective experience of conflict journalists creates a strong and widely accepted "culture", based around extreme risk and bearing witness to atrocities. There is a sense that such experiences are necessary to become part of the "group" and have become part of the overall identity of conflict journalism, reinforcing cultural theory.

However, cultural theory cannot be the exclusive framework through which to view risk appetite and management. Journalists often have competing priorities, agendas and varying attitudes to risk, which can be contradictory. As such, the literature highlights that multiple variables must be considered by news organisations which choose to cover conflict areas, many of which are difficult to control:

> What is considered as a risk, and how serious that risk is thought to be, will be perceived differently depending upon the organisation, the grouping to which a person belongs or with which they identify, as will the conflicts, disasters, accidents or other negative occurrences which occurs within a culture (Douglas, 1992, p. 78).

2.3 b - *Changing Risks*

The record of prosecutions for the targeting or killing of journalists is poor across much of the globe; 57% of journalists surveyed by INSI felt that impunity was a significant threat to their safety (INSI, 2014). Moreover, INSI (2014) reported that only one person was prosecuted, and 14 people arrested, for targeting journalists in 2013. At least 324 journalists were murdered worldwide in the ten-year period from 2007 to 2017, with a record 62 killed in 2017 (CPJ, 2018). The majority of those journalists killed or injured while working were locals. Indeed, local journalists are often less inclined to report critically about their home country, as they face a higher risk of consequences than international counterparts; they are more vulnerable to political pressure, intimidation and direct targeting by their governments.

Where there is a history of fractured governance, civil disorder, inadequate infrastructure and interference by non-state actors, impunity has flourished, making it more difficult for journalists to operate safely (CPJ, 2019). In its Impunity Index Report published in 2019, the CPJ noted that the prosecution rate in cases of murdered journalists actually decreased in the ten-year period from 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2019. Small improvements were reported in some of the world's worst areas for attacks on journalists, including Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq, in 2019; however, there was

a noticeable deterioration in Syria; despite Islamic State's loss of territory and "defeat", there was an increase in attacks on journalists, including 22 unsolved killings in 2019 (CPJ, 2020).

Censorship and harassment by state authorities is another risk that journalists face during deployment planning and once their story is published (often referred to as post transmission risk). The state can employ a variety of methods to make the work of newsgathering inherently more difficult, including but not limited to surveillance, aggressive prosecutions, criminal investigations, publication banning orders, forced removal of internet, vexatious civil lawsuits, and the abuse of the statutory right to reply; Parker (2015) referred to such methods as occupational intimidation. They are intended to ensure journalists do not counter the government narrative (CPJ, 2019). Indeed, journalists that have faced such harassment are less likely to continue to carry out their work and often increase self-censorship. Two prominent examples of countries that employ such measures are Turkey, which Bieser (2018) noted had imprisoned more journalists than any other country, and Egypt, which prosecutes more journalists on "false news" charges than any other country (Associated Press, 2020).

The literature highlights that some 98% of jailed journalists have been imprisoned by their own governments (CPJ 2019). Moreover, freelancers account for 30% of all jailed journalists; they are particularly at risk when operating in regions where impunity and censorship exist, because they have less access to legal and physical support than those in staff positions. Journalists who cover human rights stories are often at greatest risk (Beiser, 2018). Censorship, then, is inherently linked with impunity, which "encourages perpetrators and governments to attack journalists with a limited legal consequence" (Parmar, 2015, p. 51). With the increased use to non-traditional roles in newsgathering, the question of mitigating such risks becomes more pressing for international news organisations.

2.3 c - *Modern Media Communication*

Cottle in 2014 detailed the increased role media communications play in conflict: "These 'forgotten disasters', 'hidden wars' and 'permanent emergencies' still thrive, their invisibility is less likely, as the role of media communication has forced certain conflicts into the mainstream public eye" (p. 18). Advances in communications technology have made it more difficult for regimes to censor and

contain information flow. Nevertheless, many governments and non-state actors still have the ability to "pull the plug on the internet, monitor telecommunications and make it difficult for foreign journalists through targeting and intimidation" (Cottle, 2011, p. 652). These highlight the links between risks associated with censorship and impunity and technological advances in communications.

Cottle (2014) highlighted six characteristics of modern media communications: scale, speed, saturation, social relations, enfranchisement and surveillance. These characteristics profoundly impacted conflict reporting. Specifically, the scale of modern-day news organisations means their reach is now truly global. The increase in geostationary satellites, global connectivity and internet access means that information, images and videos can now be shared with audiences in near real-time. Sambrook (2010) wrote that "technology has unquestionably made foreign reporting more productive in terms of quality, at least" (p. 28). While improved communications have allowed for faster reporting and increased the scope of coverage, there are several downsides associated with the characteristics highlighted by Cottle.

Sambrook (2010) stated that, while the speed of modern media communication has had significant positives, it has "cut back the time a reporter has to watch, think, listen and compose" (p. 28). Sambrook also stressed that the 24/7 news cycle coupled with digital technology had devalued the "currency of mainstream foreign news" (p. 8). Various scholars (Gowing, 2009; Sambrook, 2010; and Cottle et al., 2016) noted that this had led to global news saturation, with Gowing (2009) stating that this "civilian surge of information in crises is having an asymmetric negative impact on traditional structures of information management" (p. 11). The use of smartphones, tablets and laptops has become standard practice, allowing people to digest the news in multiple formats, at any time they choose. Not only do news channels such as CNN and the BBC provide live 24/7 coverage, viewers and subscribers can now also access up-to-date information via websites, apps and online analytical tools.

The killing of Marie Colvin in Syria in 2012 serves as a widely publicised example of the negative impact of modern communications on news reporting; Colvin was killed in an alleged artillery strike by Syrian government forces, who were reportedly able to directly target the well-known journalist using satellite communications (Jukes, 2019). This underlined that by accessing equipment

provided to journalists, state actors and non-state actors could monitor and target them. In fact, journalists lacking in sufficient technical knowledge or understanding may have unknowingly given away their positions, increasing the risks to themselves and their team of contributors.

The lack of training on securing communication methods in modern conflict was highlighted in a DART report (Slaughter, 2017), with one participant stating, "I have been monitored, and I know my computer has been accessed, but I lack the technical skills to respond" (p. 24). Many apps on modern communication devices send their geographic locations if the settings are not managed. This risk is especially pertinent for so-called "influencer journalists", who frequently – perhaps unwittingly – post personal information to social media such as Facebook and Instagram, increasing their risk profile.

Another emerging risk associated with modern media communication stems from the ever-increasing demand that news stories communicate raw emotion and human experience, up close and in "near real-time"; this type of reporting has physical and emotional risks attached. Tait (2011) clarified the differences between "eye-witnessing" and "bearing-witness". Put simply, "bearing witness" implies that there is a rationale behind the presence of news teams, and, as such, Tait considered it the more principled approach.

"Old-school" journalists often immersed themselves in disaster reporting, with some seeing their role as "experiential ontology [with] the importance of 'being there' and the 'bodily' experience" (Cottle, 2013, p. 233). Moorcraft (2016) referred to this as being "voyeurs of strangers' misery", while Zelizer (2017) noted that "we [journalists] assume responsibility for the events of our time" (p. 10). Vasily Grossman's report "The Hell of Treblinka" (1944) is a classic example in which raw reporting and photography provided the context for the world to know, understand and act on atrocities. Modern technologies have only increased the expectation that news reporting reflect human experience. Cottle (2000) highlighted the "ever increasing 'virtual communities' that allowed more effective connections to the heart of conflict instantaneously" (p. 3). Put simply, this means journalists are under pressure to get physically closer to the story, increasing potential security risks.

While modern communications will always be central to journalism, the literature highlights that it can exacerbate risks if not managed correctly. With the continued advancements in media

communications, news organisations should seek to account for the related exposure risks for their journalists and ensure that mitigations are effective.

2.3 d - *Mental Health Awareness*

The increasing pressure to "bear witness" highlights another risk consideration; journalists working in conflict zones are exposed to a wide range of situations that may harm their mental health and wellbeing. Slaughter et al. (2015) reported that 92% of journalists who had covered conflict had experienced multiple mental trauma episodes. Cottle (2013) stated that those who worked in areas of conflict for extended periods of their career could "often have an amoral and emotionally evacuated journalistic outlook on death; referred to as 'calculus of death'" (p. 233). Scanlon (2020) referred to this as "the creep", whereby "months after an event, you start to notice changes in yourself and the way you interact with others" (p. 1). This is unsurprising given the level of violence witnessed by modern conflict journalists; indeed, more journalists have been killed in the Iraq conflict (2003-ongoing) than in the Second World War, Vietnam and Balkan conflicts combined (Moorcroft, 2016).

Feinstein (2015) noted that news organisations did not always do what was required to support journalists returning from conflict zones, or help them recognise the warning signs presaging mental health issues. This was highlighted in 2014 by the BBC's former Baghdad Bureau Manager Patrick Howse, who stated that he had limited knowledge or understanding of the realities of post-traumatic stress disorder (Feinstein, 2016). This lack of mental health support was underlined by the BBC's Ben Brown, who, reflecting on his career in a piece for the Mail Online, stated that "it is an extraordinary and privileged life, and you see history unfold before your eyes. But you also pay the price" (Brown, 2009).

Basic mental health awareness training is often provided to journalists deploying to conflict zones. However, Greenberg et al. (2009) highlighted that further research was required to ascertain whether such support was adequate. Indeed, the primary focus of training provided to journalists relates to physical security in conflict situations, and only 15% of training provided on mental health is conducted by instructors with relevant mental health qualifications, training and experience (Slaughter,

2017). Feinstein (2016) noted that there was often a "misconception and/or cynicism amongst trainers and participants about the utility of addressing psychological trauma and preparedness" (p. 3). This approach and lack of expertise on the part of trainers add to the stigma around mental health episodes. This was underlined by Feinstein's 2016 article "Syria: Most Dangerous Place for Journalists", wherein several interviewees emphasised that stigma and fears over discrimination had limited their willingness to speak up about or report mental health issues.

In addition to stigma and a lack of awareness, the "macho culture" within conflict reporting also has a profound impact on how mental health issues are handled. Moorcroft (2016) noted the irony that "journalists will write about post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in soldiers but will rarely admit that they are suffering from it themselves" (p. 303). Cottle (2012) noted that those continuously operating in conflict areas may become detached from reality and that their role "may start to fall into almost disaster porn, where the figures become the story" (p. 238). Scanlon (2020) highlighted that the risk of mental health problems did not emerge instantaneously; for many journalists the impact of stress, fear and other experiences came only much later, once deployments ended. Around 20% of those who cover war suffer from the impact of "prolonged exposure" to danger, a cumulative effect of covering conflict; less than 10% experience "point prevalence", a "one-off event" triggered by exposure to high-stress situations (Feinstein, 2005, p. 131).

Although the BBC, Thomson Reuters, CNN and other news organisations have developed programs to more proactively support journalists' mental health, challenges remain, especially with regard to risk management and issues around discrimination, data privacy and the judgement of senior managers. It is especially worrying that some journalists may choose not to disclose mental health issues for fear of the negative consequence on their careers. While the main focus of this thesis is not mental health in journalism, the research will assess how the issue is currently accounted for within news organisations' risk assessment processes. The research will also aim to highlight critical gaps when it comes to managing mental health in conflict reporting.

2.4 - Increased Targeting of Journalists

Fish and Srinivasan (2011) noted that a bearer of the title "journalist" was afforded certain rights and privileges, including the advantage of extra international support, legal protections and easier access to conflict areas (p. 307). However, the title remains a double-edged sword. According to the CPJ (2016), December 2014 was the deadliest period for journalists since records began in 1992. However, this statistic was eclipsed by the targeted killing by militants of eight journalists at French publication *Charlie Hebdo* on 7 January 2015. The attack pointed to a potential dramatic escalation of risks for journalists, because it was motivated by opposition to the content they produced, and because it occurred at the magazine's headquarters in Paris, rather than in a relatively less secure location. Even before the Charlie Hebdo attack, an INSI report in 2014 noted that 86% of journalists felt that they were being targeted more frequently than ten years ago.

It is no surprise that risks to journalists escalated after 2014; on 29 June of that year, militant group Islamic State declared the establishment of an Islamic caliphate in its territories in Iraq and Syria. Political groups, including extremist organisations such as Islamic State, were the most frequent perpetrators of attacks on journalists in that year, accounting for more than 53% (CPJ, 2016). Journalists were "firmly in the crosshairs of combatants and insurgents" (Feinstein, 2015, para 6) and the Islamic State's territories became a no-go area for foreign correspondents (Moorcraft, 2016, p. 271).

Covering conflict has always been perceived as dangerous and exciting, which is part of the attraction for would-be journalists. In the past, "journalists often operated with 'a non-combatant status', in which they could safely navigate conflict zones" (Armoudian, 2017, p. 52); however, the meaningfulness of this status reduced significantly in the wake of the terrorist attacks in New York on 11 September 2001 (McCarthy, 2014), and even more so in the fight against Islamic State. US television journalist Robert (Bob) Woodruff reflected upon these changes when he commented that "in the old days if you put your TV or journalist tape [markings] on your vehicle, people wouldn't attack you because you're telling them you're a journalist" (Armoudian, 2017). This perception of neutrality simply no longer exists in modern conflict zones.

This increased threat of violence towards journalists reduced news organisations' willingness to send staff into conflict zones, from Syria to Somalia (Picard & Storm, 2016; Simon 2017; Spinner

2014). It became an especial challenge to send well-known journalists from the UK and US; the monetary cost of deploying safely, potential reputational damage in case of an incident and increase in physical risks made for uncomfortable discussions for risk owners responsible for deploying news teams (Moorcroft, 2016). The following sections will discuss two key areas where risk considerations changed.

2.4 a - *Kidnap for Ransom (KfR)*

KfR is not a new threat for those deploying to conflict zones (Cottle, 2012; Picard & Storm, 2016; Cottle et al., 2016; and Moorcroft, 2016). However, it has become a greater risk in recent years, especially to news teams working in regions where economies have been badly disrupted by insurgency and civil war (Aldrich & Herrington, 2018). This is because it has emerged as a lucrative industry for militant groups in these areas. Indeed, Picard and Storm (2016) noted that Islamic State received an estimated USD 28 million in ransom payments in 2014-2015 alone. Moorcroft (2016) commented that during the Afghan conflict, terror groups viewed news teams and journalists as "an easy means to the only currency that held any actual value for them – the US Dollar" (p. 211). The value inherent in passing on vital information on news teams' planned movements tempted some fixers to abandon long-term standing loyalties and hand over journalists for a financial incentive.

The methods of kidnapping have not changed. They are either premediated or opportunistic (Picard & Storm, 2016); both can result in a long, painful and drawn-out process, often involving political engagement. Premeditated kidnappings are used as a tool to obtain a financial return, but also to apply political pressure for a specific aim or as a propaganda tool.

Journalists may be targeted based on variables including their role, organisation, profile, religion and nationality. Nilsson and Ornebring (2016) noted that journalists were often targeted "in their capacity as professionals" rather than as representatives of a particular ideology or ethnic group (p. 888). However, in 2002, Daniel Pearl, a journalist for the Wall Street Journal, was killed after being kidnapped in Pakistan while investigating al-Qaeda and its links to the British 'shoe bomber', Richard Reid; it was reported that his faith (Jewish) and nationality (US) played a significant role in his targeting

(Feinstein, 2005). Journalists have also been targeted because their kidnapping often falls under the category of "major news events – the kind that shocks the world" (Liebes & Kampf, 2007, p. 112); news coverage is all but guaranteed.

However, journalists can also fall prey to opportunist kidnappings merely by being in the wrong place at the wrong time. The nature of geopolitical crises means that they are often required to report from areas suffering extreme poverty and hardship; this can include the aftermath of humanitarian disasters, tribal and ethnic conflicts, and displacement caused by war and insurgency. By the nature of their role and the equipment they deploy with, journalists are often perceived as wealthy and important, which increase their attractiveness as targets.

The Syrian Conflict.

The targeted kidnappings of journalists James Foley, Jon Cantlie and Steven Sotloff by Islamic State in north-western Syria in 2012 sent shockwaves through the media community and brought international attention to this amplified risk (DART, 2015). These incidents forced a change in most news organisations' approach to deployments, with the risk generally not considered worth the reward; one risk owner cited in an INSI report (2014) stated, "we can deal with bombs and bullets, but not kidnapping".

As in previous conflicts, militant groups used kidnappings of journalists to raise their profile and demonstrate capability and intent. Such incidents were, in fact, often reported to have led to increased support for the militant cause in question. Social media was frequently used to communicate this narrative and proved an excellent resource by which militant groups could increase exposure, recruitment and funding. Not only could messaging be easily produced in high quality, but social media platforms allowed these groups to bypass Western media to reach their audience directly. When British war correspondent Cantlie was kidnapped, Islamic State used him to "front a series of propaganda videos where he spoke in English to the camera" (Mendick et al., 2019). This included a six-part series entitled "Lend Me Your Ears", wherein Cantlie, wearing the infamous orange prison jumpsuit, criticised Western foreign policy in the Levant. This highlighted how Islamic State was "ironically exploiting mass media to draw attention to their cruel intent" (Feinstein, 2015, para 15).

The targeted kidnapping of journalists by Islamic State highlighted a new risk level, not witnessed in previous conflicts (Feinstein, 2015). David Schlesinger, a former editor-in-chief of Thompson Reuters news agency, stated in 2014 that "I'm not going to have my people put in a situation where they could be taken prisoners or hostage". As noted above, this resulted in a reduction of media coverage of the Syrian conflict, as the additional expenses necessary to mitigate these risks coupled with the operational and logistical challenges were considered too much of a drain on resources.

With news organisations' appetite for covering high-risk conflict waning, some individual journalists remained willing to take the risk. This is partly due to what Gutman (2008) refers to as the "common misconception" that working in a conflict zone can provide more junior journalists an opportunity to advance their career and gain notoriety. Armoudian (2017, p. 34) commented that "one correspondent who found himself kidnapped in Syria did so for adventure, and also so that he could write a book and sell it". Some news organisations also continued to operate in Syria, albeit at a reduced level. To ensure an acceptable level of residual risk, certain mitigations were put in place. The following sections will discuss some methods used to mitigate and manage risks for news organisations operating in areas with high KfR risk.

KfR Training.

KfR awareness, which is generally offered as part of the HEFAT course, is a critical part of pre-deployment training for journalists. It involves a kidnap and hostage situation, made to appear as real as possible and typically lasting a minimum of several hours. Gutman (2008) suggests that some journalists, including Daniel Pearl, might have survived if they had undergone these trainings. However, this type of training has proved contentious and raises several ethical concerns. In a 2015 DART report into security training for journalists, one participant stated: "the hostage exercise was ridiculous. People were very upset at being taken at gunpoint, put in stress positions for long periods, abused etc." In some cases, participants reportedly felt that the instructors took the course as an "opportunity to show off and put us all under extreme duress," causing significant distress. Moreover, many journalists reportedly did not feel that they benefited from the course. Several participants quoted in the DART report alleged that the exercises, scenarios, and advice from instructors, actually increased the danger level on

deployments; this was because most instructors were ex-military and based their advice on military experience and perspectives, rather than either a local or professional journalistic context.

Government Response to KfR.

During a KfR incident, news organisations may choose to enlist the support of their governments; however, this can complicate matters and add significant challenges, depending on the nature and location of the kidnapping. The US and UK governments have long taken a stance against paying ransoms, maintaining that succumbing to the demands of terror groups could inspire further kidnappings. In 2013, the G8 countries agreed not to pay ransoms to terrorist groups, and made it illegal for people and organisations to do so. The G8 position was adopted by the UN in 2014 (Security Council Resolution 2133). As well as taking a hard-line approach on ransom payments, governments do not always pursue the release of kidnapped journalists, instead basing their approach on a combination of factors, including foreign policy, terrorism policy and the interests of security agents (Picard & Storm, 2016).

Clutterbuck (1992) argued that when specific governments allowed ransom payments, it increased risks to their citizens by making them higher-value targets. Aldrich & Herrington (2018) noted that studies like this persuaded the UK Government in its historic hard-line stance on hostage negotiation and ransom payments, despite privately reported "conflicting voices" (p. 740). Indeed, there have been no prosecutions in the UK for those who have paid ransoms. The issue became a political one in the US with the kidnapping of US journalist James Foley by Islamic State in 2012, with reports emerging after Foley's execution in 2014 that the US government had refused to support paying a USD 132 million ransom. Indeed, US and British policy was reiterated during the Syrian conflict, when both countries "publicly refused to enter into any form of negotiations" to secure the release of citizens captured by Islamic State (Aldrich & Herrington, 2018, p. 739).

This stance by governments has added to complications around deploying journalists. Not only does the hard-line policy on ransom payments increase risk for victims, but news organisations do not always have adequate resources or measures to support resolution in the event of a kidnapping. This

has forced news organisations, and other businesses that operate in conflict areas, to take out additional insurances to support staff.

Insurance.

The payment of ransoms is a sensitive and secretive issue for a variety of reasons. As the UK government in 2015 banned the provision of ransom insurance for cases involving groups on the proscribed terrorism list, those organisations that facilitate and support affected organisations during such crises walk a fine line between what is legal and what is morally justifiable. Picard and Storm (2016) highlighted that journalists were high risk for insurance underwriters because of their risk-taking reputation and tendency to neglect risk mitigation measures and precautions, in both the physical and cyber worlds. KfR insurance policies are nonetheless viewed as useful protective tools (Armoudian, 2017) for deployed journalists, news organisations and their brand reputations.

These policies are specialised and confidential, with details very rarely disclosed to those covered within the policy. In some cases, the policy is rendered null and void should details be widely disclosed. Most KfR policies allow a percentage of the fee to be used for preventative training and KfR response planning, to support news organisations in preparing robust, bespoke crisis management plans. Several insurance providers, including Hiscox, Aon and Lloyds of London, offer specific policies for this type of risk. Should the policy be activated, third-party companies, such as Control Risks, Solace Global SOS and Healix International, usually act as advisors, negotiators and facilitators on behalf of both insurer and policyholder. These third parties also offer or facilitate training and specialised pre-deployment advice for news and other organisations they support.

Regardless of this support, waning interest in international and foreign news (Sambrook, 2010) has added to pressure on news organisations to reduce their exposure to the now substantial risk posed by kidnapping in conflict zones.

2.5 - The Risk of Embedding

Embedding is one of the primary methods for deploying news teams. A discussion of risks around embedding sits at the heart of the majority of risk assessments for news organisations operating

in conflict areas. To understand the risk level that news teams face, knowledge of the relationship between the media and embed hosts, and an appreciation of the evolution of embedding is required. In modern conflict, journalists and organisations must choose between operating unilaterally, without support, or embedding with a range of hosts. These can include militaries and other state or state-supported actors, militias and other non-state actors. Embedding provides access and a level of security, which may enable teams to get to the centre of the story. Conversely, journalists operating unilaterally usually enjoy increased editorial freedom and autonomy of movement.

A unilateral journalist has been defined as "an accredited, but non-embedded war reporter – an independent – whose movement was not theoretically restricted on the battlefield" (Katovsky & Carlson, 2003). The decision to deploy unilaterally involves greater risks and the ability to manage significant variables. During the 2003 Invasion of Iraq, the number of unmanageable variable risks often made news editors nervous; the result was that embedding became an acceptable form of deploying to gather news. However, with the withdrawal of US and Western forces from battlefields in recent years, a vacuum has been created, decreasing options for embedding. This has added significant risks for news teams on the ground and increased potential liability for news organisations.

2.5 a - *History of Embedding*

Moorcraft (2016) stated that "embedding is a new label in an old bottle" (p. 222). The first reports of any type of "embed" appear in the early 1840s, when war correspondents operated alongside troops in the Mexican War (Grossman, 2017, p. 147). The media presence in conflict zones was typically facilitated via loose arrangements with little formal risk mitigation structure. This gave the military an outlet to transmit propaganda, while journalists benefited from the ability to travel to front lines and hostile environments with security and support.

The success of this model was evident in the First World War, during which no accredited correspondent was killed (Lisosky & Henrichsen, 2011). From mid-1915 until the end of the war, journalists were attached to British forces on the Western Front, in the Middle East and at Gallipoli. They wore officers' uniforms, often the only difference being a lack of insignia and green band on the

arm (Moorcraft, 2016). The arrangement allowed hosts to fully manage the security element of a journalist's deployment within their battlegroup structure; however, for journalists, embedding came with certain editorial restrictions and often resulted in a pro-government bias (Katovsky & Carlson, 2003).

The Vietnam War was described by Errington and McKercher in 1989 as the "most accessible war" for journalists (p. 126). Many reporters operated alongside military units for extended periods, with American journalists travelling with the military and often wearing uniforms. Journalists even approached the front line alongside US troops – something that would be classified as "high risk" in today's media landscape (Grossman, 2017, p. 141). However, the US government was eventually forced to tighten its control over journalists covering the conflict after negative coverage was perceived to turn domestic public opinion against the war, with officially accredited journalists instead drip-fed reports by military command.

The US experience in Vietnam influenced British political and military elites, who exerted more robust control over media communications to manage the political narrative during future conflicts (Shaw, 2005). For example, during the 1982 Falklands War, the British government deliberately restricted journalistic access to the conflict, aided by the geographical inaccessibility of the conflict zone, to influence public opinion (Katovsky & Carlson 2003).

During the first Gulf War in 1991, the majority of established journalists were based with the US military in Saudi Arabia. Journalists were drip-fed briefings to influence public perception of the control, with the "spectacular displacement of the US war machine beamed back to viewers in the states" (Shaw, 2005, p. 125). The control exerted by the US administration formalised existing relationships and risk management processes to ensure media operability (Armoudian, 2017). Although the embedding process was forged in war, it was also used during peacekeeping, humanitarian missions and protracted conflicts, such as in Bosnia (1991-1996).

2.5 b - *The Iraq Embed Structure*

The US Government's frustration at having to directly manage media teams during the first Gulf War led to changes to the embedding structures adopted for the Invasion of Iraq in 2003 (Lisosky & Henrichsen, 2011, p. 145). This new structure allowed journalists to report freely what they could see from frontline tank and helicopters, "to experience the morale of being a member of the crew" (Liebes & Kampf, 2007, p. 163). All news organisations used embedding during the Iraq War, which the coalition force governments viewed as the "biggest public relations coup of the war" (Lewis et al., 2006, p. 321 & 324).

The widespread use of embedding in the 2003 conflict resulted in Western militaries enshrining it as a strategic doctrine. In 2003, the UK's Ministry of Defence (MOD) developed a robust definition and policy for media embeds, detailed in its *Green Book*. This document provided a "statement of strategic intent between the military and the media, to allow effective working relationships between the MOD and media organisations" (MOD, 2003, p. 9). The US government, also in 2003, defined an embed in its Public Affairs Guidance (PAG) in the US Central Commands (CENTCOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR):

> A media embed is defined as a media representative remaining with a unit on extended basis-perhaps weeks or even months. Commander will provide billeting, rations and medical attention if needed to the embedded media, commensurate with that provided to members of the unit, as well as access to military transportation and assistance with communication if required (US CENTCOM, 2003, section 2.C).

This increased control by and dependency on the military (Shaw, 2005), was not necessarily considered a success for those covering the conflict. Only 10% of embeds witnessed frontline conflict and only 9% of all published news reports during the invasion phase were delivered by embedded journalists (Moorcraft, 2016). Lead news anchors delivered 48% of reports, typically from a safe location or regional news bureau. There were also restrictions on who could take part in media embeds; parachute correspondents and freelancers were often barred unless a news organisation officially designated them as employed journalists (Moorcraft, 2016). Before deploying with military units, journalists were required to sign documents absolving hosts of any liability, leaving news organisations

with full responsibility even though they were not able to manage or control many of the residual risks (Moorcraft, 2016). Many news teams that worked alongside the military also cited the inability to move freely as a significant frustration, often forcing them to look at inventive reporting methods (Foerstel, 2006).

For those journalists who did not, or could not, deploy as part of embedded news teams, the only other option was to deploy unilaterally, resulting in significantly higher risks. Overall, journalists were ten times more likely to be killed than Western soldiers during the Iraq invasion (Katovsky & Carlson, 2003), with unilateral journalists suffering more deaths than their embedded counterparts. Without support, unilateral news teams struggled to manage risks on the ever-changing battlefield. On several occasions, journalists were attacked by fighters loyal to Saddam Hussein and faced a "real" threat of being targeted by coalition forces (Feinstein, 2015). Indeed, news teams were attacked by the US military and killed in the crossfire (Manion, 2003, p. 26). In one high-profile case in March 2003, British journalist Terry Lloyd was killed while covering the conflict for Independent Television News (ITN). Lloyd and his team were working unilaterally, but driving in two cars clearly marked as press vehicles when they were attacked. The US military denied involvement; however, a subsequent UK coroner's inquest recorded a verdict of unlawful killing by the US military (Manion, 2003, p. 16).

Despite the higher risks highlighted by such incidents, unilateral journalists produced powerful coverage for the broadcast media (Feinstein, 2015). Lewis et al. (2006) highlighted the benefit of unilateral over embedded journalism, describing the former's ability to provide a "raw multi-layered account of Iraqi opinion building, an emotive picture of how ordinary Iraqis felt about the invasion and the 'mood' of neighbouring countries" (p. 322). This resulted in an increased preference on the part of journalists for unilateral deployment.

As can be seen above, the extensive literature on the history and evolution of embedding paints a mixed picture; the relationship between news teams and their embed partners has not always been positive (Hanlin, 1986). From the military perspective, journalists were often perceived as a nuisance, ignorant of military aims and unprepared for the wars they were sent to cover. Members of the media could appear "anarchic, anti-establishment, sceptical, disrespectful of authority, competitive to the point

of dog eat dog" (Moorcraft, 2016, p. xiii). On the other hand, as British photojournalist Don McCullin (2002) noted disdainfully of embedded journalism, "you are basically a dog on a leash, and who wants to be like that?" (p. 252) Journalists that spent significant time as an embed were also at risk of acting like their protectors; Ayres (2005) wrote of his experiences as an embed, that "it had turned me into a Marine; I was thinking like a fighter, not a reporter" (p. 183).

2.5 c– *Embedding After Troop Withdrawal from Iraq*

In 2011, the US military – coupled with its troop drawdown – disbanded its embed program in Iraq, bringing to an end the longest such structured program in history. While certain papers (Armoudian, 2017; Foerstel, 2006; and Shaw, 2005) provide good overviews of the security challenges for news teams, there has been very little research since the US's disbanding of its embed program looking at risk mitigation strategies for modern-day media embeds.

Because of the withdrawal of Western troops, news teams now have to rely on those "independent actors at the heart of battle; working in a grey area" (Foerstel, 2006, p. 3). Embedding has now become a blanket term for working with a wide range of groups within conflict zones. With the range of embed hosts expanding, the support functions that were previously standard (such those enshrined in as the US embed program) are no longer guaranteed.

Tuosto (2008) writes that "relationships with embed hosts are key to the success" and safety of conflict zone news gathering (p. 26). During the fight against Islamic State in Iraq (2013-2017), it often took news teams many weeks to build up a rapport with frontline Iraqi security forces. It was not uncommon for news teams to change embed hosts when a better option became available, that could for example give them more access or a different editorial angle. The fixer, a well-connected local individual, would be the only constant, serving as the intermediary between security force units and media teams. The terrorism and kidnap risks were constant throughout this conflict.

The withdrawal of Western troops from Iraq, (2011), Afghanistan (2014) and Syria (2019) significantly shifted power dynamics associated with these regional conflicts. They also reduced the coverage appetite from international news organisations: "the Western media tend to report on big wars

involving their own troops. Smaller wars, and even genocides, get less airtime" (Moorcraft, 2016, p. 275). Despite this, there is still a need for the media to cover conflict, particularly large-scale incidents, human right abuses and other geopolitical events. Various complex unfolding crises, including the Arab Spring, the rise of Boko Haram and Islamic State, meant that embedding with sensitive and contentious hosts became the new normal for news teams covering conflict. Journalists have embedded with militias, splinter groups and other non-governmental forces, as areas of interest are often fractured and controlled by multiple actors. For example, during the Battle of Raqqa (2016-2017), news teams were forced to rely on the Syrian Democratic Force (SDF), a US-backed militia not aligned with Bashar al-Assad's regime. During the Arab Spring of 2010-2011, news teams were even "physically embedding among protests," where they "vividly conveyed the elation involved in challenging repressive state power" (Cottle, 2011, p. 655).

These new embed hosts offered less reliable support and fewer guarantees, increasing potential risks for journalists and news organisations. The standards of training, transportation, communication, shelter, food and medical/evacuation support were significantly lower than during conflicts in which journalists embedded with US or UK militaries. Despite this, there is a lack of evidence-based research investigating the challenges and risks faced by news teams working in conflict regions after the withdrawal of Western troops. The literature gap suggests that any such research should consider three key areas: how teams are deployed; the support from new non-state actor hosts; and the risks to the news organisation.

2.6 - Conclusion

Given ongoing technological improvements, the increasing use of non-traditional roles in conflict reporting and reduced budgets available to traditional news organisations, the risks for journalists are likely to continue to evolve and increase. The academic literature regarding these critical trends highlighted throughout this review is sparse. The changing risks for journalists have not been subject to rigorous academic study. The lack of academic studies of risk management within journalism mean that risk stress testing and management continue to be based on experiential learnings at an

organisational level, rather than through structured academic extrapolation, such as has been the case for media communications and journalism ethics. This is despite the significant evolution of risks highlighted in this chapter.

What is clear from an overview of the literature is that the economic pressures faced by news organisations have profoundly affected decisions around deploying journalists to conflict areas. The available academic literature largely analyses organisational change and its economic impact on the media sector, rather than any transformation of the broader risk landscape. It shows that news organisations are now operating under reduced budgets, with increased competition from free new media platforms and increased availability of information. Modern-day newsgathering is generally unprofitable, and reliant on funding from parent companies often forced to run news organisations at a financial loss.

These budgetary pressures, combined with technological advancements and the expectation of real-time reporting from the frontline, have forced a paradigm shift in journalism. News organisations are now moving away from the more traditional media roles, in favour of freelancers and contracted staff, including more local and citizen journalists. While this has many benefits and can reduce news team's risk profile, several risk factors and security implications need to be studied more closely to ensure news organisations understand the level of residual risk associated with using these non-traditional roles in newsgathering.

The lack of academic research into risk management in conflict journalism is surprising given perceptions of the unique risk appetite of conflict journalists, reflected in the cultural theory literature reviewed in this chapter. It restricts news organisations' ability to evolve operational risk plans in light of changes to the media landscape highlighted above. In fact, these changes have directly impacted the level of risk journalists are exposed to on deployments. Specifically, impunity and censorship are now more significant risks, especially for journalists operating in areas where there is fractured governance, risk of civil disorder, inadequate infrastructure and interference by non-state actors.

With the vastly increased scale and reach of modern media communication, there has been an unprecedented change in how journalists operate in areas of conflict. Sambrook (2010), Cottle (2014)

and Allan (2006) have highlighted the benefits that the ability to communicate more quickly and easily brings those deployed. However, this does have certain drawbacks, such as reduced time for journalists to watch, think, listen and compose. Research into how media communication impacts journalism risk is limited, especially with regard to physical risks. However, potential risks have been highlighted by real-life cases in which media communications have played a part in the direct targeting of deployed news teams. This highlights the need for more research into emerging risks around information security and related risk mitigation measures.

The literature review also highlighted concerns around mental health risks in conflict journalism, especially in light of cultural theory. A macho culture continues to pervade journalism, with bravado and stigma adding to the profound effect on mental health (Cottle, 2012). Nevertheless, there is very little research into how mental health is accounted for from a risk management perspective. Considering conflict journalists' significantly higher risk of mental health problems, there is a need for greater understanding of how news organisations can support staff on deployment. More importantly, it is potentially unsafe to deploy personnel suffering mental health issues.

The final section of this chapter highlighted two key risks that have emerged and evolved over the past decade that pose new threats to journalists' safety. Firstly, the direct targeting of journalists in KfR, and second, risks associated with the new trends in modern media embedding. Although kidnapping has always been a risk consideration for news organisations, the rise of Islamic State, which used KfR in new ways, signified a paradigm shift in terms of risk exposure, and reduced the willingness of news organisations to send journalists into conflict areas. All research available is based around experiential learnings, with very few academic studies conducted into this evolving threat.

Embedding has remained a favoured and effective strategy for news teams covering recent conflicts, primarily as it provides a level of safety and security. However, the withdrawal of Western forces from theatres of conflict since 2011 left a power vacuum. This has been filled by various state and non-state actors, which are now also the main hosts for embedding news teams. These usually do not provide the same level of safety or logistics support and have less understanding of the role of the media. The lack of clarity as to the level of support makes it more challenging to measure and mitigate

potential risks; this points to the urgent necessity to update risk management strategies to account for this evolving risk.

On the whole, the lack of empirically conducted academic research into risk management within journalism and media studies is problematic. A review of the literature highlights the importance of risk management to enabling the safe deployment of journalists to areas of conflict. It also highlights the lack of specific research aimed at reducing the risk to journalists or reflecting evolving threats within the risk management and assessment processes. This is especially important in light of the significant changes to how news organisations operate and deploy over the past decade. The context set by this chapter will enable the researcher to identify gaps and weaknesses within the security risk management structures.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

3.1 - Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology chosen to facilitate the research project, with the aim of assessing perceptions of risk mitigation strategies practised by news organisations and used by journalists in conflict areas. It begins with an overview of the research philosophy and the paradigm approach applied. A breakdown of the research methods follows, including the researcher's reasoning for choosing the selected methods. This includes discussion of the sampling strategy, questionnaire design, semi-structured interview approach and data collection element.

3.2 – Research Philosophy Approach

This section highlights the philosophical approach and general theoretical principles that underpin the research in this thesis (Moon & Blackman, 2014). It examines the ontological and epistemological foundations, before introducing the paradigm approach chosen for this mixed-methods study. This is essential in order to understand how the researcher views and approaches the participants and subject matter, and to ensure that the outcomes of the study are appropriate and meaningful.

All research has its foundation in underlying philosophical norms: "those that constitute acceptable research methods" (Antwi & Hamza 2015, p. 217). The concept of research philosophy lies at the very heart of centuries-old debates over the nature of knowledge. The father of modern philosophy René Descartes (1637)'s famous statement, "I think; therefore, I am" (p. 32), provides the basis for foundational knowledge; Descartes argued that the very fact of doubting one's own existence proved that existence. However, Descartes' subjective approach was challenged by Piaget (Inhelder et al., 1976), who expressed that, "there is never an absolute beginning" (p. 207).

The starting point for this research project was Socrates' (n.d) classic dictum that "the only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing". The overall aim was to develop knowledge and seek to discover what is known and how it is known; to construct concepts and assess the validity of data,

accept reality and pursue truth, avoid biases and seek to understand the source of participants' knowledge. To frame the research in the context of risk management and security in conflict zones, this study utilised the philosophical concepts of ontology and epistemology.

Put simply, ontology is about being and epistemology is about knowing. More specifically, ontology is concerned with concrete or abstract experience. Slevitch (2011) states that ontology can be defined as "the study of reality or things that comprise reality" (p. 75); this means that ontology concerns the real perceptions, experiences and thoughts and how they relate to each other. Indeed, Guba & Lincoln (1985) state that the basis of the ontological viewpoint is "how things really work" in relation to reality (p. 105).

Ontology underlies the research, as the primary aim was to gather real experiences of risk management for news reporting in conflict zones. Moreover, an ontological approach was necessary to understand how journalists operating in areas of conflict were impacted by this reality. Journalists are likely to base their approach to risk on both concrete and abstract experiences, as they may have witnessed physical damage and destruction, which may impede their ability to identify true knowledge. This effect is often referred to as the "fog of war" (Blight & Lang, 2005), and has an impact on how they view reality and therefore perceive risk, and therefore must be taken into account.

Epistemology describes concepts around the nature of knowledge. Within research philosophy, it helps frame research questions and methodology to allow for the collection of experiences and data, while accounting for potential factors such as bias and prejudice. Revonsuo (2010) states that either one acknowledges that facts exist independently of the human mind or accepts that reality is entirely subjective. Allison and Hobbs (2006) further this line of questioning by asking "what is the nature of the knowable, or what is the nature of reality?" Is there such a thing as true knowledge, or is it merely a construct of our surroundings and experiences?

With this in mind, the researcher aimed to ask several questions, including but not limited to: What is knowledge? How will knowledge be acquired throughout the project? What do participants and interviewees know? How will research methods draw out experiences of participants? Furthermore,

what are the limits to the knowledge that can be created? By asking these questions, the researcher was able to more clearly understand the world that he was exploring.

The researcher carefully considered his own position and philosophical stance to support the validity of the methods. This involved an examination of how pre-existing biases might impact the research, with methods then selected to account for these potentially influencing factors. Specifically, it was critical to account for potential subjectivity stemming from the researcher's professional role as a safety practitioner and his own experience of operating in areas of conflict. This factor had the potential to influence the interpretation of the data, as subjectivity holds validity of judgement of the individual, not the collective (Kant, 1783/1977). This theory was best described by Kant's four seminal strands highlighting the impact of radical subjectivism on the possibility of knowledge (Schulting, 2017).

The research also applied epistemological theory when considering research participants. The study sought to create new knowledge by coupling research participants' historical and cultural perceptions with social and human elements. As such, during the data collection phase, the study required careful consideration of the perceptions, life experiences, observations, beliefs and claims of the participants and their impact on responses.

Finally, the research sought to account for the two major facets of epistemological knowledge: vulgar knowledge based on opinion, and rigorous knowledge based on subjective observation. Applied to security, an example of vulgar knowledge would be a risk advisor who believed north-eastern Syria to be a dangerous, high-risk area based on conversations with peers and hearsay rather than experience. An example of rigorous knowledge would be a risk advisor concluding that there was a high risk of civil unrest in a certain area after having carried out a thorough assessment. This study sought to separate vulgar from rigorous knowledge and favour the latter by assessing experience as a key qualifying factor.

3.3 - Paradigm Approach

The above ontological and epistemological considerations provided the rationale for choosing "pragmatism" as a research paradigm, which supported a mixed-methods approach, involving both qualitative and quantitative research.

Prior to selecting a paradigm approach, the researcher assessed the suitability of the positivism, interpretivism/constructivism and transformative paradigms. Based on the work carried out by Creswell (2011), positivism was rejected as a framework; the study was non-experimental, and did not aim to verify previously collected or tested theory. The research was also not seen as transformative as it was not looking to analyse or assess critical (existing) theory. Nor did this research conform to a constructivist paradigm, primarily because – even through social and historical constructions were probed within the research – ethnography was not viewed as an alternative to mixed-methods research. With the exclusion of these alternatives, the researcher considered pragmatism.

As highlighted by Weaver (2018), pragmatism focuses on knowledge, linking experience and action, and inquiry as the three core principles of the decision-making process. Following a pragmatic paradigm allowed the researcher to observe and develop the link between the experience, knowledge and action of journalists and news organisations. This was beneficial to the study, which is grounded in real world experience, dealing in facts and the consequences of the actions of these actors. An approach grounded in pragmatism was also deemed suitable due to the researcher's position as a subjective researcher, and the successful application of this paradigm approach within previous risk management research projects.

Previous risk management research projects have applied post-positivism, social constructivism and pragmatism as research paradigms, depending on their aims (Strang, 2013). This study aimed at analysing existing process and practice, as opposed to forming philosophical theory. As such, the researcher favoured the pragmatic approach to be the more flexible tool, especially as it lends itself to a mixed-methods study.

The first phase was a quantitative survey and the second a qualitative phase based on interviews. This pragmatic approach built logic and coherence into the study, supporting the transition from

findings to new knowledge, increasing confidence in the outcomes. Specifically, the researcher accepted the following two rationales for a mixed-methods approach, cited by Bryman (2016).

Explanation – Qualitative methods were used to elaborate on information already obtained in the initial capture of quantitative data. This added greater depth to the research: e.g., by collecting key variables such as the age, gender, occupation and experience of participants and accounting for these in the qualitative phase.

Credibility – The study aimed to add value for journalists deploying to areas of conflict. A mixed-methods approach increases the perception of the results' validity and legitimacy, making it more likely for the research to have an impact in an industry that relies heavily on analysis.

Despite the mixed-methods approach, greater emphasis was placed on inductive measures (qualitative), as it was the intention of this study to develop and construct theory, instead of testing existing theory. The above philosophical approach was extended across the research, including the design, management of relationships with participants and write-up of the results (Salmon, 1984).

3.4 - Research Design

The research design was loosely based on Creswell and Plano Clark's (2011) basic mixed-methods approach with an exploratory sequential design. Creswell and Plano Clark's design ordinarily placed the quantitative methods after the qualitative element, to allow for any theory gained in the initial phase to be hypothesised within the same study. However, this study preferred Morgan's (1998b) approach, whereby the quantitative research preceded the qualitative element. This method ensured the researcher had an open and exploratory view, instead of accruing additional undeclared bias in the initial phase.

The initial collection of quantitative data also permitted early exploration of critical themes that were highlighted within previous studies and the literature review. This helped to form the study's

baseline approach, adding key points and identifying information gaps within the existing studies. This method also allowed the researcher to generate hypotheses in the quantitative phase that could be tested during the subsequent qualitative phase.

The second part of the research – the qualitative element – was then used to elaborate on theories that emerged from the study's primary phase. A strict sampling criterion during the qualitative phase, detailed later in this section, helped add value to the initial data collection. It served to uncover the broader elements of the relationships of the journalists to their specific experiences, allowing for extrapolation of the initial insights.

