

**NAVIGATING THE CHALLENGES AND VAGARIES OF ATTAINING
PROFESSIONAL STATUS AND RECOGNITION FOR THE UK SECURITY
SECTOR AND THOSE EMPLOYED IN IT – A WORTHWHILE PURSUIT OR
POTENTIAL EPHEMERALITY?**

by

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DISSERTATION

Presented to the Swiss School of Business and Management Geneva

In Partial Fulfilment

Of the Requirements

For the Degree

DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

SWISS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT GENEVA

JUNE 2025

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Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge several organizations and the many individuals who, by their kind and unstinting support, made this research possible. Firstly, my thanks go to the registrants of the Chartered Security Professionals Register who participated in survey or interview, and the registrars, past and present, who gave up their valuable time to share their thoughts and assist in providing valuable data. In a similar vein I thank the Chief Executive, the Board, and those members of the UK Security Institute who assisted in this endeavour and especially James Dawson and team for their support and facilitation of data collection by providing much needed access across their membership. Without all their help this research would have been impossible to accomplish. A special word of thanks to Professor, Doctor Leif Erik Wollenweber, my dissertation supervisor, who through kind and most timely advice and guidance ensured I was able to better see the different approaches available and keep my research correctly focused. Many thanks to everyone who facilitated contacts, particularly Angela Vernon-Lawson who went the extra mile, and those who humoured me in their kind willingness to participate. Finally, thanks also to those who through discussion often provided rich insights or advice to help further the research journey, especially Keith Lawery, David Gill, and Mike Bluestone. It is all these individuals and groups mentioned who have helped me in this endeavour. I trust the recommendations resulting from this study will be of some benefit to those who are involved or have influence in the UK security sector.

ABSTRACT

NAVIGATING THE CHALLENGES AND VAGARIES OF ATTAINING PROFESSIONAL STATUS AND RECOGNITION FOR THE UK SECURITY SECTOR AND THOSE EMPLOYED IN IT – A WORTHWHILE PURSUIT OR POTENTIAL EPHEMERALITY?

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2025

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The concept of a profession in the UK has been characterised by historical underpinning and strong cultural components, perhaps more so than elsewhere in the world, making for complexity and some lack of definitive understanding. Many in society and business are aware of the prestige and status that membership of an established profession brings, including the likelihood of potential power and financial reward, especially when fully recognised by the State institutions. Security in UK is not generally considered a profession despite moves by much of the sector in that direction, marked by the inception of chartered status in 2011 and increasing access to university degrees in various security disciplines. The research aimed to evaluate the challenges facing the UK security sector

in attaining formal professional status and assess whether it is needed, if routes exist now, or what they might be in the future, and whether alternatives may be more advisable. The research met this aim by evaluating qualitatively and with informal mixed methodology the current state of the professional concept and its relationship with security. The primary research was based on cross sectional surveys and interviews of different security populations using thematic and content analysis to interpret participant views as well as to provide a comparison with the secondary research based on a literature review.

The evidence suggests that rather than pursuing a traditional UK professional model it would be beneficial to adopt a neo-expert framework but one that is embedded within a concept similar to UK Engineering which contains all regulatory controls for standards and codified ethics and provides established career paths present in the more traditional constructs. This approach if strategised correctly by a unified sector leadership and based on inextricable linkage to governmental oversight would indeed improve individual and collective status and provide the elevated recognition sought. This could eventually extend to society more generally if focus and attention are provided to that.

The research will prove important to all those in the sector who have an interest in security status, influence, recognition and their positioning in business or society, or just in security more generally. The study outlines and recommends a possible future with a sector initiative to achieve professional recognition. Additionally, the findings help contextualise some ideas surrounding the sector's professional positioning in relation to regulation, standards, and socio-ethical accountability alongside identifying the feasibility of professional attainment or the adoption of alternative frameworks and approaches.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AALE	Association of Accredited Public Body Advocates to the EU
ACP	Australian Council of Professions
ASC	Association of Security Consultants
ASIS	American Society for Industrial Security
BBC	British Broadcasting Company
C.Eng	Chartered Engineer
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CHCSP	Chartered Cyber Security Professional
CILEX	Chartered Institute of legal Executives
CMI	Chartered Management Institute
COVID	Corona Virus Disease (19)
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CSPRA	Chartered Security Professional Regulation Authority
CSyP	Chartered Security Professional
EPS	Emergency Planning Society
ERM	Enterprise Risk Management
EU	European Union
FEE	Foundation for Economic Education
GMC	General Medical Council
HE	Higher Education
H&S	Health and Safety
HRM	Human Resources (Management)
ICAEW	Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales
ICJS	Institute of Criminal Justice Studies (Portsmouth University)

IT	Information Technology
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCSC	National Cyber Security Centre
NHS	National Health Service
NPSA	National Protective Security Authority (A Department of MI5)
OFS	Office for Students
OFSTED	The Office for Standards in Education
PMCs	Private Military Contractors
QCA	Qualitative Content Analysis
REINSW	Real Estate Institute of New South Wales
RICS	Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors
RSES	Register of Security Engineers and Specialists
RTA	Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke)
SIA	Security Industry Authority
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Relevant and Time Bound
SyI	Security Institute
UK	United Kingdom
UKCSC	United Kingdom Cyber Security Council
UBK	Unique Body of Knowledge
USA	United States of America
WCoSP	Worshipful Company of Security Professionals

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“The difficulty lies not in the new ideas, but in escaping from the old ones, which ramify, for those brought up as most of us have been, into every corner of our minds.”
(John Maynard Keynes, 1964)

1.1 Background and Context - a Profession

The observation by Keynes (1964) quoted above is a particularly apt one concerning the general thinking on professions, certainly within the UK. Professions are associated with historical foundations characterised by a particular employment construct and ‘brand’ culture. For those admitted to them this is a source of great achievement, attachment, and pride and traditionally not something to be changed overmuch. In a modern technological and fast paced changing world it is wise and correct to challenge many assumptions and preconceptions surrounding these ideas, which are held by the professional institutions almost affectionally. This research investigates how the concept of a profession relates to the UK security sector, which has over the last few decades sought greater status in the business environment. This has taken the shape of a general professionalisation of security activities and performance, but to some extent has also been characterised by a more latent desire by the security sector to achieve recognition as a formal UK profession, or perhaps by some other construct which may offer a similar end result.

Freidson (1988a) on being requested to appraise the concept of professions, observed that some sociologists had argued the word had little meaning beyond that of a construct designed mainly to derive prestige for itself and presumably the members of that or any professional body. Although Freidson himself then elaborated on this by explaining the perception as being an overly simplistic analysis, the basic perceptual issues he described persist in UK

society today, even within businesses and public bodies, and in most western democracies. These perceptions and how they may affect status attainment and recognition are at the core of this research, but the study was very much focused on the relationship of the professional concept with the security sector in the UK. However, evidence and experiences from other countries were also considered to better inform the primary research presented and to more effectively identify any previous and more contemporary literary insights. This research is focused both practically and theoretically, to aid the UK security sector in any future initiatives that may be contemplated and to better understand and navigate the dimensions of attaining professional status or identify any alternatives that may be considered by the sector leadership and representative bodies.

1.2 Structure of this Study

Following this introductory first chapter the literature review found in Chapter 2 provides the existing literary underpinning of both the theoretical ideas and the practice of professions discussed as a critical overview. The methodological theory used in this research is fully discussed in Chapter 3 covering the framework, approach taken and identifies the instruments used to collect primary data. Within that chapter the methodological choices are considered and justified with discussion of the philosophical stance taken and the methodological tools used to meet the research aim and objectives. The research primary findings are presented in Chapter 4 derived through analytical discourse and an evaluation of primary data. Further insights are provided from some comparison with the secondary data which was critiqued in the literature review. Following this, in Chapter 5, there is a discussion of the findings and implications overall including those focussed on the likelihood of the security sector attaining professional recognition. Chapter 6 takes a summative stance noting any final further observations or reflections and it presents the recommendations arising from the research findings after which a final short conclusionary section is given.

1.3 The Winds of professional Change

Susskind and Susskind (2015, p.1) believe that “professions are on the brink of a period of fundamental change”. Their research is comprehensively of the view that technology particularly, will revolutionise (and indeed is already doing so) the way identifiable and more established UK professions such as doctors, lawyers, and architects will operate in the future and how society and business generally will regard and interact with them in the years ahead. Whilst professions will always evolve it is the accelerated rate of change which perhaps gives the sense of a professional revolution and some associated unease, whether originating from technical or cultural origins, as outlined by them and others.

Many of the views expressed by Susskind and Susskind (2022) are not universally accepted, especially by the professions themselves. However, many of their arguments, some of which are discussed later in this dissertation, are quite compelling in many important and pertinent professional areas, especially in relation to the fast changing technical environment. They also articulate a generally accepted understanding that professions, seen as the holders and arbiters of specialized knowledge, are a major channel by which others such as business and public clients are able to gain access to their specialized services, if not always the knowledge itself. However, a more controversial and extreme prediction by them is their forecast that the “professions should and will be displaced by feasible alternatives” (Susskind and Susskind, 2022, p.4). This feasibility will feature later in the literary review and following chapters, together with other related evolutionary ideas, compared and correlated in the analysed primary data. Before then it is necessary to introduce the concept of a profession as largely understood within the UK as the first introductory building block of this research.

1.4 Professions as a Concept

The concept of a profession and the descriptor ‘professional’ regarding work status and recognition, although perhaps having become much overused terms in everyday employment

language, are in reality often misunderstood ideas in the UK business, and even the wider, social lexicon (Nolin, 2008). This misunderstanding is visible, to some extent, in terms used such as ‘working professionally’ which in most qualitative ways, other than indicating a high standard, can be largely disassociated with the idea of being a member of an established profession. In the UK, a profession has an historical dimension linked to governing bodies or institutions and must even be endorsed by a Royal seal of approval. Such bodies are the General Medical Council (GMC) for the medical profession and the Engineering Council for the myriad of engineering disciplines. More generally for those professions based on chartership there is also the Privy Council, a quasi-political body, which is able to award and refuse or remove chartered status and confer (with assent) the Royal Charter. The security sector attained chartership through the auspices of the Worshipful Company of Security Professionals (WCoSP) in 2011 and there are now 283¹ registrants, a first step to greater professional status as the concept is understood in UK.

Furthermore, professions in UK have been characterised by having identifiable standards and regulatory, or other quality assurance systems, inherent within them (Fitzgerald, 2020). As a result of this historical evolution, professions in the UK have become associated with sector disciplines such as medicine, law, teaching, or engineering, with a few recognised others. However, it is possible to objectively meet most if not all the loosely associated criteria of being a profession and still not perhaps be either officially recognised or even perceived as such by the business community or society at large. Herein lies a conundrum and something important to this study.

There appear to be other potential determinants beyond standard characterisation, including a strong cultural dimension as indicated by Bloor and Dawson (1994), concerning how work status is perceived, both from within and without the business communities in UK or in the

¹ Correct on website as at 30th November 2024 (<https://www.charteredsecurityprofessional.org/listing>).

public working sector. In addition, the public, arguably more so in UK, often have disparate views on what is perceived as a profession making a fixed understanding of the desired and much sought after professional recognition and status, to be anything other than a simple endeavour.

It is in this rather obscure and multi-dimensional professional landscape that the UK Security sector finds itself, as it seeks to understand the vagaries of professionalisation, decide whether a security profession is needed or wanted and if so how to go about attaining that recognition and perceived status that accompanies membership of the elite club of ‘professions.’ It may well be that alternatives might serve better. This is especially if professions as they are known today are set to be transformed fundamentally by accelerated technology creating a rapidly changing social landscape and new business requirements as authors such as Susskind and Susskind (2022) have predicted.

1.5 Security Recognition and Status

The security sector in UK has struggled to gain professional recognition despite now having a chartered pathway for senior security practitioners². Status and recognition are increasingly a major focus and are important to many lead voices in the sector who believe they are key components needed to recruit talent and improve standards. This desire is underscored by the UK Security Institute (2023) who believe both respect and recognition are key to its mission. Whilst there have been several studies on the generalities and even some specific aspects of professions, the novel approach of determining pathways, or lack of them, for security specialists, managers, leaders, and the sector to fully attain professional recognition has not been explored to any significant extent in UK.

² Chartered Security (CSyP) was commissioned by the Privy Council in 2011, and the Register is ‘internally’ regulated by the Chartered Security Professional Registration Authority (CSPRA).

1.6 Clarification and Importance of Research

It is important to assist the UK security sector identify the difficulties presented in attaining full professional recognition as a conduit to promote occupational status and standing in the business community generally or offer alternative frameworks that may suit better. It is also necessary to determine whether practitioners believe recognition as a profession is required as UK determines the concept. This research focus presents an opportunity to further clarify and assist in sector development to assess whether practically and culturally this journey is worthwhile and indeed even feasible, whether alternatives do or could exist or potentially something that is ultimately unlikely and perhaps even ephemeral in nature. The next section will build on this thinking to identify and articulate the scope of the study, with the research problem presented before outlining the research aim and objectives chosen to drive the study.

1.7 Scope of Study

This research was confined to protective security practiced within the UK security sector but excluded the defence sector and Private Military Contractors (PMCs), civil policing or those companies and organisations that sell, install, or maintain security equipment. However, certain practitioners, including consultants and advisers³ operating in these domains may, individually, be fairly judged to be personally part of this security sector research depending on their function and personal situation. In general, throughout the research, where necessary, distinctions were made in the narrative between practitioners as individuals and those collective aspects of being considered a profession, whether that be the whole sector or functional disciplines and sub-sectors within it.

Security disciplines considered within the UK for this research are relatively wide in scope and include IT and cyber security and also security consultancy as well as contract or in-house elements of commercial and public security provision. The scope comprises protection

³ Consultant and Advisor may (or perhaps should) be considered synonymous terms according to Gill (2007).

of people, property (including intellectual property) and technical operations, albeit not the sales of technical equipment or services. The whole range generally reflects the protective security framework described by the Security Institute (SyI, 2024). This allowed for most areas of protective security to be included within the main groupings. The scope whilst UK focussed also considered world and other illustrative business sector and functional lessons, albeit literary derived, together with views of some UK practitioners who may be operating overseas and were obtained through the primary data collection.

1.8 A Statement of the Problem

1.8.1 Security professional Understanding and Status Concerns

Within the UK, security practitioners are not currently considered part of an established formalised profession. The concept of a profession in its more formal UK sense is at best partially understood and usually only then at the higher level of security practitioners. Whilst many practitioners and representative security organisations desire a greater occupational status, they are unclear how this desire might translate or actually be achieved. However, there are increasing institutional ‘professional’ memberships together with a raised educational profile which have been achieved through business agreements, university courses and a huge uptake in courses offered by bespoke training providers. This advancement has already helped professionalisation of the sector and may even point to potential pathways for eventual recognition.

Attaining UK professional recognition is seen as the ultimate goal for many senior security individuals and representative organisations. However, the newer or more junior practitioner strata of the security sector are arguably more likely to see greater training and financial reward in isolation and as a much higher priority. Fragmentation and diversity of the sector, including leadership, specialist disciplines, sector representation and educational ranges, also pose challenges to a unified cohesive sector view on the routes to attaining recognition more

formally as a profession. Despite this many would accept more widely the merits of achieving professional status and recognition in the wider sense of those words.

1.8.2 The Dimension of the Problem

These identified issues highlight the problem regarding the achievement of professional status and whether seeking professional recognition is desirable, even possible, or if alternatives may exist now and in the future. Within this stated problem there exists the dimension of business, societal and financial power to be found within established UK professions. This is even in those newer professions based increasingly on a greater and workable pragmatic expertise. It is a dimension, which is in part culturally dependent, that needs to be factored into any research as it relates to the security sector. In addition to this, there are complexities resulting from both the business and societal contexts, or even perhaps governmental expectations and other State drivers. These can all be intertwined with different perspectives on what the 'expert workplace' should look like overall. They could see the concept of a profession, as understood currently, becoming part of an ephemeral ever shifting and increasingly perceptively based construct. Alternatively, but perhaps just as likely, they may give rise to an even more taxonomic and defined functional and trait-based set of professional characteristics. This is especially if greater regulation is required in the various business sectors, which would include security.

Incongruously the uncertainties arising from this rather impenetrable perspective may provide a catalyst to accelerate the need to identify new paths or frameworks for the security sector in attaining business recognition and status attainment. At the least they may prompt some approach which does not discount the possibility of professional attainment but keeps options and end goals open to better match whatever new expectations arise. These tangential complexities are all worthy of exploration to add richer understanding to this research and may possibly identify new approaches or point the sector in an unforeseen direction.

Conversely, the evidence might simply endorse the need or desire for a UK professional formal identity as an ongoing worthy pursuit.

The shape and nature of the methodology described later in Chapter 3 has been designed and operationalized to address this research problem as outlined and one that is full of the complexities discussed. It is hoped that some clarity and greater understanding will arise together with workable recommendations derived from the primary data findings presented and through examining this specific niche professional area. A stated aim and set of objectives which together are used to drive the study and provide research vectors for both the primary and secondary elements envisaged are required to correctly focus further enquiry and subsequent discussion.

1.9 Research Aim and Objectives

The problem statement provided those general areas and context which need examination and provides a preliminary focus for the research requirement, needed to ensure the correct research trajectory. The stated problem makes identifying the aim and supporting objectives somewhat more straightforward. Whilst both the research title and problem statement describe the research topic more generally it is important to generate a research aim which reflects these, but one that is built on SMART⁴ principles and is above all, clear and concise (Ogbeiwi, 2017). The aim formulated for this research and derived from the problem statement was therefore synthesized to the following:

- ***Aim - To evaluate the challenges facing the UK security sector in attaining formal professional status and assess whether it is needed, if routes exist now, may exist in the future, or if alternatives to recognition as a profession may be more advisable.***

⁴ SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound (Forbes, 2024).

The aim encapsulates the problem overall. In order to achieve this aim, it was supported by several research questions (see these later in Chapter 3) synthesised as objective statements of intention which collectively constitute and support the stated aim. In some research literature this is sometimes referred to as the primary objective (Lopez, 2023). This approach resulted in the following subordinate and underpinning objectives being formulated:

- **Objective 1 - *Identify and evaluate the current constituent elements which provide for UK recognition of a profession and assess security practitioner understanding of the concept.***

This objective contextualised and helped clarify the vagueness and dynamics involved within UK concerning the nature of an established profession. This was achieved by analysing both primary and secondary data to obtain views of practitioners and reviewing the debate in recent literature with some theoretical ideas also investigated.

- **Objective 2 - *Assess whether security (or elements of it) actually needs or wants to become a profession and, if so, why that might be important.***

This objective focused on why, and if, it is important for security to attain professional status and be recognised by stakeholder groups at both the individual practitioner and organizational level. This concentrated on interpreting mainly primary data responses and sought to reveal the appetite and understanding of practitioners in the quest for status through professional recognition and why they deemed it important.

- **Objective 3 - *Establish and assess the current UK security sector status in relation to being regarded formally as a profession (in whole or in part).***

Within this objective the current positioning and status of the UK security sector was identified and critically discussed to better understand the problems and opportunities

that may exist. Much of this was through interpretation of both primary responses and the secondary literature. This also included comparing both data sets and identifying themes and patterns. Such an approach helped derive a wider understanding of the complexities which are often presented in daily discourse and through common understanding as something that appears erroneously as quite a simple concept in business life. It also evaluated the issues peculiar to the security industry within the lexicon of professionalism.

➤ ***Objective 4 - Identify and evaluate any potential routes for UK security to attain formal more traditional professional status and the likelihood of success.***

Drawing on findings mostly centred on the first three objectives, the likelihood and potential of attaining status through a process of formal professionalisation was ascertained with some pointers on how recognition may be achieved. The likely pathways to professional traditional recognition were also assessed and presented. This is quite predictive with only a little knowledge of how the future may unfold but the analysis was based on potential and identified possibilities, taking a pragmatic interpretive view.

➤ ***Objective 5 - Identify and determine the viability of any potential alternatives for security in UK to pursue occupational status outside of the current traditional UK professional framework to include any ephemerality that might be encountered.***

In this objective some potential alternatives to full traditional recognition as an UK profession were investigated together with views on other frameworks. Both the literature and primary data informed this discussion to reinforce validity and provide a counterbalance to the predicative nature of the analysis. The likelihood of any potential uptake by the sector of the identified alternatives was estimated whilst noting the uncertainty in this research area.

- **Objective 6 - *Provide recommendations regarding the findings for use by the security sector and any other invested parties.***

Several recommendations were made resulting from the research findings and discussion and it is anticipated that the sector will engage in reviewing them, possibly with the researcher. Ideally, the sector as a result will be able to design and implement a pragmatic strategy to promote agreement on a path for further established formal professional status or other form of recognition.

These objectives collectively underpin the overall aim and title topic to provide a strong research focus and overall direction to better explore and investigate the vagaries surrounding professions and how the UK security sector and disciplines factor into the concepts that are examined in this study.

1.10 Conclusion

The outlined aim and objectives focus directly on the identified problem. It is this particular focus more than any other consideration or interest of the many other aspects of the professional concept that drive the research trajectory and the chosen methodological approaches. Before discussing the methodology in Chapter 3 the literature review is presented in the next chapter to provide the theory, practice and current literary debate surrounding the topic and to contextualise the understanding overall prior to introducing the primary data presented and analysed in the research.

CHAPTER 2

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 Literature Review Objectives

This literature review situates the main research by critiquing the existing theoretical and practical knowledge base (Snyder, 2019). In many ways it is foundational to this research as it examines those views existing prior to the collection of primary original data in this study. Unlike the targeted primary data, the literature encompasses a wider base and includes interdisciplinary work and many source origins. Not only does this review provide a starting point in understanding previous debate and what has practically gone before, it shows which theories may have informed professional practitioners (Webster and Watson, 2002). When critically analysed, reliable and valid literature exposes possible research gaps, or avenues for greater exploration and assists with the development of themes for research overall.

This review is a thematic and critically evaluative one such as those advocated by Baumaster and Leary (1997) and Kirkevold (1997). In this study it also served to provide the basic more deductive categories used for coding as the building blocks for the start of a later more iterative open and subsequently axial *inductive* coding framework developed to become the thematic start points for primary data analysis. This review was also used as an integrative comparator with findings from the primary data. A form of informal triangulation was provided to test validity of the findings overall together with the use of different instruments and several sample frames,. This is something advocated as ‘powerful’ and greater than the sum of the parts by Snyder (2019), an aspect discussed in more detail in the methodology chapter. The starting point for this literature review is a critical examination of basic ideas such as the definition and characteristics of the professional concept which are needed to contextualise and understand much of this research.

2.2 Defining a Profession - Simplicity and Complexity

2.2.1 A Starting Point for Understanding

It would be a logical, if not too simple a start, to identify definitions from reliable dictionaries. The Oxford Dictionary (2002) describes a profession as a “paid occupation involving training and formal qualifications”, although a later interpretation of the professions is given in the Oxford Learners Dictionary (2024) as “traditional jobs that need a high level of education and training, such as being a doctor or a lawyer”. This already points to some conceptual interpretation noting the ‘need’ for high levels of knowledge and using established professions as examples. The earlier dated definition, in the UK modern workplace, would likely account for most occupations undertaken and therefore perhaps does not accurately or more importantly, culturally, fully align with more current views where history, context and other factors influence what might be considered a profession.

A more modern cultural slant is given in the Cambridge Dictionary (2024) which points to ‘special’ training and more importantly adds attainment of ‘respect’ and a required high level of education to the mix. As well as identifying, arguably, some of the more important components of a profession, these definitions also point to the great complexities or even the likely business and overall cultural subjectivity that is inherent in defining or gaining an understanding of the term ‘profession.’

2.2.2 *Profiteri* – an early conceptual Definition and Declaration of Service

Lester (2016) describes the notion of public service enshrined in early notions of a profession through examining the derivation of the concept from ‘*profiteri*’ a Latin verb meaning to ‘profess’ or declare and which in some contexts also indicates commitment or (altruistic) service besides any knowledge competence. Indeed, the title of Professor has the same linguistic root. Even in this short overview the elements of altruism, knowledge, links to

academia, commitment and even perhaps moral superiority emerge and it will be no surprise that these ideas are explored further throughout this study.

Teaching in the UK is often seen as one of the established professions but one which lacks a more formal means of self-governance often considered a standard professional trait (Adams, 2017). Nevertheless, it is regarded by Hoyle and John (1995) to be a profession despite much State control over its standards and processes with resultant loss of some autonomy, another expected professional characteristic as discussed by Harris, (2018). This is on the basis of the ethos within the teaching sector and an enshrinement of expert knowledge, together with accentuated public service. This is an interesting argument as it suggests that societal and cultural drivers likely play a large or potentially greater role than any collection of functionalist professional components. Just as importantly it highlights the varying balance of internal governance with external regulation possible, and whether one might be more important than the other when defining a profession in trait and functionalist terms. In the view of Lester (2016) it is “being professionals” rather than perhaps the entities themselves, that is closer to the meaning of ‘profiteri.’ This perhaps aligns with more recent moves in society to individualism which is ironic given the provenance and ideas behind the root word.

Implicit within this overall thinking is a probability that professions themselves may be perceptively rank tiered, something hinted at by Lester (2016) when using the phrase “higher level occupations”. It becomes evident, as more literature is examined, that the complexities abound, especially regarding cultural influences and drivers. Many of these issues are discussed in varying contexts within the review. Even the basic definitions discussed earlier, and the associated word derivations point to there being several components that characterise a profession. However, the feasibility of settling on a reliable definition is unlikely, at least one agreed formally in the UK. It is more enlightening to investigate how the literature in UK and other countries discuss professions. Such discussions also refer to those component or

constituent factors and recognisable characteristics as a means of understanding the nature of a profession. In this way a conceptual understanding rather than a simple but potentially misleading dictionary definition of a UK profession may be established.

2.2.3 The Australian Perspective – a definitional Bridge to a Concept

The Australian Council of Professions (ACP) has existed since 1971 and provides a clear definition of a profession which interestingly encompasses the better known and tangible characteristics to be found in mainstream UK and most western professions. More importantly the council is recognised by ‘State, Communities and Industry’ (ACP, 2003) an acknowledgement which itself also appears to be a requisite component for most professions, within the UK. The definition given by ACP is worth noting:

A profession is a disciplined group of individuals who adhere to ethical standards and who hold themselves out as, and are accepted by the public, as possessing special knowledge and skills in a widely recognised body of learning derived from research, education and training at a high level, and who are prepared to apply this knowledge and exercise these in the interests of others.

This more conceptual definition is important. It reflects not only the major generally accepted and tangible components of a profession but also infers more intangible elements such as a ‘social contract’ and a form of altruism are required by the entities in that they should serve the greater public good. The definition also majors on ethics which always features heavily in the literary discourse on professions (Koehn, 1994). However, the only hint of a possible form of either internal or external regulation is provided by the use of the word ‘disciplined.’

Whilst not in the definition, this is actually covered in their explanatory subtext which makes clear that codes of conduct and practice are part of the ethical and disciplinary mix together with ‘enforcement’ by the professions themselves and by external oversight. This is with the acceptance of the ‘community,’ although community itself is undefined in the document

(ACP, 2003). Whilst the definition does not allude to any other attributes such as direct ownership of knowledge and there is only an acknowledgement and acceptance of State rather than any more direct involvement, the definition provides a good framework of understanding albeit confined to Australia.

In UK, some mirroring of a more codified concept similar to the Australian approach has begun with the UK Government recently publishing several views and regulatory documents on UK professions which will be examined later in the review (Gov.UK, 2020). Given that the process began in Australia as early as the 1970s the UK would seem to be quite late in emulating the progressive stance adopted by Australia.

Although the discourse surrounding the Australian professional approach is generally favourable some specific concerns have been expressed for their security sector. Those such as Sullivan (1998) felt that codification and the general initiatives in the 1990s promoting systemic professionalism in the security sector had resulted in a convergence of academic security studies. The author outlines an unhealthy overriding foreign policy priority in effect increasingly closing down healthy enquiry and debate, and providing a worrying 'postmodern' political form of dissidence in the security disciplines.

This observation viewed by governments is more likely to be slanted towards the defence sector (and this is outside the scope of this research). However, if the tendency is as pronounced as Sullivan suggests then it potentially impacts the wider security sector and other professional entities. This could lead to an inevitable 'law of unintended consequences' regarding professional autonomy in the security disciplines.

In essence the security disciplines could be affected by increasing professional codification and resultant regulation which even if well intended could lead to the security profession sometimes succumbing to undesired governmental strictures or expectations. Such a development may not always serve the emerging security profession well. It points to a loss of autonomy, one of the defining professional characteristics as discussed by those such as Hashimoto (2006) and Mastekaasa (2011). This may be replicated in UK if fuller codification is introduced in a similar way to the Australian system. The early signs are that this trend is increasing in the form of external regulation and legislation.

2.2.4 A Real Estate Institute Vignette

The codification seen in Australia and now perhaps emerging in UK, is an evolving process and perhaps points towards potential pathways for any emerging profession. This is also something mirrored by the New South Wales Real Estate Institute (REINSW, 2024) in Australia, a professional representative entity which together with its members perhaps reflects the concept of a ‘new expert profession.’ It is one that follows all the legal requirements and components needed of a profession in Australia.

Cunningham (2017) the then President of REINSW made 2017 the ‘year of the professional’ for his professional body. In his view ‘trust’ and ‘expertise’ are at the core of a professional identity and he pointed to the ‘5 Es’ of ethics, education, experience, examination, and entity as his understanding of the component framework for any profession⁵. He added ‘evolution’ as a 6th which suggests he was noticeably clear sighted about the direction of travel for professions, whilst acknowledging the fact that his Institute and members were still on a ‘pathway’ to being fully fledged. It is probable that the UK security sector and others would

⁵ This reflects the 5 Es used by the statutory Australian Professional Standards Council (as described in REINSW, 2024).

welcome such an established and understood pathway although a cautionary note would need to be taken of the potential strictures surrounding professional autonomy described earlier.

2.2.5 An European Perspective on defining Professional Characteristics

AALEP, the ‘Association of Accredited Public Body Advocates to the European Union’ compiled what they considered to be the fundamental characteristics of a profession as well as those of a ‘professional’ (AALEP, 2016). Unsurprisingly the European Union (EU) ideas largely reflect those Australian attributes previously evaluated but with a differing emphasis on certain characteristics. In particular they emphasise ‘institutional preparation’ which they describe as the individual practical experience needed, and which leads to full professional standing sometime within a career. This is notably a form of ‘gatekeeping’ with monopolistic overtones – something discussed in more detail later. The EU list of characteristics is worth tabulating to better identify the main generally agreed conceptual components sprinkled throughout the various literature, together with the European Union’s explanatory notes to provide the context as codified by them in Table 1.

EU Conceptual Components of a Profession

1. Great responsibility

Professionals deal in matters of vital importance to their clients and are therefore entrusted with grave responsibilities and obligations. Given these inherent obligations, professional work typically involves circumstances where carelessness, inadequate skill, or breach of ethics would be significantly damaging to the client and/or his fortunes.

2. Accountability

Professionals hold themselves ultimately accountable for the quality of their work with the client. The profession may or may not have mechanisms in place to reinforce and ensure adherence to this principle among its members. If not, the individual professional will (e.g. guarantees and/or contractual provisions).

3. Based on specialized, theoretical knowledge

Professionals render specialized services based on theory, knowledge, and skills that are most often peculiar to their profession and generally beyond the understanding and/or capability of those

outside of the profession. Sometimes, this specialization will extend to access to the tools and technologies used in the profession.

4. Institutional preparation

Professions typically require a significant period of hands-on, practical experience in the protected company of senior members before aspirants are recognized as professionals. After this provisional period, ongoing education toward professional development is compulsory. A profession may or may not require formal credentials and/or other standards for admission.

5. Autonomy

Professionals have control over and, correspondingly, ultimate responsibility for their own work. Professionals tend to define the terms, processes, and conditions of work to be performed for clients (either directly or as preconditions for their ongoing agency employment).

6. Clients rather than customers

Members of a profession exercise discrimination in choosing clients rather than simply accepting any interested party as a customer (as merchants do).

7. Direct working relationships

Professionals habitually work directly with their clients rather than through intermediaries or proxies.

8. Ethical constraints

Due to the other characteristics on this list, there is a clear requirement for ethical constraints in the professions. Professionals are bound to a code of conduct or ethics specific to the distinct profession (and sometimes the individual). Professionals also aspire toward a general body of core values, which are centred upon an uncompromising and unconflicted regard for the client's benefit and best interests.

9. Merit-based

In a profession, members achieve employment and success based on merit and corresponding voluntary relationships rather than on corrupted ideals such as social principle, mandated support, or extortion. Therefore, a professional is one who must attract clients and profits due to the merits of his work. In the absence of this characteristic, issues of responsibility, accountability, and ethical constraints become irrelevant, negating any otherwise-professional characteristics.

10. Morality

The responsibilities inherent to the practice of a profession are impossible to rationally maintain without a moral foundation that flows from a recognition of the singular right of the individual to his own life, along with all of its inherent and potential sovereign value.

PROFESSIONALISM

Professionalism means behaving in an ethical manner while assuming and fulfilling your rightful responsibilities in every situation every time, without fail.

Table 1 – EU Conceptual Components of a Profession (AALEP 2016).

The ‘institutional preparation’ characteristic mentioned is a form of graduated professional attainment and also reflects an idea used by the UK Engineering Council career framework (Engineering Council, 2020). This is something with which most UK professions will be acquainted albeit with differing emphases and graduated learning levels within the frameworks used and the entry point for full membership to the professional body.

Another slight difference, and unlikely to be a translative issue, is that ‘morality’ is additional in the list to ‘ethics.’ Although more generally these terms are usually considered much the same by many the explanation given by AALEP (2016) reflects a “moral foundation” being the “right of an individual to his own life - and their own sovereign value.” This seems not only contextually esoteric but quite different to ethics as would be expected in such a definition. Conversely when discussing professionalism, the same document refers to the need for professionals to operate in an ethical manner. It might also indicate perhaps that the EU views ethics as a more individual coded component and that morality is a better overarching descriptor to suit EU understanding for both corporate entities and individuals.

Even if the difference is more semantic rather than substantial it would still suggest that codification of ethics and morality are both required for definition and practical understanding or the efficacy of any professional entity. More important, perhaps, is the lack of any direct mention of a relationship with collective society, something characterised as the ‘grand bargain’ by Susskind and Susskind (2022, p11.). Instead, the EU emphasises professions as merit based. This perhaps suggests a new direction for emerging constructs exemplified by ‘neo-expert’ professions such as Health & Safety (H&S) and Human Resource Management (HRM) or even metamorphosing older ones.

2.3 Security as a Profession definitionally

Those such as Manunta (1999) and Horrocks (2001) explain that in simple definitional terms

security meets some, but not all, of the basic requirements expected in an established profession. The absolute need for qualifications and regulatory components is something distinctly absent in most but not all security disciplines. Security may have professionalised considerably over recent years but has not yet reached even a simply defined version of being a profession. At this stage of the research this view is prior to any full examination of components and characteristics of a profession being made. The evolution both culturally and pragmatically of the constituents of a profession in the eyes of the majority need to be also considered. However, this observation may be taken as an initial marker for understanding, and one focussed on security more as a traditional professional entity. This is particularly so since these views do not account for the widening access and uptake of security 1st and higher degrees, discussed by Wakefield and Gips (2022) and something to be factored into any consideration including the challenges of burgeoning technology in the security sector.

2.4 Components and Characteristics of a Profession – a Sum of the Parts

It is necessary to first identify the existing theory to better understand conceptually the term profession and its linguistic derivatives, especially in relation to the UK and how they may be aligned or associated with the security sector. Following that a critical review may be made of the use and understanding of the terms to build on the very basic definitions outlined earlier. Some basis for conceptual definition is outlined by Goddard (2022) but her views and approach are distinctly traitist although disdainful of the actual characteristics as this view indicates:

Professionalism is a successful ideology and as such has entered the political vocabulary of a wide range of occupational groups who compete for status and income.

She believes her views are realistic ones of traditional professions but ironically also present as a thesis of the more pragmatic functionalist tendency emerging in newer professions. Her

views also leave neo-Weberian views in the conceptual sidelines despite her treatise grounding the professional base as “western, white and heteronormative.”

It may be possible to determine to some limited extent the nature and scope of a profession through reviewing literary debate on the application of theoretical frameworks, together with the effects and outcomes associated with those terms. This is especially in relation to UK as a whole, but more specifically the security sector. This approach becomes even more important when it is realised that much confusion and variation appears to exist in the general lexicon and indeed within business communities, not least the security sector both public and private, something identified by Bledstein (2009).

Some basic themes, tensions and agreements developed over time may be established in the literature base to provide a foundation for the follow-on primary research in relation to the UK security sector. These would provide some value to the sector or even the wider business community which employs or uses security services but potentially misunderstands security in relation to both capability and status. Focussing on those areas which conceptually and practically drive the understanding of professions and how security may relate to those identified themes may provide further insights. These will be used to better compare or inform the later primary findings derived from data provided by the security community.

2.5 Philosophical Views on Professions

2.5.1 How Scholars think about Professions

As with all matters that comprise many cultural, societal, or even business perspectives there is often a philosophical underpinning to consider to better understand those everyday viewpoints – in this case those surrounding professions. Saks (2012) highlighted the real complexity and underlying cultural implications of professional concepts when discussing the

philosophical views that underpin the notion of a profession. This was by tracing the debate from the taxonomic approach that emphasises unique functional characteristics such as knowledge and expertise, which will be further covered in this study and also by examining various critical perspectives that challenge this view. Saks (2012) believes it is the Anglo-American constructs of professions that provide the ‘root’ understanding and a context of what a profession might be and how they operated historically and now currently in the modern business world. This would also be the case in UK.

2.5.2 A taxonomic Approach

The early taxonomic approach as advocated by Carr-Saunders and Wilson (1933) described the nature of a profession as those identified characteristics, such as specialized knowledge, expertise, and a commitment to public service as the distinctions that could be made between them and other employment. However, it was in the 1950/60s that the greater set of components recognisable today began to fully feature in the discourse. Knowledge and expertise tend to sit at the top of these as noted by Freidson (1986, 1988b) although these were historically always the central headline feature. What was more important was a concentration on traits (Parsons, 1952) where a cultural significance and the prominence of idealism features strongly making for an altruistic approach and emphasis on the ‘ideal character of members’. This went further as ethics, rationality and a conjunction with intellectualism and the slightly more tangible idea of a profession being the custodian of a specific knowledge base emerged (Nerland, 2012). This resulted in what can be seen today as perhaps the inception of a ‘social contract’ with the public as explained by Barber (1963), a commentator who approached the whole newer conceptual understanding from a rationalist perspective.

It is also difficult to escape the conclusion that the resulting constructs may also have become

less that altruistic over time despite the initial laudable aims of both the traitists and functionalists. Inevitably there followed a perceived level of superiority, power, and privilege for members of professions that naturally present as elitism and a desire for status, something even acknowledged by the UK Government (Gov.UK, 2019). Such connotations are understandably judged by some as a negative trajectory in a more ‘progressive’ modern world, both for the business environment and in general societal terms. It is however these trait and rationalised configurations, with some variances, which still dominate the UK formal professional landscape. However, they have recently become the focus of some dissent from some business and academic quarters, although this is perhaps not so much from the individual professions themselves, at least openly (Kezar, 2011). This dissent was emphasised and compounded further by loss of trust in some experts and professions after the global financial crashes (Gillespie *et al.*, 2012) and then later during COVID with some political and social backlash eroding trust in some professions (Lavazza and Farina, 2020). However, this emerging discontent was in many ways first identified many years previously in the neo-Weberian views on professions.

2.5.3 Neo-Weberian Stances

The Neo-Weberian approach presents professions in terms of exclusionary social closure in the marketplace and professional position being sanctioned by the State, rather than the focus being mainly on inherent knowledge and expertise (Saks, 2003a and 2013b). Interestingly George Bernard Shaw quipped in one play⁶ “all professions are a conspiracy against the laity” (Ashton, 2003). In this view the very strengths of the characteristics outlined by earlier traitists are turned to negatives. This is through observing work and social outcomes as elitism, exclusivity, and ones which present obstacles to new employees attaining desired employment pathways (gatekeeping) or being resigned to less ‘respected’ jobs. This provides a somewhat polarised summative position and an example of two conflicting ideas where both

⁶ The Doctor’s Dilemma 1906.

views potentially have validity. What the approach does suggest however, is that professions are set to continue evolving in a fast-changing business environment with possible outcomes being greater regulation, registration, and certification of members. This is whilst still arguably offering prestige, status, and greater income but all of them becoming increasingly fragile and contingent on many other factors, (Freidson, 1994; Parry and Parry, 1976).

In essence it appears that the newer stances see professions driven by greater but fluctuating or changing socio-cultural concepts (Lasky, 2005). This is rather than purely functionalist imperatives which explains why knowledge and expertise feature lower in priority in any Neo-Weberian definition, but notably not being excluded entirely. This perhaps also reflects changing societal and business views as well as employment evolution in general within the UK. Even more likely is that new approaches result from a distilled basic pragmatism and reflect modern practices driving professional change. Albeit this is perhaps, at a slower pace than might be needed. How these fundamental aspects affect the security sector and its wish to be a profession is discussed later in this review.

2.5.4 Fluidity and Balance

These opposing stances also outlined by Cross and Swart (2021) highlight the fluidity of professional boundaries and understanding which have evolved and not just since the industrial revolution but likely for centuries previously. These issues transcend the premise that the basic first building blocks of a profession are simply knowledge and expertise as indicated by Becker (2017). Neo-Weberianism remains a valuable approach for understanding how professions define themselves and are defined by others, but there remains a need to acknowledge the need for rigorous empirical application with a balanced perspective on the role of professions. The more identifiable and familiar constituent components of a profession are evaluated in the next sections, which are focussed mainly on the peculiarities found in UK

and begin with the societal constituents germane to professional understanding before identifying the more tangible components.

2.6 A Social Construction and Dimension

Historically and cumulatively the components of a profession within the UK and much of the western world, expand well beyond standard dictionary definitions. Olgiati (2010) views the professional concept as one of socially constructed ideas with a ‘social meaning’. This perhaps begins to explain the inadequacy of simple definitions as there are many cultural forces in the mix which may cloud any definitive understanding. Moreover, Cogan (1955) believed that any attempt to define a profession only invites controversy because of the very subjective societal drivers involved and the presence of a cultural imperative causing what he believes was a potential ‘irrationality’. This irrationality likely relates to seeking acceptance and status, individually and collectively. Although nearly seventy years have passed since these views were expressed they reflect the vagaries and difficulties still present in any attempt to understand the concept. Indeed, Becker (2017) relates how a profession provides an ‘honorific’ symbol for use in society. It suggests that being part of an established profession and to therefore be considered as a professional, is a goal for an individual to aim for in occupational life. This is even perhaps in some cases where this might be purely driven by individual perceptions, or when respect and status are not quite universally recognised outside the professional body itself.

2.6.1. Societal and Business Trust and the ‘Susskindian Grand Bargain’

Frowe (2010) when discussing trust in a profession critiques it as a manifestation of judgement being exercised through ‘discretionary powers,’ presumably afforded by society and/or business fraternities. This is perhaps one side of the bargain where society accepts and acknowledges the expertise and assistance a profession can give. Sometimes, this is free as in pro-bono legal work, but usually there is a considerable, often hourly rate cost to clients or to

society more generally. The other side of the bargain is that society in return culturally endorses and bestows status, trust, and sometimes elite recognition to the profession.

This recognition provides a form of power seen in the established bodies traditionally having a monopoly of expert knowledge held by a profession (Lerner, 1934). This is even if the public do not quite fully understand or acknowledge this conceptual bargain or social contract openly. Phillips (2004) made an erudite observation which counters the view of modern professions being engaged in a bargain with society:

In today's world one does not need to be a sceptic to wonder whether the very notion of a profession is not fanciful. Some young lawyers and accountants for example would appear to favour a simple business approach which sticks to the one essential – the bottom line.

Given Lord Phillips of Sudbury is an experienced solicitor with his own large law firm and has been elevated to the Lords his views should not be dismissed lightly. They likely reflect a legal profession in deep transition. Transition as a theme is something which features greatly throughout this study. Despite the strong negativity in this observation, it is still likely that the social contract provides the very foundation of all established professions but is the one most under threat as business and society are subject to faster technical, economic, and cultural change. The 'bargain' in effect constitutes the unwritten 'social contract' albeit one that attracts many and varied perceptions and much misunderstanding.

