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ABSTRACT

Journalism is often referred to as one of the most important knowledge-producing institutions in society, yet also one facing numerous challenges, among which the safety of journalists critical. Public visibility as a journalist, having thousands of followers on social media, was until recently aspired by many in the field. However, this may well be disadvantageous to journalists scrutinizing sensitive topics, encountering actors that do their best to outright undermine and delegitimize journalism, also in Western democracies. This article begins by introducing and discussing research and ongoing developments relating to journalism and safety. It then turns to the sociotechnical and three-dimensional concept we call Newsafety, encompassing infrastructures, practices and consequences. Moreover, the article introduces and highlight key contributions from the special issue, which features six original articles and two invited commentaries. In closing, we call for interdisciplinary research focusing especially on psychological- and digital issues related to the UNESCO research agenda on the safety of journalists.

Introduction

Journalism is often referred to as one of the most important knowledge-producing institutions in society. Journalists and institutions of journalism can play essential roles for citizens looking to become informed in everyday life, as well as in special contexts such as during elections, pandemics, or wars. Nevertheless, journalism is also an institution and practice facing several significant challenges.

In recent decades, scholars, practitioners and pundits have raised concerns about one challenge in particular: the ongoing weakening of news publishers' business models. Amid the rise of global digital platforms, advertising revenue for news outlets has declined while readership and audience-generated revenues are significantly lower than before (e.g., Olsen, Kalsnes, and Barland 2021). In the first decade following the rollout of Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms, and the parallel expansion of smartphones and mobile ecosystems such as Apple iOS and Android, publishers largely sought to develop an online platform presence for strategic, symbolic and branding reasons (Steensen and Westlund 2021). As part of this process, many publishers cut

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staff while some even went out of business, leading to mounting concerns as to whether news companies would be able to ensure that journalists had the expertise, resources and support necessary to produce and publish verified news perceived to have high quality (Carlson, Robinson, and Lewis 2021; Steensen and Westlund 2021). Additionally, social media platforms enabled a multitude of actors to publish, distribute and engage with different kinds of content. These platforms have become occupied by often deliberately biased alternative news media (Holt, Ustad Figenschou, and Frischlich 2019) and also actors producing and distributing "fake news" (Braun and Eklund 2019; Tandoc, Lim, and Ling 2018). These are all, rightfully, significant areas of concern, and by now they are rather well-researched. Associated with these developments we find another just as important yet less researched area of concern: the interconnection of journalism and safety.

In our next section, we introduce general research and ongoing developments relating to journalism and safety before turning to and introducing new approaches and frameworks relating to the sociotechnical and three-dimensional concept of what we call *Newsafety*. Our work with the annual journalism and safety conference at Oslo Metropolitan University provided a starting point from which we could familiarize ourselves with research and emerging practices relating to these dimensions, but which also revealed that there was no coherent conceptual framework and review of the field.

This served as the springboard, leading us to agree with the editor of *Journalism Practice* to develop a special issue on this theme. We received a multitude of proposals and subsequently full paper submissions, with which we have engaged substantially in rigorous peer-review processes. This introduction to the special issue discusses its six original articles and two invited commentaries. The introduction closes with a concluding discussion focusing on the ongoing need for interdisciplinary research.

Journalism and Safety

That journalists recurrently face safety risks in the course of their work is nothing new. However, digital developments have resulted in increasingly problematic conditions where, on the one discourse, publishers are able to build and promote an online presence in new locations and journalists are able to brand and publicize themselves but, on the other side, the same digital infrastructures and platforms have made it easier to identify, harass and threaten journalists. Public visibility as a journalist, with thousands of followers on social media, may well be disadvantageous to journalists scrutinizing sensitive topics. In recent years researchers have discussed how actors in Western democracies have done their best to outright undermine and delegitimize journalism (Carlson, Robinson, and Lewis 2021; Egelhofer and Lecheler 2019; Egelhofer and Lecheler 2019). Acts of dark participation (Quandt 2018) and mob censorship (Waisbord 2020; see also Henrichsen and Shelton 2022) have become critical problems for journalism and journalists, challenging not only the professional work but also the mental wellbeing and safety of reporters. As we enter the 2020s, ongoing problems related to the pandemic as well as the continuing war in Europe have resulted in numerous safety concerns for journalists. The world watched closely as Russia attacked Ukraine, and as Ukraine fought back, while journalists on the ground and their local fixers risked their personal safety in order to cover events. Ukrainian journalists were awarded the 2022 Pulitzer Prize for their "courage, endurance

and commitment to truthful reporting". As the war has unfolded, journalists have been killed and many have endangered their lives, including the journalist Marina Ovsyanni-kova who appeared on Russian state television Channel One's televised newscast holding a sign condemning the war. State control and censorship of news media in Russia has become increasingly significant, banning independent journalism and labeling journalists and outlets as "foreign agents", forcing journalists to flee the country, as well as censoring use of platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. Even as this special issue focuses on safety issues relating to journalistic practice and its infrastructures, we also recognize that there are many cultural contexts in which audiences jeopardize their safety by accessing news from independent and critical news publishers, and even more so if they publicly engage with such news.