This quantitative followed by qualitative approach was the most effective design to support the data in this case; allowing assumption and bias to emerge early in the research would have reduced its effectiveness. There was no confirmatory quantitative phase following the qualitative research. However, the researcher may conduct further quantitative research following the submission of this thesis.

3.5 - Sampling Strategy

A "purposive sampling" technique was employed for both the quantitative and qualitative elements of this research. This meant that participants were selected based on their role, experience and the conflict zones in which they operated (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016). This targeted approach and selection criteria – detailed in the next section – ensured that the data collected could support the study (Patton, 1990).

This research aimed to use quantitative followed by qualitative methods to develop a baseline understanding of problems. This logic-based approach allowed for the exploration of potential critical gaps in the risk management process employed by news organisation, as well as in the relationship between journalists and risk owners involved in the deployment cycle. Merriam (1998) stated that purposive non-probability sampling is a rational approach for resolving such qualitative problems,

helping to avoid binary quantitative data from an undetermined cohort. However, the critical factor is not whether the findings obtained from the sample selected can be generalised to a broader audience, but how well the researcher deduces and explores the data and generates theory from the findings of this purposeful sample (Merriam, 1998).

3.6 - Participation Criteria

This research applied strict inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure the relevance and validity of the empirical data collected. All participants were chosen for their ability to add credibility and ensure the study added value for journalists deploying in conflict areas. The researcher had three main inclusion criteria: role requirement; regional experience; and exposure to news organisations' risk management processes. The selection criteria highlight the value of subjective research in revealing how an individual's experience shapes their perception of the world.

Firstly, all participants were required to have operated in either a primary or support role within a news team deployed to areas of conflict. Capturing the perspectives of those filling both primary and support roles was key to assessing the wider news team's risk exposure, as opposed to simply that of journalists and correspondents. This meant the research provided a more holistic picture, enabling better targeted recommendations regarding risk management procedures, to ensure they are "fit for purpose" and measure all risks present in modern-day deployments (Sambrook, 2010).

The researcher separated roles into two distinct groups – primary and secondary. Primary roles were those with direct involvement in the news team's physical production side; those who captured material that would be aired or published on international news platforms. Such roles include news correspondents, news journalists, photojournalists, shoot editors, camera operators, photographers, producers and directors. The secondary (support) group included all other elements that deploy with the primary team, provide editorial support or are part of the risk assessment process as risk owners. Such roles include security advisors, risk managers, safety specialists, fixers, medical advisors and editorial support and logistics staff.

The second inclusion criterion was the participant's level of experience. The researcher stated that participants must have worked on assignment covering kinetic conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria or Yemen. However, they were free to highlight any other conflict areas in which they had operated on behalf of news organisations. Participants were also required to have deployed as part of news teams between 2009 and 2019. These years were chosen because – as highlighted in the literature review – it was a period of significant change, both in terms of threat levels towards journalists and changes to the modus operandi of the news industry. The aim was to capture and assess the risk management and pre-deployment support received by participants during this period.

The final criterion for inclusion in the study was participants' involvement in their news organisation's risk management process. Those who took part were required to have been involved in the risk assessment process in some way, have understood the risk mitigation measures in place and have taken part in any pre-deployment training. The researcher also focused on news organisations that had offices, bureaus or operations controlled from the UK, with British law used as a framework for legal and duty of care considerations.

There were a few cases in which potential participants were excluded from the study. For example, participants were excluded if they had operated in one of the countries mentioned above but had not directly reported from a conflict zone. An example of this would be if a reporter had covered the Islamic State-led conflict in Iraq, but had reported the story from the relative safety of Erbil, in Iraq's Kurdistan Region. Although this criterion was subjective, it was considered valid because the researcher was looking to capture participant's experiential ontology, with the importance of actually being present, in person, to experience the events (Cottle, 2008).

Freelancers, stringers or civilian journalists that were not employed directly by a news organisation at the time of their deployment were also excluded from the study. This allowed the researcher to focus on the pre-deployment risk management processes within international news organisations. No participants were paid for partaking in this study.

3.7 - Gatekeepers

Gatekeepers – often referred to as relevant authorities – were used to gain access to participants that met the pre-selection criteria. By contacting and engaging participants through such third parties, the researcher was able to maintain productive and professional relationships with respondents (Cresswell, 1994). This sample collection method was also used to limit any pressure that participants may have felt in the event of direct correspondence. As some of the questions involved potentially sensitive information and dealt with experiences of conflict, the researcher felt that potential participants should have space and time to reflect on whether to take part. The distance provided by the gatekeepers was especially critical as the researcher was likely to have worked with, supported or previously met many of the participants in the course of his employment as a safety advisor for news teams. As such, it removed potential pressure stemming from personal relationships.

The initially selected gatekeepers were the INSI, ACOS Alliance and Frontline Freelance Register (FFR). However, after initially agreeing to support the research project, the first two organisations subsequently decided to withdraw their backing. This was mainly due to concerns, linked to General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) about engaging with their members and sharing the study.

Following the withdrawal of INSI and ACOS, the researcher, with the support of his supervisor and industry contacts, solicited the support of six additional gatekeepers directly from news organisations. These included safety and security directors, senior news editors and correspondents from a range of organisations. In this way, the sample size of 60-100 respondents was maintained, along with participants' anonymity.

For context, the FFR is a representative body for freelance journalists, created for and run by freelancers. Founded in 2013, FFR is a member-driven ring-fenced initiative of the Frontline Club Charitable Trust. The organisation distributed the survey to its membership base, with a clear outline of the criteria.

3.8 - Phase One - Quantitative Approach

This study used a grounded theory approach, whereby the theories and themes for further research were selected after analysing data from the first phase (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As such, it was critical to select the correct data collection method for this initial phase, to allow the researcher to identify gaps in the risk management behaviours of conflict journalists and their organisations.

A questionnaire is just one of many ways of obtaining information from participants (Gillham, 2000, p. 2); however, it was considered ideal for the first phase of this research as it allowed the researcher to obtain foundational knowledge while eliminating any potential bias. A comprehensive approach to data collection within a questionnaire is critical to a study's success; a poorly structured questionnaire reduces the effectiveness of the data gathered. The researcher had to consider many variables before designing the questionnaire to ensure high participation and return rates.

A multiple-choice questionnaire was chosen to gather initial quantitative data. The online survey tool [Survey Monkey](#) was selected, as it allowed for completion of the survey at any location and using any convenient device (laptop, phone or tablet). The questionnaire's flexibility and the lack of pressure (in comparison to face-to-face interviews) allowed participants to complete the survey at their own pace, potentially increasing the response rate.

The Survey Monkey tool was also chosen because it is regarded as one of the most user friendly and robust online data collection tools for academic research; such tools enable large quantities of data sourced from participants to be managed and analysed more effectively than through manual analysis. The data collected by the researcher was protected by the platform's HIPAA, Norton and TRUSTe security features, which are in line with the information security requirements set out by the University of Portsmouth's ethics committee.

The online tool also helped support respondents' anonymity. The researcher assessed that by ensuring anonymity and only capturing demographic data, participants would be more honest in their answers, thus improving data quality. Furthermore, the use of an online tool allowed the researcher to

customise the survey's structure and layout, ensuring a logical flow that guided participants through the questionnaire process.

Once responses – of which there were 72 – were submitted, the online tool helped the researcher to accurately process the data and analyse them in various formats. The reporting features of the online tool allowed for clear visualisations of participants' answers. The closed-question, multiple-choice design of the first phase questionnaire – detailed in the section below – also lent itself to this data visualisation process. A dynamic user interface supported data analysis, allowing the researcher to quickly extract critical elements. This enabled the identification of key themes in preparation for phase two of the study.

3.9 - Phase One - Questionnaire

The first phase questionnaire had a total of 56 closed, multiple-choice questions, with an additional commentary section allowing the participant to provide context where there may have been ambiguity (Appendix A).

The questionnaire began with a consent form, which all participants were required to read and agree before proceeding. Ten initial questions covered demographic information and pre-selected criteria, to ensure eligibility. This was followed by questions relating to the pre-deployment planning element of the risk management cycle. Section one involved six questions about risk assessment processes in place at news organisations for conflict zone deployments. This was followed a section with 12 questions investigating pre-deployment criteria and minimum standards for journalists deploying to conflict areas.

Section three looked at additional pre-deployment risk factors that may have been taken into account by news organisations, including health, age, mental wellbeing, as well as any specific support necessary for women and members of the LGBTQ+ community. Section four allowed participants to rate their perception of the support measures currently offered by news organisations to those deployed

to conflict zones. These questions allowed the researcher to assess current processes and procedures for deployments, perceptions pertaining to the risk owner and the crisis management response offered.

The questionnaire concluded with ten questions focusing on lessons learned and changes that may have an impact on participants' future deployments. The final question asked participants if they were prepared to join phase two of the research – the qualitative section – and gave them the option of providing their email address to enable this. As the survey was anonymous, the comments box only captured the email address required to contact participants for an interview; no names or organisational details were required.

3.10 - Phase Two - Qualitative Approach

The second phase of the study allowed the researcher to challenge critical themes that emerged in the first phase, improving the quality of the findings and enabling the formulation of key recommendations. The researcher chose to employ semi-structured interviews in the qualitative phase. This allowed for flexibility and a deeper exploration of participants' views, especially with regard to perception of mitigation measures and risk tolerance. Questions for the interviews were formulated based on six key themes that emerged from quantitative questionnaire. This way, the exploratory sequential design outlined by Morgan (1998b) aided more robust data collection.

Blee and Taylor (2002) described the benefits and downsides of the semi-structured interview format, noting that:

[It] provides a greater breadth of information, the opportunity to discover the respondent's experience and interpretation of reality, and access to people's ideas, thoughts, and memories in their own words rather than in the words of the researcher, but at the cost of reduced ability to make systematic comparisons between the interview responses. (p. 92)

Indeed, various scholars have questioned the effectiveness of interviews (Holstein & Gubrium 2003; Berg, 2001), contending that the variables involved are likely to affect the overall findings and

outcomes. Both Robson (2011) and Kvale (1996) noted that interviews often lacked a consistent approach to measuring respondents' answers, such as a standard matrix. However, Hagan (1982) argued that, although time-consuming in terms of collection, analysis and data management, interviews could be a useful mechanism for exploring complex issues, such as reliability of data. Bryman (2012) furthered this argument, pointing to the relative flexibility of interviews as the reason they remained the standard instrument for qualitative research.

The researcher was examining multiple variables and complexities associated with risk management strategies used by news organisations to deploy staff to areas of conflict. Therefore, it was concluded that the flexibility of the semi-structured interview format would be an effective mechanism. This format allowed interviewees to give unique, first-hand accounts of their experiences, providing context in the form of specific incidents. As such, the second-layer interview process allowed for what Denscombe (2007) refers to as comprehensive data analysis, increasing the reliability of information gathered.

Moreover, this process allowed the researcher to observe and gather data on the interviewees' attitudes, feelings, interests, concerns, gestures, facial expressions and tone with regard to the themes under investigation (Creswell, 1994; Bryman, 2001; Babbie & Mouton, 2006). It was not possible to capture this type of data during the quantitative phase, underlining the benefits of a mixed-method approach.

Another benefit of semi-structured interviews was that it allowed an element of researcher control. The ability to adjust the interview approach allowed for dynamics to be captured in real-time, ultimately improving data quality (Robson 2011). For example, changing the line of questioning in response to participants' answers enabled deeper investigation, with researcher probing and participant elaboration often resulting in essential additional context. This emerged as a critically important element supporting the overall research.

This element of researcher control can also be perceived negatively. This was highlighted by Babbie and Mouton (2006), who stated that "all too often, the way we ask questions subtly biases the

answers we get" (p. 289). Stringer (1999) underlined this risk of bias, noting that "the researcher's assumptions and values shape the inquiry and become part of the argument…   there can be no disinterested research… the researcher is both a participant in the action and inquirer into that same action" (p. 15). As the researcher is a practitioner of risk management for journalists deploying to conflict areas, the question of potential bias needed to be taken into account in research design.

Efforts by the researcher to avoid potential bias in this study included lengthy preparation of the semi-structured interview format, to ensure that all interviews followed the set process set out in this methods chapter, as far as possible. Despite this, it was necessary to recognise and account for the fact that the researcher's experience as a security director for news organisations could result in bias in participant responses in the interview phase. For example, the interviewees may have chosen to withhold information, especially concerning real-life experience from which lessons could have been drawn, for fear of being judged by the interviewer in his professional capacity.

The researcher also considered the interviewees' biases and possible selectiveness in the information they shared. Bias could stem from the interviewees' role, experiences within conflict zones, their own understanding and classification of conflict areas, their internal risk threshold and opinion of their organisation. For example, the results in phase one demonstrated a clear distinction between primary and secondary roles, in terms of their attitude to risk and the security support they received. Those in supporting roles faced just as much risk, but often received less, preparation, training and operational support.

Another consideration was how to manage the interviewees' demanding schedules. While many of those involved in the initial phase of research had stated their desire to participate in phase two, the often-unpredictable nature of the news industry presented challenges. Firstly, many of the journalists who agreed to participate in the interviews were either based overseas or busy with ongoing assignments or projects. These factors reduced availability and necessitated flexibility on the part of the researcher; meetings were scheduled to suit interviewees, and rescheduled or cancelled at short notice upon request. Video conferences (VC) were scheduled for those interviewees located abroad. In some

cases, the interviewee's remote location meant that internet connectivity was poor, hindering interviews. These challenges on several occasions required a change of strategy or flexibility of methods on the part of the researcher.

3.11 – Phase Two – Interview

Those first-round participants that stated they were happy to support the second part of the research were sent an invitation email (Appendix D). This included additional questions to capture further data, such as role type and length of time spent in conflict areas for news organisations. This enabled the researcher to ensure interview balance; for example, separating interviewees into primary and secondary (support) function categories to allow an even spread of experience. This allowed for adequate focus on those operating in secondary roles, such as security personnel, fixers and contributors, who may face the same or a higher level of risk than journalists in areas of conflict. Before starting any interviews, the confirmation of acceptance was checked to ensure it aligned with the requirements of the University of Portsmouth ethics committee. (Appendix F)

In-person interviews were initially deemed essential by the researcher, in order to gain a more personal insight into interviewees' perspectives. It was assumed that conducting interviews over VC or telephone would not allow for the same level of intimacy, potentially reducing the effectiveness and quality of the data collected (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004). However, it was ultimately not possible to conduct in-person interviews due to restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic from March 2020 onward, including a directive issued by the University of Portsmouth.

While interviews help the researcher get to know the participant, the interview method selected will impact the data obtained (Dicicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Sorrell & Redmond, 1995). VC, as opposed to telephone, was ultimately chosen, as it was perceived to be a more direct substitute for in-person interviews. Sturges and Hanrahan (2004) questioned the quality of the data collected via telephone compared to face-to-face methods and expressed concerns about whether telephone was suitable for managing semi-structured interviews. While there is little research available comparing in-

person with VC interviews, O'Conaill et al., (1993) observed that using VC as a method of interviewing did have a positive impact on social interaction, though it did not fully replicate the in-person experience.

Unlike the telephone, VC allowed the researcher to respond to visual cues, which meant the conversation style more closely resembled an in-person interview (Irani, 2019; Vurdien, 2019; Archibald et al., 2019). It made it more likely that interviewees would express personal opinion and emotional feeling (Chapman, 2003). Vital visual cues such as head nods and eye gaze could be observed, while the format also likely resulted in less interruptions, longer turns between speaker transitions and more informal interactions (Sedgwick, 2009). Ultimately, VC could capture more successfully than telephone what Diccicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) described as the stages of apprehension, exploration, corporation and participation.

Although it was not the researcher's preferred method, there were some benefits to VC over in-person interviews. As the study subject could be deemed sensitive, many interviewees may have preferred the relative anonymity of remote interviews compared to face-to-face interaction. Indeed, respondent reluctance has been well-documented in interview studies (Creswell, 1998).

Interviews were initially scheduled for spring 2020. The researcher decided to postpone the interviews until the initial peak of the COVID-19 pandemic had subsided across Europe. The pandemic was dominating personal and professional lives near-universally, in some cases causing significant stress; postponing allowed the interviewees to prioritise more pressing concerns. Moreover, the researcher believed it inappropriate to ask interviewees to recall periods of potentially significant stress, such as deployments to conflict areas, during this period. The delay also ensured that answers remained relevant, and the retelling of experiences was not altered by the pandemic's stressful context. The researcher did not conduct any interviews until 1 June 2020, at which point the UK government was advising that it was safe for people to return to work.

Six key themes were extracted from the quantitative phase of the study to form the basis of the qualitative interview. This allowed for a logical approach to questioning that followed the outline of a

risk management process. Although the interview was semi-structured with no pre-designated questions, the aim of the thematic approach was to ease interviewees into the process, meaning they were not intimidated by probing, tough questions from the outset. This semi-structured approach also supported the researcher's aim to gain a more robust and extensive understanding of the reality of news gathering in modern-day conflicts, by allowing flexibility to ask different questions based on answers. Babbie and Mouton (2006) stated that:

> The best way to elicit the various and divergent constructions of reality that exist within the context of a study is to collect information about… events and relationships from different points of view. This means asking different questions, seeking different sources and using different methods. (p. 27)

Interviewees were each assigned a number to ensure their anonymity. As mentioned above, the researcher selected phase two interviewees based on their experience and roles. He then ordered them based on an assessment of which would add the greatest value to the study. While this selection process can be characterised as less robust than the initial sample criteria, the questionnaire ensured that all interviewees had enough experience to add value in terms of their analysis of the risk management process.

Interviews were initially scheduled for a 45-minute period; however, it was decided to extend this by 15 minutes to allow for additional questions. The researcher decided to stop conducting any further interviews once saturation point was reached; this was the point where "no new information or themes are observed in the data" (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006, p. 59). For this study, this was deemed to have occurred after the 12th interview. At this point, the interview process was suspended and remaining three scheduled meetings were cancelled after explaining individually to participants.

3.12 - Data Security

The data collected from both the quantitative and qualitative elements of the study were analysed using Bryman's (2016) four stages of thematic coding. The process involved attaching codes

to specific text within transcripts, allowing the researcher to categorise and index recurring concepts, keywords, themes and key qualitative transcripts.

All questionnaires, interviews and transcripts were securely stored in the cloud system. Where this was not possible, interviews, audio recordings and written transcripts were placed on a password protected flash-drive and secured within a locked cabinet in the researcher's home office, in line with the University of Portsmouth's data management policies. These encrypted portable devices (e.g., external hard drives, USB sticks) were only used for temporary storage when necessary, with all data captured transferred to network storage and Google Drive cloud storage as soon as it was possible to do so.

Chapter 4 - Quantitative Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the quantitative findings obtained in the survey conducted in phase one of the research project. It provides a detailed analysis of the results, with the purpose of:

1. Assessing current understanding of risk management strategies applied by international news organisations for deployments to areas of conflict;

2. Identifying differences in attitudes to risk based on the role, regional experience and exposure to news organisations' risk management processes, and;

3. Highlighting areas for further investigation during the second, qualitative phase of research.

The quantitative survey (see Appendix A) consisted of introductory questions followed by five themed sections, with 56 questions in total. The assessment was constructed from 72 respondents, who operated in either a primary role or a secondary role covering news stories in areas of conflict between 2009 and 2019. It is relevant to note that survey participants were not required to answer every question, meaning the base number from which percentages were calculated differed for each question. Nevertheless, the average completion rate for each question was over 92%.

The overall research question and aims of this thesis were used to direct the survey questions. The survey was developed with reference to the existing loose framework of risk management processes implemented by news organisations. The survey responses were subsequently examined in light of the research questions and objectives.

4.2 Participant Impact and Experience

This section assesses participants' profiles, their experience and relevance for the study. The first step in analysing the survey data involved identifying the sample characteristics of the 72 participants, which formed the basis for the remainder of the quantitative analysis. It was used to support this research project's qualitative element, allowing for classification and highlighting the impact of different profile characteristics on perception, experience and outcomes. The following five main areas were assessed:

- Age of participants

- Gender of participants

- Length of participants' career experience

- Areas of conflict covered by participants between 2009 and 2019

- Roles in which participants deployed to areas of conflict

4.2 a – Age of Participants

Almost half of all participants surveyed ($n = 35$, 49%) were aged between 40 and 54. More than 32% ($n = 23$) were 25-39 years' old, followed by 18% aged between 55 and 64 ($n = 13$). Only one respondent was aged between 18 and 24, and no respondents were over 65.

Although no participants were deployed to conflict areas over the age of 65, it is notable that most respondents were in their 40s or early 50s. This is potentially because it is perceived as important that those deployed to conflict areas are skilled and experienced enough to carry out high-risk tasks. It is important to note that the research recorded participants' age at the time they completed the survey. This meant it could have been up to ten years since the participant had worked or started to work in conflict zones. Future research might instead consider participants' age at the time of deployment.
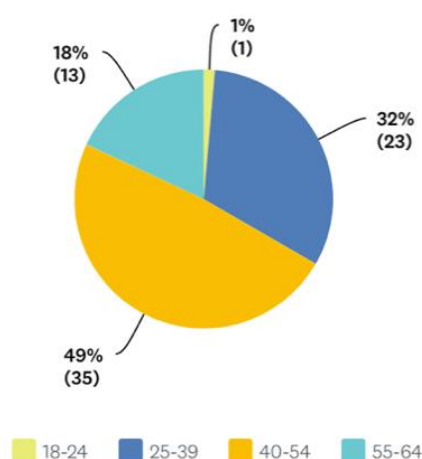
Figure 1 - Breakdown age of participants

4.2 b – Participant Gender

The research clearly demonstrated male dominance of conflict reporting, with the overwhelming majority of those that answered this question identified as male (87%, $n = 60$). The remaining participants identified as female. Those deployed in secondary roles within conflict zones were almost entirely male (93%, $n = 40$). Notably, only 6% ($n = 2$) of safety advisors were female. This may be due to the fact that military service, which is more commonly undertaken by men, is considered favourable experience for recruitment to safety advisory roles.

4.2 c – Career Experience

The majority of participants (69%, $n = 50$) had worked in news media for 11 years or more, while 19% ($n = 14$) had worked in the industry for more than six years. Just 11% ($n = 8$) had experience of between two and five years, while no participants had less than two years' experience. When broken down further, all journalists, correspondents and producers ($n = 30$) had more than six years of experience, while 92% ($n = 12$) of camera operators had six or more years' experience. Freelancers were generally less experienced than those in the above traditional roles, with 25% reporting between two and five years of prior experience. This may be because it is common in the news industry to start

as a freelancer, to gain experience and a reputation, before switching to a traditional staff role within an organisation. The data confirms the assumption that news organisations would be unlikely to deploy inexperienced staff to cover conflict zones. The research suggested that producers are often the least experienced news team member in conflict zones.

Table 1

Participants' career experience in media industry

Time in the Media Industry	No of Participants	Percent of Participants
2 – 5 Years	8	11
6 – 10 Years	14	19
11+ Years	50	69

4.2.d - Areas of Conflict Covered by Participants Between 2009 and 2019

Iraq was the most common conflict area that study participants covered between 2009 and 2019, with 83% ($n = 60$) having been deployed there. This is unsurprising given that the country was in a permanent state of conflict during this period. Afghanistan was the next most frequently covered conflict area, with 72% of participants ($n = 52$) having been deployed there. As highlighted in the literature review, the Syrian conflict, which began in 2011, was extremely dangerous for journalists, and news organisation were extremely cautious of operating in the country. Nevertheless, 50% of respondents ($n = 36$) had covered this conflict.

The significant logistical challenges presented by reporting in events Yemen, including a civil conflict that began in 2014, was reflected in the study; only 26% ($n = 19$) of respondents had operated in the country between 2009 and 2019. Another 22% ($n = 16$) of participants reported having deployed to Libya, where a civil conflict began with the ousting of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011. This is a relatively high number, considering that the limited US or UK ground troops in the country meant that news teams were generally embedded with non-Western forces, increasing associated risks.

Other significant areas of conflict covered by survey participants were Somalia, Ukraine and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT, West Bank and Gaza), with 14% ($n = 10$) having reported from each of these countries. Extensive news coverage of insurgencies in recent years was also reflected in the results, with 8% ($n = 6$) of participants having covered the activities of the Islamist extremist Boko Haram group in north-eastern Nigeria since 2013, 3%, ($n = 4$) covering the activities of various local jihadist groups affiliated with Islamic State since 2014, and 2% ($n = 3$) reporting on Islamist insurgent attacks in Pakistan.
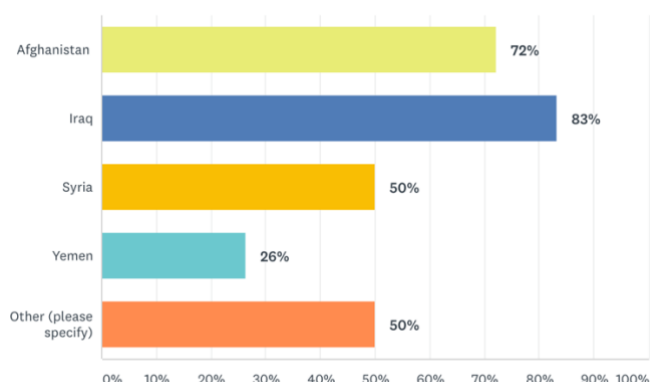
Figure 2 - Participants' conflict zone deployments, 2009-2019

On reflection, it would have been beneficial to define the term "conflict zone" to survey participants. Some participants provided information on assignments outside the standard definition of conflict zones, including deployments to cover terrorist attacks in Europe. Participants also noted assignments covering Islamic State and other militant attacks and civil unrest, including in Hong Kong and Thailand. While these do highlight the varied and evolving risks facing news teams, this study focused on traditional conflict zones.

4.2 f - *Roles in which Participants Deployed to Areas of Conflict*

Participants were asked to identify which roles they had fulfilled on deployment in conflict areas. One potential limitation arises from the fact that respondents were overwhelmingly (50%, $n =$

36) deployed in the role of safety advisor. While the safety advisor plays a critical role for news teams covering conflict, it is nevertheless a support function. While the study adds value to the foundational empirical research on risk analysis for the news industry, the effectiveness of the data is potentially somewhat impacted by the larger number of participants in secondary than primary roles.

Interestingly, six additional participants (8%) reported supporting the security function while also carrying out their primary role. In fact, the survey showed that dual roles were common across all functions of news teams in conflict zones. Indeed, 50% ($n = 4$) of survey participants primarily identifying as journalists and 25% ($n = 2$) of those identifying as correspondents also carried out the role of producer on deployments. The trend was also evident for those deployed in a primary role as camera operators and producers; 41% ($n = 5$) of producers also deployed as correspondents/journalists and an additional 25% ($n=3$) as camera operators. This trend is likely due to shrinking news budgets for modern conflicts, as highlighted in the literature review.

On reflection, the research may have benefitted from gathering more granular data separating traditional from non-traditional roles. While all participants had deployed for international news organisations and completed risk assessment processes, it is likely that many deployed in non-traditional roles to some areas and in traditional roles to others. This may have had an impact on their experiences and the data provided.

Table 2

Role on deployment in conflict areas

Role when Deployed in Areas of Conflict	No of Participants	Percent of Participants
Risk Advisor / Security Specialist	36	50
Camera Operator / Shoot Edit	13	18
Producer	12	17
Correspondent	10	14
Journalist	8	11
Other (please specify)	5	7

Freelancer	4	6
Director	2	3

4.3 – Risk Assessment Process

The second element of the quantitative survey considered the risk assessment processes implemented by those deployed by/on behalf of news organisations to areas of conflict. The risk assessment is a critical document approved by the risk owner; ultimately, it states how the team will operate and what emergency plans are in place in case of an incident. Outlining how the risk assessment supports news teams and looking at gaps or areas of weakness highlighted by participants allowed for an in-depth analysis during the second phase of research.

4.3 a – Validity of Risk Assessment Process

Participants were asked if they considered their organisation's risk assessment fit for purpose and adequate for a safe deployment. A key finding was that a majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their organisation's risk assessment was fit for purpose. This is somewhat surprising, given the lack of a standard approach for assessing risk applied across the industry. More than 75% ($n = 54$) either agreed or strongly agreed that the process was suitable in its current format; 18% ($n = 13$) did not state whether they agreed or disagreed, and just 7% ($n = 5$) did not feel that the risk assessment was fit for purpose. Out of 72 participants, none strongly disagreed that the process was fit for purpose. Of participants operating in a primary role, just 8% of camera operators, 8% of producers and 20% of correspondents stated that they did not feel that the current methods of assessing risk were fit for purpose.

Several participants stated that organisations such as the FFR, INSI and Rory Peck Trust had actively engaged with senior management and safety advisors. These organisations thus helped to coordinate and support news organisations and freelance journalists in their approach to safety in conflict areas.

Table 3

Do you agree that your organisation's risk assessment process is fit for purpose?

Answer	No of Participants	Percent of Participants
Strongly agree	16	22
Agree	38	53
Neither agree nor disagree	13	18
Disagree	5	7
Strongly Disagree	0	0

4.3 b – Adequacy of Risk Assessment Process for Modern Conflict Risks

Participants were asked about their level of confidence that the risk assessment process at their organisation accounted for the wide range of threats inherent in modern-day conflicts. More than 82% ($n = 59$), reported being somewhat confident, very confident or extremely confident that the risk assessment process was adequate in this regard. Only 18% ($n = 13$) were not confident in their organisation's ability to manage these risks effectively. Of this 18%, 31% ($n = 4$) of camera operators, 25% ($n = 1$) of freelancers and 14% ($n = 5$) of safety advisors were not satisfied that modern-day risks were accounted for.

Table 4

Confidence in risk assessment process with regard to modern-day conflict risks

Answers	No of Participants	Percent of Participants
Extremely confident	8	11

Very confident	22	31
Somewhat confident	29	40
Not so confident	13	18

4.3 c – Duty of Care Obligations in Risk Assessment Process

Respondents were then asked whether they agreed that their organisation provided an adequate level of risk "duty of care" for those operating in conflict zones. The vast majority – 78% ($n = 56$) – agreed that duty of care was adequate. Only 7% ($n = 5$) felt that the level of duty of care provided was not adequate, including 15% ($n = 2$) of camera operators and 8% ($n = 1$) of freelancers. This data suggests that news organisations are broadly aware of the critical importance of duty of care obligations, especially given the significant risks faced by news teams in conflict areas.
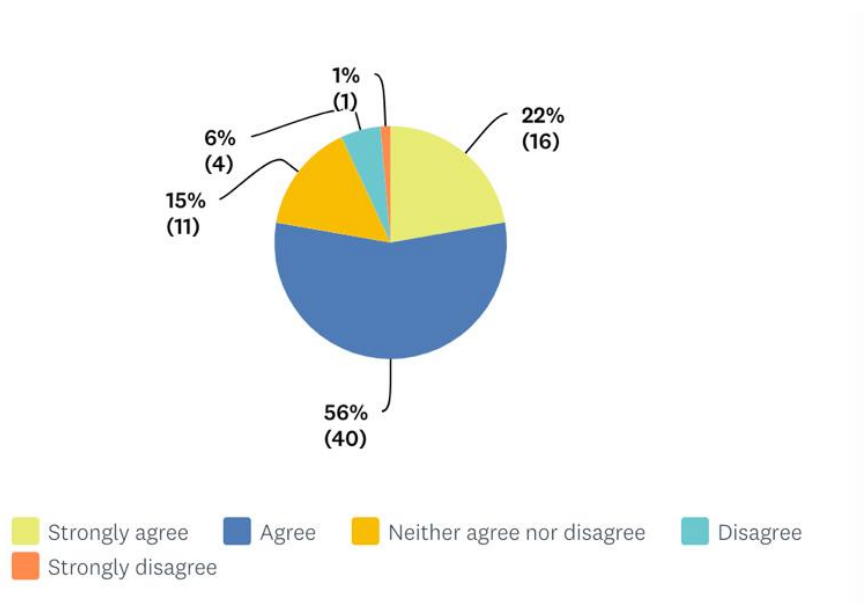

Figure 3 - Do you agree that your organisation provides an adequate level of risk 'duty of care' for those operating in conflict zones?

4.3 d – Engagement with Pre-Deployment Risk Assessment Process

Participants were asked whether they had completed their organisation's risk assessment process prior to deployment to conflict areas. One of the important findings from this section was that more than 25% (n = 17) of all participants did not complete a risk assessment. This finding is significant, as many organisations, including the BBC, CNN and NBC, state as official policy that all those deploying should have had the opportunity to read and have input into the assessment. When broken down further, 50% ($n = 2$) of all freelancers said they had not completed the risk assessment process for deployments; this underlines that freelancers are often not part of the pre-deployment planning process. More concerning is the finding that a quarter of all safety advisors (26%, $n = 9$) reported not having completed a risk assessment. Safety advisors are usually responsible for implementation of the mitigation measures outlined in the risk assessment, raising the question as to how this would be practically possible if they were unaware of those measures. Moreover, 38% (n = 5) of camera operators – who are believed to face the highest risks of news team members – stated that they had not completed a risk assessment. These results highlight potential critical gaps in pre-deployment safety procedures that could affect crisis support.

Table 5

Did you complete your organisation's risk assessment?

Answer	No of Participants	Percent of Participants
Yes	52	73
No	19	27

4.3 d – Engagement by Extended Members of News Team with Risk Assessment

Participants were asked whether all members of the extended team (including security and fixers) had input into the risk assessment process prior to deployment. Just half of respondents (50%, $n = 36$) stated that all extended members of the team had input. Indeed, 39% ($n = 28$) said that extended members of the team had not had input. Of the 11% ($n = 8$) that answered this question with "other", many highlighted variable approaches in the comments, including "they should", "not always, depends

on the team" and "not all see or read the risk assessment". This suggests another critical gap in current process. One participant, a freelancer, stated that it "depends on the type of task and if I'm subcontracted to another organisation. I personally will always ask to see a risk assessment if I'm not the person writing it". This lack of consistency in the risk assessment process must be addressed to ensure that those in both traditional and non-traditional roles know what to expect before deploying to conflict areas.
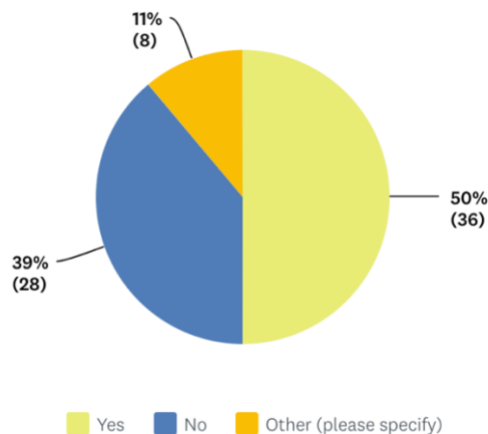
Figure 4 - Does extended team have input into the risk assessment process prior to deployment?

4.3 e - Management Understanding of Conflict Risk

Participants were then asked to rate how satisfied they were that the risk owner (management approver) understood the complexities of risks involved in deployment to modern-day conflict areas. Overall, the results suggest that most risk owners and managers responsible for deploying news teams to conflict zones demonstrate an understanding of the complexities and risks involved. A majority (57%, $n = 41$) of participants reported being satisfied or very satisfied in this regard. Notably, 100% ($n = 8$) of journalists and 94% of risk advisors ($n = 34$), two of the most experienced groups among respondents, stated that they were not dissatisfied with their risk owner/management's understanding of the risks.

Nevertheless, 16% of participants ($n = 11$) stated they were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, suggesting they lacked confidence that their risk owner or manager fully understood risk

levels. This included 31% (*n* = 4) of camera operators, 33% (*n* = 4) of producers and 20% (*n* = 2) of correspondents.
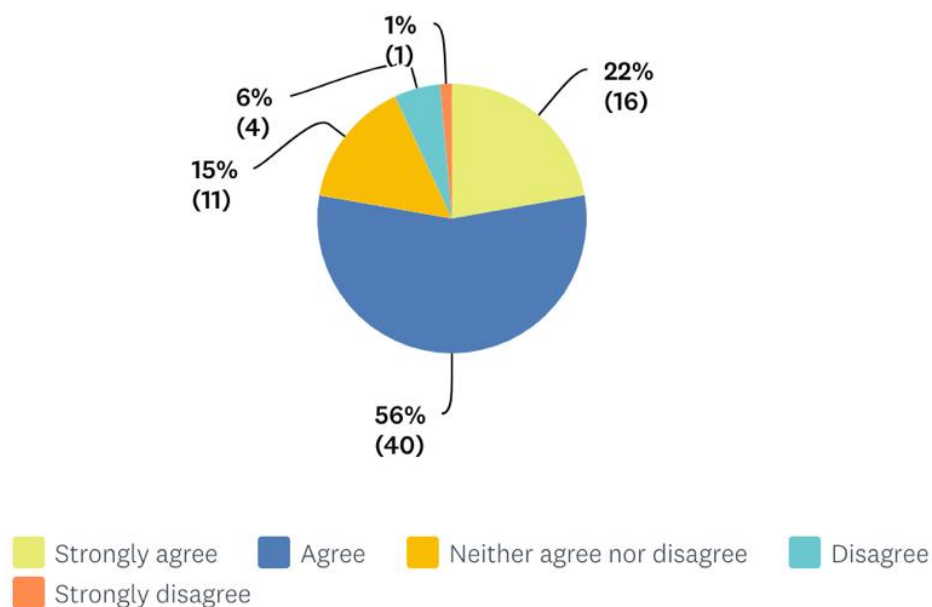
Figure 5 - How satisfied are you that the risk owner understands the complexities of risks associated with deployments to modern-day conflict area?

4.4 – Pre-Deployment Training

Most news organisations offer pre-deployment training before sending journalists into areas of conflict. This section aims to assess the range and quality of training offered by news organisations in light of modern-day conflicts. Only with a robust understanding of the value of training currently offered, will it be possible to assess any gaps or failures, allowing for improvements.

4.4 a – Sufficiency of Training Courses Provided

Participants were asked to state whether they believed that pre-deployment training courses provided by their news organisation were sufficient. Respondents overwhelmingly rated the level of training as sufficient, with 72% ($n = 52$) either agreeing or strongly agreeing. Only 11% ($n = 8$) either disagreed or strongly disagreed that training was sufficient, including 25% ($n = 3$) of producers, 23% ($n = 3$) of camera operators, 10% ($n = 1$) of correspondents and 13% ($n = 1$) of journalists. Interestingly, only one participant (2%, $n = 1$, safety advisor) deployed in a secondary role (total in the secondary role was $n = 43$) felt the training was insufficient; this is despite the fact that those in secondary roles generally have less access to training.

Table 6

Do you think that the training courses that your news organization provides for its journalists, freelancers and other support staff are sufficient?

Response	No of Participants	Percent of Participants
Strongly agree	**10**	**14**
Agree	**42**	**58**
Neither agree nor disagree	**12**	**17**
Disagree	**6**	**8**
Strongly disagree	**2**	**3**

4.4 b – Risk Capture within Current Training

The next question was designed to assess whether trainers were perceived to have adapted their course content to address current threats. Participants were asked whether they agreed that the training provided by their news organisation captured all the risks that teams face, especially with regard to the modern battlefield. Overwhelmingly participants agreed (49%, $n = 35$) or strongly agreed (6%, $n = 8$) that the training captured current risks. Only 18% ($n = 13$) felt that certain risks were not captured, and just 1% ($n = 1$) strongly disagreed that training captured the extent of modern conflict zone risks.
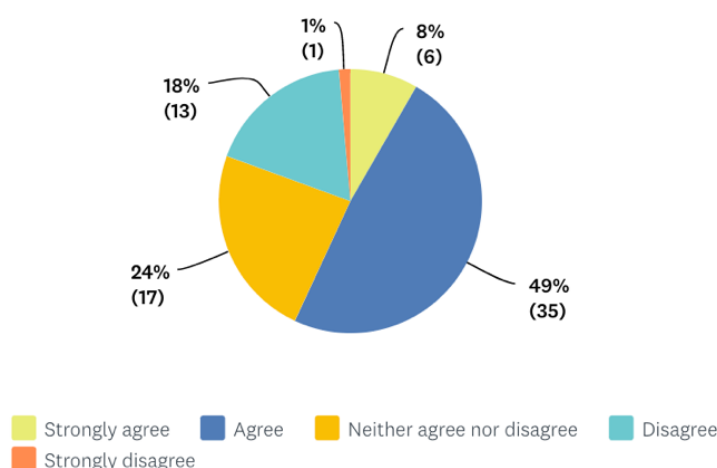
Figure 6 - The training provided by your news organisation captures all the risks that teams face on the modern battlefield. Do you agree?

While 47% (*n* = 20) of participants deployed in primary roles agreed or strongly agreed that their training captured the risks, a significant 30% (n = 13) did not feel the training was sufficient. More than 60% (*n* = 26) of those operating in secondary roles were confident in the training; just 12% (*n* = 5) were not. Individually, at least 38% of journalists (*n* = 3), 30% correspondents (*n* = 3) and 31% of camera operators (*n* = 4) were unsatisfied with the risks captured within the training courses.

4.4 c – Mandatory Training

The next question explored which roles were accompanied by mandatory security and safety training. More than 88% (*n* = 63) of respondents reported that news organisations provided mandatory training for full-time staff. For non-staff positions, the results indicate that mandatory training is lacking, suggesting that these individuals must rely on their own initiative to ensure an adequate level. Indeed, one participant noted that "In my first deployment, I completed no training". Only 33% (*n* = 24) of respondents reported that their organisation provided mandatory training for freelancers and non-staff positions. Just 15% (*n* = 11) of respondents reported that security staff and long-term contributors

benefited from mandatory training. It was also not the norm for fixers to receive mandatory training, with less than 10% of respondents confirming this. One participant mentioned that fixers received training on a case-by-case basis, while another noted that the *"security team provided training for the support staff and fixers"* but provided no details.

The survey indicated confusion over what news organisations defined as mandatory training. One participant noted that (they were) "not sure – the policy is not clear cut. Drivers I am not sure, stringers no – it appears mandatory training is only for those who are insured", while another commented that training was provided on a discretionary basis. One participant expanded this point, noting that the level of mandatory training depended on the organisation and media type: "Budgets will always have an impact; bigger newsgathering organisations will generally train all staff, including some form of training for local in-country staff; TV production is more constrained by budget".
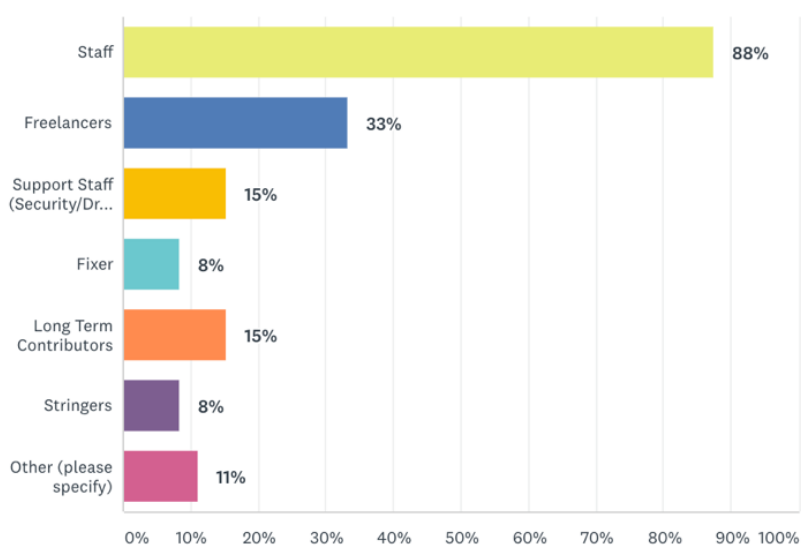
Figure 7 - Roles that require mandatory training

The results suggest that the level of training provided for permanent editorial roles varies considerably from that provided for support staff, creating a two-tier system that one respondent described as "us and them". One participant took this further, bluntly stating "it is a f***ing mess and no idea what is going on".

4.4 d – Training Courses Completed Before Conflict Zone Deployments

Participants were asked to indicate which courses they had completed before deployment.

Hostile Environment Training (HE) – Nearly half (49%, *n* = 35) of survey participants reported having completed HE training. This figure may be somewhat inaccurate; most HE courses now also contain first aid and are referred to as Hostile Environment First Aid Training (HEFAT), with these names often used interchangeably.

HEFAT – HEFAT is seen as the industry standard for pre-deployment training, a fact reflected in the finding that most participants (86%, *n* = 62) had undertaken this training. The percentage was greater for those deployed in primary roles, with more than 88% (*n* = 65) having completed HEFAT. For those in secondary roles, there was significant uptake from those deployed in security and safety roles, 78% (*n* = 28) of whom had completed HEFAT.

Public Order/Riot Training – Anecdotal reports suggest there has been increased interest in this training as a result of high-profile incidents of political unrest since 2009, including the Arab Spring protests. This is reflected in the research, with more than 54% (*n* = 39) of participants having completed public order training. 67% (*n* = 8) of producers and 69% (*n* = 9) of camera operators had completed this training, highlighting that these roles often involve getting into the thick of protests. Freelancers, who are often requested to cover such incidents at short notice, also reported a high participation rate (75%, *n* = 3). A high number of safety advisors (61%, *n* = 22) had also completed this training, most likely because they are often deployed as "back-watchers", to ensure the safety of camera operators during protests.