Marshall (1939) provided an early classic treatise in which the author theorised that professions are best defined as those where '*caveat emptor*' should not be required in any dealings with a true profession. This indicates the strong altruistic and ethical characteristics by which each profession should be bound. Hughes (1960) also reflected on this and claimed that modern society was increasingly more client-dependent on the old and even the newer emerging professions. If this were the case then some 65 years later, a strengthening of the

Susskindian ‘grand bargain’ might be expected although in most respects the opposite seems to be the greater truth.

It might well be that professional identity is one of *social trustee* professionalism, something in decline according to those such as Ariens (2016). Alternatively, there is a form of *expert* professionalism, and it is this increasing distinction which may determine the degree of this ‘grand bargain.’ This is a notion described by Aven and Andreassen (2020) when discussing what a profession looks like from an employer’s viewpoint researched from Norwegian studies on job advertisements.

More importantly this comparative discourse may signal the potential demise of the ‘grand bargain.’ If this is the case, it suggests that the rise of larger companies with seemingly unassailable power such as Microsoft, Apple, and Amazon and the leaders of such organisations now shaping their professional landscape may not care overmuch about altruistic considerations. They and others may not even be aware of its importance or a need for a ‘social trustee’ relationship as posited in classical Durkheimian sociology (Goffman, 2014). This is a positioning in which the concept of professions has historically been predicated with altruism and ‘putting society before self’ at the heart of professions and the social contract.

2.6.2 Altruism and its diminishing Place in Professions

This departure from strong altruism is further and more vociferously commented on by those such as Larson (2013) who describe the exclusivity provided in the ‘grand bargain’ as ‘pernicious’. She points to a market monopoly and that members “manipulate societal and business ideas of status to reflect their own activities” an idea explored further by Susskind and Susskind (2015, p.27). However, the trend towards a diminishing altruism in professions is not new, even if a performative element continues. It was something commented on much

earlier by Hughes (1959) who depicted professions as ‘knowing best’ on all manner of societal issues beyond their particular expertise. Even a century ago concerns were expressed about “narrow and selfish professionalism” (Gaus, 1926), indicating the tension between altruism and self-serving tendencies is not recent. This trend implies that professions are potentially prone to condescension or even a propensity to subvert the social narrative and sometimes act in a somewhat polarised fashion to any altruism. If this idea is extrapolated it points to increasing negative business or social cultural forces which may diminish the social contract. Whilst this is a stark view as presented, it intuitively reflects the evolving social and business dynamic overall as worsening with a weakened social contract the probable result.

Whether this is actually important or really has negative connotations depends on institutional and personal views on the importance of a social contract being vital to any established or emerging profession (Jos, 2006). If Marshall (1939) and Hughes (1960) were correct in their belief that society would increasingly be dependent upon professional services, noting the passage of time, then on balance a weakened social contract is undesirable. At the very least it provides a challenge for professions and how they conduct business, or for newer ones how to retain favour or derive status in the first place. That is not to say that such services could not be delivered by any new recognised entity beyond the accepted professions of today.

This inversion of altruism amidst the technical and cultural changes as described by Jones (2002) does not bode well for the status quo of the ‘old fashioned’ professions and associated elitism, one albeit historically swaddled in altruistic professionalism. It will be interesting to see how the shape of the older and newer professions might change. More positively, it would seem likely that moves toward business self-interest and pragmatism in professional delivery and outlook are evolving to better suit society as it is even now but also how it might become. This might just be considered a sensible and natural shift to match requirements. It does mean however, that altruism is likely to decline progressively as observed by Jones (2002) and

Paterson (2013). This is something which may extend potentially to a similar decline in ethical behaviour unless, for the latter, greater oversight, and regulation to match such a decline are fully enshrined in the professional mix. All these considerations would seem to indicate that some degree of trust between all stakeholders and in various contexts will need to remain central to professional branding and relationships.

2.6.3 Trust as the Glue in the Grand Bargain

Trust is a vital part not only of the ‘grand bargain’ constituting the glue that holds the virtual framework together, but also any business or social interaction that wishes to be resilient (Brien, 1998). Any diminishment of trust between society, professions and institutions or the establishment erodes not only the underlying social contract but also potentially affects business operations and finances. This is underscored by the financial crisis in 2008 where trust in the financial professions and others, according to those such as Isaeva *et al.*, (2020) or Gounaris *et al.* (2009), created a negative discourse around any value professions might bring. They point to much criticism of the mounting costs to society and the business harm to market economies and social life.

This harm to society and markets was not necessarily reciprocated. Not all established professional instigators were overly affected or even disadvantaged. The banking sector was actually protected by governments. The distaste appeared to have a snowball effect in polarizing professional attitudes and promoted a pragmatic or even opportunist questioning of the autonomy professions are allowed to have (Hartz, 2024). Such singular large scale events such as the financial crisis and later COVID indicate an increasing acceleration of change and subsequent need for professions to respond, reconstitute, or change how they operate generally. This is especially so when considered alongside the technical and cultural threats to professions and the dilution of the social contract.

2.6.4 Industrial Action and resultant Trust – the established Professions

Such has been the increasing lack of cohesion in UK society, more especially since COVID, it is perhaps no surprise that even practitioners in the established professions such as doctors, barristers, and teachers have opted for strike action or conducted street protests to improve conditions and pay in their own professions. This is something either rare or largely unheard of previously. Junior doctor strikes and their impact on health care was lamented in the British Medical Journal (Badrinath, 2023) together with the tarnishing of care and commitment. However, mention of any ‘trust’ was conspicuously absent in the article other than a simple mention of a ‘dent in public confidence’ by such industrial action.

Stoye and Warner (2023) described the effect of these medical strikes on patients when discussing evidence from the English NHS, but views were restricted to practical medical effects rather than any societal professional connotation:

There were larger reductions in elective volumes but (industrial action) did not affect average mortality or readmission rates for emergency patients.

These statistical elements deflect the professional aspect and make no mention of altruism or societal linkage. The absence of any discourse on trust in this report and other literature is remarkable and further accentuates the views that a newer pragmatism is prevalent.

Other sectors such as teaching have also taken strike action and featured in the Belfast Telegraph (Reid, 2023) with the author warning of the degradation of the profession by such strikes. The barrister all out strike in September 2022 (BBC, 2022a) was a rare occurrence and was based on legal aid limitations and pay generally but the government insisted that the action was ‘irresponsible’. Again, there is an absence in most reporting of the potential fracturing of trust in these professions which eventually could lead to a perceptible dissolution

or diminution of any social contract – the public do not expect the ‘noble’⁷ professions to strike or become ‘activists,’ at least openly. It is likely this view would pervade regardless of any righteousness or justification by the professional bodies of their cause. Any increased fragility of the delicate ‘grand bargain’ would present more problem vectors for the future of professions when even the oldest and most respected act in a ‘lay’⁸ manner.

2.7 Security and UK Society

Unlike the medical, accountancy, teaching and legal professions which interact with society within the understood standard framework of the ‘grand bargain,’ security disciplines are mostly not engaged in an openly similar transactional arrangement with society. However, increasing ‘private policing’ in UK and emerging other public security interfaces may contribute to an increasing part of the social contract. Schauer *et al.*, (2008) perhaps point to a hidden reality in determining that the professional entities in obeying law and moral codes form part of any social contract. If security were to enact formally and fully a standardised and regulated ethical code and be ‘seen’ to prevent harm, especially when that is more directly in the aid of the public, then a tenable and tangible acceptance may indeed be possible. This probably exists in some diluted form already in UK. To cement this understanding a major focus on regulated ethical coding would need to be established as a part of any new security profession entity beyond that provided by the chartered structure and the present limited reach of the Security Industry Authority (SIA).

2.7.1 Security Regulation

The SIA is the governmental security regulator sponsored by the UK Home Office (Gov.UK, 2024c). It is responsible for the regulation of the more practical based security

⁷ Noble professions historically were Law, Medicine, and Divinity (the Church).

⁸ In the UK ‘lay’ has been traditionally used to denote those workers and members of society who are not members of a profession – a term that has perhaps become derogatory in more recent times but is still used in some professional quarters.

functions but not for all disciplines and is fairly limited in reach and arguably substance in relation to the majority and all strata of security employment. At present only security guards, close protection operatives, cash in transit and door supervisors are regulated (Gov.UK, 2024d). This indicates the scale of increase required in regulatory professional oversight needed for a new profession or any alternative framework, whether that regulation is internal or external or both. Establishing this ‘integrity’ component of a profession could constitute a real possibility and a relatively substantial win for any move to institutional recognition of the security sector and more subliminally by the body public. Regulation is intertwined with ethics as well as performance and the more functional standards according to Dingwall *et al.*, (1987). This constitutes another fundamental component of a profession, perhaps even more so in any emerging new expert based security model.

2.8 Ethics as an enduring professional Component

If professions are undergoing an historical moment of decline as suggested by Carvalho *et al.* (2018) then one of the reasons might be the changing ethical stances by modern professionals, or the importance ethics play in the traditional framework of a profession. However, as recently as 2013 when referring to tax avoidance schemes Michael Izza the then CEO of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), believed there was no place for ‘creative accounting’ and advising on tax avoidance schemes in the profession (Spencer, 2021). This was despite such schemes being fully legal, but something viewed by the CEO as distasteful and unethical. The comments also recognise the role of accountants in the ‘grand bargain’ and social contract. Spencer (2021) further commented that for him it was this simply stated position that captures more than anything else the meaning of what it is to be a profession. Clearly then ethics is historically one of the major components of a profession and not just in UK accountancy. Professionalisation of security would need to take note of such a view and ensure even greater import is placed on this professional characteristic if those such as van Buuren (2009) are correct when discussing ethics in hybrid

security. However, cyber security has already adopted a formalised code of ethics controlled by the Cyber Security Council suggesting an improving trajectory (UKCSC, 2021) within that domain.

Sieghart (1985) when discussing medicine and law at a World Congress noted that ethics are not just an abstract notion but a science like many other professional components and drives professions to mirror the ‘conscience of society’. Perhaps this was a somewhat lofty stance but in 1985 would have been quite a standard perception of one of the original ‘noble and grand’ three professions (law, medicine, and divinity). However, it underscores the importance of an ethical foundation in the modern era as integral to the concept of professions, whether they be the traditional or the new expert ones. Increasingly ethics are more likely to be codified and regulated internally either by the profession, or increasingly by external oversight through statutory regulation.

More modern evaluations question the ethical position of those unusual phenomena such as medical employment strikes (Mfutso-Bengu and Muula, 2002) and signify that professions are increasingly being caught between two distinct viewpoints, which are as much cultural as they are pragmatic. One is individualism and the role of member professionals acting as ‘ordinary individual workers’ and entitled through just cause or a grievance to withdraw labour and strike. The other is to collectively adopt a more altruistically based social and professional expectational stance not to take industrial action which until more recently has been the historic norm. Depending on how this ethical dilemma unfolds over the coming years suggests that reputational damage and professional branding may be impacted.

Arguably if a more ethical positioning could be well managed then respect and understanding may continue without too much degradation. There can be no clear prediction on how this cultural and ethical dilemma will unfold in the UK.

2.9 Knowledge in many Forms - the primary Component of a Profession

2.9.1 A Knowledge Base as a Foundation

Authors such as Saks (2012) have characterized professions as holding distinctive knowledge and expertise in order to provide uniqueness and positivity. In the taxonomic sense knowledge and expertise are essentially at the core of what distinguishes a profession from other employment groups (Young and Muller, 2014). This has often been associated with graduate entry, or a framework of education leading to that level and beyond. This is evident in the UK Engineering Council entry process (Engineering Council, 2020). A casual observer may think that this knowledge component within a profession is purely one of needing a certain level of certified knowledge to both enter the profession and then conduct business transactions within it. This would be even if there are graded levels in the hierarchy of advancement. However, even this single characteristic component becomes enmeshed with cultural and power related matters.

There are other more cultural influences which shape the nature of such knowledge and its availability to those outside the profession as well as highlight the ‘fiduciary’ component as argued by Sciulli (2005). He outlines the institutional responsibility of the ‘make-up’ of knowledge in professions by comparing them with other ‘expert’ occupations who bear much less or even no responsibility. This viewpoint jars with the emerging pragmatic shift discussed earlier in how professions operate in their relationship with knowledge. This was something highlighted by Evetts (2006) who believes such demarcation of criteria is less relevant. However, there are those such as Etzioni (1969) who try to classify some expert professions perhaps demeaningly, as ‘soft types’ or even semi-professions.

The pragmatic shifts are likely an attempt, not necessarily a conscious one, to overcome or explain the clear predicaments arising in how knowledge sits in both responsibility terms and actual usage within professions (Laby, 2004; Finn, 1987). Perhaps more importantly they

illustrate the creation of a new professional vernacular which allows and feeds into different cultural approaches. This all suggests ‘shifting sands’ in the way professional relationships with knowledge are evolving. There may be no clear and safe benchmark that might be identified to cement necessary thinking in many current or future professions, including any emergent security profession of the future.

2.9.2 The professional Unique Body of Knowledge (UBK)

Beyond the moniker of being ‘noble’ the original professions were often referred to as the ‘learned professions’ (King, 1970), clearly setting them apart from the lay person. These terms have largely fallen away and are largely forgotten or are becoming culturally inappropriate in UK. However, in the legal profession the use of a formal address may still acknowledge the root trait, evidenced by barristers in court proceedings addressing the opposing counsel as ‘my learned friend.’ Fundamentally it is learning and accumulated knowledge that are the foundation for these older professions and likely new ones striving to emulate them.

The concept of professions having a unique body of specialised knowledge often referred to as an UBK is now considered an essential component of a profession. As Wideman (1987), the then President of the Project Management Institute outlined, the UBK represents a codified and documented form of knowledge derived from study usually at graduate level from an university or professional school. This graduate level was considered a fundamental level of basic professional knowledge meaning it had to be aligned with the profession’s UBK for any aspirants to professional membership. Whilst not necessarily qualifying for entry on that basis alone, it was considered to be the educational minimum requirement. Other requirements such as experience and further technical or specialised courses to supplement the degree were usually required. Further, there were cultural character thresholds to be met

as described by Rousseau and Stouten (2024). This then was the standard required and represented the traditional educational threshold for entry to the established professions. The elite nature of the traditional professions is evident in remarks by Hughes (1963) who observed the historical ‘superior’ nature of noble professions and advanced the following:

They (professions) profess to know better than their clients what ails them and their affairs.

There is a tinge of loftiness and condescension often expressed relating to this educational superiority. This was clearly hinted at by Hughes and once again reflected both the perceived positive and negative nature of elitism in professions. This likely stems from views on intellect and advanced knowledge together with the cultural wedges that develop from disparities in natural intellect or sometimes earned knowledge levels and the application of them as discussed by Lloyd (2009).

The concept of knowledge as a professional main component and as a positive characteristic takes on a more complex hue when it is considered that the concept of a profession being the arbiter and custodian of its own UBK is now prevalent and sanctioned by State. This is very evident in the UK. Although not all new professions may have this privileged power and recognition, especially newer ones, it has been a central feature of established ones for many decades. Pellegrino (1983) remarked that ownership of an UBK was seen by many as being central to the concept of a profession together with an adherence to an ethical and moral code upheld by an internal regulatory framework.

The specialised UBK has evolved in many professions in UK to something akin to professional autonomy with regulation being administered internally. This is using performance and ethical codes authored and enforced by an institute or a council set up by themselves (Olgiati, 2010). A good example of this approach is provided by the Engineering

Council (2025) which codifies and frameworks entire career pathways and required qualifications. This would be expected in a mature professional model in UK, especially one considered to be more a traditional profession but with clear expert modern overtones present. The Chartered Security Professionals framework comprising standards and competencies was largely devised following consultation with the UK Engineering Council leading up to inception of the Chartered Security Register in 2011. Although this was, and still is, a very embryonic security professional manifestation it is one that could be built on further to mirror those ideas provided by the newer professions and others seeking further professionalisation.

2.9.3 Monopolistic Knowledge – Upsides and Downsides

The monopolistic nature of the UBK in most professions is used as a form of gatekeeping ostensibly to maintain entry levels to the profession and to then ensure those standards are available as client services (Saks, 2012). The neo-Weberian take on this would naturally highlight the exclusivity and lack of inclusion in this approach, accentuated perhaps by the cultural elements involved in gatekeeping and power connotations discussed later in the review.

Ownership and a monopoly of an UBK are central to the professional concept together with adherence to an ethical and moral code with some (self) regulatory capacity as described by Pellegrino (1983). These ideas point to a wider notion that a profession is not just concerned with ownership of knowledge and regulation of their own standards. It involves taking on the mantle of public service as part of their identity, together with extended specialist or expert training highlighted to varying degrees by those such as Caza *et al.* (2018), Demchenko *et al.* (2021) and Payne *et al.* (2020). The relationship of knowledge with altruism was also noted by Kinsinger (2005) in this observation:

The two most basic features of every profession are control over a specialized body of knowledge and a commitment to use this knowledge for good.

This quote highlights the original good intentions of professions reflecting a once eulogistic feature of traditional professions. However, any positivity that exists might now be tempered by professions creating for themselves an exclusionary element whereby professional delineation arises forming access and membership boundaries as the natural end result.

Reinforcing this notion Becker (2017) unsurprisingly remarks that entrance to a profession must be strictly controlled and the tools for this lie in the membership formally setting the values, ethics, and other standards to be achieved. Such views are in addition to the regulatory element required and combined they point to the inherent and historically cumulative power and monopolisation of the occupational field by a recognised professional body. This is prevalent in the UK and may lead to the potential misuse or abuse of power as alluded to by Skaaden (2019), albeit in remarks about a different contextual employment setting.

Kurtz (2021) believes this monopoly is ending even in the more established professions such as education, health, law, and religion. It is probable that commodification and democratisation of knowledge are at the root of such understanding although the author was more focussed on macro-sociology in this assertion. This prediction of evolved change was outlined much earlier by Stichweh (1992) who gave a very philosophical treatise on the conceptual changes. In essence this mirrors the view of Kurtz that professions in their current form are a '*transitory phenomena*.' Similar thinking is also accentuated by Susskind and Susskind (2022) when reviewing how technology and knowledge commodification will drive change even faster in professions.

There is increasing agreement amongst reviewers that the traditional model will either change or in some cases disappear entirely. This is tempered by the probability that those attributes associated with the professions continuing in whatever replaces the entity. Susskind and Susskind (2022) in particular predict and welcome the changes they envisage such as new

providers emerging in the marketplace who otherwise would be excluded from the old framework (decomposing all or part of the ‘grand bargain’). These ideas include a rebalancing of AI and learning technology juxtaposed with individual practitioners whose skills may not necessarily be the same as their expert predecessors. The Susskindian view is this would benefit both business and society. As with all things predictive, the actual outcomes may be harder to foretell. However, if the predicted changes do materialise the actual consequences for members of professions might be job displacement and a likely diminution of individual power or potentially their status. However, it could also be that such a trajectory may not change corporate status overmuch where stakeholder entities may still engineer some market benefit and prestige from change.

2.9.4 Knowledge and Expertise – a symbiotic Relationship in Professions

According to Young and Muller (2014) this base of knowledge needed to underpin a profession, and its differentiation from other occupations, leads to an extended focus with expertise and practice as well as knowledge at its core. Indeed, thinking could go beyond this if it is considered that expertise is perhaps the greater driver of differentiation.

It is the relationship with theory and the ability to execute at the delivery level, perhaps exclusively, that seem to be at the heart of this knowledge-expertise conundrum. This is illustrated by Waterfield (2010) when evaluating whether pharmacy in UK is a knowledge based profession given that the public, and others, question if their contribution is based on ‘what they know rather than what they actually do’. This perfectly mirrors the conundrum stated. Waterfield (2010) alludes to the cultural aspects of this argument although on the surface the debate may be moot and derived from a somewhat self-preoccupied perspective for the pharmacy profession. However, it likely encompasses views of some professional groups but may divert from more major issues such as increasing commodification of knowledge and access to it by those outside the profession through advancing technology.

2.9.5 Experiential Factors as a Form of Knowledge and Expertise

Another facet that impinges on the professional knowledge characteristic was described by Schön (2001) who expressed the view that experience in part becomes the basis of professional knowledge in opposition to any codified specialised taught subjects as a curriculum. If this is extrapolated further then it can be inferred that it is experience in conjunction with specialist taught knowledge that forms the foundation and coalescing of expertise and judgement so necessary to the nature of what a profession is, or more accurately has become over time. This instinctively seems a reasonable premise especially when it is realised that in the Victorian era this is exactly how early experiential skills in emerging professions, especially medicine and surgery (Youngson, 2018), were later supplemented by academic learning in designed systematic curricula taught in specialist universities. This all developed quickly as business and social demands increased to meet ever increasing technical and other business or service requirements. Once again this points to pragmatic evolution sometimes constituting a departure from and at other times reinforcing more traitist conceptions.

2.9.6 Knowledge Commodification and Challenges

The knowledge commodification challenge is also discussed by Scott (2006) in relation to the UK academic profession which he describes as a ‘depressing’ discourse on the trajectory of learning in a ‘post-modernistic’ world. Scott counterbalances this forecast with more positive views promoting diversity and complexity with widening route entry to education. However, it is hard to escape the inference that many professions see commodification of knowledge as a singular important, possibly existential, threat to their future status and even existence. This could be equally posited for many professional groups. However, it is more likely that this would be very much a worst case trajectory regarding professional self-interest. Even so, in the longer term it is not an inconceivable one for some professions in a rapidly evolving AI and quantum computing environment.

2.9.7 Knowledge Commodification (an Example in the Education Profession)

Miller (2010) raised the question of knowledge commodification in relation to higher education (HE) referring to three main aspects – firstly the diminishing credibility yet increasing numbers of a 1st degree and it not being representative of the classical elitism in the profession both for teacher and consumer. Secondly Miller mentions skill courses which can be ‘purchased’ outside of the standard HE system to be used in professional or quasi professional settings. Thirdly there is the expectation by the consumer to achieve a 1st degree as the ‘norm’ leading to a more basic consumption of HE in turn driven by market forces and cultural expectation. In this context it is a postgraduate degree which becomes the meaningful currency in the existing makeup of the education profession, which may eventually extend to other professions. These three observations are prevalent in educational professional discourse as reiterated by Brown and Carasso (2013). They remark on lecturers being ‘keenly aware’ that their professional agency and even their professional identity are being eroded by knowledge increasingly being for sale or available from sources outside the profession.

If these commodification issues are as intense as suggested and occurring to varying degrees and forms in other professions it would indicate a bleak professional future of the Susskind and Susskind (2015) variety. This could also be accelerated by technological AI issues predominating and driving commodification in professions even faster and further. However, even Brown and Carasso (2013) acknowledge that the professions are able to adapt to market forces. Although not specifically stated by them this likely applies both conceptually as well as structurally to meet the changing demands, although depending on the speed of technical advancement that may still be problematic. More importantly, however, this infers that professions (certainly HE on this evidence) will more rapidly need to move from more traditional fixed outlooks towards an increasingly pragmatic persona and working style. Such a move would alter the shape and culture of a profession towards the newer expert form of professions.

Whilst members of more traditional professions might resist the trajectory, this inexorable trend of commodification and the necessary changes to deal with it are likely to be inevitable. The question of commodification has lessons and implications for any new emerging profession such as the security sector. They raise questions regarding whether the sector should be seeking a more traditional professional configuration or progressive and pragmatic alternatives, including the newer constructs found in more recent expert professions.

2.9.8 Knowledge Entry to a Profession – Credentials and Quality

In Europe and the USA there is much debate and disagreement on what the knowledge entry threshold should be for a profession. A report by the Royal Institute for Chartered Surveyors (RICS, 2024) mirrors much of the UK Engineering graduated pathway approach and points to the future direction being more inclusive and pragmatically tailored with a professional degree in the mix. Traditionally it is generally considered to be 1st degree level (L6) qualifications based on systematic knowledge and aligned with the actual profession which constitute the gateway to full professional membership (McMurtrey *et al.*, 2008).

In UK, attainment for entry into a profession has always been associated with holding a relevant university degree. However, there are secondary avenues available for admittance such as that for the legal profession through the Legal Executive route (CILEX, 2024) amongst several others. In the UK, the prize of attaining formal acceptance and status as a member of a profession has transcended even the more obvious components articulated earlier in this review. This is because governmental ‘recognition’ of professional bodies is essential in UK and sometimes licencing or secondary governance is provided by State organisations as described by the Privy Council (2024). This State endorsement may be seen as adding a greater frisson of respectability and status for the body and its members as well as shaping perceptions of end-users, society, or business more generally.

1st degree attainment in the UK has generally increased yearly and to the point where such terms as *credentials inflation* have entered the vernacular as reported by the Foundation of Economic Education (FEE, 2021). The figures for degree attainment compiled by the Office for Students (OFS, 2023) over a ten year recent period may be seen at Table 2.

First Degree Attainment in UK, 2010-2022

Degree Classification	2010-11	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
First (1 st)	34,845	77,230	93,870	100,850	85,285
Upper second	114,125	130,115	125,085	125,000	121,680
First and upper second combined	148,965	207,345	218,955	225,850	206,965

Table 2 – First Degree Attainment in UK, 2010-2022, (OFS, 2023).

The figures clearly illustrate the huge growth in attaining ‘Firsts’ over ten years in effect much more than doubling whilst the overall volume of degrees rose from 148,965 to 206,965, an increase of 40%. This is also a notable increase if not quite at the quantitative scale of ‘Firsts’ attainment. The increase in numbers has been matched by what is perceived as an ever decreasing quality of degrees both in standard and type offered with grade inflation shown by 1st Class Honour degrees doubling in a decade (BBC, 2022b). This symbiotic double negative trend is concerning for professions both for qualitative reasons and perhaps for their gatekeeping and assessment for entry procedures. However, these figures and views may not be so problematic as might be thought at first sight as there is little evidence that the newer and burgeoning availability of professionally aligned degrees are as qualitatively affected in the same way.

It comes as no surprise that the top three valued degrees are medicine, dentistry, and veterinary science with education in 4th place and law in 6th (Garnet, 2024) perhaps maintaining the past hierarchical and status preferences. However, it is the expanding range and availability of professional degrees available from UK universities, many of which have contractual agreements with aligned professions which now provide the main crossover building blocks between educational and more professional expert curricula. This is to better match professional needs and expectations. Any new certificated degree wherever it sits on the graduated ladder entry point framework for a particular profession is likely to provide the main gatekeeping point for full membership for most professional entities, old and new, in the foreseeable future.

2.9.9 Security and its Relationship with Knowledge

Simonsen (1996) argued almost 30 years ago that security could and should be considered a profession based on improved certification, standards, and ethics as well as an improving body of knowledge. This review so far would indicate that the security sector might have difficulty in most respects in meeting the knowledge requirements for being considered a profession. That is not to indicate that security disciplines are not knowledge based as they often rely on a complex, improving and increasing body of knowledge as demands and complexities increase. This is aided by professional degrees for individuals and in respect of cyber security some governmental interest and financial support. It is perhaps the broad and diverse security disciplines and their relationship with each other that presents the greater challenge; a cultural hurdle outlined by Burke, (2009). In UK this is evidenced by a plethora of associations and institutes that whilst broadly fraternal do not speak with one voice making collaboration, let alone unified communication and messaging difficult.

Griffiths *et al.* (2010) examined this from an Australian perspective and concluded that security was continuing to evolve hampered by disciplinal diversity. However, they were

confident that progress for a UBK was positive, unlikely to diminish in need and that security was pushing towards being a new profession. This is broadly true of UK security although progress is perhaps less mature and as well defined. Regarding interdisciplinary concerns and notwithstanding the multiple voices in the sector, the UK engineering profession, also composed of multiple disciplines, manage well such disparities. Diversity in security therefore should not be seen as an overriding impediment provided some singular focussed leadership existed for all professional aspects of security and not just a diffuse representation of defining and promoting member interests. Even if the focus were to swing even greater to a more expertise skill base, security would unlikely be considered a profession unless it developed a fuller curated UBK (Coole *et al.*, 2015). This suggests strongly that unless substantial inroads are made to curate, define and regulate security knowledge in some framework, codified or otherwise, then progress will be slow.

2.10 Power and Professions

It is perhaps no surprise that western academia and the professional concept are intrinsically linked as discussed by Strain, *et al.* (2009) in relation to the ‘architecture’ of how ethics, professions and academic life intertwine. The very word (profession) derives from ‘profiteri/professes’ and associated academic professorial or even religious concepts. This is highlighted by Hughes (1963) who associates initial ideas of a profession with religion and admittance to Holy Orders in the 17th century. Unsurprisingly, this still resonates today and reflects the current ideas of admission, regulation and ultimately the attainment of power by UK professional bodies. However, even Academia, a well-established and early original profession in the UK struggles internally with the ‘professional’ concept and lacks consensus on what definitively constitutes a profession, something articulated by Abadi *et al.* (2020).

Historically the original professions such as law and medicine have wielded much professional group power and also at the individual level as described by Krause (1999).

More recently these powers, or the perception of them have declined considerably and according to Krause this is because with capitalist control comes profits trumping altruism. This might however, amount to swapping one form of power (social) for another (economic). It is likely that since Krause's observation the rise of greater knowledge commodification in the last decade and an accelerating rise in AI and technology is more likely to accentuate this loss of power. This is quite speculative, and it may well be that just the nature of that power will change as alluded to by those such as Johnson (2016) and Saks (2016 b.).

Knowledge and expertise represent the central focus of the power equation, and those knowledge factors already reviewed will all play their part in any power distinctiveness and/or differences of both the old and new professions (Zikic and Richardson, 2016). Evolving power relationships will affect educational and cultural gatekeeping to the profession as well as shaping the market, including political and social professional configurations. Professions sometimes, but rarely, cooperate with each other and also internally when some objective is desired (Zander *et al.*, 1957). They may well be less fraternal otherwise. Security as a new emerging profession or professionalised sector will need to navigate carefully the practical and cultural 'power' drivers as they emerge in the coming years on the route to recognition and beyond.

Influence in the markets, whether societal or inter-relational with other businesses represents one facet of professional power although there is also the matter of internal power of professions. This is equally important and relates to those actions which perhaps more immediately affect individuals such as gatekeeping to membership of the 'club' (Halpern, 1992). In particular this relates to the ways in which standards and sanctions for members who transgress ethically or in other professional standards are enforced and whether fairly. The profession may decide what is appropriate action against any transgression (Wideman, 1987). Many see this self-policing as vital for maintaining professional standards, but which

may not always be welcome in a modern business landscape by the affected individual or society at large. Much depends on the morality and standing of the entity and those individual leaders in the profession who are charged with sanction operations and maintaining the efficacy of the codes.

There is no *internal* regulation⁹ within the security sector at present apart from the CSyP Register. Even though a registrant can be divested of chartered status that security practitioner could still operate freely in business. As Merkelsen (2011) noted, professional power is a double edged sword and impinges on how invested parties view a profession and something to be kept in the right balance moving forward. Increasingly one way of maintaining this balance is greater governmental *external* regulation and licencing, something on the rise and peculiar to modern professions, including State imposed legal strictures.

The components identified so far in this review cumulatively reveal that various forms of power rest with an accepted profession. This idea is accentuated perhaps by those such as Fitzgerald (2020) who advocates that regulation, in particular self-regulation, is needed to provide professions with strength and independence. The drive for greater internal and increasingly external regulation whilst understandable serves to emphasise the societal or professional barriers that occur for anyone joining a profession or wishing to attain the associated and prized status of recognition, or possibly even admiration, as a professional.

2.10.1 Regulation and Licencing with new Governmental Oversight

One of the defining characteristics of professions is self-regulation (Adams, 2017). However external regulation has become a prevalent mechanism in more modern professions and likely will be for those still emerging. This takes the form of statutory governmental oversight such as with the SIA mentioned previously for certain security practices. If a charter is involved,

⁹ External regulation for standards of 4 practitioner functions is provided by the SIA.

including for some more established professions, the Privy Council also has regulatory power, although rarely used once an entity is incepted. Historically external regulation has not been universally welcome as Hirsch (1976) observed:

It (external regulation) implacably leads to a rising mass of codified petty regulation, swollen by the need to enforce rules and to counter their avoidance.

This infers the potential for a social bureaucracy to unbalance well intentioned regulatory control and something the security sector will need to consider in all regulatory thinking.

In the UK new governmental guidance specifically uses the term ‘professions’ and lists those regulated sectors and individuals within them together with the appointed external regulating body (Gov UK, 2024d). Interestingly this listing approach lays the foundations not only for a new formalised characteristic of *external regulation* by a government of a profession but also formally recognises the groups formed as the new expert professions. This is an encouraging sign for the security sector and something not dissimilar to the Australian approach discussed earlier. The 2020 governmental initiative to identify and codify professional qualifications is also important and should offer further pathway markers to assist the security sector (Gov.UK, 2020).

2.11 Culture and Class – the Relationship with Professions

2.11.1 Class Influence in UK Professions

The cultural complexity within the Susskindian ‘grand bargain’ is complicated even further in UK by the idea that ‘class’ and associated privilege still pervades the professional landscape, even if not to any previous historical extent. This is commented on by Calarco (2020) when she reviews access to elite UK professions through the work of Friedman and Laurison (2020). She suggests that “neither merit nor character” (the qualities ostensibly sought by professions) can explain the inequalities observed through the lens of class in UK. Her

narrative is focussed on those residual effects manifested by elite original professions steeped in historical and privileged class foundations. Whether that relates to new expert professions in the same way is unlikely although class consideration especially in professional entry gatekeeping may still play a part in the cultural mix. However, the merit and character equation would be expected to be much stronger than any class differentiation. Intuitively a correlation would be expected to present itself, if measurement were possible, of increasing class consideration as the hierarchy status ladder of the professions was ascended.

2.11.2 Culture as a Mix of Status Power and Ethics

In the context of emerging HR views, Baczor (2024) discusses whether being a profession is a behaviour or a status. She also extends her thinking to ethical power and the central focus of ‘trust’ in any concept of profession and shared views by all stakeholders presumably including those of society. The relationship with culture and power was noted by Kostera (2003, p.121) in this critique on doctors’ professional identity:

The profession itself has some considerable cultural power. The high social and professional status enables them to keep a considerable control over systems of accountability.

It is an incisive understanding of the inseparable role culture plays with both professional power and status issues and although the context was the medical environment there is no reason to believe it is not equally applicable to other professions including security. These are all pertinent issues which intertwine with cultural progression and workplace evolution. They do however fail to clarify entirely the solidity of professions but rather point to ‘shifting sands’ and a somewhat unfixed positioning dependent on changes in the workplace which are apparently increasing.

Building on the idea that social responsibility and some accountability exist in a profession, perhaps to offset imbued professional power, Abbott (1983) observed that ethical codes used

by professions were a ‘concrete’ form of cultural recognition and an acknowledgement by professions of their responsibilities. This in effect is perhaps a manifestation of balancing power with accountability and forms the rationale and some basis for integrity running as a ‘silver thread’ throughout all professions. This idea has over the decades become another recognizable main feature of what constitutes a profession even when the notion may not be formally embedded in any business memoranda or articles of association, let alone something that is actually fully implemented.

Interestingly, there is a view that professions themselves may be an outdated concept and that the focus should shift to a ‘sociology of expertise’ as outlined by Eyal and Pok (2011). This may also point towards the ephemerality aspect considered as part of the research. Whether such a shift towards a pure focus on expertise, without the historical and cultural drivers, is even possible may be very questionable in reality. However, a slow business and social evolution may potentially produce a greater shift in that direction. However, if the fast-paced cultural fragmentation highlighted by Olgiati (2010) continues, it may paradoxically accelerate changing societal cultural and business views on what a modern profession really represents and whether there may be other options to consider. This in many ways may be considered dependent on how technology intervenes or drives the views on this.

2.12 Technological and digital Drivers for Change

Stavrou and Piki (2024) point to the fast-paced technological changes that affect ‘self-efficacy’ especially in relation to cyber security and the need to increasingly up-skill in that domain. This is likely true of all security disciplines but arguably to a lesser extent unless cyber and mainstream security converge more fully through the ‘internet of things’ as AI exponentially increases. More importantly although not observed as such by the authors these reflections could be seen as the march to greater meritocracy beyond the standard gateways to the sector. This may enhance any implied professional standing but also conversely may point

to a different status attainment based on some form of technocratic rating. What is true however is that at present the technological element will continue to increase, as noted by Lester (2020). It will likely impinge on perceptions of being a profession especially if the technical dimension is deployed directly in the debate or even if it just unintentionally settles into the consciousness of stakeholders.

The ‘4th Industrial Revolution’, a euphemism for fast moving technical advancement impacting the workplace (Lester, 2020) is also synonymous with advancements in AI including within the learning domain and automation (Saracco, 2021). This is something which will increasingly impinge on technical elements of security protection especially cyber threats. This in the short term may appear to have little impact when viewed through the lens of professional concepts. However, in the mid to long term it is probable that with needed upskilling, higher education, more complex AI and quantum technological bases, and new attitudes of sector entrants, a major shift is likely to occur, perhaps sooner than professions expect. It is Susskind and Susskind (2022) who believe perhaps more than many commentators that it is technology which will transform professions in the medium to long term eventually replacing the professional structures as currently understood. It is also highly unlikely the ‘grand bargain’ will be immune to fast paced and exponential technical change.

2.13 Representative and Institutional Bodies and Associations

The professional associations and institutes are usually non-profit bodies which seek to support, represent, and often professionalise the sector or professional entity they represent (Christ and Burritt, 2016). Their legitimacy stems mainly from their membership support base as well as how they perform on the professional stage in their transactions with governments and institutions. This is something according to Dawson (2016) as increasingly under threat in an interdisciplinary world dominated by communication and social media technology.

Although not expressed directly by such authors as Dawson (2016) or Merton (1958) this presumably relates to the rise of individual identity and how perceived or actual autonomy is regarded. This brings relevance of such bodies into question, and it is likely those that survive and prosper will be the professional entities that can transform quickly and meet the changing needs of their members and profession generally as well as adding value. If institutes¹⁰ or councils provided a regulatory role that would add validity to their existence as well as a greater permanence through State entanglement. The function would allow a positive symbiosis with any legislated external oversight and/or external regulatory apparatus.

These ideas mostly reflect the thoughts of Sanders (2020) who alludes to associations needing to change their boundaries and relevance to match demands. He envisages this as conducted through a 'narrowed defined frame,' something he believes is necessary and permissible in a technically driven environment. Perhaps the idea of a focussed strategy and mission could have been added by the author. There are other commentators such as Freeman and Evans (2016), who see this oversight role extend to accreditation and educational standards of the entities they represent. This is already the case with many bodies and would naturally fit the regulatory offering.

In the security sector there are many and varied representative and membership associations and institutes, the most prominent of these being the Security Institute (SyI) and the Association of Security Consultants (ASC)¹¹. Whilst each has claim to merit the divergence of views and lack of cohesiveness or a single leadership role for the sector in general works against any future singular sector representation for progress as a profession using a unified leadership voice. It is difficult to see how this difficulty would be overcome without either a

¹⁰ The Security Institute already recognised by the UK Government could extend to this role for internal regulation if permitted.

¹¹ ASIS is also very representative of many British members but in UK is a Chapter of the worldwide American centred body and does not quite fit the arguments presented here.

prominent one taking the lead with sufficient vision and authority as well as broad support or perhaps better an amalgamation of the most influential bodies currently existing.

2.14 Economics as a Driver for Security professional Status

Eder and Holinger (2023) very much equate status of employees with earnings in their study, one which spanned many countries. They found different cultural drivers alter surprisingly marginally the views of populations on the morality and reasonableness of this approach. Interestingly the word profession does not feature in their study, as meritocracy appears to be the sole benchmark on which their research is built. This suggests that perhaps another approach to seeking status exists but one that would be dependent on the culture and societal view present - something in the UK that may be a difficult shift.

The literature tends not to directly link the concept of a profession with any substantial economic considerations, and this might be because of the public service connotation overriding any commercial component. However, in a modern globalised world economics is increasingly a major driver for the shape of businesses (Dietrich and Roberts, 2025). It is also likely that economics will eventually feature as a greater potential and important aspect of any new emerging professions. This would encompass corporate security generally and especially those commercial security elements linked to national defence.

Cavusoglu (2004) notes that IT security and perceived high risk threats combine as a potent economic driver for governments to shape the future of corporate security or aid defence and more business oriented commercial sectors together with increasing homogenisation and alignment of business operations. Whilst this is still a long way from directly linking economic considerations with professional concepts it perhaps points towards a business evolution that may add another focus to the professional mix especially in any alternative pathway emerging and may feature more prominently in the not-too-distant future.

Horrocks (2001) also remarks that security training provision is a fast-growing element of the sector and is now a lucrative enterprise. The increasing economic profile of academic and training offerings in the corporate security sector will undoubtedly provide yet another professional consideration when searching for that elusive status and recognition. This reflects an increasing collaboration and sometimes integration of corporate security processes in business, especially as security becomes more technically complex. This was something remarked on by Badr *et al.* (2010) who believe there is a move from traditional security to a distributed environment collaboration. This would also align well with the increase in enterprise risk management (ERM) prevalent in larger UK businesses and where security plays an ever-increasing part.

Quite apart from the more ideological, cultural, and theoretical interpretations of the professional concept it may well be the scale of economics in security that finally, even if inadvertently, provides some powerful drivers for attaining status. Alternatively at some juncture it may act as a catalyst for a different professional approach in the corporate security sector. De Joode (2011) relates how even then 92% of businesses experienced security cyber incidents in just one year. This currently amounts to a loss of £3.1bn to the UK economy when all cyber-attacks, public and non-public are considered (Gov.UK, 2024a).

It is estimated that the UK Cyber security sector was worth £10.5B in 2023, with 2000 firms employing over 58000 workers (NCSC, 2023). The UK Government in 2024 has already uprated these figures to £11.9B and over 60K employees (Gov.UK, 2024b) showing how much cyber security is involved in just one part of the security sector within the UK economy. Outside cyber, mainstream security providers such as MITIE and G4S had annual turnovers of £8.9B and £7.97B respectively in 2022 (Guard Mark, 2024). What the figures already indicate is the inherent and potential economic power to shape the security image and positioning in the business sector to add a powerful voice in any drive for status in whatever

professional form that may finally take. In particular cyber-security attracts a favourable economic focus from government and increasingly those larger businesses where cyber threats and attacks have become commonplace.

2.15 Security – understanding the Journey and Obstacles to being a Profession

Some authors believed nearly four decades ago that it was time to recognise security as a profession (Criscuoli, 1988; Simonsen, 1996). Conversely, more recently there is doubt by others such as Eyal and Pok (2015) that security could ever be viewed in this way. They have an unease that the diverse discipline would be unable to meet ‘expectations’ and therefore unlikely to be considered a true profession, especially with the historic lack of regulation in the sector. This trajectory and associated negative reputation were also alluded to by Romanet and Perroux (2019) when considering security shortcomings in Libya.

Whilst many such views were focussed geographically outside the UK the concerns raised would resonate more generally in the UK security sector and those it serves. Collectively the many varied and even disparate literary viewpoints from various domains highlight the complexity and dimensions inherent in a seemingly simple defined concept of a profession. This indeed makes navigating any status and recognition pathway for security leaders and the sector itself very complex and likely quite challengingly predictive. In particular the cultural dimension, already discussed in this review earlier, would feature highly.

Less controversial within the UK is that some components of the security discipline have over several decades been *professionalised* in a similar fashion to various medical professional initiatives outlined by Reed *et al.* (2019) and Abbott (1991). Many similar security training initiatives have begun to address, for some UK practitioners, the accusation that more and better education or training is needed in the sector. Security generally has enhanced its own standing through offerings of professional degrees and advanced training tied to continuing

professional development (CPD¹²). CPD is welcomed generally and can be mandatory for members of the SyI or those registered as CSyP. These moves are all conducive to establishing a preliminary pathway and consideration as a profession. Status and recognition are an increasingly major focus and important to many leading the sector who see them as important components to recruit talent and improve standards. These are promoted by the UK Security Institute (2023), emphasising respect and recognition as key mission components.