While current events may dominate headlines, it is also apparent that journalists confront many serious threats even outside of wars and disease. When journalists Maria Ressa and Dmitry Muratov were awarded the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize it was in recognition for their courageous fight to ensure freedom of expression is safeguarded, and for standing by this ideal in a world where democracy and press freedom frequently is increasingly challenged. The Nobel committee emphasized how freedom of expression and quality journalism are prerequisites for democracy and lasting peace, stressing that "a free independent and fact-based journalism protects against abuse of power, lies and war propaganda" (Norwegian Nobel Committee 2021). And yet, in many countries, covering corruption or criticizing political leaders is one of the most dangerous things a journalist can do. UNESCO has mobilized significant efforts in assessing safety concerns, publishing reports, educating journalists on how to protect themselves physically and digitally, while also emphasizing the need to end impunity for crimes against journalists. The International Center for Journalists, Reporters Without Borders, the Committee to Protect Journalists, the Freedom of the Press Foundation and others have run projects geared towards identifying and preventing harassment of journalists, and the Worlds of Journalism Study has developed a large set of questions focusing on safety in their global surveys. The safety of journalists has become an increasingly critical area of concern, and yet this this remains an area that is relatively under-represented in research.

Safety is vital for those who practice journalism, for their families, and for their sources. Safety is essential for the wellbeing of media institutions, civil society, academia and the private sector more broadly. Unfortunately, journalists and their sources are repeatedly subject to attacks that threaten the safety of their practice, their technological infrastructures, and the psychological and physical safety of individual persons. Attacks and threats against journalists are a growing international challenge that affects the press's freedom of expression in a number of different ways (Berger 2019; Fadnes, Krøvel, and Orgeret 2019; Larsen, Fadnes, and Krøvel 2020; Orgeret and Tayeebwa 2020) and which can have severe consequences. Criminal organizations, authorities, activists, and citizens carry out deliberative and substantial attacks against journalists and media outlets or contribute to online harassment via social media (e.g., Lewis, Zamith, and Coddington 2020) in modes that have been conceptualized as a form of mob censorship (Waisbord 2020). Moreover, journalists are not being targeted randomly, but through rather systematic harassment—for example where they are called out as an "the enemy of the people", by the former US president (Carlson, Robinson, and Lewis 2021) and also by other political leaders, not least during the global pandemic. Reporters Without Borders' Press

Freedom Index shows threats and violence against journalists increased during the pandemic even in countries traditionally known for having a high degree of media freedom (RSF 2022). Politicians, members of the public and partisan media have increasingly undermined legacy news media by repeatedly alleging that they publish "fake news", and thus using fake news as a label (Egelhofer and Lecheler 2019).

Gender and Safety Issues

Studies have shown that female journalists are targeted online significantly more than their male colleagues, and that the threats they face are highly sexualized, and focus on the journalist's physical features, ethnicity, or cultural background, rather than on the content of their work (OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues 2021). As a result, these threats tend to silence women journalists' voices and to deplete freedom of speech by interrupting valuable investigative journalist work (Ivask, Laak, and Kuulpak 2021; Koirala 2020; Nakiwala 2020; Posetti et al. 2021). Posetti (2022) shows how digital, physical, and mental safety threats are both frightening and potentially deadly when they occur simultaneously. In recent years a number of international studies have documented how women are frequent targets for digital hatred (Chen et al. 2020; Koirala 2020; Martin 2018). At the same time, without opposing the notion that gender differences do exist for women and men as journalists in general and as war reporters in particular, (Høiby 2016) argues that men often do not receive recognition for their vulnerability and need of protection. UNESCO's Observatory of Killed Journalists shows that during between 2016 and 2022 the number of men journalists killed is almost ten times larger the number of women journalists killed (428–44). Little systematic research is done into threats and violence against male journalists as such, although the more recent research include a focus on both men and women journalists, for instance in studies of sexual harassment against journalists (e.g., Idås, Orgeret, and Backholm 2020; Røsok-Dahl and Orgeret 2020). This research shows that although the numbers of male journalists who have been subjected to sexual harassment are comparatively small, there is a growing attention to the fact that harassment first of all is a type of power abuse that may hit anybody independently of gender. Moreover, research has found that there are structural barriers to addressing (gendered) online violence in organizations (Claesson 2022). Ultimately, both small and large attacks threaten safety—and the future role and function of journalism practice.