Advanced First Aid Training – Certain organisations now provide this specialised training in addition to HEFAT, especially for staff required to work in remote areas where access to medical treatment is limited. Some 46% of respondents (*n* = 33) completed advanced medical training before deploying. When broken down further, a significant finding was that just 10% of correspondents and

journalists ($n = 4$) had taken advanced medical training. Moreover, only 23% ($n = 3$) of camera operators had undertaken the training – a slightly lower percentage than among producers (33%, $n = 4$) – despite carrying out what is perceived to be a higher risk role.

Defensive Driving Training – Defensive driving training is generally not deemed essential, because most news organisations engage third-party drivers in conflict areas. This leverages local knowledge of routes and driving styles, ensures checkpoints and local security forces are navigated according to local norms, and allows journalists/team members time to rest and focus on their core roles. Despite this, more than a fifth (21%, $n = 15$) of all participants reported having completed defensive driving training. This included (36%, $n = 13$) of safety advisors, who are often required to drive in emergencies or take charge of support vehicles.

Other Training – Participants mentioned several other types of training in an open question section. One participant stated that they had undertaken digital security awareness training. Mental health first aid (trauma risk management) training was mentioned by two participants. Organisations such as DART and March on Stress have developed such courses in recent years to support journalists at high risk of conditions such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). One participant had attended a HEFAT course designed specifically for women.

Additionally, several participants had undertaken training aimed at countering specific threats. For example, during the Ebola outbreak of 2013, journalists often undertook Chemical, Biological, Radioactive and Nuclear (CBRN) training or a specific infectious disease course aimed advising media teams on how to minimise risks.

4.4 e – Value of Training Provided

Participants were asked to assess how valuable they found each of the training courses they had attended.

HE – 58% of participants ($n = 40$) found HE training either extremely or very valuable. Another 32% ($n = 22$) rated the course as somewhat valuable, while only 7% ($n = 5$) did not find value in the course.

HEFAT – The research suggests that HEFAT is the considered the most valuable training offered by news organisations, with one participant noting that it "gets people thinking in areas that they may not consider from a creative standpoint". Of those deployed in primary roles, 75% of journalists ($n = 6$), 100% of correspondents ($n = 12$), 100% of camera operators ($n = 13$) and 66% of producers ($n = 8$) found the HEFAT course very or extremely valuable. Of those in secondary roles, 100% of directors ($n = 2$), fixers ($n = 1$) and freelancers ($n = 4$) rated it as very or extremely valuable. 77% of those deployed in a safety role agreed; however, one safety advisor stated that they often "do not get on these courses as students".

Public Order/Riot Training – Although not usually mandated, this training was assessed as extremely valuable by more than a quarter (26%, $n = 17$) of participants that had taken it. Another 23% ($n = 15$) found it very valuable and 17% somewhat valuable. Only 7% ($n = 4$) did not find the course of value.

Advanced First Aid Training – All participants who had attended advanced first aid training stated that they found value in the course, with a resounding 77% ($n = 49$) rating it as very or extremely valuable. One participant highlighted that, although the training was valuable, the skills "should be refreshed more than once a decade (or longer in some of our cases)". Another participant agreed, noting that "advanced first aid training is not like riding (a) bicycle. It is a profession on its own". One participant highlighted the logistical challenges associated with receiving training, stating: "(I) didn't attend because I've always been in outlier bureaus (offices). Opportunities are usually made available for London based staff at (organisation). The rest of us are left in the dark." This underlines the need for a standardised approach to training across news organisations, especially those that straddle multiple countries.

Defensive Driving – Of those respondents who had completed defensive driving training, 36% (*n* = 21) found the course very or extremely valuable. However, there was some criticism, with one participant commenting that the driving training they had attended was not relevant to the environments that news teams operate in, stating "the driving course was more 4x4 off-road skills rather than defensive driving". Another participant noted that the course had not considered challenges associated with driving armoured vehicles (G-Type), which can travel upwards of 140kmph, are known for brake issues and weigh significantly more than standard 4x4 vehicles. A third participant highlighted logistical issues associated with accessing training if located outside London, with "the rest of [the country] are mostly unaware [of what training is available]".

4.4 f – Mandatory refresher training

The research showed that more than 70% (*n* = 49) of respondents were required to undertake a mandatory HEFAT refresher at some point before deploying to conflict areas. 41% (*n* = 29) undertook a mandatory HE refresher, without the medical component. A third of participants (33%, *n* = 23) were required to attend an advanced medical training refresher.

4.4 g – Enforcement of Mandatory Pre-deployment Training

Participants were asked to rate how strictly news organisations enforced attendance at mandatory trainings. The majority of study participants (26%, *n* = 25) perceived that there was "some dispensation" allowing personnel to deploy without having received mandatory training under specific circumstances. Less than a quarter (24%, *n* = 17) stated that their organisation would refuse to deploy team members unless they had completed the mandatory courses. 20% (*n* = 14) observed that their organisation allowed news teams to deploy without training "on a case-by-case basis", with a slightly

lower number (19%, *n* = 13) of news organisations rated as "loosely enforcing" mandatory training, with no policing of training requirements.

Table 7

Dispensation with regard to mandatory training

Response	Participants	Percent of Participants
Mandatory courses MUST be completed	17	24
Some dispensation, certain circumstances	25	36
Case-by-case basis	14	20
Loosely enforced – limited oversight	13	19
Additional information	1	1

4.5 - Additional Pre-Deployment Factors

4.5 a – Deployment History

Respondents were asked if their news organisations took their deployment history into account prior to sending them to conflict zones. The overwhelming majority (82%, *n* = 59) of participants felt that their news organisation did take their level of experience into account. The 18% (*n* = 13) that disagreed included more than a third of camera operators (38%, *n* = 4) and nearly 20% of safety advisors (*n* = 7).
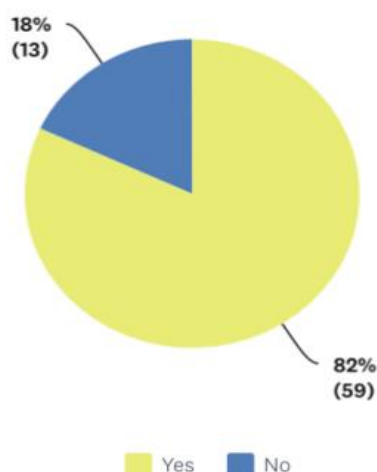
Figure 8 - Does your organisation take the deployment history of the team into account for conflict zones?

4.5 b – Gender Specific Risks

Participants were asked if their organisation took specific gender risks into account for countries where women's rights are extremely conservative. A slight majority of participants (54%, *n* = 39) agreed that their news organisations did so. However, one participant noted that it was "up to the individual [to highlight] any concerns". This was elaborated upon by another participant: "I've never been part of a conversation where this has been discussed, but I believe it is taken into consideration, No one is ever made to go anywhere they don't what to".

However, a significant number of participants (32%, *n* = 23) did not believe their organisation accounted for these gender-specific risks, including more than 50% of correspondents (*n* = 5) and freelancers (*n* = 2), 46% of camera operators (*n* = 6), 34% of producers (*n* = 4) and a quarter of safety advisors (25%, *n* = 9). One participant commented that news organisations often failed to take gender and cultural risks into account, unless they were raised directly by individuals. Others stated that they were "not aware [of these risks being managed], and if it is, it is at management level", or noted that

any decisions to exclude staff from deployments-based gender-related risks were "probably [taken] off

the record".

Table 8

Does your organisation take gender-specific risks into account?

Response	No of Participants	Percent of Participants
Yes	39	54
No	23	32
Other / Unsure	10	14

The survey also asked whether participants felt that their organisation measured travel risks and
safety for female travellers as part of its risk assessment process. More than one-third (36%, $n = 26$)
stated that this was not part of the risk management process.
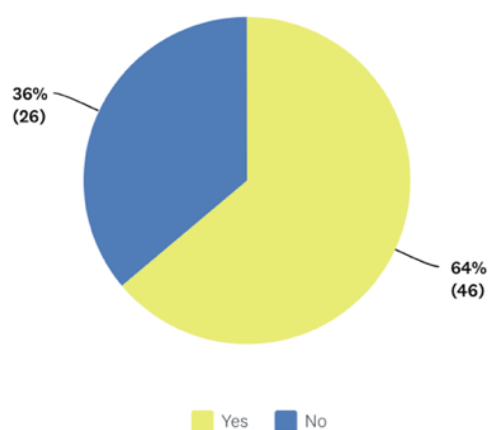
Figure 9 - Is travel risk and safety of female travellers' part of your organisation's risk management?

4.5 c – Risks for LGBTQ+ Community

Participants were asked whether their organisation took account of risks to members of the LGBTQ+ community as part of the risk assessment process, specifically with regard to travel to locations where homosexuality is legally punishable. Given the critical necessity of accounting for these risks, it is concerning that only 44% ($n = 32$) reported being aware of specific measures within their organisation's risk assessment for LGBTQ+ staff.

Overall, 38% ($n = 27$) stated that their organisation did not take LGBTQ+ risks into account. Another 18% ($n = 13$) were unsure of their organisations' position on managing risks for LGBTQ+ staff. The comments reflected that this was possibly because it is an issue that organisations are required to deal with sensitively, with one fairly typical response being: "I am not aware if management takes this into account; it has not been disclosed to me". Another participant stated that advice in this regard had been distributed by the safety advisor during the deployment, which was viewed as potentially too late to mitigate related threats.

Table 9

Does your organisation take into account the risk to members of the LGBTQ+ community as part of the risk assessment process, specifically when they travel to areas where it is punishable to be gay?

Response	No of Participants	Percent of Participants
Yes	32	44
No	27	38
Other (N/A)	13	18

4.5 d – Cultural Beliefs and Sensitivity Management in Risk Assessment Process

As news organisations have moved away from the "foreign correspondent model" (Sambrook, 2010) towards leaner, locally focused methods of newsgathering, the diversity of staff has also increased. This adds to potential complications around risks for conflict zone news teams. When asked whether their organisation managed team members' cultural beliefs and other cultural sensitivities as part of their risk assessment process, more than half (51%, $n = 37$) of participants stated that they did. One participant stated that "normally media are up to speed on cultural sensitivities".

Nevertheless, 40% ($n = 29$) stated that their organisations did not manage cultural sensitivities in the risk assessment. This too could be partly due to sensitivities, with one participant commenting that "if this criteria is discussed it is at the management level and not the field level [those who deploy]." Indeed, more than 8% ($n = 6$) were unsure whether their organisation took cultural sensitivities into account, with one stating "I assume [this is managed] but again, I'm not sure".
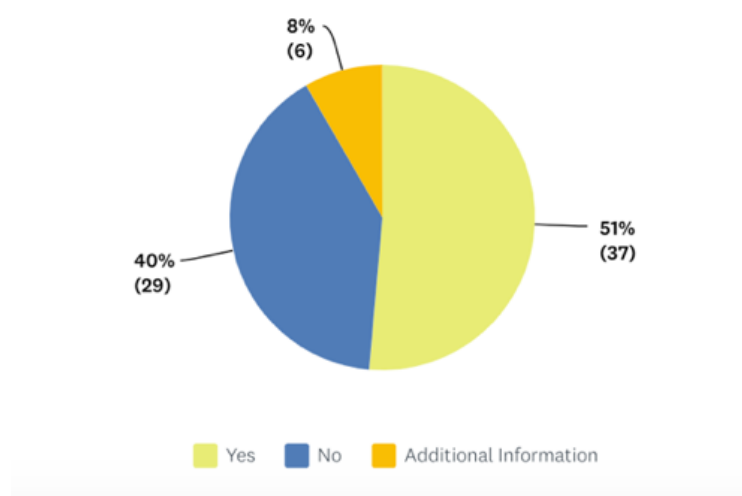
Figure 10 - Does your organisation manage team members' cultural beliefs and other cultural sensitivities as part of their risk assessment process?

4.5 e – Ethnicity as Factor in Risk Assessment Process

The majority of participants (56%, $n = 40$) felt that their news organisations considered ethnicity within their risk assessment process; however, one third (34%, $n = 24$) stated that they did not

believe that this was the case. One participant stated that they did not know if it was considered, "but in some cases, it should be". Another noted that "it is sometimes, but rarely". Overall, 10% (*n* = 7) were unsure whether their organisation considered ethnicity. One participant stated that ethnicity was more often discussed during the in-country brief than during the risk assessment process. This potentially raises concerns, given that the in-country brief may be too late to implement adequate risk mitigation.
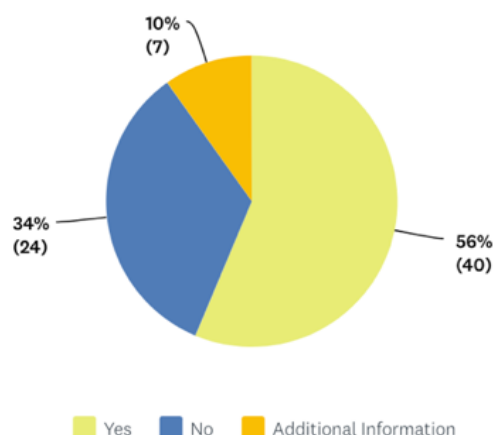
Figure 11 - Does your organisation consider team members' ethnicity as part of their risk assessment process prior to deployments?

4.5 f – Impact of Ethnicity or Religion on Deployment Decisions

Participants were asked whether they felt that ethnicity or religion impacted the decision to deploy certain journalists to areas of conflict. Nearly half of respondents (47%, *n* = 34) felt that it did. A number were aware of cases wherein news team members had been removed from an assignment because it was felt that their profile could impact safety. One respondent highlighted a case involving a Jewish/Israeli media team that was not deployed to conflicts involving Islamist forces due to the risk of targeting, but noted "that is my only experience of management taking this into account". Another participant commented they were only aware of "certain occasions when there is a specific risk to a team member due to religion or ethnic difference, such as when a Shia reporter visits ISIS areas".

Another participant highlighted the importance of specific regional considerations during the risk assessment process, noting that "in Africa, tribal affiliation is a very important aspect of planning".

Of the 72 participants in the study, 29 (40%) felt that ethnicity or religion did not impact decisions to deploy staff to conflict areas, with one noting that it was "a consideration, but I wouldn't say it has stopped someone deploying". Participants pointed out that, in some organisations, a lack of diversity meant that special consideration for ethnicity and religion was less necessary, with one noting that "at the [UK broadsheet newspaper] it was almost all white men, a few white women and very few BAME [and none in overseas/foreign positions]".

4.5 g – Pre-deployment Health Checks

Of the 72 participants, only 29% ($n = 21$) stated that they were required to undergo a pre-deployment health assessment. This highlights the lack of mandated pre-deployment healthcare checks across the industry.
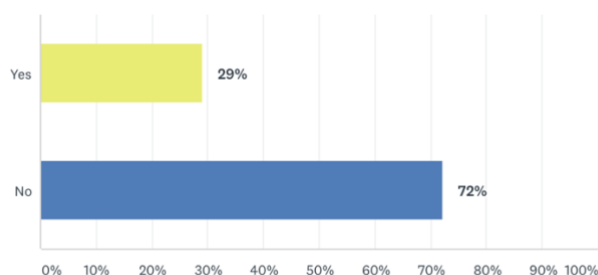
Figure 12 - Are you required to have any type of health check as part of a pre-deployment process?

In terms of what pre-deployment health checks involved, 14 participants said that their organisations' process involved an assessment of previous medical conditions. Six participants saw an occupational health specialist as part of the process. At least two participants highlighted the need for vaccinations to be up-to-date, especially yellow fever; however, this is a travel requirement for access to certain countries, rather than a pre-deployment requirement enforced by news organisations.

Only five participants stated that they had received a full medical examination before deployment, while just three had a physical fitness for deployment assessment. One safety advisor

stated that all those deploying to areas of conflict "should have a fitness to work certificate" to ensure the whole team's safety. Another participant stated that "it is up to team members to keep themselves fit and in date, but we are never asked about this". What is most striking is that just four participants reported having any form of mental health assessment before deploying to conflict zones. It is possible that participants may not have wanted to disclose such assessments due to the stigma attached, though the anonymity of the survey should in theory have mitigated this concern.

Table 10

Are you required to have any type of pre-health check as part of a pre-deployment process?

Response	No of Participants
Assessment of previous medical conditions	14
Full medical examination prior to deployment	5
Mental health assessments	4
Occupation health screening	6
Physical fitness for deployment assessment	3
Not required	27
Additional information	4

4.5 h – Methods of Confidentially Reporting Pre-deployment Concerns or Issues

The final question of this section asked whether there was a confidential means of reporting any issues or concerns to new organisations/management prior to deploying to conflict areas. Most participants (63%, $n = 45$) stated that there was, though another 38% ($n = 27$) said there was not. Notably, over half of all journalists (53%, n = 5), correspondents (60%, $n = 6$), producers (58%, $n = 7$), camera operators (54%, $n = 7$) and freelancers (75%, $n = 3$) did not know of confidential ways to report concerns. However, safety advisors (75%, $n = 25$) overwhelmingly felt they could raise issues confidentially with their news organisations; this is possibly because they often serve as the direct link between staff and management on safety concerns before and during deployments.
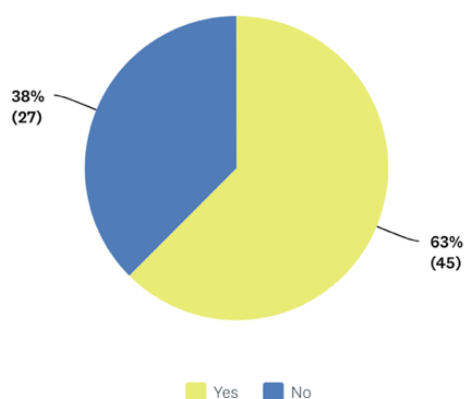
Figure 13 - Is there any internal confidential method of speaking out to your news organisation to report issues or concerns prior to deploying to conflict areas?

4.6 – Crisis Management

4.6 a – Support Provided in Conflict Zones

Participants were asked if they felt fully supported by their news organisations on deployment in conflict zones. Respondents overwhelming (83%, $n = 60$) either agreed or strongly agreed that they were fully supported. Just 3% ($n = 2$) disagreed that they felt fully supported. It is worth noting that 14% ($n = 2$) neither agreed nor disagreed.

Table 11

My news organisation fully supports me on deployment in conflict zones

Response	No of Participants	Percent of Participants
Strongly agree	19	26
Agree	41	57
Neither agree nor disagree	10	14
Disagree	2	3

Strongly disagree	0	0

4.6 b – Provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

An overwhelming majority (97%, *n* = 67) of participants agreed they were provided with adequate PPE for conflict zones (Figure 14). However, the comments revealed some concerns, with one participant mentioning that they often faced "extremely long delays in getting higher level body armour plates". Another stated that the most effective and newest equipment was often not available at news organisations, as compared to other industries, such as private security companies, aid organisations and militaries. Only two (3%) participants felt that they were not provided adequate PPE for conflict zones.

Participants were also asked if they had been refused equipment due to cost, availability or other non-operational reasons (Table 13). Only 8% (*n* = 6) had been refused equipment. One participant stated that, on one occasion, they were told that they "could only have one armoured (vehicle) not two vehicles for a deploying team in Afghanistan for cost reasons". However, the participant escalated the issue to more senior management and had the decision overruled based on safety concerns. Another participant stated that they would "love more Gucci [top of the range] kit [equipment], but what we have is generally sufficient". Another participant highlighted that that "there is better PPE available, however more expensive. Media teams need to have ownership of their own fitted PPE".
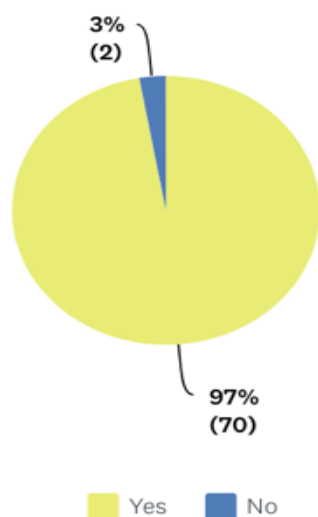
Figure 14 - Does your organisation provide adequate PPE for deployments to conflict zones?

Table 12

Have you been refused equipment due to cost, availability or other non-operational reasons?

Response	No of Participants	Percent of Participants
Yes	6	8
No	60	83
Additional Comment	6	8

One camera operator stated that, although they had not been refused PPE, they were refused other equipment: "like an extra-long-range camera lens – which would allow getting the video without having to get close. Also [I was] refused telecommunication/broadcasting equipment that allows us to be lighter and more mobile in favour of existing purchases equipment that meant we had to be more static. There is not a budget to buy other kits for 'one off' war zone assignments".

4.6 c – Medical Evacuation Planning

The research suggested that most participants were satisfied with their news organisations' medical evacuation planning, with 74% (n = 53) confident that robust evacuation plans were in place for emergencies. Nevertheless, more than a quarter (26%, n = 19) were not confident in the medical evacuation plans.

26%
(19)

74%
(53)

◼ Yes   ◼ No
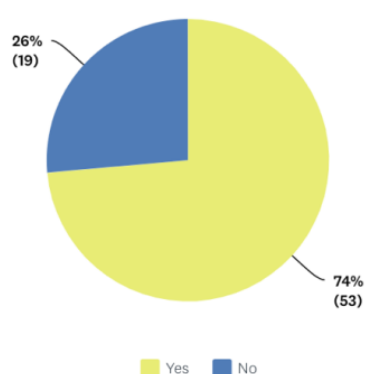
Figure 15 - Are you confident that your organisation has effective evacuation plans in place?

4.6 d – Kidnap for Ransom

Three quarters (74%, n = 53) of participants expressed confidence that their news organisations had the correct support available to manage any KfR situation occurring in conflict zones. 26% (n = 19) did not have confidence in their organisation's KfR support, including 58% of producers (n = 7) and 50% of freelancers (n = 2).
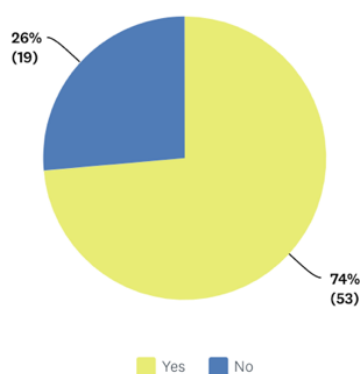
Figure 16 - Are you confident that your organisation has the correct support available to manage any kidnap and ransom (KfR) situation in conflict zones?

4.6 e – Medical Provision in Conflict Zones

Participants were asked whether they considered the medical training provided, either by a medic or by members of their team, sufficient for operating in conflict zones. 82% ($n = 59$) stated that medical training was sufficient. The 18% ($n = 13$) that felt the medical training was not adequate included 60% ($n = 6$) of correspondents and 50% ($n = 2$) of freelancers.
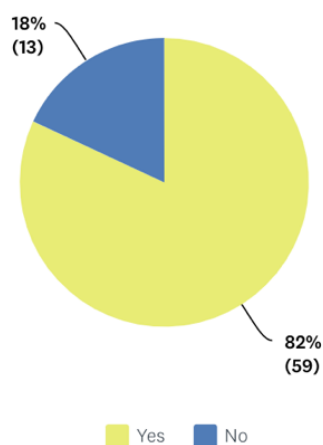
Figure 17 - Is the medical training provided either by a medic or by members of your team, sufficient for operating in conflict areas?

4.7 – Lessons Learned and Management Understanding of Risk

4.7 a – Methods of Capturing Lessons Learned

43% of all participants ($n = 31$) strongly agreed or agreed that their news organisation had a robust method for collecting information on assignments to ensure key lessons were learned. This included 60% ($n = 6$) of correspondents, 50% ($n = 6$) of producers and 38% ($n = 5$) of camera operators. Overall, only 31% (n=13) of those in primary roles strongly agreed or agreed that their organisations had robust methods in place to learn from previous assignments. However, around a quarter (27%, $n = 19$) of all those deployed disagreed or strongly disagreed that their organisations had such methods in place.

Table 13

Do you feel that your news organisation has a robust method for collecting information on assignments to ensure key lessons are learned for future tasks?

Response	No of Participants	Percent of Participants
Strongly agree	5	7
Agree	26	36
Neither agree nor disagree	22	31
Disagree	15	21
Strongly disagree	4	6

4.7 b – Ongoing Assessment of Risk mitigation Methods

On questioning, 85% ($n = 61$) of participants stated that the mitigations in place for deployments to conflict areas were regularly assessed by their news organisation's security department.

The 15% (*n* = 11) of respondents that did not believe there were regular assessments included four

safety advisors (11%) and five correspondents (50%).

15%
(11)

85%
(61)

Yes   No
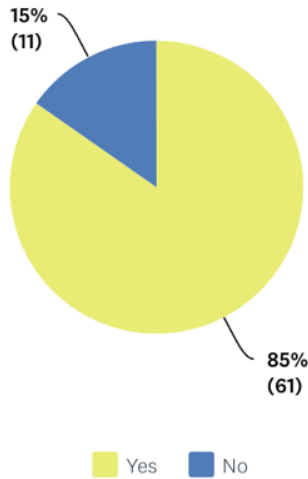
Figure 18 - To the best of your knowledge, are the mitigations for your task assessed on a regular

basis by your security department?

4.7 c – Safety Advisor Support

The next question concerned whether participants felt their risk advisors were

experienced/qualified enough to provide the correct advice to keep them safe in conflict zones. Overall,

78% (*n* = 56) felt that their safety advisors could provide the correct advice. Only 10% (*n* = 7) felt that

safety advisors were not experienced or qualified enough; all of those who stated that they were not

satisfied operated in a primary role.

Although most participants felt that their safety advisors were experienced/qualified enough,

comments added a little more depth. One participant stated that "the pool of good risk advisors is not

too deep". Another stated that qualified advisors were not always experienced, and "there is often a

disconnect between them and reality/needs on the ground". One participant elaborated that field teams

often had significantly more experience than their security/safety advisors. The responses suggest that

this disconnect between theoretical knowledge and on-the-ground experience can cause frustrations within news teams.

4.7 d – Effectiveness of Risk Reduction Methods

Participants were asked to rate the effectiveness of the current risk reduction methods employed by news organisations, journalists and support staff. The majority (44%, $n = 32$) rated them as very effective, with a further 7% ($n = 5$) rating them extremely effective. Another 42% ($n = 30$) stated that the measures were somewhat effective. A very small number of participants (7%, $n = 5$) felt risk reduction methods were either not so effective or not effective at all.
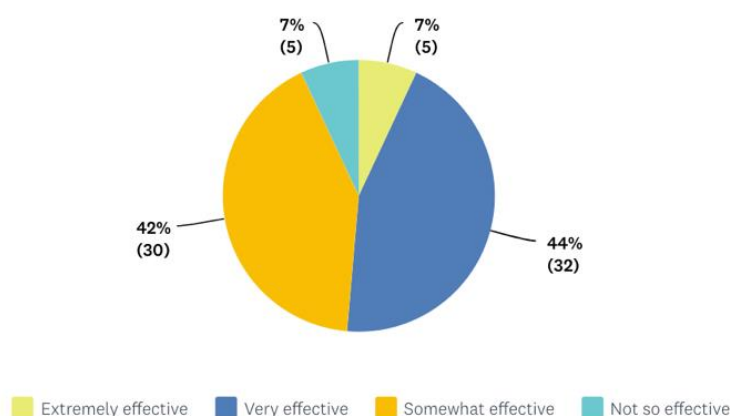
Figure 19 - How effective do you consider your organisation's risk reduction methods?

4.7 e – Risk Owners' Awareness of Cultural Considerations

A majority (81%, $n = 59$) of participants felt that their respective organisation's risk owner was at least somewhat aware of cultural considerations (women travellers, LGBT+, religious factors) before sending teams to conflicts zones. However, only 8% ($n = 6$) of participants felt risk owners were extremely aware and 26% ($n = 19$) very aware.

Thirteen participants (18%) rated their risk owners as not so aware of cultural considerations. This included 40% ($n = 4$) of correspondents, 38% ($n = 5$) of camera operators and 25% ($n = 3$) of

producers. Most safety advisors, responsible for overall security in high-risk regions, had confidence that risk owners accounted for cultural considerations; only 8% ($n = 3$) stated that they were not confident in this.

Table 14

Do you feel that those who sign off risk assessments (approval managers) are fully aware of the

cultural considerations of those working in conflict zones?

Response	No of Participants	Percent of Participants
Extremely aware	6	8
Very aware	19	26
Somewhat aware	34	47
Not so aware	13	18
Not at all effective	0	0

4.7 f – Risk Owners' Understanding of Risks Associated with Modern Media Embeds

35% ($n = 25$) of respondents felt that their risk owners were not so aware of the risks associated with modern-day media embeds. This included 50% ($n = 5$) of journalists, 50% ($n = 6$) of producers, 54% ($n = 7$) of camera operators and 28% ($n = 10$) of safety advisors.

More than 29% ($n = 21$) of participants felt that those who signed off on risk assessments were somewhat aware of modern embed risks, while 36% ($n = 26$) rated them as either very aware or extremely aware. Overall, those that deployed in secondary roles overwhelmingly (67%, $n = 29$) believed that their risk approvers were aware (extremely, very or somewhat) of the risks of embedding in modern conflict zones.

Table 15

Do you feel that those who sign off risk assessments (approval managers) are aware of the challenges

of working within modern-day media embeds?

Response	No of Participants	Percent of Participants
Extremely aware	5	7
Very aware	21	29
Somewhat aware	21	29
Not so aware	25	35
Not at all effective	0	0

4.7 g - Risk Owners Understanding of Cyber and Data Security Threats

More than one third (37%, $n = 27$) of respondents did not feel that risk owners were aware (not so aware or not at all effective) of the various cyber threats faced by deployed media personnel. 32% felt that management was somewhat aware, though most participants (45%, $n = 22$) rated risk owners as either very or extremely aware of the various cyber threats.

Table 16

Do you feel that risk owners are aware of the various cyber threats for media personnel deployed?

Response	No of Participants	Percent of Participants
Extremely aware	3	19
Very aware	19	26
Somewhat aware	23	32
Not so aware	24	33
Not at all effective	3	4

4.7 h – Overall Safety in Journalism

Finally, participants were asked if they felt that the safety and security of journalists had improved since 2009. A modest majority (63%, *n* = 45) stated that safety had improved since 2009.

4.8 - Conclusion

This first quantitative phase of research provided insights and a base level of knowledge that was used for further research in the qualitative phase, supporting the validity of the mixed-methods approach.

Respondents were mostly men and mostly experienced, with a majority having spent time in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria. A large proportion identified primarily as safety advisors. However, it was also notable that many had deployed in multiple roles, pointing to the increasing budgetary pressures that news organisations have faced in recent years. Although the questions did not specifically account for this, the fact that many respondents had carried out multiple roles also suggested they were likely to have deployed as freelancers and in non-traditional roles on some assignments.

Another key area highlighted within these findings related to emergent risks around gender, sexuality and ethnicity. Despite the overwhelmingly male character of the survey respondents, diversity is increasing in newsrooms. As such, it was concerning that the research uncovered a level of uncertainty around policies on these issues, and whether risks were adequately taken into account when planning conflict zone deployments.

Training is a key risk control measure applied by news organisations. This research showed that while there was a broad approval of the training, there were significant numbers of participants that were either apathetic or disagreed that it captured all the necessary risks that journalists are exposed to on the modern battlefield, suggesting room for improvement. The survey results also suggest that policy around the training provision for those in secondary roles is uneven. HEFAT was clearly identified as the most valuable training; as such, the qualitative research phase focused on this in greater detail.

There were a number of surprising outcomes around the risk management structures employed by news organisations. One key finding was that the majority of participants considered their respective risk assessment processes to be fit for purpose. However, this may have been because of the high

percentage of safety advisors among participants in this phase of research. As such, this was identified as an area for further exploration in the qualitative phase – especially as more than a quarter of respondents admitted to not having engaged with the risk assessment process at all, pointing to an inherent contradiction. Another key finding that required exploration in greater detail was engagement in the risk assessment process by wider members of conflict zone news teams, as only half of participants were confident that this happened.

The research demonstrated that while most participants who deploy to conflict zones felt supported by their news organisations, there was a lack of confidence in risk owners' understanding of risks associated with modern conflict zone embeds and information security/cyber risks. Another striking finding was that only 8% of those deployed had received a mental health assessment, despite the significant increase in resources to support mental health by news organisations in recent years. Given the increasing awareness of the risks around mental health, this required further exploration. More generally, it is notable that 38% of participants stated that safety had not improved for conflict zone reporting between 2009 and 2019. This comes despite increased emphasis by news organisations on their duty of care obligations, as well as the increased use safety advisors as a control measure over the same period.

Chapter 5 – Qualitative Findings

5.1 - Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from interviews conducted in the second, qualitative phase of research. The data was organised into themes, based on an analysis of the quantitative data obtained in the first phase (see Chapter 4), as well as the researcher's own field experience and existing subject-specific literature. The themes were also loosely structured to align with risk management processes followed by news organisations. The following six themes were identified:

1. Non-traditional roles and their impact

2. The application of control measures

3. Risk owner considerations

4. The risk assessment

5. New considerations

6. Contingency planning, crisis management and lessons learned

In total, there were 12 interviewees; six were deployed in primary roles (journalist, correspondent, producer or camera operator) and six in secondary roles (safety advisor and other support functions). The interviewees (see Table 1) were chosen from willing survey respondents to ensure a balanced spread of role and experience. The methods used to conduct the interviews are outlined in Chapter 3. Interviewees were identified only by their interview number (Table 1) to protect anonymity.

This chapter provides an overview of the areas highlighted by interviewees as vital to their news organisations' risk assessment processes for deployments to conflict areas. It considers levels of engagement, existing control measures, perceptions of current risk assessment and crisis management processes, with each section discussing gaps highlighted by the research. Rigorous thematic analysis throughout allowed for a conscious and systematic exploration of the main research questions (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Table 17

Profiles of interviewees (n = 12)

	Role	Primary / Secondary	Experience
IV001	Producer / Risk Manager	Secondary	8+ years
IV002	Camera Operator	Primary	6+ years
IV003	Producer / Safety Advisor	Secondary	4+ years
IV004	Producer	Primary	8+ years
IV005	Safety Advisor	Secondary	10+ years
IV006	Producer	Secondary	6+ years
IV007	Correspondent / Bureau Manager	Primary	10+ years
IV008	Camera Operator	Primary	10+ years
IV009	Producer / Bureau Manager	Primary	10+ years
IV010	Freelance Producer	Primary	6+ years
IV011	Producer / Safety Advisor	Secondary	10+ years
IV012	Safety Advisor / Medic	Secondary	10+ years

5.2 - Non-Traditional Roles and Impact on Journalism in Conflict Areas

This section highlights changes in the composition of news teams observed by respondents and how this is perceived to have impacted the safety of those deployed. Chapter 2 highlighted several changes to how news organisations have operated in conflict zones in recent years. The quantitative research underlined that non-traditional roles had become a key part of the deployment framework for conflict reporting. This has coincided with a significant reduction in the number of people fulfilling traditional media roles, such as foreign correspondent, full-time camera operator, international producer and director.

Those employed in non-traditional roles are often freelancers and local journalists. For news organisations, increased reliance on these non-traditional roles has provided operational and financial benefits, as well as allowing for faster deployment. Moreover, freelancers and those in other non-

traditional roles are also often able to provide a more detailed, contextualised picture of dynamics "on the ground" than news teams parachuted in (Moorcraft, 2016). As such, increased reliance on non-traditional roles has helped news organisations stay relevant amid increased competition from social media. However, it also brings with it new safety challenges and risk considerations, especially considering the potentially higher risk exposure for those local and freelance journalists that are deployed.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, there is very little literature or research around these elements of risk and crisis management. A failure to assess these new risks holistically means that news organisations are more likely to be affected by an incident or crisis, with these risks exacerbated in conflict zones.

This section focuses on three roles:

- Freelancer journalist

- Local journalist

- Safety advisor

It aims to pinpoint specific risks these roles face and assess how they can be incorporated into risk management processes. It underlines the need for formalised, industry-wide risk assessment processes that reflect the new circumstances around news team staffing.

5.2 a – Freelancer Roles

Although freelancers were already viewed as a critical component for news organisations prior to 2009, there has been a significant increase in their use in conflict deployments since then. As well as cost-cutting, other factors driving this change include the ability to transfer certain risks, coupled with the benefits of having a network of global resources without the administrative burden of full-time staff.

In recent years, news organisations have come under pressure to ensure they provide proper duty of care for freelancers operating on their behalf. Notably, this movement resulted in the publication of the ACOS Alliance's Freelance Journalist Safety Principles in 2015. The principles provide guidance on best practice for news organisations and journalists on dangerous assignments. The majority of news

organisations have agreed to operate in accordance with these principles. However, it is clear from this research that some news organisations still deploy freelancers as a method of transferring risk, and do not always follow the ACOS principles.

Based on the perceptions of those who took part in the research, this study identified three specific risks that required more effective management:

- Contractual risk transfer

- Duty of care / post-deployment

- Support levels available to freelancers

IV009 noted a wide range of factors that caused news organisations to use freelancers over full-time staff, including cost, locality and simplicity, but highlighted that the ability to transfer risk was "a big factor". By not employing journalists on full-time contracts, news organisations accrue less liability, and are usually only liable for the period under contract. A contracted freelancer is also often not provided the same level of training, equipment or access to institutional knowledge. While nearly all news organisations have a risk management process, the assessment details are often not communicated to freelancers. IV010, a freelance producer, noted that they often did not see the risk assessment before meeting the team on the ground and had limited input, adding "at times, I am not sure if there is a risk assessment".

Freelancers, who usually operate remotely, are less involved in the planning, collation of data and mitigation discussions associated with the risk assessment process. Indeed, in some organisations, there is no requirement for those that are deploying to approve the risk assessment. This gap was highlighted by IV005, who noted that while they were required to sign off as safety manager, it was unclear if everyone involved saw the risk assessment: "We do not confirm that all those who will operate in the risk assessment have seen and agreed to the mitigations that will be used while deployed".

Due to the number of conflicts covered between 2009 and 2019, IV007 stated that most news organisations used several tried and tested freelance journalists to cover key areas. This supports the risk management process, as it is easier for news organisations to ensure that regular freelancers have

completed the required training and follow the ACOS safety principles. Indeed, IV002 highlighted that many news organisations refuse to work with freelancers that have not completed a HEFAT course.

However, the cost of training can be prohibitive for freelancers. One interviewee noted that this was less of a problem for regular freelancers: "If the freelancer does more than 50 per cent of their time working for [their organisation], they're entitled to the same training paid for by the organisation" (IV002). This ensures that the freelancer understands the organisation's pre-deployment process and creates a more inclusive team environment: "the freelancers they use are generally repeat freelancers, so [there is] already kind of a relationship there" (IV002).

While freelancers are now a well-established part of conflict deployments, several interviewees expressed concern about critical gaps in support:

> I've always felt fairly taken care of. However, a lot of the guys I've worked with have been really badly burned by being preyed on, working in big organisations. And I know guys sort of like pulling out of helicopters while shooting, broken their back and had zero compensation, zero support whatsoever from the [organisation]. (IV010)

This underlined by IV010, who said that as a freelancer, they would expect very little help in the event of injury on a shoot: "I think it would be on me to take care of myself afterwards, despite any sort of promises upfront". This highlights the necessity for news organisations to ensure that risk assessment processes account for differences in contractual agreements, to enable support for all those deployed to conflict areas.

5.2 b – Local Journalists

News organisations have also increasingly relied on local journalists since 2009. By using local crews, new organisations save costs on flights, accommodation and other operational expenses. Local journalists also enable organisations to report breaking news more effectively, given fewer logistical and planning considerations, and the advantage of additional context provided by local knowledge. The use of local journalists has also increased diversity of opinion (Luck et al., 2020) and helped

broadcasters move away from the existing perception of a journalist as "a posh, white man, describing events he cannot relate to" (IV002).

This research suggests that many news organisations perceive local journalists to be the "less risky" option for deployments and that this is reflected in the level of support they receive. IV002 highlighted that local journalists often do not complete the same, detailed risk assessment that news organisations would require from an international journalist parachuting into a conflict area. IV001 stated that news organisations did not consider risk assessments necessary for local staff, noting "they kind of almost felt that they knew the environment and so, what's the point?" Another participant added that, "the level of duty of care applied to journalists in traditional media roles, in comparison to local journalists, is vastly different" (IV012).

Yet improvements in technology have also arguably increased the risks for local journalists, as highlighted in the literature review. In the past, cumbersome newsgathering equipment had served to differentiate international news organisations from local news crews or civilians, allowing them to be protected by their status as theoretically neutral observers. The ability of journalists to deploy with compact, covert equipment – which is also relatively affordable, so available to anyone – raises two key concerns, according to interviewees.

Firstly, the technological advancements mean that local journalists are often deployed on their own or with just one other team member, limiting support. Secondly, IV009 and IV008 highlighted that it made it difficult to differentiate between professionals and civilians in high-risk situations:

> There are now a lot more local journalists that aren't us. When before there would be the big three other foreign networks, we usually all knew each other. Now you go to a bomb site or something and there's us, and then there are a million local channels that you never heard of with a little camera, and then you got a million other people with their phones ready for YouTube or whatever. (IV008)

A lack of oversight, equipment provision, pre-deployment training and post-deployment support were all highlighted as concerns by interviewees with regard to local journalists. It was also made clear that several factors specific to local journalists, including language skills, cultural dynamics,

risk appetite and understanding of residual risk, should be considered within the risk assessment process to ensure a commensurate level of duty of care:

> They [local journalists] struggled with the risk assessment process, mainly as English wasn't their first language. There were also issues with the reasoning as to why we were asking them to operate in a certain way, outside what they considered to normal. They didn't get the bigger picture. (IV002)

As noted above, there is a perception among risk owners that locals have a lower risk exposure than international journalists. Indeed, IV007 noted that local journalists understood the risk picture and could blend into their surroundings more easily than international journalists. However, this research and a review of the available literature (see Chapter 2) underscore that this is not always the case. Local journalists are at greater risk of being detained, directly targeted or murdered with impunity than their international counterparts (CPJ, 2020; Parmar, 2015). This was underlined by IV002, a safety advisor, who stated that "it is those local journalists and those people who were in the country for an extended period; they are the ones who are most at risk".

Interviewees also highlighted potential risks associated with concerns over impartiality. Local journalists operating in contentious political environments often walk a fine line between journalism and activism. IV009 noted that "journalists follow an ethical code; some do not have the same principles [as an internationally accredited journalist] and some verge on being activists and partisan". There is potential for subjectivity that correlates with a heightened risk level, especially for stories requiring local journalists to hold their governments to account over allegations of corruption, criminality and other illegal activities.

Several interviewees expressed that local journalists may have a different attitude towards risk, given that they had often been living with conflict for much of their lives. However, this is directly comparable with war correspondents that develop risk apathy (Bowen, 2006; Simpson, 2016; Ward, 2020). The normalisation of risk is a significant challenge, but it must be accounted for when measuring risk and deciding mitigations for deployment, with experience (even when a factor) no substitute for training and support.

You know, they've got no experience. They say: so, I'm a journalist, so I'm going to go to the protests. They have no training, no legal backup, nobody watching their back and have no protective equipment. That's just not right. (IV011)

5.2 c – Safety Advisors

There is very limited academic or industry-specific research looking at the increasing role of safety advisors in mitigating risks associated with conflict reporting. The majority of the available information is anecdotal, and part of experiential literature written by journalists (Ayres, 2005; Kiley, 2009; Armoudian, 2017; and Sambrook, 2010). This lack highlights critical areas that require further research and broader industry alignment.

The safety advisor's role is to ensure journalists' safety and security on deployments, enforce the risk assessment mitigations and communicate on security-related issues with news organisation management; they are often viewed as a form of internal risk transfer. While deployed, the safety advisor must ensure that changes to the risk picture are dynamically assessed to ensure the level of risk remains acceptable. The term dynamic risk will be explored in further detail in section 5.3.b.

Several participants, including IV002, IV004 and IV009, considered it of critical importance to have a safety advisor that remained impartial and outside the editorial process, allowing for considerations of safety to be placed above both the journalistic risk perception and the competitor risk pendulum[3]. IV009, a bureau manager who reported having deployed numerous safety advisors to conflict zones since 2009, noted that having someone that was "focused on safety and not on fixing a story or getting, you know, a Pulitzer," was especially important in conflict areas. Several risk owners felt the role was vital to ensure duty of care on high-risk deployments, as well as supporting effective communication around changing risks.

A key role of the safety advisor is to ensure that the risk mitigations approved by the risk owner are managed and carried out effectively. Interviewees viewed them as the eyes and ears of the news

---

[3] For this study, the term competitor risk pendulum has been adopted to describe the paradigm shift in risk appetite occurring in response to, or in an attempt to match, actions of competitor organisations or individuals.

organisation/risk owner. They also noted they often brought the team together to have challenging conversations, enabling a cohesive approach:

> We have had a difference of opinion of what a safe level of risk is; however, we agreed before if one member of the team doesn't feel safe, then we simply don't do it. Plus, we know this will be reported back to management. (IV008)

The importance of safety advisors in conflict reporting has increased since 2009, due to the decreased opportunity to embed with Western military forces (see Chapter 2). They have ensured that journalists can continue to deploy to high-risk and complex environments, often unsupported and operating unilaterally. In particular, this research showed that safety advisors played a vital role as go-betweens between local security forces or militias and news teams. This is because they often understand military jargon and logistics, with IV004 noting that they were able to help navigate checkpoints and security hotspots. Their experience and contacts were also considered beneficial: "They have a lot of experience; some have many contacts within the security industry as well as they can share information about what's going on" (IV002).