The introduction of UK security professional chartered registration in 2011 has also provided momentum for senior practitioners seeking recognition as well as providing potentially enhanced employment or client prospects. Contained within the charter mission is a need to provide a service for the public, again adding to the professional component (Chartered Security Professionals, 2023). These elements, besides mirroring the basic professional characteristics described earlier, provide status enhancement for some senior motivated individuals. One element little discussed in literature is the will and desire to seek professional change and recognition. Susskind and Susskind (2015, p.304) are an exception and their interesting take on this when discussing the professional landscape is:

It is not simply that we can shape our own future; more than this, we believe we ought to, from a moral point of view.

This statement clearly contains a cultural driver (morality) which is surprising but when combined with their logical more functional stance might be a powerful future voice. Unfortunately, the security sector currently remains stubbornly incohesive and as yet does not fully address those aspects of ethicality or provide any substantial regulatory component for senior leaders outside chartered status. Ethics and regulation are major determinants for being a profession as indicated by Wolfson *et al.* (1980). This is endorsed by Adams (2017) who

¹² Notably provided by organisations such as the Security Institute UK and ASIS (world coverage) and now the Chartered Security Professional Register as well as the Security Industry Authority (SIA) for practitioner training and licencing.

from a different perspective examined the future of self-regulation in professions and the potential need for legislation, ironically to limit such self-regulation. This presumably would be to counterbalance any emerging but burgeoning unnecessary power. It also reflects perhaps the rebalancing towards external ‘independent’ regulation hitherto not traditionally a necessary professional characteristic but increasing likely to be so. However, it is important to note that any external regulation and those who judge what constitutes ‘independence’ would effectively be removing a degree of professional autonomy as described earlier in the review.

From a sociological perspective the cultural view of many outside the sector is one of security employment being a traditional uniformed low paid job with a minimal secondary educational requirement. Such perceptions are likely intertwined with a cultural foundation similar to ideas expressed by Bloor and Dawson (1994). As outdated, or possibly ill-informed, as these societal views may be, especially since they refer to one particular segment of the security sector, they do represent a common and persistent view even within business and society generally. Undoubtedly they present a challenge to those seeking advancement in status within the security sector, and an even greater one for the sector to gain formal professional recognition.

Beyond those views of Saks (2012) discussed earlier there are authors such as Niezgoda *et al.* (2014) who also explored the concept of an UBK together with full ownership being essential elements of a profession and something that is distinctive to a professional group. This particular requirement would be difficult for a very diverse and fragmented security sector to pursue beyond the more potentially mature and perhaps politically supported specialisms such as cyber-security in UK. This was observed by Reece and Stahl (2015), who noted the need to attract talented individuals to combat emerging economic or terrorist cyber threats was distinctly related to governments favouring this specialty. Market forces and pragmatic need appear to be the main drivers here.

2.16 Fragmentation - a Vector or Disruptor for alternative Approaches

Olgati (2010) points to the more liberal professions beginning to suffer cultural fragmentation which effectively lowers standards and status, both in reality and perceptively. Logically this could easily extend to integrity and other ethical issues. This phenomenon is perhaps even greater now than when observed over ten years ago and likely growing as professions attempt to respond to the tensions created by modern fast paced cultural shifts. This is together with those resultant pressures characterized by student or employment protests and even industrial action. It is likely most professions would not be immune (Adobor, 2022) and is something increasingly prevalent in western democracies.

Fragmentation in the security sector is characterised by multiple bodies focussed on membership representation. There are also several differing security disciplines each with their own agenda within the sector. Such physical and cultural diversity may in the short term constitute a barrier to any formal institutional acceptance, although not necessarily a socially perceptual one. These tangible obstacles do exist but could be ameliorated if some agreement and cooperation is found. However, any continuance of the status quo suggests that status and recognition may remain a long-term endeavour if some resolution is not identified in the pursuit of professional pathways for security.

If fragmentation issues continue then difficulties for any pathway would still exist even if ethical codes were to be formally embedded as a professional requirement, something outlined by Payne *et al.* (2020) and De Goede (2018). This might still be the case if educational pathways were also to be clearly delineated and available, something which Hargreaves and Dawe (1990) think may be necessary in professions. However, these ideas become even more complex and multi-faceted when the views of Maestriperi (2019) are considered. He believes more prosaically that an accepted 'discourse of norms' and a

‘worldview,’ not necessarily an institutional or regulatory process, should determine acceptance of, and admittance to, what is now called a profession.

These difficulties indicate it would currently be a challenge for the UK security sector to form a cohesive whole recognised by institutions, academia, businesses, and the public more generally as gauged by the literature studies. This is especially given the professional cultural fragmentation described earlier in the review. However, as Reece and Stahl (2015) describe in the wake of fast emerging cyber threats in UK and the USA there may be greater potential for certain security disciplines such as cyber-security to provide their own professional persona or even eventually be formally regarded as a profession. However, this negativity for the whole sector may be precipitate given the variables and vagaries present. The focus should be more on establishing expertise, convergence and cohesiveness in the form of a new style expert profession of the newer variety discussed and is something which may be in reach.

2.17 Pathways for Security as a Profession

It would be logical to assume that the characteristics identified to this point would constitute attainment targets for any aspiring professional entity including security based on the literature reviewed so far. According to Alvesson *et al.* (2015) this would also represent individual identity in the constituent makeup. This reflection by them of the professional components would accompany a likely ‘buy-in’ from aspiring professional members since identity is in effect a representative construction of the entity itself. Although the definitional characteristics (as described by the EU and tabulated individually) have already been critiqued, a reminder of base professional characteristics is also provided by Alvesson (2013):

- A theory based body of knowledge (UBK - owned and curated by the profession).
- Long and standardised formal education of members.
- A strong professional association body representing the profession.

- Some autonomy in conducting affairs.
- A code of ethics (that can be self-regulated) and occupational culture.
- Criteria for entry.
- Monopoly or restrictions of certain labour and knowledge application.
- Client orientation.

Others to add to this and reviewed so far would be internal, and increasingly external, regulation administered and directed by a council as well as recognition by the UK Government. Some form of social contract or an acceptance by society would also be beneficial. Clearly if security wished to follow the established route, regardless of the envisaged shift and changes alluded to by Susskind and Susskind (2022) and several others then the majority if not all of the listed components would need to feature. The more practical aspects of this route and implications will be discussed later in the research.

2.18 Alternatives to being an established traditional Profession

Kritzer (1999) discussed the future of professions with a provocative title ‘The Professions are dead, long live the Professions’ which really signalled the need for adaptability and professions rising to the challenges of a new business and economic landscape emerging even twenty or more years ago. Since then, new professional identities have emerged or and begun to morph into identities more specialist in nature with increasingly niche expertise but still fundamentally ‘knowledge focussed’ despite the commodification trend. However, there have been signs of practical or pragmatic democratisation of professions and their knowledge, moving away from the more monopolistic approach (Larson, 2018). This manifestation also mirrors the approaches of the emerging newer expert professions and will likely be something that grows albeit incrementally.

Potentially this democratisation or even pragmatism could eventually subsume even the more elitist and traditional structures and break the monopolistic hold. This emerging trend can be

seen in the literature reflecting changes in professional teaching (Parding *et al*, 2012) and even medicine (Susskind and Susskind, 2022) showing a late but perceptive leaning into a new expertise focussed professional persona. Security is likely to benefit from such an identity or cultural shift including the prospective technical security advances. This is especially relevant considering the increasing cyber profiles in business and State. It follows that alternatives to standardised traditional professional identity may offer the security sector an accelerated route to status and a form of recognition as professional constructs and identities increasingly shed traditional constraints.

Susskind and Susskind (2022, pp 284-301) discuss alternative professional models more aligned to the pragmatic notion of expertise and weighted differently depending on the requirement and service desired. It is fair to acknowledge that their approach is very conceptual, and suggestions range from the current traditional professional model towards such notions as para-professions, networked experts and communities of experience. These ideas are all subtly different but reflect at their heart the nucleus of expert knowledge only differing in how that knowledge is practically distributed, something Susskind and Susskind, (2015, p.188) term “production and distribution of knowledge.” The context of these ideas for professional alternative working will be considered where relevant in relation to the primary research data alongside other possibilities as frameworks in later chapters.

2.19 Summary of literary Findings

A fully cross-referenced tabulated summary of literary findings is available at **Appendix 2**. The contents will be used to inform the initial coding categories for later synthesis with the initial primary inductive semantic and follow-on latent axial coding as described in the methodology chapter. These literary findings will also be used to further the overall understanding and provide greater comparative depth to the primary findings analysed in Chapter 4 and later discussed in Chapter 5. The table represents a summative set of the main

evaluations made through analysis and critical discussion of the literature reviewed. The main highlights revolve around the perceived decline in importance of the social contract within professions and associated trust issues especially following financial events in 2008. This appears to have led to a transition of professions with a focus on more pragmatic approaches where altruism features much less and for newer entities to be more externally regulated with some loss of autonomy overall. This also reflects an inability for new professions to recreate the historic cultural and class underpinning enjoyed by more established traditional models. Naturally, this suggests that the security sector would most likely need to adopt a newer framework often described as neo-expert in nature.

2.20 Review Conclusion

The literature discussed in this review clearly identifies some widely recognised and mostly accepted common features on what constitutes a profession. It significantly highlights the cultural component that features heavily within a construct that has both societal and business involvement and perceptions. Within UK, and in any final analysis beyond professional self-regulation, this extends increasingly to governmental oversight, licencing, and gatekeeping by the State. This is in addition to any continued internal governance – in effect rebalancing the level of autonomy in some professions. Cultural aspects may differ between countries. In UK, the historical and cultural drivers are extensive, and this literature review has pointed to the relationship between knowledge and power as being a fundamental one when attempting to understand a profession beyond the theoretical and definition base.

This review assists and contextualises the later primary research. It makes sense of the obvious vagaries that arise, if indeed that is possible, and perhaps identifies the need for alternative approaches. The primary research, aided by the literature, will identify and recommend potential routes and possible designs to achieve professional accreditation. This

will be important for senior security leaders and the sector as a whole. The next chapter will outline and discuss the methodology and explain how data was collected. It also discusses the analytic approach and the philosophical stance taken overall together with the reasoning used to interpret results and identifying the thematic codes used in later evaluation.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Background to the Methodology used in the Research

Research is a form of systematic enquiry used in both business and academia. It is an investigative process used to explain, examine, or evaluate and sometimes compare issues that constitute a problem or require more knowledge (Gratton and Jones, 2009; Walliman, 2011). This generality can be expanded to include enquiries into some phenomena or situations in need of a solution, measurement, or to provide answers to questions raised. Research may also correlate, predict, and even ultimately provide a guide to control the causes of the identified problem (Walliman, 2011). This research contains elements of each category.

Gathering relevant and credible convincing data (information) is an essential early component of research, which can then be analysed and critically reviewed or discussed to recommend courses of action or even to simply explain whatever the object of the research happens to be. Methodological design therefore ensures the research aim may be achieved and, consequently, it is why the aim is so important early in the research process, together with the derived objectives and/or questions. These were at the heart of the methodological requirement in this study as they pointed the researcher to the likely best methodological framework to adopt and the direction to take in research thinking.

3.2 Drivers for chosen Method

Clearly then, the research method chosen for this study was a key component to ensure that the research achieved sensible outcomes. It was important for the method to be workable and systematic, rather than predicated on some loose process of intuition or based solely on personal views and experience (although these may play their part in some approaches).

Perhaps worse would have been poor operationalization of ideas derived without an evidence base. This all points to the importance of methodological rigour, especially since even tried and tested methodologies are not without flaws. There will always be differing views on their efficacy, usually stemming from the inherent philosophical component, something discussed later in this chapter.

The eventual choice of which method to use was driven not only by the aim, but also by being cognizant of the advantages and disadvantages of the choice made and ensuring as much validity and reliability remained by capitalizing on the strengths and mitigating the weaknesses (ICJS, 2003). The goal of this rigour and methodological awareness was to ensure there was validity to the findings, as well as reliability in the actual methodological processes used to gather and explore the collected data (Walliman, 2011).

The nature of the research also pointed to the approach to be taken; for instance, empiricism tends to align with inductive reasoning, unlike rationalism which is usually associated with deductive reasoning (Walliman, 2011). However, the delineation and barriers between inductive and deductive reasoning have decreased over the last few years. This is not only because of what is termed “a more pragmatic approach” by such researchers as Patton (1997, p.295). It also refers to flexibility between paradigms to aid interpretation of data in more than one way, and also because software analytic tools (such as MAXQDA used in this study) are very capable of using and successfully mixing both approaches to good effect, when used wisely. Indeed, some researchers advocate for a mix as the better and more valid approach (Patton, 1997, p.296). This research project whilst heavily weighted to inductive reasoning utilized some limited deductive approaches in early coding allowing for an appropriate combination of flexibility and analytical breadth to stimulate even better arguments and valid insights.

3.3 The Research Aim and Problem

The overall research problem was outlined in Chapter 1 together with the adduced aim and objectives. For ease of reference the stated aim was:

To evaluate the challenges facing the UK Security sector in attaining formal professional status and assess whether it is needed, if routes exist now, may exist in the future, or if alternatives may be more advisable.

The nature and framework of the methodology used in this study relates directly to the chosen aim which reflects the stated problem, and which seeks to examine professional status generally and more specifically as it is recognised in the UK security sector. It is the stated research problem outlined in Chapter 1 which provided the focus for the study to ultimately help the sector identify, understand, and provide actionable guidance to the long standing problem of achieving status and recognition for the UK security sector and those employed within it.

3.3.1 Research Questions

The objectives that support the overall aim were also fully articulated in Chapter 1 where they are couched as evaluative objectives operationalized from research questions. They could easily be reframed again as research questions without any loss of meaning as:

- *What are the current constituent elements which provide for UK recognition of a profession and how do security practitioners perceive them?*
- *Does Security (or disciplines as elements of it) actually need or want to become a profession and, if so, why might that be important?*
- *What is the current UK Security sector status in relation to being regarded formally as a profession (in whole or in part)?*

- *Are there potential routes to UK Security reaching formal more traditional professional status and what is the likelihood of success?*
- *Are there any potential alternatives for Security in UK to pursue occupational status outside of the current UK traditional professional framework and how viable or ephemeral might alternatives be for seeking a different professional status?*
- *What recommendations can be made to the security sector?*

For simplicity and clarity this dissertation only refers to the stated objectives in Chapter 1 throughout the remainder of this study.

3.4 The underpinning Philosophy significant to this Research

Methodology to the extent described earlier, seems relatively straightforward but, as early as Socrates (348-322 BC), who advocated for empiricism and inductive reasoning and, before him, Plato (427-347 BC) who is associated with rationalism and deduction (Walliman, 2011), some underpinning philosophy has been needed and central to method choice. This is to support how research is both approached, understood, and interpreted and how knowledge is acquired, this last component being termed epistemology. Although this research study tends more towards empiricism rather than any rationalism, meaning therefore that knowledge is gained mainly by inductive reasoning and the senses, it is the perspective of ***critical realism***, that is the touchstone philosophical stance chosen for the methodological approach used in this study overall. Unlike pure empiricism it allowed for interpretation beyond the observable and allowed for an evaluation of the ‘unseeable reality.’ This is explained well by Zachariadis *et al.* (2010) who describe critical realism used in mixed method research as not only what can be observed (empiricism) by ‘seeing’ and ‘understanding reality’ but also from acknowledging and addressing the ‘unseen reality’ to acquire a greater understanding, metaphorically envisaged as the submerged portion of an iceberg below the water line.

3.4.1 Critical Realism

Philosophy as it relates to research extends to many approaches such as positivism, relativism, pragmatism, and others including critical realism the more recent concept mentioned (Walliman, 2011, p24). Critical realism developed in part and later refined by Bhaskar, (1994) is based on critical reasoning within the inductive and interpretative canon. Walliman (2011) further explains that this approach represents a reaction to some rigid aspects of the traditionalists whilst offering some 'reconciliatory' basis between them by acknowledging aspects of other stances such as positivism and empiricism.

Critical realism has been described by Stutchbury (2021) as looking for explanations, in a social landscape, something termed 'causal mechanisms', where much is not easily observable and sometimes hidden. This indicates that the 'reality' researchers wish to discover is also hidden to some extent. The approach requires the researcher to be critical of the theories and explanations, including those that might be proposed by themselves. Price and Martin (2018) state that the ultimate goal of critical realism is to "improve the world" which carries a lofty, almost metaphorical tone and connotation. However, as this research seeks to improve understanding and provide potential actionable recommendations this critical approach was considered as the most likely to offer a suitable perspective for this study's aim and objectives. This is especially so since cultural and class contexts feature highly and represent much of the 'hidden' landscape. It is critical realism around which this research has mainly pivoted because it is, arguably, a less absolutist approach than some others and is largely driven and dependent on interpretation of both theory and practical work which aligns well with the aim in this research (Walliman, 2011, p25). It also complements and reflects well the qualitative methodology overall requiring the main focus to be on inductive reasoning, something central to this study, and where interpretation points towards some action to follow, notwithstanding the potential vagaries or limitations of the

interpretations themselves. This unsurprisingly takes the form of actionable recommendations in this research.

3.5 Qualitative Research as a Basis for Understanding

Qualitative research is the prevalent methodological framework used in social science study. This is because a ‘reality,’ through interpretation of texts derived both from literature and as primary data through interviews or surveys, may be recognised with ‘progressive focusing’ as indicated by Parlett and Hamilton (1972). This is then aided by thematic or content coding and thence interpretive analysis. Analysis becomes both an iterative and a reflexive process and allows the context within social structures to be acknowledged and greater sense made through the researcher’s own interpretation. The process has been described as being as much an art form as it is a science (Miller and Crabtree, 1999), but in the context of the qualitative social sciences and the reflexive approach used here it should not be considered a criticism.

This research is heavily qualitative, although some limited statistical mixed methods are apparent. Importantly, it is the nature of the data, and the end goal sought which has pointed to whether a qualitative or quantitative method (or even a mix) was suitable. A major decision to be taken was to embark on either a primary or secondary data approach. Either may be used with qualitative studies and in this research primary data was chosen as the main focus, although secondary data was also collected for the literature review. When using primary data great diligence is needed in qualitative research to ensure validity and reliability through collecting often copious amounts of diverse and complex data. However, the insights can be meaningful and unexpected, especially when any bias is eschewed and a strong methodological rigour maintained (Johnson *et al.*, 2020).

Qualitative methods are diverse and not constricted in the same way as quantitative methods,

since in the social sciences especially, the need is to understand complex social phenomena (Yin 2003) and to provide deeper holistic meaning, not easily provided by any mathematical-centric method. That is not to say some informal mixed methodology cannot be employed within the qualitative approach to provide statistical comparison and numerically derived insights, but even when illustrative statistics are used they usually depend on qualitative interpretation. This research is no exception.

3.6 Extending Understanding - Reasoning and Mixing

The overall evaluative and interpretive approach in this study was based on inductive reasoning. However, some deductive elements were used especially in the initial category coding. The boundaries in these reasoning ideas in modern research have been increasingly blurred and drawn together, even if they are not quite overlapping. Rather, the approaches have become more complementary, as argued for by those such as Armat *et al* (2018), who advocate for ‘dualism’ in qualitative content analysis (QCA) or, more generally, a mix of reasoning in qualitative studies (Ali and Birley, 1999). This reflects the pragmatic pursuit for even deeper understanding and meaning which remains the main goal of qualitative research. In these ways this research may be considered an *informal* mixed approach and the instruments used for data collection and the researcher stance adopted reflect this.

3.7 Overall Methodology used in this Research

As is quite usual in social science research and has been rationalized in the previous sections, the main method used in this study is qualitative in nature and overall evaluative with analysis largely driven by inductive reasoning and interpretive processes. This is to provide flexibility and ensure greater detail and a more comprehensive approach overall (Creswell, 2006) with the aim of providing deeper understanding and meanings. Evaluation, which is central in this design, is also well suited for complex social ideas and questions (and in this case business

issues). However, some statistical data have also been incorporated to better make sense of the information collected but this was interpreted in the finality through a qualitative lens.

The main data was obtained as primary responses from sampled populations. This framework was chosen because of the complexity and nuances in the UK relating to the issues in professionalism and the need for a richer and deeper understanding which may be provided by interpretative analysis. Such an approach using qualitative design is usually, and arguably, better in providing meaning from complex data. The data generated and subsequently interpreted seeks to discern what is happening within professions and related security and how improvements in achieving status and recognition may be made as well as identifying professional pathways for security in UK. This is done in an evaluative way as described by Stern (2004).

A fully qualitative approach can lead to subjectivism and bias from both the researcher and from data providers which needs to be avoided as much as possible. To help mitigate such biases and subjectivity the intended design also included some basic triangulation techniques (Bell, 1999), to better balance and **validate** not only the main qualitative findings but also any quantitative statistical data. As well as using differing primary data collection instruments this triangulation extended to include some comparative views of the primary findings with the literature base.

Within the epistemology and ontology of this research the study tends heavily towards the ‘realism’ paradigm although some elements of ‘constructivism’ as described by Adom *et al.* (2016) are also present. Despite some commentators seeing these as competing paradigms there is an emerging and strong view that they can be used together well for social science research in order to make even better sense of the world (Barkin, 2020). Any constructivism used in this research is mindful that it is a different perspective from critical realism despite

being complementary to it, as described by Mir and Watson (2001, p.1171). It was important to be transparent in this thinking so that readers may always be able to contest the findings based on a perspective used (Mir and Watson, 2000).

3.8 Secondary Research Approach (Literature Review)

A literature review is intended to discover and critically assess the state of latest knowledge and understanding on the topic being investigated. It extends to any related components which contribute to that subject and the paradigms that exist which may have resulted from previous study. Simply put a literature review is meant to map what is known in a particular research field (ICJS, 2003, p.16) which for this study is the professional concept and its relationship with security. In most respects a literary review synthesises data and more specifically in this research relates theory to applied practice in the real world, something described by Hart (2000, p.27). The source for the material is often termed secondary since it represents research conducted previously or is commentary already published and openly available. Although sometimes primary original data sources may be considered for literary reviews none were used in this study.

The literature and other documentary sources used in this study are inclusive of all pertinent ideas that could be identified and not just a biased selection. Just as importantly, there is a healthy mix of theory and practice focussed data especially suitable for studies such as this one. The selected literary and document data provided for the research are relevant and usually more recent when reviewing practice, but as might be expected not always so much for the theory base. Furthermore, a high quality threshold was employed meaning that reliable sources were favoured to add validity wherever possible. This meant avoiding biased literature and dubious sources. Authoritative sources and oft cited material with academic and professional exposure, containing balanced and/or well evidenced arguments, even

contradictory ones in some literature, were especially favoured. Naturally, the literature needed to be pertinent to the topic and drawn from both the theory and practice base.

In this research the following literary sources were used:

- Academic literature including research articles sourced from university libraries and the internet, as well as books and literature (library located and personally owned, or borrowed). Much of the literature was initially identified through google-scholar, other on-line libraries and some was sourced by recommendation. This included academic theses and dissertations which were pertinent to the topic or interdisciplinary and related or connected in other ways to the topic.
- Professional journals and articles including business and security as well as interdisciplinary material (psychology, sociology, medical, educational and security mainly). Publications such as '*Journal of Organizational Behaviour*,' *Human Resource Management Revue*' and the '*Journal of Professions and Organization*' were all source material.
- Internet sourced material – various abstracts, full texts, and podcasts when judged to be authoritative and/or reliable and valid.
- Professional reference and subject matter books/reports, especially those centred on research methodology and subject matter including cross disciplines.

A critical evaluative thematic approach was adopted for reviewing the available literature with description of material generally avoided, unless considered essential to provide a degree of background and context. The focus was on critical evaluation and interpretation. The themes for the review were chosen through a categorization of existing ideas following immersive reading of relevant material. Themes were also derived to help make sense of the

current situation and the stances taken on professionalism, especially as applied to the security sector. These initial themes used in the review and those extra ones emerging from the literary critique also provided simple initial thematic categories for the subsequent primary research; a process described in a later section. They were also used within the MAXQDA software to underpin iteratively and inductively more applicable open and then axial coding leading to final themes for analysis of the primary data using both thematic (RTA) and some limited content analysis (QTA).

3.9 Primary Research Approach, Sampling, and Instruments

Primary data is usually considered more valid and reliable in many respects, mainly because it is original and up to date, something important in a fast changing societal, technical, and business landscape. Data collection is, however, time consuming and logistically challenging. Gratton and Jones (2010) refer to it as a collection of original data whilst also indicating that it is something specific to the goal of the research. One of the greatest problems in primary data can be the veracity and possible oblique views obtained from the actual data when collected in surveys and interviews. Much relies on the researcher to be aware and address these foibles in the overall use and later analysis of the data. Primary research was chosen for originality of the data something considered to be a main requirement for this study. This reflects points made by Callaham *et al.* (2002) when discussing how firsthand accounts can be sourced, and current evidence made available. The primary data comprising individual information and views were obtained by using both a cross-sectional survey design for two stratified groups as well as three sets of semi-structured interviews for all the chosen sample frames.

The various approaches used in this study have been synthesised diagrammatically by the researcher for ease of understanding as a whole and are illustrated in Figure 1. This diagrammatic representation clearly shows the main constituent parts of the methodology

employed in this study and should assist the reader to better conceptualise the approach used throughout this research.

Researcher's Synthesis of the methodological Design used for this Study.



Figure 1 - Researcher's Synthesis of the methodological Design used for this Study.

3.10 Coding Induction and Deduction - their Role in this Research

This study whilst heavily weighted overall towards an inductive reasoning approach might be described as 'informal' as outlined by Kirk and Miller (1986) because, alongside induction, some deductive techniques were used informally. This idea is reflected on by Yin (1994) who refers to informal approaches but advocates that the inductive approach predominates in this conceptual balance of reasoning. Category codes derived deductively from the literature were used as a comparator base for the later immersive reading of collected primary material where **all the primary data** was inductively coded with the assistance of the bespoke 'Smart' and 'Creative' coding tools¹³ in MAXQDA. Their use is not surprising given the overall inductive stance this study has taken. This early open semantic coding was then reflexively assessed before conducting a synthesis with the simple broad thematic more deductive categories

¹³ These two tools are iterative and inductive in design for open leading to axial coding.

mentioned earlier to provide second level more open codes to point the way for more latent axial and final coding and analysis.

The initial broad but explicit semantic category coding (initially a priori) was developed further through increasingly more axial latent inductive coding iteratively developed successively over the second and third ‘level passes’ which eventually led to forming underlying final themes for further analysis. This element of ‘mixing’ emphasizes just one aspect of the ‘balance of reasoning’ but without any detriment to the rigour and validity of the findings whilst enabling a wider research stance. Also, any deductive elements did not per se need to be ‘tested’ in this qualitative informal design. However, when key patterns and dimensions were noted then deduction could be used to verify the results as explained by Knafl (1990). This study very much followed this overall informal mixed approach. The more orthodox coding process devised by Hahn (2008) is summarized by Bihu (2024) in Figure 2 which shows this in diagrammatic form. The process may be understood by starting at level 1 of the pyramid base and then iteratively working upwards to the apex and then to synthesise thematic conceptions to be used in analysis of the data.

Hahn’s Orthodox Coding Pyramid

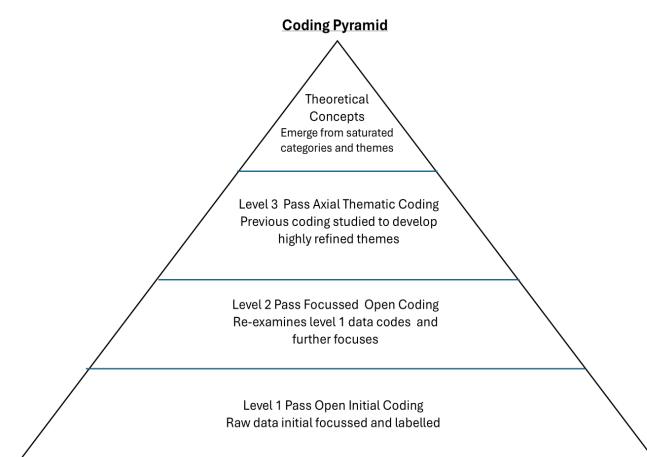


Figure 2 - Orthodox Coding Pyramid (Hahn, 2008).

This more standard theoretical/thematic coding concept by Hahn (2008) has been amended slightly by the researcher in Figure 3.

Reworked Pyramid Coding used in this Research - adapted from Hahn (2008) by Researcher

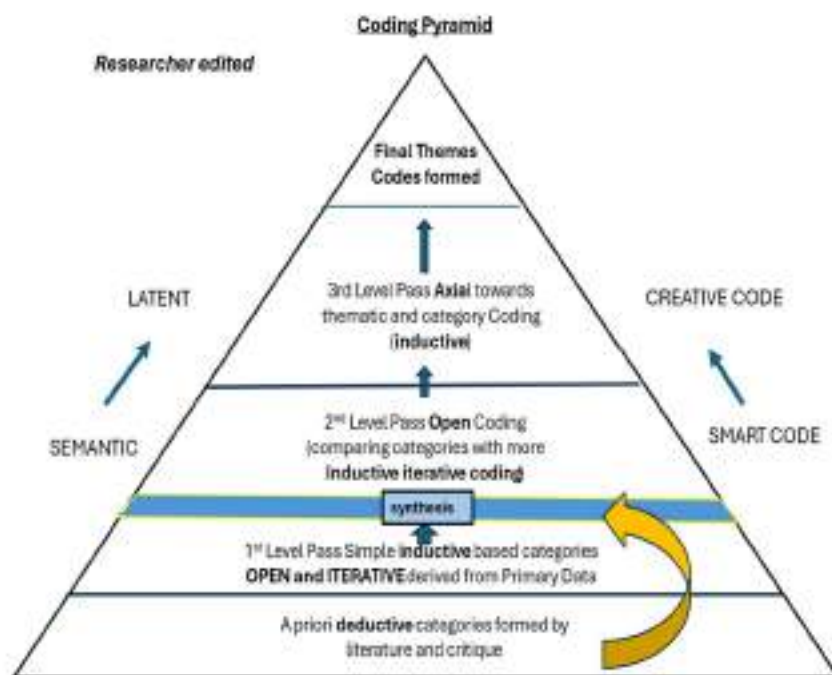


Figure 3 - Pyramid Coding used in this Research - adapted from Hahn (2008) by Researcher.

This better aligns with the ‘informal mixed’ coding approach used in this project, but which incorporates the layered transitional steps described earlier. The themes were derived from bringing together a series of open codes (tags), representing basic categories of interest, quite segmented at first, to eventually form a meaningful themed framework to be analysed in relation to the aim and objectives.

The codes began as open in nature and after several iterations (passes) became more axial through a focused recategorization. This meant they coalesced around an idea in a more relational approach to establish suitable categories in a meaningful themed framework to be analysed in relation to the aim and objectives (Siegle, 2023).

It should be noted that the 2nd level pass in the diagram actually became several iterations as initial categories began to show emerging initial themes following some shaping and fusing with the deduced earlier codes. It was then that a more axial coding approach was taken in the 3rd level pass. Finally, the coding was consolidated to form the themes to be explored through analysis of all the primary data and any comparison with the secondary literature. The codebook at this final stage is reviewable at **Appendix 8**.

3.11 Survey Design

Cross sectional survey was one of the instruments used to collect data from individuals using a questionnaire format (O’Leary, 2014) and one of the main ways of acquiring primary data (Cohen *et al.* 2017). The survey design for this research was produced to collect both personal anonymous views and also quantifiable data for stratification and comparative statistical analysis. The views were collected by use of both open and closed questions and statistical data through employing both closed questions and Likert response scaling.

Care was taken to reduce ambiguity in questions asked but also kept contextually balanced to ensure the correct intended meaning for the sampled population remained. The design followed ideas expressed by Bell and Waters (2014) and O’Leary (2014). Jargon was avoided and the questions related solely to the objectives of the research. The ‘Google Forms’ survey tool was used to ensure anonymity of respondents but mainly to allow for a professional and aesthetically pleasing format as advocated by O’Leary (2014). The survey was distributed to both sample frames by use of a covering personal explanatory note from the researcher routed through the bodies administering the sample groups. This was only after the survey forms had been piloted and minimally refined. A completed sample¹⁴ survey form (anon) may be found at **Appendix 4** whilst the covering note used may be examined at **Appendix 7**.

¹⁴ The SyI questions are identical content apart from title to the CSyP form therefore one example covers both.

3.12 Interviews

The main reason for using interviews in primary data collection is to understand the deeper meaning of responses through the analytical process (McNamara, 1999). Interviews allow for fuller face to face conversations (albeit in this research mainly through MS Teams and Zoom) which provide a transfer of information (data) in an open manner as described by Cresswell (2012). A semi-structured set of questions was used which provided topic focus but allowed for fuller open answers. Such an instrument is well aligned to the qualitative design of this research and alongside the surveys and the literature analysis allowed for some minor triangulation for validity. Open answers, according to McNamara (1999) may improve impartiality in responses rather than produce potentially forced responses in more closed formats. Three sample frames were used for interviewing as explained in the next section. As with the survey design a pilot study was conducted before extending to the sample frames. Interview content was transcribed in MAXDQA and used for both thematic and content analysis.

3.13 Population Sampling

In many respects the ‘population’ for this research could more generally considered to be the whole UK security workforce, but effort was made to keep the sample frame(s) to a manageable level, but which would still ensure a representative solution and provide as much **reliability** and representation as possible. For that reason, the samples were drawn through the auspices of security practitioner membership institutions. This approach, at first glance, may present as a ‘non-probability’ method using purposive sampling. However, this is not really the case as the sampling method explained below provided for a very representative cross-section group of security populations (cyber/physical/gender/ people security, geographical location, and age/experience). It is one which also reflects some stratified sampling as well as randomness, all desirable elements to be found in standard ‘*probability stratified sampling*.’ Just as importantly the chosen methods of collection were achievable in the timeframe

available and were judged to be overall a good reliable representation of the wider general security employee population to be found in the UK. The following breakdown of sampling and instruments was made as shown next:

- **The (National) Security Institute** - 4704 members of all disciplines and gender/grades/ages (<https://www.security-institute.org>). In their website they describe their launch in 1999 to become the UK's largest professional Institution offering professional membership to security practitioners. They have Royal Patronage and also act under licence as administrative managers of the Charter for Security Professionals (which is owned by the Worshipful Company of Security Professionals and regulated by CSPRA).
 - Random Sample Frame used for cross sectional survey – 2000 (half of population).
 - Survey returns received – 134 (6.65% of sample frame).
 - Interviews conducted (volunteers) - 10.

Pro-Forma survey questionnaires containing mixed content including Likert scaling and open and closed questions were used to obtain data/views from the sample framed population (to give age/gender/sector representation). Initially a cross-section of 2000 volunteers were invited to contribute to allow a sufficient, random, and stratified selection. All 134 participants who made returns were chosen to be processed. The sample provided representation of the security sector's different disciplines and overall allowed a wider and stronger, more reliable data set. In addition to the proforma survey questionnaires, 10 interviews were conducted using semi-structured questions. The population as described encompasses all levels in the security sector - top management through to basic guarding – but **not** including chartered professionals (frame sampled separately¹⁵) and are representative

¹⁵ The Institute who sent out invites filtered out CSyP registrants who were also Institute members to avoid double counting.

of all major disciplines/sub-sectors in the security industry country wide.

The second sample frame with a much smaller overall population was derived as follows:

- **The Chartered Security Professionals Register (CSyP)** – *currently there are 283 registrants (<https://www.charterdsecurityprofessional.org>¹⁶). The Chartered Security Professionals Register was established under a Royal Charter issued to the Worshipful Company of Security Professionals in 2011. The mission is to maintain internationally recognised standards of competence and commitment in protective security for the public benefit and to certify practitioners in the field as Chartered Security Professionals (CSyP).*
 - Random Sampled by survey – 283 (full population).
 - Survey returns received – 59 (21% of population).
 - Interviews conducted (volunteers) - 10.

All CSyP registrants were invited to complete a survey questionnaire and some volunteered for interview. The total number of surveys received was 59. For interviews a semi-structured format was incorporated. Chartered registrants come from all security disciplines, including cyber, and represent the upper echelons both academically and practically, of all the UK security disciplines. One of their professional features is that the Regulator (CSPRA) can strike off a registrant. The chartered fraternity also have been formally recognised and endorsed by the UK Security Services and as such they provide a suitable sample frame for top senior and director level security practitioners who have established credentials.¹⁷

The stratification provided by these two sample frames provided for comparative analysis both statistically and for various opinions and viewpoints and using MAXQDA it was

¹⁶ This figure was listed on the CSyP Register website on 1 Nov 2024 (likely increased since then).

¹⁷ Note - The design of survey questionnaires was similar for both frames and interviews for the above sample frames and only differed in preamble.

possible for both sample frames to be easily combined to offer the analytical opportunity for an overarching holistic analysis of the wider security population. As is usual a pilot study for each sample frame was conducted to ensure all collection instruments were fit for purpose and easily understood by recipients without any ambiguity or over complexity. The pilot also helped identify early data quality issues that may have arisen. Only minor adjustments were necessary before full data collection was made.

3.14 Sampling Calculations

3.14.1 Surveys for SyI and CSyP Sample Frames (Figures combined)

It was important to achieve a sufficient and reliable representative size and cross section of participants in the survey element to enable some statistical reliability and accuracy. This was to ensure an acceptable confidence level in the data, and which did not give rise to false analytical interpretations. The calculations made to ensure this were based on the 2 sample populations and although basic were effective and are discussed in the following sections covering both groups and the required sample for both surveys. The full survey population¹⁸ was initially identified as follows:

SyI (Security Institute)	4704	members
CSyP (Chartered Security Professionals)	283	registrants

TOTAL	4987	combined

To initially identify the required optimum sample which would be needed for the total population group a basic Yamane’s test was conducted (Yamane, 1967).

¹⁸ For transparency - it is important to note that although this was considered a population it was in fact a relatively small proportion of the overall UK Security practitioner workforce more generally.

The formula used was:

$$n = N/(1+Ne^2)$$

where:

N = population size

n = corrected sample size

e = margin of error (MOE) - **5% was used**

The full combined population of **4987** was used to identify an optimal adjusted sample. The following calculation was made for the full population ***as if the research were to notionally use that figure*** as the sample frame to identify the optimal 'n' figure:

$$4987/1+4987(0.05^2) = 4987/ 13.47 = \mathbf{n\ 370\ (optimal\ number)}$$

This '**n**' figure produced was considered by the researcher to be either impractical to achieve or more importantly if achievable the large sample volume would be difficult to effectively analyse. This resulted in the pragmatic decision to target **2000** SyI (just under half population) and **283** CSyP (as a full population) totalling **2283** potential participants being invited as the chosen combined sample frame overall.

This framing achieved responses of **134** (SyI) and **59** (CSyP) totalling **n = 193** surveys.

A sense-test using an on-line sample-size generator¹⁹ was conducted for the following parameters to ascertain what MOE and confidence level might be achieved for this 193 response figure. The calculated results were:

Confidence Level - **95%**

Margin of Error (MOE) was calculated as - **6.89%**

¹⁹ Calculator.net - (math section) – sample size generator.

(Sample size used to generate results, n – 193)

Proportion of Population - **46% (2283 of 4987)**

Based on Population (full) Size - **4987**

This suggests that the survey sample obtained had a minimum **95%** confidence level with a **6.9%** MOE which is considered to be within acceptable and mainly reliable statistical parameters for the purpose of this study. A factor that should also be acknowledged is the sample statistics used in this research ***do not include*** the 30 interviews conducted and discussed in the next section, which should be seen as both very significantly additive and complementary to the reliability and validity overall in this study, especially as they were mainly derived from the same overall largely homogenous populations.

Importantly it should also be understood that both populations added together and utilized in this research are themselves only a representation of the whole UK security practitioner ‘population.’ Including security guards this is estimated to be around 262,800 (Statista, 2024) or even up to 500,000 (SSR-Personnel, 2024). However, regarding mainstream protective security disciplines the former is more likely. The majority of this wider population are security guards estimated by Statista (2024) to be around 140,700 and therefore likely representing over half of the security sector in UK²⁰.

3.14.2 Interviews of Volunteers from both Sample Frames

Volunteers from both sample frames allowed for follow up interviews which in effect were random albeit differentiated by whatever motivation was held by the volunteers themselves and which could be borne of altruism, interest, sector service or some other personal reason.

²⁰ Importantly note that few security guards would have participated (as members of an Institute or registrant) and given the national population it is worthy to conclude as such that samples do not fully represent that discipline strata to any valid extent.

The number breakdown of interviews conducted were:

SyI – **10**; CSyP – **10**; Expert/niche - **10** (see later section)

Total – 30 interviews.

These interviews were conducted face to face and a semi-structured format was used but with weighting to open responses to achieve a broader and richer set of data than surveys could provide. The same format question topics were used for both groups and for the expert group some minor variations were made to reflect their specialties. Interview questions and guides are shown at ***Appendices 5*** and ***6***.

The principles of data saturation and segmentation as described by Jones (2023) were used to ensure that sufficient interview numbers were reached, and 30 interviews were considered very sufficient in both segmentation and data criteria. Recurring themes were clearly being presented after approximately 15 interviews and little new data was becoming available after that. This was helped by the groups being fairly homogenous as a whole, despite some stratification in, and by, group selection.

3.14.3 Expert Interviews

Beyond the two main sampling frames discussed, some interviews were sought with prominent security figures such as those sitting at board level in the Security Institute as well as charter registrars past and present, academics, trainers, lawyers, and Chief Executives, most involved in furthering or administering elements of the UK security sector.

Sampling in this instance was non-probabilistic and purposive with some limited snowballing achieved through recommendation of others by those initially selected. All who partook in interviews were volunteers. These interviews represent slightly more bespoke open questioning but were still based on the topics and themes used for the two main sample

frames. These interviews provided useful comparator ideas and were used to highlight differing perceptions within the strata of higher leadership and influencers in and outside the sector offering alternative views, or those that reinforced main sample framed findings. Ten participants were interviewed, and the Ethics Consent form used for this group (and for all other interview samples) is at **Appendix 10**. The question component guide used for the expert sample using both semi and fully open responses is available at **Appendix 6**.

3.15 Processing Data and Analysis

Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) as described by Braun and Clarke (2021a) was the main approach used in this study and is arguably the most widely used analytical tool in qualitative research despite its ongoing development and changing approaches over recent years. In this study, RTA together with some limited qualitative content analysis (QCA), formed the major analytical approach used to make deeper sense of the primary data sets obtained. A critical themed approach was also used for analysis of the literature review. The RTA stages used are shown in Figure 4, but they are not necessarily sequential steps and should be seen as iterative in nature rather than as shown.

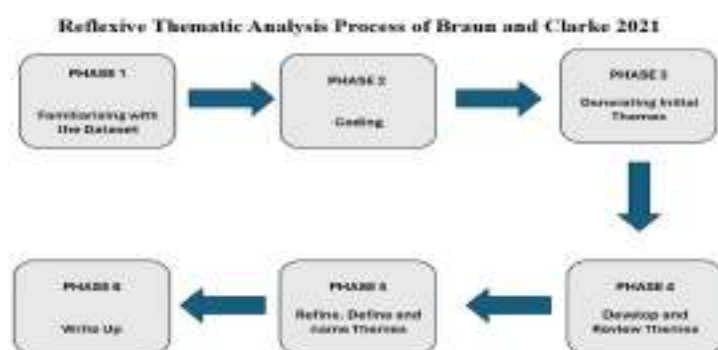


Figure 4 – Reflexive Thematic Analysis Process (Braun and Clarke, 2021a)

For the primary data, a largely reflexive stance was taken using reliable coding techniques aided by MAXQDA analytical software but always resulting in a personal flexible

interpretive approach by the researcher in a reflexive manner. This allowed for identification of emerging patterns and themes in the dataset. RTA is heavily geared to interpretation aimed at the intersections of the dataset, theoretical assumptions in the analysis made, and importantly the skill of the researcher in doing these with the text data sourced being suited to the concepts of thematic reflexivity, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2019).

The smaller amount of content analysis used was to explore or identify ‘consistencies’ and specific ‘data contexts’ as described by Zhang and Wildemuth (2009). Because QCA has a ‘counting’ element and edges towards a more positivistic philosophy it is suitable for adding extra insights from the texts used and complementing the overall qualitative evaluative assessment. QCA was especially useful for highlighting frequencies and to help gauge importance of these in any aspect under consideration (Walliman, 2011, p.86). In a similar way to how RTA codes were used, the QCA codes and analysis tools provided by the MAXQDA platform made separation and understanding of the differing approaches much easier.