Newsafety: Advancing a Sociotechnical Conceptual Framework

Take a moment and ask yourself what is the first thing that comes to mind when you start thinking of safety and journalism? Perhaps an image of a reporter with camera equipment and a colored vest in the middle of a war zone emerges. This is a persistent situation that challenges journalists' safety and reporters continue to be killed in conflict zones, with male journalists most at risk for getting killed while on duty. Or perhaps you thought of the harassment of female journalists via social media, or how hackers infiltrate news publishers to interfere with ongoing investigative reporting, or perhaps that, in many regions, journalism has become such an unsafe occupation altogether that journalists self-censor or choose to quit the job.

This special issue recognizes that safety associated with journalism is not limited to reporters taking precautions when occupying war zones or other physically unsafe areas but encompasses a multitude of spaces and issues including the digital mediascape. The special issue introduces and advances *Newsafety*, a concept that blends news and what is new with safety, with the intention to stress how safety and news can and should be approached in tandem. The newsafety concept focuses on safety in journalism practice, interwoven with (technological) infrastructures and an understanding of different types of consequences that may arise. The three sub-dimensions of this concept are (1) Safety and infrastructures; (2) Safety in practice; and (3) Safety and its consequences.

Newsafety works with the premise that the social should be approached in tandem with the technological. We adopt a socio-technical approach that integrates activities by human social actors engaging with different sorts of technological materiality, referring to technological systems, tools and platforms. Journalistic practices and their interrelationship with safety are, in other words, approached as consisting of what journalists do with technologies in distinct activities, forming socio-technical practices (e.g., Lewis and Westlund 2015). Journalists also coordinate with human social actors in journalistic institutions, including technologists responsible for digital design, programming, mobile apps, etc. (Westlund 2011; Lewis and Westlund 2015), and other actors specialized in digital safety (see Henrichsen 2022, in this issue). The sociotechnical framework acknowledges that these human social actors work with, even depend on, technological infrastructures to carry out their practices (c.f. Ahva 2017). Technological infrastructures consist of digital materiality carrying a set of properties that essentially establishes conditions for what is possible to do with the technology or platform, yet do not determine how these are used. Technological infrastructures are owned and controlled by specific institutions in which human social actors work to develop and inscribe these with functionalities.

The sociotechnical approach to newsafety aligns with a call for advancements of transdisciplinary research: trying to develop a conceptual framework that scholars from different fields can share and use by drawing upon disciplinary-specific theories, concepts and approaches to address the common problem of safety in journalism. Some scholars have built on a sociotechnical lens in more recent studies into journalism and safety (e.g., Harlow, Wallace, and Cueva Chacón 2022; Henrichsen and Shelton 2022).

When UNESCO brought researchers from around the world together to build a research agenda, to produce much-needed knowledge on the safety of journalists, it became clear that research from a variety of disciplines was needed to explore the many topics that would be covered (UNESCO 2015). However, to move from multidisciplinarity to interdisciplinarity is not always straightforward. The greatest challenge for a multidisciplinary team is to find a common language to discuss concepts and phenomena under investigation. Success depends on building a team of researchers where each member has sufficient knowledge of the others' disciplinary backgrounds (Research Council of Norway 2003). Still, in multidisciplinary projects, several disciplines are normally used in parallel to research comparable problems. Interdisciplinary teams seek to take the collaboration one step further by integrating theory and/or methods of several sciences into the same study and analysis (Shiu 2014). Transdisciplinary collaborations aim at a still deeper form of disciplinary integration. According to Shiu (2014), transdisciplinary

research refers to team working jointly using a shared conceptual framework drawing upon disciplinary-specific theories, concepts, and approaches to address a common problem, and makes inquiries on the disciplinary integration of creativity. We posit that newsafety, as defined here, requires moving beyond parallel disciplinary research to transdisciplinary collaborations in the sense of developing shared conceptual frameworks and making inquiries on the disciplinary integration of creativity. If research on the safety of journalists is to contribute to finding solutions to the very real safety challenges and problems of journalists, deep integration between sometimes disparate disciplines is needed to come up with creative and useful answers and implications.