The research suggested that safety advisors that developed a positive relationship with news teams were able to support newsgathering in unique ways. They also provided an additional layer of support for those in primary roles at greater risk. For example, camera operators often developed a strong rapport with safety advisors, who they relied on to monitor the surroundings while their eyes were focused down the lens:

> I think the relationship between the camera person and the security guy is always a really, really good, strong relationship. I guess it's sort of like an officer versus NCO kind of relationship. . . We (camera and safety) are the grizzled old sergeants who have seen it all and then we've got to deal with the young officers. (IV008)

Although interviewees understood the safety advisor's primary responsibilities, the varied experiences recounted in the research reflect the lack of universally accepted minimum standards, experience or qualifications for safety advisors in conflict zones. It is clear from the research that inconsistencies in the level of professionalism among safety advisors have impacted the role's

credibility. Interviewees recounted that many safety advisors were not aligned with the culture of the news organisation, did not understand editorial needs, and worked in a silo away from the rest of the news team. The following comments highlight these inconsistencies:

> So, all of the risk guys have been absolutely fantastic, with maybe one or two exceptions in the early days. (IV008)

> I've had a mixed bag of safety advisers. I've had some, really, really solid ones (negative) then had some really, really sharp ones. (IV010)

> You know, you've got some really calm heads and cool heads and mature heads on shoulders. (IV006)

Some interviewees expressed negative perceptions of safety advisor role due to the additional budgetary costs. This had in some cases resulted in the cancellation of plans as financially unviable, causing resentment. This issue was raised by a senior producer, who had used several safety advisors to cover the conflict against Islamic State in Iraq and Syria:

> High-risk advisers are expensive and, you know, managers are worried and bowled over by how much they're costing and what you end up doing. By sending a high-risk [safety] advisor it is basically limiting the number of days that you can shoot. (IV004)

A number of those interviewees also highlighted a perceived lack of professionalism and problems with communication and interpersonal skills. One of the most revealing statements was made by IV010, a senior freelance producer who has worked in some of the most challenging conflict zones with multiple safety advisors, who recounted:

> On one deployment, we had one of the deplorables (negative name for a deployable safety advisor) out with us in Kurdistan, and as we were going to the [rural area], to a festival, I was just very surprised that [news organisation] was sending somebody out with this, because it seems very safe anyway… That [safety advisor] wasn't just a hindrance, he was potentially, at points completely, unhinged. We were dealing with a young woman, so a sensitive contributor ... a former sex slave for ISIS. This guy was making, like crude jokes, like sexual jokes in front

of her about ISIS. He was just completely inappropriate. And he was "ah, she doesn't understand English, she's a whatever" and starts making racist jokes.

While this is an extreme example, most interviewees felt that problems around professionalism were often due to a lack of clarity on roles and responsibility. To improve engagement, safety advisors must ensure that they operate professionally at all times, while using the risk management process as a basis for their assessments and to effectively communication their risk approach. Indeed, IV006 noted that "those who can work closely with the team and communicate their position on safety issues effectively often achieve better results". All safety advisors should be able to articulate the reasoning behind their decisions, avoiding situations such as that recounted by IV010: "He [safety advisor] pulled us out of it [the task] as he had a feeling; basically, there was no evidence on the ground".

These examples underline the need for a mechanism for reporting safety advisors for inappropriate behaviour, while also balancing expectations around the safety advisor deployment triggers built into risk management processes. This will ensure that safety advisors can demonstrate value by supporting teams in challenging environments. IV012, a safety advisor, commented that "a lot of correspondents think of safety advisors as a hindrance… you've got to prove yourself again and again to that crew that you go out with in order to get respect".

Although news organisations and risk managers often view safety advisors as an essential part of news teams in conflict zones, there has been very little research and no attempt at a practical framework defining the role. This research makes clear that clarity on roles and responsibilities, together with guidance on effective communication, would increase the benefits from this valuable resource and gain safety advisor's greater industry-wide acceptance.
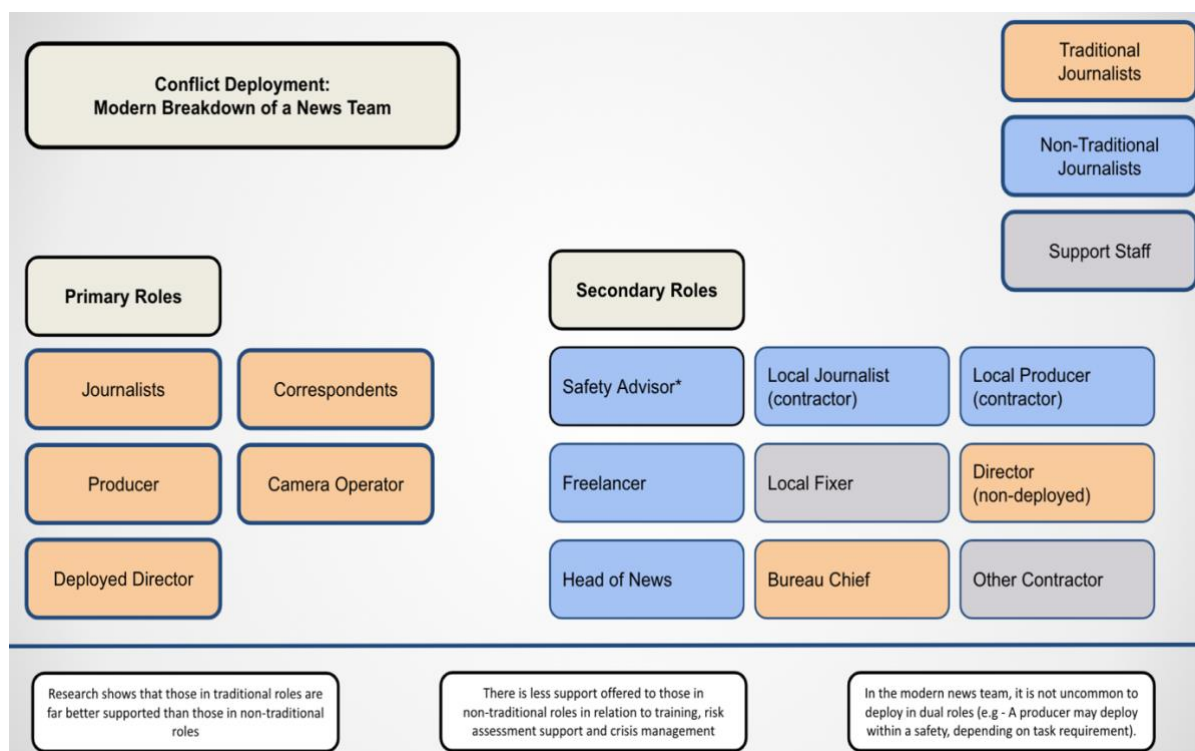
Figure 20 – Conflict Deployment: Modern Breakdown of a News Team

5.3 – Application of Control Measures

News organisations use three control measures to reduce the level of risk to an acceptable level before deploying: a safety advisor, pre-deployment training and personal protective equipment (PPE). The role of safety advisor has been discussed in the section above. The first phase quantitative research indicated that the majority of participants were happy with the PPE provided by their news organisations. As such, this section will largely focus on pre-deployment training. It will demonstrate that there is an "unofficial" acceptable level of training applied across new organisations and include an assessment of interviewees' experiential learnings.

5.3 a – Pre-Deployment Training

Pre-deployment training is one of the most effective risk control measures that can be applied by news organisations. It allows an element of "risk transfer" from the news organisation to the journalist and fulfils the minimum duty of care responsibility for the news organisation. In the UK, there is a legal requirement under Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HASAWA) to

ensure "provision of such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary, so far as is reasonably practicable, for the health and safety at work of his employees".

Although most news organisations stop short of mandating training for conflict zone deployments, interviewees outlined that the necessity of pre-deployment training was broadly accepted:

We rarely see people deploy without the training. (IV002)

I do not know anyone would be willing to take the risk of signing off for someone to go on a high-risk deployment if they had not been trained. You know, they open themselves up to a lot of problems. However, the one area that it kind of gets a bit murky is when someone pays for training themselves that wasn't from our preferred provider/vendor. (IV003)

Most organisations have internal governance that ensures that no staff member deploys without training; however, several organisations allow some dispensation, especially for breaking news:

We look at their experience. Have they worked in hostile locations before? We look at the experience of the rest of the team… If there is a case where HEFAT is out of date or it's a freelancer who doesn't have it, but they are particularly well suited for the story because they're in the town itself, then their experience will be taken into account as a potential mitigation. (IV002)

At the time of research, there were no set baseline standards for training across news organisations. Training providers generally set the standards, often based on feedback and tender documents provided by news organisations to ensure a robust course syllabus and quality control standards. As such, training was news organisation-specific and depended on the individual safety culture within said organisations.

Hostile Environment and First Aid Training.

Of all pre-deployment training courses, HEFAT is the most widely attended. It is normally scenario-based, focused on experiential learning and covers a wide range of topics including essential medical training and hostile environment awareness. The research suggested it was widely accepted by participants, with IV003 considering it sufficient and quite a good standard of training. IV007 highlighted the benefit with regard to a shared understanding of risk:

Something you get from going on the hostile environment training is a common understanding and shared experience and all the rest of those conversations. That's quite an important thing. I think it's creating a shared culture, shared understanding that everybody sees, as how we think about risk.

Public Order.

The research showed that after HEFAT, the next most commonly attended course was public order training, often referred to as riot training. Increased demand for this type of training comes amid a perceived increase in civil unrest globally over the past decade. While most news organisations do not class areas affected by civil unrest as conflict zones, some have mandated these courses due to the risks inherent in the fast-moving dynamics of public order events. IV001 notes that the course is mandated for those that "want to get in the thick of a public order event".

Participants also found the training valuable, with IV008 calling it "very, very useful". That said, there is crossover between elements of HEFAT and public order. As such, having one course that incorporated public order training with HEFAT would ensure more effective buy-in and reduce logistical challenges associated with attending two courses.

Advanced Medical Training.

Advanced Medical Training was considered the most beneficial course by interviewees, with IV001 noting that it was always favourably received. Many felt it extremely important to be able to provide emergency medical treatment to themselves or their teams. It was also highlighted as involving transferable skills that were also useful outside conflict zones: "You know, I think the only training that's ever been of any value in the real-world application has been medical stuff" (IV010).

Although safety advisors are partially responsible for medical support, several interviewees suggested that other team members should have medical skills:

It's all very well having a high-risk (safety) advisor or a medic with you. But if he gets shot in the face or, you know, seriously injured, do you have the skill set within that needed to look after him? Because if he's injured, you know, that puts everyone else at risk. (IV004)

One aspect of the Advanced Medical Training highlighted by the research was the concern that skills would deteriorate without regular refresher courses. As per the UK's HASAWA, it is a requirement to remain competent in order to effectively carry out the role of medic while deployed. This was found to pose a challenge, as even safety advisors, for whom medical support is a primary function, reported a lack of time in the annual training schedule or budget for refresher courses. The need to keep on top of this skill was outlined by three interviewees:

I think you should (refresh the skills) at least annually, if not biannually. (IV010)

I think, you know, a regular refresher on the medical would be great. (IV008)

It needs to be practical. I witnessed a course where the only practical thing they did was how to put on a pair of gloves with the training all being on PowerPoint. (IV0011)

More broadly, the research suggested that medical training was viewed as a critical part of news organisations' pre-deployment tool kit:

The medical side is probably going to be the most important bit. And how are they ready for their medical training? If something goes wrong, you know. How exposed are they? If one doesn't have medical training and the other two do, then that's an acceptable mitigation. (IV002)

5.3 b – Issues with Current Training Provision

The research highlighted that although training has improved, is widely accepted and well attended, some critical gaps need to be addressed to ensure the safe deployment of journalists. The following were identified as areas of concern by interviewees:

- Training for those in non-traditional roles

- Gaps in information security awareness

- Provision of bespoke training

- Mental health awareness

Training for Non-Traditional Roles.

The research identifies several practical challenges and gaps that need to be addressed to ensure that those deployed to conflict zones in non-traditional roles receive the same attention with regard to duty of care as those in traditional roles. This duty of care is a legal and moral requirement for news organisations; failures with regard to duty of care obligations may lead to prosecution or civil suits against risk owners, with a potentially detrimental impact on wider brand reputation.

IV002 stated that news organisations made efforts to provide adequate support wherever possible: "We try to get them back to the UK for the training. Sometimes we do training overseas. Somehow, it seems to work". However, for those in non-traditional roles, who are often based outside the UK or in areas where courses are not widely available, additional costs and logistical factors such as travel time and resources can complicate attendance: "So it does get a little bit challenging quite often in relation to where we are able to actually hold the training and also what resources were able to use… it is not the same level of training" (IV001).

Training taking place outside the UK would likely be deemed as meeting the "so far as is reasonably practicable" criteria in HASAWA, meaning that news organisations had technically met their legal obligations. However, organisations using local training providers, or locally run courses provided by UK companies, often receive training that is below the standard that journalists receive in the UK, especially with regards to the scenario-based training aspect. Indeed, the research demonstrates the difficulties associated with ensuring the application of duty of care across the news organisation, irrespective of geographical location or role. IV003 referred to the "big gap between the people who are most at risk and the people who get the most training". More research is needed to assess how these gaps could be closed, as reliance on local resources and non-traditional media in conflict areas is expected to continue to increase in the coming years.

Information Security Awareness.

Information security (InfoSec) was one of the main areas in which interviewees felt that sufficient guidance and training was lacking. This knowledge gap was perceived to extend across their peer group and news organisations, and even to those providing the training. Training courses have failed to keep pace with considerable advances in technology over the past decade. Interviewees were

especially concerned about ensuring the privacy of data from contacts and confidential contributors, and safely managing their public-facing profiles on various social media platforms. IV005 expressed this as an emerging threat, stating that "we never had [the] digital threat that we have today"; the senior safety advisor also outlined concerns that this lack of knowledge extended to training providers, noting that there was reluctance among some instructors to cover data security.

Some interviewees felt that management needed to take the lead in implementing more robust InfoSec awareness training for those deployed to conflict areas, with IV004 noting that a top-down ethos change was needed. This was furthered by IV005, a safety advisor, who highlighted that management could do more to enforce effective InfoSec awareness, given the pressure on journalists to maintain an online presence, especially on social media.

The research highlighted that journalists felt they had a duty of care to protect the security of contributors and sources. The majority of credible HEFAT courses provide InfoSec basics, to prevent journalists from compromising data from contributors and stakeholders. This was considered a minimum requirement, and most wanted more:

> The cyber stuff was quite good. [I am] always, always interested in getting more information about country-specific risks in the cyber world. So, if there was a search and if a country had a known method for… bugging your phone, or if we knew that the Russians use this type of malware or phishing scheme. (IV003)

This need for country-specific training was also expressed by IV0011, an experienced safety advisor, who noted that "for instance, with censorship somewhere like China, Ethiopia, Russia, if you have not got the proper preparation, you could compromise everything". An experienced risk manager, who had been involved in several high-profile incidents at one of the world's leading news organisations, highlighted that the involvement of outside sources also complicated training:

> How do you train that source? Because that source might not have an idea of how to secure the data and then, you know, where does the data go and where is that held? And then when you release that story, how to do it in a way you don't compromise the source and get that person targeted or at worst, killed. (IV001)

The interviewees also highlighted concerns, discussed in Chapter 2, about risks associated with social media and how it could compromise safety:

Social media and the whole issue about sharing location, information and visibility online is a new risk that we do talk about. But again, it's a good example of something where we would say you make it up as you go. (IV007)

As well as more pressure from management to enforce secure use of social media, there was also a feeling among interviewees that journalists must take steps to protect themselves and their teams from potential exposure on social media. IV005 expressed the opinion that many journalists were too absorbed in their profiles and the need to maintain it, while IV002 more explicitly talked about "frustration as people are tweeting everything and using Instagram when deployed".

Indeed, the study suggested that opinions on the use of social media were divided within news teams, with IV004, a senior producer, firmly stating:

I mean, the Twitter and Instagram thing massively f**** me off because particular print journalists, they will be so concerned with being like "I'm in Syria, here's me in a cafe, I'm in Syria". So, you not only left your f****** location on an Instagram box – I don't need it, I can just see the cafe where you're at.

The producer, who has deployed in some of the world's most dangerous areas, added that they believed that the limited targeted incidents was down to luck rather than good InfoSec discipline, and expressed the opinion that it would take a kidnap incident for these risks to be taken seriously.

Several interviewees, including IV001, highlighted the need for dedicated InfoSec training, outside HEFAT, due to the growing complexities and associated risks. Some training providers, including 1st Option, SEPAR and Pangolin, already provide bespoke courses; however, several participants felt that this should be higher priority for news organisations. Indeed, with the ever-increasing reliance on technology to report the news, good InfoSec will play vital role in ensuring that news teams can deploy safely to conflict areas. The research highlights that news organisations, journalists and safety advisors are not confident they have the required skills to reduce their exposure in this regard.

Provision of Bespoke Training.

Several participants highlighted the need for bespoke training for task-specific deployments. Although some providers do support news organisations with bespoke courses on a case-by-case basis, IV012 felt that these were usually outdated. Specific criticisms included a failure to account for all the risk variables and heavy reliance on the instructors' own experiential learnings rather than risks to news teams.

One example involved chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defence (CBRN) training provided for teams covering the 2014 Ebola epidemic in West Africa. Those that did not receive training from the World Health Organisation (WHO) and were required to deploy were supplied base-level training from private providers, often involving outdated lessons stemming from military experience. IV008 noted:

> The course was jacked up in a few days. While it covered the principle of keeping ourselves safe, it did not provide much context around the risks of covering such a story, and was based around the basics of putting on the PPE. I didn't feel fully equipped to cover the story.

Nevertheless, IV007 stated that some training was better than nothing, and a good start point, even if it only involved informal, ad hoc conversations.

This research suggests that news organisations must work in partnership with training providers to ensure that any new and emerging threats are adequately captured in bespoke courses, which should provide the correct context and be based on contemporary examples instead of trainer knowledge.

Mental Health Awareness.

The provision of mental health awareness training was highlighted as a significant area for improvement. Both those in traditional and non-traditional roles expressed that they had not been prepared for the potential impact of deployments on their mental health, and lacked a clear understanding of available pre- and post-deployment mental health support.

Several interviewees underlined concerns around the macho, ego-driven culture of conflict journalism, highlighted in the literary review (see Chapter 2), which prevented an acknowledgement of the impact of trauma on mental health:

I've been to pretty much every area of extreme poverty and deprivation, worked in every major refugee camp on the planet, and for a long time, it just was not even a question; we never even had a conversation about mental health. The attitude is not "do you need to talk to somebody about this event"; it was more "have a whisky in the evening, you know, and that that'll be fine" … from every person I know, there is definitely a fear of showing any weakness. (IV010)

So you build up an image of yourself as the war reporter, who goes around and covers all this nasty stuff, and by admitting that you suffer from mental health issues, it may be seen as a weakness. It's like this is who I am. This is what I do. (IV002)

IV001 highlighted that support was difficult to obtain in some news organisations, noting that their employer had staff with mental health difficulties that stemmed from the lack of support from previous employers. This was not uncommon, and the following comments highlight worrisome attitudes to mental health in the industry:

It's a touchy area to advise on mental health… there were definitely some correspondents who we knew they had mental health issues. But you definitely didn't feel that you were in a position where if you did highlight that as a reason for not deploying… it wouldn't be great as you can't be seen to be treating them negatively. (IV003)

There have been some improvements, but we've still got a hell of a long way to go. There's still a lot of stigmas attached to a lot of mistrust in relation to whether [speaking up] is going to completely compromise their careers. (IV001)

The comments highlight the need for better understanding of the stigmas around mental health in conflict reporting and the implementation of programs to encourage those affected to seek support. Organisations such as DART, the CPJ and INSI support news organisations with research, information and guidance; however, their internal processes are still heavily based on experiential learnings. IV002 highlights that although stigma is decreasing, it still has a huge impact, stating "if I had PTSD, I likely wouldn't admit it".

IV006 suggested that the exclusive focus on PTSD was too narrow given the small numbers of those impacted, nothing that "more focus should be put on wider mental health issues that impact far

more journalists". They added that greater awareness surrounding mental health resilience would also add value to news organisations.

Training is the primary tool available to news organisations with regard to mental health awareness. However, it is not being used effectively. Interviewees pointed to the current awareness training, generally conducted as part of HEFAT, as below standard and lacking detail. IV001, a risk manager, characterised the mental health section of the course as "rushed" and noted that there was not enough time to cover everything necessary.

Instructors' knowledge and experience were also called into question, with IV005 noting that, "It is one of those subjects were maybe older, long in the tooth, instructors won't touch it. There is an attitude of 'man up and get on with it'". Other interviewees also highlighted concerns over subject delivery:

> You can't leave mental health to the end of the course, with a pop-up presentation [which asks] why are they drinking alcohol? They are taking drugs – they must have PTSD. That can't be done. I think we need to talk about it from the very basic stress level and then build it up, let people identify maybe themselves, but it's about people looking at themselves. (IV005)

The need for improved instruction was furthered by IV001, who highlighted that the sessions were sometimes led by below-standard instructors and rendered irrelevant because they did not understand how news teams worked.

One positive aspect highlighted by those that had received mental health training or experienced mental health issues in the past was a perceived increased focus on mental wellbeing by news organisations and at the institutional level. Organisations such as Thomson Reuters and the BBC were highlighted as industry champions, leveraging their brand power to ensure broader awareness. This has been supported by certain journalists' publicly acknowledging and talking about the need to proactively manage their mental health issues. The sharing of such stories and the beginnings of a culture of vulnerability and openness is likely to benefit the conflict reporting industry. One participant noted:

> When it comes to mental health, I've had loads of counselling over the years, not because I've been on the brink of stuff, but just because I think it's like the gym or going for a run. I treat it

in the same manner. I think it's good to impact and assess your mental state with a professional and I think if you can do these things before, they become an issue, and if you're operating in a conflict zone, then you should be getting counselling irrespective. (IV010)

Overall, training has significantly improved since 2009 and remains the central risk control measure employed by news organisations for conflict zone deployments. However, the research suggests that courses have formed organically over time, meaning they are not subject to minimum standards. A proactive approach to training and the development of agreed industry-wide syllabuses would ensure that all news organisations operate to the same high standards. The research also identifies several areas, including but not limited to InfoSec, mental health awareness and non-traditional journalist roles, that require more effective training to ensure that news organisations fulfil their duty of care obligations.

5.3 c – Personal Protective Equipment

PPE is the equipment issued to journalists as part of risk mitigation measures, and includes, but is not limited to body armour, helmets, public order kits, medical equipment and CBRN equipment. Communications equipment was also provided to most interviewees, especially when covering natural disasters or areas with poor infrastructure. This research overwhelmingly demonstrated that the PPE provided to journalists by their organisations was robust and sufficient. While many stated that body armour was either too bulky, too heavy or not market-leading, most felt it was sufficient for them to carry out their role. IV008 noted that "they have got it right", before adding that "it is often not the newest of equipment, but I have never been refused any safety gear when deploying".

5.4 – Risk Owner Considerations

This section will look at the relationship between news teams and their organisations' risk owner. It will also explore the risk culture around conflict journalism – a key consideration that those approving risk assessments need to be aware of.

The risk owner is the person responsible for signing off the risk assessment and ensuring that there are "arrangements in place to cover their management health and safety" (UK Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations [MHSWR], 1999). By doing so, they are accepting liability for health and safety when deploying journalists. The risk owner can sit in a range of roles, but is often the news editor, head of newsgathering, head of news operations, director of coverage, or similar. Some organisations have different sign-off hierarchies depending on the perceived level of risk involved in the deployment. The researchers experience indicates that the BBC bases its risk assessment sign-off process on the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)'s travel risk ratings. Other commercial organisations have their own methodology, typically involving an external intelligence provider and some element of internal assessment. A safety advisor, if the organisation has one, will oversee these processes.

5.4.a - *Experiential Learning*

News teams that repeatedly deploy to conflict areas will have an abundance of experiential learning. From this career experience, including in conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen and Somalia, they are likely to have developed a robust understanding of the variety of risks they face on deployments. As highlighted in Chapter 2, cultural theory suggests that journalists are predisposed to accept a level of risk that would be considered too high in most other sectors. This was highlighted by IV010, who noted, "Oh, I definitely take more risks than other people necessarily would on shoots, to get the job done".

The journalist's perception of risk is often overlooked within risk management processes, with those deploying carrying out subjective assessments, based on their own risk appetite. As we have seen, a significant shift in the media landscape over the past decade has added a range of new risk variables and pressures for conflict journalists. There is now common agreement on the importance of support in managing risks; IV004, a senior producer, stated that "everyone has realised that you need to have support in place in a way that possibly didn't happen previously".

A key finding of the research was the need for a better understanding, and calculated assessment, of the impact of individuals' risk appetite on operations. It highlighted the following areas where improvements are necessary to ensure that risk assessments capture individual risks that may increase exposure:

- global communications allowing instant reporting and uploading of files

- the increase in (so-called) celebrity journalists

- the increase in reliance on social media platforms to report the news

The growth of social media has been accompanied by an increase in risks for journalists. Nearly all mainstream journalists have multiple social media accounts, and this is often even mandated in their employment contracts. However, as we have seen, this is not always matched by an understanding of the potential impact that a higher profile can have on safety and security.

IV008 blames the sometimes evident difference in risk appetite between journalists and other team members on "the ego factor and the on-camera factor". Several interviewees admitted that the impulse to "get the story" often took precedence over risk considerations. Three examples are detailed here:

I've often been the one who's been dangling out of a vehicle, which other people necessarily wouldn't want to dangle out of, but again, probably a bad idea in retrospect. (IV010)

Journalists often take added risks. I know a couple of the correspondents there chasing the explosions around Mosul and Syria because they want a better piece. They've always got to make a name for themselves. It's for contracts as well; pushing to get awards. (IV012)

There was one guy who left [organisation] years ago, and he was this little crazy guy sort of persona. And he said to me, there was a guy in Vietnam that got killed. And he says, I want to be just like that guy. (IV0011)

While this higher risk appetite can significantly increase the whole team's exposure, it cannot be captured in a generic risk assessment. Moreover, the impact extends to increased post-transmission risks, which should also be taken into account in risk assessment processes. Before the widespread use of social media, risks for local drivers, fixers and journalists were limited by their anonymity. This has changed as news reaches a global audience through platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, increasing exposure and often having consequences months after transmission. IV001 recalls journalists that "often push it" and in some cases "get themselves and other people killed (by oversharing on social media)".

Journalists are often engaged on fixed-term contracts (FTC) rather than open-ended contracts. These FTC are renewed periodically, with negotiations based on performance, coverage and level of exposure. This research found that journalists were more likely to take risks to get stories, increasing the whole team's exposure, depending the timing in their contract cycle. It also highlighted that this was not accounted for in existing risk management processes, or if it is, the knowledge is retained at senior management level. IV008, a camera operator, reported finding themselves at greater risk on several occasions when correspondents' contracts were perceived to be up for renewal. It is worth quoting an experience recounted by IV008 at greater length:

> There are some reporters that, you know, will take extreme risks. The best case, I was in Tikrit, embedded and there was a reporter, a well-known correspondent whose contract was coming up for renewal. ... That reporter wanted to put a camera inside the armoured vehicle, and drive back and forth, trying to draw fire. You know, it wasn't me, but we were all embedded together with another network and the other camera person from the other network said "no, I am not going to do that". The reporter [then said] "the military says it is fine. You'll be totally safe. It's armoured, all that kind of stuff. I'll call America. I'll get permission for you to get in". ... This was all because his contract was up for renewal. He had to come back to America with a big story. He was a domestic guy who wasn't based internationally. This is his one shot. … He's got to get some amazing stuff and come back. So, it's ego and contract that drives risk. (IV008)

However, this heightened risk appetite was not universal. Several of those interviewed highlighted that many journalists had developed a more risk-averse attitude, based on experiential lessons, knowledge of the increasingly fractured nature of modern conflicts and limited availability of support. Some interview excerpts highlight this:

People who've maybe been in the field quite a bit and have seen this stuff, and it's like, you know what, I don't want to come back in a body bag. You know what? I don't care that that piece isn't going to make it and I am not doing that. (IV009)

The camera people who, in many cases, have seen more, we tend to be a bit more cautious. (IV008)

A change in attitude to things like mental health has motivated people to take sort of safety much more seriously. (IV004)

In some ways it's getting together with the team first, sitting down and saying, "you know, we're not going to push anything". If one person has a bad feeling about going anywhere, then we don't do it. At the end of the day, there're a lot of journalists out there that have that bad gut feeling, pushed it and either been seriously injured or killed or taken hostage; trust your gut. (IV012)

These examples highlight that while some journalists will always be keen to push boundaries, a balanced and, above all, experienced team will limit undue risks. This suggests that level of experience needs to be better accounted for in the risk assessment process, with each team member assessed based on their value. A number of those interviewed highlighted this:

I think a lot of that comes through experience, I think when you're young and you're out there on your first rodeo, you know, you maybe don't see the kind of dangers and the fears that more experienced journalists do. (IV009)

If I had a gaggle of inexperienced kids with me, then, you know, at the same time my voice counted more than their voices because of their lack of experience. (IV006)

Importantly, however, the research also suggests that a level of risk acceptance must be built into a conflict zone risk assessment. With so many variables in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) environment, not all risk can be mitigated, transferred or managed. IV008, a camera operator, encapsulates this understanding:

> I mean, in for a penny, in for a pound, right? If I'm going to someplace, I know it could get very, very ugly very quickly. And I kind of prepared for that. But don't bullshit me. Don't try to sell me. It's all going to be f*****g wonderful. … It's not Disneyland.

5.4.b - *Risk Ownership by News Organisations*

This section will focus on elements that risk owners should consider as part of their deployment methods. The following were highlighted by study participants as essential factors to ensure safety when deploying into areas of conflict:

- composition of news team

- management handling of risk assessment process

- perception of additional risks placed on journalists by management

Composition of News Team.

Effective team composition was flagged by participants as critical for successful deployments. A team must not only work well together, but needed time to develop trust, respect and an understanding of mutual strengths and weaknesses. Indeed, some interviewees highlighted their frustration that teams that had worked closely together were sometimes broken up and replaced with a group where the dynamics were problematic. IV012 suggested that this took place with inexperienced risk owners, who were "more worried about getting the team out the door". Another, IV006, stated that this was a hallmark of editors that had not previously worked as journalists.

The importance of a cohesive team was flagged by IV008, a senior camera operator, who was involved in several high-profile incidents where the team made the difference between a successful outcome or further disaster. He noted that his "main concern" was who was in a team rather than where they were deploying:

There are just some people who I know, where we don't get along. We cover the story differently and that is that. You don't want to be in a dodgy situation [where] you're not getting along. Management really doesn't, I think, understand the fact that, if you've got a good team and that team works well together, [you should] keep them together. Throwing people together in the mix at the last-minute leads to all sorts of stress and trouble. (IV008)

Team placement is the responsibility of the risk owner. In the past, those who become risk owners were usually experienced journalists with many years of conflict understanding. Despite the comments noted above, this still does appear to be the case in some organisations. Participant IV007 characterised risk owners as generally clear-sighted and aware: "I've always been very impressed at how closely they wanted to know about risks and the context we were working in."

Management Handling of Risk Assessment Process.

Risk owners are, in effect, the gatekeepers to all deployments for journalists. Their challenge is to ensure a balanced approach, given multiple competing priorities, including internal politics, personality management, management of external communications, brand reputation and risk exposure for staff and stakeholders. The pressure on risk owners comes from all levels, meaning that they must be skilled at prioritisation and ensure a commensurate level of risk is applied at all times. An interviewee highlighted that strong personalities were required in this role:

The pressure tends to come from middle management. I think the big boss right at the top doesn't want people to be put at extra risk. He does want things to happen, and he won't let an egotistical correspondent cause problems. The problem is the middle managers want to look good to him [leadership] and they are concerned about the power. If they [risk owner] were just

willing to relax a little bit and take a bit of a longer view [they would] make a safer place for everybody. (IV008)

Some interviewees expressed cynicism about management attitudes. IV006 charged that management were more concerned with managing the flow of paperwork than the risks; specifically, IV006 charged that managers did not fully understand what the risks on paper represented on the ground and that this difference represented "two completely different mindsets". Several interviewees' perception was that management tried to expunge themselves from responsibility for tasks with a higher-than-average level of risk attached. IV004 noted that "there's a liability concern and being able to demonstrate that they've done the right thing. I think they would rather cover their butts. . . Not everyone is like this, but I think it's symptomatic just to say no".

The research suggested that management could face challenges in getting proper engagement from news team members in the risk assessment process, which appeared to be largely perceived as a formality to cover the organisation for insurance purposes. For example, IV004 described the risk assessment as a bureaucratic exercise, about "getting the box ticked and getting you out the door". IV012 and IV005 also used variations of the phrase "tick box exercise" to describe the risk assessment process. Indeed, IV012, a senior risk manager, expressed doubt that risk assessments contributed to improving security on deployments, and stated that they did not believe that risk owners were making knowledge-based decisions: "It's more a corporate 'cover your arse' kind of thing". Another participant expressed doubt that risk managers were skilled enough to understand the risks:

The reporters and teams on the ground always just want to get on the ground and use common sense to do the story. So, they are always going to rely on the people above them [deployment managers/risk owners] to catch it [risk]. And unless they're given the proper training, those risk owners, they're not going to catch it either. (IV002)

The research suggests that it would be beneficial if members of news teams understood the breadth of the challenges faced by risk owners. Risk owners are often responsible for large global or regional remits, which is likely to make detailed knowledge of every conflict within their remit a

challenge. Nevertheless, they are liable to prosecution (in the UK under HASAWA) if the correct duty of care is not applied. Despite this, they can face immense pressure from journalists to assess deployments as safe and enable the news teams to get "out on the ground", ignoring critical risks. IV008 stated: "I won't work with the correspondents who do try to, you know, persuade management." Those who apply such undue pressure on risk owners fail to understand the legal and moral pressures to get this right.

Risk owners have a legal responsibility to ensure they have applied mitigations as far as practically possible to ensure a task can be carried out safely; there is no dispensation for work in conflict zones. Only by engaging journalists and other team members in logistical planning and details, can managers increase the credibility of the risk assessment process and ensure they have the correct information to effectively identify the risk levels associated with deployments.

Figure 21 – Basic Risk Approval Framework

Perception of Additional Risks Placed on Journalists.

The research showed that news organisation risk owners and management can, often inadvertently, increase the pressure on members of their news teams around conflict deployments,

contributing to associated risks. Participants indicated that pressure applied by senior management to "get the story", often compounded by reduced news budgets and increased competition, could increase physical risks. IV004, a senior producer, highlighted the need for better collaboration between risk owners and teams on the ground to understand these pressures, noting "they have a responsibility beyond insurance and accountability".

Interviewees alluded to pressures stemming from the continuous news cycles, requirements for overnight live shots and more general physical risks associated with conflict deployments. One noted that "they [management] cannot understand the environment and they can therefore sign off on things that they possibly shouldn't sign off on" (IV004). The research highlighted that participants felt that risk owners often applied undue pressure to no beneficial effect:

When you go to a place like Syria, and they [management] spent the money to send you there, [so] you end up working nearly 24 hours straight. Management will never step in and say, let these guys sleep a little bit and, more importantly, let the drivers sleep. And after three or four days of going on, two or three hours of sleep, you increase the risks of car accidents happening. (IV008)

Although not accounted for as standard in the risk assessment process, some organisations demand regular welfare check-ins at pre-agreed times. Although this is generally good practice, the interviewees suggested that it could add to pressures on news teams. One safety advisor highlighted frustrations and risks associated with the process:

I think it's quite a hindrance. . . when they're telling you to call in every two hours; or in the past going into Raqqa, when they're telling you to call in every 30 minutes or every time you move from A to B. Instead of watching out for the team, looking at the dynamics on the ground and planning for the task, you're phoning up HQ to pass and potentially putting your team at risk by doing so. (IV012)

As such, the research suggested that it was sensible for risk owners to exercise restraint in terms of such communications. Including agreed guidelines for appropriate welfare check-ins in a

standardised risk assessment process could help build a constructive relationship between management and news teams in conflict zones that accounts for pressures on the ground.

5.5 - Risk Assessment

As highlighted in the above section, several interviewees felt that their news organisations' risk assessment process was inconsistent and provided limited practical benefits for teams deploying on the ground. However, risk owners have a legal obligation to ensure mitigations are in place, the level of risk is acceptable and that teams have the competence to conduct ongoing assessments of risk levels once deployed. This research shows that the lack of a standardised industry-wide risk assessment process has resulted in conflict between journalists and risk owners regarding the level of acceptable risk.

The lack of a standardised risk assessment process also reduces wider cohesion within the industry. News organisations often have a high turnover of staff, and new employees have to adapt to new risk assessment processes that can be very different to those of their previous organisation. A standardised process would increase the likelihood that all employees are familiar with risk assessment requirements. This would, in turn, increase management confidence in the ability of journalists to operate freely, knowing that "safety red lines" were understood and agreed upon in advance. A consistent, standardised approach to risk assessments for conflict zone reporting would reduce potential for confusion and conflict, and limit the need to cancel assignments. IV012 noted that the process should to be "non-repetitive, quick, pre-populated where possible, and add actual value to both journalists and news editors".

More broadly, while IV001 noted that some media organisations were perceived as not taking the safety and welfare of staff seriously, others including IV004 and IV005 indicated that there had been a sea change in approaches to risk management, including a recognition of the importance of proper safety procedures: "I think the Arab Spring in Egypt was an eye-opener, as journalists took a damn good kicking. ... It made [organisation] sit up and sort of re-evaluate sort of both training and

safety." (IV005). The increased targeted risks that journalists face underscore the need for further improvements. However, the research highlighted that safety advisors have struggled to articulate the benefits of and reasoning behind the risk assessment process. One interviewee stated that they had consistently tried to "get them [journalists] to change the culture and to understand why they're actually doing it [the risk assessment]" (IV005).

The following areas of the risk assessment process will be dealt with in this section:

- Risk assessment engagement

- News organisation perceptions of risk assessment process

- Dynamic and standing risk assessments

- Risk assessment awareness

5.5.a - Risk Assessment Engagement

This research outlined the need for wider collaboration on the risk assessment process. The most common approach outlined by participants involved the producer preparing the risk assessment and sending it to the risk owner for approval. However, IV002 highlighted that there was no hard and fast rule: "It's normally the producer, but as long as it gets done and it's shared around the team, it doesn't really matter who does it." Indeed, one concern highlighted by the research was that data collection for the risk assessment was sometimes managed by those that lacked experience; IV003 noted that it was usually the job of the "junior person". These people may lack a robust understanding of the risks or the necessary experience to provide the correct context, both of which are critical components for effective risk assessments.

As already also highlighted, participants repeatedly noted a lack of engagement by team members in the risk assessment, with IV001 stating that "I just don't have the confidence that everybody then opens it and reads it". IV002 noted that while the producer completed the assessment, the rest of the team "might skim read it afterwards, but I doubt they're really engaging with it".

Some participants stated that, on occasion, team members deployed without ever seeing a risk assessment: "There are actually some correspondents, some camera crew who just turn up for the job on day one anyway. They just get told what the plan is ideally at the last minute" (IV007). Even when there had been input from the wider team, it was often not input of sufficient quality, as "a lot of people would just do the bare minimum. ... I wonder if everything went wrong, how useful it would actually be" (IV003).

Effective engagement in the pre-deployment risk assessment is vital, especially as all journalists must have the opportunity to question any elements they find uncomfortable. Risk assessment transparency accounts for the human factor and details the process for handling incidents (Gadd et al., 2003). Those in non-traditional roles have even less engagement with the process, and are often not made aware of risk mitigation measures before deployment. IV010, a freelance producer, stated that "although I have been asked my opinion on various things beforehand, I've not been involved in the whole process of the paperwork". This can mean that individuals deploy to conflict zones without a detailed understanding of the level of risk they will be exposed to, what mitigations are in place and support contingencies for a crisis. The same freelancer producer noted that they were forced to carry out their own risk assessment on several occasions, suggesting a clear breach of duty of care on the part of their employers*:*

> I just started doing that stuff myself so I would have my own local contacts, or I would speak to people I knew in the country and I would sort of build the picture myself, because before deploying, the organisations I was working with just weren't going to do it. (IV010)

When safety advisors are deployed with journalists, they often take on some responsibility for the risk assessment and broader engagement. Nevertheless, there often remains a lack of active engagement. One safety advisor noted:

> They pretend that they've read it on the plane on the way into the conflict zone. [There are] very few journalists actually who've read it and who've fully sort of understood it. I will

basically sit down with the journalist either just before we go or first night in the hotel and talk through all the relevant sections, so that they do actually fully understand what's what. (IV006)

IV002 stated that there was benefit in getting the team to discuss the risks face-to-face before deploying. However, IV001 noted the lack of a system to check that everybody had read the risk assessment and signed off on it. To ensure legal compliance, most news organisations now include a statement such as: All news team members have had the opportunity to have input in the risk assessment and understand the level of risk on the deployment (IV002). However, many of those interviewed did not feel that such statements were sufficient to support active engagement in the risk assessment process.

Engagement was highlighted as critical to ensuring that every deploying team member had an opportunity to consider their own risk appetite in relation to the assignment. IV001 noted that it was critical that teams deployed "voluntarily" and that understanding the risks was part of this. The statement highlights the concept of risk transfer; however, more energy needs to be put into creating an environment where teams feel they can or want to actively participate in the process. Overall, this research highlights that engagement is a critical component of the risk management framework. Further research, including a detailed breakdown of the current processes, will help enable improved engagement.

5.5 b – Perceptions of Risk Assessment Process

A recurring theme of the research was that the term "risk assessment" did not adequately describe the pre-deployment process followed by news organisations committed to risk mitigation and duty of care obligations. For companies based in the UK, which most of the news organisations included in this research are, the risk assessment is legally required (under HASAWA) to:

- Estimate the likelihood of occurrences of specific undesirable events
- Detail the severity of the harm or damage caused

- Provide a value judgement concerning the significant results

The risk assessment comprises two distinct elements; the risk estimation and the risk evaluation, also referred to as risk mitigation (Gadd et al., 2003). Most interviewees preferred to term the risk assessment as just one, critical component of a more extensive "planning document" for deployments to conflict zones. This would be a "live" document with a broader scope that increased engagement. IV002 advocates strongly for a change in terminology, stating that "I don't know a single job that doesn't benefit from planning, but you call it a risk assessment and it sends shivers down people's spines". An experienced producer, responsible for hundreds of risk assessments, agreed:

Reframing it as a planning document would have a great benefit, because then it's like, yes, the risk assessment makes up parts of this document, but, you know, you've seen this document taking shape, that we do together. ... We go into detail, what routes we're likely to be taking. (IV004)

Several interviewees stated that they felt the risk assessment process was not treated as a priority by either journalist or risk owners, especially during breaking news or "fastball" deployments – highlighting what is referred to by the researcher as the competitor risk pendulum:

Generally, it's last minute and there's just no time to do the risk assessment. You're packing and often you're going from one assignment to another assignment, so the cameraperson is very often not involved, and we've got to pack and we have to prepare for the task. (IV008)

Some interviewees also complained that their organisations' risk assessment was too detailed. They stated that it should ideally only reflect what the team needed to know, and allow them to take more responsibility for their own risk on deployments. IV007, an experienced bureau manager, highlighted that this problem was related to the challenges that news organisations had in defining an acceptable level of risk, which he describes as "detrimental" and which "limits news gathering opportunities on the ground". This was underscored by another experienced producer, who highlighted that "everything becomes so prescriptive" (IV004).

Overall, participants felt that flexibility needed to be built into the process to allow those deploying to contextualise the level of risk on the ground. Nevertheless, news organisations must have an opportunity to question, challenge and express dissent before deploying. As such, the risk assessment should ideally be framed as a series of talking points to support journalists and risk owner alignment.

5.5.c - Other Risk Assessment Types

Once teams have deployed to conflict areas, they often have access to more and better information, which means that plans change. This requires the initial risk assessment to be updated, sometimes repeatedly, with amendments then requiring approval by the risk owner. The aim of these ongoing assessments is to ensure that the residual risk remains "as low as is reasonably practicable" (as defined in HASAWA) and that news organisations are providing the correct level of duty of care at all times. The UK's Ministry of Defence (MoD) elaborated further on what this entailed: "This does not mean that an activity assessed as low risk needs no further action; nor does it mean that an activity assessed as high risk is unacceptable" (MoD, 2020).

In practical terms, it means that more mitigation measures should be applied to areas or situations where the risk is higher. The research demonstrated that news organisations use two methods to ensure such efforts are made during deployments:

- Dynamic risk assessments
- Standing risk assessments

Dynamic Risk Assessments.

While not enshrined in law, dynamic risk assessments are used in fast-moving situations or during an incident, when decisions must sometimes be made with incomplete or inaccurate information. These are usually situations where the risk is immediate, meaning that the assessment may not be written or recorded, but carried out verbally. According to the MoD (2020), "generic risk assessment"

is the correct term for risk assessments conducted before departure; once a team deploys, the term "task or activity-specific risk assessment" should be utilised for changes to the pre-deployment plan. The term "dynamic risk assessment" should be used for all urgent/critical tasks, where it is not possible to record the assessment details because delay could cause harm; however, it should not be used purely to save time or avoid additional work or approvals (MoD, 2020).