3.16 Ethical Considerations

The overarching ethical consideration practiced in this research was to do ‘no harm,’ a principle translated from ‘*primum non nocere*’ (Scheuermann and Evans, 1997) dating back to Hippocrates and ‘*Of the Epidemics*’ now associated with medical ethics. Interestingly this aptly chimes with the context of this research, as it is a central tenet and defining feature of the professional makeup of the medical profession (Schmerling, 2020). This research was conducted at all times within ethical guidelines as practiced and understood within UK (BPS, 2021; UKRI, 2024), this included complying with data protection legal requirements.

All sample populations were volunteers and willingly participated with informed consent. There was no identifiable harm either to the researcher or those participants involved, and all

participants were treated with professional respect and appropriate boundaries were maintained. Anonymity of participants was, and is, assured. Confidentiality is also guaranteed and there was no deceit practiced in obtaining responses and other data. The key ethical components and issues listed below were fully complied with including all SSBM requirements:

- Obtaining informed consent before interview and survey and explaining how the data was to be used and managed.
- Observing confidentiality in reporting – full compliance by researcher made.
- Independence of research maintained with no conflict of interest.²¹
- Integrity, openness, and transparency was maintained throughout all participant dealings.
- Right of participants to withdraw was explained to all interviewees.
- Voluntary participation was ensured.
- Confirmed destruction of any identifying participant detail after research complete (this follows conferment of Doctorate).
- Communication was kept within the scope of the research practice.
- Risks were identified and minimized.
- Participants were provided with researcher contact details for any potential query or redress and in the case of interviewees a SSBM email address also.

Lastly it is incumbent on the researcher to be honest about any shortcomings and be open in his approach eschewing any ego-defences and/or deception. In terms of disclosure the researcher is a retired security executive and currently a tutor in academia. He is a Chairman Emeritus of the Security Institute, and a past Panel Registrar of the UK Chartered Security Register. With this background clearly extra effort had to be made in this research to remain objective in both how the research was conducted and in how data was interpreted, given the

²¹ No funding or cash payments were used or received in this research.

intimate previous (but not current) involvement in the sector. However, this background did help the researcher understand the experiential security issues with arguably better granularity as well as more broadly and allowed for more informed reflexivity of the many germane details of the problem from a both a practitioner and educationalist perspective. In many ways, by always endeavouring to ensure objectivity and lack of bias, this prior work background likely assisted the reflexive approach to this research and on balance outweighed any potential drawbacks.

3.17 Design Limitations

One of the major limitations in any qualitative study, no matter how empirical it might strive to be is the potential subjectivity of all involved. This, together with possible flawed representativity, or researcher and participant bias can easily detract from research validity or reliability. Data collected was perforce an amalgam of participant perceptions which were subsequently analysed and interpreted to derive deeper sense and meaning to address the research objectives. The interpretation by the researcher, if not rigorously conducted with due cognizance to biases (himself included) and within the philosophical perspective being employed could lead to poor findings and the researcher remained aware of this and checked for open mindedness and objectivity frequently.

To help mitigate the potential dangers the research ensured a strong philosophical perspective was understood and an appropriate methodological framework employed. Some mixed methodology and triangulation techniques helped improve the validity of the findings, together with identifying appropriate representative and different sub-populations chosen to better achieve some greater objectivity and reliability. In addition, the research endeavoured to retain an unbiased inductive approach, something underscored by RTA methodology (Braun and Clarke, 2021b). Whilst the data collected relied on the honesty of participants (and researcher) the likelihood of the views being both relatively reliable and valid, especially

when there was consistency through the triangulation present, should be considered quite high. Limitations identified or encountered in the findings stage are discussed later in the research for both ethical and practical considerations.

3.18 Conclusion

Overall the research was conducted within an empirical qualitative framework driven by primary data and approached from a critical realist perspective using an evaluative approach and mainly inductive reasoning, although some ‘informal’ mixed methods were used where they were compatible as outlined previously. The interpreted results of this research, derived from thematic and content analysis are presented in the next chapter and include the analysis of the primary data, obtained from the various instruments described in this methodology chapter, as well as some comparative discussion of the primary findings in relation to the literature review outlined and summarised earlier.

CHAPTER 4

AN ANALYTICAL PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS AND RESULTS

“Data is the plural of anecdote” (Daniel P. Moynihan, 1997)

4.1 Introduction

The findings and results of the primary research in this study obtained from various security groupings and experts in related contributory fields hopefully represent much more than anecdotal information as expressed by Moynihan (1997). This is whether analysed through a qualitative lens or that derived from the statistical analyses also present. The qualitative element of this research relies heavily on an interpretative approach and is conducted through RTA and to a lesser extent QCA and therefore prone to some subjectivity. The additional mixed methods used both in the statistical interpretation and through the primary data collection instruments mitigates some potential problems. Results derived from two main sample frame surveys and three groups of interviews are presented in this chapter in thematic fashion and overall relate both sequentially and in focal content with the objectives described in Chapter 1. An overview of respondent socio-demographics initially will be helpful to contextualise the later analysed primary data.

4.2 Respondent Information – Socio-Demographics

The randomly sampled survey respondents represented a wide security practitioner demographic and were broadly representative of all disciplines and overall produced the expected spread. One demographic which was less representative of the national security practitioner population was the age group and years of experience. This was because the samples were derived from a membership institute and chartered register (seniors in the sector) which naturally and understandably have a membership base of older and more

experienced practitioners with few very junior or young front line security officers. Usually practitioners may be more motivated to join or seek some institutional involvement (and possibly complete surveys) only when advancement to team leadership, management or some specialisation occurs. The proportional absence of much of this demographic in the research whilst important to acknowledge does not overly affect the veracity of the findings when considered in the context of the study. The research base required articulated views from a population arguably more motivated to consider the professional concept and likely to be more cognizant of any professional understanding of the sector. The age spread is shown in Figure 5.

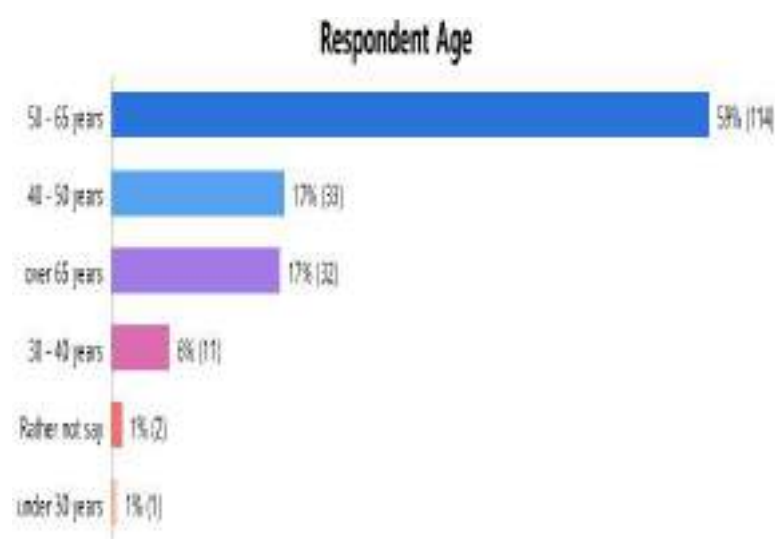


Figure 5 – Age Percentage Spread (n:193) of Respondents.

Overall 76% of participants were in the 40-65 age group which was to be expected, however, more surprisingly there were 17% aged over 65 years, likely indicating the more modern trend to later retirement in UK or possibly part time working as part of graduated retirement. This aspect also highlights the likely alignment of those practitioners reflecting on many years of experience in relation to the topic with a stronger motivation to discuss and put forward views in research studies such as this one.

The years of practitioner experience also corresponded to the age range and are shown in Figure 6 tending to support the motivational aspect mentioned and it is clear that almost 80% of participants in the two survey sets have over 15 years of service and many at relatively senior level.

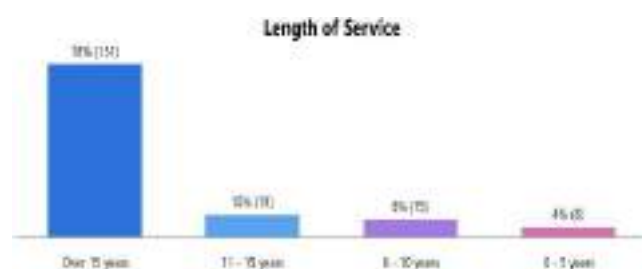


Figure 6 – Respondent Years of Service in Sector (n:193).

The spread of different sectors served by practitioners also gives an expected but welcome business cross section of participants. This breakdown is depicted in Figure 7.

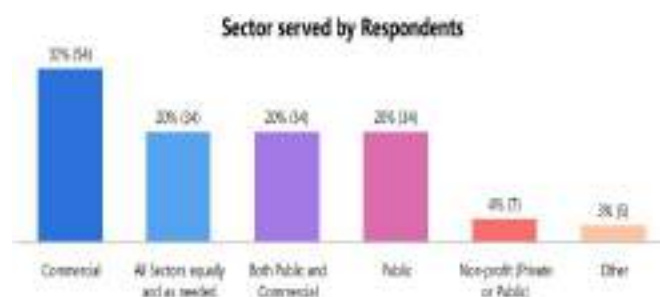


Figure 7 – Sectors served by Respondents (n:193).

The spread clearly indicates that over 70% work within the commercial and public sector with a strong tendency towards commercial work (as much as 32% uniquely commercial) with only 20% operating only in the public sector. The numbers also highlight the propensity for many senior security practitioners to be part of a consultancy or them operating with a security company or provider which services multiple sectors.

Females are historically under-represented in the security sector and Figure 8 provides the gender breakdown of survey participants; 10% which matches favourably the 10.83% derived from a 2021 national survey (WTD, 2024) where it was estimated that 41,000 workers were female compared with 378,543 male²².

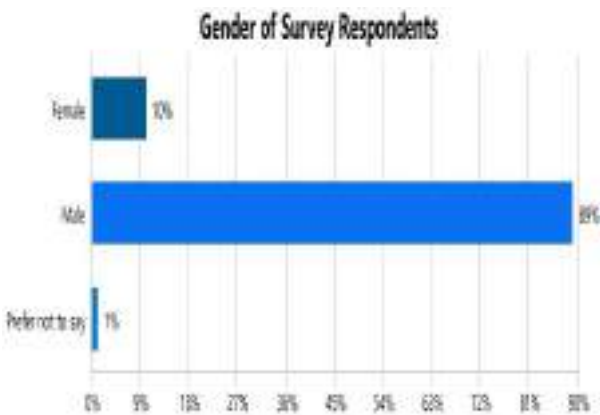


Figure 8 – Sector Gender Spread (n:193).

The ratio in gender representation is again as might be expected and provides some assurance of the demographic and general sampling reliability overall which aimed to provide appropriate representation of many practitioners serving several business sectors or public ones with a small number of non-profit and other ‘niche’ organisations also in the mix.

The operating UK locations for survey respondents are depicted in Figure 9 showed a conventional and representative mixed coverage of geographical areas including some practitioners currently operating overseas. The 14% operating mainly from home (anywhere in UK) likely reflects the consultancy and individual operator scenarios or even post COVID homeworking. It was a little surprising that London only accounted for 23% of respondents together with only 8% indicating they operated within another non-London city environment. However, the geographic demographic reflects a very clear depiction of differing security

²² This survey was for Front Line Female/Male workers only and so excludes other female and male security staff in management and other roles. In cyber the figure has been estimated to be closer to 20% or more.

environmental working which was considered a good representative base to be noted contextually when assessing other primary qualitative data.



Figure 9 – Location of Survey Respondents (n:193).

Other socio-demographic information will be introduced later within the analysis of the data as it applies to themes being analysed and will provide extra context and understanding to the findings for the objectives which follow.

Structural Note regarding Analysis of the Objectives:

*The continuing analysis which focusses on the objectives also draws on interview response content and open segments from surveys. To ensure such response quotes are not overly structurally disruptive to the analysis a large selection of quotes are provided in **Appendix 9** to substantiate the more summative styled analytical approach in the next sections. However, the occasional quote is used in the narrative where considered helpful.*

4.3 Constituent Elements of a Profession and Security Perceptions (Objective 1)

The literary review highlighted the understanding of what constitutes a profession to be very much conceptual rather than strictly definitional, although Australia made a good attempt at codifying these concepts in definitional form (ACP, 2003). It is no surprise that many

respondents both in survey and interview had varying and sometimes quite different views on what they understood a profession to be. However, the majority of respondents frequently identified the need for qualification, knowledge, recognition, and experience as main determinants and as Figure 10 also shows many characteristics as discussed in the literature review were present.

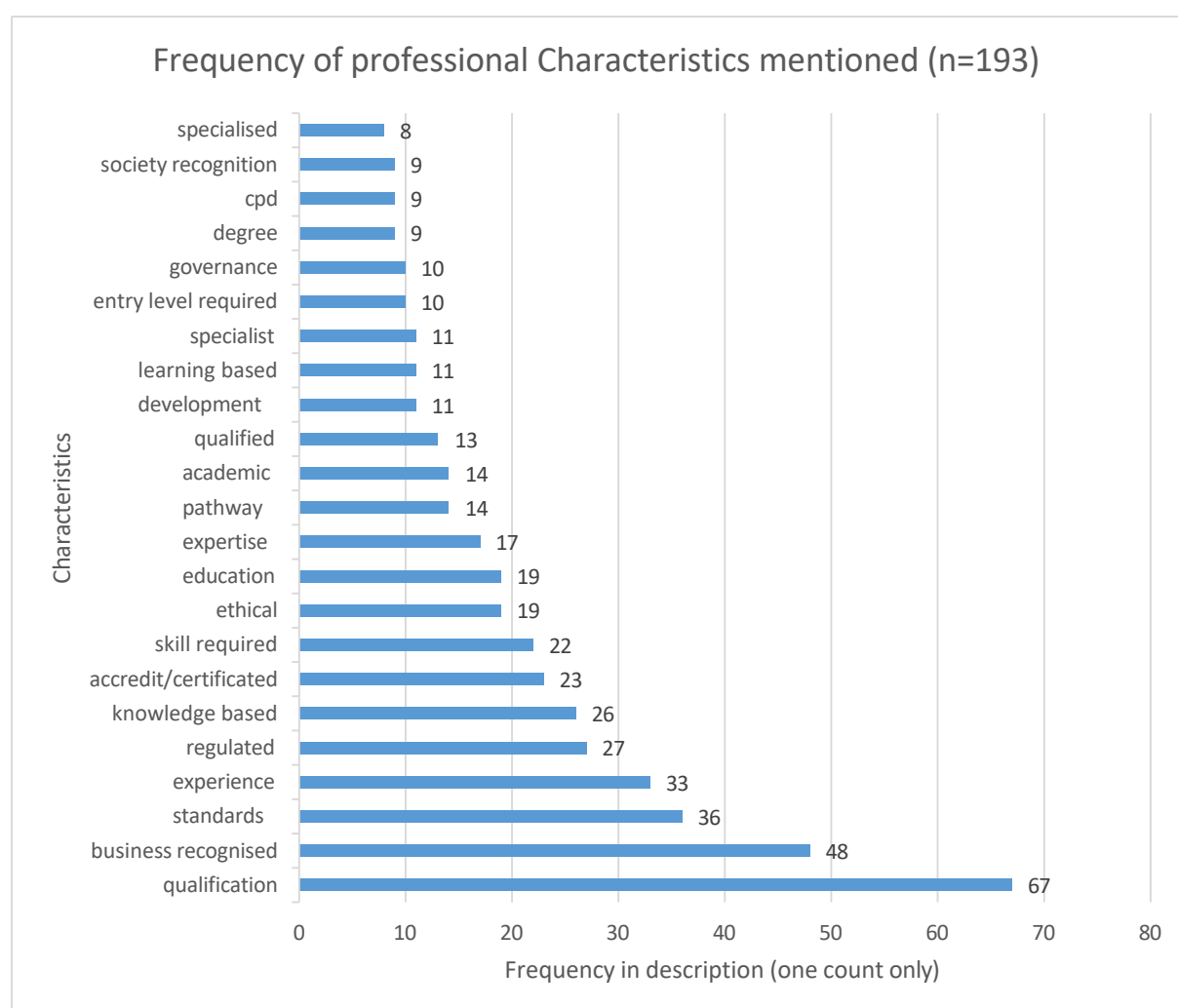


Figure 10 – Frequency of Characteristics used in Participant Descriptions (n: 193 surveys).

Perhaps more significant was that ‘specialisation’ and ‘societal recognition’ featured much less frequently, the latter presumably resulting from the newer pragmatic approaches to employment and professions. Unsurprisingly the results overall tended towards definitions

rather than anything too conceptual but yet covered a wide spread of accepted and sometimes disparate characteristics spread across the participant range in varying degrees. One quite comprehensive survey response included several characteristics:

In my view a profession is defined by several characteristics. Firstly, there should be some element of training, learning or qualification. To be considered a professional you should add value (at least theoretically) in a way that requires others to consult you for subject matter expertise. Secondly, professions are in my view less transient than occupations. Professionals may change employer or develop their skills and grow but wholesale career changing is not a hallmark generally. Finally, there is a recognition element. (S58, Pos. 1-4).²³

Many other responses were relatively short:

Recognised as experts in their field who have legitimate academic qualifications and are relied upon for professional guidance and accountable for their work and behaviour. (C57, Pos 1).

However, even such short responses often contained several elements of the expected professional make-up; this second one suggesting a level of learning, reliability, accountability (regulation) and ethical conduct as constituting a profession. In general, the survey data clearly showed a basic understanding of many major professional functional or trait components throughout the spread of respondents with many identifying multiple characteristics. However, very few pointed to the social factors and the ‘grand bargain’ which featured heavily in the literature and the more altruistic elements so intertwined with the older professions in UK. Those few that did articulate the societal link most usually referred to it in relation to some aspect of ethics:

Professionals are committed to ethical conduct, continuous learning, and prioritizing the interests of clients or society. (S115, Pos. 1).

However, when answering the specific question focussed on that item in isolation from any definition of a profession, the large majority of all survey respondents also described ethical

²³ The codes are C = Chartered, S = Institute, E = Expert for all coded respondents/participants.

standards as a high priority. This possibly denotes a more functionalist and compartmentalised approach to the topic by many practitioners but with them likely still understanding the human values associated with security practice. This view including the lesser focus on society by the respondents emphasises and aligns with the current ‘expert’ trend in newer professions and reinforces the idea that the ‘grand bargain’ is changing.

4.3.1 Professions and Security – how the Relationship is acknowledged

The responses from both survey and interviews suggest that it is the trait factors recognised by businesses that dominate security practitioner thinking on the sector being a profession, rather than any notion of public service or altruism. This was particularly so for non-chartered practitioners but the difference in emphasis between SyI and CSyP samples was not significantly marked. This is underscored not only by the frequencies of key words found in the survey-views on what constitutes a profession but from later coding and analysis of all interviews. Although not a surprise it does illustrate the likelihood reflected in many stereotypical and historical views that security might often be considered a career but not necessarily a traditional profession. In the latter altruism would be seen as central to the professional identity. Ironically, this is at the same time as altruism is decreasing in importance in the established professions as noted in the literature.

The primary research responses regarding categories will be considered in turn to gauge how the sector views professions and the concepts involved so as to identify how the sector relates to the professional determinants as well as the main characteristics and their frequency. This is to later ascertain what pathway to recognition might be the most appropriate. Logically it should be no surprise that knowledge and experience sit at the top of the perceived ‘recognition tree’ for current security practitioners. Excluding perhaps expertise, this generally aligns with the functional and traitist approach overall despite the lack of factors such as social prominence and altruism in responses.

4.3.2 Knowledge Expertise and Experience – a recognised Triumvirate

Responses from all participants both in survey and interview stress the importance of knowledge, experience, education, and to a slightly lesser degree, expertise and certification in establishing security as a recognised profession. Views coalesced around professions, including any future security entity, being characterised by the sector needing a UBK. However, respondents did not necessarily focus on the concept of control of an UBK and ownership. Further, they often stated that this should be obtained through formal education and training, although conversely there was some lack of agreement in relation to how this knowledge should be derived - academically or vocationally. Indeed a small proportion, especially those without a degree, believed that experience trumps formal education in this respect. This is whilst many opined that progressive training courses with an experiential mix was perhaps the best route to gain knowledge, eschewing the need for a degree. However, most participants agreed the main characteristics and need for a profession were qualifications and associated knowledge. This can be seen in the quote that follows where the respondent combines both elements:

I like to subscribe to the idea of the subject should be qualified experienced person. So a balance of qualification as in the learning of the skill set in a, you know, in an academic sense (E7, Pos. 4).

This approach is an expected juxtaposition and points to some pragmatism in any way forward. A very small minority, mainly from the Security Institute membership, did not necessarily think being qualified with credentials was essential. These opinions will naturally have been largely informed by individual personal experience or background and perhaps also represent culturally constructed beliefs. All have some validity depending on the particular specific focal context on knowledge and which particular security discipline within the sector is being discussed or even more generally on how knowledge in a security profession is perceived.

4.3.2.1 First Degree and Security Qualifications - Considerations for professional Entry

Over one third of all respondents see a degree-level education, particularly in a related security subject as important for establishing credibility and competence. Replies were inconsistent regarding whether a first degree should be the minimum entry to membership of a profession or for later career development stages. Perhaps more significantly Figure 11 also shows that nearly half of respondents believed a degree was unimportant to a security profession.

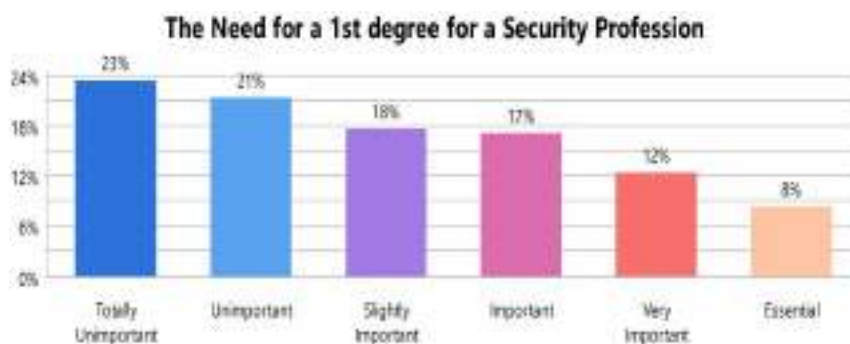


Figure 11 – The Need for a First Degree in a Security Profession (n:193).

This finding illustrates that for many practitioners a first degree is not universally considered essential for entry into the security profession, whilst perhaps acknowledging that they might be, important in the overall mix. Many argued that a degree demonstrates intellectual capacity, critical thinking, and communication skills which are essential for professional practice as illustrated in this respondent's view:

A degree is a must, whether a first degree or masters. I believe without a degree security will never be accepted at the top table of professionals or the wider public. Experience follows in any professional discipline but to attain the highest standing in a given profession one must be expected and indeed demonstrate a high degree of academic learning. Quite different to a trade (C48, Pos. 5)

This response reflects the views of many and poses a convincing argument for higher status

and comparison with other professions. However, others cautioned that overly rigid academic requirements could exclude talented individuals with relevant experience but who lacked formal qualifications. This is not necessarily an irreconcilable position as both views could be accommodated in some educational equivalence and professional entry matrix.

Analysis on this topic suggests many respondents think the more pragmatic stance is to acknowledge the diverse pathways to a career in security and even entry to the security sector in mid-career - from military and policing as examples. Ideally this should only be when entrants demonstrate competence and professionalism, sometimes difficult perhaps without certification. Importantly this is something which may not always be acknowledged or obvious to potential employers. Some have been historically predisposed to believe policing and military experiential backgrounds are synonymous with requirements in modern security practice, which is not necessarily the case.

Many of the experienced practitioners who participated in this research have already achieved successful careers without any need for a formal university degree and have managed this often by leveraging practical skills, on-the-job training, and vocational qualifications. It was a little surprising that even with such backgrounds a sizeable proportion of them advocated first degrees as invaluable and required as an entry point for a membership based profession. Whilst there are some polarised views in the first degree debate it was abundantly clear that the vast majority believed strongly that security qualifications were the main educational prerequisite for security to be a future profession or even for the present evolutionary trajectory. This ironically now encompasses academic professional degrees right up to doctorate level, suggesting eventually there might be some convergence of opinion on this issue. The responses shown in Figure 12 indicate 90% of respondents feel that security qualifications are important in the context of security as a profession whether they include professionally related degrees or not.

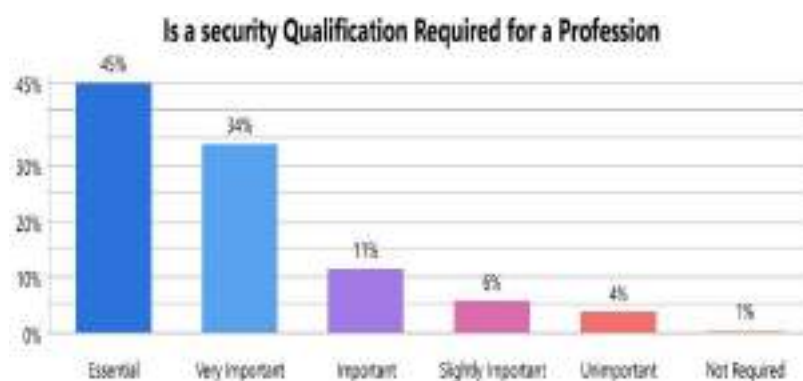


Figure 12 – Is a Security Qualification needed for a Security Profession?

The non-degree approach has worked well in the current security professional landscape and survives still as a common route especially for mid career transfer into the sector. However, this is becoming less so as the ratio between degree and non-degree holders entering the workplace has altered sharply as described earlier in the literature review. There are also socio-cultural drivers pushing the move towards degree status for many employment areas and even in the security sector this tendency edges closer especially within management or for those at technical levels. The increasing recognition that a degree can provide a good foundation of critical thinking instilled through academic rigour is something which complements practical experience especially in relation to professional degrees. Many view them as providing a suitable foundation for direct entry to a career. Some mentioned that even post graduate security related degrees are gaining greater traction for mid to senior levels:

The nature of the industry has tended toward middle to senior individuals obtaining a postgrad degree (C57, Pos. 5).

This suggests some motivated practitioners view education beyond a bachelor degree as important in their profession as a progressive move to assist their careers.

The surveys and interviews suggest that more generally professional degrees could provide a

more pragmatic way of 'squaring the circle' in relation to the contrasting viewpoints derived from respondents who have such differing understandings of degree efficacy. Whilst a degree may not be an absolute prerequisite, it can enhance credibility and access particularly at more senior levels. The key then is likely to be a balanced educational approach where an evolving 'mix and match' progressive framework is adopted. This could work in the spirit of modern flexibility and pragmatism and might offer a very good way forward for a new profession such as security.

Interestingly the security education profiles of respondents themselves indicate this favoured mix and is portrayed in Figure 13.

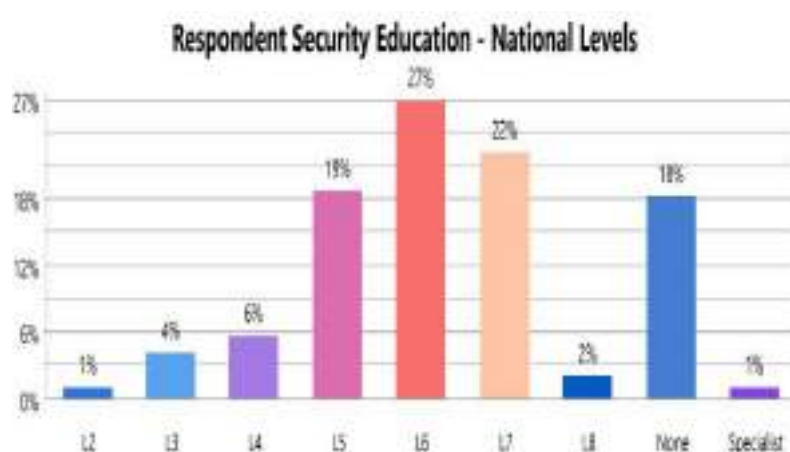


Figure 13 – Respondent Security Qualification Levels L1 to L8 (n=193).

Here it shows that a few survey respondents have security related doctorates (L8) and many survey participants are educated to degree level (both L6 and the higher L7, amounting to nearly 50%). The lack of L4 respondents, which would include the new UK security apprentice route²⁴, is noticeable. However, if the scheme proves successful this is likely to increase greatly as a security educational level in the sector.

²⁴ Apprenticeships generally are gaining traction in UK and a new Level 4 Security one is being launched.

4.3.2.2 Merit – Specialist Knowledge and Accreditation with Certification

Evaluation of the literature indicates that accreditation and certification would be important factors for the knowledge equation in the newer merit-leaning business landscape whether that be degree based or by other educational attainment. This in essence shifts the focus perhaps more to specialised expert knowledge but also towards extensive and extended training including CPD. The shift featured highly and favourably in responses with this response clearly observing that CPD is viewed as vital for a future security profession:

And it's different for everybody. But CPD should be a vital element of any profession and that's...yeah...okay (.CI5, Pos. 73).

This is a typical response from the majority of those interviewed and surveyed and should come as no surprise given the push over the last ten years in the sector to develop formalised ongoing training.

Most views provide a strong weighting towards expertise as a merit form evidenced by the uptake in recent years of UK security courses and professional degrees. Respondents, especially in interview, from both sample groups indicated that any security professional should be required to have specialised knowledge and participate in ongoing development. This indicates the need for appropriate education and training leading to accreditation and certification which the overwhelming majority see as demonstrating a high level of expertise. Typical responses were:

*Something that requires a professional qualification and credentials to practice.
(S127, pos 4).*

with the next quote incorporating several knowledge characteristics such as training, licencing, and credentials showing the understanding many practitioners have on this central issue and the need for it to feature in any security construct:

It (the profession) requires specialist knowledge, extensive training and often a formal qualification or licence to practice. It is characterised by needing a high degree of autonomy, a commitment to serving the public good, and adherence to a code of ethics.(C50, Pos. 1).

Clearly expertise is seen as something perhaps more professionally tangible than pure academic attainment by many practitioners. Whilst not mutually exclusive it emphasises the growing meritocracy being witnessed within UK in both the emerging and established professions. The security sector would do well to mirror any merit based drive in its own professionalisation.

4.3.2.3 Educational Pathways

Responses both in survey and interview indicate generally that multiple routes to professional status should be available, and across the whole spectrum of views much mention was made of L4 apprenticeships and even the L6 degree apprenticeships emerging in UK. These pathways were discussed alongside inclusion of industry-specific certifications, and opportunities for continued professional development, something which is widely available currently if membership of one of the representative bodies is sought. Clearly respondents see the better focus as ensuring security professionals possess the necessary competencies. This also appears to be irrespective of whether they have been acquired through formal education or alternative means. The following quotes clearly articulate educational and career pathway needs but are inclusive of diverse learning:

A clear avenue and route from school with recognised qualifications, internships etc. (S55, Pos. 1).

As a security manager I believe it requires a structured learning path that requires education, training, and certification, this showing a recognised standard of practice. It also shows commitment to ethical standards, continuous professional development, and being a membership of a professional organisation.(C34, Pos. 1).

These typical responses articulate a very thoughtful overview on the diverse elements of

pathway development needed for a security profession and bode well for the future trajectory. The national push to upgrade and increase apprenticeship routes in all sectors of business is mirrored in the security sector. Many of the responses supported the apprentice route and were cognisant of the cultural or pragmatic shifts occurring. Perhaps these are no more than an evolutionary rebalancing which endeavours to identify and meet societal or business expectations and needs. This rebalancing was also prominent within the Susskindian forecasts (Susskind and Susskind, 2022) and is something for which they advocate.

Ironically, the move to apprenticeships in UK replicates ‘trade’ and professional educational divides from decades previously. This is likely intended to be a clear move away from pure academic qualification, certainly up to and likely including degree level. However, this might yet be a false dichotomy as it is likely the new apprentice curricula and frameworks will not be based around ‘craft’ skills but targeted more towards management. Even at L4 the greater focus will be supervisory or technical practice in particular specialisms. In any event it points to fast paced change and some developing ephemerality in business generally regarding professional profiles. Most respondents commented that security is not immune from these shifts and the tenor of responses suggests the sector in most ways appears to welcome them. A significant number in interview suggested that a range of qualifications, including vocational and industry-specific certifications, should be accepted as alternatives to a first degree. The overall sentiment in responses was that there should be multiple pathways into the security profession, with a focus on developing competence and professionalism rather than just academic credentials.

4.3.2.4 Monopoly Gatekeeping and Commodification of Knowledge

The literature highlighted that there needs to be not only a strong emphasis on the importance of education, practical experience and training but also a gatekeeping and regulatory system. This points to the likely need for security to establish entry requirements, qualifications, and a

defined career pathway with formalised processes. Ostensibly this would be to ensure high standards are maintained. Some responses were quite forthright in their views such as this one:

The (security) profession must be regulated and have strict, enforceable barriers to entry (C41, Pos. 3).

However, the general view was although some entry level condition is required a degree of flexibility should be allowed. Some sensitivity was also apparent in the interviews relating to the balance to be struck in gatekeeping. It became quite clear that the appetite exists for monitored and controlled access to any future security profession if approached in a sensible and balanced way.

There was a general consensus in the primary data that some form of minimum entry standard or gatekeeping would be necessary to uphold professional standards which in turn links to professional status and membership of the profession. Suggestions for professional entry ranged from L4 to L6 qualifications on the national framework with a large minority advocating for degree level entry only (L6) as highlighted earlier. If a matricised framework was adopted this could perhaps lead to associate entry (e.g. L 4/5) and later full membership (L6) similar to many professions such as engineering (Engineering Council, 2025).

Concerns were raised by many participants regarding potential monopolisation of sector knowledge and the need for a UBK. A notable number indicated they were clearly conflicted on how, or if, a UBK should be controlled solely within the purview of a new security profession. This included some reservations on the need for external and/or internal oversight to ensure standards. Conversely the majority of responses at all levels clearly endorsed the need for regulation of both performance and ethical standards and this is discussed in more detail in a later section. More generally there was an overall consensus that establishing and

curating a central UBK, potentially through academic partnerships with a sector council or institute was a good concept if it could be achieved. The idea garnered mainly favourable responses but there were some limited reservations about a potential for a less ‘democratic’ system and loss of external access to security knowledge. However, the majority of interviewees could foresee threats and dangers in wide general access to some sensitive security knowledge or open databases. They noted the potential for public danger and misinformation which in some circumstances could also damage professional integrity. This democratisation tension is further discussed later in the research.

Overall, the responses highlighted the complex balance required in professionalising security and the need for education and certification to raise standards. This is whilst endeavouring to avoid exclusivity and continuing to recognise the value of practical training and experience. It suggests that some multifaceted learning pathways need to be formally developed as an appropriate way forward. This would be a challenging approach incorporating multiple and diverse certification and professional entry points. There would need to be accepted (entry) thresholds established with expertise as the overarching driver factored into any professional security model. Regulation of these standards also needs consideration, together with any required ethical component.

4.3.3 Regulation Licencing and Ethics

Regulation of standards and ethics featured highly as a requisite in the literature as well as the primary responses. Despite the current lack of a full regulatory system in the sector, responses both in survey and interview highlight the need for a governing body or professional association to regulate the security industry. This would be to set standards, and address issues of malpractice or incompetence. This would be associated with clear entry requirements, ethical codes, and disciplinary procedures, not dissimilar to other fields such as law, medicine, or accounting, mentioned frequently by many. Such views are reflected in

Figures 14 and 15 and showed little to no dissention for both regulation and ethical underpinning in any new security profession or even in the existing framework.

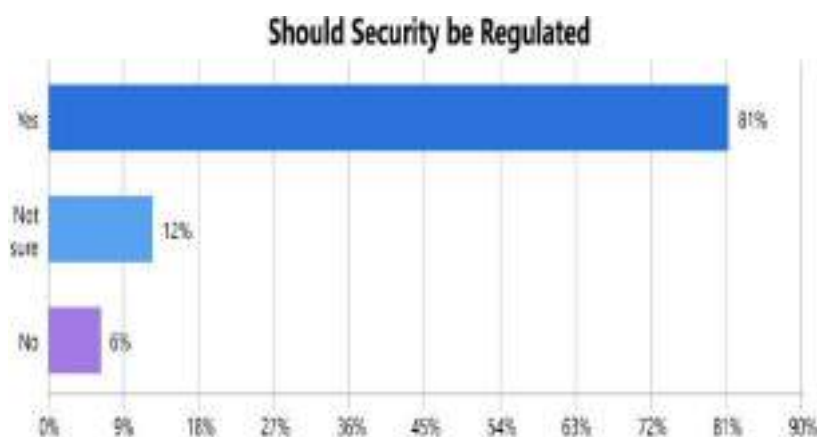


Figure 14 – Should Security be Regulated (n=193).

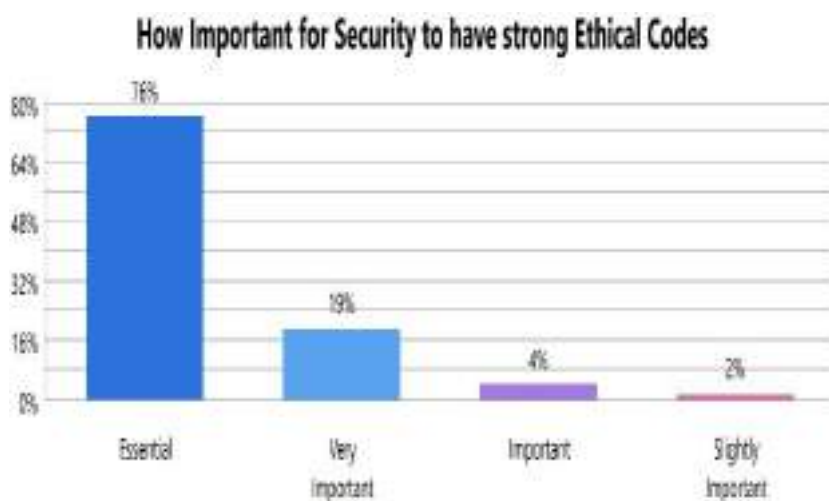


Figure 15 – The Importance of Security having strong ethical codes (n=193).

Similar views were adopted by respondents regarding licencing/certification for practitioners and the services offered. However, as Figure 16 shows the difference here was a split in whether all or certain disciplines in the sector require to be licenced (50% for and 50% disagreeing).

The licencing views reflect the diversity of functions and levels within security. They suggest that individual respondents are cognisant that many practitioners need to be licenced for quality control or perhaps gatekeeping purposes. However, half of respondents feel not all services or functions need such licencing or related certification.

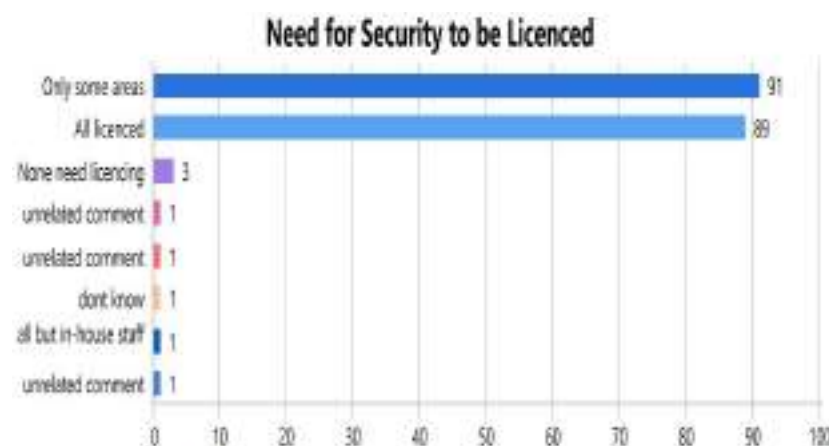


Figure 16 – The Need for Security (Services/Individuals) to be licenced (actual numbers, n=193).

This indicates that some initiative would be required to determine exactly which individuals, services or sector discipline would need to be licenced. Intuitively this is likely to be better weighted more towards forward facing practitioners and hence linked to actual delivery and client interface including consultants within a regulated framework as advised by Gill, (2007). Further, given the mid-point split in views on this it is likely that a greater spread and amount of licencing would be needed and considered desirable in regulatory terms.

4.3.3.1 Ethics, Integrity and the Security Perspective

Ethics or integrity were not necessarily linked directly with a social perspective. However, the importance of instilling a strong ethical foundation and regulatory framework within the security profession became a clear theme. The great majority interviewed or surveyed in open responses clearly emphasised this aspect. Views were strongly in accord with much of the literature base regarding ethics and related integrity as core components of a profession, even

if not directly associated with the Susskindian ‘grand bargain.’ One particularly short but incisive quote from a chartered professional was:

Self-regulate or expect legal regulation. (C7, Pos. 7).

This pithy observation goes to the heart of one transitional tension evident in professions. The comment insinuates a strong trend towards mandated external regulation and subsequent loss of internal oversight. Achieving the correct balance is key to the new security profession.

Some comments were focussed on the importance of codes of conduct, and disciplinary procedures to maintain standards including to a lesser extent public trust indicating some small acknowledgement of the social dimension. Further, these views possibly originate more from their own individual values or the impact trust may have on business efficacy rather than any overt external projection of the social contract and morality. However, some respondents acknowledged this societal aspect and clearly understood or agreed the need. It is likely that overall perceptions on regulation requirements are based more on tangible pragmatic or intrinsic drivers as much as any cultural component. Importantly, responses showed little consensus on what disciplinary powers a regulator (internal or external) should hold for control of ethical or performance standards in order to assure clients, government or the general public. This is at a time of decreasing trust and diminution of the ‘grand bargain.’ There is potential for a thorny debate in the sector on this aspect and it would need to be evidence driven to resolve the necessary components well.

4.3.3.2 Internal and external Regulation – a Conundrum

A reoccurring theme identified in the literature pointed to internal regulation being a significant hallmark of a profession. Paradoxically, in UK the general trend in more recent years has been towards stronger and more external regulation, following in Australian footsteps, but with perhaps a mix of internal and external regulation developing for some

‘expert’ professions²⁵. Security would need to seek the right balance between these. The remarkable similarity of views in survey results shown in Figure 17 highlights the importance of both external and internal regulation and the symbiotic linkage to licencing.

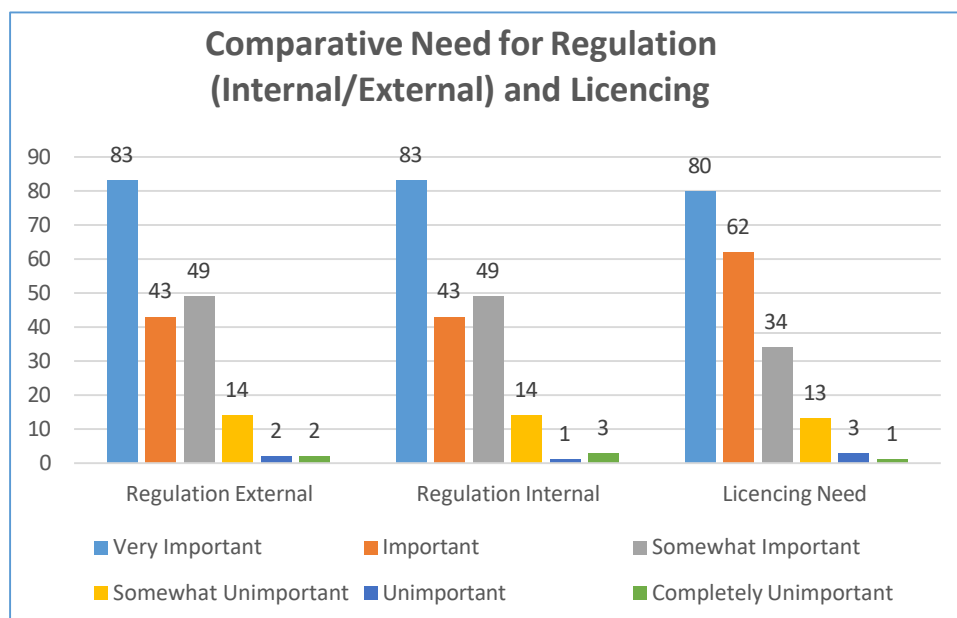


Figure 17 – Comparative needs for Regulation and Licencing (actual numbers with n=193).