Safety and Infrastructures

In a UNESCO study on building digital safety for journalism, Henrichsen and colleagues (Henrichsen, Betz, and Lisosky 2015) identified 12 digital threats relevant for the study of sociotechnical infrastructures, including illegal or arbitrary digital surveillance, location tracking, software, and hardware exploits without the knowledge of the target, phishing, fake domain attacks, Man-in-the-Middle (MitM) attacks, and Denial of Service (DoS). The report demonstrates why "journalists need protection from threats such as website defacement, compromised user accounts, confiscation or theft of their digital resources, and online intimidation, disinformation, and smear campaigns" (p8). Still, the authors recognize that digital security is constantly changing and inherently dependent on context. The pioneering report was published as part of a UN initiative to foster more research with the stated goal of improving the safety of journalists around the world. UNESCO has since played a major role guiding research and facilitating research collaborations in the field.

In a more recent mapping of the state of art in the field of information security and journalism, Di Salvo (2022a) finds the research to be broadly divided into two areas. First, several studies of how information security tools and practices are being used in journalism or in response to various digital threats; and, second, there are analyzes of motivations, rationales, and organizational issues related to information security in a journalistic context (Di Salvo 2022a, 3). Di Salvo (2021) has also studied how specific information security technologies such as SecureDrop has entered the journalistic field. Research into surveillance and whistleblowing platforms have increased considerably since the Snowden revelations (e.g., Thorsen 2016). Similarly, coverage of encryption-related issues has increased significantly following the publication of the Snowden leaks, the Lux Leaks, and the Panama Papers. McGregor (2021), however, reminds us that information security in journalism needs to be considered from a holistic perspective avoiding a purely technological software-oriented point of view. According to McGregor (2021, 33–48), identifying potential adversaries and threats case-by-case should be the first step of improving information security in journalism. Information security in journalism needs to be investigated from a sociotechnical perspective that recognizes the interaction between people and technology in workplaces.

At the intersection of technologies and journalism, several news publishers and tech companies have developed tools and methodologies as well as moving the understanding of infrastructure and journalism forward. For example, a mapping of technologies associated with fact-checking employed a sociotechnical lens (Westlund et al. 2022). At

the same time, many of these investigations such as the prize-winning Pegasus, Panama Papers and the FinCEN Files investigations show that research into surveillance, interception of information, hacking, etc., as well as legal and technological responses to such challenges including enhanced cryptography, development of secure communication channels, digital protection of sources such as whistle-blowers, secure data storage, and so forth can also be exciting journalism.

Coordinated by Amnesty International and Forbidden Stories, an international consortium of journalists revealed how hacking spyware Pegasus, sold by the Israeli surveillance company NSO Group, was used to target human rights activists, journalists, and lawyers across the world. The spyware infects iPhones and Android devices and makes it possible for operators of the tool to extract messages, photos, and emails. Pegasus can record calls and secretly activate microphones. According to Forbidden Stories, the spyware infected 50 000 phone numbers in more than 50 countries from 2016 (Timm 2022).

Another highly innovative example is the Datashare platform developed by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) with Swiss university EPFL to allow reporters around the world to securely search one another's documents. According to ICIJ, journalism like the Panama Papers and FinCEN Files investigations would not be possible without creating cutting-edge technology. Consequently, some of the most insightful experience-based knowledge about infrastructure and journalism safety is being published by journalists for journalists on platforms such as ICIJ, Forbidden Stories, Freedom of the Press Foundation and the Signals Network.

Regardless of research area or topic, however, most research of information security and journalism is qualitative in nature and interviews dominate the field (see review in Di Salvo 2022a). The understanding of culture and information security is growing. Many of the issues highlighted by Henrichsen, Betz, and Lisosky (2015), however, require technological competence and understanding in addition to cultural-based approaches and surveys. More transdisciplinary research combining qualitative methodologies with technological approaches is needed to explore the intersections of emerging technologies and the safety cultures of journalism. To a large extent, much research is being conducted in parallel from various disciplinary perspectives. The field would benefit from more research transcending disciplinary boundaries to develop shared conceptual frameworks and making inquiries on the disciplinary integration of creativity.

Safety in Practice

Research consistently shows that journalists and journalistic practice are the subjects of both explicit and implicit harassment and threats (e.g., Löfgren Nilsson and & Örnebring 2016; Lewis, Zamith, and Coddington 2020; Waisbord 2020, 2022 in this issue). The prevalence of such threats and harassment can affect journalists and how they choose to cover certain topics, what stories they report on Posetti et al. (2021), as well as how they navigate digital infrastructures in terms of using specific technologies for reporting more safely and curating their online presence.