This research shows that news organisations use the term more loosely, describing all risk assessments carried out after the initial pre-deployment one as "dynamic". Most organisations approve initial risk assessments with the proviso that, as more information becomes available or if there is a significant change to atmospherics or ground truth, further changes are made, requiring additional approval. Many journalists view this process as a check on their creativity and overbearing. Indeed, research participant generally characterised the dynamic risk assessment process in the same way they characterised the pre-deployment risk assessment, namely as a "check box exercise" to appease management and allow the news team to "get on with the task without interference" (IV002). Participants also noted that there was often little consideration for the risk process in dynamic assessments. IV006 suggested these assessments were rushed for breaking news, and that it was more about having something "on paper" for the insurance assessor so "it would appear that the right things have been done".

It appears that both teams on the ground and news organisations might view this approach as beneficial, because it allows the journalists to move more freely, without full consideration of additional risk mitigations. The lack of a thorough dynamic assessment only becomes an issue in the event of an incident, and due to the often remote and fast-changing environment in conflict areas, it would be very difficult for investigators to prove any malice, ill intent or failure of duty of care on the part of news organisations. This suggests that the dynamic risk assessment process requires thorough evaluation, with a framework adopted across the industry. A simplified process, with guidelines on what critical information news teams must capture, would improve the assessment process, allow more effective engagement and manage expectations of both risk owners and journalists.

Standing Risk Assessments.

Like the dynamic risk assessment, a standing risk assessment is not an official category but a practice that has developed over time. It initially denoted risk assessments covering longer-duration assignments, for example, to account for risks for those deployed in overseas bureaus. The reality is that individuals on certain longer-term assignments are required to accept a heightened level of risk. With the increasing reliance on non-traditional roles, news organisations have also been forced to consider the additional, persistent risks faced by freelancers and local journalists. This means that generic risk assessments are carried out covering all staff members stationed in a specific location, even local journalists, to ensure that news organisation are fulfilling their duty of care obligations.

The research suggests that while such assessments are positive in principle, in practice, the process leaves much to be desired. There is often little input from local staff or anyone residing in the country. Moreover, there is a sense that mitigations within these assessments are not followed, especially in light of the lack of clear delineation indicating when staff are "on-duty" and what comprises "everyday life", where the duty of care ends. IV003 described the standing assessments as "almost laughable. ... Should there be an incident, these assessments would not stand up in court [as a commensurate level of duty of care]".

A well-experienced bureau chief highlighted the practical challenges associated with these standing risk assessments:

> How do we risk assess the activities, the bureau, that's going out day after day, doing stuff in that place? How do we know the risk, when our risk assessment started in May [when] there's a certain bunch of risks and it's quite clear to define, but then they change in July? (IV007)

This research suggests that both the standing and dynamic risk assessments are either being misused or, at the very least, are not properly understood, especially in light of the changing dynamics of conflict reporting since 2009. Further detailed research is necessary to examine in more depth how risk assessments are utilised on deployments and where the safety gaps exist. Only after a fuller

assessment will risk owners and journalists be equipped to properly fulfil their legal and moral obligations with regard to risk mitigation in conflict areas.

5.6 - Risk Assessment Awareness

The attitudes to the risk assessment process highlighted above suggest that there is a need to elevate the status of risk assessment training and awareness to make it a critical element of pre-deployment training. Most organisations and their training providers include this as part of the HEFAT curriculum; nevertheless, IV005 highlighted that education around risk assessments remained poor and that more needed to be done to change attitudes from the top-down. Buy-in from the leadership of news organisations would allow risk assessment training to be enshrined in organisational culture. An experienced producer underlined this when he stated that, "the risk assessment process as taught should be much more an integrated part of the planning, that you deal with [together] with your team, rather than it being viewed as this form that you need to fill in" (IV004).

HEFAT was rated by most participants as a fun and engaging scenario-based training programme. As such, a potential extra half-day of static, desk-bound training on risk assessments would not necessarily be popular, including with trainers, many of whom come from a military background and favour scenario-based training. Indeed, one interviewee stated that it could prove challenging to get some trainers to incorporate this element, noting that, "some instructors don't enjoy doing it and so they're not really engaged; and they probably also don't necessarily understand some of them, you know, the process as well" (IV001).

The research suggested that experienced senior journalists had much to contribute to such training sessions. They were able to add context in the form of anecdotes and demonstrate the value of the wider risk management/assessment process to less experienced colleagues. Indeed, some news organisations use their own journalists for in-house refresher training, to pass on internal lessons learned; IV005 noted that in training "you have old school journalists [who have] been around a long time; it's their 15th refresher class, and they love it".

A move away from the use of inexperienced (in media) military trainers, to the use of subject-matter experts in the form of media safety advisors with on-the-ground experience with news teams, supported by experienced journalists, would be a positive step for news organisations. Improved training around risk assessments is especially important as it remains the primary risk control measure employed by news organisations. It would improve understanding of the benefits of risk assessments and engagement with the process by news teams, closing a significant gap in current risk management processes.

Figure 22 – Risk Assessment for Conflict Deployment Framework:

02

Control Measures Improvements

- A lack of training offered to those in non-traditional roles, in comparison to their traditional counterparts - Agreement on mandatory norms should be debated.
- The need to improve offering of Information Security & Mental Health training.
- Mandate the minimum level of training before deploying, with a clear framework for any dispensation given - risk acceptance.

04

Risk Assessment

- Currently a lack of engagement at all levels.
- An urgent need to elevate the risk assessment planning to ensure confidence and flexibility in the process.
- An overwhelming omission of certain risks aimed at higher risk individuals including gender risks, female travellers and the LBGTQ+ Community.
- Current risk assessments processes do not effectively account for cultural sensitivities, language or those risk tolerance of those in non-traditional roles.

05

Deployment Monitoring

- Development of flexible ongoing threat assessment that allows flexibility for deployed teams.
- Risk Owner New Considerations.
  - Competitor Risk Pendulum.
  - Effective Management of Risk Apathy.
- Build an effective framework for use of safety advisor, highlighting where deployment value and safety can be improved upon.

06

Contingency Planning

- Overconfidence in news organisations ability to manage risk in higher risk crisis situation.
- Risk owners should effectively communicate limitation to manage journalists expectations.
- There is a need to close identified gaps on crisis management planning for those in non-traditional roles to ensure duty of care obligations are maintained.
- News organisations should look to conduct stress testing prior to large scale conflicts to ensure effective and test plans in advance.

07

Task Closedown

- There needs to be a more effective method of capturing lessons learned across news organisations.
- Any lessons or experiential learnings should be recorded to reinforce future trainings.
- A method to allow confidential reporting on mental health concerns, with news organisations aiming to reduce stigma amongst news teams.
- Encourage experienced journalists to play an active role in championing risk reduction measures.

Figure 23 –Highlighted Areas of Improvement in Conflict Deployment Framework

5.7 - New Considerations

News organisations often overlook new considerations, including critical emerging threats, in the risk assessment process. This can directly impact the safety of those deployed. This section will look at participant perceptions of:

- Risk apathy

- The competitor risk pendulum

- Non-traditional media and risk assessment processes

- LBGTQ+ and gender issues

5.7 a - Risk Apathy

After repeated deployments to the same conflict zones, journalists often become complacent of the risks. Additional risk variables, such as fatigue, over-familiarity or over-confidence, compound this complacency. Risk apathy was highlighted by participants as a significant problem for non-traditional journalists, who are often based in conflict zones for extended periods, and may therefore become desensitised to the risks. One interviewee expressed the opinion that it was sometimes "dangerous" to have new teams that were repeatedly deployed to the same area, because they became "a little casual with the whole risk assessment process" and "didn't really engage with the team or new threats on the ground" (IV002). This was furthered by IV003, a safety advisor who had also deployed as a producer on several occasions, who referred to the risk of "fatigue" and "complacency" with regard to the risk assessment process. One participant comment captured this inherent risk especially well:

> I think there's a huge difference between risk and recklessness. You can spend a lot of time in an environment… getting to know the risks and becoming comfortable with it. … This is one

of the reasons I don't just solely do hostile environments of war, because all of my friends who do just do that have gone slightly mad... they take risks that I think too absolutely insane. By having some space, you automatically prevent risk inertia. (IV004)

This suggests that processes must be in place to encourage personnel to challenge the risk assessment, allowing team members to question the task overview and ensure more effective risk mitigation. This is of greater importance for repeat, long term postings, where it is critical to ensure that the risk assessment is updated to represent current threats.

As highlighted in a previous section, many news organisations conduct standing risk assessments, which are updated regularly and cover all staff stationed in a specific location. All those who fall under this are required to sign a document stating that they will operate according to this standing assessment. However, adherence is patchy, especially with the increasing use of non-traditional roles, including local journalists and freelancers that might chafe under restrictions imposed from afar.

Risk apathy also supports cultural theory with regard to journalism, which states that the media culture requires news teams to accept a certain level of risk. This likely contributes to the prevalent attitude, viewing the risk assessment process a bureaucratic hoop to jump through. However, the research also underlined that attitudes vary:

I think you get some who just want to get the story and they'll do anything to get the story, and then you get some who are concerned about the security aspects of the task as well. People are different [in terms of conflict risk appetite]. ... I know when I was a freelance photographer, I was doing stuff that a security adviser wouldn't let me do because I wanted to get the shot. I'm sure lots of lots of journalists are probably the same. They say they will push as far as they can. (IV002)

Over-Familiarity

Those who spend an extended amount of time in areas of conflict run the risk of becoming too close to their sources, the contributors or the host government, where often the line between journalism and activism. This can increase the risk.

Complacency

Should journalists operate in conflict areas extensively, they may become complacent if conducting high risk tasks on a daily basis, where they take unnecessary risk as they spend more time.

Overconfidence

There is a risk of on longer deployments that teams may become overconfident, especially as they may start to acclimatise to the increased level of risk. By limiting the time that teams spend in areas of conflict, it will ensure that they are able to re calibrate their risk tolerance and appetite for overall risk.

Risk Inertia

Inertia, or resistance to change, occurs when the dynamics of the conflict changes. Unless acted upon, or managed, it may increase the risk due to deployed teams' failure to notice, or want to change the way they operate. The very comment of "we have always done it this way", exemplifies the increased risk.

Figure 24 – Risk Apathy and the Compounded Risk

5.7 b - Competitor Risk Pendulum

For this study, the term competitor risk pendulum, has been adopted to describe the paradigm shift in risk appetite occurring in response to the actions of competitor organisations or individuals. As previously mentioned, most organisations have internal "red lines" that they will not cross; however, these are often subjective, dependant on internal process and change at an organisational, management and operational level. The research suggests that such "red lines" were routinely crossed by news teams and journalists during coverage of the armed conflict against Islamic State in Syria and Iraq.

News organisations were generally wary of the significant risks associated with kidnapping, improvised explosive devices (IED) and broader conflict-related issues and avoided deploying journalists to cover the conflict. However, on several occasions, once one news organisation decided to deploy to cover a story, a domino effect ensued, with all other major organisations following suit. The

question was, had the risk changed enough to justify deployment, or was it simply that the editorial imperative took precedence because the competitor had deployed first? IV004 commented that, "you have to make decisions that mean you are sometimes taking an increased risk level", partly due to "management's desire to be first". IV005 underlined this point, noting that, "I have seen correspondents on the ground make phone calls to their bureaus, and because [news organisation] has gone in – I've got to get in there to get the story".

Dynamic risk assessments are conducted to help support teams once they are deployed. Although this can help make rapid changes in pragmatic and operationally beneficial ways, the risk may be miscalculated under the urgent pressure to capture the same or better footage than competitors. Indeed, as noted in the above section on dynamic risk assessments, the process can be rushed, especially for breaking news, and viewed as a bureaucratic exercise for insurance purposes.

It is a challenge for risk owners to assess how far the competitor risk pendulum impacts their deployments. Any adverse consequences of deploying based on competitive pressure are only captured in after-action reviews, generally in the wake of a significant incident. However, journalistic freedom is considered fundamental by participants, with many journalists expressing a lack of confidence that management has the context to make the correct decisions for the team on the ground. Indeed, at times, this has resulted in journalists being creative with the truth to ensure they can get the story.

The Competitor Risk Pendulum often reduces the credibility of risk-management frameworks. This is when there is a shift in risk appetite and acceptance based on the actions of a competitor where organisational "red lines" are routinely crossed. This is to ensure risk owners do not miss out on breaking news, especially if a competitor has already deployed. This ultimately undermines their own risk assessment process and reduced engagement across their entire news organisations.

Increased exposure and lack of initial assessment due to competitor deployments

Current risk tolerance threshold with adequate risk assessment

Risk Assessment criteria for planned deployments

Figure 25 – Competitor Risk Pendulum

5.7 c - Non-Traditional Media and Risk Assessment Process

Those deployed in non-traditional roles within conflict reporting, such as freelancers, local journalists, fixers and other contributors, often have a very different approach to managing risk. Distance from news organisation offices, an understanding of the local culture and, on some occasions, a lack of awareness of the risk mitigation processes they *should* follow, were just some factors that interviewees highlighted. The research also showed that the approach taken by news organisations towards risk is vastly different depending on whether they are deploying a parachute journalist/international team or using non-traditional journalists. The types of risks and level of exposure that non-traditional journalists face, along with those in support roles (drivers, fixers, contributors etc.), are also very different, as they often live in the conflict area; this poses challenges for organisations that want to assess the risks they face and how to mitigate them.

Some interviewees felt that those in non-traditional roles were at less risk in conflict zones, and that their use reduced overall risks for the organisation. For example, IV002 noted that they were "already in that situation and already doing that work. But this time they will just be doing it for us". However, a commensurate level of duty of care needs to be applied for all staff. Moreover, this attitude

fails to take account of the fact that working for an international news organisation often increases risk exposure for those that live and work in the conflict area to a far greater extent than for those that fly in to cover a story. Despite this, when interviewees sketched how risks were discussed with those in non-traditional roles, they painted a picture of an informal, ad-hoc process, rather than a thorough assessment. For example, IV002 stated:

> We would ask them if they were okay with proceeding [on task] and they said they were okay with it. ... We will take that as them making an informed decision on it [risk] themselves. Which you can kind of understand, these people have to be given a certain amount of agency to make decisions for themselves. (IV002)

One interviewee stated that organisations often did not include details of all available fixers and drivers on their risk assessments; those for which there was less information could be used in an emergency. Several participants also pointed out that the risk assessment and planning documents were usually not shared in their entirety with drivers and fixers for security reasons. One participant highlighted this:

> If you don't trust the fixer, you wouldn't necessarily share the most intimate workings of your plan or your contingency with someone you don't fully trust. But on the other hand, the fixer is the person who's most at risk by this task and is going to be there when you leave and go back to the UK. (IV003)

Regardless of security concerns associated with those in non-traditional roles, it is important that they are provided details of the risk assessment and mitigation plan relevant to their task, to allow them to make informed decisions about their own safety.

5.7 d - LGBTQ+ and Gender Issues

Since 2009, there has been an increase in awareness with regard to the risks for journalists deploying to conservative areas, where intolerant attitudes, violence or persecution targeting women or

members of the LGBTQ+ community may be a concern. Prior to 2009, identifying as a member of the LGBTQ+ community or as female would restrict the opportunity for deployment to conflict zones. However, news organisations are changing their approach and increasing representation at all levels. Increased diversity in the news industry is also underpinned by comprehensive anti-discrimination laws governing employment, including the UK's Equality Act, 2010.

However, risk management policies and assessments have failed to keep pace. Those women and LGBTQ+ journalists that do deploy face a variety of threats and there is a question mark as to whether news organisations cover their duty of care obligations in this regard. Many interviewees highlighted this as a significant concern, especially in conflict areas where adequate support structures are often lacking.

Overwhelmingly, interviewees were aware of specific risks for women and LGBTQ+ personnel, but stated that it had little impact on their deployments. Several highlighted a lack of organisational understanding of what is needed to allow journalists who identify as LGBTQ+ to deploy safely. IV003 stated that there was an inability to have difficult conversations at the organisational level, noting "I had to deploy with a gay producer to Uganda, and she wasn't even aware that she could be jailed for being gay". The research suggests that a culture of openness, as well as education around how to address such issues sensitively, is essential to ensure related risks are captured during the assessment: "I was quite wary of stepping into that conversation because you may be seen as being discriminatory" (IV002).

Overall, participants indicated that very few deployments had been cancelled or rearranged due to the risks to individuals based on their sexual orientation, gender or religion. However, the research suggested that the onus was on the individuals that deployed to ensure that they understood the related risks, including any potential legal punishments around homosexuality or gender-related issues. For example, IV005 stated that journalists needed to be aware of how these issues could impact behaviour on deployment: "Just because you come from a Western culture, where you can sing from the rooftops and you can wave your flag, you can't do that in that country because it is illegal".

While related risks are higher for those deployed for extended periods, news organisations should be aware of the role they can play in supporting staff and long term contributors in line with duty of care obligations. Moreover, they need to consider the challenges associated with providing consular support or using political leverage in the event of an incident involving staff in a conflict zone or fractured state. Most interviewees agreed companies needed to support their LGBTQ+ staff in covering stories:

> If you say you're doing a story that covers LGBTQ+, if you do it in a country where it's illegal, then you are kind of breaking the law from the start. And that's really hard, isn't it? It's about freedom of expression. (IV0011)

Overall, while research participants indicated that gender and LGBTQ+ issues had not prevented journalists from deploying to more conservative areas, the research also highlighted a lack of awareness, a reluctance to address potentially sensitive issues, and a failure to comprehensively discuss credible mitigations measures around these risks. As such, this suggests there might be hidden risks associated with this issue for both personnel on news teams and organisations.

5.8 - Contingency Planning, Crisis Management and Lessons Learned

Lalonde (2007) stated that there were two approaches within crisis management, namely "crisis management planning" and "analysis of organisational contingencies" (p. 57). This research has highlighted that these two functions are out of sync; often there is a breakdown in communication between journalists and risk owners, and limited alignment between the risk assessment and realities of deployments. It also highlighted the lack of trust that those deployed to cover recent conflicts have in the overall organisational approach to proactive crisis management. Several participants stated there was a need to improve this element of the risk management process:

I don't think we give crisis management quite enough focus; although I think that the coverage

of the Syria war changed everything in terms of risks and the realities of support available, we

have barely had a response from [organisation name] to deal with it. (IV007)

A crisis can occur when a sudden, unexpected and unpredictable situation develops, in which

the balance of time and urgency collide. Although the risk mitigations around such an incident will be

referred to collectively as crisis management, the research highlighted three distinct areas as critical for

news deployments:

- Contingency planning

- Crisis management

- Lesson learned

5.8.a - Contingency Planning

The contingency planning phase of the risk assessment is carried out in advance. It is, in short,

"what would we do, should we get into difficulty while deployed" (IV012). It involves

conceptualisation of how to deal with specific risks and uncertainty, which assists in planning for

potential incidents. Those interviewed felt that the contingency part of their risk assessment processes

had limited usefulness. IV001 noted that while it often "looks good on paper", there were potential

problems in terms of practicalities. Another interviewee agreed:

I think a lot of people would put a plan down that, you know, on Google Maps looks workable,

but no one actually really dug into the details of how that could work. I didn't see that kind of

granular thinking at [organisation]. (IV003)

When asked if they felt that contingency plans were robust enough to provide necessary support

on deployments, IV008 noted that while their organisation would "do the absolute best they can" there

were just some locations where "if something goes pear-shaped... you know, I'm stuffed, but I know

that I accept those risks going in. So does the team". This highlights the disparity between the realities

on the ground, the risk perception of conflict zone journalists and the expectations of risk owners. Participants indicated that the only real benefit of contingency planning was felt when the safety advisor or a senior team member took charge on deployments and operationalised the plans.

The research also suggested that more effective testing of contingency plans was required before deployment. Often referred to as stress testing or table-top exercises, this would involve news organisations running through potential crisis scenarios and emergency drills with the teams before deployment to areas of significant risk. Participants indicated that this did not take place as a matter of course, mostly due to time constraints and the number of risk variables:

> A lot of these things look great on a table-top; and it was like, there's a good enough plan to get it signed off, but because you're under time constraints, there isn't really time to look into the details and contingencies; some of them would fail under pressure. (IV003)

However, the idea of testing contingency planning was well received in principle, with IV004 noting that, "it's a good idea and it's probably something I will do". IV003 favoured live crisis management or road traffic collision scenarios, which tested leadership under pressure. IV007 also advocated for testing, noting:

> I think as an exercise, even nothing more complicated than just thinking through a war gaming exercise: what actually would we do right now if X happens, and all of our assumptions about how we might have responded to it six months ago, is it still valid now? (IV007)

Overall, the research highlighted that risk owners and journalists felt that there was need for more robust contingency plans to be in place before teams deploy to areas where there is a significantly higher risk or threat to safety. One safety advisor summarised the attitude as "being more realistic and giving more time to the planning and risk assessing and making sure everybody is signed up and understands the contingency plans and the risks they are taking" (IV012). Stress testing contingency plans would provide clarity on existing gaps, highlight where additional information was required, and allow news organisations to accept the risk levels in conflict zones with more confidence.

5.8.b - Crisis Management

One area in which news organisations have an abundance of experience is "crisis management resolution; fixing issues as they happen" (IV012). This was highlighted by IV009, who stated that they were "always confident, very confident" in their organisation because they had "done this before". The research showed that when an incident occurred, all levels of management were involved in the problem, and in gathering internal and external support, both financial and political (where required), to get a resolution. This has proved effective and saved many lives of journalists in recent years. However, "throwing money at an issue" (IV002) when it occurs may solve the immediate crisis, but is generally not a sustainable solution, especially given the increased budgetary constraints traditional news organisations find themselves under.

Moreover, with the changing media landscape and increased threats, journalists are more exposed than ever. These dynamics have also had a deleterious impact on the resources available for crisis management. There are no longer trusted militaries or other forces to support or provide embeds for journalists in major conflict zones. One interviewee highlighted that this left journalists feeling more exposed:

> Where do you go when things go pear-shaped? Where do you turn now? Before, we got amazing access, we saw great stuff; and there were good guys around us with guns. We went in, we had support, we had comms back to base and there were medical people with us. (IV008).

Pre-deployment contingency plans for modern conflicts often have many uncontrollable risk variables to consider, which forces news organisations to accept a significantly higher level of risk. Indeed, some interviewees felt that their organisations had failed to provide them with adequate support in conflict areas. An anecdote by IV004 provides the best illustration:

> A little while ago I was in Syria and I did my sort of checking of our overall tracking devices. ... We went to Raqqa the next day and we completely dropped off on all tracking for about six

or seven hours on all comms. No one reached out or even noticed from the safety or management teams. I was furious. And I sort of made this note in a WhatsApp security group: [I] was like you cannot ignore us for seven hours. We're fine. But nobody here has checked. … But when I came back to the UK and I went to see them [management], they essentially insinuated that I had been really stressed and that it wasn't their fault. The feedback I received was – why are you rocking the boat? ... There was no support at all. (IV004)

The crisis management support available to those in non-traditional roles was also highlighted as a concern. IV010, a freelancer, stated that they would expect "very little help" if they were injured or shot, adding that "I think it would be on me to take care of myself afterwards, despite any sort of promises upfront".

The effectiveness of the medical evacuation element within the crisis management plans was challenged by interviewees. This added depth to the survey results in the quantitative phase that suggested most had confidence in this element. One interviewee stated that the medical companies that provided evacuation support on behalf of news organisations, and were detailed in the risk assessment, "often just give you a generic bunch of hospitals; they're often not anywhere near you and when you are working in remote areas, you've just got to fend for yourself and your team" (IV012). IV005 stated that more should be done in advance to highlight available support, including exit strategies for dealing with casualties and other medical situations.

The quantitative survey highlighted some gaps in pre-deployment health and well-being checks. This is particularly important for deployments to conflict zones or remote environments, where any problems could put the wider team at risk during a crisis. Significant challenges in terms of data and personal privacy mean that these issues are not currently a formal part of risk assessments. In practice, this means there is no upper age limit or pre-deployment health assessment unless the individual requests this. The risks during a crisis were highlighted by IV005, who noted: "When you've got a 65-year-old director and you're going into Syria, you are not running away from anyone." Such aspects need to be considered and to be part of crisis management plans agreed before deployment.

Overall, the interviewees felt that, while news organisations would do whatever was necessary to resolve crises, there was, at times, very little that could be done. This was best described by IV008, a camera operator who covered nearly every major conflict of the 21st century, who stated (referring specifically to Syria): "if something happens, I have no faith, there's no air ambulance going to go get me out of there".

However, when a crisis occurs, effective communicate with teams on the ground is critical. In recent years, advances in global connectivity has made communicating easier – rendering obsolete the traditional image of a war correspondent calling the news desk using a satellite phone with no connectivity. Reports can be filed near instantaneously and teams can broadcast live from almost anywhere. In addition, news organisations can more closely watch over their teams' movements and activities using tracking apps and instant messaging services such as WhatsApp. One senior camera operator highlighted these changes:

> Once when I jumped on a helicopter from Bagram, went on a mission to Afghanistan, got stuck at a FOB (Forward Operating Base) and I didn't get out that far for 10 days; I couldn't call back. There were no smartphones. ... Now you can't go an hour without checking in. (IV008)

This quote also highlights that, while these advancements are all widely accepted as extraordinarily beneficial, some aspects have unwittingly increased the risk to journalists and created processes that are either too prescriptive or allow gaps in operational oversight.

Risk assessment and contingency plans require that journalists have redundancy communications available at all times. This research indicated that most deployments to conflict zones are provided with multiple means of communication, including GSM phones, phones with local sim cards, GSM based trackers, satellite-based trackers and satellite phones; some even deployed with covert devices developed for investigations and higher-risk tasks. While this is undoubtedly positive in terms of crisis communications, several participants expressed the opinion that there was an over-reliance on technology by both risk owners and journalists.

For example, devices need to be tested, active, have airtime (where applicable) and be operator-friendly. However, journalists are not always trained in how to use these devices effectively or understand what the response is likely to be if they, for example, activate panic alarms: "I think I am one of the very few people who actually test panic alarms. I never get asked, I always have to ask – can we do it?" (IV004).

IV012 went so far as to state that regular communication could be detrimental to newsgathering, noting that a missed check-in could create panic at the head office. On occasion these devices, specifically satellite devices can drop out of range. If this lasts more than a few hours, it can result in activation of crisis management plans and a further escalation by risk owners and senior management. A safety advisor who was deployed for a news organisation in Yemen recalled an occasion where management had created an incident and called everyone on the team's itinerary after they missed one half-hourly check-in, despite the fact they were in a relatively safe area where no incidents had been recorded for months, noting that it was "embarrassing and followed no risk logic" (IV012). While news organisations must ensure oversight, this incident highlights the need for crisis communications to take account of context to avoid damaging relationships or undermining confidence in the process. Decisions should be considered on a case-by-case basis, with flexibility built into the process, wherever possible.

Overall, this research underlines that news organisations are committed to supporting their staff in crisis situations in areas of conflict. However, active engagement with news teams to develop realistic crisis management plans, which involve a level of risk acceptance, would benefit the wider industry by increasing levels trust in the processes. At the very least, it would ensure that teams were made fully aware of the risks that they will be exposed to.

5.8.c - Lessons Learned

The research highlighted that capturing lessons learned from deployments – often referred to as "the debrief" or "end of task wash-up" – is an overlooked aspect of the risk assessment process. The nature and duration of some conflict area deployments mean that it is hardly surprising that team

members are reluctant to spend time discussing them. But by failing to collect this vital information, safety lessons may be missed.

Interviewees broadly acknowledged the necessity of the process, with IV009 calling debriefs "almost as important" as pre-deployment processes because they impacted future decision-making. The research showed that most organisations had a very loose structure for collating information from completed assignments, though very few had a robust system as part of their internal risk assessment process. Some interviewees, including IV010, reported taking charge of collating this information, especially when it concerned an area of interest to them personally, but this did not involve a formal process. Below are examples that illustrate the informal nature of such debriefs:

> It's normally one camera person saying, "Hey, I heard you going off to Iraq. Are you going to this place?" And then we have a chat. (IV008)

> What teams do very badly is debrief. I think it is useful, obviously, from an intelligence-gathering perspective, a lessons-learned perspective and also a mental health perspective. We don't really do that at all. (IV004)

> We only do post-deployment reports if a security [safety] advisor has deployed with a team. Otherwise, the news teams don't. (IV002)

Many interviewees strongly favoured a structured approach to collating lessons learned from previous deployments, noting that it could harness valuable insights for future tasks. IV008 pointed out that such formalised debrief/review processes had resulted in significant benefits for other high-risk jobs, such as surgeons. They added that a formal structure would be especially useful in light of the challenges of sharing the right information while travelling constantly and so having to communicate largely via email.

This highlights the main challenge associated with improving processes for capturing lessons learned; the nature of the news cycle means that time is a precious commodity for journalists. IV003 noted that they often barely had time to decompress after returning from a trip, never mind passing on

crucial information. This suggests that there needs to be a cultural shift when it comes to prioritising post-trip reviews: "People don't like to admit they haven't done things properly, and that's the only way we'll learn" (IV004).

This research also highlighted that most organisations only enforced lessons learned after involvement in a significant incident. For example, IV007 was only aware of lessons capture exercises being carried out after staff had been detained or kidnapped on deployment. A failure to learn from high-risk deployments limits news organisations' ability to ensure safety for journalists and support staff working in extremely challenging environments.

Introducing a process that mandates some form of lessons capture before tasks can be considered "complete" would have immediate benefit. Accumulated knowledge needs to be well-documented by crisis management in formalised after-action reports, supported by reliable data and research. This would then inform improvements to the training and risk assessment process to make conflict zone deployments safer. The challenge organisations face is developing the accumulated knowledge from recent experiences into a learning model in which personnel can be actively engaged (Lalonde, 2007).

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

Since 2009, there have been significant changes to the way news organisations operate in areas of conflict. News organisations have faced challenges associated with new technology, increased competition and changes to traditional business models, which have squeezed budgets and increased operational risks for news teams deploying to conflict zones. These new challenges have not been assessed from a risk management perspective, and the risk assessment processes within news organisations have not evolved to meet them.

This thesis aimed to conduct an exploratory study into the risk management process for conflict reporting, assess its impact on staff safety during deployments, and the implications for news organisations' duty of care obligations. This thesis did not set out to solve overarching problems or hypotheses but rather to construct practical recommendations in support of those who deploy to areas of conflict. Therefore, this study is grounded in inductivist, empirical and multi-factorial examination of the current risk management practices applied by news organisations; this study could therefore allow further research to be carried out to define theoretical positions. It must be acknowledged that this research does not develop theory or construct theoretical perspectives, but the pragmatic approach followed has closed the gap of knowledge on risk management measures applied by news organisations.

The research – the first of its kind – created foundational knowledge by gathering perceptions of the current risk management processes employed by news organisations from individuals deployed to conflict zones between 2009 and 2019. The recommendations highlighted within this research are aimed at news organisations but will add significant benefit for journalists, especially around engagement with the risk assessment process and lessons learned. This research is not intended to be used by a wider audience, such as governments, the UN or other non-state actors. Adopting a mixed-methods approach allowed knowledge to be built upon validated data from the first (quantitative) phase, reducing bias prior to the second (qualitative) phase. The qualitative phase enabled a practical evaluation of the current gaps, supported by interviewees.

By using a thematic approach, this thesis allows for future research to be conducted based on critical gaps identified within this original project. This conclusion will also draw on the research to provide actionable recommendations for improving the risk management process for those employed by news organisations to report from conflict zones. The key thematic findings will be broken down into the six separate areas reflected in the qualitative phase.

6.1 – Non-Traditional Roles, Impact on Journalism Risk Management Process

The research underscored findings from the literary review indicating an increasing reliance by news organisations on non-traditional roles for conflict zone deployments between 2009 and 2019. However, it also highlighted that risk assessment processes supporting the deployment of personnel in non-traditional roles had failed to progress at the same speed. The process does not account for the different threats, risks and challenges faced by those in non-traditional roles, especially prolonged risk exposure and limited support. Indeed, the research found that while news organisations offered some support to those in non-traditional roles, it fell significantly short in comparison with what was offered to their traditional counterparts. This is a potential duty of care failure that needs to be addressed immediately by news organisations, given the substantial evidence that those deployed in non-traditional roles are at greater risk than their international colleagues (Clifford, 2015).

In 2015, the majority of news organisations signed-up to the ACOS Freelance Safety Principles. However, the research showed that participants across news organisations felt that these principles were not always fully implemented, often due to cost, resources and logistics. Moreover, some organisations use non-traditional journalists as a way to transfer risk and reduce costs by circumventing pre-deployment training, deployment costs and, occasionally, mental health support. In addition, local teams were often deployed without a detailed or robust risk assessment. The research also highlighted a lack of engagement by non-traditional journalists with risk assessment processes, in comparison with their traditional counterparts. The lack of training around risk awareness provided by news organisations to non-traditional journalists has exacerbated this problem. Non-traditional journalists often deploy without understanding task details, the associated level of risk, or even the composition of

the team that they will be entering a conflict zone with. This highlights that current processes are outdated and fail to account for increased diversity in terms of culture, language and risk appetite in modern newsgathering teams; freelancers and, especially, local journalists assess risk from a different perspective, often due to their familiarity with deployment areas.

To address changes to the risk landscape, including the additional risks associated with utilisation of non-traditional roles, news organisations increasingly turned to safety advisors. This has resulted in the professionalisation and evolution of the role. Notably, the research demonstrated that safety advisors held myriad responsibilities during modern conflict deployments, including medical support, production-related support and logistics management, in addition to their traditional risk mitigation role. It also underscored that the primary benefit of safety advisors stemmed from the fact they were not editorially focused and therefore more situationally aware. This suggests that, if deployed correctly, the modern safety advisor can add significant benefit for both risk owner and journalist.

Nevertheless, the research highlighted frustrations, notably around inconsistencies in safety advisors' levels of professionalism and their ability to communicate rationale around risk assessments. This caused resentment on the part of journalists and producers, who felt restricted by safety advisors who were unable to articulate their decision making. The significant additional costs associated with using safety advisors was also a frustration, because it occasionally led news organisations to determine that a deployment had a negative cost vs. benefit ratio, resulting in cancellations of assignments.

These outcomes suggest that news organisations should employ clear guidelines indicating under which circumstances a safety advisor is mandated for deployments. Guidelines will ensure effective engagement by journalists in the risk management process and improve relationships between journalists and safety advisors, ultimately contributing to team safety in conflict zones.

PROS		CONS
Non-editorial focused ensuring ongoing situational awareness	✓	✗ Inconsistencies of advisor level of professionalism
Provide medical support for deployed teams	✓	✗ Restriction placed on teams movements by deployed advisors
Conduct dynamic deployment risk assessments	✓	✗ No existing framework for deployment of safety advisors - subjective
Risk mitigation implementation and crisis management	✓	✗ The additional cost this often has on the deployment

Figure 26 – Overview of Benefits and Limitations of the Safety Advisor

Key Recommendations from this research

- News organisations must ensure that current risk management frameworks encompass non-traditional roles.

- The risk assessment process must support non-traditional journalists by considering and accounting for cultural difference, awareness of the risk assessment process and language barriers.

- The ACOS Freelance Safety Principles should be adhered to; any deviation must be recorded and fully explained to those involved.

- Organisations must implement processes to ensure critical learnings are shared across the industry, especially around risks faced by those in non-traditional roles.

- News organisations must create guidelines setting out deployment rules and role requirements for safety advisors.

6.2 – Application of Control Measures by News Organisations

Pre-deployment training remains the main control measure employed by news organisations to transfer risk. Those journalists that have completed the HEFAT programme are deemed "competent" –

the minimum level of duty of care that employers must provide under HASAWA. While ensuring staff are competent to deploy is a legal requirement, most organisations have not mandated this training, allowing flexibility to deploy untrained journalists for breaking news and other time-sensitive assignments. Indeed, as noted above, training for non-traditional journalists was found to be inconsistent at best. Factors hindering training for non-traditional journalists included cost, logistics and a lack of credible overseas training providers.

The research showed that of those training courses offered in the UK, advanced medical training was deemed most beneficial, especially for deployments to areas where state support was limited. However, this training is not mandated by the majority of news organisations in the UK for conflict zone deployments. Interviewees noted that this was largely due to the need for frequent refresher trainings, which is impeded by budgetary constraints, participant availability and logistics.

Mental health awareness was one of the key training gaps identified. While news organisations have increased dedicated support for staff mental health, it has not been sufficient to significantly reduce stigma around the issue. Interviewees identified persistent attitudes, especially linked to the "macho culture" around conflict reporting, fears over a perceived lack of resilience and reduced career prospects, which continue to prevent openness around mental health and limit uptake of support. Indeed, interviewees expressed fears that they would be denied future assignments if their employers became aware of the true state of their mental health – an especially concerning finding.

Information security was identified as another critical training gap. Most interviewees agreed that the speed of technological advances made it challenging for courses to remain relevant and accurate. Many felt the lack of knowledge spread across all levels of their organisations and that a stand-alone training package, offered by subject matter experts in journalism, would improve the training offering. News media organisations prioritise this emerging risk, as increasing reliance on and availability of technology heightens the potential for malicious state and non-state actors to exploit weaknesses.

Key Recommendations from this research

- Risk owners should fully understand their liability in ensuring that they deploy "competent" journalists to manage and assess risks for each task.

- The HEFAT course should be mandated for both traditional and non-traditional roles. If news organisations fail to provide HEFAT, they must accept the increased risk, and notify those deploying of critical gaps in competencies prior to assignments.

- Further research into the provision of medical, information security and mental health awareness training is required by academia and news organisations.

6.3 - Risk Owner Considerations

The research underlined the increasing complexities faced by risk owners, who are the effective gatekeepers for conflict area deployments. Improvements in global communications, increased reliance on social media platforms to identify and broadcast news, and the higher profiles of journalists have served to blur the boundaries between the personal and private, complicating the picture for risk owners. Risk owners are legally required, in accordance with HASAWA, to ensure the competence of their journalists before deploying; this can be achieved through experiential learning and training. This research concluded that experiential learning from conflict zone journalism is currently not effectively gathered, recorded or considered within the majority of risk assessments. This failure by risk owners to regularly consider journalistic experience when planning deployments may also result in a failure to ensure that the team is competent to the minimum legal standard.

The research highlighted cynicism among news teams about risk owners' attitude to the risk assessment process, with many stating that risk owners treated the process as a "tick box" exercise to pass on responsibility for dangerous deployments. Nevertheless, it also highlighted that risk owners frequently refused to sign off on risk assessments where journalists failed to provide the correct mitigations or context, suggesting they are aware of their legal obligation to ensure that the mitigations and safety measures taken are sufficient "as far as is practicably possible".

Nevertheless, the research highlighted that risk owners need to be aware of the potential increase in risks for deployed teams associated with pressures inherent in modern newsgathering.

Editorial pressures related to the 24/7 news cycle, such as the need for live shots and frequent updates, have the potential to increase team's risk exposure. Conflict journalists are often characterised as "gung-ho", and while there is a basis of truth in this cliché, many experienced conflict zone interviewees showed a heightened aversion to risk. Indeed, the research demonstrated that the reduced Western military embed support available in modern conflicts meant that journalists had taken a more cautious approach to news gathering within fractured states. To account for the above considerations, risk owners within news organisations must take a holistic approach to ensure a fluid and comprehensive risk policy that is both legally compliant and morally justified.

Key Recommendations from this research

- News organisations should ensure that risk assessments capture and include experiential learning from conflict deployments.

- Periodic assessments should be made to account for the changing media landscape and new trends impacting on-the-ground risks.

- There should be a focus on improved communication and engagement between journalists and risk owners throughout the risk management cycle.

6.4 – The Risk Assessment

There is no single widely accepted risk management framework for news organisations deploying journalists to areas of conflict. Many organisations' risk assessment processes were developed from in-house experiential learning that has not been shared across the industry; this means that approaches to can differ significantly, especially based on risk appetite. Despite efforts by several industry organisations to collate this information, there has been limited buy-in from news organisations for a set standard.

One of key finding from the research was that this lack of an accepted single risk assessment process can lead to confusion over pre-deployment requirements, causing unnecessary conflict between journalists and risk owners. It was evident that some journalists pay little more than lip service to the

risk assessment process, with this failure to engage resulting in teams deploying without the correct mitigations or the cancellation of plans. Creating a unified risk management framework for the industry would have the dual benefit of improving safety and reducing resources required when operating across organisations, because of the potential to share knowledge and resources. Another benefit would be increased journalist understanding of and confidence in the process, especially for those in non-traditional roles. Simplifying and standardising the process would reduce potential points of friction and harmonise approaches to risk management.

It was found that, because the risk assessment is viewed as a bureaucratic necessity rather than a critical aid to manage risk, it is often completed by less experienced journalists. Encouraging experienced journalists (who, as the research shows, are generally more cognisant of and adverse to risk) to play an active role in the process would have a three-fold effect; it would improve the quality of risk management provided by organisations, increase news teams' awareness of the risks and underscore the importance of the risk management process to less experienced journalists.

News organisations should aim to demonstrate value in the risk assessment process by elevating it to a critical element of the wider planning process. The research suggested that organisations should focus on eliminating the perception that the risk assessment is a method of organisational risk transfer and emphasise the support element. If paired with effective communication between risk owners and journalists, this would increase engagement with the process. However, news organisations are likely to face challenges in changing attitudes, due to negative perceptions. The research suggested that many journalists felt that risk mitigation measures were overly restrictive, hampered creativity and brought their competency into question. Again, news organisations must leverage experienced staff members that have benefited from and understand the risk assessment process to bring about a change in attitude.

The research also found that news organisations should reassess how they apply risk assessments in the field, especially dynamic risk assessments (technically termed as "generic risks assessments"). By building awareness among risk owners and journalists of conditions determining the application of dynamic risk assessments, news organisations will enable more flexibility and confidence

in the process. Improved understanding of the limitations and benefits of dynamic, generic and standard risk assessments will also increase their effectiveness.

Overall, in order to remain an effective risk mitigation tool, the risk assessment process requires significantly increased collaboration, effective engagement from all levels of the news team and efforts to influence positive changes in terms of perception.

Key Recommendations from this research

- The industry should support the development of a single standardised risk management framework for deploying journalists to areas of conflict.
- Risk owners should leverage experienced journalists to play an active role in the risk assessment process, specifically with a view to increasing engagement.
- Organisations must work toward increasing industry-wide understanding of the limitations and uses of dynamic, generic and standard risk assessments.
- News organisations must ensure the risk assessment framework is taught, accepted and reflects contemporary challenges associated with conflict reporting.

6.5 – New Considerations

The research highlighted three key emerging considerations for news organisations. It showed that risk apathy stemming from prolonged or repeated deployment to conflict areas can result in limited engagement with the risk management process. Moreover, the increased use of non-traditional journalists may heighten organisations' exposure to the consequences of risk apathy. This is because non-traditional journalists are often stationed in areas of conflict for longer periods or reporting from their doorstop, which may result in desensitisation. The research underlined that risk apathy is not accounted for within current risk assessment processes.

The researcher coined the term competitor risk pendulum to highlight the phenomenon whereby existing risk mitigation measures are disregarded in situations where news organisations want to ensure that competitors do not gain advantage. For example, the research indicated that, during

breaking news incidents or "fast-ball" deployments, the risk assessment process is often bypassed due to the competitor risk pendulum. This undermines the risk management process and reduces confidence in risk owners and engagement by journalists in risk assessments. Any relaxation of safety measures to match competitors' risk appetite is a concern for the entire industry, as the resultant domino effect clearly increases risks for all news teams.

As highlighted in the previous section, dynamic risk assessments are often used inappropriately. The research also suggests that understanding of how dynamic risk assessments are carried out may benefit from grounding in cultural theory. It is automatically assumed by risk owners that deployed personnel are capable of effectively assessing risk; however, journalists are not trained risk assessors but deemed "competent" due to completion of a HEFAT course. Less experienced journalists, who are unable to draw on experiential learning from previous deployments, may therefore be under pressure to conform to the cultural understanding of the "normal" risk appetite for conflict journalism, even if they are uncomfortable with the situation. When a dynamic risk assessment is carried out in situations where a risk owner is under pressure from the competitor risk pendulum, this could combine to result in a serious failure in terms of safety and duty of care obligations. Further research is required to explore the competitor risk pendulum, including how it impacts risk owners' willingness to use dynamic risk assessments.

Key Recommendations from this research

- Risk owners should implement checks within the risk management process that account for risk apathy among non-traditional journalists.

- News organisations should account for the heightened risks associated with pressure from the competitor risk pendulum, and its impact on the risk assessment process.

- Cultural theory with regards to conflict reporting should be considered when designing dynamic risk assessments for completion on deployments.

- News organisations must introduce processes by which less experienced journalists can raise concerns confidentially prior to, during and after deployments.

6.6 – Contingency Planning, Crisis Management and Lessons Learned

Although the research reflected generally positive perceptions around contingency planning for conflict zone deployments, it did identify some areas where improvements are necessary. The research demonstrated that the vast majority of news organisations do not conduct any stress testing, particularly with respect to scenario-based risk testing or realistic assessments of the workability of crisis management plans in different locations. Regular stress testing would add significant value, improve engagement and increase the credibility of the risk assessment process. In particular, there is appetite for in-depth discussions about ground realities in the event of an incident. The contingency planning section of risks assessments must be rigorously tested prior to deployments to ensure personnel have the appropriate equipment and are aware of the correct process in the event of an incidents or crisis. Periodic stress testing or table-top exercises should involve journalists, risk owners and individuals who have deployed to conflict zones.

Nearly all those interviewed felt that their employers were well-versed in crisis management, mainly due to the experiential learnings gained from previous conflicts. Many had anecdotes about crises managed against the backdrop of fractured states, poor infrastructure and challenging environments. However, the research indicated that this could detrimentally impact journalists' level of risk acceptance, meaning they often deployed into high-risk areas with limited risk mitigation measures in place, but confident in their organisation's crisis management. This blind belief in crisis management was actually contrary to their own experience and understanding. Conflict zone reporting in 2021 involves limited opportunity to embed with trusted Western militaries or access governmental support that news organisations could previously rely upon during emergency situations.