The consistent high importance noted for all three was perhaps quite unexpected. However, the views garnered for which practitioners or what security activity should actually be licenced is much less consistent as was shown earlier in Figure 16. This quote outlines well the general thinking on why regulation is important:

Then again, there's no compliance regulation. There's no governance, no accepted standards, which then leads people open to the very, very least, incompetence and the worst case, all manner of fraud, mis selling personal interests and people getting hurt, assets being lost or damaged.(SI9, Pos. 8).

This comment sets out a good case for regulation but interestingly this respondent and many

²⁵ Examples it is suggested are Accountancy and H&S.

others do not differentiate whether that should be external or internal oversight. It is likely however they were referring to external regulation as this currently exists in limited form through the SIA and would be more familiar to respondents.

External regulation as implemented in Australia is something likely to be replicated more greatly in UK. It highlights the potential for inherent State restrictions affecting overall autonomy of a professional body and in this case security. Overall respondents in this study seemed largely unaware of this potential drawback, and might not even consider it to be one, although some responses identified the extra burden that greater and more focussed regulation could bring. There was, however, a minority understanding and reluctant acceptance of some loss of freedom of action which acknowledges loss of full autonomy. Nevertheless, the views concerning internal and external regulation were very similar and were perceptively discussed almost as one and the same thing, where the reality of course is quite different. In general responses indicated that both would be mostly welcomed.

At this stage it would be unwise to draw significant strong conclusions on the required balance of any new security regulatory framework as the two sets of responses were so similar, by almost equal statistical weighting, between the requirements for internal and external regulation. This makes any reliable analysis beyond the insights explained already very speculative. Deeper and more targeted research would be required to better determine the optimum balance and repercussion of internal and external regulation. However, in some respects those in security would not be the arbiter of the type or amount of external oversight imposed other than as an influencing contributory 'voice' since this would be government driven. This reflects the observations on loss of autonomy noted in Australia.

4.3.4 Power and Autonomy with potential Dilemmas

It was clear that the majority of participants who advocated for a unified, regulated body to

oversee the security industry did not necessarily equate autonomy and the gatekeeping of entry and UBK ownership with any power dynamic which might be involved. However, in those interviewed this was more greatly realised when probed. Very prominent in views was the 'distaste' the majority expressed for the word rather than perhaps the concept of power within any professional structure. Power almost without exception was viewed as a pejorative word and in responses was quickly replaced with descriptors such as influence, 'a seat at the table,' respect or 'having more credibility' when dealing with the business fraternity. This sentiment is characterised in the following response:

But, yeah, that's my own bias against the word power. I'm not a fan of, but I think there's responsibility. Yes. For sure. (CI1, Pos. 49-50),

This should be no surprise given that the sector operates within a more sensitive or culturally fragile business landscape, which security has likely begun to increasingly mirror. Socially and in some business circles power, or any mention of it, has become something increasingly viewed as universally negative and in bad taste. Another interesting observation was :

For me, the danger is that nobody regulates the power of the power brokers, people, whatever you want to call them.(E5, Pos. 34-35).

This succinctly makes the case for careful monitoring of how power is exercised something quite difficult if the origin is the UK Government as the external regulator. However, depending on what contextual element of power is being considered it remains an essential interwoven component of the idea of professional autonomy (Johnson, 2016).

4.3.4.1 Autonomy in Security and Representation

The literature portrayed autonomy as a key characteristic of any profession, personified by a monopoly of the UBK and disciplinary powers to sanction or strike off members from the

profession. Conversely, autonomy also allows professionals to exercise independent judgment and decision-making within their areas of expertise using agreed codes operating in that profession. The responses translated autonomy as something essential for security professionals to effectively advise, assess risks, and recommend appropriate courses of protective action. As with most aspiring professionals autonomy is viewed as desirable despite the previous comments on power as a descriptor.

There appears to be conflicting needs and desires in those surveyed and interviewed in relation to the power and autonomy equation although these were not directly addressed by responses. On the one hand they mostly realise that security currently lacks a unified, regulated, and standardised approach to autonomy and professionalisation. However, many were accepting of the diverse set of security-related bodies and associations, each with their own standards and approaches, and which has led to a fragmented and inconsistent professional landscape readily noted by many responses. On the other hand, some do not see a great need for centralisation of leadership and control (power) in the sector likely needed to represent vital security interests, especially when government facing and which would be provided for by collective autonomy. However, there were many who indicated such centralisation would benefit the drive to security being a recognised profession.

A significant majority of responses indicated that one way to improve external regulation might include an uprated SIA with greater reach than the current body. This might be together with a council for internal regulation and greater recognition with codification of standards to oversee and govern the security profession. The latter is important as it constitutes a route to limited autonomy albeit more collectively. An internal council would be responsible for establishing and enforcing ethical codes of conduct, disciplinary procedures, and provide the gatekeeping function for entry and competency requirements. It would, together with the

Security Institute, also promote the recognition and respect of security professionals and emulate procedures and structures, where desirable, of other established professions.

A new professional framework with some level of autonomy would empower security professionals to have a stronger voice and greater influence in organisational decision-making. Their expertise and compliance guided by coded professional standards would likely help improve recognition and status. There would be a need to establish career pathways and professional development within the various security disciplines as well as mechanisms for addressing misconduct or incompetence. The majority of responses indicated great consensus for these benefits and major professional characteristics. Overall, the major themes explored by participants especially in interviews suggest that development of a robust, more regulated, and respected framework are needed to benefit security. This would constitute a critical step in enhancing the credibility, effectiveness, and impact of security services within organisations although professional autonomy issues would need to remain a focus.

4.3.5 Society – a Contract and the Grand Bargain

Power arising from a social contract and the associated autonomy prevalent within the literature showed a clear link and connection with the ‘grand bargain.’ These elements did not translate entirely or so straightforwardly in the primary data collected. Indeed any notion of a ‘grand bargain’ and an unwritten contract with society only featured occasionally when unprompted. However, when the question was asked in the survey (see Figure 18) there was a major agreement on how important it is for the public to value security. It is incongruous therefore that societal factors were not seized on as a major element of professional thinking although it is possible this may be partially attributable to the interview focus and somewhat shaped by the data collection instruments in use.

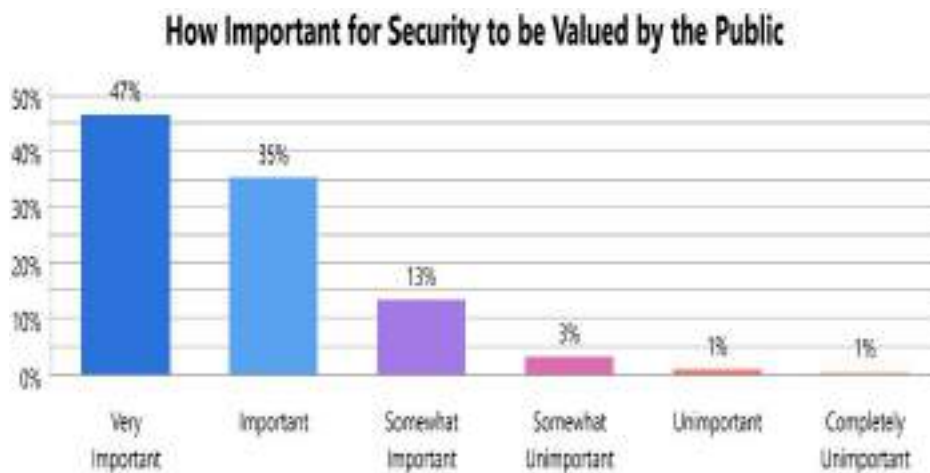


Figure 18 – Importance of Security being valued by the Public (n=193).

This disconnect suggests that social factors are not high in the consciousness of many when thinking about a new security profession and this was evident in the tenor of interviews. Societal linkage appeared to be only acknowledged almost as part of a ‘list of general factors’ and even then only for limited consideration when it might perhaps affect the security ‘profession’ directly. This perceptive lack of societal focus is one explanation of why the notion of altruism for any emerging security profession featured very rarely in any interview responses as a significant core characteristic needed to attain professional status. This societal equation or bargain and any associated altruism has always been a major characteristic for professions which going forward needs focus and understanding to ascertain how important or not it will be for the security professional project.

4.3.5.1 Altruism with Trust and Public Awareness

Notwithstanding this lack of societal focus there was comment in regard to how the wider public perceives particularly frontline level security. The public and business perception of the sector is generally one of security as a ‘lowly’ employment, something reflected in poor pay and perceived lack of respect. This extended to views that within business there is often a perception of security as a ‘necessary evil’ rather than a vital business function and a

strategically important asset. There was unsurprisingly no unprompted mention of ‘pro bono work’ in interviews. However, one interviewee from the ‘expert’ sample noted altruism is an essential professional component:

It has to be extremely altruistic because of the fact that we're concerned with the safety and security of people and assets which involve people's lives, so you know it's absolutely essential. Within that, there is a caring and sharing kind of culture built into the attitudes of security professionals.(E10, pos.5).

The quote is a counterpoint to the mainstream practitioner responses and usefully emphasises the intrinsic link between society and security not often acknowledged by many of the security sector especially when the public is not the client. However, when public service was mentioned by the interviewer the notion was always viewed positively.

It should be no surprise that stereotypical descriptors such as ‘bouncers’ or ‘gate guards’ featured at times in responses. These indicated a long known need for better public education and engagement to improve understanding of the role of security, its value and purpose; issues which stem more likely from long standing cultural and class precursors rather than any other tangible or functional reasons. These low level issues do portray the societal disconnect which exists and which could be an obstacle to public support or wider recognition of the value and standing of security were it to emerge as an established profession. This perception likely stems from the limited interaction of the public with security personnel, typically limited to interface at events or entrances to premises, rather than with strategic security advisors or perhaps more senior practitioners. These perceptions are seen in many responses as substantial challenges to elevating the status of security as a profession. This includes the need to overcome negative stereotypes, demonstrate the value of security expertise, and achieve parity in compensation and recognition compared to other professions.

Interestingly trust was a reoccurring theme both in interviews and survey open responses and very much reflected the concept of ‘glue’ as the trust holding everything together as described in the literature review. However, the context and focus were much more on the cohesiveness and strength trust can create in business and security operations rather than, as was highlighted in the literature, an integral part of the social contract and the ‘grand bargain.’ This once more highlights the contextual lack of societal focus in practitioner thinking. However, if pressed all respondents indicated they would see trust as an important element when dealing with the public. It is the more practical interactional driven focus that stands out in this analysis of trust rather than any intrinsic altruism.

Summatively it is clear that participants understand and acknowledge the security and societal equation but do not see it as a pre-eminent need or driver to become a profession. That might be correct if a more pragmatic expert route is envisaged rather than any attempt to mirror the older established professions. In this newer pragmatic approach, it would be factors such as government support, regulatory oversight, and the development of professional bodies and standards which would provide a more professional foundation. Potentially these would help drive the societal cultural shift in understanding or help acknowledge security and its importance. Strength would be gained through greater cohesiveness, integrity, ethicality, and incepting a professional body that serves the public interest whenever that might possible.

4.3.6 Conclusion for Objective 1 Findings

The evaluation so far has tended to segment responses into a summary of each characteristic group or those with overlapping or closely related themes. However, there has to occasionally be a refocussing to understand the interconnectivity and dependency of all of them and which more collectively correspond to the concept of a profession. Knowledge, power, regulation and the myriad of societal and cultural or class issues are completely interconnected. Taken together as a whole these primary findings elicited so far should add some understanding and

further contextual underpinning to better navigate the obvious vagaries and dynamics present within the idea of security vying for professional status.

Overall there is much alignment in research participant understanding with the literature base together with general agreement of the many characteristics of a profession. There are varying degrees of endorsement for them but the aggregated views do not suggest that there are insurmountable barriers to achieving better professional recognition. The nature and format of any such professional security entity however, is less discernable. Further, this deeper meaning is difficult to achieve from any simple evaluation and discussion of definitional characteristics and their understanding by those participants in the security sector alone. The continuing analysis of the subsequent objectives should assist with such a determination.

4.4 The Need and Importance for Security as a Profession (Objective 2)

Whilst the analysis for Objective 1 was required to both understand the collective security perspective and individual security practitioner understanding of the professional concept it represented in part a contextual but necessary basis to meet the overall research aim and benefitted from comparing findings in many areas to the literature base more directly. The second objective discusses the need and importance of security becoming a profession. Evaluation mainly focuses on the relevant primary responses to ascertain this perceived need, or absence of it, to attain the recognised status which comes with being a profession both at the individual and collective level. For this reason much of the analysis is centred around statistical responses but much qualitative evaluation of the primary data open responses is present also.

Initially respondents were asked both in the survey and at interview if they had a magic wand would they wish security to be a fully-fledged profession today. The responses are shown in Figure 19.

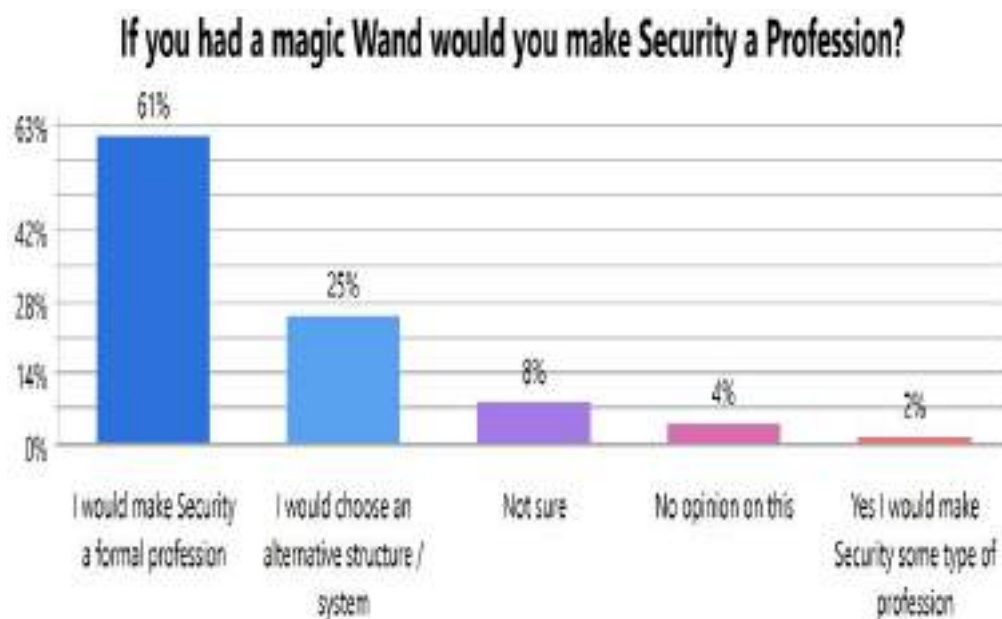


Figure 19 – Would Respondents make Security a Profession today if they had a Magic Wand.

It was a little surprising that although a majority would wish for a profession immediately, a quarter advocated for an alternative system. Whilst it is fair to assume that most respondents were thinking of a more established professional construct in their responses (such as doctors/lawyers) rather than any new expert styled entity, it is still perhaps a little surprising. However, within respondent thinking an alternative might also constitute some neo-expert professional entity as previously described. The following remark in interview sums up the major collective view on the need for security to be a profession:

*I think the current status quo is untenable, and that formal recognition is a must.
(S2, Pos. 6)*

This well observed comment infers that the need stems in part not just from personal wishes and need for status but also from the dangers inherent in maintaining a status quo where risks are likely to lead to future professional problems. This was largely confirmed in interviews

where much mention was made of ‘frameworks and ‘merit based regulated constructs’ within alternative thinking approaches.

The majority agreement for security to be a profession was further reinforced by a similar direct question in the survey (Figure 20) and shows that 87% were in agreement with a further 6% somewhat in agreement. Although this was survey based it was equally evident in interviews that this desire for a collective profession was prevalent and it was only the nature and construct of the resultant entity which might give cause for any disagreements.

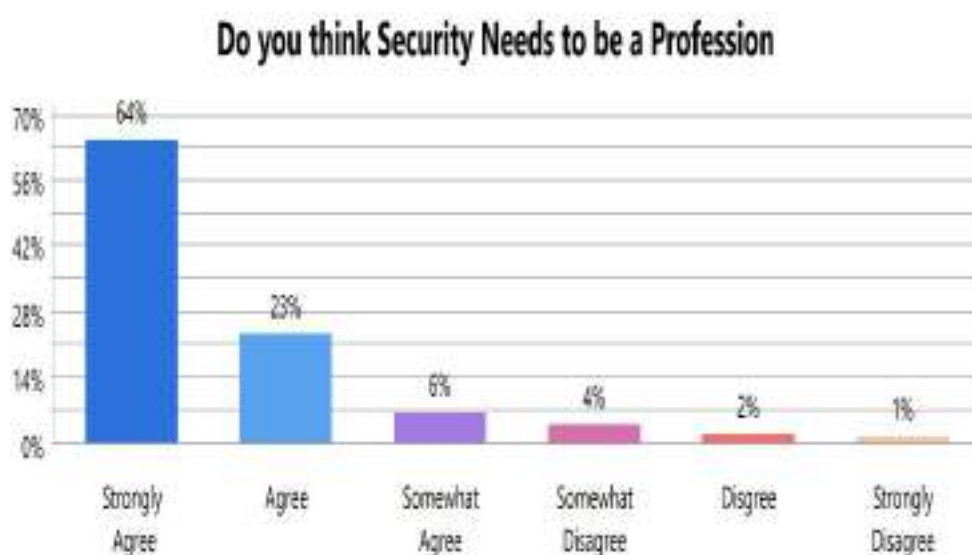


Figure 20 – Do Respondents think Security needs to be a Profession? (n =193).

A more nuanced perspective was obtained (Figure 21) when personal desire was considered and although the figures for personal importance dropped overall the result still represented a general belief that attainment, even at the personal level, was important. The difference between the sets of figures is most likely explained by the seniority and standing of most respondents where the status quo for them personally is acceptable whilst understanding that collectively and institutionally seeking professional recognition would be welcome. This sentiment was clear in many interview responses.

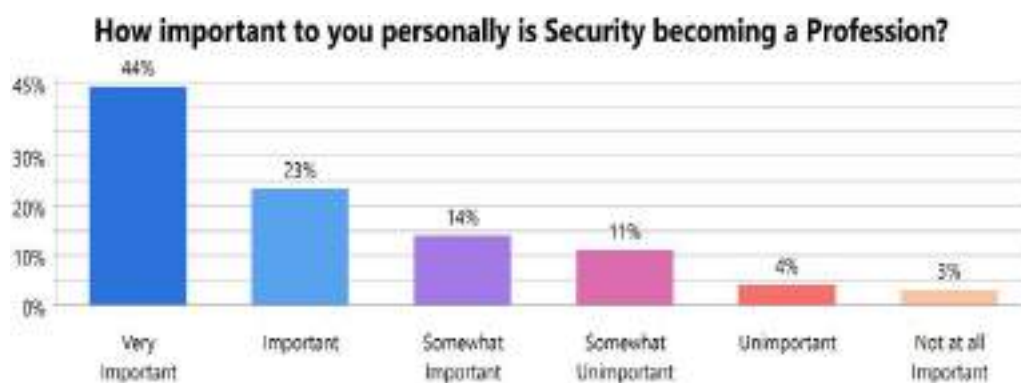


Figure 21 – Importance to Respondents Personally for Security to be a Profession (n=193).

When collectively analysed the responses were even clearer that a security profession would considerably enhance sector status and the responses on this aspect are shown in Figure 22. These statistics indicate that the security sector as perceived by the research participants would desire to be a profession in some form. Within the overall sampled population there definitely appears to be a strong mandate for seeking and even quickly progressing some greater form of professional status.

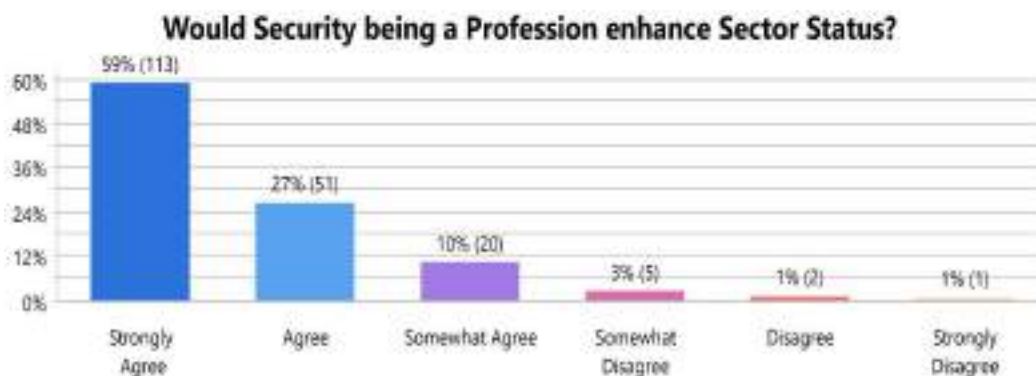


Figure 22 – Would Security as a Profession enhance Status (n=193).

4.4.1 Salaries and Income

Responses in respect to remuneration indicate that if the security sector became a professional entity the effect on both senior and junior salaries or that of entry-level members would be

difficult to predict. Much would depend on the particular discipline within security. Some believe it could lead to higher starting salaries, as formal qualifications, training, and certification requirements would raise the baseline competency and value of new hires. The following observation highlights general thinking on this:

It perhaps may lead to somewhat higher starting salaries if there are entry requirements into the profession linked to acquiring specific education/qualifications or passing exams (C1, pos. 6).

This would likely make the sector more attractive to higher-quality applicants, increasing competition and driving salaries upward – a general rule of business recruitment. However, other responses were more sceptical, noting that in established professions, junior roles often start with relatively low pay until experience is gained.

There would probably be a limit to raising junior salaries because of the cost-driven profile usually adopted in security. The client focus is often on lowest price for what is usually considered a ‘grudge purchase’ rather than a business value-added service. This would be more apparent in less technical roles even if the junior level were part of the professional body. Some respondents suggested the greatest salary increases would be seen at the mid-to-senior levels, as security professionals become increasingly recognised as being on a par with peers in other professions and having developed areas of expertise.

Notwithstanding higher levels of entry qualification views overall inclined towards the impact on junior salaries likely receiving a modest boost at best. Many factors would impinge beyond just professional status. These would include market forces, client attitudes, and internal organisational dynamics exerting a strong influence. However, any accurate prediction is difficult when even cultural vectors must also be considered. It is the hidden cultural intertwined factors that may likely shape future views on remuneration. However, it is also

probable that actual salaries would be strongly driven by basic market forces, and these would more likely be the final determinant.

It is important to acknowledge these responses just discussed and use them as a base context when considering the numerical data in any isolated fashion. This is in order to better understand the benefits of being a profession in relation to salaries as presented in Figures 23 and 24. They show that there is much agreement overall that salaries could be affected positively but as the context from open responses has indicated this is likely without any large or immediate shift upwards.

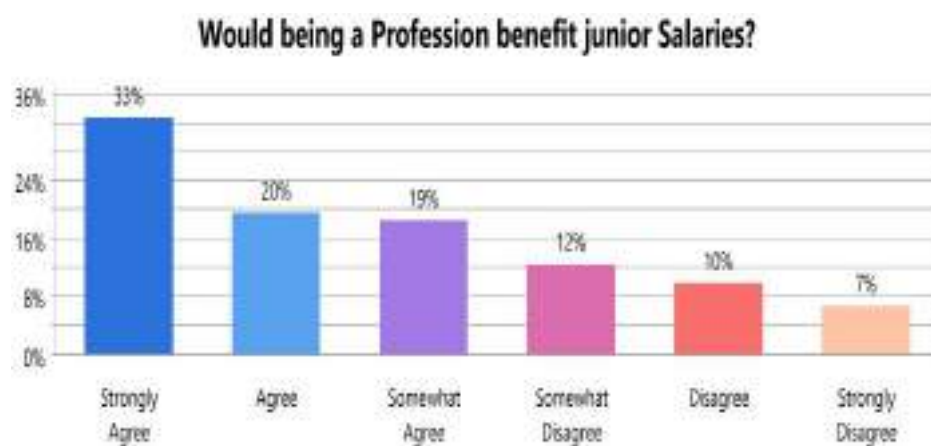


Figure 23 – The Benefits of being a Profession on Junior Salaries (n=193)

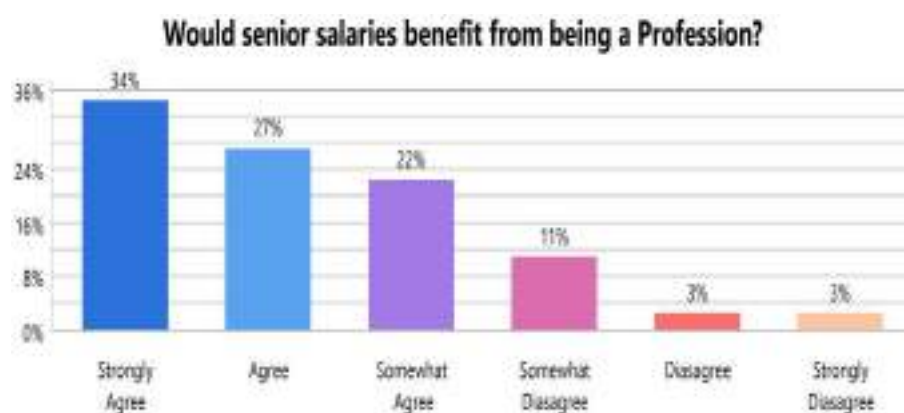


Figure 24 – The Benefits of being a Profession on Senior Salaries (n=193).

What may be inferred from the analysis and projection of likely salary outcomes is that generally any motivation or desire for security to become a profession is not necessarily driven by any personal financial factors. This is despite a general view that the impact on salaries would on balance be positive. This was mirrored outside of survey in the interviews where a recurring sentiment (paraphrased to reflect majority feedback) was ‘*it would not change anything for me personally given where I am in my career.*’ The reasons for respondents wishing security to be a profession are more likely to be not only ‘professionally’ pragmatic but also originating more from Maslowian²⁶ driven needs within the higher pyramid areas of ‘self-esteem’ (Simons, et al., 1987). Unsurprisingly therefore motivation would accord with those social business drivers of identity, recognition and respect.

4.4.2 Disciplines and Fragmentation

The responses in regard to security disciplines within the sector focussed on the need for more functional and even operational convergence rather than a potentially damaging fragmentation of the sector. This is important if the sector as a cohesive grouping wants to become a profession of any variety. Most who responded were cautious about the professional direction of cyber security as there has been a recent tendency for that discipline towards greater autonomy. This is not a major issue provided the end result is not greater sector fragmentation. However, the dangers presented by diverse disciplines and continuing fragmentation are noted in this response:

The sector is too diverse. It needs to focus on areas where profession can make a difference - senior management (C49, Pos. 2)

The unfortunate consequence of such views is the understandable choice made to select the more senior or highly technical grades as the sole level for professional membership which would probably be impractical to accomplish and would be quite divisive. Moves by cyber

²⁶ Maslow - ‘Hierarchy of Needs’, as in Simons *et al.*, (1987).

security towards self-regulation as discussed in the literature highlight that the discipline has already adopted a formalised code of ethics controlled by the Cyber Security Council. This further suggests an improving trajectory (UKCSC, 2021) for them but one that is somewhat disconnected from other security disciplines.

The cyber security discipline has also attained its own chartership (CHCSP) as well as being viewed more generally as an elite part of the sector with much governmental and economic support. Most respondents including some cyber specialists who were surveyed and interviewed advocated for more convergence of all security disciplines in a fast changing AI and potential quantum environment. Cyber security is likely to attract an even greater focus. Given its increasing interconnectivity with all forms of security through the ‘internet of things’ (IBM, 2023) it should perhaps also sit technically and functionally more within and better connected to mainstream protective security. Engineering in UK has shown this is perfectly possible without producing professional fragmentation.

4.4.3 Conclusion for Objective 2 Findings

It is clear that there is appetite and a perceived need for security to become a profession. Interestingly and perhaps reassuringly this appetite appears to be driven by pragmatic professional considerations and also more psychological needs. This is likely to deliver more consistent, authentic and sustainable outcomes in a drive towards recognition rather than any overwhelming desire to radically improve salary conditions, which in those surveyed and interviewed was not a major consideration.

Fragmentation of disciplines could pose a challenge if those in cyber choose to pursue their own professional path in a more isolatory mode and which the large majority of respondents in this research feel would be misguided. Disciplines can coexist under a more general regulatory framework as the Engineering Council has demonstrated for an even greater

disparate set of related disciplines. Fragmentation of disciplines as well as in leadership and representation do however pose a threat to progress in the search for professional status as a sector. This concern will also feature in later analysis of remaining objectives.

This objective was heavily focussed on interpreting basic statistical information and has not been overly compared analytically with the literature base which, given its main focus was understandable. However, there is little of note in these primary findings for Objective 2 that does not align with those summarized literary findings tabulated in **Appendix 2**. The importance, need and wish to attain some form of professional framework and representative governing body is quite clear in the majority of responses in this research and links well with the areas covered in the following analysis for Objective 3 discussed next.

4.5 The current UK Security Sector professional Status (Objective 3)

The views expressed in the previous section concerning the current need and appetite for security to be a profession are in most respects a foundational element for future progress and the direction to be taken. To broaden this further some greater detail and overview of the current perceived professional status of security generally will be helpful in later determining whether security has pathways to a more formal professional status.

4.5.1 Functions Traits and a Voice

Throughout this research it became clear that many of the traits, functions and attitudes discussed throughout the literature review were reflected in nearly all respondent comments to a large degree. Clearly the sector already displays many of them and has done so for some time. Although it became equally clear that these already established characteristics would not fully amount to those present in a traditional and long standing profession. However, they do amount to a sizeable foundation for the newer expert frameworks and could be leveraged towards that direction should that become the required goal. Even so there remain significant

shortages in the characteristic professional makeup of security which would need attention no matter which professional route was sought.

The general lack of real societal linkage and complete lack of any internal regulatory ability in responses highlighted the major misalignment together with the sector not having a definitive or in any sense a monopolized UBK.²⁷ Nor is the sector externally regulated beyond some lower level practitioner duties. An institute exists and has made progress in two decades and might be one that could currently pivot from straight membership representation to act as a form of council to provide a regulatory and oversight role. Whilst cyber security has adopted an ethics code the great proportion of protective security has not yet reached that point. However, one CSyP leader stated in interview that an ethical code developed to guide registrants is imminent which would likely be enforceable through CSPRA but not for those who are not on the CSyP Register.

Many interviewed repeated the problem of fragmented representation and coherence in sector leadership. Fundamentally, progress will inevitably be slow or even none at all without good sector leadership and an agreed vision coalesced into a fuller representative and authoritative centralised body to provide both the ‘voice’ and focus for any professional journey. The desire to attain professional status would be just as reliant on vague singular incohesive initiatives, or worse, directionless evolution.

4.5.2 A Profession or not a Profession? – different Security Practitioner Perspectives

Responses showed there to be a wide spectrum of opinion on whether security is already a profession and a number of respondents indicated that security is one. Surprisingly, and initially counter intuitive to research expectations, one chartered professional was adamant that security was already a profession. This belief is likely to be driven very much from a

²⁷ However, cyber could claim they are in that professional UBK space and are moving to consolidate quickly.

perspective of particular individual ‘professionalism’ and an acquired personal status, something often reflected in views from those practitioners admitted to the CSyP Register. This status is often derived from high profile and respected employment backgrounds. This view subsumes a rather more understood perspective of the concept of being a profession at an individual level or as UK perceives one.

Ironically, it might be a good strategy for the sector to adopt such positive reinforcement by encouraging practitioners to represent their situation and identity in this way, especially given the cultural and class connotations involved. In short practitioners and the institutions **believing** the sector is a profession and expressing it openly would likely be a most positive strategy. Culturally this would be a major reinforcing element in emphasising positive communication by all in the sector. This is provided such an approach was deemed ethical. This more introspective viewpoint was very much an outlier in responses as was those few others at the other end of the spectrum that believed quite strongly that it would be very unlikely for security to ever be a profession.

This wide divergent set of arguably extreme viewpoints is not unlike discourse in the literature explored earlier. There was some who advocated for security as a profession as it currently presents juxtaposed with quite negative theses from others. The caveat here is the literary focus was not specifically UK centric and represented mostly an American narrative. However, in this research a large majority of UK practitioners understood that security is not yet a profession as viewed traditionally despite the sector having several positive characteristics pointing to a future likelihood that it could be in time.

4.5.3 The Problems with the Lexicon of Professions and Security

In the early part of this research and something confirmed both in interview and survey is the

problematic lexicon for professions. Even when respondents were focussed on the concept of a profession as an entity they frequently in interview lapsed into the daily used descriptors of ‘professional’ and ‘professionalisation’ but not necessarily in the correct context of the concept but more in the isolated meaning of improved or high performance and standards. This is understandable and indeed this research narrative is likely just as guilty of lexical inexactitude.

Even the UK Government describes some occupations and individual employments (including security guards) as ‘a profession’ in their formal codified literature related to regulation which overall further sows the seeds of confusion in many minds regarding the term (Gov.UK, 2024d). However, even if words are not correct when used in some contexts the meanings behind them often equate to various characteristics of a recognised profession. This could be turned to advantage as part of promoting the idea that security is indeed a profession despite the absence of any formal recognition. The more such words and derivatives are associated positively with the sector the more likely the idea will take root. This reflects the earlier analysis on respondents believing that security already was a profession. Such overall descriptive cultural reinforcement could be useful and should not be dismissed lightly.

4.5.4 Core Concept - a Security UBK and Gatekeeping

Much has been discussed and analysed already concerning the UBK more generally, especially as the core characteristic of professional makeup. As the frequency chart in Objective 1, Figure 10 showed, respondents agreed that knowledge and, linked to that associated qualifications, were central to progress. Many relayed that within the sector there was much emphasis currently on training. In some limited circumstances at management level the take-up of professional undergraduate and even masters professional degrees is increasing

although rarely a job pre-requisite. Similarly, chartership often termed the ‘gold standard’²⁸ by those respondents associated with the register, has seen a yearly increase in those qualifying through registration but progress remains stubbornly slow. Numerically they represent a fraction of those eligible to embark on the chartered route. In that respect even with valuable and welcome NPSA endorsement the current journey is one of limited evolution.

Currently the sector has no formal gatekeeping regulated mechanism and responses were mixed on whether that was really an important consideration. However, most recognised the need for some entry standard and regulatory aspect in a future profession. Many of the mixed feelings were likely because of the potential for exclusion and barriers that such mandated educational levels (and potentially socio-cultural ones also) would bring in order to maintain entry standards. This was also noted in the literature. There was the occasional sentiment expressed which reflected that the status quo works well and needed little change, albeit originating from a very small number of responses.

It was refreshing to see that most responses gravitated towards open and diverse entry routes based more on merit rather than falling back on any cultural preconceptions, especially given that a proportion of the respondents were from a previous military or policing background. Several also remarked on the need to attract more young entrants, including females, by introducing a ‘career pathway,’ something yet to exist, rather than rely on the ‘hotch-potch’ of assorted educational and training offerings. These currently mainly cater for those seeking professional progress when they are employed in the sector and set on a particular path.

4.5.5 Conclusion for Objective 3 Findings

This analytical section has further built on the first two objectives to set the scene for an

²⁸ A term initially coined by Lord Carlile of Berriew, past Chair of CSPRA.

evaluation of whether the sector could indeed find a pathway to more formal professional status and something more aligned to what UK understands a profession to be as discussed in the literature review. It is clear that there are some fundamental deficits in characteristics or components of being an UK profession and there are also some cultural and practical challenges outlined by various respondents. These are perhaps less than may have been first envisaged when the research was started. However, the focus at the start of the research began with formalised more traditional models. As the research has shown more modern expert professional models exist which may be more aligned with security.

The next section will explore Objective 4, which is an attempt to identify and evaluate any potential pathway to a more formal and traditional professional construct such as those associated with medicine, law and other long-established models. An assessment will also be conducted on the likelihood of success for this approach. The section will use the analysis made so far using mainly primary data but touching on the literary findings to inform thinking on what will necessarily be quite predictive in some instances.

4.6 The Potential for Routes to formal professional Status for Security (Objective 4)

The evidence derived from both primary and secondary data so far suggests that it would be extremely difficult for any new employment discipline, including security, to fully replicate a similar construct prevalent in older traditional professions. This is perhaps not so much because organisational change and adoption of vital functional and structural characteristics could not eventually be originated and incorporated successfully in any tangible sense. It is more likely because those original professions were born of a different cultural and societal origin. Their identity survives probably because of that strong historical and cultural linkage and more arguably the historical reverence that power, time and even more controversially the autonomy and influence that overt intellectualism perhaps brings.

This cultural dimension in the medium term is likely to be impossible to replicate and is a stark factor but one which becomes increasingly more important to consider in the way forward. This is especially so if indeed the ‘grand bargain’ as described by Susskind and Susskind (2022) is in decline or even if that proves to be ephemeral itself, which is unlikely in the foreseeable future. Ultimately, a more pragmatic and utilitarian approach might be necessary.

Security practitioner responses reflect some notion of this steady decline of professions especially in relation to trust. This was discussed earlier but is also as a result of changing societal norms and expectations resulting in a rising pragmatic expertise era of business delivery to match those forces such as technical advances and knowledge commodification outlined by Susskind and Susskind (2022).

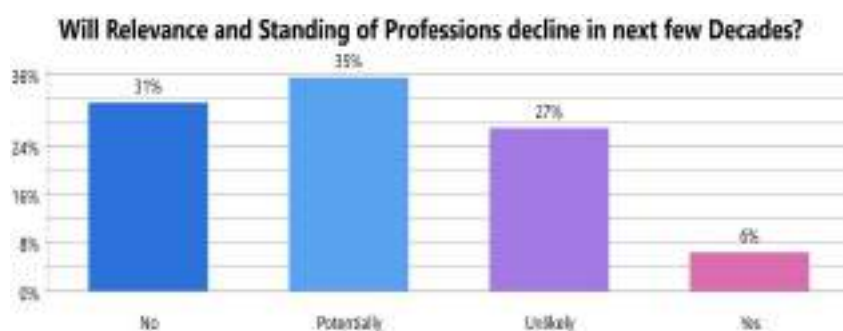


Figure 25 – Changing Relevance and Standing of Professions (n=193).

The views in Figure 25 show that although one third of survey responses believe that relevance or professional standing will not decline over the next two decades this is not the high figure that would be expected if professions were flourishing. The following quotes are typical responses:

I have spent 40 years in commercial security and seen the benefits of professionalisation in the industry. I am a founder member of the SyI and have a personal invested interest in seeing us recognised more widely as professionals. (C27, Pos. 3).

Also:

I've got more of my career behind me than ahead. I think it's important to keep pushing at becoming a profession but this isn't going to impact me at all. (C22, Pos. 8)

These views suggest that security professionalism is indeed relevant for many practitioners even for those who have served much of their career. This is despite overall professional trends mirroring those Susskindian projections present in the literature base discussed earlier in the review.

4.6.1 The Trajectory of the current Professions – Views by Practitioners

If security chooses not to replicate exactly the more traditional noble professions, then the focus shifts more to what the current professions, even the traditional ones, are moving towards. Again, both the literature and responses suggest that whilst the concept of a profession is still a mix of functional traits and societal acceptance the balance has changed more towards governmental recognition with decreasing societal consideration. This has evolved into a rise in neo-expert professions such as 'H&S,' 'Business Continuity,' 'HR' and several others which appear to have eclipsed security in regulatory and acceptance terms both within business and even perhaps in society more generally. As much of the literary discourse has already indicated, this likely stems mostly from a pragmatic reaction to the pervasive rise in external regulation, usually governmental and legislatively driven. This was noted also by respondents as this quote indicates:

Governments aren't tending to deregulate, are they? They're more not less and adding more regulations. And so with the protect duty, we'll have another set of regulations. So there's certainly trends that are promoting demand for security practitioners, (E6-E, Pos. 14).

This suggests the reaction is another indicator of the shifting form newer professions are taking and as this trend shows no sign of changing it unlikely presents any strong ephemeral considerations.

There are those professions which arguably straddle both traditional and expert forms ranging from engineering in UK (closer to the traditional framework and acceptance) through to the accountancy model which reflects newer frameworks which are heavily regulated externally. The important point here is that they are all generally considered to be full professions. It is their position on the spectrum ranging from traditional to new that possibly determines their cultural and class based ‘pecking order’ a phenomenon that could be expressed as the ‘hierarchy of professions’ consistent with rank tiering which was alluded to by Lester (2016). This hierarchy reflects quite well how cultural and class drivers play such a large part in recognition and status in UK society and within the business communities, even if the focus and weighting of these drivers and understanding of them might be perceptively different.

4.6.2 Perceived Obstacles to Security becoming a Profession

Survey respondents indicated their perceptive ranking of what might potentially be obstacles to security gaining professional status. Even though there were diverse views on ranking them it was the perceived lack of the *need for security to be a profession* (by practitioners) and *fragmentation of the sector* that were highlighted with the former more so by SyI members by quite a margin as Figure 26 shows.

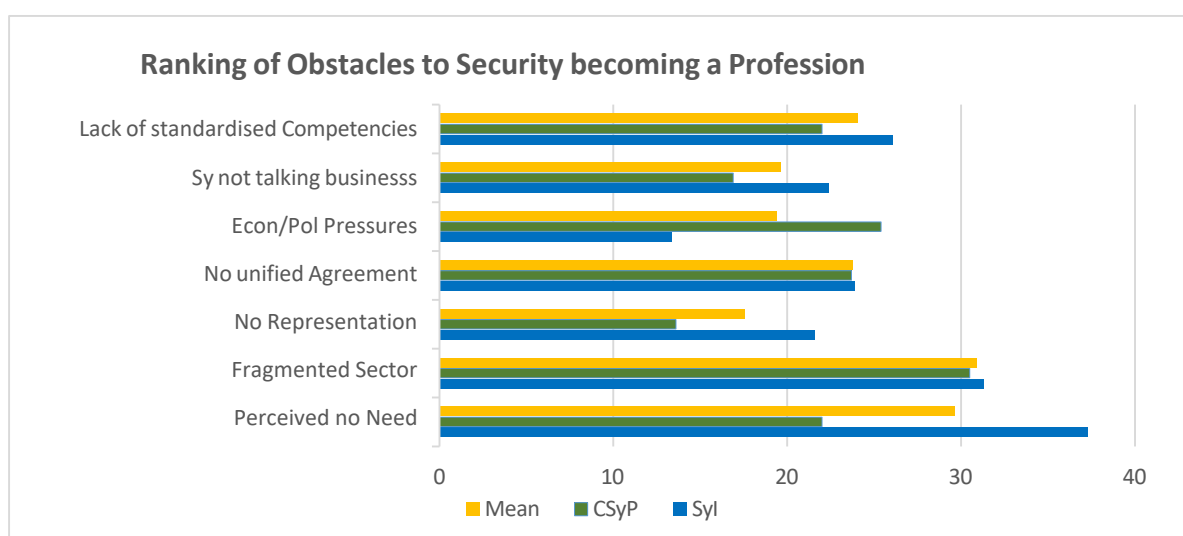


Figure 26 – Obstacles to Security becoming a Profession (percentage figures with n=193).

However all the indicators tended to almost a quarter (20-27%) of the responses. This indicates that there appears to exist several almost equally weighted underlying obstacles. Discussion in interviews showed similar thinking and largely reflected the same areas which would need addressing to help pave the way for professional progression. Interestingly and ironically, although the majority of respondents themselves wish security to be a profession and recognise the need, as was seen in earlier analysis, they see the major obstacle being that others do not. This possibly indicates some form of attribution or actor-observer bias (Murphy, 2021) and may arguably not be the obstacle it seems. However, it is clear that there are several almost equally ranked issues to consider in a new strategy.

4.6.3 Factors indicating potential Decline of Relevance for Security to be a Profession

How the sector views those factors that focus on the relevance of becoming a profession is an important part of the equation in determining a future professional trajectory. This links back to the previous analysis indicating a perception of the need for professionalisation. Figure 27 shows what might drive any related perception of potential drivers for a decline in relevance in regard to why security might not become a profession.