Safety in practice encompasses research into how matters of safety influence epistemological news production processes. Journalism and epistemology center around what journalists and news organizations know, how they know what they know, and how they articulate and justify their knowledge claims. Institutions of journalism carry

journalistic authority and journalists typically claim to produce news that is accurate, relevant and verified. Researchers have studied the practices of justification in journalistic practices, norms and routines, but also in text and discourse, as well as how audiences assess (accept/reject) knowledge claims (Ekström and Westlund 2019). Researchers focusing on epistemology have explored and reported on significantly diverging epistemic practices in journalism, including pioneering works into investigative journalism (Ettema and Glasser 1985) and television journalism (Ekström 2002), studies focusing on live blogging (Thurman and Walters 2013; Matheson and Wahl-Jorgensen 2020) and online live broadcasting (Ekström, Ramsälv, and Westlund 2021), extending to forms of journalism driven by data (Ekström, Ramsälv, and Westlund 2022). Practices for epistemologies of digital journalism are closely associated with what digital technologies afford journalists to do, such as developing so-called meso news-spaces for audience participation via WhatsApp (Kligler-Vilenchik and Tenenboim 2020), or enabling journalists to access satellite footage and Flickr datasets with geotagged photographs in their online sourcing and reporting on events in countries far away. Such practices are invaluable when journalists feel they cannot trust authorities as sources (Seo 2020), but also in situations where the safety of journalists is at risk, and thus connects with safety in practice insofar that news workers have adapted their practices for the situation, which may involve avoiding reporting from the field, or, as in the recent case of independent journalists in Russia after the invasion of Ukraine, deciding to report from exile while developing tacit knowledge for using specific digital technologies.

More generally, safety in practice concerns what explicit and tacit knowledge journalists, technologists, sources, and other actors involved in news production have, or have had to develop, when it comes to their safety. Researchers have found that some news organizations do not seem to recognize the scope of online harassment against journalists, nor do they take actions to help their employees stay safe (Holton et al. 2021). The development of digital tools, for example, to fight online harassment of female journalists, may be effective, but research also shows that the emotional toll of harassment disrupts women's daily lives, safety, and autonomy (Ferrier and Garud-Patkar 2018). Related to this, amid mob censorship (Waisbord 2020) some studies have reported that news workers have avoided or discontinued using specific digital technologies or platforms in their journalistic practices, as these are perceived as jeopardizing their safety.

Another critical question for journalists, for journalism, and potentially for democracy at large, has to do with whether potential threats to safety results in journalists adapting their practices by engaging in self-censorship, eventually giving biased or limited information to the public (Walulya and Nassanga 2020; Larsen, Fadnes, and Krøvel 2020). In this context, newsrooms and their managers do not necessarily take ownership for safety issues (Henrichsen 2022, in this issue; Holton et al. 2021). Waisboard argues that news publishers should better enable reporters to inform and document attacks, while also ensuring their privacy is protected (Waisbord 2022, in this issue). Overall, challenges with journalism safety should be documented and discussed inside and outside of news publishers.

Interference with journalists and journalism can come in many forms, including from the authorities, inhibiting press freedom through state influence (e.g., Papadopoulou and Maniou 2021; Wu 2021). A free press can obviously not be taken for granted, and in authoritarian regimes the press has since long been used by authorities to orchestrate

their messages, and thus issues of hostility towards journalism in such contexts are much different compared with democratic societies (Hamada 2022). Polarized media scenes, vigilante groups and personalities on social media have been identified as additional threats to journalists (Workneh 2022; in this issue). Journalists are harassed in multiple ways, such as rhetorical aggression, trolling, bullying, threats, public shaming, violation of personal privacy, malicious social media interaction, and cyberattacks/site hacking (Tofalvy, 2017, c.f. Holton et al. 2021). Multiple studies have witnessed journalists being exposed to varying forms of (online) harassment, involving direct threats and/or abusive comments that are unpleasant but do not involve any direct threat (Löfgren Nilsson and & Örnebring 2016).

In response to these threats, journalists do not necessarily turn to silence but may adapt their journalistic practices by way of choosing other methods and routines, turning to other sources, reporting without bylines, and so on. Some key questions include, but are not limited to: how do perceptions about surveillance and digital threats and harassment possibly influence the stories journalists choose to work with, how they communicate with sources, and how they produce news materials with certain claims? Researchers have reported some journalists discontinue covering some topics, or even give up their journalistic careers altogether (Binns 2017; Stahel and Schoen 2020). Ferrier and Garud-Patkar (2018) found that some journalists avoid specific topics they envision will expose them to online harassment. Further questions include what steps individual journalists take to achieve and maintain safety, and whether they report and process incidents with their employers? Research suggests publishers have offered rather limited (practical) support to their journalists. A US-based study found that publishers told journalists harassment was not their fault, but nevertheless it remained the journalist's problem as the employers did little to support their journalists (Holton et al. 2021). Both individual journalists and news organizations are responsible for journalists' safety, yet there may be cross-cultural differences when it comes to how publishers take responsibility as employers. This suggests that there might be a growing normalization taking place, in which journalists and publishers largely think that online hostility and safety concerns comes with the profession. Miller reviewed the field and discussed conceptualization of hostility towards the free press. Her review discusses the fact that there is much research about hostility but highlights that there is limited research about changing journalistic practices (Miller 2021). Notable exceptions include Miller and Lewis's findings about avoiding social media (reading comments and messages, delayed check-in on Facebook) as well as bringing company to places that are perceived as unsafe (Miller and Lewis 2022). We call for further research into how diverse safety problems are (perceived to be) affecting concrete journalistic practices.