Unsurprisingly, considering the findings detailed above, there is also a significant gap in terms of crisis management for those employed in non-traditional roles in conflict zones. The most significant gap relates to ownership of duty of care obligations. For organisations deploying freelancers, there is ambiguity about where one task starts and another ends, compounded by a lack of communication between news organisations, meaning that freelancers have sometimes been left without support. Local

journalists working in their home environments are vulnerable to targeting by hostile actors while going about their everyday lives, something that regular crisis management plans are not equipped to account for. While most news organisations are signatories to the ACOS Freelancer Safety Principles, the standard use of third-party audits would ensure that they were forced to consider non-traditional journalists while designing and enacting crisis management protocols.

The process of capturing experience from completed deployments was identified as another area where improvements would be beneficial. The research indicated that the majority of news organisations were failing to properly capture learning about key conflict risks and to implement associated risk reduction measures. The industry suffers from a "fire and forget" approach, which means that potentially avoidable crisis scenarios are liable to repeat themselves. Those news organisations that do attempt to capture experiences do so informally. This informal structure can reduce trust and potentially allows internal competition to impact safety considerations; for example, there is a risk that some journalists might refuse to share knowledge for fear of granting colleagues competitive advantage.

It is vital that news organisations capture critical lessons learned by recording data and experience from conflict zone deployments as part of the risk management process. This requires a confidential method of information collection and reporting, actions to guard against a blame culture and organisational buy-in to enforce these measures. The lessons learnt would help inform future training and risk assessments, ensuring that as the nature of the news reporting landscape changes, risk management processes evolve alongside it, enabling journalists to safely deploy to conflict zones.

Key Recommendations from This Research

- News organisations should conduct stress-testing, run scenario-based playbooks, and conduct assessments of the contingencies used in conflict zones.

- Clear guidelines must be developed for engaging with freelancers operating in areas of conflict to ensure all parties understand where liability begins and ends.

- News organisations must incorporate lessons learnt into the risk management process, capturing relevant data and experiences relating to conflict zone deployments.

- Future training and risk assessments should be built upon the lessons-learnt process.

6.7 – Overall Conclusions

This research has demonstrated that, while most news organisations have continually improved their risk management processes, there are areas that would benefit from fresh evaluation in light of the changing operational environment and emerging risks identified between 2009 and 2019. It is clear that news organisations must develop their risk assessment frameworks to ensure they are providing a commensurate level of duty of care for all team members deployed in conflict areas. The research has also underlined the critical value to be gained from capturing experiences and lessons learnt from previous deployments. There is a need for industry-wide communication and alignment efforts to ensure that improvements benefit all news organisations. In particular, perhaps the most important factor, identified repeatedly throughout the research, is the need for industry-wide minimum standards. This would serve to concretise risk management procedures, including around mandatory training and risk assessments, which are already widely accepted as a necessity, while simultaneously accounting for new risks.

The research also demonstrated the critical requirement to improve the risk management processes for those deployed in non-traditional roles, in order to ensure that a commensurate level of duty of care is applied. More research is needed to assess how these gaps can be closed, as reliance on local resources and non-traditional media in conflict areas is expected to continue to increase in coming years. A potential challenge is posed by the extra costs of these safety improvements, which could outweigh the cost benefits associated with the use of non-traditional roles in the first place, placing news organisations in the position of making an unenviable choice; a balance must be struck.

Moreover, it is vital for the industry that additional research is carried out with a focus on other important gaps highlighted in this thesis. This conclusion has presented a "wish list" of recommendations; however, the research suggests that implementation might face challenges, especially given the potentially need for changes to the overall safety and risk culture within conflict journalism. One notable finding, for example, is around the issue of engagement – or lack thereof –

with the risk assessment process. The research repeatedly highlighted the broad perception within conflict news reporting of the risk assessment as merely a "tick-box" exercise, with even more experienced journalists sometimes displaying a dismissive attitude towards the process. This raises another question, namely: how much does the lack of engagement with the wider risk management framework have to do with a problematic attitude towards risk inherent in the "culture" of conflict journalism? While the research underlined that most experienced journalists well understood the gravity of the risks faced in conflict zones, it also highlighted some persistently problematic areas, including stigma surrounding mental health issues and the bravado and "gung-ho" attitude towards risk displayed by some journalists, especially those with less experience and more to prove. This highlights the continuing relevance of cultural theory to conflict journalism, where group identity is still, to an extent, measured through experience of danger and high-risk situations. This underlines the researcher's recommendation that news organisation must leverage more experienced, risk adverse members of the news team to improve the cultural understanding of risk and safety for the new generation of journalists, especially in light of the positive trend towards increasing diversity in newsrooms. A change in the attitude is necessary to match the increased professionalism of the safety advisor role and suggested changes to risk management processes outlined above, especially if there is to be a positive impact on the overall safety culture within conflict journalism. The institutionalisation of a risk aware safety culture will help the industry rise to meet the challenges associated with evolving conflict risks, while enabling it to continue to report critical news and to "bear witness" with integrity.

01 Develop industry-wide accepted minimum standards for risk management for journalists

02 Build out mandatory norms for those in non-traditional roles

03 Discuss and develop how to effectively deploy the safety advisor

04 Effective collection lessons learned from previous conflict deployments

Figure 27 – Future Research and Areas of Studies

6.8 - Limitations, Reflections

In February 2020, Europe became the epicentre of the COVID-19 pandemic, with significant implications for everyday life. After the first UK COVID-19-linked death was registered on 5 March 2020, there was a rapid increase in the impact of the crisis on the British public. Restrictions included stay-at-home notices, lockdowns, closures of businesses and educational institutions, and social distancing measures. The resulting mass unemployment, public transport reductions and strain on healthcare services resulted in an economic and health crisis on a scale not seen since the Spanish Influenza pandemic in 1918. As such, the crisis significantly impacted the researcher's ability to complete the study as agreed in the ethical approval document ref FHSS 2020-001. The following paragraphs highlight the changes to the research resulting from the coronavirus pandemic.

Before starting the research, a questionnaire return rate of between 60 and 100 was expected. Conversations with the three pre-selected gatekeepers who had agreed to send the questionnaire to their members and/or subscription base were impacted by the pandemic. These gatekeepers also faced significant challenges in getting members to complete and return the questionnaires. These gatekeepers reported that questionnaires supporting previous research studies had elicited high rates of return. This leads to the assumption that the impact of the pandemic may have limited interest in outside issues at this time, reducing participation. Nevertheless, it is also important to note that some people that received the questionnaire may also not have wanted to partake in the study. Despite these challenges, a total of 72 questionnaires were completed – within the expected return rate.

Due to social distancing measures, government restrictions and travel limitations, the University of Portsmouth decided to issue a directive banning all in-person research interviews from March 2020. This directly impacted the proposed interview schedule between April and May 2020. While interviews were eventually conducted using VC providers Zoom and Google Hangouts, the researcher felt that the lack of in-person social interaction, and the increased challenge in interpreting

gestures, tone and other informal indicators of communication, reduced the potential depth and impact of the research.

Nevertheless, VC was deemed to have a potentially positive cost-saving element. Face-to-face interviews are significantly more costly than VC meetings, as they include outlays associated with time spent, travel, accommodation, coffee and other possible sundries for both interviewee and researcher. The impact of cost, both in terms of time and money, on participation rates would have been difficult to gauge, but VC may have presented a hidden advantage in this respect.

One of the self-imposed constraints of this literature review was that it focused on western news organisations, specifically papers published in English. Although there were a few papers reviewed outside of this (Liebes & Kampf, (2007), Luo & Harrison, (2019), Lück, Schultz, & Simon, (2020).), the research will have a western-centric focus. If the available time and scope of the research were extended, it would have been beneficial to include readings, journals and grey literature outside the English language, including French, Arabic and Spanish. In addition, an expanded geographic literature review would have yielded benefits and more colour to the study; this should be considered for future studies.

Throughout this project, there were identified gaps within existing literature specific to risk management in journalism security. In order to reduce the impact, the current gap in knowledge had, multiple types of literature were used to supplement this argumentative review of the literature. First, by leveraging authors and scholars who focus on journalism as a subject (Cottle, Sambrook, Allan, Shaw, Modell), key details were extrapolated to help form a foundation for knowledge on security and safety issues. Second, first-hand accounts of conflict by journalists (Bowen, Lyon, Ward) and those deployed to conflict areas were used to supplement academia. Finally, an assessment of grey literature produced by media support bodies was completed. The approach taken ensured that while there was limited existing risk and security management literature available for the review, a strong foundation and understanding were created using academia and grey literature to conduct an effective review.

The research was designed as a strategic review of the risk management and assessment frameworks used by news organisations deploying journalists to conflict areas. This study aimed to

compile an initial body of knowledge, as a basis for further research into organisational risk assessment processes used across the news media industry. As such, it did not consider process at the micro level; the effectiveness of individual safety measures written into an organisation's risk management processes were not examined as part of the research.

The research participants largely comprised individuals employed by international news organisations with a presence in the UK. While this geographical scope could be viewed as a research limitation, most of the world's leading news organisations have UK bureaus that serve as hubs for news coverage of conflicts in the Middle East, making it a suitable research location. In addition, the focus on industry-leading, international news organisations means that the findings are widely applicable across the news industry, with the potential for further research to investigate risk management practices in other geographical regions and organisation types going forward.

This research aimed to capture the perceptions of a broad spread of individuals involved in news reporting in conflict zones. This means it targeted both those deployed in primary roles – so those directly involved in gathering material – and those in secondary (support) roles on conflict zone assignments. The researcher found it significantly easier to engage individuals that had deployed in secondary roles for the study, which is reflected in the quantitative phase results. This limitation may have impacted the findings, especially within the quantitative survey. However, this potential bias was offset by the selection method for interviewees for the qualitative research phase.

The researcher was aware from the outset of the research that some journalists would be reluctant to speak "on the record" about their experiences in a professional context. This is because it would require staff to expose potential gaps in safety measures and risk mitigations provided by their employers. Measures assuring anonymity and confidentiality were built into the study design. However, some participants may have remained reluctant to provide details of experiences that painted them or their employers in a damaging light. Moreover, the risk culture in conflict journalism meant that there was potential for some journalists to perceive additional safety recommendations stemming from this study as potentially limiting their freedom of movement. As such, participant hesitation was a possible factor limiting the full potential of the study.

This research project began 2016, when a number of concurrent developments – such as Islamic State's territorial "defeat" in Syria and Iraq – significantly impacted the news media and risk management landscapes. This meant that the researcher was required to remain alert to new developments throughout the project, including by accounting for significant amounts of new grey and anecdotal literature produced around these topics between the beginning of the literature review in 2017 and the interview process in 2019. The researcher continued to review literature throughout the project, to ensure that it reflected the latest theories and learnings.

While acknowledging the above limitations, the researcher aimed to keep the scope of the research manageable by introducing mitigating measures wherever necessary, to ensure the study remained impactful.

END OF STUDY

References

Aldrich, R. J., and Herrington, L. (2018). Secrets, hostages, and ransoms: British kidnap policy in historical perspective. *Review of International Studies*, *44(4)*, 738-759.

Allison, H.E., and Hobbs, R.J. (2006). *Science and policy in natural resource management: Understanding system complexity*. Cambridge University Press.

Allan, S. (2006). *Online News*. Open University Press.

Allan, S., & Thorsen, E. (2009). Citizen Journalism: Global Perspectives, Volume 1. Peter Leng Publishing.

Anderson, C. W. (2011). Between Creative and Quantified Audiences: Web Metrics and Changing Patterns of Newswork in Local US Newsrooms. *Journalism, 12(5)*, 550-566.

Armoudian, M. (2017). *Reporting from the danger zone: Frontline journalists, their jobs, and an increasingly perilous future*. Routledge.

Antwi, S. K., & Hamza, K. (2015). Qualitative and Quantitative Research Paradigms in Business Research. A Philosophical Reflection. *European Journal of Business and Management, 7(3)*, 217-225.

Archibald, M. M., Ambagtsheer, R. C., Casey, M. G., & Lawless, M. (2019). Using Zoom Videoconferencing for Qualitative Data Collection: Perceptions and Experiences of Researchers and Participants. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 18*, 1–8.

Ayres, C. (2005). *War Reporting for Cowards*. John Murray Publishers.

Babbie, E., & Mouton, J. (2006). *The practice of Social Research*. Oxford University Press Southern Africa.

Bargdill, R. (2006). Fate and destiny: Some historical distinctions between the concepts. *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology, 26*, 205-220.

Bell, M. (1997). TV news: how far should we go? *British Journalism Review, 8(1)*, 7-16.

Berg, B. L. (2001). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (4th ed). Allyn and Bacon.

Blaagaard B, (2013). Shifting boundaries: Objectivity, citizen journalism and tomorrow's journalists. *Journalism. 14 (8). 1076-1090.*

Blee, K. M. & Taylor, V. (2002). Semi-Structured Interviewing in Social Movement Research. In B. Klandermans & S. Staggenborg (Eds.), *Methods of Social Movement Research*. University of Minnesota Press.

Blight, J, G. & Lang, J, M. (2005). *The Fog of War: Lessons from the Life of Robert S. McNamara*. Bowman and Littlefield Publishers.

Boholm, A. (1996). Risk perception and social anthropology: Critique of cultural theory. *Journal of Anthropology, 61(1-2)*, 64-84.

Bowen, J. (2006). *War Stories*. Simon & Schuster.

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology, Qualitative Research in Psychology, *3 (2), 77-101*.

Bryman, A. (1988a). *Quantity and Quality in Social Research*. Routledge.

Bryman, A. (1998). Knowing the Social World. Quantitative and Qualitative Research Strategies in Knowing the Social World. Open University Press.

Bryman, A. (2001). Social *Research Methods*. Oxford University Press.

Bryman, A. (2016). *Social Research Methods* (5th ed). Oxford University Press.

Bryman, A. & Bell, E., (2011). *Business Research Methods*. Oxford University Press.

Bryman, A. (2012). Contribution to S.E. Baker & R. Edwards (eds). *How Many Qualitative Interviews is Enough? Expert Voices and Early Career Reflections on Sampling Cases in Qualitative Research.* National Centre for Research Methods Paper. Viewed on 19 April 2020. <https://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/2273/>

Chapman, A. (2003) Conceptual Awareness Through Categorizing: using ICT to get Year 13 reading, Teaching History, *111, pp.38-44*.

Clifford, L. (2015). *Under Threat: The Changing State of Media Safety*. International News Safety Institute (INSI). Viewed on 20 Jan 2020. <https://newssafety.org/underthreat/index.html>

Clutterbuck, R. (1992). Negotiating with Terrorists, *Terrorism and Political Violence, 4*, 263–287.

Colvin, M. (2012). *On the Front Line: The Collected Journalism of Marie Colvin*. Harper Press.

Committee to Protect Journalists (2006). *Panel on Impunity.* Viewed 22 November, 2020. <www.cpj.org/killed/impunity.php>

Committee to Protect Journalists (2019). *10 Most Censored Countries*; Committee to Protect Journalists. Viewed 30 April 2020. <https://cpj.org/reports/2019/09/10-most-censored-eritrea-north-korea-turkmenistan-journalist.php>

Committee to Protect Journalists (2020) *Safety Advisory: Iraq Safety Advisory*. Committee to Protect Journalists. Viewed 3 May 2020. <https://cpj.org/2020/01/cpj-safety-advisory-iraq-safety-advisory.php>

Couldry, N. (2012). *Media, Society, World: Social Theory and Digital Media Practice*. Wiley

Cottle. S, (2000). *Ethnic Minorities and the Media: Changing Cultural Boundaries*. Open University Press.

Cottle, S. (2008). Reporting Demonstrations: The Changing Media Politics of Dissent. *Media Culture Society, 30(6)*, 853-872.

Cottle, S. (2011). *Cell phones, Camels and the Global Call for Democracy*. Open Democracy. Viewed on 2 January 2020. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/cell-phones-camels-and-global-call-for-democracy/>

Cottle, S (2013). Journalists Witnessing Disasters: From the calculus of death to the injunction to care. *Journalism Studies, 14 (2)*, 232-248.

Cottle, S. (2014). Rethinking Media and Disasters in a Global Age: What's changed and why it matters. *Media War and Conflict. 7(1)*, 3–22.

Cottle, S., Sambrook, R., & Mosdell, N., (2016). Reporting Dangerously: Journalist Killings, Intimidation and Security. Palgrave Macmillan.

Creswell, J.W. (1994). *Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Sage.

Creswell, J.W. (1998). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions*. Sage.

Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V.L., (2011). *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* (2nd edn). Sage.

Dake, K., & Wildavsky, A. (1991. Individual Differences in Risk Perception and Risk-Taking Preferences. In B. J. Garrick & W. C. Gekler (Eds), *The Analysis, Communication and Perception of Risk*. Plenum Press. 15-24

DART Centre. (2013). *Freelancers in Focus*. Viewed 19 May 2020. <hhttps://dartcenter.org/blog/newsgatherers-responsibility-us-all>

Denis, H. (2002). *La Réponse aux Catastrophes: Quand l'Impossible Survient*. Presses Internationales Polytechnique.

Denscombe, M. (2007). *The Good Research Guide: For small-scale social research projects (3rded.).* Open University Press.

Douglas, M. (1985), Risk Acceptability According to the Social Sciences. Routledge.

Douglas, M. (2013). Risk and Blame. United Kingdom. Taylor & Francis.

Dicicco-Bloom, B., & Crabtree, B. F. (2006). The Qualitative Research Interview. *Medical Education*, 40(4), pp 314–321.

Errington, J. & McKercher, B, J, C,. 1989). The Vietnam War as History. The Journal of Military History. 55 (3) 425-437.

Etikan, I., Musa, S.A., & Alkassim, R.S. (2016). Comparison of Convenience Sampling and Purposive Sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, *5(1)*, 1-4

Feinstein, A. (2015). Syria: Most Dangerous Place for Journalists. DART Centre. Viewed 2 May 2020. <https://dartcenter.org/content/syria-world%E2%80%99s-most-dangerous-place-for-journalists>

Feinstein, A., & Nicolson, D. (2005). Embedded Journalists in the Iraq War: Are they at Greater Psychological Risk? *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 18(2), 129-132.*

Fish, A. & Srinivasan, R. (2011). Digital labor is the new killer app. New Media & Society *14 (1), 137-152.*

Foerstel, H. (2006). *Killing the Messenger: Journalists at risk in modern warfare*. Preager.

Gadd, S., Keeley, D., & Balmforth, H. (2003). *Good Practice and Pitfalls in Risk Assessment*. Health and Safety Laboratory.

Gillham, B. (2000). *The Research Interview*. Continuum.

Glaser, B.G., Strauss, A.L,. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Aldine.

Greenberg, N., Gould, M., Langston, V., & Brayne, M. (2009). Journalists' and Media Professionals' Attitudes to PTSD and Help-seeking: A descriptive study. *Journal of Mental Health, 18(6)*, 543-548.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1985). *Fourth Generation Evaluation.* Sage Publications.

Gutman, R. (2008). *How We Missed the Story: Osama Bin Laden, the Taliban, and the Hijacking of Afghanistan*. United States Institute of Peace.

Grossman, L. (2017). All the News That's Worth the Risk: Improving Protection for Freelance Journalists in War Zones. *Boston College International And Comparative Law Review*, *40(1)*, 140-167.

Grossman, V. (2014). The Hell of Treblinka. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform

Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How Many Interviews are Enough?: An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods, 18(1)*, 59-82.

Gustafson, J.L. (2011). Moore's Law. In Padua D. (eds), *Encyclopedia of Parallel Computing*. Springer.

Hagan, F.E. (1982). *Research Methods in Criminal Justice and Criminology.* Macmillan.

Hughes, S. (2015). *Safety for Freelance Journalists: Two Tribes Come Together*. DART Center. Viewed on 20 Jan 2019 https://dartcenter.org/blog/safety-for-freelance-journalists-two-tribes-come-together

Holstein, J, A., & Gubrium, J. F., (2003). *Inside Interviewing: New Lenses, New Concerns*. London: Sage Publications.

Howse, P. (2014). *When the War Comes Home*. DART Center. Viewed on 23 May 2020 https://dartcenter.org/content/when-war-comes-home

Inhelder, B., Chipman, H.H. & Zwingmann, C. (Eds.) (1976). *Piaget and His School: A Reader in Developmental Psychology*. Springer.

International News Safety Institute (2006). *Killing the Messenger*. International Press Centre. Pp. 15–24.

International News Safety Institute. (2014). *Killing the Messenger*. Viewed on 11 March 2019 <https://newssafety.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Killing_the_Messenger_2014.pdf>

International News Safety Institute. (2016). *Killing the Messenger*. International Press Centre, 1-68.

Irani, E, (2019). The Use of Videoconferencing for Qualitative Interviewing: Opportunities, Challenges, and Considerations. *Clinical Nursing Research, 28(1)*, 3–8.

Jukes, S. (2019). Reporting Global While Being Local. Commentary for Special Issue of Journalism Studies, *Journalism Studies, 20(12)*, 1798-1802.

Jiang, G, A. (2016). Dynamics of Culture Frames in International News Coverage: A Semantic Network Analysis. *International Journal of Communication. 10, 3710–3736.*

Kant, I. (1977). *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics That Will Be Able to Present Itself as a Science*, (P. Carus & J. Ellington trans & ed). Hackett. (Original work published 1783)

Katovsky, B., & Carlson, T. (2003). *Embedded*. Lyons Press.

Keller, B. (2013). *It's the Golden Age of News*. *The New York Times*. Date viewed 17 May 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/04/opinion/keller-its-the-golden-age-of-news.html>

Khajeheian, D., Friedrichsen,M., & Mödinger, W. (2018). *Competitiveness in Emerging Markets: Market Dynamics in the Age of Disruptive Technologies*. Springer.

Kiley, S. (2009). *Desperate Glory*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Sage Publications.

Lalonde, C. (2007). Crisis Management and Organizational Development: Towards the Conception of a Learning Model in Crisis Management. *Organization Development Journal 25(1)*, 17-26.

Lawyer: Egyptian Journalist Detained on Fake News Charges. (2020, October 25). *Associated Press*. Viewed on 10 December 2020. <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2020-06-15/lawyer-egyptian-journalist-detained-on-fake-news-charges>

Leach, P. (2013). *The principles which can be drawn from the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights relating to the protection and safety of journalists and journalism*. Council of Europe. Viewed 17 Jan 2020.

<https://okno.mk/sites/default/files/MCM(2013)012_en_Leach_ProtectionofJournalists.pdf>

Liebes, T. & Kampf, Z. (2007). Routinizing Terror: Media Coverage and Public Practices: Israel 1996 – 2004. *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics, 11(12)*, 108-116.

Levine, R. (2011). *Free Ride: How Digital Parasites Are Destroying the Culture Business, and How the Culture Business Can Fight Back*. The Bodley Head.

Lewis, J., Brookes, R., Mosdell, N. & Threadgold, T., (2006). Shoot First and Ask Questions Later: Media coverage of the 2003 Iraq War. *Linguistics and the Human Sciences*, *2(2)*, 319 – 325.

Lisosky, J., & Henrichsen, J. (2011). *War on Words*. Praeger.

Lyon, D. (2011). *Frontline: Reporting from the World's Deadliest Places*. Summersdale Publishing.

Lück, J., Schultz, T., & Simon, F., (2020). Diversity in British, Swedish, and German Newsrooms: Problem Awareness, Measures, and Achievements. *Journalism Practice*. 1, 1 -21.

Luo, Y. & Harrison, T, M. (2019). How citizen journalists impact agenda of traditional media and the government policy making process in China. Global Media and China. 4 (1) 72 – 93.

Lupton, D. (1999). *Risk and Sociocultural Theory: The New Directions and Perspectives*. Cambridge University Press.

Manion, D. (2003). In *Dying to Tell The Truth*. Brussels: International News Safety Institute.

Mendick, R., Sanchez, R., & Ensor, J (2019, February 5). *UK minister branded 'genuinely irresponsible' after claiming British Isil hostage John Cantlie is alive*. The Telegraph. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/02/05/uk-believes-isil-hostage-john-cantlie-still-alive-minister-says/

Merriam, S. (1998). *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education.*

Ministry of Defence. (2013). *GREEN BOOK: MOD working arrangements with the media for use throughout the full spectrum of conflict* (pp. 1-47). Ministry of Defence.

Ministry of Defence. (2020). *Management of health and safety in defence (JSP 375. 1, (8))* .Ministry of Defence.

Moon, K., & Blackman, D. (2014). A Guide to Understanding Social Science Research for Natural Scientists. *Conservation Biology*, *28*: 1167-1177. Viewed on 2 May 2020. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/cobi.12326/full>

Moorcraft, P. (2016). *Dying for the Truth: The Concise History of Frontline War Reporting*. Pen and Sword Military.

Morgan, D.L. (1998b). Practical Strategies for Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Methods: Application for Health Research. *Qualitative Health Research, 8*, 362-76.

Morgan, D, L. (2014). Pragmatism as a Paradigm for Social Research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 20(8)*, 1045-1053.

McCarthy, T. (2014). Personal Interview. In Person. Los Angeles. July 7, In Armoudian, M. (2017). *Reporting from the danger zone: Frontline journalists, their jobs, and an increasingly perilous future*. Routledge.

McCullin, D. (2002). *Unreasonable Behavior: An Autobiography*. Vintage

Nilsson, M.L. & Ornebring, H. (2016). Journalism Under Threat: Intimidation and harassment of Swedish journalists. *Journalism Practice, 10(7)*, 880-890.

Oltedal, S., Moen, B., Klempe, H., & Rundmo, T. (2004). Explaining Risk Perception. *An Evaluation of Cultural Theory.* Routunde Publishing.

Pantti, M., Wahl-Jorgensen, K., & Cottle, S. (2012). *Disasters and the Media*. Peter Lang .

Parker, E.C. (1980). What is right and wrong with media coverage of disaster? *Disasters and the mass media* (pp.237–240). Washington, DC: The National Research Council.

Parker, K,. N. (2015). *Aggression Against Journalist: Understanding Occupational Intimidation of Journalists Using Comparisons with Sexual Harassment*. ProQuest.

Parmar, S. (2015). The International Human Rights for the Protection of Journalists. In *Journalism at Risk: Threats, Challenges and Perspectives* (37-74). Council of Europe Publishing.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods* (2nd edn.). Sage Publications.

Picard, R. G. & Storm, H. (2016). *The Kidnapping of Journalists: Reporting from High-Risk Conflict Zones*. Tauris & Co.

Price, M. E., Haas, S., & Margolin, D. (2008). New Technologies and International Broadcasting: Reflections on Adaptations and Transformations. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 616(1) 150 - 172*.

Revonsuo, A. (2010). *Consciousness: The Science of Subjectivity*. Psychology Press.

Robson, C. (2011). *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers* (2ndedn.). Blackwell.

Salamon, E. (2019). Freelance Journalists and Stringers. In Lewis, S, C. (Ed), *The International Encyclopedia of Journalism Studies*. John Wiley & Sons.

Salmon, W. C. (1984). *Scientific Explanation and the Causal Structure of the World*. Princeton University Press.

Sambrook, R. (2010). *Are Foreign Correspondents Redundant?* Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford.

Scanlon, G. (2020). *Without Empathy, Journalism is Lost*. Ethical Journalism Network. Viewed 30 April 2020. <https://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/without-empathy-journalism-is-lost>

Schulting D. (2017) *Kant's Radical Subjectivism*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Schmickle, S. (2009). Reporting War: A Dart Society Project. DART Center. https://dartcenter.org/content/reporting-war-0

Sedgwick, M. (2009). The Use of Videoconferencing as a Medium for Qualitative Interview. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 8(1)*, 1-11.

Shaw, M. (2005). *The New Western Way of War*. Polity.

Simon, J. (2017). *Introduction: The New Face of Censorship*. Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). Viewed 23 May 2020. < https://cpj.org/2017/04/introduction-the-new-face-of-censorship.php>

Simpson, J. (2016). We Chose to Speak of War and Strife: The World of the Foreign Correspondent. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Sjöberg, L. (1998). Worry and Risk Perception. *Risk Analysis, 18(1)*. 85-93.

Slaughter, A., Smith, R., Newman, E., & Drevo, S. (2015). *Covering Trauma: Impact on Journalists*. DART Center. Viewed on 20 January 2021. <https://dartcenter.org/content/covering-trauma-impact-on-journalists>

Slaughter, A. (2017). *Journalists and Safety Training Experiences and Opinions*. DART Center. viewed on 19 May 2020 <https://dartcenter.org/resources/journalists-and-safety-training-experiences-and-opinions>

Slevitch, L., (2011). Qualitative and Quantitative Methodologies Compared: Ontological and Epistemological Perspectives. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism, 12(1)*, 73-81.

Socrates Quotes. (n.d.). BrainyQuote.com. Viewed on January 21, 2021 https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/socrates_101212

Sorrell, J., & Redmond, G. M. (1995). Interviews in Qualitative Nursing Research: Differing approaches for ethnographic and phenomenological studies. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *21(6)*, 1117–1122.

Spinner, J. (2014). Freelance War Photographers: On Their Own in Danger Zones. *American Journalism Review*. Viewed 20 May 2020. <https://ajr.org/2014/11/18/freelance-war-photographers-danger-zones/>

Strang, K, D. (2013). Risk Management Research Design Ideologies, Strategies, Methods and Techniques. *International Journal of Risk and Contingency Management, 2(26)*, 1-26.

Stringer, E. T. (1999). Action Research (2nd edn). Sage.

Sturges, J, E., & Hanrahan, K, J., (2004). Comparing Telephone and Face-to-Face Qualitative Interviewing: A Research Note. *Qualitative Research, 2004; 4(1), 107 - 118*.

Sullivan, G. (2006). *Journalists at Risk*. Twenty-First Century Books.

Susi, M. (2019). *Human Right, Digital Society and the Law: A Research Companion.* Routledge

Tait, S. (2011). Bearing witness, journalism and moral responsibility, *Media Culture & Society, 33(8)*, 1220-1235.

Tuosto, K. (2008). The "Grunt Truth" of Embedded Journalism: The New Media/Military Relationship. *Stanford Journal of international relations, 10(1)*, 20-31.

United Nations Human Rights Committee (2011), *The Charter of the United Nations.* UN General Assembly, 2011, Paragraph 44.

UN Human Rights Council (2012). *The Charter of the United Nations.* Viewed on 18 May 2019 https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/A-67-53-Add-1_en.pdf

UN Human Rights Council (2012b). *The Charter of the United Nations.*

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (2011). *Safety and Security for National Humanitarian Workers* (pp. 1-28). United Nations.

United Nations Security Council (2016). Security Council Resolution 2133. Viewed on 13 June. <www.un.org/press/en/2014/sc11262.doc.htm>

U.S. Central Command. (CENTCOM). (2003). *Public Affairs guidance (PAG) on embedding media during possible future operations/deployment in the U.S Central Commands (CENTCOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR)* (pp. 1-26). US Department of Defence.

Vurdien, R. (2019). Videoconferencing: Developing Students' Communicative Competence. *The Journal of Foreign Language Education and Technology, 4(2)*, 269-298.

Wahl-Jorgensen, K., Williams, A., Sambrook, R., Harris, H., Iñaki Garcia-Blanco, I., Dencik, I., Cushion, S., Carter C., & Allan, S. (2008). The Future of Journalism: Risks, Threats and Opportunities. *Digital Journalism, 4(7)*, 809-815.

Walters, E., Warren, C., & Dobbie, M. (2006). *The Changing Nature of Work: A global survey and case study of atypical work in the media industry.* International Labour Organisation. Viewed on 20 May 2020. < https://www.ilo.org/sector/Resources/publications/WCMS_161547/lang--en/index.htm>

Ward, C. (2020). On All Fronts: The Education of a Journalist. United States: Penguin Publishing Group.

Weaver, K. (2018). Pragmatic Paradigm. In B. Bruce (Ed.), *The SAGE Encyclopaedia of Educational Research, Measurement, and Evaluation*. Sage Publications.

White, A. (2016). Ethical Journalism: An Inspiration for responsible communications in Europe. In O. Andreotti (Ed), *Journalism at Risk: Threats Challenges and Perspectives* (195-223). Council of Europe.

Appendices

Appendix A – SURVEY MONKEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Reporting from the frontline: An assessment of the risk mitigation strategies applied...

SUMMARY → DESIGN SURVEY → PREVIEW & SCORE → COLLECT RESPONSES → ANALYZE RESULTS → PRESENT RESULTS   NEXT →

QUESTION BANK ?

Questions

Previously Used Questions >

All Categories >

Community >

Customer Feedback >

Customer Satisfaction >

Demographics >

Education >

Events >

Healthcare >

Human Resources >

Industry Specific >

Just for Fun >

Market Research >

Page Logic ▼   More Actions ▼

UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH

Reporting from the frontline: An assessment of the risk mitigation strategies applied by news organisations when operating in areas of conflict

Welcome to the survey

EDIT

I am a student of the Institute of Criminal Justice Studies at the University of Portsmouth (UoP), researching the challenges faced by News Organisations when assessing risk mitigation measures when operating within conflict zones. This research will contribute to my Professional Doctorate in Security and Risk Management with the results being used as part of my main thesis project.

The answers provided by participants of this study will form the basis of determining vulnerabilities and shortfalls within existing risk mitigation strategies. Once completed, it may offer solutions to improve journalists' security, as an outcome of action-based research. By gathering rich contextual data, the study aims to highlight where changes to the media ecosystem have had a direct impact on the ability to effectively manage risk within modern-day conflict zones. You will be asked a number of questions surrounding 4 key themes; deployment planning, pre-deployment training, crisis management, changes and lessons learned within modern-day journalism, all focusing on areas of conflict.

The research complies with data protection regulations (GDPR). Your responses will be entirely anonymous and fully confidential. We will not collect any information that can identify you or your organisation. The collected data will be securely stored by the UoP for 10 years and then destroyed.

You have been invited to take part as it has been indicated that you may have **worked for an International News Organisation** in one of the following areas of conflict between **2009 and 2019.**

a) - Afghanistan
b) - Iraq
c) - Syria
d) - Yemen

⚠ Oops, Something went wrong

You **should** have also:

1 - Deployed in a **primary role** with an International News Organisation (Correspondent, Journalist, Photojournalist, Shoot Editor, Camera Operator, Photographer, Producer, Director).

Or deployed in a **support role** with an International News Organisation (Security

Advisor, Risk Manager, Fixer, Medical Advisor, Additional Editorial Support, and Logistics).

2 - Been involved in the pre-deployment process, including the **risk assessment** and individual **training** requirements.

The survey should take around 20 minutes to complete. Participation is entirely voluntary. You can withdraw at any point by navigating away from the web page, however, you cannot modify your answers once you have submitted your responses because your participation is **fully anonymous.**

New version available!

Saving changes...

If you need more information, please contact me, I mark.grant@myport.ac.uk.

You can also contact my supervisor, Chris Lewis, at chris.lewis@port.ac.uk.

The study has been reviewed and approved by the ICJS Ethics Committee. If you have any problems with the study please contact the researcher or supervisor above. If you wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the University at complaintsadvice@port.ac.uk. Institute of Criminal Justice Studies, University of Portsmouth, St George's Building, 141 High Street, Portsmouth PO1 2HY T: 023 9284 8484

Should you require further details on the study, please see the invitation letter, participation information sheet, or the informed consent form for additional prompts on what is included in the study.

1. By clicking the consent button below, you agree to take part in the study, you meet the criteria as described above and you are aged 18 or over.

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

2. What is your age?

○ 18-24   ○ 55-64

○ 25-39   ○ 65+

○ 40-54

3. What is your gender?   ⚠ Oops, Something went wrong

○ Female

○ Male

○ Other (please specify)

4. What is your sexual orientation?

○ Asexual

○ Bisexual

○ Gay

○ Heterosexual or straight

○ Lesbian

○ Pansexual

○ Queer

○ None of the above, please specify

New version available!

Saving changes...

5. What is your racial or ethnic identity? (Select all that apply.)

☐ African-American/Black

☐ East Asian

☐ Hispanic/Latinx

☐ Middle Eastern

☐ American Indian/Alaskan Native

☐ Pacific Islander

☐ South Asian

☐ Southeast Asian

☐ White

☐ None of the above, please specify...

6. Do you identify with any of the following religio

⚠ Oops, Something went wrong

☐ Protestantism

☐ Catholicism

☐ Christianity

☐ Judaism

☐ Buddhism

☐ Hinduism

☐ Native American

☐ Inter/Non-denominational

☐ No religion

☐ Other (please specify)

New version available!

Saving changes...

7. Which conflict areas have you operated in between 2009-2019

☐ Afghanistan

☐ Iraq

☐ Syria

☐ Yemen

☐ Other (please specify)

8. In which role were you deployed in when working within the previously selected areas of conflict?

☐ Journalist

☐ Correspondent

☐ Producer

☐ Camera Operator / Shoot Edit

☐ Director

☐ Risk Advisory / Security Specialist

☐ Fixer

☐ Freelancer

⚠ Oops, Something went wrong

☐ Other (please specify)

9. How long have you worked in the media industry?

◯ 0-1 Years?

+

○ 2-5 Years?

○ 6-10 Years?

○ 11+ Years?

10. **SECTION 1 - RISK ASSESSMENT SECTION**

Do you agree that your organisation's risk assessm   New version available!

                                                         Saving changes...

○ Strongly agree   ○ Disagree

○ Agree   ○ Strongly disagree

○ Neither agree nor disagree

11. Do you feel confident that the risk assessment process at your organisation takes into account the wide range of threats and realities of modern-day conflicts? (e.g. local culture risks, LGBTQ+, drone, cyber, modern-day embeds risks)

○ Extremely confident   ○ Not so confident

○ Very confident   ○ Not at all confident

○ Somewhat confident

12. Do you agree that your organisation provides an adequate level of risk 'duty of care' for those operating in conflict zones?

○ Strongly agree   ○ Disagree

○ Agree   ○ Strongly disagree

○ Neither agree nor disagree

13. Did you complete your organisation's risk assessment process before deployment?

○ Yes

○ No

⚠ Oops, Something went wrong

14. Do all members of the extended team (including security & fixers) have input in the risk assessment process, prior to deployment?

○ Yes

○ No

15. How satisfied are you that the risk owner (management approver) understands the complexities of the modern-day risk involved with deployments to conflict areas?

○ Very satisfied   ○ Dissatisfied

○ Satisfied   ○ Very

○ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

New version available!

Saving changes...

16. **SECTION 2 - PRE-DEPLOYMENT TRAINING**

Do you think that the training courses that your news organization provides for its journalists, freelancers and other support staff are sufficient?

○ Strongly agree   ○ Disagree

○ Agree   ○ Strongly disagree

○ Neither agree nor disagree

17. The training provided by your news organisation captures all the risks that teams face on the modern battlefield. Do you agree?

○ Strongly agree   ○ Disagree

○ Agree   ○ Strongly disagree

○ Neither agree nor disagree

18. Who does your organisation provide **mandatory** training for?

☐ Staff   ☐ Fixer

☐ Freelancers   ☐ Long Term Contributors

☐ Support Staff (Security/Drivers...etc)   ☐ Stringers

☐ Other (please specify)

⚠ Oops, Something went wrong

19. Can you confirm which of the courses below you completed before traveling into areas of conflict?

☐ Hostile Environment   ☐ Advanced First Aid Training

☐ Hostile Environment and First Aid Training   ☐ Defensive Driving Training

☐ Public Order / Riot Training

☐ Other (please specify)

20. If you attended the Hostile Environment Training, can you please highlight how valuable you have found the course?

○ Extremely valuable

○ Very valuable

○ Somewhat valuable

○ Other (N/A)

○ Not :

○ Not :

New version available!

Saving changes...

21. If you attended the Hostile Environment First Aid Training, can you please highlight how valuable you have found the course?

○ Extremely valuable

○ Very valuable

○ Somewhat valuable

○ Other (N/A)

○ Not so valuable

○ Not at all valuable

22. If you attended the Public Order / Riot Training, can you please highlight how valuable you have found the course?

○ Extremely valuable

○ Very valuable

○ Somewhat valuable

○ Other (N/A)

○ Not so valuable

○ Not at all valuable

23. If you attended the Advanced First Aid Training how valuable you have found the course?

⚠ Oops, Something went wrong

○ Extremely valuable

○ Very valuable

○ Somewhat valuable

○ Not so valuable

○ Not at all valuable

24. If you attended the Defensive Driving Training, can you please highlight how valuable you have found the course?

○ Extremely valuable   ○ Not so valuable

○ Very valuable   ○ Not

                                           New version available!

○ Somewhat valuable   Saving changes...

○ Other (N/A)

25. If you attended any other trainings, can you please highlight how valuable you have found this course and state what the course entailed?

26. Please tick where there is a mandatory requirement to periodically refresh the training courses?

☐ Hostile Environment Training   ☐ Advanced Medical Training

☐ Hostile Environment First Aid Training ☐ Defensive Driving Training

☐ Public Order / Riot Training

☐ Other (please specify)

27. Are there any allowances/dispensation given for the mandatory training courses?

○ The mandatory courses MUST be completed, or teams are not deployed.

○ There is some dispensation given under certain circumstances

○ On a case by case basis

○ Loosely enforced - limited oversight of policing

○ Additional Information   ⚠ Oops, Something went wrong

28. **SECTION 3 - ADDITIONAL PRE-DEPLOYMENT FACTORS**

Does your organisation take into account the **deployment history** of the team prior to deploying to conflict zones?

○ Yes

○ No

29. Does your organisation have an **upper age limit** prior to any team member deploying to conflict zones?

○ Yes

○ No

New version available!

Saving changes...

30. Does your organisation have a lower age limit prior to any team member deploying to conflict zones?

○ Yes

○ No

31. Does your organisation take into account specific gender risks in countries where women's rights are extremely conservative?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Other (please specify)

32. Does your organisation measure travel risk and safety for female travelers as part of their risk assessment process?

○ Yes

○ No

33. Does your organisation take into account the risk to members of the LBGT+ community as part of the risk assessment process, specifically when they travel to areas where it is punishable to be gay?

○ Yes

○ No

⚠ Oops, Something went wrong

○ Additional Information

34. Does your organisation manage team members' cultural beliefs and other cultural sensitivities as part of their risk assessment process?

(+)

○ Yes

○ No

○ Additional Information

35. Does your organisation consider team member
assessment process, prior to deployments?

New version available!

Saving changes...

○ Yes

○ No

○ Additional Information

36. Does being of a certain ethnicity or religion impact the decision to deploy certain
journalists to areas of conflict?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Additional Information

37. Are there any special considerations given to the different religious groups prior
to deployment? (Muslim team members' prayer times, diet requirements)

○ Yes

○ No

○ Additional Information

38. Are you required to have any type of pre-health check as part of a pre-
deployment process?

⚠ Oops, Something went wrong

☐ Yes

☐ No

39. If Yes, does this include the following:

☐ A full medical examination prior to deployments

☐ Physical fitness for deployment assessment

☐ Mental health assessment

☐ Not required

☐ Additional Information

40. Is there any internal confidential method of sp Organisation at the pre-deployment phase, to repo deploying to conflict areas?

New version available!

Saving changes...

○ Yes

○ No

41. **SECTION 4 - CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

I feel that I am fully supported by my news organisation when deployed in conflict zones.

○ Strongly agree

○ Disagree

○ Agree

○ Strongly disagree

○ Neither agree nor disagree

42. Are you provided with adequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for deployments to conflict zones?

○ Yes

○ No

43. Have you been refused equipment due to cost, availability or other non-operational reasons?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Additional Comment

⚠ Oops, Something went wrong

44. Are you confident that your news organisation has a robust medical evacuation plan in place, that would support you in an emergency?

45. Are you fully aware of the insurances in place to support should there be a serious incident during deployment within areas of conflict?

○ Yes

○ No

New version available!

Saving changes...

46. Are you confident that your organisation has the correct support available to manage any kidnap and ransom (K&R) situation for media teams deployed in conflict zones?

○ Yes

○ No

47. In your opinion, is the medical training provided, either by a medic or by members of your team, sufficient for operating in conflict zones?

○ Yes

○ No

48. **SECTION 5 - LESSONS & CHANGES IN MEDIA**

Do you feel that your news organisation has a robust method for collecting information on assignments to ensure key lessons are learned for future tasks?

○ Strongly agree   ○ Disagree

○ Agree   ○ Strongly disagree

○ Neither agree nor disagree

49. To the best of your knowledge, are the mitigations for your task assessed on a regular basis by your security department?

○ Yes

○ No

⚠ Oops, Something went wrong

50. Do you feel your risk advisors are experienced/qualified to provide the correct advice to keep you safe when deployed in some of the most dangerous parts of the world?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Other (please specify)

51. How effective do you feel the current risk reduction methods being deployed by news organisations, journalists and support staff are?

○ Extremely effective

○ Very effective

○ Somewhat effective

○ Not :

○ Not :

New version available!

Saving changes...

52. Do you feel that those who sign off risk assessments (approval managers) are fully aware of the cultural considerations (women travellers, LGBTQ+, religious factors) of those working in conflict zones?

○ Extremely aware

○ Very aware

○ Somewhat aware

○ Not so aware

○ Not at all aware

53. Do you feel that those who sign off risk assessments (approval managers) are aware of the challenges of working within modern-day embeds.