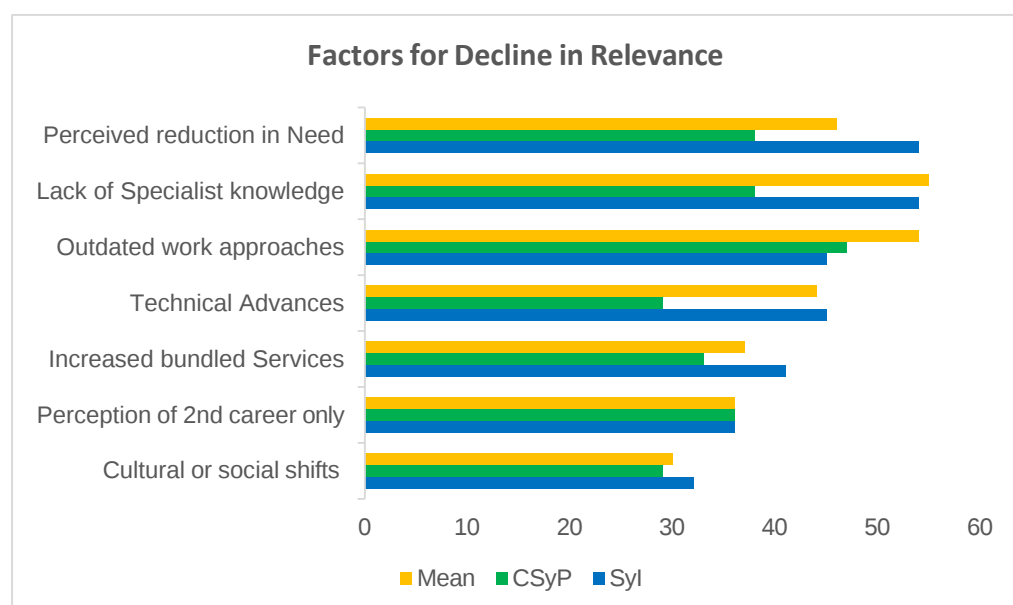


Figure 27 – Factors related to any Decline in Relevance for Security becoming a Profession.

Responses focussed very much on a perceived absence of specialist knowledge in the security domain. This was together with outdated work approaches juxtaposed with the technical advances in security. Such views perhaps are not surprising. They relate well to Susskindian projections discussed in the literature review concerning fast changing AI driven technology and resultant commodification presenting a potential displacement threat to the heavily human component currently prevalent in the security sector.

One factor which did not feature to any degree in the literature base was ‘bundled services’ which is a common construct in UK especially when cost pressures are paramount and large companies such as Mitie and G4S provide a mix of ‘related’ services (Liberto, 2024). The other factors that placed highly in the survey were second careers and cultural shifts something also prominent in the literature base. This served to confirm the general understanding of professional status generally and in relation to this objective how the factors might relate to a decline of relevance in security being a profession. The factors present a context to be recognised when determining likely pathways to being a profession.

4.6.4 Relevance for Security becoming a Profession

There are relevance factors identified by the security community that may add greater insight to the quest for professional recognition. The changing and increasing nature of the security threat in UK was identified in both survey and interview responses something which shows little sign of abating both in crime related issues and continuing terrorist threats. The political fallout and greater tendency to regulation following the Manchester Arena attack in 2017 bears witness to the likelihood of increasing external regulation vanguarded by ‘Martyn’s Law²⁹’ (Gov.UK, 2024e). This particular law was widely commented on by most respondents and viewed as a very positive move. Whilst there were some reservations most agreed the need for such external legislative regulatory drivers.

²⁹ Formally ‘The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill, introduced to Parliament 2024.(Gov.UK, 2024e).

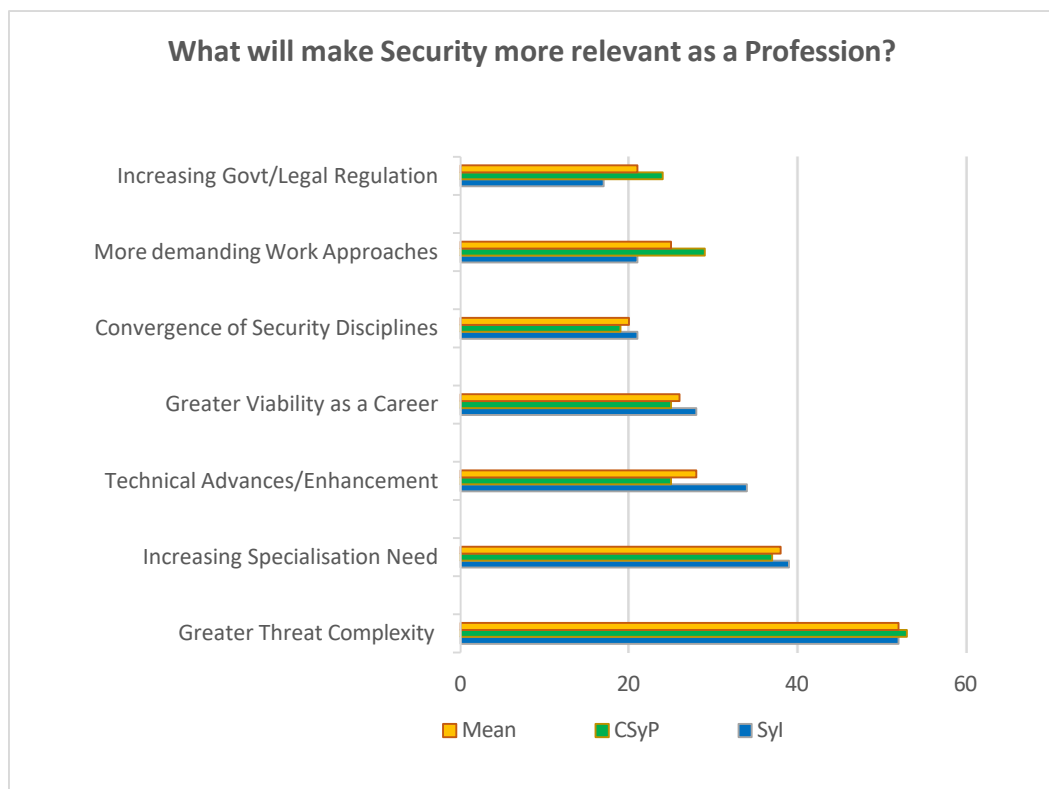


Figure 28 - Contributions to greater Relevance in Security becoming a Profession (n=193).

As Figure 28 indicates there was also similarity and agreement of this view between both Syl and CSyP sample groups and indeed regarding several other factors as well. Interestingly and somewhat surprisingly only 20% (based on the mean between both groups) indicated that regulatory needs might present a vector for professionalisation, with this more emphasised by CSyP overall. It was also noticeable that some of the factors such as specialisation and technical advances were seen as factors which might provide both as positive factors and/or a decline in professionalisation relevance. Whilst appearing counter-intuitive this suggests that these particular factors present both an opportunity and threat when designing the professional construct.

4.6.5 Conclusion for Objective 4 Findings

This objective was very much focussed on evaluating the potential for formal recognition of security as a profession and therefore relates to recognition being based on the whole gamut

of institutional, societal and business institutional constructs. This evaluation also focusses and reflects on all or most of the major characteristics identified both in the literature and research responses which are very much aligned with more traditional models.

The obstacles and factors elicited as relevant to security obtaining recognition, or any lack of it, may constitute no more than navigable areas to consider as structural or cultural challenges to be recognised and factored into a strategy. Overall, the evidence produced in this, and the previous objectives suggests they and the desired eventual professional recognition do not present an insurmountable problem. However, much focussed and unified work to make it a likelihood is required. None of the issues on their own suggest achieving recognition is an impossible endeavour but they do suggest collectively that the direction lies more in the newer expert form of a profession rather than any direct emulation of the traditional model. There is perhaps one exception to this analysis.

It may be advisable to utilise much of the Engineering Council framework³⁰ as was articulated by many who took part in this research. Engineering is a traditional model for a UK profession but presents clear aspects of the expert concept in a frameworked approach which in many respects may offer a template for further progression. This is albeit a model that for security could not currently immediately enshrine those developed aspects of cultural underpinnings, at least socially. The societal aspect is something more bound by the passage of time and part of an enculturation journey. This model and its potentiality will feature in later discussion in the next chapter.

The next section based on Objective 5 focusses on potential alternatives to the traditional approach and evaluates how feasible it will be for security to pursue frameworks which

³⁰ The Chartered Security Register competencies and thinking was based on advice and assistance from the Engineering Council and would seem logical to consider further.

feature outside the older traditional pathways. These results will then be used for discussion in the following chapter to better highlight and recommend the approaches to take.

4.7 Alternatives for Security to attain Status – potential Ephemerality (Objective 5)

The evidence so far has clearly shown that pursuing a more traditional professional model not dissimilar to those constituting the medical and law professions would be highly problematic. This is even if physical and functional characteristics could be achieved. This reservation relates to the cultural underpinning required but even if the physical entities and systems needed could be developed there is no guarantee recognition would necessarily follow. This is a pessimistic view for attaining the most traditional form of a profession and one that might rank as a higher form in any tiered system.

It makes sense at this stage of the research to look at newer emerging alternatives. This section of the research will explore the newer expert models originating both from the literature together with the primary data responses from surveys and interviews. This is to analyse the likelihood of there being a reasonably pragmatic and practical route to a form of profession. The analysis will focus on the term in the newer expert leaning sense of the word and which might actually match the direction of travel in business and even culturally.

4.7.1 Status Quo as an Alternative

There were interview responses and indications in the open remarks of the surveys that indicated that no changes were necessary. This is something expressed in earlier analysis as a ‘no need for a profession’ indicating some limited support for the current status quo. These views were very much the minority opinion and even then they were often couched in a particular context as these three respondents indicate:

I think alternatives are what we have already with the Sec Inst.: CPD, Competency-based for targeting key skills, scenario-based training, operational. experience & peer validation for

formal validation. (S48, Pos 12).

This next one indicates the fear that the sector would just not be able to manage the pathway as the sector is not mature enough but the evidence overall would suggest otherwise:

We shouldn't seek recognition at this stage. It would be running an Ultra Marathon before we can crawl. (S58, Pos 21-22).

This third response is more contained thinking representing several participant's views that regulation is more a negative than a positive as it constrains actions. Interestingly, this perhaps unknowingly refers to the tension of autonomy described earlier:

Unsure, I can see the benefits to being a profession. My concern is that within the current industry, as it is, this would lead to a compliance mindset amongst professions echoing how a lot of advice and expertise is given at present (S5, Pos 12).

One survey response indicated that maintaining the status quo was the easier solution by simply continuing in the same way whilst simultaneously indicating it was not their preferred route (S37, Pos 7). These replies reflect the tone of nearly all the small minority unsupportive of change and do not necessarily suggest a dogmatic rejection of pursuing professional advancement. Rather they do reflect at the personal level the envisaged difficulties or even perceived potential drawbacks in attaining such a status in the current environment.

More importantly the overwhelming majority of responses indicated that security should strive to become a recognised profession in order to derive elevated status in some form. However, a very few outlier responses indicate complete rejection of the premise of the question asked in the survey regarding alternative routes. These mirror those earlier analysed responses relating to the belief that the sector, or in this case individuals, who believe they are already part of a profession. An example follows although the terminology in this response highlights the lexical misunderstanding and inexactitude of the use of 'profession' and 'professionals' when discussing the issues:

Again, I am not sure of the basis for this question. Having worked in security, based in the UK but operating around the world for over 25 years, I have consistently been recognised as a professional working in a distinct discipline. (C29, Pos. 6).

Maintaining any form of status quo does not fundamentally address the challenging issues identified at the start of this research as articulated in the introductory problem statement, even if there were to be slow evolutionary progress. It is therefore something that would perhaps be wise to discount as a viable way forward as it is one which would leave the sector continually susceptible to the vagaries described overall and hardly present as the progressive career it could be, especially to new young entrants.

4.7.2 Cohesion and Confusion in potential alternative Thinking

Alternative routes to professional status were very recognisably the one discussion topic in the primary data that caused some confusion or lack of coherence in replies or in the ideas expressed. It appeared many had never considered that alternatives exist or might be formally considered. The responses were mostly quite diffuse noting small functional areas to consider with some suggesting establishing recognised certifications and specialised training programs to demonstrate competency.

Others expressed concern that formal recognition could lead to a compliance mindset, and instead advocated for clearer career paths, credible training for younger practitioners and better integration of security with other professions. Noticeably this was without any thought articulated on how that might be accomplished. It is likely that all these more singular ideas and requirements expressed as alternatives are just prioritised elements individuals were able to quickly identify when specifically asked on their views for alternatives. In any event collectively they would need a more formalised professional construct containing not only the several traits or characteristics mentioned but a controlling influence to bind and maintain the whole, including regulation and standards. In effect all roads could lead to some form of a recognisable professional model of some description.

Several responses proposed a tiered approach with mandatory Security Institute membership for practitioners with managerial responsibilities together with a chartered or certified licensed status that could be built upon progressively with qualifications. An external assessment body or multiple authorities were also suggested. These suggestions all could represent a matricised or multi-faceted approach combining certification, licensing, regulation, and an attainment process in the form of a ‘ladder of knowledge and working level.’ These form the basis of a ladder-lattice approach discussed in a later section.

Taken together it is easy to see the emergence of what already constitutes the main physical and tangible characteristics that comprise more traditional or expert constructs with some oversight present, in regulatory terms. Interestingly and reinforcing earlier analysis there was definitively no societal element mentioned or considered other than the likely inclusion of an ethical code base. This amplifies the inherent security sector disconnect with the societal dimension that may be inferred from the majority of respondent thinking.

4.7.3 Hybrid Professionalism

Hybridity was not often mentioned specifically in relation to alternative approaches although from responses it was clear that many saw ‘hybrid’ as representing some form of the ‘ladder’ or graduated approach within a regulated construct as discussed previously. Most cited the UK engineering model to be a worthy manifestation of that. It was also considered by some to be just a pathway to becoming a profession and perhaps in a sense is what exists now as this response indicates:

Yeah, you can use a hybrid route, but I think the hybrid route is just a route to professionalization, in my view, to creating a profession. But I think that's the way you need to go (Segments, E5, Pos. 84).

The graduated or ladder model will be considered later but notwithstanding it is a potentially

viable and useful element in a framework it does not accord to the more current debates on hybrid professional positioning. The hybrid term is often used to describe the identity of professionals who in a fluid way operate at several intersections of expert work (Berk-Bickerton, 2025; Hendriks and Gestel, 2016). In this sense hybrid as a term does not constitute any recognisable model other than at the individual level of those who may have two or more professional or even trade memberships. Such an example in the security sector might be security consultants for explosive blast protection where an engineering professional background and a security knowledge and experience base intersect.

This hybridity is manifestly clear in those practitioners who sit on both the CSyP Register and the Chartered Engineer Register (CEng) and/or Register of Security Engineers and Specialists (RSES)³¹ the latter operating within the security sector using what they deem their main professional accreditation. There are quite a number of these and other engineering security specialists that perfectly illustrate the concept of hybrid professionals in the present context of security. This response observes this stance:

It's a hybrid and integrated profession where one aspect relies on another. Still, consultants and high-end leadership roles are ideal candidates for professionalisation based on experience, skill, and knowledge.(C54, Pos. 2).

However, whilst hybridity is welcome it is difficult to see how any hybrid focussed model could in itself be easily developed based on the literature and academic understanding of hybrid professionalism. In any sense this tends towards individualism, fragmentation, or likely split foci which pulls away from any concept of security being an autonomous entity. However, including hybridity in any model is not a mutually exclusive exercise and does not automatically preclude a security framework having an hybrid characteristic as one of the professional components.

³¹ See reference NPSA (2025).

The analysis suggests this aspect should not be ignored and needs to be factored into any alternative to the more traditional frameworks. Indeed, this hybridity exists currently in the sector and is likely to be a greater feature in any Susskindian envisaged future. As a ‘ladder’ alternative was thought mistakenly by many to be a hybrid element it makes sense to explore this idea next.

4.7.4 Ladders Lattices and Matrices

Within the literature the idea of a career ladder is mostly approached with a focus on the individual level and pertains to advancement in vertical **steps** of a career path but within a defined existing profession, employment organisation or employment sector (Deel, 2025). This is something not dissimilar to the academic debate on hybridity regarding individualism. In the primary data the ladder was referred to overall in a similar vein as in the following response:

You might be an associate or something lower down the ladder, but at the degree point you then become a member of the profession. (E4, Pos. 29).

This response, as did others, reflects the use of ladder career pathways inside any new professional framework, with a noticeable point on that ladder indicating a full membership entry point which in this response was degree level. Most existing professions use the ladder format in some form (at least educationally) and in some cases a lattice approach also exists especially in bigger enterprises where greater flexibility is available. The lattice approach allows for sideways movement where the specialism or focus might be different, rather than just an upwards and downwards progression (Veldsman and van der Merwe, 2025).

Other responses generally indicated an understanding of the ideas relating to matrices and career ladders and often mentioned them in their responses on the specific topic of ‘alternate approaches’ but also more generally. Noticeably in this instance the issue of conflating the

‘ladder’ with ‘hybrid’ elements was evident. There was also mention of ‘merit’ showing the confluence of all the factors being analysed in this research:

Hybrid approach with certification and licensing at the core and ladder scale of knowledge attainment. All merit based. (S44, Pos. 7).

A more typical response highlights the understanding prevalent in the survey answers but without using the descriptor ‘ladder’ or ‘lattice’:

A better way is developing clearer career paths, credible training for the younger consultants and a security, as a discipline, integrating more with other professions (S5, Pos 12).

Overall, as with hybridism, a ladder/lattice approach in the form of a strategised matrix does not constitute any realistic alternative standalone model but rather points again to elements that should be found in a healthy functioning professional framework. This would be additive to, rather than some replacement for, a profession itself.

4.7.5 Single Disciplines as Professions and a Fragmented Sector

The responses indicate that there are diverse views on which parts or disciplines of the security sector could individually be considered a profession, should one or some of them choose to take their own professional path diverging from the security sector. Most suggest that the entire security sector which has been the greater focus of this research should be recognised as a profession, whilst some argue that only certain specialised or senior-level roles, such as security consultancy, cyber security, and security management, should be considered as being a profession. Ironically and perhaps dangerously this would signal a form of polar fragmentation with higher echelons segregated from more practical junior practitioners and is something which would seem undesirable and even impractical.

There is little doubt that cyber-security especially could choose to take its own route to further

professionalisation. Even security consultancy and also security management (less likely other than continuing the status quo of present chartership) could fragment further and choose to tread their own path. However, in the longer term this might prove very unhelpful to all parts of the sector which even now struggles to identify itself in a landscape characterised by related disciplines such as ‘resilience,’ ‘crisis or risk management’ and ‘business continuity.’ All of these potentially pose an existential threat to security cohesion and needed focus on the business landscape (Opstal, 2009).

There is a general consensus that the security sector is broad and fragmented, encompassing various disciplines and skill sets. Any effort to create a security alternative to a more traditional profession would need to account for this complexity. Overall, the responses suggest that there is no clear agreement on which specific parts of the security sector should be considered a profession, other than the groups discussed already which were highlighted by respondents in varying degrees. Rather there is a strong consensus and general desire to see the sector as a whole become more professionalised and recognised for the critical role it plays in protecting individuals, organizations, and communities.

4.7.5.1 Security Consultancy

In the wider literature, management consultancy is in most cases considered one of the newer professions (Susskind and Susskind, 2015, p.20) but is not recognised in UK as a regulated profession by government (Gov.UK, 2024). However, it has its own chartership (CMI, 2025) with the Chartered Management Institute (CMI) distinctly stating that the discipline is a ‘profession.’ This seems to capitalise on cultural reinforcement described earlier as a potential avenue for security professional communication. The description by the CMI was unlikely a misstep or any unintentional lack of precision. However, whether security consultancy might fall into the realms of ‘management consultancy’ is quite a different issue and much would depend on individual circumstances and matching the specifications of the CMI. What is clear

is that some security consultants (at individual level) could veer away from the security sector mainstream and create their own professional identity. To some extent this has been achieved already in part through the ASC within the sector and in a more limited way through the CSyP Register. Respondents, many of them consultants, did not substantially allude to any consultant alternative framework model and as such this option as a viable alternative or break from the sector is presently unlikely. Provided they do not choose another path this promotion of sector convergence keeps fragmentation at bay.

4.7.6 Guilds Crafts and Apprenticeships

A small number of respondents when asked about alternatives remarked that a guild system could offer an option if being a profession was not on offer. 'London Lives' (2025) describes how in the 19th Century London had 89 guilds which provided a craft or trade membership but had a very similar structural concept to the professions which were being established as a parallel system. However, guilds and professions highlighted a very strong cultural divide based on class and (perceived) intellectualism or practical skills usually hand based. Even though both concepts reflected power and control including the monopolistic and exclusionary elements of an UBK with the accrued status there was no mistaking the cultural tiering (Brooks, 1994).³²

As society changed professions gained ascendancy whilst guilds diminished to the point where now liveried guild companies are no more than anachronistic charitable bodies devoid of their once great strength in determining sectors of craft-based employment. However, the employment linkages have ironically become stronger in more recent years for those such as the Worshipful Company of Security Professionals (WCoSP) who actually 'own' the CSyP charter. They have contracted with the SyI to manage the register on their behalf, but which is regulated by CSPRA appointed by WCoSP. In many ways this suggests that for some guild

³² Guilds were a middle class construct whereas profession represented elitism and largely upper class origins.

companies there is an increasing alignment between ‘old crafts’ and the professions perhaps again pointing to the focus overall as becoming more ‘expert.’ This is arguably more so as class and cultural boundaries recede despite livery companies being characterised by much outward ostentation and historical ceremonial trappings at their core.

Guilds used apprenticeship (patrimony) or even redemption (payment) as the main vehicle for progression to attain membership of the guild companies although it was apprenticeship which was the central feature (Brooks, 1994). Several respondents in this research mentioned apprenticeship in conjunction with the guild as an alternative to being a profession:

A Guild or Institute approach or possible apprentice route initially - graduated merit and segmented in sector. C4 (pos.11 - 11)

All responses mentioning guild as an alternative viewed the idea as more focussed on junior or more practical skills in the sector as these two examples illustrate:

Okay, so if you were looking at this sort of almost guild approach for the sort of people at the bottom end of the so-called profession, but then you've got profession is like sort of junior manager upwards or maybe a senior technician upwards. (Interviews, CI4 (pos.21 - 21).

And then maybe another route could be something along the lines of guild type based, one like the old guilds that used to be, which have now turned into professions, but were guilds originally with a trade in brackets by the side? (SyI Interviews, SI9 (pos. 19 - 19).

This focus on the junior or more practical components of security is not surprising given the historical background of guilds and apprenticeships. Although it might appear that little is to be gained in ‘re-inventing the historical wheel’ there is no doubt that in the security sector there is almost a polar divide between management or consultancy levels and the more practical components such as guarding. This perhaps excludes the increasing number of technical positions creating arguably a different balance than that found in some other professional groupings. Furthermore, there is already a symbiosis between WCoSP (a guild

company), the CSyP charter and the SyI which presents its own interesting conundrum. This relationship is something to factor in when considering a way forward. This thought perhaps presents a good link to how the charter might provide a nucleus alternative approach to a traditional profession and is explored next.

4.7.7 Chartered Nucleus Approach

Many interview and survey responses indicated that building on what currently exists (for more senior practitioners) may be the best alternative and least difficult to navigate. In a sense this would be ‘enhanced’ evolution but paradoxically is likely to reach a focal point of resembling an emerging neo-expert profession. The CSyP charter could extend its remit to associate levels and technical graded levels to provide a ladder or even a latticed framework of qualification progression. If this were to be linked with some greater Security Institute³³ involvement even to the extent of forming a regulatory council offshoot, then the physical and educational building blocks would be in place. The following views suggest some favour this approach and think that the current sector position aligns well:

So, if you're a fellow and a charter then it becomes a different status. (CI6 (pos.78 - 78).

I think we already have alternatives - we have accreditation through The Security Institute and the CSyP, and those have helped significantly to the recognition of the higher levels of our industry (SyI, S74, pos.7 - 7).

These two views appear to favour the gentle evolution of a status quo with perhaps the focus on chartered growth providing the professional component. This is a positive proposition but one that could be divisive if all parts of the security sector are not involved in a professional construct having regulation and education pathways for all at the core.

³³ Or other governmental recognised body although the SyI is the obvious candidate at present.

The CSyP nucleus approach involving the Security Institute extends to all grades and levels similar in some respects to the engineering framework which is more traditional. The model could also extend to a route for para-professional individuals (not unlike the legal CILEX system explained in the literature review). However, as more features are added to link to the nuclear bodies of the CSyP and the Institute the framework becomes very close, if not the same as any neo-expert model representing the current professional trend. As one ‘expert’ interviewee intimated all alternatives that can be identified are likely to replicate or have some components of what is considered a profession as the end result:

No matter which way you cut it, no matter even if you go down alternatives or hybrids or whatever, all roads lead back to Rome. (E5, pos. 55 - 55).

The only major exception to components found in models for a profession in a more fully developed nuclear framework might be the absence of a strong societal focus or even a regulatory base, something much needed. Arguably in neo-expert models this would likely be more developed and constitute an ingrained value characteristic similar to those found in accountancy and H&S disciplines. This leads to an examination of neo-expert models.

4.7.8 Neo-Expert Models

The alternate models and frameworks examined in previous sections and mentioned by those research participants to varying degrees offer some possible pathways to greater recognition and potentially higher status. However, it is hard to escape the conclusion that any accumulated combination of these traits, frameworks, controls or regulations in effect amount to some form of neo-expert profession. Indeed as the overwhelming majority of respondents indicated it is a profession that is the desired end state even if those articulating this were likely more focused on a more traditional construct. Psychologically the responses unsurprisingly centred around the recognisable professional characteristics expected.

The term 'neo-expert profession' has no definitional solidity to it in the sense that the literature often defaults to neo-Weberian causes and a focus on the changes in older constructs. Some observers increasingly point to neo-institutionalism and individualism when discussing new approaches (Saks, 2016 a.; Cross and Swart, 2021). The institutional and individualist perspectives relate to the developing employment ecology and reflect the oft used descriptors of pragmatism and increasing external regulation with a diminution of altruism or any social contract of substance.

It is this newer perspective that sums up the somewhat amorphous and potentially ephemeral neo-expert professional construct. However, it is one that would seem to offer the sector the most likely way forward perhaps using much of the engineering framework as the apparatus to bring all neo-expert elements into play. This would require most of the regulatory and ethical coding aspects identified and the institutions to provide control and overall oversight. This blend would also provide a clear bridging between the old and new ideas yet allow more inclusion of traditional components should any transitory or ephemeral potential become a reality.

4.7.9 The long Game or a transitional Journey? - Ephemerality

The uncertainty of any permanency that may result was always obliquely present in responses throughout the analysis regarding a potential path forward, whether that be towards a traditional model or some alternative. Some views showed understanding of this but most interviewed or surveyed had clearly not perhaps fully considered the potential for some ephemerality derailing a transition to a professional model. In a worst-case scenario this could make the chosen model redundant just before achieving the desired end state.

The increasing fluidity and febrility of the professional landscape as discussed by Cross and Swart, (2021) shows that adaptable models and thinking behind them need to be kept in focus

and leveraged well going forward. This is even if the current trajectory of business professionalism would suggest potential technical and cultural upheaval as well as likely greater individualism at certain junctures of the evolutionary business environment. Flexibility would be key when developing a strategy for professional change, which may present a difficult challenge for security given the numerous other, arguably even greater, challenges highlighted. The evidence overall suggests the landscape is perhaps more one of predictable transition and is reasonably manageable rather than anything short term ephemeral, although this itself is ironically just a prediction based on the literary and primary evidence available.

4.7.10 Conclusion for Objective 5 Findings

Overall, the responses indicate a strong sentiment that the status quo is untenable, and that formal professional recognition is necessary, even if the specific approach debated tends more toward the neo-expert model. Such a model could incorporate much mentioned elements of 'ladder progress' and any hybridity required. This desire for being a profession appears to be rightly driven by the need to raise standards, provide clear career progression, and achieve status through recognition and respect. The notion of broader societal respect and altruism whilst present in some responses was much less in focus.

Many highlighted the potential dangers and challenges of fragmentation. They pointed to lessons that might be learned from other professions such as H&S and HRM who have developed career pathways, incorporated continuous professional development, and created some public trust, all to varying degrees. Caution was often expressed against directly comparing security to the noble professions such as medicine or law as this higher status is unlikely ever to be attained. The practicality of an achievable outcome suggests strongly that a more modern expert focussed approach could work best but should also include principles centred around regulation, ethics, and competence. Suggestions also included looking to

examples in countries with more advanced security professionalisation (as in Australia), as well as drawing on frameworks from related fields including engineering, HR, or H&S.

4.8 The 3rd Interview Sample – ‘Expert’ Views

Ten interviews and discussions were conducted for senior individuals who are either at the heart of sector leadership or represented in related disciplines to security including education and training. The sample included academics, registrars (past and present), lawyers, senior trainers, as well as CEOs, and Board members. All are closely involved, mostly directly, with security and risk disciplines and sector leadership. Whilst nearly all of these interviews indicated general agreement with both the literary findings, and the majority of participant views it was the emphasis on certain characteristics and requirements for progress that were sometimes different. In particular more emphasis on the social contract and altruism was made by several responses with these two being typical:

I think some subscribe to that view that if every one of us in security, wherever we fitted into the hierarchy of things, behaved in a way that met the social contract requirements, then I think automatically we'd probably rise in the eyes of the public to the level of being seen as a cohesive professional. I don't doubt that for a moment. (E2, Pos. 29).

Then if you don't have that social contract, who are you actually working for? What are you actually doing? You then bring in the political aspect as well. Who are you actually working for? What is the actual means to the to this particular end. And I think it's still critical to have that at the heart of what we do (E4, Pos. 36),

It is perhaps no surprise that the experts from academia might see altruism as more important compared to a more working pragmatic stance adopted by many respondents. There was also a definite majority in this sample that advocated for a 1st degree as the correct entry point for full membership to a profession which is unsurprising given that some experts were based in training and academia. However, one respondent indicated L4/5 may also be a possibility especially if apprenticeships proved successful. Many countenanced the criticality of having

career pathways with easier more diverse entry to any emerging profession as something much needed and which should be aligned with academic and practical training. Overall, it was surprising to note the great degree of alignment present in views between the expert sample and the other two sample groups. Views were very similar and ranged from the Engineering Council as a potential model for the security sector to the dangers of monopolistic power. This indicates that regarding communication between academia, training providers and the sector ‘leadership’ some degree of agreement on principles and suitable trajectories should be possible.

4.9 Summary of Findings

The complete findings (52 in total) are fully summarised and tabulated in **Appendix 1** with cross referencing to assist identifying source data and the analysis used to derive the results. In general, the analysis indicated a clear understanding of professional components and more importantly the need and likelihood for security to become a profession. Whilst unusual to use a chart in any summary Figure 29 importantly underscores this general recognition.

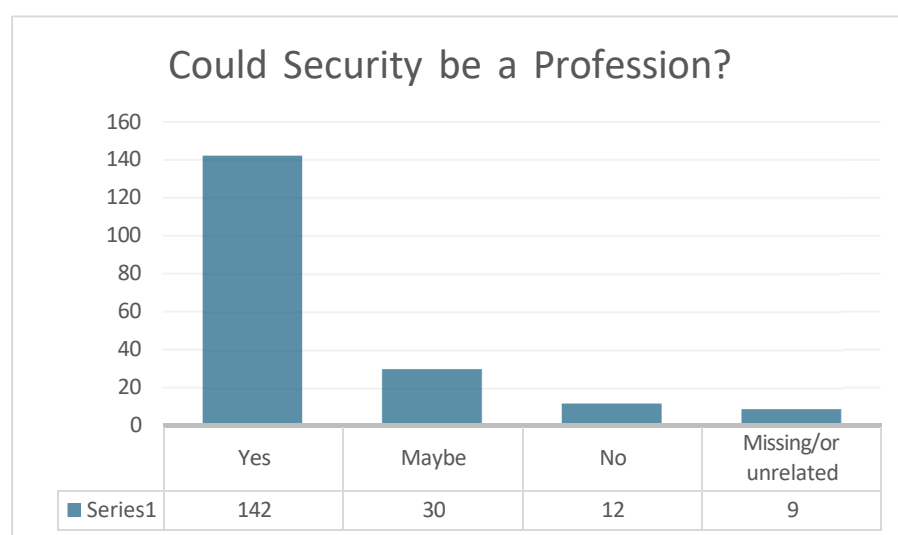


Figure 29 – Views on whether Security can become a Profession (n=193).

The clear overall finding is that a neo-expert model would be the likely conceptual framework

to target as a pathway for becoming a profession as an alternative to a more traditional approach. It could be largely styled on a proven framework such as that provided by the Engineering Council, itself a long-standing well-respected profession, although it should be bespoke to security. Within the selected framework such elements as matrixing (ladder, latticing and hybridity) need to be built into the chosen model. Just as important is the need for clear entry levels and career pathways to be provided with full internal and external regulatory processes based on an ethical coding base and known set of standards.

4.10 Conclusion of the Primary Findings

The primary findings have produced clear indications of what the direction of travel might be in relation to the security sector pursuing greater professional identity and recognition. The analysis of all objectives shows both the strong understanding and desire as well as some optimism that security could indeed become a profession, although not one necessarily in the traditional mode. It is more likely that pragmatism and new business imperatives, not least technology, will drive the shape of security and result in a greater institutionalised form of an expert professional model. This may have less of a social contract focus but will probably be centred on considerable internal regulation. External State regulation required for both trust and institutional recognition despite some loss of autonomy is just as important.

The next chapter examines the overall findings to synthesise responses and also judge how they align with the secondary data. The discussion will reflect and focus on the summaries of findings in both **Appendix 1** (Primary Findings) and **Appendix 2** (Literary Findings). The chapter will approach these findings in a much more consolidated thematic way to avoid sequential repetition but will naturally retain focus on the theme content arising in the original objectives. Overall, the chapter aims to provide a strategic synthesis of the research conducted.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

“It is usually futile to try to talk facts and analysis to people who are enjoying a sense of moral superiority in their ignorance” (Thomas Sowell, 2023)³⁴

5.1 Introduction

It is highly likely that the Susskinds would relate well to Sowell’s view above, even though it is starkly described and somewhat satirical. If this quote is interpreted with professions as the focus, it would suggest that many members of the older and more traditional professions might be in denial that their identity and ‘cosy’ existence are fast changing. This change may be much faster than they suspect if Susskind and Susskind (2022) are correct, as society and business demands alter, and technology accelerates almost exponentially in an emerging quantum AI age. It was also evident in the analysis in this research that apart from a small minority most might not fully appreciate the rapidity of change that may occur. This is even if they were clearly aware of technical advances but arguably less so the relevance of any societal change that may also accompany them. It is even more important that professional adjustment, or even a minor revolution, takes place in the security sector if this ‘speed in all things’ manifests as predicted. This would better meet changing circumstances in a pragmatic and sensible way to provide sustainable recognition and longevity of function and purpose.

This discussive chapter articulates the researcher’s own reflexive interpretation and synthesis of the findings derived in previous chapters to add further insights. The examination allows the researcher to explore the various intersections of ideas to better focus the later recommendations originating from the analysis. The researcher also explores the most prominent tensions arising from the findings adding some clarity where that is possible. The

³⁴ Thomas Sowell is an American Economist, Social Theorist and Journalist (born 1930).

interpretive nature of this approach naturally presents potential limitations and these are discussed later towards the end of the chapter.

5.2 A Concept in Transition

The literature clearly articulates the transition from traditional to newer professional forms over a long period and much of this was also noticeable in the primary data but in a more nuanced and less focussed way. The recent acceleration of this transition was also evident. Some of the drivers for this transition are quite clear. Whilst there will always be ongoing cultural-business and economic evolution, something to be expected as society evolves, there have been more recent almost tectonic societal shifts caused by events such as the global pandemic and 2008 economic crash. The accelerating technical revolution predicted by Susskind and Susskind (2022) could now also be added to the list.

5.2.1 Pandemic as a professional Catalyst

The researcher in a similar way to many others worldwide experienced personally the professional challenges resulting from COVID isolation strictures and the requirement to conduct business from home. The pandemic and its continuing political and business fallout is likely one of the major intersectional points in the continuing professional transition. Many professional working practices in the UK today still tend towards hybrid homeworking. The respondent socio-demographics in the primary data also appear to support this trend, although other factors likely play their part. This also emphasises increasing individualism enabled by improving communication technology and sometimes a clear lack of institutional or cultural will to require employees return to the office (Alexander, et al., 2021; Sokolic, 2022). Some organisations actually welcome this new working plurality and many respondents also reflected this stance. The researcher makes no qualitative judgement of this departure from the once normative stance of business working from the office but it does emphasise increasing uncertainty in the professional arena. This may be an ephemeral phase but clearly

the pandemic precipitated a strong change in professional thinking for many organisations. UK security may find both a challenge and an opportunity in determining their own professional position. Leveraging newer professional trends would seem pragmatic but meeting some of the environmental and physical challenges poses potential difficulties in most security working practices. Viability and longevity will only be assured if the sector adopts the most appropriate and adaptable security model.

Whilst COVID precipitated change and uncertainty it likely did no more than speed up the cultural and organisational transformation already in play by promoting and cementing individualism faster and further. This might be more prevalent in the UK and much of the western business world. Ironically, this parallels well the societal shift from modernism to post-modernism and now tending to meta-modernism³⁵ even though accelerated by a pandemic in this instance and not just by cultural shifts generally.

5.2.2 General professional Change and Flux

The more traditional established legal, medical, academic, and church professions, on the surface present as ‘little changed’ despite the clear transitioning of professional entities towards expert focussed frameworks. However, all data shows that much of the professional landscape is in flux and reflects many respondents’ views well. This aligns strongly with Susskind and Susskind (2022) who predict that much change even for older models is on the horizon as technology and cultural changes accelerate. The likelihood is older professions will substantially change judging by the number and prevalence of professional articles outlining the existential threats to their identity or even survival as expounded by clinicians, teachers, and nursing. This is even if such change is in the medium to long term rather than in the near

³⁵ Meta-modernism can be aligned with technology/IT and subjectivism, but this is a very simplistic linkage - see Yousef, (2017) for a detailed treatise on the 3 modernistic stages.

future (Samier, 2022; Miroshnichenko and Proscurina, 2021). It is clear that this realisation should factor strongly in how security moves forward on its own professional journey.

5.2.3 Global Disruption and the Trump Effect

Much has changed globally and economically since the researcher embarked on this study. The 2nd term for President Trump has presented political, defence and economic challenges to the UK. Although no direct reference to this was made by respondents the situation points to those potential economic drivers or disruptors discussed in the literature review. Future related decisions by the UK in response to USA initiatives could present unforeseen difficulties for the professional landscape including for any embryonic security profession. Predicatively, it is economic shifts which may most affect emerging or even existing professions. However, it is far too soon to ascertain if any US driven changes affecting the UK security sector would result in favourable or adverse outcomes as it embarks on the professional journey. The Trumpian era and associated global flux do however emphasise the further need for pragmatism and far sightedness by security sector leaders weighed against all the other elements discussed.

5.2.4 The Internalisation of Trust

The primary data and the literature clearly show that societal linkage with the professions is becoming increasingly weaker, although trust was still considered a vital professional component. The security sector mirrors this partial disconnect. Respondents did not focus on a societal relationship whilst acknowledging trust was vital. The inference of this seemingly contrary positioning is that the focus of trust has changed for professional entities. Although trust remains an important component in the professional equation it appears the direction and ambit have distinctly shifted. Until recently trust was the ‘adhesive glue’ between elements of the social contract. However, this has clearly morphed into a pragmatic trust system focussed on inter-organisational and institutional relationships forged within business structures and

operations. Unsurprisingly, this insight echoes concerns once raised by those such as Gillespie *et al.*, (2012) and Lavazza and Farina, (2020) when discussing the financial crash of 2008. This shift will do little for the social contract even if strong ethical codes are in place possibly as a means of controlling standards more generally. The researcher concurs with the literary and primary data analysis indicating societal linkage and trust (not just ethics) are something not to be ignored just because a more pragmatic and possibly transitory environment exists. Rather, the two aspects are not mutually exclusive and both should be part of a new professional security construct. If trust is only maintained between business colleagues and not more generally between professions and society then cohesion and societal trust will continue to diminish. This would present even greater challenges especially when future national or global disruptions occur. Security should not lose sight of the benefits of strong societal linkage.

5.2.5 Technology and its future Role in the Security Profession

It is hard to predict how technology specifically will change the shape of security. Although Susskind and Susskind (2022, p244.) have a definitive view on this in the form of a “production and distribution of knowledge” it is possible that the security sector by virtue of its operational nature may not quite conform to their view. The primary data was optimistic that technology would enhance the sector drive for professionalism and this seems feasible when cyber and economic leverage is considered together with enhanced practitioner training and education. However, the main variable in this equation may be the rate of change and how much (quantum) AI might displace security professionals. Scoping this area fully, especially alongside the cyber fraternity would be most beneficial when designing professional pathways.

Technical improvements have the potential to materially change the security landscape and the roles and status of those who work in it. However, this technical revolution could

accelerate rapidly in the foreseeable future with outcomes very difficult to predict especially if the sector is not able to keep pace. The chances of foreseeing or dealing with such challenges may be much improved with a cohesive professional construct in place.

5.3 A Perspective on Tensions arising in the Research

Much of the professional transition already evaluated has highlighted several ongoing tensions. These are individually threaded throughout the literature but also many were indirectly highlighted in the primary responses. These tensions provide the context and maneuvering space for the security sector to work within when developing professional pathways. The developing profession could benefit greatly if these tensions were understood and leveraged correctly. It is important therefore to identify resolutions to these tensions if possible or predict likely outcomes. In some cases the security sector may just have to accept uncertainty, but these unresolved tensions would remain a focus to inform any risk assessment. Some consolidation of these themed tensions may point to even further insights.

5.3.1 Protecting Knowledge – Gatekeeping and Commodification

It should be no surprise that knowledge as the most prominent and overarching characteristic of a profession has resulted in transitional tensions arising between old and new professional forms. The literature makes much of knowledge commodification and its threat to some professions notably teaching and medicine who perhaps focus more on knowledge as elite gatekeeping. However, security knowledge is in early development and yet to be curated in any meaningful way. There was no sense in the primary findings that knowledge democratisation or greater sharing would pose significant problems other than for those specific areas where integrity might be compromised or where access to classified material might result in security risk. The researcher discerned much pragmatism and realism in responses with practitioners having little desire to be overly protective about any UBK. Views reflected the new direction of travel for new professions regarding this alleged tension.

Whilst many older professions may view this tension as an existential threat the security sector is in the favourable position of initially not having any preset condition for knowledge commodification or gatekeeping. It is able to introduce a bespoke system that curates what it requires as essential knowledge, allow for commodification if necessary and design required gatekeeping conditions for professional entry. It is what happens in later years that might create similar tensions currently experienced by more traditional professions. It is probable that knowledge tensions may never be fully resolved as they sit at the heart of professional and cultural evolution. Also accelerated technological advances will always be in varying states of flux requiring professions to be both nimble and adaptable. Security will be no exception in the longer term.

5.3.2 Power and Influence – a linguistic and cultural Tension

Power and influence are central to the dynamics of professions both internally and externally to varying degrees. Whilst the primary data generally reflected the distaste for the (power) word it was clear that influence was considered vital for a future security profession. This tension is perhaps more perceptual than factual and one for vernacular consideration. The majority of respondents just find the word linguistically and increasingly culturally uncomfortable reflecting the current negative overtones present in some sectors of UK society. However, the reality is that inherent power is central to all professional transactions and likely to remain so. It is how power is exercised and its purpose that are important. Nevertheless, the framing of power in a new security profession would need to move with the cultural base as it evolves.

5.3.3 External or Internal Regulation - Autonomy

The primary data in this research majors on regulation as a necessary and required professional security component. However, the main literature other than the concern in Australia (Sullivan, 1998) referring to an increasing loss of security sector autonomy, has

until very recently provided little substantive discourse. It is now evident that a growing tension in this area of transition from old to new forms is developing. For older professions this will increasingly present a great challenge for their autonomy. However, some recognition of cause and effect is now emerging in UK professional journals and the media. Reports such as that by Kilian *et al.* (2025) point to tension building in the education sector manifested by imminent legal challenges to OFSTED as reported by the BBC (2025).