Safety and its Consequences

Safety and its consequences focus on both psychological, social and political consequences that arise when the safety of journalists is being challenged. What are the costs of intimidation, harassment and hate speech for democratic processes? Are some groups of journalists more exposed to intimidation, harassment and hate speech than others—and what are the implications in terms of voices lost and stories not told? What are the effects of confiscation of journalistic work, forced exposure of online

networks, defamation, and libel, and how do these processes impact on which perspectives of reality we are given? This section is particularly interested in how such pressures affect the news and knowledge produced in general, and how this may impact freedom of expression and processes of democracy in a given society or across regions.

Research shows that journalists who cover topics such as politics and gender are more likely to become targets of intimidation and anti-press violence (Kim and Shin 2022), and those covering local and national politics and extremism are subject to receive more severe and sustained online abuse (Westcott and Foley 2019). Holton and colleagues identified three forms of online harassment: acute harassment (e.g., generalized verbal abuse) chronic harassment (e.g., repeatedly occurs over time), and escalatory harassment (e.g., more personalized and threatening forms) (Holton et al. 2021). The annual report of OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues (OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues 2021) reveals how the types of political stories that trigger abuse vary by country and region. For instance, reporting on refugees and migration has inspired online abuse against journalists in Finland, Germany, Poland, and the United Kingdom. Coverage of Russia's invasion of Ukraine inspired backlash in Finland and Poland, whereas discussion of the Catalan independence movement catalyzed violence against journalists across Spain. In Malta, investigating journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia was murdered by a car bomb in 2017 when she was investigating corruption in the Maltese government and society. Her case tragically illustrates how intensive online attacks and smear campaigns, including by politicians and other powerful actors, can lead to physical violence or even murder (OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues 2021; Posetti et al. 2021). Principally, offenders seem to target women journalists in particular when they cover stories on the subjects of women, gender and sexuality. Gender was the story theme most often linked to heightened online harassment by participants in a UNESCO survey of women journalists in 125 countries (OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues 2021). The same survey notes that stories about feminism, domestic violence, sexual assaults, femicide, reproductive rights and abortion, and transgender issues were met with particular revilement (Posetti et al. 2021, 31).

The COVID-19 pandemic represented a critical moment for journalism (Quandt and Wahl-Jorgensen 2021), and not least so for the safety of journalists (Shah, Jan, and Ittefaq 2021). Responses to the pandemic rapidly changed the paradigm for journalist safety as a wave of attacks on journalists covering anti-vaccination protests hit countries such as the Netherlands, Italy and South Africa (Wiseman 2020). Many journalists found working within a "COVID-19 communication ecology" (Perreault and Perreault 2021) hard and many were also affected emotionally from their reporting on the pandemic (Osmann, Selva, and Feinstein 2021). The safety of journalists is closely linked to press freedom and the opportunity to produce and disseminate news and information in the public interest is important to the overall state of democracy in a given country or region. Attacks on journalists may have a chilling effect on press freedom and hence on the level of democracy in a given society as it may infringe on individual journalists' autonomy and editorial independence. How journalists cope with attacks on, even assassinations of colleagues, and what impact such incidents have on everyday journalistic practices and routines when it comes to achieving and maintaining safety is an understudied area. How do journalists react when a colleague is murdered, not in a dangerous region or a war zone, but in their own home in a peaceful country? What are coping

strategies they may use when facing a fundamentally new and traumatic experience: the murder of one of their colleagues and friends? (Urbániková and Haniková 2022, in this issue). Although the study of coping is fundamental to an understanding of how stress affects people, the knowledge on how journalists deal with occupational stressors is still limited (Monteiro and Marques-Pinto 2017) and even more so when the stress is caused by attacks on a colleague in a relatively peaceful context.

Political polarization creates challenging working conditions for journalists in societies that otherwise are considered stable and peaceful. When polarization develops to toxic levels, journalists' freedom is typically dismantled and the erosion of press freedom is both a symptom of and a contributor to the breakdown of other democratic institutions and principles (Repucci 2019). A poignant example is how journalists were violently attacked during the United States' Capitol Insurrection on 6 January 2021, but so far little research has looked into a polarized political and media scene that may be perceived as a safety threat for journalists as such (Workneh 2022, in this issue).