Note - Prior to 2011, many media teams embedded directly with the military, normally within a western military or other well-trained government-controlled personnel, rather than the various non-western military, militias, criminal gangs that often support media teams throughout modern-day conflict areas.

○ Extremely aware

○ Very aware

○ Somewhat aware

○ Not so aware

○ Not at all aware

54. Do you feel that those who sign off risk assessments (approval managers) are aware of the various Cyberthreats for media personnel deployed?

○ Extremely aware

○ Very aware

○ Somewhat aware

○ Not so aware

○ Not :

⚠ Oops, Something went wrong

55. Do you feel that those who sign off risk assessments (approval managers) take into account the rise of populism and the increased physical threats posed to media teams? (civil unrest, public order)

(+)

○ Yes

○ No

56. Do you feel the safety and security of journalists has improved since 2009?

○ Yes

○ No

New version available!

Saving changes...

57. Optional - If you would like to be contacted to be part of further research into this topic, please leave your name and email address here:

58. Thank you so much for taking the time to complete this survey. With the conceptual data that you have provided, I aim to develop and provide pragmatic solutions to help improve the safety and security of journalists operating within areas of conflict. Should you have any questions regarding the survey, please contact me directly.

Researcher: Mark Grant - mark.grant@myport.ac.uk

Supervisor: Chris Lewis - chris.lewis@port.ac.uk

Complaints: complaintsadvice@port.ac.uk

ICJS, University of Portsmouth, St George's Building, 141 High St PO1 2HY   T: 023 9284 5204

⊕ NEW QUESTION ▼

or Copy and paste questions

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form for Interviews

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWS

Title of Project: Reporting from the frontline; An assessment of the risk mitigation strategies applied by news organisations when operating in areas of conflict

Name and Contact Details of Researcher(s):

Mark Grant at mark.grant@myport.ac.uk on +44 (0) 7408 833 234

Name and Contact Details of Supervisor:

Chris Lewis at chris.lewis@port.ac.uk on +44 (0) 7469 958 430

University Data Protection Officer:

Samantha Hill, +44 023 9284 3642 or data-protection@port.ac.uk

Ethics Committee Reference Number: **REC Ref No:** FHSS 2020-001

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the *Information Sheet* for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time within 3 months of the interview being conducted, without giving any reason.

3. I understand that data collected during this study will be retained in accordance with the University's data retention policy and *could* also be requested by UK regulatory authorities.

4. I allow for the data I provide to be used for the purposes of the doctoral thesis.

5. I agree to the data I contribute being retained for any future research that has been given a favourable opinion by a Research Ethics Committee for professional journals, magazines or other publications.

6. I understand that I can withdraw consent for my data to be used at any time before analysis starts, or within 2 months of the interview being conducted.

7. I agree for the interview to be recorded.

8. I agree to take part in the above study.

Appendix C: Information Sheet for Questionnaire

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Study Title: Reporting from the frontline; An assessment of the risk mitigation strategies applied by news organisations when operating in areas of conflict

Name and contact details of researcher
- Name: Mark Grant
- Email: mark.grant@myport.ac.uk
- Phone: +44 (0) 7408 833 234

Name and contact details of supervisor
- Name: Chris Lewis
- Email: chris.lewis@port.ac.uk
- Telephone: +44 (0) 7469 958 430

Ethics Committee Reference Number: **REC Ref No:** FHSS 2020-001

1. Invitation

I would like to invite you to take part in my doctoral research study. Joining the study is entirely up to you before you decide I would like you to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. This *Information Sheet* will provide context help you decide whether or not you would like to take part in this research. Please feel free to talk to others about the study if you wish, and please do ask if anything is unclear.

As you know, I am a doctoral student at the University of Portsmouth studying Security and Risk Management with a focus on how security measures is applied for journalists operating within areas of conflict, exploring the effectiveness of the current mitigations.

2. Study Summary

This study will look at the risk mitigations applied by news organisations in support of their news teams and journalists, prior to, during and post assignment, specifically with areas of conflict. I feel that this is important because the sector not only faces changes within the ever-evolving fabric of journalism but it seeks to provide support for news organisations to ensure their measures provided to news teams are fit for purpose and a true reflection of the modern-day risks. I am seeking participants who have:

- Deployed in a primary role with an International News Organisation (Correspondent, Journalist, Photojournalist, Shoot Editor, Camera operator, Photographer, Producer, Director)
- Deployed in a support role with an International News Organisation (Security Advisor, Risk Manager, Fixer, Medical Advisor, Additional support Editorial support, and logistic staff
- Participants must have covered news stories in areas of conflict between July 2009 and July 2019 in any of the following countries:
    i. Afghanistan
    ii. Iraq

iii. Syria

iv. Yemen

- Deployed by their respective news organisations to areas considered a kinetic or conflict affected regions.
- Taken part in their respective organisations risk assessment process, risk mitigations measures and individual pre-deployment training requirements.
- All participants must have operated in the media industry for more than 12 months continuously.

Should you wish to continue with this part of the study, the questionnaire should take no longer than 20 minutes to complete. You support is vital as the research aims to ensure the findings add value to the safety of journalists. We are looking to ensure the responses given are steeped in experience, relevance and lessons learned from recent assignments to inform future deployments.

3. What is the purpose of the study?

The aim of the research is to add to the current body of knowledge surrounding risk management measures implemented by media organisations.

By seeking empirical data to add to the existing body of knowledge will support the improvement of risk mitigation measures and for news organisations. The output of the research is intended to provide action-based outcomes, providing pragmatic and actionable measures which might assist news organizations (and the sector at large) to better manage their risks, or more effectively respond to covering news stories in conflict zones.

The research will be built upon an initial online survey which you may have participated in, a literary review of available studies and research by others (academic and professional practitioners), and semi-structured interviews. Note, if you would like to be considered for the interview phase, please annotate the relevant box within the questionnaire.

The themes will be areas of focus for the research:

- Deployment planning and support,
- Pre-deployment training,
- Crisis management and incident response,
- Changes to modern-day journalist,
- Lessons learned in areas of conflict.

Further depth on these topics is included within the *Invite Letter* to help you better contextualise what the questionnaire is seeking to address.

4. Why have I been invited?

You have been invited to participant based on your:

1. Experience of operating in conflict regions for International news organisations.
2. Geographic experience
3. Specific sector experience

4. A deep understanding of the pre deployment processes and requirements

It is felt that these qualities will enrich the context of the research with real-life observations on how organisations manage modern day deployments and how they react to multi-faceted risks. The goal of the research is to receive up to 80 returned questionnaires from across the various roles and organisations, from which both trends and unique views and experiences can be drawn.

5. Do I have to take part?

No, taking part in this research is entirely voluntary. It is up to you to decide if you want to volunteer for the study. I have described the study in this *Information Sheet.* If you agree to take part, I will then ask you to confirm the points highlighted in the *Consent Form,* on the next page. You can either email a copy back, or you can sign one when we meet for the interview.

6. What will happen to me if I take part?

If you agree to participate in the questionnaire then the following steps will be required:

1) Continue with this survey and ensure you read and understand the consent form. You will be asked to confirm this before being approved to move onto the questionnaire.
2) Complete the questionnaire as instructed.
3) Confirm if you would be happy to be involved in the interview element of this research at a later date. If you agree, you will be contacted to arrange a suitable time and provided more information on the interview format.
4) You will have 3 months to indicate whether you wish to withdraw consent after the questionnaire has been submitted.
5) Your observations, and the observations of the other participants will be used as the backbone of the doctoral thesis paper.

After this process the collective data may be used for journal and magazine publications – at all times with anonymity being in place. You will have 3 months to withdraw your interview if you change your mind.

7. Expenses and payments

There will be no cost to you regarding this research process, nor will payment be made for participation.

8. Anything else I will have to do?

You do not have to do anything ahead of the interview.

9. What data will be collected and / or measurements taken?

The questionnaire data will be recorded, with your permission. This will be analysed to support the second phase of research. No-one else will have access to the data, nor will your answers be linked to you in anyway. At no time will your name, nor the name of your organisation, be used.

10. What are the possible disadvantages, burdens and risks of taking part?

Aside from the use of your time, there are no disadvantages associated with participating. Your identity will never be revealed within any materials resulting from the questionnaire, and any comments which can be associated with you or your employer will be removed from the transcript.

11. What are the possible advantages or benefits of taking part?

The benefits of participating include: 1) you will have access to the research findings and doctoral thesis, 2) this will both directly and indirectly benefit both your organisation as well as the community at large, and 3) this may provide insights which help you implement change within your role, organisation and journalism community.

12. Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

The priority of this research is to gather information without in any way compromising participants, nor their organisations. As such:

1) Your questionnaire will be given a code, prior to the data being analysed. From that point on, there will be no reference to your name, organisation or any other identifying factors.
2) A single printed code to name sheet will be retained in a secure safe and security envelope separate from the questionnaires. This will only be accessible by the researcher and supervisor.
3) Any potential linkages between your questionnaire response and you will be 'scrubbed' so that no associations can be drawn between you and the research.
4) You can also scrub your interview before any data is used.

Anonymity will be maintained at all times, both the questionnaire and the data are used. The data, when made anonymous, may be presented to others at academic conferences, or published as a project report, academic dissertation or in academic journals. Anonymous data, which does not identify you, may be used in future research studies approved by an appropriate research ethics committee.

The raw data, which would identify you, will not be passed to anyone outside the study team without your express written permission. The raw data will be retained for up to 10 years. When it is no longer required, the data will be disposed of securely (*e.g.* electronic media and paper records / images) destroyed.

13. What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?

As a volunteer you can stop any participation at any time during the questionnaire, or you can withdraw from the study at any time within 3 months of the questionnaire being conducted, without giving a reason if you do not wish to. If you do withdraw from a study after some data have been collected, you will be asked if you are content for the data collected thus far to be retained and included in the study. If you prefer, the data collected can be destroyed and not included in the study. Once the research has been completed, and the data analysed and used for the doctoral thesis it will not be possible for you to withdraw your data from the study.

14. What if there is a problem?

If you have a query, concern or complaint about any aspect of this study, in the first instance you should contact the researcher(s) if appropriate. There will also be an academic member of staff listed as the supervisor whom you can contact. If there is a complaint and there is a supervisor listed, please contact the Supervisor with details of the complaint. The contact details for both the researcher and any supervisor are detailed on page 1.

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should ask to speak to the researcher or their supervisor, who will do their best to answer your questions. The researcher Mark Grant can be contacted at mark.grant@myport.ac.uk or the supervisor/gatekeeper, Chris Lewis can be contacted at chris.lewis@port.ac.uk If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can do this by contacting the head of school, at Paul.Norman@port.ac.uk or the FHSS Ethics Committee chair at ethics-fhss@port.ac.uk.

If the complaint remains unresolved, please contact:

The University Complaints Officer

Phone: 023 9284 3642   Email: complaintsadvice@port.ac.uk

15. Who is funding the research?

None of the researchers or study staff will receive any financial reward by conducting this study.

16. Who has reviewed the study?

Research involving human participants is reviewed by an ethics committee to ensure that the dignity and well-being of participants is respected. The research has been given a favourable ethical opinion by the University's Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Ethics Committee.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for considering volunteering for this research. If you do agree to participate your consent will be sought; please see the accompanying Consent Form. You will then be given a copy of this Information Sheet and your signed consent form, to keep.

Appendix D: Invitation Letter – Semi-Structured Interview

University of **Portsmouth**

Doctoral Research Invitation Letter - Semi-Structured Interview

Name and contact details of researcher
- Name: Mark Grant
- Email: mark.grant@myport.ac.uk
- Phone: +44 (0) 7408 833 234

Name and contact details of supervisor
- Name: Chris Lewis
- Email: chris.lewis@port.ac.uk
- Telephone: +44 (0) 7469 958 430

Study Title: Reporting from the frontline; An assessment of the risk mitigation strategies applied by news organizations when operating in areas of conflict

REC Ref No: FHSS 2020-001

Dear Potential Participant,

Thank you for reading this. I am a doctoral student at the University of Portsmouth studying Security and Risk Management, with a specific focus on risk mitigation measures taken by international news organisations operating in areas of conflict. As part of my thesis paper I would like to invite you to take part in my thesis research study, which will take place in the form of a *semi-structured interview*. Further details are provided within the *Information Sheet* on the next page.

It is entirely up to you whether you participate, however your involvement would be very much appreciated. My research is designed to explore the relevance of the current risk mitigation strategies, with the objective being to identify existing strengths, as well as vulnerabilities and weaknesses to support and improve the mitigations used by news organisations around the world. My research intends to offer action-based outcomes (in the form of solutions) from which the community might benefit.

The themes will be areas of focus for the research:

- Changes to modern-day journalism,
- Pre-deployment planning and support,
- Crisis management and incident response,
- Lessons learned in areas of conflict.

In order to protect both you and your organization you will be asked <u>NOT</u> to comment directly on your existing employer, nor name any previous employer nor party you have worked with. Rather, you are asked to provide professional and experiential observations in terms of strengths, weaknesses of the current risk mitigation strategies. Also note, your name will be fully omitted from any publications and the research will be fully anonymised.

If you do agree to participate then can you **please respond** to the main body of the email that this invitation letter was attached within. By doing so will confirm whether the research can be used for:

- My academic doctoral thesis paper
- Professional or academic journals and magazines

As such, you will be able to select how your observations data is used. In addition, an *Information Sheet* is attached, which provides further information relating to this research.

<u>Your rights in research</u>

If you are able to support this research, then a priority is to ensure that your interests are protected. As such:

- You will remain anonymous throughout this study and no identifying data will be kept on record.

- You have the right to withdraw your response data for a period of 2 months after the Interview for the thesis. After this date, your response data will be collated into the overall dataset for this project and unable to be withdrawn from the thesis.

- You are welcome to see the results and findings once the research is complete.

- At completion of the study, and when the research findings are published, you are welcome to express your feelings about the research, the researchers and your participation.

- Your anonymised, aggregated data will be kept on file in a secure, encrypted and password protected location. Any recordings or data will be secured in a security envelope with security seals, and this will be stored in a safe.

This research has been approved by the University of Portsmouth Ethics Department. The University of Portsmouth will <u>NOT</u> be provided information on the identity of participants to further protect your identity.

If you agree to participate then we can coordinate a convenient date and time to meet for the interview.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Grant

Appendix E: Participant Information Sheet

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Study Title: Reporting from the frontline; An assessment of the risk mitigation strategies applied by news organizations when operating in areas of conflict

Name and contact details of researcher
- Name: Mark Grant
- Email: mark.grant@myport.ac.uk
- Phone: +44 (0) 7408 833 234

Name and contact details of supervisor
- Name: Chris Lewis
- Email: chris.lewis@port.ac.uk
- Telephone: +44 (0) 7469 958 430

Ethics Committee Reference Number: **REC Ref No:** FHSS 2020-001

1. Invitation

I would like to invite you to take part in my doctoral research study. Joining the study is entirely up to you before you decide I would like you to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. This *Information Sheet* will provide context help you decide whether or not you would like to take part in this research. Please feel free to talk to others about the study if you wish, and please do ask if anything is unclear.

As you know, I am a doctoral student at the University of Portsmouth studying Security and Risk Management with a focus on how security measures are applied for journalists operating within areas of conflict, exploring the effectiveness of the current mitigations.

2. Study Summary

This study will look at the risk mitigations applied by news organisations in support of their news teams and journalists, prior to, during and post assignment, specifically with areas of conflict. I feel that this is important because the sector not only faces changes within the ever-evolving fabric of journalism, but it seeks to provide support for news organisations to ensure their measures provided to news teams are fit for purpose and a true reflection of the modern-day risks.

Should you wish to continue with this part of the study, the interview should take no longer than 30-45 minutes. You support is vital as the research aims to ensure the findings add value to the safety of journalists. We are looking to ensure the responses given are steeped in experience, relevance and lessons learned from recent assignments to inform future deployments.

3. What is the purpose of the study?

The aim of the research is to add to the current body of knowledge surrounding risk management measures implemented by media organisations. By seeking empirical data to

add to the existing body of knowledge will support the improvement of risk mitigation measures and for news organisations. The output of the research is intended to provide action-based outcomes, providing pragmatic and actionable measures which might assist news organizations (and the sector at large) to better manage their risks, or more effectively respond to covering news stories in conflict zones.

This part of the research will build upon the initial online survey, which was completed prior to these interviews being organised. The data gathered in the questionnaire will be supplemented by a literary review of available studies and research by others (academic and professional practitioners), and this semi-structured interview.

The themes surrounding the interviews will be:

- Changes to modern-day journalism,
- Pre-deployment planning and support,
- Crisis management and incident response,
- Lessons learned in areas of conflict.

Further depth on these topics is included within the *Invite Letter* to help you better contextualize what the interviews are seeking to address.

4. Why have I been invited?

You have been invited to participant based on your:

1. You provided your details on phase one of the study, or have highlighted you would be willing to support this study

2. Experience of operating in conflict regions for International news organisations.
3. A deep understanding of the pre deployment processes and requirements

It is felt that these qualities will enrich the context of the research with real-life observations on how organizations manage modern day deployments and how they react to multi-faceted risks. The goal of the research supplements the initial 74 returned questionnaires, with up to 20 semi-structured interviews.

5. Do I have to take part?

No, taking part in this research is entirely voluntary. It is up to you to decide if you want to volunteer for the study. I have described the study in this *Information Sheet*. If you agree to take part, I will then ask you to confirm the points highlighted in the *Consent Form, on the next page*. You can either email a copy back, or you can sign one when we meet for the interview.

6. What will happen to me if I take part?

If you agree to participate in the interview, then the following steps will occur:

1) We will agree a schedule for when we can conduct the interview over ZOOM.
2) You can confirm over email that you give consent to take part in the study.

3) I will give you a verbal briefing before the interview starts, and then will walk through the themes outlined within the Invite Letter – the interview will last no more than 60 mins.

4) The interview will be recorded – and a transcript will be made. You will be assigned a code so that your transcript is not attached to your name to protect your anonymity.

5) You can indicate during the interview any comments you wish not to be used.

6) You will be provided a written version of the transcript and you again can indicate comments which you would like to be removed.

7) You will have 2 months to indicate whether you wish to withdraw consent after the interview.

8) Your observations, and the observations of the other participants will be used as the backbone of the doctoral thesis paper.

After this process the collective data may be used for journal and magazine publications – at all times with anonymity being in place. You will have 2 months to withdraw your interview if you change your mind.

7. Expenses and payments

There will be no cost to you regarding this research process, nor will payment be made for participation.

8. Anything else I will have to do?

You do not have to do anything ahead of the interview.

9. What data will be collected and / or measurements taken?

The interview will be recorded, with your permission. This will be turned into a transcript so that the information you provide can be better leveraged for research. You will have access to both – at any time. No-one else will have access to the recordings, nor the full transcripts. Nor will recordings or transcripts be linked to you in any way. At no time will your name, nor the name of your organization, be used.

10. What are the possible disadvantages, burdens and risks of taking part?

Aside from the use of your time, there are no disadvantages associated with participating. Your identity will never be revealed within any materials resulting from the interview, and any comments which can be associated with you or your employer will be removed from the transcript.

11. What are the possible advantages or benefits of taking part?

The benefits of participating include: 1) you will have access to the research findings and doctoral thesis, 2) this will both directly and indirectly benefit both your organization as well as the community at large, and 3) this may provide insights which help you implement change within your role, organization and journalism community.

12. Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

The priority of this research is to gather information without in any way compromising participants, nor their organisations. As such:

1) Your interview will be issued a code rather than your name.
2) A single printed code to name sheet will be retained in a secure safe and security envelope separate of your interview recording and printed transcript.
3) Any potential linkages between your interview and you will be 'scrubbed' so that no associations can be drawn between you and the research.
4) You can also scrub your interview before any data is used.

Anonymity will be maintained at all times, both during the interview and as the data is used. The data, when made anonymous, may be presented to others at academic conferences, or published as a project report, academic dissertation or in academic journals. Anonymous data, which does not identify you, may be used in future research studies approved by an appropriate research ethics committee.

The raw data, which would identify you, will not be passed to anyone outside the study team without your express written permission. The raw data will be retained for up to 10 years. When it is no longer required, the data will be disposed of securely (*e.g.* electronic media and paper records / images) destroyed.

13. What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?

As a volunteer you can stop any participation at any time during the interview, or you can withdraw from the study at any time within 2 months of the interview being conducted, without giving a reason if you do not wish to. If you do withdraw from a study after some data have been collected, you will be asked if you are content for the data collected thus far to be retained and included in the study. If you prefer, the data collected can be destroyed and not included in the study. Once the research has been completed, and the data analysed and used for the doctoral thesis it will not be possible for you to withdraw your data from the study.

14. What if there is a problem?

If you have a query, concern or complaint about any aspect of this study, in the first instance you should contact the researcher(s) if appropriate. There will also be an academic member of staff listed as the supervisor whom you can contact. If there is a complaint and there is a supervisor listed, please contact the Supervisor with details of the complaint. The contact details for both the researcher and any supervisor are detailed on page 1.

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should ask to speak to the researcher or their supervisor, who will do their best to answer your questions. The researcher Mark Grant can be contacted at mark.grant@myport.ac.uk or the supervisor/gatekeeper, Chris Lewis can be contacted at chris.lewis@port.ac.uk If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can do this by contacting the head of school, at Paul.Norman@port.ac.uk or the .the FHSS Ethics Committee chair at ethics-fhss@port.ac.uk.

If the complaint remains unresolved, please contact:

The University Complaints Officer

Phone: 023 9284 3642   Email: complaintsadvice@port.ac.uk

15. Who is funding the research?

None of the researchers or study staff will receive any financial reward by conducting this study.

16. Who has reviewed the study?

Research involving human participants is reviewed by an ethics committee to ensure that the dignity and well-being of participants is respected. The research has been given a favourable ethical opinion by the University's Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Ethics Committee.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for considering volunteering for this research. If you do agree to participate your consent will be sought; By attending the interview, you are consenting to supporting the study.

Appendix F: Favourable Ethical Opinion

UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH

Professor Matthew Weait,
BA (Hons) MA MPhil DPhil FAcSS
Professor of Law and Society
Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and
Social Sciences

T +44 (0)23 9284 6012
E matthew.weait@port.ac.uk

Faculty of Humanities and Social
Sciences
Park Building
King Henry I Street
Portsmouth PO1 2DZ

T: +44 (0)23 9284 8484
port.ac.uk/fhss

FAVOURABLE ETHICAL OPINION (with conditions)

Name: Mark Grant

Study Title: Reporting from the frontline; An assessment of the risk mitigation strategies applied by news organizations when operating in areas of conflict

Reference Number: FHSS 2020-001

Date: 20/01/2020

Thank you for submitting your application to the FHSS Ethics Committee.

I am pleased to inform you that FHSS Ethics Committee was content to grant a favourable ethical opinion of the above research on the basis described in the submitted documents listed at Annex A, and subject to standard general conditions (*See Annex B).*

With this there are a number of ethical conditions to comply with, and some additional advisory notes you may wish to consider, all shown below.

Condition(s)[1]

1. Good to see that a peer review has been undertaken, but the applicant is reminded of the following, from the guidance: "Please briefly summarise how this project has been peer-reviewed, ideally adding any peer reviews and your response to the review as an appendix or supporting document".
2. Sites/Locations: 5.This could be more precise. Note guidance: "Please provide addresses or description of where the work will take place. Please note if the intention is to conduct fieldwork, visit participants or work on commercial premises the university fieldwork policy needs to be referenced and adhered to".
3. Insurance: 6. Every project should have appropriate insurance(s) in place before it begins. Assurance is therefore needed that the project is covered under the University's Public Liability insurance.
4. Methodology: 9.1. "The first part of this research will be a questionnaire. This will be in the form of an online platform, most likely 'Survey Monkey'. It would be good if the applicant could identify definitively which platform is to be used. It is worth considering Online surveys, formerly BOS. With regard to interviews, in the guidance it states "you will need to append the interview questions/topic list)".
5. **a.** Anticipated ethical issues: 9.2. This section begins by saying what the ethics forms has done, but this document **is** the ethics form. The section could be clearer. **5b.** Anticipated ethical issues/risks: 9.2/3.What if interviewees were to reveal questionable or even illegal practice? Would they be advised against doing so and what action, if any, would the researcher take should such practice come to light?
6. Risks: 9.3: Should any interviews be conducted outside the UK or the US, an amended application will be needed as well as a full risk assessment.
7. Compliance with Laws, Codes, Guidance, Policies and Procedures: 10. Guidance: "At the very least human participant research should be consistent with the Declaration of Helsinki. All research should also reflect the University's adherence

---

[1] A favourable opinion will be dependent upon the study adhering to the conditions stated, which are based on the application document(s) submitted. It is appreciated that Principal Investigators may wish to challenge conditions or propose amendments to these in the resubmission to this ethical review.

to the commitments set out in the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and the University's ethics policy". Assurance is required that this is the case.

8. Who are the Research/Participant Population?: 11.1. Good to see that gatekeepers are identified, but this section says very little about the actual participants. This is, however, covered in 11.2.

9. Recruitment strategy: 11.4. "Gatekeepers will be asked to identify, and seek consent from, identified Candidates". Potential participants must be put under no pressure to take part in the study.

10. Interview: In 11.4, there is mention, for the first time, of a potential video conference. This should have been included in the methodology section.

11. Participant documentation: 11.6. "The full documents, including the Invitation Letter, Consent Form and Information Sheet will be sent alongside the questionnaire, electronically direct to the participant, from the gatekeeper". The PIS and full consent form do not need to be sent out to those agreeing to complete the questionnaire; they only need to go to those volunteering to be interviewed, and it is suggested that the final question on the questionnaire asks the participant if he or she would also agree to be interviewed. In order not to deter potential participants from completing the questionnaire, they only need limited information. This would include a brief explanation of the project, a guarantee of confidentiality, and the understanding that completing the questionnaire implies that consent has been given for their data to be used.

12. Storage of data: 12.2. The use of encrypted portable devices (e.g. external hard drives, USB sticks) should only be used for temporary storage when absolutely necessary (e.g. during fieldwork), and the data must be transferred to network storage/Google Team Drive at the earliest opportunity.

13. Destruction, Retention and Reuse of Data (often AFTER your project has finished): 12.3. Please note that the secure storage of data becomes the responsibility of the department when the researcher leaves the University.

14. Documentation: All documents going out to potential participants needs to bear the current UoP logo.

15. PIS: "…the ICJS Ethics Committee chair on vasileios.karagiannopoulos@port.ac.uk". This should read "…the FHSS Ethics Committee chair at ethics-fhss@port.ac.uk.

16. PIS: The research has been given a favourable ethical opinion by the University's **Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Ethics Committee**.

17. Consent form: Tick boxes are needed.

Advisory Note(s)[2]

A. Faculty should be entered as FHSS not ICJS.

B. "Changes to modern-day journalist" must surely read "Changes to modern-day journalism".

C. PIS: 15. This asks who is paying for the study, not who is being paid to do it.

D. It might be useful, in the consent form, to obtain permission to use anonymised verbatim quotes

Please note that the favourable opinion of FHSS Ethics Committee does not grant permission or approval to undertake the research/ work. Management permission or approval must be obtained from any host organisation, including the University of Portsmouth or supervisor, prior to the start of the study.

---

[2] The comments are given in good faith and it is hoped they are accepted as such. The PI does not need to adhere to these, or respond to them, unless they wish to.

Wishing you every success in your research

Chair

Mr Richard Hitchcock

Email: ethics-fhss@port.ac.uk

Annexes

A - Documents reviewed

B - After ethical review

ANNEX A - Documents reviewed

The documents ethically reviewed for this application

Document	Version	Date
Application Form	1	19/12/2019
Invitation Letter	1	18/12/2019
Participant Information Sheet		
- Questionnaire	1	18/12/2019
- Interview	1	18/12/2019
Consent Form		
-Questionnaire	1	18/12/2019
-Interview	1	18/12/2019
Interview Questions/Topic List	1	18/12/2019
Questionnaire	1	18/12/2019

ANNEX B - After ethical review

1. This Annex sets out important guidance for those with a favourable opinion from a University of Portsmouth Ethics Committee. Please read the guidance carefully. A failure to follow the guidance could lead to the committee reviewing and possibly revoking its opinion on the research.

2. It is assumed that the work will commence within 1 year of the date of the favourable ethical opinion or the start date stated in the application, whichever is the latest.

3. The work must not commence until the researcher has obtained any necessary management permissions or approvals – this is particularly pertinent in cases of research hosted by external organisations. The appropriate head of department should be aware of a member of staff's plans.

4. If it is proposed to extend the duration of the study beyond that stated in the application, the Ethics Committee must be informed.

5. Any proposed substantial amendments must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for review. A substantial amendment is any amendment to the terms of the application for ethical review, or to the protocol or other supporting documentation approved by the Committee that is likely to affect to a significant degree:

> (a) the safety or physical or mental integrity of participants
> (b) the scientific value of the study
> (c) the conduct or management of the study.

> 5.1 A substantial amendment should not be implemented until a favourable ethical opinion has been given by the Committee.

6. At the end of the work a final report should be submitted to the ethics committee. A template for this can be found on the University Ethics webpage.

7. Researchers are reminded of the University's commitments as stated in the Concordat to Support Research Integrity viz:

- maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research
- ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards
- supporting a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice and support for the development of researchers
- using transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise
- working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly.

8. In ensuring that it meets these commitments the University has adopted the UKRIO Code of Practice for Research. Any breach of this code may be considered as misconduct and may be investigated following the University Procedure for the Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct in Research. Researchers are advised to use the UKRIO checklist as a simple guide to integrity.

Appendix G: Application for Ethics Review – Staff and Postgraduate Students

UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH

1. Study Title and Key Dates

1.1 Title
Reporting from the frontline; An assessment of the risk mitigation strategies applied by news organizations when operating in areas of conflict
1.2 Key Dates
Date of original submission to ethics committee: 19 Dec 2019 Version number of original submission: 1.1 Ethics Committee Reference Number: FHSS 2020-001 Intended Start Date of Data Collection: 1 Feb 2020 Expected Finish Date of Data Collection: 30 July 2020 Date of resubmission to ethics committee: N/A Version number of resubmitted documents: N/A

2. Applicant Details

2.1 Principal Investigator	
Name: Mark Grant Title /Role /Course of study: DSyRM	
Department: FHSS Faculty: FHSS Telephone:07861 660 288 Email: markagrant83@gmail.com / mark.grant@myport.ac.uk	
Has the principal investigator attended a training session in the graduate school (for students) or researcher development programme (for staff) on research ethics?	Yes as part of 2017 ART assignment class-based sessions and further GSDP lessons in 2016 & 2017
2.2 Supervisor (if Principal Investigator is a student or a research assistant)	
Name: Chris Lewis Title /Role: Primary Supervisor Department: FHSS Faculty: FHSS Telephone: 07469 958 430 Email: chris.lewis@port.ac.uk Names and email of any other supervisors: Name: Frances Pakes Email: frances.pakes@port.ac.uk	
Has the supervisor attended the researcher development training session on research ethics (NB this is not mandatory)?	YES
2.3 Others involved in the work/research including students and/or external collaborators (name, organisation/course, role in the project)	

None

3. Details of Peer Review

The project has been reviewed by the former course lead Alison Wakefield, along with Andy Williams in 2017 as part of the initial Proposal concept. Certain elements of the project have been peer reviewed as part of the publication and dissemination module on the DSyRM. The article submitted focused on the changes in media teams embedding with a range of different actors, post 2011, as part of the taught phase of the DSyRM.

Prior to starting research, the initial aims and objectives of the proposed project have been discussed with other security professionals with the journalism security field, namely Charles Ede, Director of Security at NBC and Sean Power, Deputy Head of High-Risk Team at the BBC. Both had significant input on the initial discussions around gaps within media security with initial themes for part one of the research developed after these length discussions.

4. Funding Details

This research project will be fully self-funded. No external funding will be used.

5. Sites/Locations

Interviews will be conducted principally in the UK or the US at either:

1) Conference rooms, serviced offices or within business spaces in hotels.

2) The researcher's or the participant's work location.

6. Insurance/indemnity Arrangements

No special insurances are required; however, the University of Portsmouth's public liability insurance and professional indemnity insurance will be used as fallback insurance.

7. Aims and Objectives/Hypothesis

7.1 Aims

News organisations have a moral responsibility to support journalists to whom they give assignments in areas of conflict. The aim of this research is to gain a deep understanding of the risks, mitigations and complexities that modern day journalists faces when operating in austere environments. By gathering rich contextual data, it will allow the researcher to explore emergent threats to the sector, how organisations view and address risk, whether the current mitigations applied by news organisations are suitable, and how the sector might evolve to better address their current and future vulnerabilities within journalists covering stories in conflict zones.

7.2 Primary Objective
To assess the fitness for purpose of current risk mitigations applied by leading news organisations, highlighting where changes to the media ecosystem has had an impact on the ability to effectively manage risk within modern day conflict zones.

7.3 Secondary Objective(s)

The secondary objectives of this research involve conducting both quantitative and qualitative research to determine:

- What impact does the current mitigations applied my news organisations have on the realities of modern-day news teams operating within areas of conflict.

- The effectiveness of current risk reduction methods being deployed by news organisations, journalists and support staff.

- How is knowledge and practice operationalized through training?

- An examination of the realities of conflicts, highlighting if any vicissitude of modern-day journalism has impacted the ability to reduce risk.

- What solutions might reduce risks and vulnerabilities within the sector?

The answers to these questions will form the basis of determining vulnerabilities and shortfalls within existing risk mitigation strategies. Once completed, it may offer solutions to improve journalists' security, as an outcome of action-based research.

8. Justification/Summary of Study (no more than one side)

International news teams that are tasked to cover breaking news stories throughout conflict zones, often have a significantly higher risk profile than other sectors or industries. These news teams can find themselves heavily immersed in political instability, fragile states, post-disaster recovery and fragmented conflicts which significantly elevate the risks that they face, as many of the variables cannot be quantified or effectively mitigated. This is often compounded by the significant changes within the media ecosystem, modern-day viewing patterns and the competitor pendulum, all of which often apply more pressures to both the journalist and the parent news organization.

Although many of the recurring risks and threats have been well documented across the industry, understood by seasoned journalists, and are regularly managed by large news corporations, there is very little in the way of definitive risk management best practices, training standards or role-specific advisories commonly shared across the various organisations. While news support bodies and charities such as International News Safety Institute (INSI), ACOS alliance and Frontline Freelance Register (FFR) have made significant headway in highlighting the challenges, often standards are inconsistently applied and are heavily aligned with security budgets, news cycles, and other domestic priorities. The current knowledge base and practices across the industry are not effectively operationalized through training which often exposes the sector to avoidable and hazardous risks.

The compounded level of risk faced by journalists, news teams and corporations has been highlighted by the continued wide variety of incidents they continually face. From the French journalist, Veronique Robert was killed by an IED blast in Mosul in June 2017, the Kidnapping of NBC's Richard Engel in Syria in 2012, to CNN's Clarissa Ward being monitored by Russian mercenaries in Central African Republic (CAR) and being subjected to a propaganda video denigrating her work, all highlight the critical impact risk has on journalists ability to carry out their work safely.

Research conducted as part of the researcher's previous submission on the publication and dissemination assignment highlights a significant gap in the literature. Currently research conducted has failed to look at journalism from a risk management perspective, with little to no study on how risk strategies are implemented for journalists or how their news organisations continually manage and assess risk. The aim of this research is to determine how organisations both view and approach mitigation strategies and how these are developed in line with the evolving ecosystems and variables that need to be considered when managing deployments in areas of conflict. By understanding where gaps and vulnerabilities exist, pragmatic solutions and recommendations may emerge that support future deployment of risk strategies across the industry.

9. Description of Method/ Protocol and Risks

9.1 Please describe your main method(s) or describe your protocol here, although ensure you do not replicate sections 11, 12 or 13.

This research will be based on grounded theory, with all the themes being developed after the collection of data. By using inductive reasoning in the form of both an initial questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, set within a logical process will allow a true conclusion highlighting the behaviours of journalists and their organisations. The researcher will conduct all interviews using an interview protocol to ensure a consistent approach is adopted.

The first part of this research will be a questionnaire. This will be in the form of an online platform, most likely 'Survey Monkey'. This survey will have 29 closed questions with additional comments required for 4 of these questions. The following 5 themes will be explored:

- Deployment planning and support

- Pre-deployment training

- Crisis management

- Changes to modern-day journalist

- Lessons learned

The questionnaire will be reviewed by the researcher's Supervisor, Chris Lewis, prior to any research taking place. The draft questions are detailed in Appendices 4, at the end of this Ethics Application. Following on from the questionnaire, the researcher will follow up with 20 semi-structured interviews, with a fifth of those who took part in the initial research. As mentioned these will be set in grounded theory with inductive reasoning being taken throughout the interviews.

9.2 Anticipated Ethical Issues

This is the ethics application for the main thesis project and this aims outlined the measures that will be taken by the researcher to mitigate any risks of information to be disclosed or leaked to anyone

outside of the University of Portsmouth. The researcher has set up the systems highlighted throughout this application to reduce the risks of any participants or organisational data being compromised. To ensure that participants do not inadvertently disclosure sensitive information, they will be advised not to comment on their current role, organisation nor will they be requested to share such information. These actions are taken to ensure no links or experiences can be directly made to the participants, ensuring an additional level of protection is afforded to all participants, their employers or any third parties that are involved in the research. All participants would be advised not to reveal any potential illegal practices. Full context is provided to each participant prior to starting the survey or interview.

While the questioning will inadvertently look at key incidents around the exposure to risk and may include events that are specific in nature, the researcher will ensure that the individual, employer or event details are omitted, should there be any risk of disclosure of sensitive data. The aim of this research is not to highlight failures within specific organisations or individuals but is to gain an empirical understanding of the risks faced by journalists and those working within the media industry. The strategy around questionnaires has been designed with this in mind, with interviews being conducted being semi-structured to allow the flexibility to reduce the risk of disclosure throughout the research phase.

Throughout this research process, all participant information and details will be treated with the utmost confidence, and that anonymity is established within the research participant pool. All stored documents will be password protected and encrypted as per the instruction set by the University of Portsmouth available at https://library.port.ac.uk/researchdata.html.

9.3 Anticipated other Risks or Concerns	
Have all risk assessments as required by relevant Health and Safety policies been completed?	YES

Risks to participants: None.

Risks to researchers/ university staff/students: None.

Reputational risks: None.

Security risks: None. Should this change and any interviews be conducted outside of the UK, a full risk assessment will be conducted per University of Portsmouth guidelines for any international travel where interviews will be conducted.

9.4 Medical Cover (if applicable)

Medical Information: No additional medical cover required.

a. **Medical Category (1-5)**:

This research will be a Category 5 model.

Category 5   No additional medical cover required.

10. Compliance with Laws, Codes, Guidance, Policies and Procedures

It is not anticipated that the research will breach any local laws, codes, guidance, policies and procedures, however as a minimum, the research will be consistent with the Declaration of Helsinki and all collected research will reflect the University's adherence to these guidelines.

11. Recruitment of Participants

11.1 Who are the Research/ Participant Population?

The participants will be selected through one of the three Gatekeeper detailed below. By using one of these journalism support organisations it will increase the potential return rate of the questionnaires and ensure those taking part meet the criterion set out within this ethics approval documentation). The researcher will send the Invite Letter, an Information Sheet and Consent Form to those who have been identified as the most suitable participants based on the selection criteria of organisational size, nature, operating regions and risk exposure.

The proposed gatekeepers will be representatives from the following three organisations:
INSI - a member-based organization dedicated to journalists' safety. INSI offers the world's leading news organizations a vital forum for networking and information sharing via our membership portal, alerts and advisories, workshops, regional meetings, and webinar discussions.
https://newssafety.org/about-insi/what-we-do/

The **ACOS Alliance** (A Culture Of Safety Alliance) is an unprecedented coalition of news organisations, freelance journalist associations and press freedom NGOs working together to champion safe and responsible journalistic practices for freelance and local journalists worldwide.
https://www.acosalliance.org/

The **Frontline Freelance Register (FFR)** is a representative body for freelance journalists, created for and run by freelancers. Founded on 7 June 2013, FFR is a member-driven ring-fenced initiative of the Frontline Club Charitable Trust. As a membership association, FFR is open to international freelance journalists who are exposed to risk in their work and who adhere to its **Code of Conduct**. FFR provides its members with a sense of community while championing their safety and professional practice.

https://www.frontlinefreelance.org/

The participant will be preselected based on their role, experience and the areas of conflict they have operated within. Further details of the selection criteria is detailed in 11.2.

11.2 Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

For this research project, there will be a strict inclusion and exclusion criteria applied, which will be implemented by the three gatekeepers, pre-selected above. This will ensure the empirical data gathered will be robust and seen as credible within the industry and will help shape the recommendations as part of the main thesis project.
Inclusion Criteria
Role Requirement - All participants must have operated in one of the following positions, either in the primary or support role.

- **Primary Role -** Correspondent, Journalist, Photojournalist, Shoot Editor, Camera operator, Photographer, Producer, Director

- **Support Role -** Security Advisor, Risk Manager, Fixer, Medical Advisor, Additional support Editorial support, and logistic staff

Regional Experience Criteria - All participants must have operated in one the regions highlighted below, in areas where they have seen kinetic conflict, and within the timeframe.

Conflict Areas to be Researched - Participants must have covered news stories in selected areas of conflict between July 2009 and July 2019 in any of the following regions

        i. Afghanistan

        ii. Iraq

        iii. Syria

        iv. Yemen

Kinetic Conflict Experience - The participants must confirm they have been deployed by their respective news organisations to areas considered a kinetic or conflict affected regions.

Pre-Deployment Support - Participants must have took part in their respective organisations risk assessment process, risk mitigations measures and pre-deployment training requirements.

Duration in the Industry - All participants must have operated in the media industry for more than 12 months continuously.

Exclusion Criteria. The following characteristics will exclude potential participants to ensure that the empirical data gathered is relevant and will add value to the overall research project:

1. A lack of experience based on the criterion detailed within this document.

2. Operating in one of the countries selected above, but not directly involved in reporting on the conflict. (e.g - Iraq - working as an Erbil reporter, not covering Baghdad, Mosul or Kirkuk instability)

3. Working as a freelancer, stringer, civilian journalist when in the area of conflict - did not working directly for a news organisation while operating in the conflict affected region.

11.3 Number of participants (include rationale for sample size)

In order to gain sufficient depth and breadth of the experienced of those selected as participants who meet the criteria set above there will be two separate elements as part of this mixed methods research. The first element will be a questionnaire based online survey with the second element of the research undertaken, being a semi-structured interview. The research will start with an initial questionnaire with 29 closed questions with 4 questions having space to provide qualitative answers to support their selection. This questionnaire will be approved by the researcher's supervisor, Chris Lewis, prior to any being sent to participants, via the gatekeeper. A draft is attached at the end of this Ethics Application.

The online survey tool Survey Monkey will be used to ensure that participants have a user-friendly experience and to allow participants to complete the survey with ease on the move. This tool is also accepted by the University of Portsmouth as an approved method of data collection. The aim will be have a participants return rate of at least 60% aimed at being achieved.

After the questionnaires have been returned and assessed, the second element will take place. This will be 20 semi structured interviews, with all participants having completed the initial questionnaire and have agreed to take part further in this study. In order to achieve a balanced population between primary and support roles, the researched will try and ensure a balanced interview ration of no more than a 55% - 45% split between the two groups.

11.4 Recruitment Strategy (including details of any anticipated use of a gatekeeper in host organizations to arrange/distribute participant invitations)

Gatekeepers be used as identified above to ensure participants are selected based on the criteria and are suitable for the research. Gatekeepers will be asked to identify, and seek consent from, identified candidates. Potential participants will not be put under pressure to take part in the study. Once participants confirm their ability (or inability) to participate then a formal invitation letter and supportive documentation, including the Information Sheet and Consent Form. These documents will be sent using a survey link to the questionnaire. If they do not confirm they are happy to take part, they will be unable to access the actual questionnaire.

Note, all participants will be asked if they would like to take in a follow up interview at the end of the questionnaire. 20 of those who agree will be contacted to take part in the semi structured interview, at either a location in the UK to suit the individual.

11.5 Payments, rewards, reimbursements or compensation to participants

There are no payment being provided for the study. The researcher is fully funding this project by his own means.

11.6 What is the process for gaining *consent* from participants?

The consent process will be conducted in 3 steps:

1. Gatekeepers will confirm their interest in participating and nominating potential candidates for initial questionnaire element of the research.

2. The Gatekeepers will send the link and initial introduction email to all potential participant. The consent form is included in the survey. Note – the final question in the survey asks the participant if he or she would also agree to be further research, which is a semi-structured interview.

3. Those participants willing to take part in additional research, full documents, including the Invitation Letter, Consent Form and Information Sheet will be sent electronically direct to the participant. This would include a brief explanation of the project, a guarantee of confidentiality, and the understanding that completing the questionnaire implies that consent has been given for their data to be used.

4. All participants have the ability to confirm if they want to take part in the semi-structured interview and they could withdraw at any time.

Following the questionnaire, those who have selected to continue with the support will be sent the second set of documents, including the Invitation Letter, Consent Form and Information Sheet. This will also include the date, time and location of the proposed interview. At the beginning of the interview stage it will be repeated that the participants can withdraw at any time, noting the cut-off point for the withdrawal of data within 3 months of the interview being conducted.

11.7 Has or will consent be gained from other organisations involved (if applicable)?

Not applicable as consent will be gained from organisation, as described in 11.6.