Security is not immune from this growing tension but fortunately it can navigate the area more easily than older regulated professions who are more invested in autonomy through the medium of their internal control. The security sector currently has little professional autonomy and therefore little to protect at present. A pragmatic blend of both external and internal regulation is needed; external for professional recognition and oversight whilst some internal regulation would provide limited autonomy. If the correct balance is achieved any tension in the sector could largely be alleviated or resolved. However, in the longer term, increasing external control may bring autonomy tensions back into focus for the security profession mirroring the challenges faced by traditional entities.

5.3.4 Security Sector Fragmentation – together or separate

Security fragmentation tensions in various guises were much discussed in the primary data but featured little in the literature which is less security focussed. Responses showed undoubted concern that cyber security in particular may be on the path to its own professional recognition and has potential to derail initiatives to create a recognised security sector profession. However, if the correct linkages between disciplines are maintained and strengthened the rise of cyber recognition can be a positive development especially if that discipline agrees to associate with any new regulatory council formed.

Multiple representation by various security bodies poses tensions and potential lack of focus

and ownership. However, these are arguably of less concern, although reaching consensus will always be a challenge. The Security Institute with its elevated status, size, wide representation, and positioning make it the prime candidate to lead the professional journey given its existing institutional and NPSA recognition. Other associations and related bodies would need to be included in any new model and liaison at the right junctures would be beneficial. Fragmentation is seen as a real barrier to forward progress both in leadership and functional terms therefore it would be wise to seek full inclusivity and agreement in all framework approaches. Inclusion extends to internal regulation, an UBK, and societal linkage as well as external regulation and communication. This pragmatic approach if constructed well would emerge as a good solution reflecting a robustly frameworked neo-expert profession. It could be one that transcends ephemerality and would be likely adaptable to changing times with even the ability to pivot towards more traditional positioning if that were required at some point.

5.4 More to add on Definitions and Concepts

The primary results of this research matched much of the literature base explored but perhaps there is more to add. Evetts (2006) believes most researchers have accepted definitional uncertainty regarding professions and ‘moved on’. However, the plethora of more recent professional journal articles and especially those targeted at mostly the western education, legal and health sectors would tend to contradict that view, especially after 2008. For a short period after the financial crash the professional concept attracted great literary criticism resulting in a shift of focus in both the normative and socio-cultural approaches to professions.³⁶ A similar discourse appears to be returning post pandemic and spotlights the nature of professions once more.

³⁶ The financial crash in 2008 exposed much pent up frustration with professional power and arguably (breaking) the social contract.

Every lawful occupation in an increasing environment of individualism could be classed as a profession, or professional, if the shackles of elitism and social construction were removed, something alluded to by Monteiro (2015). However, respondents did not necessarily focus on such an argument, and it was clear many saw security as nearing professional recognition and worthy of status despite the taxonomic deficiencies. A simplistic notion is that a profession is the construct of earning a principal regular income which provides a corresponding “utility and dignity whatever its reality” (Monteiro, 2015). This view is probably too esoterically philosophical to be of much practical value except perhaps in the matter of related cultural reinforcement discussed in the analysis earlier, both in lexical expression and the belief of being a profession. However, the inference is individualism presents a clear and difficult trajectory needing acknowledgement by security moving forward to better navigate the challenges in working practices and professional representation.

In reality much of the newer professional models use the traditional frameworks to provide the same building block characteristics which have been at the discursive heart of this research. It is more the lack of a developed societal contract and historic cultural underpinning that differentiates them although depending on which newer profession is being discussed there are varying elements of these present. What is also present in newer professional models is a swing towards legislative accountability and external governmental regulation with the resultant loss of some autonomy such as in H&S and HRM. This pragmatic positioning has been central to this study. Research responses would suggest a similar concept could provide the best approach for the security sector albeit partially at the expense of the more ‘noble’ characteristics of altruism and potentially social trust. However, it would be advisable for these elements to feature in some form to offer an even firmer foundation in the longer term.

5.5 Consolidated Views of the potential Pathway forward

This study conclusively shows that an appetite and perceived need for a security profession

exists and the only debate is how the journey should begin and what construct might be achievable. Contrary to Manunta (1999), who categorically argued that security is not a profession it is noteworthy that much has changed in 26 years and there were those such as Simonsen (1996) who argued even then that security in the UK qualified as a profession based on its characteristics. His is a fairly lone voice but interestingly there are those such as Wakefield (2014, p.920), a British professor who has referred to the sector as a “security profession” in her work. Such lexical positioning adds to needed cultural reinforcement. Most responses around pathways eventually settled and focussed on more modern approaches such as used by the engineering profession or possibly other expert oriented ones. The current challenges to emulate them could be overcome if the desire and will are present and the former certainly exists as this research has shown. Whether the will also exists to unify more and pursue a tangible change is less certain.

Attaining the more functional and procedural components of a profession, old or new, might present much less of a problem. The research suggests that replicating even a traditional model structurally and practically whilst taking time, effort and money would be the least of the challenges present. It is the inability to provide the historical foundation and accrued reverence - culturally now much on the wane - together with the associated accumulated power and institutional reach which might be the insurmountable problem. Ephemerality aside, it would seem wise to discount any endeavour to become a fully traditional professional model in the mode of the ‘noble’ professions. This leaves the alternative professional approaches to consider which may provide a more suitable pathway to recognition.

Retaining the status quo, almost by definition, is an unrealistic option if any progress is to be made. Gentle forward evolution might work if it could be assured, but that cannot be guaranteed and in the current professional landscape positive progress is unlikely. If security were to ignore the need for progress it might leave the sector increasingly open to stagnation

in a fast-moving professional world, one that would not offer the opportunities provided by pragmatic progression reflecting similar successes achieved by other newer professions. All the evidence suggests a journey toward some new professional model would be advisable and it would make sense to consider a bespoke neo-expert framework such as that provided by the Engineering Council as a potential way forward.

5.6 Personal Research Insights

The researcher when deciding to embark on this research had some expectation of what issues may arise and what general views may be held by the sampled populations. Many expected views were confirmed but one surprise was just how closely aligned respondent thinking was regarding what constituted the major components of a profession and how closely that thinking matched the weighting of main characteristics found in the literature base. However, a bigger surprise was the clear disconnect between any social contract required and the identified professional characteristics, together with the distaste for power whilst conversely acknowledging influence was much needed. These perspectives led to the researcher understanding quite early in the analysis that a more pragmatic expert leaning approach would be the likely security professional solution.

The views of one chartered respondent prompted the researcher to reflect in a more focussed way on the cultural reinforcement perspective regarding the security profession which became a prominent recommendation in this study. This response by a senior individual was a declaration that security is already a profession. He clearly did not fully accept the premise of the research (*C1, pos 12.*). This outlier response was delivered so full of conviction and belief that it prompted the researcher to consider much deeper than originally intended how cultural strength, class and power in the UK relate to security as a profession. It also led to consideration of how culture could be leveraged in any strategy recommended. This aspect should not have been a surprise considering the literary coverage. Nevertheless, this trigger

was perhaps needed to make the researcher question and ascertain how important these elements really are. On reflection they might be of such central importance to the professional equation that future researchers might do well to study UK class and cultural aspects as a major focus for the relationship with security professionalism. Such parallel research would contribute to this study and provide even greater overall depth and understanding.

Previous discussion indicated there were various seemingly unresolved tensions arising from the professions transitioning from old stances to newer pragmatic forms. Although these insights at the personal level were a little unexpected this was largely because of the researcher's lack of initial awareness and deeper knowledge of the professional concept at the commencement of the study. However, what became increasingly important was the need for synthesis and resolution of many of the tensions to consolidate thinking. They became a strong focus for evaluation to provide deeper insights and help the researcher identify future security sector progression amidst the tensions and challenges. Any of those individual tensions identified would be a worthy contender for future research or scoping studies. They would contribute greatly to this more general research especially if directly security focussed.

5.7 Some Limitations of the Discussion

The nature of further interpretation in the discussion chapter presents even stronger validity challenges when evaluating consolidated findings which have already been individually analysed. Interpretation could easily lack precision because the discussion is effectively 'once removed' from the early individual analysis. Conversely, any tendency to rigidly analyse complex issues too forensically or to exaggerate meaning could result in over-reach when deciphering ideas and themes. A balance must be struck in order not to undermine validity and understanding. The researcher was fully aware of these pitfalls. The methodology and reflexivity employed in this study ameliorated many of the concerns and the comparison of differing data sets helped mitigate the challenges or any tendency to bias. The researcher

strived to achieve objectivity and maintain high analytical standards by using good reflexive practice no matter how complex the data.

The predictive nature of the discussion was also a concern and the researcher hopefully focussed more on possibilities and potentialities arising from the findings rather than articulating anything too definitive. Effort was made to analyse data wisely and appropriately. The possibility of knowledge and data gaps being present in the research fell into the same category of consideration. The potential for arriving at over-simplistic evaluation was a continuing concern and one reason why the literature base presented was balanced and expansive to better compare the extensive but complex primary data for richness and some triangulation.

5.8 Conclusion

There is little doubt that professional concepts and even the lexicon and cultural framing around them has exercised academics and the business world greatly, probably since the first ideas of employment segregation were debated. Professions have mostly thrived as society, technology and businesses have developed. This is despite the reservations evident in views by those such as Freidson (1994) and Larson (2017) who both reflected on a perceived decline in professions in juxtaposition with a rise in professionalism, reflecting the discursive zeitgeist at different stages of professional evolution. In fact, the reality may well be that the privilege provided by professional membership is illusory as described by Hughes and Hughes (2013) when discussing Scott's 3 pillars of Institutes (Scott, 2013).

Alternatively, in discussing professions it might be that to some extent the reality is whatever can be made of it at any moment in time, in recognitional terms and the prestige it might give. However, it is not an illusion to observe that older professions over many decades have derived all the trappings of status, power, authority, and autonomy. This has usually resulted

in good remuneration, even if part of the bargain has been to ensure altruism and public service is prominent in their cultural and even practical makeup. The evidence suggests this balance continues to change and very much away from altruism and towards greater pragmatism.

This discursive chapter concludes with another observation. The security sector might not be able to 'sit on its hands' and just let the professional changes being witnessed pass it by given the powerful forces in play and anticipated by those such as Susskind and Susskind (2022). The sector is already mature enough through chartership and to some extent strengthened by governmental, Royal and NPSA formal recognition to vanguard the professional journey further. At this stage of evolution, it would be sensible for the Security Institute and other representative sector bodies to desire change and one that brings greater understanding and progress.

Sector leadership in the future will need to focus not just on the more fraternally focussed elements of membership and collegiality which are important but also to drive steadily towards a profession which could transform sector or individual standing, career pathways and inclusivity, including greater gender representation. This is in a business world set to change ever faster in the 4th Industrial Revolution as described by Susskind and Susskind (2022, p136.). The following final chapter takes a summative stance and seeks to provide recommendations for the sector which could be used to pursue greater professionalisation and identify a model concept to attain full recognition. Early governmental recognition of an envisaged new Security Council to set the foundations for future status enhancement and make progress as the chosen model develops and matures would be specifically desirable.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 A Summative Overview of the Research

This research set out to demystify the concept of professions especially within UK and in a modern changing business environment. This was in relation to how the security sector might seek professional advancement and even attain recognition as an established profession. This led to examining those traits and functions that have come to characterise the older more established professions in UK but even the newer expert ones to varying degrees.

The literature showed that professions were traditionally bound by a social construct, something better described by Susskind and Susskind (2022, p11.) as the ‘grand bargain’. It also became clear that this bargain is heavily under threat as society and business have both moved towards a greater pragmatism and individualism. This has been seemingly accelerated by technology and knowledge commodification but also class and cultural shifts. The trajectory has translated into professions pivoting towards a more expert stance and whilst professions may still understand that trust and ethics are of paramount need the matters of altruism and societal leaning are considered less so. This is more marked in newer professions but even the older traditional ones have shifted their postures as they view the changing landscape and consider the threats to their identity and relevance problematic if they do not ‘change with the times.’

Whether this is something ephemeral remains to be seen but given the current trajectory of societal and technological evolution any reversal or a major return to the old status quo is unlikely. However, such a possibility still remains and ‘professional fluidity’ may increase in what has become a febrile business and social landscape. This suggests some major adaptability needs to be incorporated into any proposed security solution.

The research makes it clear that the security sector, whilst unlikely to ever successfully adopt a fully traditional model akin to that of the noble professions, could leverage socio-economic changes to adopt a neo-expert model. This would be one which is bespoke constructed but uses major elements of a more traditional framework similar to that used by the Engineering Council. This model is preferred because of the relationship that already exists from their past assistance in the inception of the security charter. Engineering also offers better alignment in functional characteristics (e.g. security engineer specialisms found in the RSES). Both sectors have a similar plethora and diversity of 'expert leaning' disciplines. Furthermore, the Engineering Council regulates entities which are traditionally framed at a scale similar to that of the security sector.

All the major positive characteristics observable in professions could and should be incorporated within the chosen model to allow development and attract greater positive recognition from businesses, society and the UK Government. The latter will be pivotal in attaining formal recognition. This means much work and focus will be required as well as a willingness to embark on a pathway towards greater professionalisation. The evidence indicates success is possible and likely if the sector leadership unifies its messaging at the right levels and pursues what so many in security desire and need. Lessons provided by countries such as Australia including codification, regulation and their formal professional route to recognition have provided good evidence for success and confirmed the endeavour is possible. The UK security sector now needs to learn from such experience and begin its own robust journey to becoming a profession.

6.2 Research Implications

It is much easier, especially in a fragmented security sector, to continue with the status quo. This is especially when sector leaders are mainly practitioners who have been elected to short term pro-bono directorships within the representative associations and institutes. A large

amount of motivation and goodwill is required. It is much to ask that they vanguard the professional journey. They will need to agree, unify and lead to the extent required to action the recommendations in this research. Others before them have ‘moved the dial’ greatly by the creation of the Security Institute 25 years previously and more recently the CSyP charter in 2011, both of which are now fully recognised by the UK Government with the Security Institute recently attaining Royal patronage. The next move is but a continuing step along a pathway already created and the research suggests the time has never been more perspicacious for further progress.

Following this section some recommendations are introduced which carry implications although very few in a suggested first phase. The Security Institute is well placed to originate a fledgling Security Council which in the early stages would not require governmental permission or a Royal Charter. However, by Phase 3 this would be expected for attaining the fully recognised framework of a new expert profession on a par with several other professions who have taken a similar journey. The recommendations which follow clearly provide the next steps although further research may be required as well as consideration of differing views in the sector. However, based on the evidence, the recommendations provide a workable solution which could be achieved in a realistic timeframe.

6.3 Recommendations and future Progression³⁷

It has been possible to identify which route the sector could take by navigating the complexities provided in the literature and aligning primary data with those sometimes difficult and conflicting literary viewpoints, as well as some found in the primary responses themselves. It is a route that offers the most likely chance of success through three stages to allow for full recognition. The researcher recognises the potential challenges, especially those in Phase 3 which would require gaining chartership for a new Security Council, something

³⁷ These recommendations constitute Objective 6.

which represents a sizeable and significant hurdle to overcome. However, even if that were to take several years the recommended Phase 1 and 2 stages offer much progress in the right direction and can be accomplished by the sector independently.

It is important to achieve the correct balance in recommendations. The evidence derived in this research has informed the weighting, likelihood of success and the viability of the proposals made. Most would intuitively make sense at any level of consideration but as alluded to earlier the concept of a profession must sometimes be viewed in its entirety of characteristics and cultural space. This provided the research challenge to originate a three phased recommended approach based on a neo-expert model incorporating the identified and needed components of functions and characteristics discussed throughout the analysis. The **26 detailed recommendations** which underpin the conceptual recommendation could also be used as a standalone aide-memoire and are presented in tabulated form at **Appendix 3**. These singular recommendations are based on the regulatory, normative and socio-cultural pillars described by Scott (2013) and provide a list for use separately and for ease of cross-referencing. The main overarching conceptual recommendation, which follows, presents a cohesive professional construct designed loosely on the engineering framework which could be adopted by the sector.

The phased model depicted in Figures 30 to 32 incorporates those characteristics required, including a curated UBK, ethical coding, a ladder approach to careers and education, as well as individual hybridity (e.g. security engineers). Also incorporated would be codified educational entry points for associate and full membership with diversity of education and background. Regulatory elements would include both external and internal oversight of ethics and performance standards and synergy with any external licencing. The socio-cultural recommendations are focussed on communication reinforcement of the ‘belief’ and lexicon including the repetition of messaging. Trust and awareness of societal links for deeper

recognition would also need to feature. The whole would be bound up in a more traditional framework to incorporate a new Security Council together with the existing Security Institute. There would also be necessary governmental linkage comprising an external regulatory body, currently the SIA, whose remit, it is envisaged, would be far more expansive than currently is the case.

6.3.1 Phase 1 – a starting Point to the Creation of a professional Model

The 1st stage of the recommended model is represented in Figure 30. This 1st phase shows the creation of an embryonic **Security Council** which at this juncture could be part of the current Security Institute or created by them as a linked offshoot. However, even at this early stage a Board of Trustees would be required for the new entity. The existing Institute Board could act in *loco parentis* initially until separate governance is instigated.

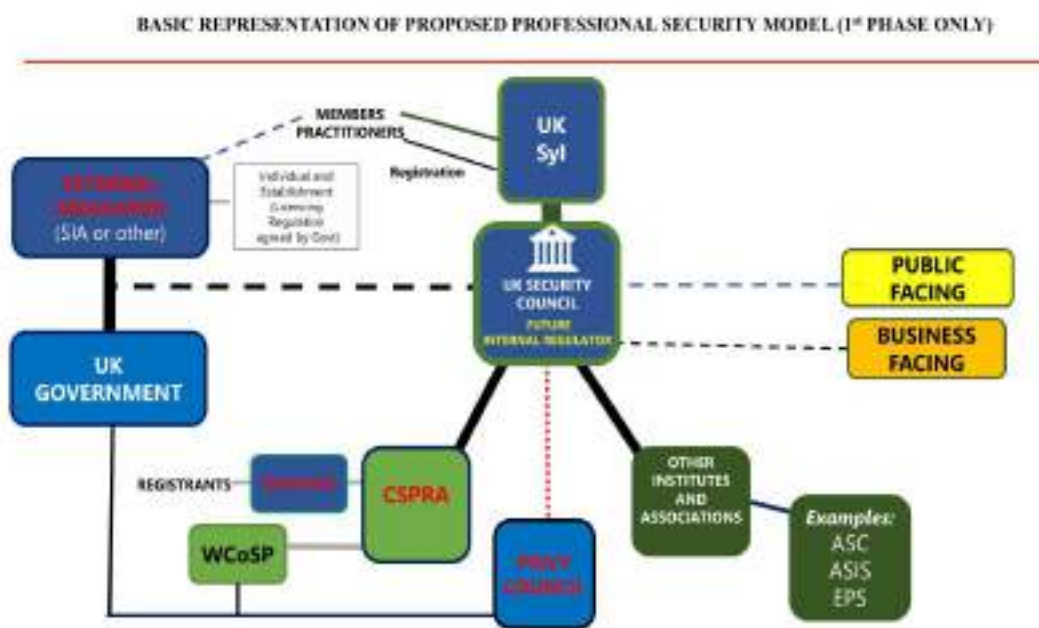


Figure 30 – Phase 1: Proposed Professional Framework for a Security Profession.

No permissions from the UK Government or other external bodies are needed in this phase but clearly there would need to be a communication strategy and ceremonial launch to best

showcase the new body. It is important to note that at this early stage CSPRA would continue to exist and retain its regulatory function for the WCoSP. Other institutes and associations would be invited to join the endeavour (see linkage in Figure 30) but in Phase 1 no regulatory capacity is likely to feature.

6.3.2 Phase 2 – a hybrid Evolution

In Phase 2 and with no set timeline, the Security Council could become largely autonomous but with arranged professional linkage to the Security Institute. More importantly the Security Council would start designing the internal regulatory framework and processes needed for developed ethics and performance codes. It would also initiate preliminary oversight of performance in the sector. However, without chartership it would not be possible to fully regulate beyond powers to remove certain memberships, registrations and knowledge access or regulate non-contracted commercial matters. This phase is depicted in Figure 31.

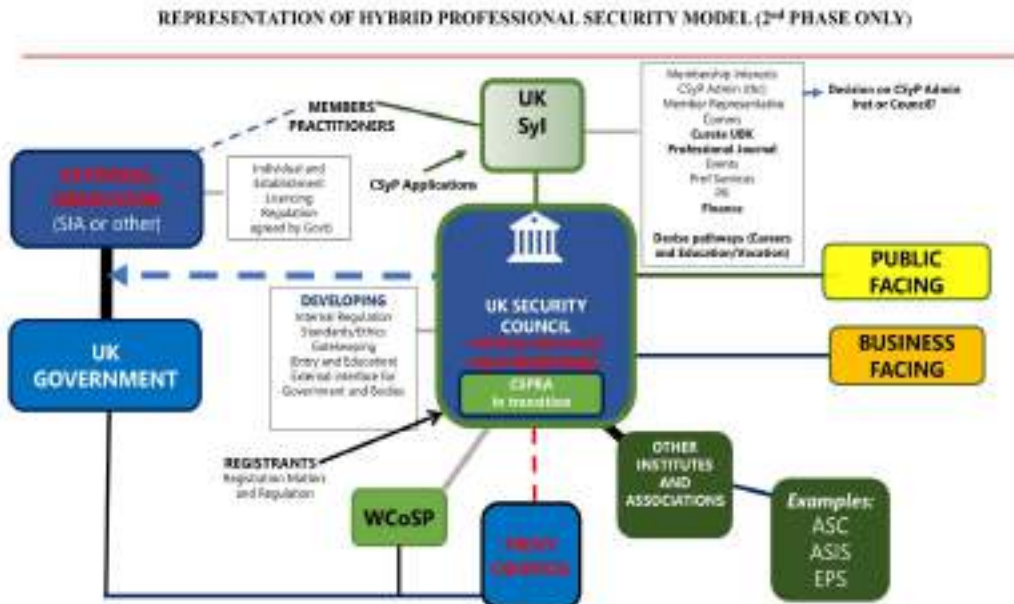


Figure 31 – Phase 2: The second Stage Model Framework for a Security Profession.

In this phase it is also envisaged that CSPRA could be subsumed by the Security Council as depicted in Figure 31 with the current registrars operating under a Security Council purview

but with WCoSP still owning the CSyP Register.³⁸ Clearly discussion and agreement between various parties including CSPRA and the WCoSP would be needed to accomplish this. Strong lobbying of the Privy Council, the UK Government and the SIA which should begin in Phase 1 would now be intensified at the inception of this new **hybrid** phase as responsibilities grow and an identity is more fully established. This would build on the previous similar work by the Security Institute and the CSyP charter when they were formed. At some desired and appropriate point in Phase 2 a formal application to the Privy Council would be the natural conclusion to establish chartership of the Security Council. At this point Phase 3 would begin and a fully institutionally recognised profession would exist and itself become subject to external Privy Council oversight.

6.3.3 Phase 3 – A recognised Profession formed

Figure 32 shows Phase 3 which is the eventual envisaged framework where the Security Council has received the Royal Charter, and all regulatory and administrative functions are in place. At this stage and thereafter professional evolution would be based on its own governance informed by other external factors and law. The framework fully matches the characteristics of other neo-expert professions.

A note of caution regarding Phase 3 must be acknowledged. The attainment of a Royal Charter is no mean feat and would require a huge undertaking similar to the charter process conducted by the Security Institute and WCoSP throughout 2009/10 to establish and form the CSyP Register. However, the Security Institute now has Royal patronage and currently manages the CSyP Register on behalf of the WCoSP which has existed since 2011. This prominence makes the research recommendations much more viable. It is suggested that all three phases could be achieved within 5 years. However, much depends on the will and effort

³⁸ This would need WCoSP agreement and required negotiation to replace CSPRA or incorporate CSPRA as an entity into the Security Council.

by leaders in completing Phases 1 and 2 initially and then ensuring all stakeholder agreements are reached prior to any submission made for a Royal Charter by the Security Council.

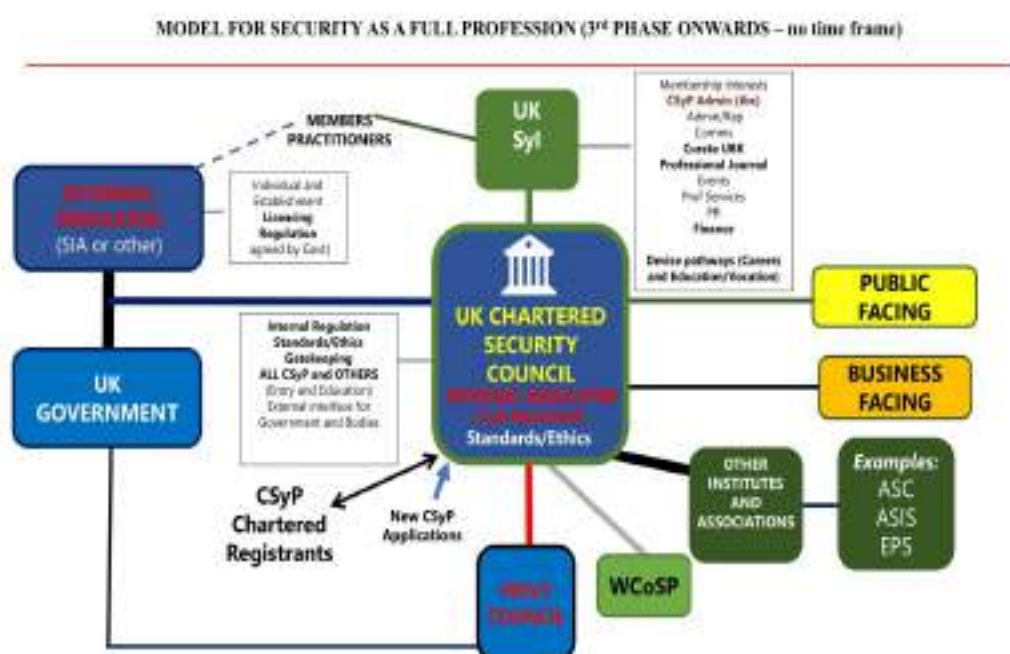


Figure 32 – Phase 3: A Security Profession.

The recommended phased approach represents a bold but pragmatic way forward to first professionalise and then present as a recognised body. Phase 3 onwards would constitute the focus for maturing the concept, strengthening further the social and business links, and ensure a fuller and evolving curation of a sensible improving UBK. This would be in tandem with good regulatory balanced processes for monitoring professional entry and maintaining ethical and performance standards.

6.3.4 Security and governmental strategic Actors

There are various bodies in the security sector and within UK Government which would be actively involved in pursuing the recommended pathway. These entities are highlighted in Table 3. The table only includes the main early actors, and it is probable that many individuals and other stakeholders may well require involvement at various stages. It is the

Security Institute together with the embryonic Security Council which are the two main actors for most of the initiatives required throughout all three phases but the WCoSP, Privy Council and the SIA also feature prominently.

The Lead Bodies and Engagement Areas

Lead Body	Phase(s)	Engagement	Comments
Security Institute	All	Lead Body and representation	The Process Inceptor and initial Budget
Security Council (formed at inception)	All	Internal regulation All Interfaces and representation	To agree professional framework and Self-Governance
WCoSP (CSyP) with Security Council	Ph 1 and 2	CSyP matters	CSyP framework regulation
SIA (with Security Council)	Ph 2 and onwards	External regulation	Governmental oversight
Security Representative Association and Bodies	Ph 2 onwards	Affiliation and internal regulation	Needs liaison and agreement (later mandate may be Governmental in Ph3)
Institute and Council with Selected Universities (liaise and contract)	Ph 2 onwards	Educational Partnerships and UBK	Fraternal and Contractual (courses/curricula)
Institute and Council with Selected Training Providers (liaise and contract)	Ph 2 onwards	Training Partnerships and UBK	Fraternal and Contractual (courses/curricula)
Legal Counsel (Retained Solicitor)	Ph2/3	Privy Council Focus for Application	Usually Learned Society Legal Advisor
Privy Council with Security Council	Ph2/3	Charter Application	Variable in time
Institute and Council with Businesses/Public	All Phases	Cultural Reinforcement	Socio/Economic focus

Note: other stakeholders when identified

Table 3 – Actors involved with addressing Recommendations.

6.3.5 The Provisional Timeline for attaining Professional Status

The potential timeline and sequencing of the more prominent actions to be conducted over the first 5 years are represented diagrammatically in Figure 33. It is suggested that an application for chartership and full institutional recognition could be attained within that time frame, but Phase 2 especially represents a flexible working period which could be truncated or elongated as conditions and progress allow.



Figure 33 – A Recommended Roadmap and Timeline for Security Professionalisation.

6.3.6 Priorities of Work

Clearly there will be work priorities and a need for correct sequencing. Whilst Figure 33 could be used as the basis for a generalised timeline programme as an early strategic model, some flexibility and pragmatism will be needed to better maintain momentum. The whole could be project managed with inherent contingency built into the planning process aided by Gannt or other similar time-frame modelling. The researcher offers some strategic priorities which could drive the process, highlighted in Table 4, as an initial guide to assist the Security

Institute and Security Council (when formed) as well as other leaderships which may become involved.

Priorities of Work for Designated Actors (in Sequence but flexible)

➤ Short Term – Immediate Action (aligned with Phase 1)		
Scope, Strategise, Brief, Manage, Budget		SyI Board
Start initial liaison with all external Stakeholders (e.g.. SIA)		SyI
Elect Board of Trustees (interim may be SyI Board)		SyI
Launch new Security Council		SyI/Council
➤ Mid-term – Structural and Communication Needs (aligned largely with Phase 2)		
To curate preliminary UBK and instigate Professional Journal		SyI
Draft and codify regulatory systems (Ethics and Performance)		SIA / Council
Devise and agree 5yr Budget and Funding Streams		Council
Extend liaison to secure agreements as required (e.g. Ed/Training)		SyI / Council
Develop and enact Communication Strategies		SyI / Council (Boards)
Agree and Implement CSyP - WCoSP framework		WCoSP / Council
Invite Associations to join Council		Council / Others
Develop Career and Education Pathways /Contracts		SyI / Universities/Training
Finalise legal Package and conduct Pre-Application Audit	}	Legal Counsel
Apply for Chartership and Royal Assent ³⁹		Security Council
➤ Long Term and aspirational Targets (aligned to end of Phase 2 and all Phase 3 onwards)		
Cultural Initiatives / Reinforcement / Social Engagement		Council / SyI / Others
Widen Remit to advise and study Sector Salaries and Conditions		SyI and others
Promote Security Research at all levels		SyI / Council

Table 4 – Priorities and Sequencing of Actions

³⁹ This in red denotes the major and most difficult work stream to accomplish (for detail see page 181) .

6.4 Limitations and Recommendations for future Research

One specific limitation which might feature moving forward is the undoubted need for a funding stream within the phases. Funding and costs were not overly discussed in the research as this is an area that would be operationally scoped as part of the pre-workup towards forming a Security Council. The limited costs in early phasing are not likely to be a major issue but a budget needs consideration. A budget requirement features later in **Appendix 3** (serial 7) as the first ‘normative’ recommendation. Any later costs related to staffing and operations for the new Security Council would constitute evolutionary progress and depend on an agreed budget. Longer term capital costs may also be required at a later juncture.

There are other limitations to be noted beyond the methodological limitations covered in Chapter 3 which were identified as the research progressed. The most obvious and as the socio-demographic of participants clearly showed, is that much of the UK security population is not fully represented in the research. This is especially so at the junior or more practical level of security, such as those in the guarding function and those who have not joined any representative body or are yet to do so. As noted in the analysis earlier this is important to acknowledge. Further socio-demographic research targeted at this younger section could further inform such cohort thinking based on selectively sampled populations. The results may be especially helpful in regard to informing and shaping career entry and pathways using the ‘ladder concept.’ There may well be other specific areas that may be identified when scoping begins as worthy of extended research to better inform decision making and this would be expected.

Although identified earlier in the methodology it is worthwhile to further acknowledge and restate the former close relationship of the researcher with the institutional bodies when in an earlier career as this experience could and likely did inform some of his thinking. Depending on sector views of how that experience fed into the research process this may be considered as

either a positive or negative. Bias awareness and using the researcher's knowledge to better inform the outcome using the critical realist approach were paramount in this study. Much emphasis was given by the researcher in triangulating the findings which were used to reach the recommendations presented and a reflexive attitude was fully adopted whereby assumptions both in the literature and in primary data were addressed. Having now completed the research the early initial view of the researcher made at the beginning of the research that the results would be balanced, valid and reliable is confirmed. Naturally, that confirmation may be challenged as may the results and recommendations made, especially if further pertinent and detailed evidence becomes available.

Future specific studies gauging views from selected surveys of the sector or even academic establishments could be considered to better inform the main recommendations in this study and would be a welcome addition to this basic research. Furthermore, the Security Institute and other stakeholder bodies would be advised to scope the practical issues and conduct a series of business studies, organisational reviews, and exercises to better understand the strategy needed to adopt the recommendations contained in this study, whether they be accepted in whole or part. The researcher would be happy to assist in any initiative moving forward, especially at the earlier stages of briefing, presentations, and discussion.

6.5 Research Conclusion

This research although comprehensive regarding the central issues, may be viewed as but part of all the considerations needed to embark further on the pathway to establish a future sector security profession. Both the complexity and, in some cases, the simplicities of the professional concept have been addressed to better understand where UK security sits in the professional landscape. The sector could almost be termed a 'profession' now if the views of Simonsen (1996) are accepted, but in reality, much needs to be reinforced and matured to legitimately claim this is actually the case. The recommendations in this research provide a

route for such legitimacy, notwithstanding sector reservations together with any potential inertia present. Furthermore, ownership and leadership issues may arise within the sector.

The recommendations made in this study, underpinned by the evidence, highlight the appetite and generally aligned thinking regarding the future. Most respondents surveyed and interviewed suggested the timeline needed for the security sector to become a profession would likely be 10 to 15 years and indeed that might be the case. However, with motivation and sufficiently galvanized action the time frame could be considerably shorter especially for Phase 1 and 2 completion, which is relatively straightforward. The sector should now seize the opportunity to build on the findings and recommendations contained in this research and begin the process of professionalisation.

It would be unwise to simply accept the status quo and proceed without a clear professional end-state. Inertia would probably lead to greater fragmentation in the sector. This would be exacerbated by the speed of technical advances and the buffeting likely to accompany increasing change. Furthermore, there may be potential counter-voices from other related disciplines or possibly from within the sector itself. Indeed, cyber-security already seems to be on a separatist path or one of duplication. There are always those with competing agendas. The sector should now acknowledge the status quo is not sustainable and poses potential future risks. The spectre of increasing individualism and cultural shifts taking place more generally in society may be added to these challenges. When all this is considered, it becomes clear that now would be a good moment to invigorate the professional security journey. This research ends with a phrase once much used when all embryonic ventures were being contemplated and where boldness or motivation were also required – *carpe diem*. Let this be the final and over-arching recommendation of this research.

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APPENDIX 1

SUMMARY OF PRIMARY DATA FINDINGS

Ser.	Summarised Main Findings	Page
OBJ 1.	CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS AS VIEWED BY SECURITY	
1.	The socio-demographics show that responses were largely from a more senior, longer serving and an older practitioner population which adds general context to the findings with the clear demographic limitation recognised. Security Guards/Officers at lower or junior career levels were not significantly represented in this research.	94-97.
2.	Significantly ‘specialisation’ and ‘societal recognition’ featured much less frequently as main characteristics of being a profession – the <i>societal</i> one likely reflecting the increasing move away from altruism but also that security and society have not had the same relationship as those mature professions resulting in the perceived need as much less pronounced. More surprising is the ‘specialisation’ characteristic being so low, but this might be because practitioners feel being <i>expert</i> is quite akin to specialist which takes the central stage in response focal terms (and possibly a result of instrument focus).	98-98.
3.	Very few pointed to the social factors and the ‘grand bargain’ which featured heavily in the literature and the associated more altruistic elements highlighting a likely disconnect between security and society (except ethics was valued highly) and a diminishing perhaps of the ‘grand bargain’ overall (something mirrored in the literature). Trust however, remained a significant need although focussed more on business fraternity and internally but not society generally.	99-100.
4.	Standard trait and functional factors dominate practitioner understanding of what a profession is/could be – with less societal linkage and altruism. Knowledge and qualification, but not necessarily formal ones, sit at the top by a considerable margin but expertise and experience also feature highly.	100-101.
5.	There is a polarised split on whether a first degree should be the entry academic level for a security profession but a vast majority believed that a security qualification was important alongside experience. A degree might be more useful later in career. The irony of professional degrees (which are academic) also being security qualifications appeared not to be in any great focus.	102-106.
6.	Diverse pathways are favoured with a limited number disagreeing on efficacy of police/military entry. Multiple entry routes should exist and across education/experience levels. This should also allow Level 4 Apprenticeships to be included and would be welcome in the mix.	107-109.

7.	Professional security related degrees at various levels offer a bridge to the divided views on academic attainment and will likely gain in prominence and thinking.	109.
8.	Merit for progress with specialisation (perhaps more expertise) was a consensus trajectory for agreement. Views agreed a developed UBK is needed with CPD as part of the mix.	110.
9.	Concerns were raised about monopolisation of knowledge (see later comments on power) and the negatives of possible exclusion and misuse of authority. Conversely it was desired by most that standards needed oversight and regulation. This indicated the fine balance needed in oversight and control of any internal regulation.	109-112.
10.	Strong ethical codes would be a necessity and coding with some oversight mechanism needed, either internal or external or both. Licencing although required showed a split in thinking – some wishing all practitioners/functions to be licenced with an equal number (half) wanting only some. Another delicate balance to achieve.	111-114.
11.	Equal desire for both internal and external regulation was expressed, suggesting a good balance could develop. However, external mandate would be government led with security needing influence – a voice - to help shape and codify.	114-116.
12.	External Regulation also very likely equates to loss of autonomy as is also mirrored and shown in the literature base (e.g. in the Australian model).	116-118.
13.	Respondents did not like the notion of power (or at least the word itself) – however, influence, credibility and a seat at the table were expressed as desirable and whilst some understanding of the power dynamic exists the idea is mostly seen as a negative (culturally?) within the necessary control mechanism that would be required.	116-117.
14.	Autonomy in some form and degree is seen as a necessary component and desirable. Credibility and effectiveness also featured (unsurprisingly given the power relationship). However, there appears to be some disconnect with attitudes on this need with related power. Views were less cohesive on centralisation of authority to accomplish collective autonomy.	117-118.
15.	Focus on any societal contract or ‘grand bargain’ was largely absent unless prompted, again reinforcing the different views and relationship security has with this more traditional component although aspects of altruism for a very few were mentioned.	118-119.
16.	Views of the public and some parts of business on the low status of security were frequently mentioned. Interestingly and perhaps telling was that there was little or no correlation expressed between Ser.15. and these views, showing another possible lack of awareness and disconnect culturally.	120.

17.	It was established by some that security interaction with the public, excepting some roles, was limited and would account for the disconnect on societal importance related to being a profession. Some understanding when probed became clear.	120.
18.	Perhaps there would be less emphasis on the societal contract required if newer expert professionalisation rather than a traditional model was adopted.	120-121.
19.	In assessing the separate components it must be remembered to sometimes look at the whole picture – remembering the characteristics drawn together is needed to gain a more valid understanding of the complex dynamic and add insight.	121.
20.	Overall, taking all views together there is much alignment with the literature <i>except</i> for the social contract characteristic, notwithstanding ethics is understood as a main and much needed component.	121.
OBJ 2.	<i>THE NEED AND IMPORTANCE FOR SECURITY AS A PROFESSION</i>	
21.	If a magic wand were available over 60% would want an immediate profession although surprisingly 25% wished for an alternative structure but could not articulate exactly what that might be in any detail. Interviews however, showed much mention of frameworks similar to expert models.	123-124.
22.	Statistical replies suggest a profession to be important in varying degrees but something substantially necessary both for individuals and the sector.	124.
23.	Impact on salaries was not seen as providing a substantial move upwards with some exceptions, but overall the gaining of professional status would anticipate effects on remuneration being marginally favourable for both groups. More importantly views on salaries appeared to be driven less by selfish motives but more by identity, recognition and self-esteem needs. A positive sign.	126-128.
24.	Caution was expressed about potential fragmentation of disciplines (and representation). In particular cyber security and consultancy are seen as two functional disciplines that could cause fragmentation when overall convergence would offer better cohesion and interoperability as well as provide an unified voice for promoting and negotiating any pathway to a profession/alternative construct.	129-130.
25.	UK Engineering shows that fragmentation of disparate related functions and disciplines does not have to occur and which could cause detriment to the whole sector – in Engineering a model of cohesion within a framework for all elements of a traditional profession exists and is worthy of consideration.	130.
26.	There is a pronounced appetite for security to become a profession with associated governance and appears at this stage to be a pragmatic as well as an emotional based desire. Fragmentation of any hue would hinder the pathway if sector recognition <i>as a whole</i> is desired.	130-131.

OBJ 3.	CURRENT SECURITY SECTOR PROFESSIONAL STATUS	
27.	The evidence collected suggests that seeking full traditional professional status would be difficult. The physical or tangible components might more easily be achievable in the short to medium term but the inextricable cultural and historic underpinning would be a huge challenge and not for the short term.	131.
28.	Whilst most characteristics exist in security already (less internal regulation and ethical coding/control) none are really completely formed and would in their entirety need robust upgrading (UBK, Ethical Codes, Regulation, Council representation with autonomy, career and education ladder, <i>et al</i>).	131-132.
29.	Some outlier responses show that ' belief ' in security already being a profession is possible and welcome as a viewpoint. This suggests 'belief' as a tool for cultural reinforcement and messaging should be part of the pathway strategy.	132-133.
30.	The imprecise lexicon of professionalism and being professional could also be used to leverage the cultural implanting of the idea of security as a profession (reinforces views in Ser 29). It could be more important than imagined.	133-134.
31.	The security UBK would play a major and central part of any new construct. Ownership/curation by research and updating knowledge bases with debate and education (through Universities and possibly other disciplines) supported by a professional journal and owned/authored/edited by the established controlling entity would be central to progress and eventual maturity.	134-135.
32.	Some gatekeeping mechanism would be necessary and is generally agreeable to respondents even with the 'power' and autonomy caveats already highlighted. In general support for some democratisation is apparent but overall the need to both protect some knowledge is recognised as is the entry standard to, and controlling elements for, a profession.	134-135.
OBJ 4.	ROUTES TO TRADITIONAL FORMAL RECOGNITION	
33.	Although the traditional model could be replicated physically and in processes even though that would be a huge and challenging undertaking requiring leadership with sector focus it would be clearly problematic with the lack of cultural underpinning or societal elements. All suggests the traditional model may not be the best approach.	136.
34.	The respondents were unsure about any declining relevance and standing of the professions. Some agreed potential and likely decline which is understandable if the 'grand bargain' is being diminished. This gives rise to more pragmatic and business needs more in focus and less social-focussed models such as HR, H&S and Business Continuity/ But they come with much external regulation and less autonomy.	138-139.
35.	UK Engineering appears to present as a traditional older professional model but it has evolved to also include some expert characteristics and flexibility. It straddles or bridges the more expert foundations with a strong cultural/historic platform and recognition. Security as a sector has already worked with	138.

	Engineering when originating the Charter and the Engineering Council assisted through consultation the CSyP formulation. Extending this further with the Engineering Council could offer some greater guidance and even provide a template in part for further progress (see Discussion chapter).	
36.	There are perceived obstacles for any route to be overcome and they coalesce around those shown in Figure 26 which tend to have equal weighting. However, none would appear insurmountable and generally they reflect those aspects already analysed to varying degrees in the research.	139-140.
37.	Related to the obstacles the 'decline in relevance' factors could also play a part (see Figure 27). Such aspects as bundled services, which featured highly in responses but not in the literature base examined, pose threats aligned to commodification and loss of functional (specialised) control. It is suggested that they be mostly considered as contextual but must be factored into thinking and strategy.	140-141.
38.	Conversely, there are factors which could add relevance (Figure 28). These should act as foci for leverage and messaging when debating or staffing/presenting any proposals.	142.
39.	The obstacles and factors of relevance should act as no more than navigable areas as none appear to present insurmountable barriers to progress, provided each is factored into strategy and plans and considered or addressed appropriately.	142-143.
40.	The evidence from both the literature base and from the vast majority of responses suggest that the route best suited and to be explored further is a construct based on more expert/specialist foundations and within a framework similar to those used by Engineering/H&S/HR.	143.
OBJ 5	ALTERNATIVES TO THE TRADITIONAL MODEL	
41.	Pursuing a traditional model is likely unwise and alternative pathways are needed. The main reservation being the needed cultural history and underpinning for more traditional models which is completely lacking in security.	144.
42.	Retaining the status quo does not address the identified issues which gave rise to the research and as an alternative to striving to be a profession or some other construct should likely be discounted in any strategy even if that constitutes a positive evolution using reactionary or even proactive initiatives within that slow journey (this is suggested as the current present state).	145-146.
43.	Respondents appeared somewhat incoherent overall on the matter of an alternative to those professions more traditionally constructed. Many professional elements were advocated for and recognised but no actual full model was described in any detail. All ideas expressed related more to the singular or several characteristics discussed in the literature as mostly standard in a profession but without any conceptual or controlling framework.	146-147.