For an environment conducive to freedom of expression and access to information to be ensured it is of vital importance that central societal actors such as the judiciary and security forces understand the value of supporting and protecting the safety of journalists. We call for increased attention as to how judicial actors and security forces are provided with practical and theoretical tools to carry out their mission of maintaining public order and upholding the rule of law, while respecting international standards on freedom of expression and the safety of journalists. UNESCO's training of judicial actors and security forces and creation of resources on sharing knowledge through toolkits and video explainers for judicial actors around the world are important contributions here and should be followed up by academic research.

Advancements of the Field

The special issue features six original articles relating to one or several of the key dimensions of Newsafety (e.g., infrastructures, practice, and consequences.). The first article in the special issue predominantly deals with cultural aspects of safety concerns relating to infrastructures and newsroom practices. The article "Understanding Nascent Newsroom Security and Safety Cultures: The Emergence of the 'Security Champion'" is an interview-based study with American journalists, media lawyers, and technologists, authored by Jennifer R. Henrichsen. She draws on new institutionalism in her study into why journalists' and news organizations, despite problematic safety conditions for journalists, have resisted developing different kinds of security-related practices. A key finding from her study is that newsrooms must have what she refers to as a "security champion" in order to develop their newsroom security cultures. Henrichsen highlights a tension associated with issues of security and this "champion". Newsrooms have not necessarily developed security cultures across the newsroom (as institutional cultures and practices) yet have adopted some security technologies (such as SecureDrop) for practical reasons and the symbolic value of legitimacy (Henrichsen 2022, in this issue). The anonymous whistleblower technology SecureDrop and its role for journalists and surveillance is at the center of attention in the second article of the special issue. The article by Philip Di Salvo goes by the title "'We have to act like our devices are already infected': Investigative journalists and Internet surveillance", and explores how journalists (and their sources) face

diverse threats in their journalistic practice because of interconnectedness to digital infra-structures enabling adversaries to engage in surveillance and malicious attacks. Di Salvo offers findings from a cross-national interview study with journalists working in six Euro-pean countries, all of which are affiliated with the International Consortium of Investiga-tive Journalists (ICIJ). The article discusses different ways in which these journalists approach and think of the national and international surveillance, and how they influence journalistic practices (Di Salvo 2022b, in this issue).

We discussed earlier that conceptualizations of journalists' safety have been tradition-ally been closely associated with reporters risking their lives when going to war zones. Colin Porlezza and Rana Arafat adopt a newsafety perspective for this context, by studying both physical and digital threats, in their article "Promoting Newsafety from the Exile: The Emergence of New Journalistic Roles in Diaspora Journalists' Networks". The article offers a metajournalistic discourse analysis and interview study of three online advocacy net-works formed by Syrian diaspora journalists. The article studies perceived threats, role per-ceptions and counterstrategies developed. Amid the digital mediascape, diaspora journalists perceive they cannot escape threats online. Several counterstrategies have formed, such as proactive safety training programs as well reactive rescue programs. Based on their findings, and with an ambition for promoting newsafety from exile, Por-lezza and Arafat introduce four journalistic roles: sousveillance, defender, trainer, and reg-ulator/policy developer (Porlezza and Arafat 2022, in this issue).

We maintain our focus on both physical and digital threats but then turn to a repeated cross-sectional study (2013–2017) with journalists working across 20 countries in Latin America. Vanessa de Macedo Higgins Joyce, Lourdes Cueva Chacón and Rosental Calmon Alves use the hierarchy of influence model to analyze Latin American journalists' perceptions of threats and attacks as barriers to investigative journalism. They find that especially women and those new to the occupation (individual characteristics), and those working independently or for digital platforms (organizational characteristics) expressed that threats and attacks were a main barrier to investigative journalism (de Macedo et al. 2022, in this issue). We then turn to an interview-based study with journal-ists, editors and media practitioners in Ethiopia. The article has been authored by Téwo-dros Workneh and is titled "From State Repression to Fear of non-state Actors: Examining Emerging Threats of Journalism Practice in Ethiopia". The study discusses that the govern-ment continues to constitute a safety threat, but so do non-state actors, most notably social media personalities and vigilante groups. The polarized media scene is also per-ceived as an additional safety threat (Workneh 2022, in this issue). The very last article explores the impact and the consequences of the assassination of a fellow journalist on the community of journalists, and how they cope with the stress of having a colleague and friend murdered. Marina Urbániková and Lenka Haniková study the impact of the killing of investigative journalist Ján Kuciak and his fiancée, in their home in Slovakia in 2018, on the community of investigative journalists in the country. The article investigates how the journalists have coped with the violent murder of their colleague and how the incident changed their everyday journalistic practices ad routines when it comes to achieving and maintaining safety (Urbániková and Haniková 2022, in this issue).