11.8 Arrangements for translation of any documentation into another language (if applicable)?

N/A

11.9 Outline how participants can withdraw consent (if applicable), and how data collected up to this point will be handled. Also stop criteria for specific tests (if applicable)?
Before the interview stage commences, they will be notified that they can withdraw from their input on the questionnaire and interview at any time before 3 months of the interview being conducted. Participants will be notified through the consent form, and at the time of interview, that they can withdraw their data up until the time where data is processed for analysis.
11.10 Outline details of re-consent or debrief (if applicable)?
N/A.

12. Data Management

12.1 Description of data analysis
Data will be analysed using Bryman's 4 stages of thematic coding by attaching codes to pieces of text within the transcripts. By using indexing, categories, codes and themes to the transcript data it can be disaggregated. This will identify repetitive concepts, key words, major themes and unusual issues from the participant's open-ended responses so as to interpret the responses and their meaning.
12.2 Where and how will data be stored DURING the project?
All questionnaires will be stored in the cloud in a secure manner in line with the University's data management policies. The use of encrypted portable devices (e.g. external hard drives, USB sticks) will only be used for temporary storage when absolutely necessary (e.g. during fieldwork), and all data will be transferred to network storage/Google Team Drive at the earliest opportunity. For interviews, should there be audio recordings / written transcripts will be placed on a password protected flash-drive and will be secured at my home office within a locked cabinet. These will also be transferred to network storage/Google Team Drive at the earliest opportunity.
12.3 Destruction, Retention and Reuse of Data (often AFTER your project has finished)
Data will be retained for a period of 10 years unless the participant notifies the researcher that they withdraw consent before the data is analysed.   **Destruction:** Any paper copies of collected data will be shredded after being analysed.   **Retention:** Please see the data storage (above) process and confidentiality (below) process.   **Reuse:** Analysed data will be reused for future article and journal submissions.   Please note that the secure storage of data becomes the responsibility of the department when the researcher leaves the University.
12.4 Personal Data – How will confidentiality be ensured?
All data from the interviews will be anonymised with all documentation going to any participants will bear the University of Portsmouth (UoP) logo.
12.5 How will data belonging to organisations (publicly unavailable data) be handled (if applicable)?

N/A

12.6 How will security sensitive data be handled (if applicable)?
N/A

13. Publication / Impact / Dissemination Plans

The primary purpose of the research is for the doctoral thesis. However, the secondary benefits of the research may include the use of the data for journal articles.

14. References

Bryman, A. (2016). *Social Research Methods (5th Edition)*. Oxford University Press.

https://money.cnn.com/2015/04/16/media/richard-engel-nbc-news/index.html

https://edition.cnn.com/videos/tv/2019/08/13/exp-cnn-ward-russia-propaganda.cnn

https://www.france24.com/en/20170620-french-journalist-killed-iraqs-mosul

15. Appendices

Put N/A in version Number column if necessary		
Document	**Date**	**Version No.**
Application Form	18 Dec 2019	Version 1.0
Invitation Letter	18 Dec 2019	Version 1.0
Participant Information Sheet(s) ● Questionnaire ● Interview	 18 Dec 2019 18 Dec 2019	 Version 1.0 Version 1.0
Consent Form(s) ● Questionnaire ● Interview	 18 Dec 2019 18 Dec 2019	 Version 1.0 Version 1.0
Advertisement	N/A	N/A
Peer / Independent Review	N/A	N/A
Supervisor Email Confirming Application	N/A	N/A
Evidence From External Organisation Showing Support	N/A	N/A
Terms of Reference for Steering / Advisory Group	N/A	N/A
Survey Instrument	N/A	N/A
Interview Questions / Topic List	18 Dec 2019	18 Dec 2019
Focus Group Questions / Topic List	N/A	N/A
Focus Group Ground Rules	N/A	N/A
Script for Oral Consent	TBC	TBC
Questionnaire	18 Dec 2019	18 Dec 2019
Observational Data Collection Form	N/A	N/A
Risk Assessment Form(s)	N/A	N/A
Other – please describe	N/A	N/A

12. Declaration by Principal Investigator and Supervisor (if applicable)

1. The information in this form is accurate to the best of my/our knowledge and belief and I/we take full responsibility for it.
2. I/we undertake to conduct the research/ work in compliance with the University of Portsmouth Ethics Policy, UUK Concordat to Support Research Integrity, the UKRIO Code of Practice and any other guidance I/we have referred to in this application.
3. If the research/ work is given a favourable opinion I/we undertake to adhere to the study protocol, the terms of the full application as finally reviewed, and any conditions set out by the Ethics Committee in giving its favourable opinion.
4. I/we undertake to notify the Ethics Committee of substantial amendments to the protocol or the terms of the final application, and to seek a favourable opinion before implementing the amendment.
5. I/we undertake to submit annual progress reports (if the study is of more than a year's duration) setting out the progress of the research/ work, as required by the Ethics Committee.
6. I/we undertake to inform the Ethics Committee when the study is complete and provide a declaration accordingly.
7. I/we am/are aware of my/our responsibility to be up to date and comply with the requirements of the law and relevant guidelines relating to security and confidentiality of personal data, including the need to register, when necessary, with the appropriate Data Protection Officer. I/we understand that I/we am/are not permitted to disclose identifiable data to third parties unless the disclosure has the consent of the data subject.
8. I/we undertake to comply with the University of Portsmouth Data Management Policy.
9. I /we understand that records/data may be subject to inspection by internal and external bodies for audit purposes if required.
10. I/we understand that any personal data in this application will be held by the Ethics Committee, its Administrator and its operational managers and that this will be managed according to the principles established in the Data Protection Act 1998 (and after May 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation).
11. I understand that the information contained in this application, any supporting documentation and all correspondence with the Ethics Committee and its Administrator relating to the application:
  ● Will be held by the Ethics Committee until at least 10 years after the end of the study
  ● Will be subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Acts and may be disclosed in response to requests made under the Acts except where statutory exemptions apply.
  ● May be sent by email or other electronic distribution to Ethics Committee members.

11. I/we understand that the favourable opinion of an ethics committee does not grant permission or approval to undertake the research/ work. Management permission or approval must be obtained from any host organisation, including the University of Portsmouth or supervisor, prior to the start of the study.
Principal Investigator/Researcher: Mark Grant   Date…………………….

Supervisor: Chris Lewis   Date……………………

QUESTIONNAIRE APPENDICES

University of Portsmouth

Doctoral Research Invitation Letter - Interviews

Name and contact details of researcher
- Name: Mark Grant

- Email: mark.grant@myport.ac.uk

- Phone: +44 (0) 7408 833 234

Name and contact details of supervisor
- Name: Chris Lewis

- Email: chris.lewis@port.ac.uk

- Telephone: +44 (0) 7469 958 430

Study Title: Reporting from the frontline; An assessment of the risk mitigation strategies applied by news organizations when operating in areas of conflict

REC Ref No: FHSS 2020-001

Dear Potential Participant,

Thank you for reading this. I am a doctoral student at the University of Portsmouth studying Security and Risk Management, with a specific focus on risk mitigation measures taken by international news organisations. As part of my thesis paper I would like to invite you to take part in my thesis research study, which will take place in the form of a questionnaire. Further details are provided within the *Information Sheet* on the next page.

It is entirely up to you whether you participate, however your involvement would be very much appreciated. My research is designed to explore the relevance of the current risk mitigation strategies that are used by news organisations who operate within areas of conflict. The objective is to identify existing strengths, as well as vulnerabilities and weaknesses to support and improve the mitigations used by news organisations and corporations around the world. My research intends to offer action-based outcomes (in the form of solutions) from which the community might benefit.

The themes will be areas of focus for the research:

- Deployment planning and support,
- Pre-deployment training,
- Crisis management and incident response,
- Changes to modern-day journalist,

- Lessons learned in areas of conflict.

In order to protect both you and your organisation you will be asked <u>NOT</u> to comment directly on your existing employer, nor name any previous employer nor party you have worked with. Rather, you are asked to provide professional and experiential observations in terms of strengths, weaknesses of the current risk mitigation strategies. Also note, your name will be fully omitted from any publications and the research will be fully anonymised.

If you do agree to participate then you will need to confirm you have read the ***Consent Form*** which will confirm whether the research can be used for:

- My academic doctoral thesis paper
- Professional or academic journals and magazines

As such, you will be able to select how your observations data is used. In addition, an ***Information Sheet*** is attached, which provides further information relating to this research.

Your rights in research

If you are able to support this research, then a priority is to ensure that your interests are protected. As such:

- You will remain anonymous throughout this study and no identifying data will be kept on record.

- You have the right to withdraw your response data for a period of 3 months after the questionnaire for the thesis. After this date, your response data will be collated into the overall dataset for this project and unable to be withdrawn from the thesis.

- You are welcome to see the results and findings once the research is complete.

- At completion of the study, and when the research findings are published, you are welcome to express your feelings about the research, the researchers and your participation.

- Your anonymised, aggregated data will be kept on file in a secure, encrypted and password protected location. Any recordings or data will be secured in a security envelope with security seals, and this will be stored in a safe.

This research has been approved by the University of Portsmouth Ethics Department. The University of Portsmouth will <u>NOT</u> be provided information on the identity of participants to further protect your identity.

If you agree to participate then we can coordinate a convenient date and time to meet for the interview.

Yours sincerely,

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Study Title: Reporting from the frontline; An assessment of the risk mitigation strategies
applied by news organisations when operating in areas of conflict

Name and contact details of researcher
  ● Name: Mark Grant
  ● Email: mark.grant@myport.ac.uk
  ● Phone: +44 (0) 7408 833 234

Name and contact details of supervisor
  ● Name: Chris Lewis
  ● Email: chris.lewis@port.ac.uk
  ● Telephone: +44 (0) 7469 958 430

Ethics Committee Reference Number: **REC Ref No:** FHSS 2020-001

1. Invitation

I would like to invite you to take part in my doctoral research study. Joining the study is
entirely up to you before you decide I would like you to understand why the research is being
done and what it would involve for you. This *Information Sheet* will provide context help you
decide whether or not you would like to take part in this research. Please feel free to talk to
others about the study if you wish, and please do ask if anything is unclear.

As you know, I am a doctoral student at the University of Portsmouth studying Security and
Risk Management with a focus on how security measures is applied for journalists operating
within areas of conflict, exploring the effectiveness of the current mitigations.

2. Study Summary

This study will look at the risk mitigations applied by news organisations in support of their
news teams and journalists, prior to, during and post assignment, specifically with areas of
conflict. I feel that this is important because the sector not only faces changes within the ever-
evolving fabric of journalism but it seeks to provide support for news organisations to ensure
their measures provided to news teams are fit for purpose and a true reflection of the modern-
day risks. I am seeking participants who have:

  ● Deployed in a primary role with an International News Organisation (Correspondent,
    Journalist, Photojournalist, Shoot Editor, Camera operator, Photographer, Producer,
    Director)
  ● Deployed in a support role with an International News Organisation (Security
    Advisor, Risk Manager, Fixer, Medical Advisor, Additional support Editorial support,
    and logistic staff
  ● Participants must have covered news stories in areas of conflict between July 2009
    and July 2019 in any of the following countries:
    v. Afghanistan
    vi. Iraq
    vii. Syria
    viii. Yemen

- Deployed by their respective news organisations to areas considered a kinetic or conflict affected regions.
- Taken part in their respective organisations risk assessment process, risk mitigations measures and individual pre-deployment training requirements.
- All participants must have operated in the media industry for more than 12 months continuously.

Should you wish to continue with this part of the study, the questionnaire should take no longer than 20 minutes to complete. You support is vital as the research aims to ensure the findings add value to the safety of journalists. We are looking to ensure the responses given are steeped in experience, relevance and lessons learned from recent assignments to inform future deployments.

3. What is the purpose of the study?

The aim of the research is to add to the current body of knowledge surrounding risk management measures implemented by media organisations.

By seeking empirical data to add to the existing body of knowledge will support the improvement of risk mitigation measures and for news organisations. The output of the research is intended to provide action-based outcomes, providing pragmatic and actionable measures which might assist news organizations (and the sector at large) to better manage their risks, or more effectively respond to covering news stories in conflict zones.

The research will be built upon an initial online survey which you may have participated in, a literary review of available studies and research by others (academic and professional practitioners), and semi-structured interviews. Note, if you would like to be considered for the interview phase, please annotate the relevant box within the questionnaire.

The themes will be areas of focus for the research:

- Deployment planning and support,
- Pre-deployment training,
- Crisis management and incident response,
- Changes to modern-day journalist,
- Lessons learned in areas of conflict.

Further depth on these topics is included within the *Invite Letter* to help you better contextualise what the questionnaire is seeking to address.

4. Why have I been invited?

You have been invited to participant based on your:

5. Experience of operating in conflict regions for International news organisations.
6. Geographic experience
7. Specific sector experience

8. A deep understanding of the pre deployment processes and requirements

It is felt that these qualities will enrich the context of the research with real-life observations on how organisations manage modern day deployments and how they react to multi-faceted

risks. The goal of the research is to receive up to 80 returned questionnaires from across the various roles and organisations, from which both trends and unique views and experiences can be drawn.

5. Do I have to take part?

No, taking part in this research is entirely voluntary. It is up to you to decide if you want to volunteer for the study. I have described the study in this *Information Sheet.* If you agree to take part, I will then ask you to confirm the points highlighted in the *Consent Form,* on the next page. You can either email a copy back, or you can sign one when we meet for the interview.

6. What will happen to me if I take part?

If you agree to participate in the questionnaire then the following steps will be required:

6) Continue with this survey and ensure you read and understand the consent form. You will be asked to confirm this before being approved to move onto the questionnaire.
7) Complete the questionnaire as instructed.
8) Confirm if you would be happy to be involved in the interview element of this research at a later date. If you agree, you will be contacted to arrange a suitable time and provided more information on the interview format.
9) You will have 3 months to indicate whether you wish to withdraw consent after the questionnaire has been submitted.
10) Your observations, and the observations of the other participants will be used as the backbone of the doctoral thesis paper.

After this process the collective data may be used for journal and magazine publications – at all times with anonymity being in place. You will have 3 months to withdraw your interview if you change your mind.

7. Expenses and payments

There will be no cost to you regarding this research process, nor will payment be made for participation.

8. Anything else I will have to do?

You do not have to do anything ahead of the interview.

9. What data will be collected and / or measurements taken?

The questionnaire data will be recorded, with your permission. This will be analysed to support the second phase of research. No-one else will have access to the data, nor will your answers be linked to you in anyway. At no time will your name, nor the name of your organisation, be used.

10. What are the possible disadvantages, burdens and risks of taking part?

Aside from the use of your time, there are no disadvantages associated with participating. Your identity will never be revealed within any materials resulting from the questionnaire, and any comments which can be associated with you or your employer will be removed from the transcript.

11. What are the possible advantages or benefits of taking part?

The benefits of participating include: 1) you will have access to the research findings and doctoral thesis, 2) this will both directly and indirectly benefit both your organisation as well as the community at large, and 3) this may provide insights which help you implement change within your role, organisation and journalism community.

12. Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

The priority of this research is to gather information without in any way compromising participants, nor their organisations. As such:

5) Your questionnaire will be given a code, prior to the data being analysed. From that point on, there will be no reference to your name, organisation or any other identifying factors.
6) A single printed code to name sheet will be retained in a secure safe and security envelope separate from the questionnaires. This will only be accessible by the researcher and supervisor.
7) Any potential linkages between your questionnaire response and you will be 'scrubbed' so that no associations can be drawn between you and the research.
8) You can also scrub your interview before any data is used.

Anonymity will be maintained at all times, both the questionnaire and the data are used. The data, when made anonymous, may be presented to others at academic conferences, or published as a project report, academic dissertation or in academic journals. Anonymous data, which does not identify you, may be used in future research studies approved by an appropriate research ethics committee.

The raw data, which would identify you, will not be passed to anyone outside the study team without your express written permission. The raw data will be retained for up to 10 years. When it is no longer required, the data will be disposed of securely (*e.g.* electronic media and paper records / images) destroyed.

13. What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?

As a volunteer you can stop any participation at any time during the questionnaire, or you can withdraw from the study at any time within 3 months of the questionnaire being conducted, without giving a reason if you do not wish to. If you do withdraw from a study after some data have been collected, you will be asked if you are content for the data collected thus far to be retained and included in the study. If you prefer, the data collected can be destroyed and not included in the study. Once the research has been completed, and the data analysed and used for the doctoral thesis it will not be possible for you to withdraw your data from the study.

14. What if there is a problem?

If you have a query, concern or complaint about any aspect of this study, in the first instance you should contact the researcher(s) if appropriate. There will also be an academic member of staff listed as the supervisor whom you can contact. If there is a complaint and there is a supervisor listed, please contact the Supervisor with details of the complaint. The contact details for both the researcher and any supervisor are detailed on page 1.

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should ask to speak to the researcher or their supervisor, who will do their best to answer your questions. The researcher Mark Grant can be contacted at mark.grant@myport.ac.uk or the supervisor/gatekeeper, Chris Lewis can be contacted at chris.lewis@port.ac.uk If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can do this by contacting the head of school, at Paul.Norman@port.ac.uk or the FHSS Ethics Committee chair at ethics-fhss@port.ac.uk.

If the complaint remains unresolved, please contact:

> The University Complaints Officer
>
> Phone: 023 9284 3642   Email: complaintsadvice@port.ac.uk

15. Who is funding the research?

None of the researchers or study staff will receive any financial reward by conducting this study.

16. Who has reviewed the study?

Research involving human participants is reviewed by an ethics committee to ensure that the dignity and well-being of participants is respected. The research has been given a favourable ethical opinion by the University's Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Ethics Committee.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for considering volunteering for this research. If you do agree to participate your consent will be sought; please see the accompanying Consent Form. You will then be given a copy of this Information Sheet and your signed consent form, to keep.

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWS

Title of Project: Reporting from the frontline; An assessment of the risk mitigation strategies applied by news organisations when operating in areas of conflict

Name and Contact Details of Researcher(s):

Mark Grant at mark.grant@myport.ac.uk on +44 (0) 7408 833 234

Name and Contact Details of Supervisor :

Chris Lewis at chris.lewis@port.ac.uk on +44 (0) 7469 958 430

University Data Protection Officer:

Samantha Hill, +44 023 9284 3642 or data-protection@port.ac.uk

Ethics Committee Reference Number: **REC Ref No:** FHSS 2020-001

9. I confirm that I have read and understood the *Information Sheet* for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

10. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time within 3 months of the interview being conducted, without giving any reason.

11. I understand that data collected during this study will be retained in accordance with the University's data retention policy and *could* also be requested by UK regulatory authorities.

12. I allow for the data I provide to be used for the purposes of the doctoral thesis.

13. I agree to the data I contribute being retained for any future research that has been given a favourable opinion by a Research Ethics Committee for professional journals, magazines or other publications.

14. I understand that I can withdraw consent for my data to be used at any time before analysis starts, or within 3 months of the interview being conducted.

15. I agree for the interview to be recorded.

16.   I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant: **Date:**   **Signature:**

Name of Person taking Consent: **Date:**   **Signature:**

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW APPENDICES

University of
Portsmouth

Doctoral Research Invitation Letter - Semi-Structured Interview

Name and contact details of researcher
- Name: Mark Grant
- Email: mark.grant@myport.ac.uk
- Phone: +44 (0) 7408 833 234

Name and contact details of supervisor
- Name: Chris Lewis
- Email: chris.lewis@port.ac.uk
- Telephone: +44 (0) 7469 958 430

Study Title: Reporting from the frontline; An assessment of the risk mitigation strategies applied by news organizations when operating in areas of conflict

REC Ref No: FHSS 2020-001

Dear Potential Participant,

Thank you for reading this. I am a doctoral student at the University of Portsmouth studying Security and Risk Management, with a specific focus on risk mitigation measures taken by international news organisations. As part of my thesis paper I would like to invite you to take part in my thesis research study, which will take place in the form of a *semi-structured interview*. Further details are provided within the *Information Sheet* on the next page.

It is entirely up to you whether you participate, however your involvement would be very much appreciated. My research is designed to explore the relevance of the current risk mitigation strategies that are used by news organisations who operate within areas of conflict. The objective is to identify existing strengths, as well as vulnerabilities and weaknesses to support and improve the mitigations used by news organisations and corporations around the world. My research intends to offer action-based outcomes (in the form of solutions) from which the community might benefit.

The themes will be areas of focus for the research:

- Deployment planning and support,
- Pre-deployment training,
- Crisis management and incident response,
- Changes to modern-day journalism,
- Lessons learned in areas of conflict.

In order to protect both you and your organization you will be asked <u>NOT</u> to comment directly on your existing employer, nor name any previous employer nor party you have worked with. Rather, you are asked to provide professional and experiential observations in

terms of strengths, weaknesses of the current risk mitigation strategies. Also note, your name will be fully omitted from any publications and the research will be fully anonymised.

If you do agree to participate then you will need to sign the ***Consent Form*** which will confirm whether the research can be used for:

- My academic doctoral thesis paper
- Professional or academic journals and magazines

As such, you will be able to select how your observations data is used. In addition, an ***Information Sheet*** is attached, which provides further information relating to this research.

Your rights in research

If you are able to support this research, then a priority is to ensure that your interests are protected. As such:

- You will remain anonymous throughout this study and no identifying data will be kept on record.

- You have the right to withdraw your response data for a period of 3 months after the Interview for the thesis. After this date, your response data will be collated into the overall dataset for this project and unable to be withdrawn from the thesis.

- You are welcome to see the results and findings once the research is complete.

- At completion of the study, and when the research findings are published, you are welcome to express your feelings about the research, the researchers and your participation.

- Your anonymised, aggregated data will be kept on file in a secure, encrypted and password protected location. Any recordings or data will be secured in a security envelope with security seals, and this will be stored in a safe.

This research has been approved by the University of Portsmouth Ethics Department. The University of Portsmouth will <u>NOT</u> be provided information on the identity of participants to further protect your identity.

If you agree to participate then we can coordinate a convenient date and time to meet for the interview.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Grant

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Study Title: Reporting from the frontline; An assessment of the risk mitigation strategies applied by news organizations when operating in areas of conflict

Name and contact details of researcher
- Name: Mark Grant
- Email: mark.grant@myport.ac.uk
- Phone: +44 (0) 7408 833 234

Name and contact details of supervisor
- Name: Chris Lewis
- Email: chris.lewis@port.ac.uk
- Telephone: +44 (0) 7469 958 430

Ethics Committee Reference Number: **REC Ref No:** FHSS 2020-001

1. Invitation

I would like to invite you to take part in my doctoral research study. Joining the study is entirely up to you before you decide I would like you to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. This *Information Sheet* will provide context help you decide whether or not you would like to take part in this research. Please feel free to talk to others about the study if you wish, and please do ask if anything is unclear.

As you know, I am a doctoral student at the University of Portsmouth studying Security and Risk Management with a focus on how security measures is applied for journalists operating within areas of conflict, exploring the effectiveness of the current mitigations.

2. Study Summary

This study will look at the risk mitigations applied by news organisations in support of their news teams and journalists, prior to, during and post assignment, specifically with areas of conflict. I feel that this is important because the sector not only faces changes within the ever-evolving fabric of journalism but it seeks to provide support for news organisations to ensure their measures provided to news teams are fit for purpose and a true reflection of the modern-day risks. I am seeking participants have:

- Have completed the initial questionnaire as part of phase one of this research.
- Deployed in a primary role with an International News Organisation (Correspondent, Journalist, Photojournalist, Shoot Editor, Camera operator, Photographer, Producer, Director)
- Deployed in a support role with an International News Organisation (Security Advisor, Risk Manager, Fixer, Medical Advisor, Additional support Editorial support, and logistic staff
- Participants must have covered news stories in areas of conflict between July 2009 and July 2019 in any of the following countries:
  - i. Afghanistan
  - ii. Iraq
  - iii. Syria
  - iv. Yemen

- Deployed by their respective news organisations to areas considered a kinetic or conflict affected regions.
- Taken part in their respective organisations risk assessment process, risk mitigations measures and individual pre-deployment training requirements.
- All participants must have operated in the media industry for more than 12 months continuously.

Should you wish to continue with this part of the study, the interview should take no longer than 30-45 minutes. You support is vital as the research aims to ensure the findings add value to the safety of journalists. We are looking to ensure the responses given are steeped in experience, relevance and lessons learned from recent assignments to inform future deployments.

3. What is the purpose of the study?

The aim of the research is to add to the current body of knowledge surrounding risk management measures implemented by media organisations.

By seeking empirical data to add to the existing body of knowledge will support the improvement of risk mitigation measures and for news organisations. The output of the research is intended to provide action-based outcomes, providing pragmatic and actionable measures which might assist news organizations (and the sector at large) to better manage their risks, or more effectively respond to covering news stories in conflict zones.

This part of the research will build upon the initial online survey, which was completed prior to these interviews being organised. The data gathered in the questionnaire will be supplemented by a literary review of available studies and research by others (academic and professional practitioners), and this semi-structured interview.

The themes surrounding the interviews will be:

- Deployment planning and support
- Pre-deployment training
- Crisis management
- Changes to modern-day journalism
- Lessons learned

Further depth on these topics is included within the *Invite Letter* to help you better contextualize what the interviews are seeking to address.

4. Why have I been invited?

You have been invited to participant based on your:

4. Experience of operating in conflict regions for International news organisations.
5. Geographic experience
6. Specific sector experience
7. A deep understanding of the pre deployment processes and requirements

It is felt that these qualities will enrich the context of the research with real-life observations on how organizations manage modern day deployments and how they react to multi-faceted

risks. The goal of the research supplement the initial 80 returned questionnaires, with up to 20 semi-structured interviews.

5. **Do I have to take part?**

No, taking part in this research is entirely voluntary. It is up to you to decide if you want to volunteer for the study. I have described the study in this *Information Sheet.* If you agree to take part, I will then ask you to confirm the points highlighted in the *Consent Form, on the next page*. You can either email a copy back, or you can sign one when we meet for the interview.

6. **What will happen to me if I take part?**

If you agree to participate in the interview, then the following steps will occur:

9) We will agree a schedule for when we can meet for the interview.
10) You can either sign and return the Consent Form before we meet, or when we meet.
11) I will give you a verbal briefing before the interview starts, and then will walk through the questions outlined within the Invite Letter – the interview will last no more than 45mins.
12) The interview will be recorded – and a transcript will be made. You will be assigned a code so that your transcript is not attached to your name to protect your anonymity.
13) You can indicate during the interview any comments you wish not to be used.
14) You will be provided a written version of the transcript and you again can indicate comments which you would like to be removed.
15) You will have 3 months to indicate whether you wish to withdraw consent after the interview.
16) Your observations, and the observations of the other participants will be used as the backbone of the doctoral thesis paper.

After this process the collective data may be used for journal and magazine publications – at all times with anonymity being in place. You will have 3 months to withdraw your interview if you change your mind.

7. **Expenses and payments**

There will be no cost to you regarding this research process, nor will payment be made for participation.

8. **Anything else I will have to do?**

You do not have to do anything ahead of the interview.

9. **What data will be collected and / or measurements taken?**

The interview will be recorded, with your permission. This will be turned into a transcript so that the information you provide can be better leveraged for research. You will have access to both – at any time. No-one else will have access to the recordings, nor the full transcripts.

Nor will recordings or transcripts be linked to you in any way. At no time will your name, nor the name of your organization, be used.

10. What are the possible disadvantages, burdens and risks of taking part?

Aside from the use of your time, there are no disadvantages associated with participating. Your identity will never be revealed within any materials resulting from the interview, and any comments which can be associated with you or your employer will be removed from the transcript.

11. What are the possible advantages or benefits of taking part?

The benefits of participating include: 1) you will have access to the research findings and doctoral thesis, 2) this will both directly and indirectly benefit both your organization as well as the community at large, and 3) this may provide insights which help you implement change within your role, organization and journalism community.

12. Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

The priority of this research is to gather information without in any way compromising participants, nor their organisations. As such:

5) Your interview will be issued a code rather than your name.
6) A single printed code to name sheet will be retained in a secure safe and security envelope separate of your interview recording and printed transcript.
7) Any potential linkages between your interview and you will be 'scrubbed' so that no associations can be drawn between you and the research.
8) You can also scrub your interview before any data is used.

Anonymity will be maintained at all times, both during the interview and as the data is used. The data, when made anonymous, may be presented to others at academic conferences, or published as a project report, academic dissertation or in academic journals. Anonymous data, which does not identify you, may be used in future research studies approved by an appropriate research ethics committee.

The raw data, which would identify you, will not be passed to anyone outside the study team without your express written permission. The raw data will be retained for up to 10 years. When it is no longer required, the data will be disposed of securely (*e.g.* electronic media and paper records / images) destroyed.

13. What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?

As a volunteer you can stop any participation at any time during the interview, or you can withdraw from the study at any time within 3 months of the interview being conducted, without giving a reason if you do not wish to. If you do withdraw from a study after some data have been collected, you will be asked if you are content for the data collected thus far to be retained and included in the study. If you prefer, the data collected can be destroyed and not included in the study. Once the research has been completed, and the data analysed and used for the doctoral thesis it will not be possible for you to withdraw your data from the study.

14. What if there is a problem?

If you have a query, concern or complaint about any aspect of this study, in the first instance you should contact the researcher(s) if appropriate. There will also be an academic member of staff listed as the supervisor whom you can contact. If there is a complaint and there is a supervisor listed, please contact the Supervisor with details of the complaint. The contact details for both the researcher and any supervisor are detailed on page 1.

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should ask to speak to the researcher or their supervisor, who will do their best to answer your questions. The researcher Mark Grant can be contacted at mark.grant@myport.ac.uk or the supervisor/gatekeeper, Chris Lewis can be contacted at chris.lewis@port.ac.uk If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can do this by contacting the head of school, at Paul.Norman@port.ac.uk or the .the FHSS Ethics Committee chair at ethics-fhss@port.ac.uk.

If the complaint remains unresolved, please contact:

      The University Complaints Officer

      Phone: 023 9284 3642   Email: complaintsadvice@port.ac.uk

15. Who is funding the research?

None of the researchers or study staff will receive any financial reward by conducting this study.

16. Who has reviewed the study?

Research involving human participants is reviewed by an ethics committee to ensure that the dignity and well-being of participants is respected. The research has been given a favourable ethical opinion by the University's Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Ethics Committee.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for considering volunteering for this research. If you do agree to participate your consent will be sought; please see the accompanying Consent Form. You will then be given a copy of this Information Sheet and your signed consent form, to keep.

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWS

Title of Project: Reporting from the frontline; An assessment of the risk mitigation strategies applied by news organizations when operating in areas of conflict

Name and Contact Details of Researcher(s):

Mark Grant at mark.grant@myport.ac.uk on +44 (0) 7408 833 234

Name and Contact Details of Supervisor :

Chris Lewis at chris.lewis@port.ac.uk on +44 (0) 7469 958 430

University Data Protection Officer:

Samantha Hill, +44 023 9284 3642 or data-protection@port.ac.uk

Ethics Committee Reference Number: **REC Ref No:** FHSS 2020-001

☐ 1. I confirm that I have read and understood the *Information Sheet* for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

☐ 2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time within 3 months of the interview being conducted, without giving any reason.

☐ 3. I understand that data collected during this study will be retained in accordance with the University's data retention policy and *could* also be requested by UK regulatory authorities.

☐ 4. I allow for the data I provide to be used for the purposes of the doctoral thesis.

☐ 5. I agree to the data I contribute being retained for any future research that has been given a favourable opinion by a Research Ethics Committee for professional journals, magazines or other publications.

☐ 6. I understand that I can withdraw consent for my data to be used at any time before analysis starts, or within 3 months of the interview being conducted.

☐ 7. I agree for the interview to be recorded.

☐ 8. I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant: **Date:**   **Signature:**

Name of Person taking Consent: **Date:**   **Signature:**

Thank you again for agreeing to participate in this interview. The interview will last between 30 to 45mins.

I would like to reconfirm that you consent to participating and using any observations for:

1. My doctoral thesis
2. Possible academic journal and professional magazine articles

   Please let me know if you do NOT want the data from this interview used for any one of these three purposes.

I would like to remind you that you can withdraw your data within 3 months of this interview. After that point the information will be used within my thesis and potentially for academic and magazine articles.

During this interview please do not:

1. Mention your name
2. Mention the name of your employer
3. Name any organisation which might place you, or them, at business, liability or reputational risk

All information provided today will be kept in the utmost confidence. Your name will not be listed on any recordings, and these recordings and transcripts will be held separate of a name to code list. These will be stored in a security envelope, with a security seal, and in a safe.

A transcript of this interview will be provided to you as well – you are free to redact sections of the transcript before the data is used within a period of 3 months. Or, you can tell me to strike any comments during the interview itself.

The objective of this interview is to explore your personal experiences and to draw upon your professional observations. As such, I will only seek to ask confirmatory questions, or to seek further insights into the main thematic areas of the research. The goal is for you to speak for the majority of the interview period.

My goal is a positive and action-based outcome which provides tangible and effective contributions to strengthening security strategies within the sector. Ideally, the findings will add to the research available for the broader community and may assist the sector at large.

Do you have any questions at this time?

Ok, I will now present a series of questions and appreciate your candid observations – please do ask me if any question is unclear:

QUESTIONS WILL BE SUBMITTED TO CHRIS LEWIS BEFORE ANY INTERVIEWS TAKE PLACE. THE MAIN QUESTIONS WILL BE FORMED AFTER THE INITIAL ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

Appendix I – Interviewee Roles

No	Role	Role Primary (P) or Secondary (S)
1	Producer / Camera Operator	P
2	Foreign Correspondent	P
3	Producer	P
4	Security Risk Specialist	S
5	Freelance Producer / Director	S
6	African Editor / Correspondent	S
7	Producer	P
8	Shoot Edit	P
9	Security Advisor / Shoot Edit	S
10	International Correspondent	P
11	International Producer / Director	P
12	Head of News Gathering	S

Appendix J - Semi structured interview Schedule

<u>INTERVIEW SCHEDULE</u>

Each topic will be used to probe further with the areas highlighted below in bullet points. The aim is to gain as much qualitative date to support the previous findings found on phase 1 of research

- o Duration of interview – 45-60 mins

- o Will be conducted over Zoom due to COVID and social distancing

- o Each session will be recorded and transcribed using Zoom.

  - o *Each participant will have the right to request removal of their inclusion until the findings are concluded.*

Topic 1 - Background

- o Can you tell me a bit about your current role and your Professional background?

  - o Current and previous roles

  - o Time in news team

  - o Experience in conflict zones

Topic 2 –Changes in Media

- o Do you feel that the safety of journalists improved since 2009?

- o What do you think has been the biggest changes in media over the past decade?

Topic 3 – Risk Assessment Process

- o Do you feel the risk assessment process could be improved, and if so, how?

- o Who is responsible for completing the risk assessment within the news team?

  - o Is there a difference in process, depending on international organization?

- o Do you feel certain members of the team do not engage with the RA process?

  - o How could better engagement be gained?

Topic 4 - Pre deployment strategies

- o What training is mandatory?

    - o Do you feel training is adequately mandated for deployment?

- o Do you feel the mandatory training is sufficient?

- o What could improve training for news teams

    - o Data security?

    - o Mental Health?

- o What more could be done to support training for support staff and freelancers?

- o Pre deployment factors

    - o Age limits?

    - o Gender / LBGTQ+ /

    - o Assessments (Medical, Fitness, Mental Health)

        - o Stigma

Topic 5 – Deployment Support and Crisis Management

- o Do you feel you are fully supported when deployed in conflict areas, and if not, what could be improved?

    - o Evac, Med. K&R support and plans

    - o insurances

- o Do you have any concerns over provision of equipment for deployments (cost vs safety)?

- o What do you see as being the main ways which safety measures could be improved?

Additional comments

- o Is there anything you would like to add that we haven't already covered?

Appendix K – Mark Grant CV 2021

Mark Grant (MSc, CSyP)

168-2 De Lairesestraat, Wilemspark, Amsterdam, 1075 markagrant83@gmail.com / +44 (0) 7408 833 234

A trusted global Safety and Security Director, Crisis Management and Chartered Security Professional whose progressive international career has been based upon a platform of over 18 years of knowledge and experience within leading edge security operations. Skilled in directing complex security programmes and portfolios, managing news, media and production teams, with up-to-date knowledge of working in Europe, Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Highly analytical, taking the initiative to proactively deliver effective solutions that ensure success, while developing new mitigations, policies and procedures within the evolving security industry.

EDUCATION

Master's in science (MSc) in **Security Risk Management** - University of Portsmouth (2013) - *The Afghan Public Protection Force: An assessment of the operational capabilities of the new private security force*

KEY PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES

- A vast amount of leadership experience, providing direction on incident management, crisis support and resilience ensuring appropriate response to emergencies
- Works alongside customers, partners and third parties at "C level" to provide expertise, leadership and support
- Directs the selection and employment of leading-edge security (digital and analogue) monitoring and alerting systems to identify and mitigate threat, constantly adjusting to emerging industry trends
- Ensures engagement across all divisions of the world's leading news organisations to ensure successful implementation of High-Risk Operations
- Able to perform detailed risk analysis with internal and external stakeholders, to ensure a secure working environment, with respect to terrorism, level of crime and threats, working with government security agencies
- Experienced in the management of, and working within, High Risk environments, in support of journalists, productions and media teams, often during times of crisis and high pressure

CAREER HISTORY

Head of Global Security Programs (EMEA) – Netflix Jul 2019 – Present

The first Netflix security hire in region, tasked with developing and building the Netflix security program across Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Responsible for Corporate, Studio and Production security business verticals, ensuring our staff, production crew, business interests and reputation is managed effectively. The development of regional crisis management support and travel security, during a period of hypergrowth and scaling throughout the EMEA region.

- Motivating a new regional security team to ensure effective communication is passed to the creative teams, operational staff and senior leadership on mitigation measures to their respective roles within Netflix

- Being able to pivot and move resources depending on the risk pendulum of the business, while highlighting and communicating the change in risk at short notice.

Director of Security – CNN International June 2018 – Jul 2019

Directed and managed all CNN International reporters, photographers and TV crews as they operated in some of the world's most austere environments throughout EMEA, APAC and LATAM. As Director of Security, I developed and led a number of innovative, market leading and ground-breaking programs to ensure a commensurate duty of care is applied to all staff, freelancers and fixers. This included an online risk assessment platform, review of global procurement support, development of internal HEFAT refresher courses and a pilot mental health awareness Peer- to-Peer campaign.

- Managed and developed a robust network of security field advisers across EMEA and APAC in order to provide 24/7 support to journalists and editorial management for ongoing deployments.
- Supported and deployed on a number of award winning and ground-breaking reports with CNN International Correspondents.
  - "36 hours with the Taliban"
  - "CNN gets rare access inside Yemen"

Global High Risk Advisor – Foreign News Gathering, BBC Nov 2016 – June 2018

Providing security knowledge, advice and support for BBC Foreign News Gathering teams, often reacting to breaking news stories at short notice. Managing the risk assessment process and ensuring that residual risks are managed in line with BBC procedures.

- A global remit, allowing a granular understanding of current conflict regions from a physical and cyber security perspective, ensuring the BBC remains as the market leader within Media Security
- Developed various internal policies and procedures for the greater BBC High Risk Team including subcontractor support models, intelligence gathering, PPE development and Cyber Security Fundamentals
- Successful management of large-scale media deployments including acting as operational IC for the Mosul Offensive against ISIS and the Zimbabwe election in 2017

Africa Senior Market Development Manager, Salama Fikira Risk Management Aug 2015 – Nov 2016

Selected to lead both the operational management and market development of the 4 key sectors that Salama Fikira manages. Ensured a strong focus on client management across Corporate Security and numerous Special Projects, working with blue chip and energy providers to deliver effective enterprise risk management.

- Swiftly delivered enhanced HSE & security outcomes, formulating and rolling out new plans, policies and procedures. Successfully improved emergency management systems, ensuring the security of business assets and infrastructure, designing new security communication plans for multiple organisations
- Managed multinational, International, FMCG and Governmental contracts, ensuring ongoing business growth
- Won 5 Pan-Africa security contracts including 3 x USAID IPs, Large Accountancy Firms and Financial Institutes
- Up skilled the team, building operational capacity ensuring that identified skill gaps were proactively resolved

Africa Security and Operations Director, National Democratic Institute (NDI) Nov 2014 - Aug 2015

Head Hunted to build the organisation's programme capability. Brought experience of three key areas (Nigeria, Kenya, Somalia and Tanzania) within West and East Africa for the NDI, ensuring that programmes were carried out with the most secure, effective and efficient risk methodology. Working across Nigeria, Kenya and Somalia with the relevant civil and military agencies; managed a diverse number of security and operational concerns.

- Performance was such that I was selected to successfully plan, coordinate and conduct the high profile International Observation Mission before and during Nigeria's 2015 elections
- Directed the operations teams and worked with third parties and partners to ensure continuity throughout

Business Development and Operations Manager (Country Manager) Sicuro Group Feb 2013 - Nov 2014

Responsibilities included the development of new and existing business through MENA and ASIA. Key roles included development of new revenue streams, budgeting, preparation of proposals and contract mobilisations, including ongoing project management to ensure the satisfaction of all clients.

- Gained a vast amount of experience in dealing with corporate level management over key project awards of multi-million dollar contracts, for USAID, NATO, USGovt and ISAF, valued at over $5M USD
- Successfully delivered major new client security protection contracts, to best practice standards
- Led the optimisation of Sicuro Group's development ad launch of dynamic new products and services, including SicuroIMS Online Platform (now called Intelyse) and other advanced technologies

Project Risk Manager, Edinburgh International (For Development Alternative Inc) 2010 – 2012

Assisted and supported contractual compliance issues that related to security, risk and client procedures (USAID). Ensured that all security plans, policies and operating procedures were implemented and that identified mitigation measures were followed. This ensured a successful and safe programme of activities was achieved

- Conducted the coordination, planning and delivery of operations, including incident handling, concept of operations and performance management, including QAQC
- Supervised the delivery of all project based security training and validation exercises and provided feedback on performance standards, areas of threat, vulnerability, risk and lessons learned
- Own knowledge of USAID rules, regulations, and procedures brought significant partnership benefits

HM Forces, Royal Marine, 45 Commando RM, UK 2003 – 2009

Selected to join this elite Commando force, invested over 6 years of exemplary service within the Royal Marines ensuring own ability to work to the highest standards in volatile, demanding environments.

- Served in Afghanistan (2008) and Iraq (2006)

REPORTING SAFELY
265

- Worked as part of a UK Maritime team in South China (2005), working with the Host Nation authorities
- Experience and ability to deal with high-pressured situations, in extremely testing conditions

ADDITIONAL EDUCATION & TRAINING

Medical – FREC4, MIRA, FREC3, Team Medic Course, Prolonged Remote Field Care – Prometheus – 2019 K&R - Kidnap Incident Management Workshop – Control Risks – September 2018
Business Risk and Crisis Management – Frontier Risk Group – Level 5
Cyber Security - GCHQ Cyber Security Fundamentals – PGI – 2017

NEBOSH – General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety – WATA – August 2018
Ashridge Business School, Business Management Program – 2013
Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS) Level 3 Course – HABC – 2014
Project Management, Prince II (Practitioner) – the Knowledge Academy - 2013
Microsoft Office Professional Highly competent with Excel, Word, PowerPoint, Outlook and Open Office

Interests: Boxing, golf, soccer, weight training, running, listening to music, podcasts, reading and current affairs

Appendix L - UPR16 Form

FORM UPR16

Research Ethics Review Checklist

Please include this completed form as an appendix to your thesis (see the
Research Degrees Operational Handbook for more information

Postgraduate Research Student (PGRS) Information	Student ID:	640233
PGRS Name:	Mark Alexander Grant	
Department:	ICJS	**First Supervisor:** Chris Lewis
Start Date: (or progression date for Prof Doc students)	**2015**	

Study Mode and Route	Part-time	☐	MPhil	☐	MD	☐
	Full-time	☐	PhD	☐	**Professional Doctorate**	☐

Title of Thesis:	Reporting Safely: An assessment of risk management practices employed by news organisations in support of journalists operating in areas of conflict, 2009-2019
Thesis Word Count:	**52,671**

If you are unsure about any of the following, please contact the local representative on your Faculty Ethics Committee for advice. Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the University's Ethics Policy and any relevant University, academic or professional guidelines in the conduct of your study
Although the Ethics Committee may have given your study a favourable opinion, the final responsibility for the ethical conduct of this work lies with the researcher(s).

UKRIO Finished Research Checklist: (If you would like to know more about the checklist, please see your Faculty or Departmental Ethics Committee rep or see the online version of the full checklist at: http://www.ukrio.org/what-we-do/code-of-practice-for-research/)		
a. Have all of your research and findings been reported accurately, honestly and within a reasonable time frame?	**YES** ☐ NO ☐
b. Have all contributions to knowledge been acknowledged?	**YES** ☐ NO ☐

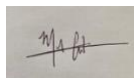|			
c.	Have you complied with all agreements relating to intellectual property, publication and authorship?	**YES** NO	☐ ☐
d.	Has your research data been retained in a secure and accessible form and will it remain so for the required duration?	**YES** NO	☐ ☐
e.	Does your research comply with all legal, ethical, and contractual requirements?	**YES** NO	☐ ☐

Candidate Statement:

I have considered the ethical dimensions of the above named research project, and have successfully obtained the necessary ethical approval(s)

Ethical review number(s) from Faculty Ethics Committee (or from NRES/SCREC):	FHSS-2020-001

If you have *not* submitted your work for ethical review, and/or you have answered 'No' to one or more of questions a) to e), please explain below why this is so:

Signed (PGRS):		**Date:** 25 May 2021