Additionally, we have invited commentaries by two leading international experts in the field. In "Can journalists be safe in a violent world?" Professor Silvio Waisbord discusses that the problem of journalists' safety is internationally present, and more complex and

worse nowadays than in the recent past. He discusses different dimensions of the problem as we know it, shortcomings of the varying actions taken to address it, and suggestions for going forward. Moreover, Canela De Souza Godoi, Guilherme, Chief of the Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists Section Communication and Information at UNESCO contributes with a commentary assessing the current trends for the safety of journalists, taking into account the framework offered by the UN Plan of Action. Canela highlights the need for an enabling environment for the safety of journalists expressed through the policy of the 3Ps: Prevention, Protection and Prosecution, and develops on how the continuous development and implementation of this policy must take place within the framework of a multi-stakeholder approach (Canela 2022, in this issue).

Concluding Discussion

The safety of journalists and journalism is a problem, and what we increasingly see as a large and multidimensional challenge. It has long been established in research that journalists' physical safety is challenged in specific contexts. To date, a significant body of research has studied journalism and safety from the vantage point of how the safety of (human) journalists is being challenged in the digital mediascape. Over the course of advancing this special issue, we have frequently observed worrying reports about how the safety of journalists is compromised. We have fortunately also observed a burgeoning of research into this field.

In this introduction, we have argued that researchers, to further advance the field, must recognize the close link between journalism and technology by adopting a sociotechnical approach to the study of journalism and safety. Importantly, a few recent studies into journalism and safety have indeed built on a sociotechnical lens (e.g., Harlow, Wallace, and Cueva Chacón 2022; Henrichsen and Shelton 2022).

The sociotechnical framework acknowledges that human social actors such as journalists work with, and to varying extent also depend on, digital technologies (materiality). Moreover, with journalism essentially being interwoven with the digital materiality, numerous concerns and challenges for safety have arisen in the digital mediascape. In this introductory article, we have introduced the newsafety concept, being mindful about technological infrastructures, practices and consequences. We call for research into these three dimensions, ideally adopting a socio-technical approach that simultaneously studies the role of humans and technology. From a more fundamental perspective, we call for interdisciplinary research into newsafety. Let us return to the UNESCO research agenda on the safety of journalists, originally drafted in 2015 (UNESCO 2015). Relating to the UNESCO research agenda we would like to stress the importance of two of their specified research areas (6 and 8) in particular from a newsafety perspective.

Research area 6, "Psychological issues" encompasses issues such as "effects of threats, killings and harassment on conceptions of victimhood, survivorhood, persecution, isolation and solidarity, etc." and "psychological effects" in general (UNESCO 2015). Dealing with these and similar issues, several teams of researchers have integrated theories and methodologies from journalism studies and psychology to explore psychological effects of insecurity with far greater depth than would have been possible without interdisciplinary integration (Newman and Nelson 2012; Smith, Drevo, and Newman 2018). This type of research is clearly relevant for the understanding of the sociotechnical

dimensions of Newsafety as numerous studies underline the impacts of online abuse and harassment. However, while the integration of conceptual frameworks from journalism studies and psychology has produced deeper insight into psychological issues, there is a long way to go before similar integration can be reached between journalism studies and computer science. We believe such interdisciplinary integration should inspire researchers focusing on other dimensions of newsafety to integrate relevant disciplinary theories and methodologies in order to develop shared conceptual frameworks.

Research area 8 "Digital Issues", encompasses research questions such as online safety threats, awareness of threats, knowledge about protective measures, practices to improve safety, effects on the work of journalists, surveillance, and the protection of sources. These issues align with the safety and infrastructure dimension of newsafety as defined here and the articles of this special issue contribute to answering the UNESCO call for more knowledge on these issues. Similarly, a string of recent publications has helped improve knowledge about social and cultural aspects of safety and infrastructure dimensions of newsafety. Nevertheless, most of the investigations have been made employing interviews, surveys, discourse analysis, surveys of existing literature in the field and so forth. Little effort has been made to integrate relevant theories and methodologies from technology, computer science and similar disciplines in order to develop shared conceptual frameworks. Research on how technology is being shaped by journalists, how technology can be developed to make journalism safer for journalists and sources, and how technological advancements contribute to shaping the safety of journalists, remain relatively understudied.

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