44.	Hybridity whilst generally conflated with alternative models is really more individualistically focussed and usually part of personal choices in multi disciplines - however this should be factored into any new security model (RSES etc.)	147-149.
45.	As with hybridity the matrix frameworks of progression including for education (ladders and lattice approaches) also need to feature in a new model.	149-150.
46.	Fragmentation of disciplines seeking their own pathways and separate models is a threat to sector cohesion and more collective recognition, although Cyber and Consultancy do have potential to separate. However, convergence is better.	151.
47.	The guild model whilst appealing for some technical or lower practitioner elements does not offer such a high status or the same recognition and would need a completely new framework for security, based probably on an apprentice framework. However, there already exists a nexus of old guild company (WCoSP) and Chartered professional elements which as a fusion with neo expert approaches and taking some lessons from guilds and apprenticeships could help shape the matrices needed for a fuller spectrum of inclusion between trade, management and executive levels.	152-154.
48.	Ephemerality and the need for flexibility were highlighted albeit obliquely in some responses suggesting that the 'long game' needs to ensure potential transitory cultural and business evolution is always in focus and factored into developing strategy and the resultant model.	156-157.
49.	A Chartered Nucleus framework could emerge and be partially successful in beginning a journey to full expert attainment especially as a transitory process leading to a fuller UBK, greater regulation and formalising the constructs and controlling bodies (Council etc.).	154-155.
50.	Neo-expert models building on the nuclear approach could be shaped to provide a suitable pathway and achieving a final formal profession, as well as gaining some public recognition provided some greater societal elements beyond ethic codes are incorporated into the more presentational and messaging aspects of the strategy.	155-156.
51.	The analysis shows that the likely option for security would be a neo-expert approach but perhaps bridging with a mature and tested framework such as that of the UK Engineering Council, although alternatives such as HRM might also work.	157.
52.	The expert interviews largely confirmed the findings presented by the other sample groups although nearly all thought altruism and the social contract should not be overlooked and would provide a good extra characteristic to incorporate to balance all the agreed more functional and trait ones in this research. This relates to status and recognition beyond the business community.	158-160.

APPENDIX 2

SUMMARY OF LITERARY FINDINGS – CRITIQUED BY LITERATURE REVIEW

Ser.	Summarised Main Literary Findings	Page
1.	Any dictionary or simple definition of a profession is inadequate and the idea really must be conceptualised, with not all characteristics being fully agreed on by society, business or academia.	14.
2.	Public service is enshrined in notions of a profession with societal and cultural drivers possibly playing as much a role, or even a greater role, as any collection of functionalist, tangible other trait professional components with rank tiering in professions being manifest in UK (likely a residual class/cultural issue).	14-16.
3,	The UK Teaching profession illustrates starkly that internal regulation as an essential regulatory component is not fixed although is likely replaced by external (governmental) regulation. This would seem to align with newer more expert oriented professions (H&S as an example).	15.
4.	The Australian conceptual definition relates closely to the majority of ‘recognised and accepted’ main characteristics providing a possible template for others. UK reflects some aspects of this in codification which has begun mirroring the approach.	16-17.
5.	The greater the external regulation implemented the less professional autonomy results as the likely consequence. (Australian critique).	17-18.
6.	There are also 5 Es and a 6 th (ethics, education, experience, examination, entity and potentially evolution). These constituents just reflect the general traits identified generally (except evolution) but do provide a good guide for pathway approaches.	18.
7.	The European (EU) model is comprehensive in traits and Morality and Ethics feature as a strong component of what it means to be a profession and are likely to be required and codified for any future professional entity (including security). Autonomy features highly also as a main professional trait.	19-21.
8.	Security in basic terms (the more tangible traits and socio-cultural ideas) does not yet match a conceptual definition of a profession at least from the Anglo-American cultural and business or traditional viewpoint. However much professionalisation has occurred.	22.
9.	There is a distinct set of functional and characteristic traits identified which constitute a profession – a taxonomic led approach but there is some counterpoint provided by other philosophical stances which highlight cultural and class issues in UK moving forward on any pragmatic basis.	22-25.

10.	There is a growing tension between traditional altruistic characteristics and professional self-interests mirrored by theory of philosophical evolution (Traits to Neo-Weberian). A balance is required within any forward pragmatic progress .	24-26.
11.	There are strong views that professions are socially constructed with a large cultural dimension: The ‘grand bargain’ is likely breaking down or at least changing. Modern managers may be less concerned about altruism and appear more pragmatic (at least in the business sense). Trustee professionalism to Expert type is the current trend.	27-29.
12.	The changes in the nature of the ‘grand bargain’ are mirrored by the rise of expert professions rather than social trustee ones.	28-29.
13.	Altruism is breaking down and likely diminishing the professions with the counter that new professions may not all reflect this in the same way but still gain acceptance. The importance of altruism, although it is lessening, and more important driver for newer thinking is pragmatism.	29-31.
14.	Trust whilst much diminished following damaging financial incidents and COVID and a general downward social/employment trajectory (strikes and activism) is still likely to remain pragmatically important in relationships. However, the ‘grand bargain’ is more fragile as the ‘glue’ becomes less ‘adhesive.’	31-32.
15.	Security sector relationship with society could be headlined and leveraged to better effect in UK – likely to develop slowly anyway as technology and threats change and increase. Development in this area requires leadership and vision/strategy.	32-33.
16.	Security External Regulation is likely to increase and feature as a part of a profession (note autonomy issue) and align with current internal regulation of existing and emerging professions including security.	34.
17.	An ethical component will remain central even if its nature changes by codification and regulation. The balancing of perceptions could be good or bad (or both!) for professions depending on their adaptation. It is difficult to predict outcomes in this area.	34-35.
18.	Knowledge and an UBK are foundational to a profession but concerns include monopolistic and gatekeeping negatives, but codification for career paths and standards vital to professional identity. Commodification and other drivers such as technical advancement may yet diminish monopolies.	36-39. 40-41.
19.	The downsides to power include negative operationalization of ‘gatekeeping,’ over monopolisation, exclusion, and elitism or condescension from (especially more established) professions.	40.
20.	Expertise (specialised knowledge and application) and in turn experiential elements combine with knowledge to enhance professions and service (but note power/authority/gatekeeping downsides) – it accentuates the increasing pragmatic approach.	41-42.
21.	Monopolistic hold on knowledge and power may be reducing (evolution and/or revolution) and transition is in the offing – whether Susskindian or just gentle long term adjustment.	43.

22.	Knowledge commodification through tech and demand is likely to drive changes faster than expected or possibly wanted. Counterpoint issue is elitism and high standards diminished by 'dumbed down' degrees, although professional ones arguably appear to maintain standard. Professions are likely to adapt if they are adept and motivated. Expertise is in the ascendancy: delivery v knowledge, 'doing' rather than being?	43-44.
23.	Perceptually a 1 st degree is likely to remain full membership level but Masters may increasingly be seen as needed if perceived/actual validity of 1 st degree declines. This would likely cause security difficulty overall in the short to medium term. Other routes (CILEX, Charters) may run in parallel with some greater gatekeeping required which will contribute to influence and power factors as well.	45-46.
24.	Parallel routes to academic driven entry successfully operate in UK (e.g. CILEX) and provide an alternative competency based pathway to entry to a profession including Security (e.g. CSyP entry).	45.
25.	Security needs to demonstrate its own UBK and have controlling interests with a defining and regulatory hand. Commodification of security knowledge is likely to be problematic in practice but arguably no different to threats facing other professions perhaps. If there is no UBK and control of it then this may be a major impediment to progress.	47.
26.	Power and authority are linked to knowledge control and status perceptions overall. Security needs to navigate the equation well and carefully as it seeks recognition. This is both for internal power relationships and external presentation, influence and any regulatory role sought. Power is a double edged sword but perhaps structured regulation may provide the correct balance.	48-50.
27.	Internal regulation and 'self-policing' with power to intervene, arbitrate and discipline members is fundamental in some form to being a profession although it (as with other constituents) is in a state of flux arguably except for the noble professions.	50-51.
28.	Greater UK external Govt/statutory regulation likely and may provide a pathway to greater recognition (despite autonomy issue). Security is currently light on regulation and has no internal system (except for limited provision by Chartered Registrants) but likely pressure will increase for both internal and mainly external focus.	50-51.
29.	Class as well as culture is still prevalent in the UK power and influence dynamic, especially at Institutional and Govt levels despite the drumbeat of meritocracy. However, social change and technology is currently fast and may drive changes and shape professional bodies despite any cultural or class resistance.	51-52.
30.	Fragmentation of professions both structurally or culturally and in procedures produces an ephemeral aspect which may provide both a driver for progress or in some instances diminish the professional standing or even the entity itself.	52.
31.	Technology AI and Quantum computing are especially likely to drive everything before it. Professions including an emerging security one will need to nimbly adapt. It may well point to the driver for increasing meritocracy rather than other cultural components (arguably).	53.

32.	Institutes and Councils are central to the professional equation and need to focus on regulation and knowledge not just member representation at transactional level to remain relevant. There is a need to promote, strategise and front-up to power to shape the trajectory required to attain professional status and maintain focussed influence.	54.
33.	If, Institutes or a Council provided a regulatory role that would add validity to their existence as well as a greater permanence through State entanglement as this function would allow a form of symbiosis with any legislated external oversight and/or external regulatory apparatus.	54-55.
34.	Security specifically has no unified voice and is damaged by multiplicity of interests and voices. Some unification or central voice is required and aligned leadership.	55.
35.	The economy (macro and micro) and financial issues generally will play a greater part than anticipated in shaping professional futures and security more generally. The Govt and Cyber equation compared with other security to be noted.	55-57.
36.	As part of the economic and recognition framework, security training, accreditation and HE are all positives to help further recognition and provide influence as well as credibility. Security is a big industry and could if focussed well have a powerful voice (take cyber viz. the economic positives for them as an example).	57.
37.	Security has professionalised greatly but is still fragmented and lacks cohesion. Whilst touching on many of the functional/trait and cultural characteristics it has not embraced any of the identified requirements comprehensively (the closest being Chartered Security which is still embryonic in nature). Curate's egg overall.	58-60.
38.	Fragmentation, depending on the focus and its target can be a vector or inhibitor to progress. If progressive then that might be helpful whilst disparate voicing and competing disciplinary and sector agendas would be detrimental.	60-62.
39.	The business and social trajectory suggests that any new professions would be pragmatically modelled and security may fit this concept whilst also emulating those frameworks and positioning of more established professions such as Chartered Engineering. Expertise is currently leading base knowledge as determinant.	60-61.
40.	The pathway for security to become a formal profession in the traditional vein would need to be trait based with improved cultural presentation (business and social). The latter is the more problematic but in general aspiring to old style traditional professional frameworks would be an uphill struggle (an evaluation based on the literature analysed).	62-63.
41.	Alternatives to traditional professional achievement might include variations of the more formal model as many of the traits would be needed. Hybrids and pure merit models might be adapted but it is unclear if prestige, status and recognition would result or be retained in the long term. However, emerging neo-professional expertise models (HR, H&S, Aviation elements, as examples) seem to offer possibilities and may chime with current evolution.	63-64.

APPENDIX 3

RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

Ser.	Recommendations (as Singular Components)
Conceptual	
1.	The Institute to incept a security Council - adopt a neo-expert model bespoke designed incorporating relevant professional characteristics reflecting the Engineering Council framework and which 'bridges' traditional and expert thinking (see the 3 diagrams below table). Timelines to be considered for phasing. Lead: SyI
2.	Build on the Australian ACP Conceptual Definition (or similar) for the security profession but a bespoke modified version to suit security and to include societal value – also devise Mission, Vision and Values. Lead: SyI
3.	Liaise and agree with CSPRA/WCoSP/Stakeholders regarding the form of Phase 1 and 2 model and working. Lead: Security Council (when formed)
4.	Appoint a Council Board of Trustees at earliest stage to govern Council. (Can be Institute Board or sub-board at start). Lead: Security Institute
5.	Open communication and negotiation channels to all Stakeholder parties both externally and within sector. Leads: Joint Council and SyI
6.	To design a Council website when appropriate (loosely based on Engineering Council content but with own distinct branding – and with their assistance/permissions as necessary). Lead: Council
Normative Pillar	
7.	Institute to agree a funding programme and devise a budget for phase 1 and 2 implementation. Lead: SyI (then Council after first budget)
8.	New Phase 1/2 Council (and/or) Institute to produce codified Ethics and Morality framework for the sector. Lead: Council
9.	SyI to curate an UBK (categorised as necessary) with mechanisms for ownership and any democratised access to also include levels and specialisations. Lead: SyI (liaise with other associations in this)

10.	Council/Institute to work towards formal linkage and agreements with selected universities and training providers to ‘contract’ and deliver required type of professional degrees and courses. MOUs/contracts would be necessary. Lead: SyI but close work with Council
11.	In collaboration with other stakeholders incept a Security Level 4 and potentially a Level 6 Apprenticeship scheme (tie into entry levels – Associate etc.). Lead: SyI with other Associations
12.	Codify and align training qualifications provided by selected providers (accredited and recognised by Council/Institute). Lead: Joint Council with SyI (and others)
13.	Initiate and SyI to own a <i>Sector Professional (owned) Journal</i> similar to other professions (ownership and editing conducted by Institute) focussing on the UBK and Research articles and papers aimed at growing the theory and practitioner knowledge/research base (not a house journal which is for administration and membership matters). Lead: SyI (Other stakeholders involved including Uni/Training providers etc.)
14.	Devise and formalise educational pathways from school leaving to Executive levels. This would be represented as a typical ladder/latticed matrix to allow not only academic or professional qualifications but also experiential and diverse vocational qualifications as well as various forms and level of degrees to all match with the agreed different entry points for various professional grades/membership. Lead: Council
15.	Agree designator and entry points for membership of the profession. e.g. Associate (Level 4/5 security qual or <i>non-security related degree</i> with agreed security course/qual) and Full Membership (<i>a professional security related degree</i> or <i>specialisation</i> qualification at Level 6). A senior membership level may be considered (level 7 or above). (decision needed for the level and degree of experience is required leading to or attaining full membership award). Lead: Joint Council and SyI
16.	Determine the <i>mix</i> of experiential and educational/training required – at entry points and at various progressive points on a career ladder or educational ladder, (the Charter framework is a good start). e.g. – 2 years’ experience for full membership but perhaps none for Associate? Joint: Council and SyI
17.	Allow for any hybridity (e.g. RSES) in devising frameworks (educational/experience and specialisations such as Security Engineers or Counterfeit Specialist etc.). Joint: Council and SyI
Regulative Pillar	
18.	Within a Council framework (Phase 1 and 2) devise an internal regulative process/mechanism. This would include (with early consent by WCoSP) Chartered regulation as well as ethical and other standards (<i>noting this cannot be fully implemented until Council has Chartership other than CSyP</i>). Lead: Council joint WCoSP for Chartered

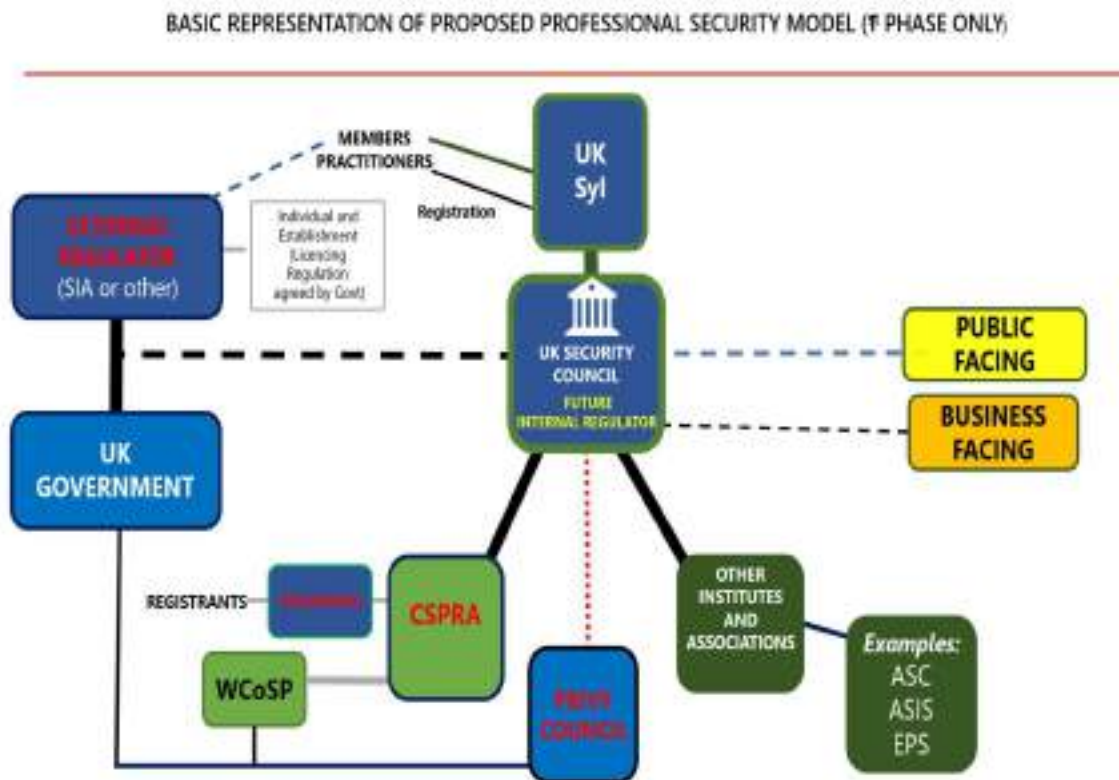
19.	A Council once formed in Phase 1 to establish formal working link with SIA (or appointed External Regulator if different) to coordinate balance between future external licencing/regulation and internal regulation. Lead: Council with SIA
20.	Include other institutes and associations in dialogue leading up to setting regulatory mechanisms and standards and then for them to be invited to formally link to the Council and be subject to Council oversight (see diagrams). Lead: Council
21.	Aim to preserve and maintain a focus on professional autonomy when dealing with external regulation and other impositions that arise to retain as much self-determination as possible (noting Australian concerns in the literature). Lead: Council and All Stakeholders
22.	Ensure client orientation and focus features strongly in messaging and regulatory framework. This also speaks to the longer term societal linkage needed culturally and practically. Lead: Council and SyI with all Stakeholders
Socio-cultural Pillar	
23.	Cultural Reinforcement is necessary at all levels (messaging and lexical use in communications conveying a <i>belief</i> and <i>immediacy</i>). Decision required to communicate openly that security is a profession even in Phase 1 - highly recommended as part of the cultural reinforcement strategy. Lead: Council and SyI (and all affiliated stakeholders)
24.	Strategise and plan/negotiate in the sector leadership to avoid further fragmentation and negotiate inclusion and fraternity with internal disciplines and other sector leaderships (cyber etc.). Lead: Joint Council and SyI and All
25.	Develop a career advisory focus/POC and instigate a 'career-fair' approach to schools and universities or other educational and vocational providers. Not ad-hoc but formalised with scheduled annual timetables (Institute is the likely lead). Lead: SyI with Council to assist and participate
26.	Determine whether to involve Institute/Council in promoting/advocating for a 'recommended guide / salary framework' (when fully mature and only if possible) or decide to allow market forces entirely to prevail. Lead: Joint Council and SyI

Overleaf – a recommended 3 phase Conceptual Model

SECURITY AS A PROFESSION

The Conceptual Framework

Phase 1 – Immediate to very short term:

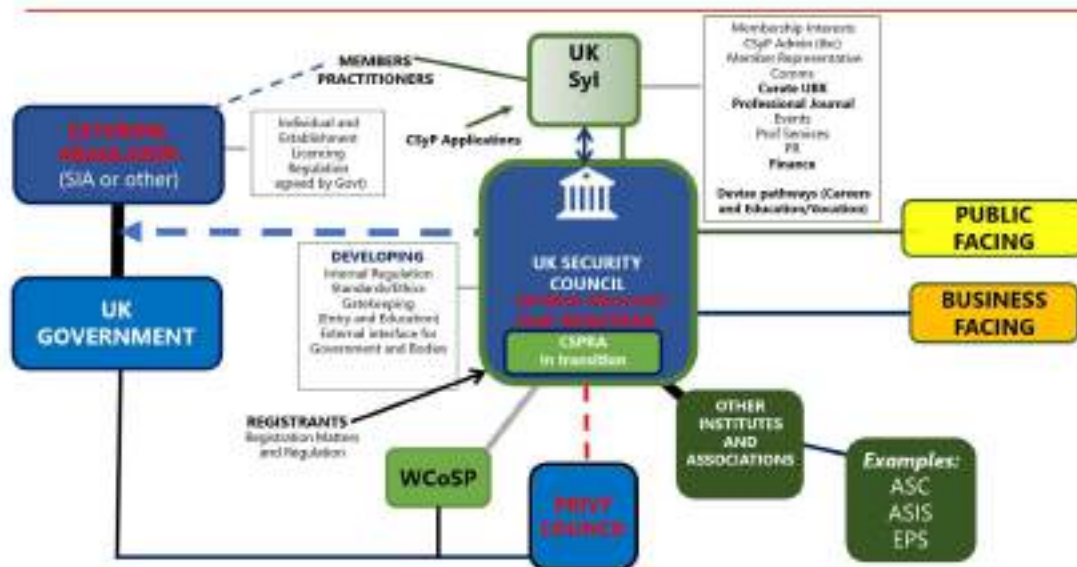


Notes:

1. This is an envisaged **1st phase** where the Council is likely an offshoot of the SyI or indeed the Institute itself. A budget would need to be agreed at this stage or prior.
2. CSPRA at this stage retains regulatory control for WCoSP but liaises with embryonic Council (looking ahead at Phase 2), when CSPRA folds into Council who regulate CSyP. CSPRA may remain an entity as long as Council remains Un-Chartered.
3. Institute continues to **administratively** manage the Register for WCoSP.
4. Other Institutes and Associations join as they wish at this stage (no internal Reg).
5. The Council requires a Board of Trustees (might be SyI Board – or part - at this stage).

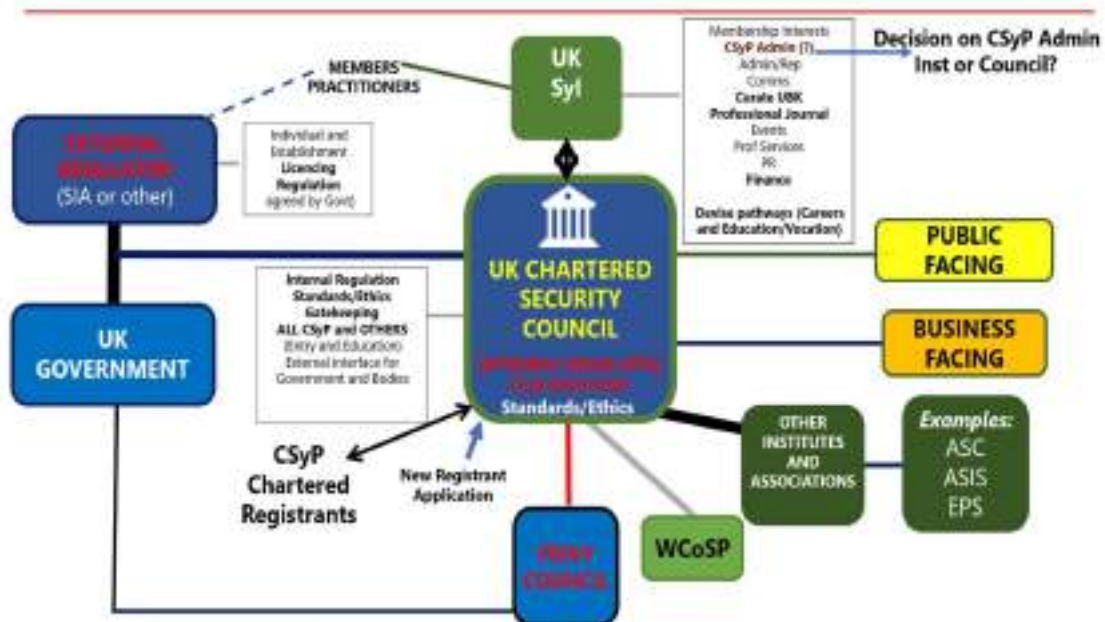
Phase 2 – When Internal Agreement reached between SyI, WCoSP and CSPRA:

REPRESENTATION OF HYBRID PROFESSIONAL SECURITY MODEL (2nd PHASE ONLY)



Phase 3– When Chartered Status achieved:

MODEL FOR SECURITY AS A FULL PROFESSION (3rd PHASE ONWARDS – no time frame)



APPENDIX 4
SURVEY FORM USED⁴⁰

**SEE OVERLEAF
FOR SURVEY
(GOOGLE FORMS)**

(ACTUAL ANONYMOUS EXAMPLE USED FOR SURVEY)

⁴⁰ The form shown is SyI but the CSyP one is identical except for background colour and designator heading – hence only one example provided here.

PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION and SECURITY (Syl Survey Form)

Thank you for taking part in this survey. My name is Garry Evanson (A CSyP Registrant and also a Syl Member). I am conducting research for my Doctorate (DBA) to identify and evaluate the UK Security sector's pursuit of status, through attaining formal recognition as a profession, including whether professional recognition is needed or desired, should it be pursued or if alternative ways to achieving recognition and status might be considered. You may have already participated in an interview and I would now like to ask you to complete this survey which is a series of related questions on this topic. I will treat all information you give me **confidentially** and your identity will be kept completely **anonymous**. You don't have to answer any question you do not want to.

There are no right or wrong answers - I just want your honest opinions to help my research.

Individual Information

Baseline statistical information to help research trends and impact

Question 1 - What is your age ?

40 to 50 years ▼

Question - What gender do you identify as:

Male

Female

Other

Prefer not to say

Question 3 - What is your highest level of security qualification (or closely related discipline)?

Level 7

Question 4 - What is your highest level of academic education and subject?

MSc Organisational Resilience

Question 5 - Are you a member of a Security Professional Body (eg Syl/ASIS/ASC - or one that is closely related such as EPS or BCI etc)?

☒ Yes

☐ No

Employment Background

Some basic statistical details relating to your work.

Question 6 - How long have you worked in the Security Sector?

Over 15 years

Question 7 - Geographically where are you based or where do you operate from?

(Country/Region/City/Town **or** please state if not physically office or site based - e.g. homeworker etc)

Lincolnshire

Question 8 - What position do you hold and/or at what level do you operate in your current work? - check all that apply to your job now

- ☒ Management
- ☐ Executive or Director
- ☐ Owner
- ☒ Practitioner (all levels)
- ☐ Consultant
- ☒ Trainer/Teacher/Tutor/Lecturer
- ☐ Team leader
- ☐ Other

Question 9 - Which security discipline(s) or function(s) are your main work strand or focus? - Please check up to top 3 that apply

- ☒ Physical Security
- ☐ Technical Security (all types less cyber)
- ☒ People centred Security (including, crowd control, behaviour etc)
- ☐ Cyber Security or IT Security
- ☒ Training, Teaching, Tutoring, Lecturing (security or related disciplines)
- ☐ A Niche or Specialist Area not listed above
- ☐ Other

Question 10 - Which employment sector do you mainly operate in?

Commercial

Views on Professions

This is to gain individual views from those in or contributing to the sector on professions generally and also how Security relates to formal Professional issues.

Question 11 - In your own words how would you describe and/or characterise what you understand a **formal** profession to be?

One definition (from the web) is that a profession is 'paid occupation, especially one that involves prolonged training and a formal qualification; "his chosen profession of teaching"'.
I feel this goes some way to describe how I interpret a profession; it is a practiced vocational which requires continually practice to retain the skill to be able to apply the craft, which may not always be readily available to the generalist, or lay person.

Question 12 - Do you think Security (or some specific discipline within it) **could in the future** be recognised as a formal profession ?

(in the same way as doctors/architects/teachers/engineers etc)

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Maybe

☐ Other: _____

Question 13 - Do you think Security needs to be seen or recognised (internally or externally) as a fully fledged Profession?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Not needed at all	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	Essential to be seen as a profession

Question 14 - Do you think that if Security were recognised as a formal profession it would give you **personally** higher status and recognition?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☒ Maybe

Question 15 - Do you think that if Security were recognised as a formal profession it would give the **sector (or some part of it)** higher recognition and status?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Unlikely	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	Certainly

Question 16 - If you think it is only a part of the sector which could be classed as a profession **which part or discipline** do you think that might be and in a few words **why you think that?**

I would argue that we're already a way down this road, and increasingly we see Security Professionals being recognised as such; one example was when the NHS mandated that each of the (approx) 2020 individual NHS Trusts in England must have a) a Security Management Specialist, and b) a board member nominated as the Security Management Director.

The BSI Technical Specification (PD CEN/TS 16850:2015) stipulates that the Security Professionals for the organisation must have a membership of a professional body.

Initially, when leaving the Army in 2012 I was a little put off of joining Professional membership bodies as I felt they focused on managers, rather than practitioners, but I joined the Syl and embarked on my FDA with BNU and over time I've realised that Management of Security staff is very different to Security Management/Security Risk Management, and support the rational in the requirements for a Security Profession to focus on the Risk Management side of the industry, which I believe is common to any of the sectors within the industry.

Question 17 - Would Security being a formal profession likely improve, or lead to, higher salaries for its **senior members**?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Unlikely	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	Certainly

Question 18 - Would Security being a formal profession likely improve, or lead to, higher salaries for its **entry** and **junior** members?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Unlikely	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	Certainly

Question 19 - Drawing on the previous answer please state in what way being a profession **may** **or** **may not affect** the salaries of entry or junior members.

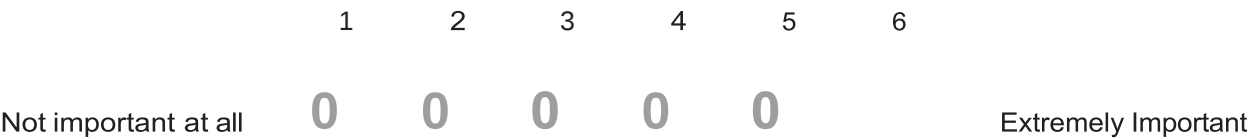
I'm not convinced any entry salaries for Professionals are likely to improve, at least for the current government term, not least because of the (anticipated) rise in NLW and (unexpected) increase in employers NI contributions.

I'm seeing traditionally higher paid skilful occupations, particularly engineering trades, move closer to NLW as their wages are not increasing as quickly as NLW, and therefore the differential is shrinking as NLW catches them and subsequently more and more people are being pushed onto NLW.

Objectively, a large portion of entry level Security jobs do not encourage professionalisation, as managerial positions do, and therefore it is unlikely to demand a higher salary/wage, at the entry/junior level.

Overlay the fact that many Security functions are outsourced, a consequence is that contracted Security staff are low paid because the supplier has overheads, and therefore the front line team will not receive the pay that the client are paying, and often the client will naturally see the on-site (contracted) Security team as a third party, and not part of their 'team'.

Question 20 - How important would it be **to you** personally for Security to be considered a profession?



Question 21 - Drawing on the previous answer please state why might being a member of a profession **may** **or** **may not be** important to you personally?

It has been important to me both personally and professionally for over a decade. I genuinely believe that the Security function is an essential business unit, which enhances and supports the business; or it should be. Particularly when we look in the context of the security function being one of the pillars of Organisational Resilience, and that they often fulfill the role (whether proactively [planned] or reactively [necessity]) of crisis and emergency response on sites.

Question 22 - How important is it for a member of **any profession** to hold a first degree (as entry to a recognised formal profession)?

		2	3	4	5	6	
Unimportant	0	0	0		0	0	Essential

Question 23 - Drawing on the previous answer please in your own words can you expand and explain why you answered the way you did.

I tried to go in the middle for this one, bit favoured the positive. I genuinely believe that profession competence is a balance, or culmination of skills knowledge and experience, and often use competency models such as KATE or SKATE to assess and record competence. Often a new hire will not meet the organisation/role needs 100%, this could be because they're recently graduated, but have little experience, or they have plenty of experience but lack the academic knowledge to apply the trade fully, or it could be that they need to transition from a neighbouring sector into this new one they've been appointed to, so to me the professional needs to have the foundations from both experience and academic to best balance the role. Naturally there are exceptions but when we consider our peers in management from the other functions in the business it will be hard to argue Professional status when we are not able to demonstrate equivalence and commonality with them.

Question 24 - How important is it for a member of any **future** security profession to hold a security qualification **but not necessarily a degree**?

		2	3	4	5	6	
Unimportant	0	0	0	0	0		Essential

Question 25 - What do you think are the **top obstacles** - if any - to security becoming a profession?
(check **only up to a maximum of 3** that apply please)

- ☒ Perceived lack of need in the sector to be a profession
- ☐ Fragmentation - too many security disciplines to be cohesive or focussed sufficiently
- ☐ Sector lacks leadership
- ☐ Too little or no representation of security at required levels
- ☐ Cultural views of external bodies and society lack interest or work against the sector
- ☐ No unified agreement on ways forward in the sector itself
- ☐ Too many representative bodies and voices for the sector lacking partnership
- ☐ Lack of motivation to seek professional recognition formally within the sector
- ☒ Security not 'speaking' the language of business impeding progress
- ☐ Security not engaging with and ensuring support of the public sufficiently
- ☐ Unable to meet the constituent elements regarded as essential for a profession
- ☐ Lack of employment pathways and opportunity in the sector including inclusivity
- ☐ A lack of standardised competencies in the sector
- ☐ Emergence and/or focal dominance of other 'disciplines' (Resilience, Business Continuity, Risk Management, Crisis Management etc)
- ☐ Poor communication within the sector and with external stakeholders
- ☐ Economic pressures politically and/or at business levels
- ☐ Lack of ethical rigour within the sector
- ☒ Security subsumed by other disciplines
- ☐ Other: _____

Question 26 - Thinking more generally - will professions and their standing or relevance decline over the coming next few decades?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Potentially
- ☒ Unlikely

Question 27 - What 3 main factors in the list below may contribute to a **decline** in relevance (for security being a profession) ? please check **the top ones** (max 3) that you think may apply.

- ☐ Technological advances in security operations or increased automation
- ☐ Cultural and/or social shifts in how security is viewed
- ☒ Outdated work approaches in security management and/or practice
- ☐ Increasing ability for none security staff to access security knowledge from other sources elsewhere (internet / shared etc)
- ☒ Perceived lack of specialist security knowledge needed in that organisation (whether true or not in reality)
- ☐ Possible reduction in need for Regulation/Oversight
- ☐ Increasing use of bundled services (commodification)
- ☒ The perceptions prominent in and outside sector that security is a second career only
- ☐ Other: _____

Question 28 - What factors in the list below in your view are likely to contribute to a need for **greater** professional relevance? please check **up to 3** of those that apply.

- ☐ Technology enhancement and advances in security operations and equipment
- ☒ Cultural and/or social shifts in how security is viewed outside the sector
- ☐ More demanding work approaches in security management and practice
- ☒ Increasing need for specialist knowledge to be held by members.
- ☐ Increasing regime or need for Regulation (externally or internally)
- ☐ Increasing requirement or need for better ethical working and/or compliance
- ☐ Greater threat complexity and expert strategies needed to deal with them
- ☐ Increasing general demand for services by clients/society/businesses
- ☐ Cyber/IT/AI integration in security systems and demand in all security systems and operations
- ☐ New or likely upcoming Government or legal requirements (excluding regulation)
- ☐ Convergence of security disciplines offering focus and cohesion both human and technically
- ☒ Security being seen increasingly as a viable full career with training and educational pathways for advancement
- ☐ Other: _____

Question 29 - How important is it that the Security Sector and its services are accepted and valued in society and the public more generally? (not just public clients).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Not relevant/Unimportant	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	Essential that Society accepts/values Security

Question 30 - Do you think Regulation is required and/or necessary in Security operations or its management?

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

Question 31 - How important is it that Security performance and ethics be regulated by external official bodies ?

(eg Government or State appointed bodies).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Not important	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	Essential

Question 32 - How important is it that Security be regulated internally?

(eg by a Professional or Representative Security body or business systems/audits in house)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Not important	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	Essential

Question 33 - Do you think Security work should be licenced by a selected body (SIA as an example or perhaps by others such as Syl or ACS etc)?

- ☒ All work should be licenced
- ☐ None should need to be licenced
- ☐ Only some areas of security work or disciplines should or need to be licenced
- ☐ Other: _____

Question 34 - How important is it for ethical standards to be mandated and maintained in the sector?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
low consideration	0	0	0	0	0	@	Essential for highest ethical levels

Question 35 - If you had a magic wand would you make security a profession (formally- as understood in the UK) or would you advocate for an alternative path or approach that might also raise status and/or recognition?

- @ I would make Security a formal profession
- 0 I would choose an alternative structure / system to recognise status and improve sector
- 0 Not sure
- 0 No opinion on this

Question 36 - In your view what might be the potential **alternatives** to seeking formal professional recognition (as understood in UK)? If possible please explain why you think alternatives, especially the one you may prefer, may be better than being regarded as a profession.

Question 37 - What lessons do you think could be learnt from other professions (such as Medicine/Law etc) **or** from other countries where systems may be similar or even quite different?

There are a number of professions i believe we could learn from, such as H&S and engineering. We do not, and arguably should not, emulate them, but we could pick out the best parts for us. We could do more with HR bodies, such as CIPD to educate on what the recruiters should be looking for (e.g. higher education achievements and professional membership).

Question 38 - how much does being a profession confer a form of power and authority in the business world generally.



FINAL VIEWS WELCOME - Your views on security as a profession are valuable - if you would like to contribute or explain responses and give more views on the topic than the answers to the questions above allow please do so here - **(no max to number of words - write as much as you want to)**

I believe that we're already of a journey to professionalisation, however that journey does seem to have stalled somewhat in recent years.

APPENDIX 5

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SyI AND CSyP SAMPLE GROUPS (2 X10)

Interview Sheet

Checks before Interview:

Check and outline that Consent is informed and with who they can contact for any queries/complaints.

Advise that all personal details Anon and Confidential and destroyed when research completed.

They don't need to answer anything they would rather not or makes them uncomfortable!

(Demographics and individual details if required and agreed)

Around 30 to 35/40 minutes ensure OK

Recording - after transcription will be deleted on recorder but retained on computer until end of research then deleted.

Give final opportunity to ask questions before recorder switched on and interview commences.

THE INTERVIEW (SEMI STRUCTURED).

Introduction given verbally to interviewee:

Thank you for taking part in this interview. My name is Garry Evanson. I am conducting research to identify and assess Security UK individual and collective pursuit of status through attaining formal status as a profession, whether it should or if alternatives might be considered. You have (or may have) already filled in a questionnaire and I would now like to ask you a series of questions on this topic. I will treat all information you give me **confidentially** and your identity will be kept completely **anonymous**. You don't have to answer any question you do not want to. I would like to digitally record this interview and after I have used the information for my research the recording will be destroyed. 35 to 40 mins if that is OK? There are no right or wrong answers – I just want your honest opinions to help my research. Is there anything you want to ask me anything before we start?

(Recording starts here)

1. What makes a profession a profession? In your understanding what is a UK profession? (*main characteristics and attributes?*)
2. Explain for me the difference as you see it between a profession and a professional body or grouping or organisation?
3. Could you explain why striving to gain recognition as a formal UK profession is something the sector should be doing? (*explain your thinking as follow up*).
4. What are your thoughts on this desire being perhaps a short passing fancy (*and follow with unobtainable or something other also follow up on thinking and the changing face of what a profession is*)?
5. If not a profession, then what should, or could security be? (alternatives?)
6. Where do you stand on **external** regulation? *Followed by* What if we were a profession what would it look like?
7. Where do you stand on **internal** regulation (and follow up by who should do it? Or why not if negative answer without detail)
8. What areas should regulation concern itself with internally? (*Does ethics feature?*).
9. What are your thoughts on where we are on the journey to being a profession (*or at the beginning*)? - *Ask to elaborate depending on response*).
10. How would you compare and contrast an academic university degree with a vocational or technical security qualifications?

11. For professions what should be the entry level qualification? (*Explain thinking*).
12. How do you think the future of professions as we know them will look like in say 20 years?
13. What are your views on cyber security or some other security discipline going it alone in seeking the label of being a formal profession? (*expand*)
14. What sort of social contract should security as a sector have with the public (if any) – *follow with* ‘is it the same as for other professions’?
15. How do students/entrants to the sector you encounter see security as a profession? (*and a career with a pathway before them?*)
16. What is the relationship of being an established profession with status and power?
17. Outline your views on whether professions should have the monopoly on their sector knowledge and perform gatekeeping for those entering it and maintaining a body of knowledge?
18. How do you think commodification of knowledge or services will affect future professions including security were it to be one?
19. Explain your thinking on whether professions are losing their currency or may have they lost it already? (*give examples and expand on thinking*).
20. In your view what type of security thinking and leadership metamorphosis might be needed to better lead and achieve professional recognition and respect?
21. What are your thoughts on mandating and formalising a graduated or ladder security qualification merit framework? (*for all and would that include a degree?*).

22. Describe what you think the 4th Revolution (Tech) will have on professions and on security's path towards being one?
23. What effects may the UK economic situation have on Security's drive for being a profession?
24. What models or countries might help us going forward (*profs or alternatives*)?
25. If you think that realistically we may achieve being a UK profession what sort of time frame to achieve it do you envisage?

Verbal Closure:

Thank you that was the last question from me – do you have any questions or wish to clarify further anything discussed. Feel free to elaborate on anything you think was missed or needed more emphasis before recording switched off.

APPENDIX 6

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR 'EXPERT' SAMPLE GROUP (1 X10)

THE INTERVIEW (A Mix of semi and then open Structure).

Introduction given verbally to interviewee:

Thank you for taking part in this interview. My name is Garry Evanson. I am conducting research to identify and assess Security UK individual and collective pursuit of status through attaining formal status as a profession, whether it should or if alternatives might be considered. You have (or may have) already filled in a questionnaire and I would now like to ask you a series of questions on this topic. I will treat all information you give me confidentially and your identity will be kept completely anonymous. You don't have to answer any question you do not want to. I would like to digitally record this interview and after I have used the information for my research the recording will be destroyed. Is that OK?

There are no right or wrong answers – I just want your honest opinions to help my research. Is there anything you want to ask me anything before we start?

The Semi Structured Interview Questions:

1. Would you describe what the term 'formal profession' means to you? (*only if blank response: prompts are such as doctors and lawyers*).
2. What do you think characterizes a profession most? (*prompts constituent parts such as - one only - such as knowledge or regulated etc*).
3. Can you tell me if you think Security (or some part of it - saying which) is a 'profession' in the formal sense and why, or why not if you don't agree it is?
4. Why does security or part of it (one of its disciplines) need to be a profession (or not!)? (*explain why - also delve into is being a profession good/bad?*).
5. How do you think security being a profession gives recognition and/or status to members and the sector? (*Expand on answer*).
6. How do you think new and greater technology and AI etc will influence professionalism and status in security? (*expand depending on response - help/hinder profession seeking or show another way etc?*)

7. Can you think of any alternative approach security could take rather than seek being a formal profession? *(Please explain why that might be better if one is offered or if not does it matter if never recognized etc?)*

Hereafter the second half of the interview was unstructured and allowed for fully open ended discussion:

8. Regarding your own situation (mention Ed/Board/Legal/Ethics/ and others) please tell me how Security factors into your work and more generally?⁴¹

EXPAND ON POINTS IN A DISCUSSIVE WAY – unstructured and open.

9. (and continuing for rest of interview). Themes such as culture/society/salaries/constructs/academia/professional transition/power/regulation and autonomy/models and alternatives.

Verbal Closure:

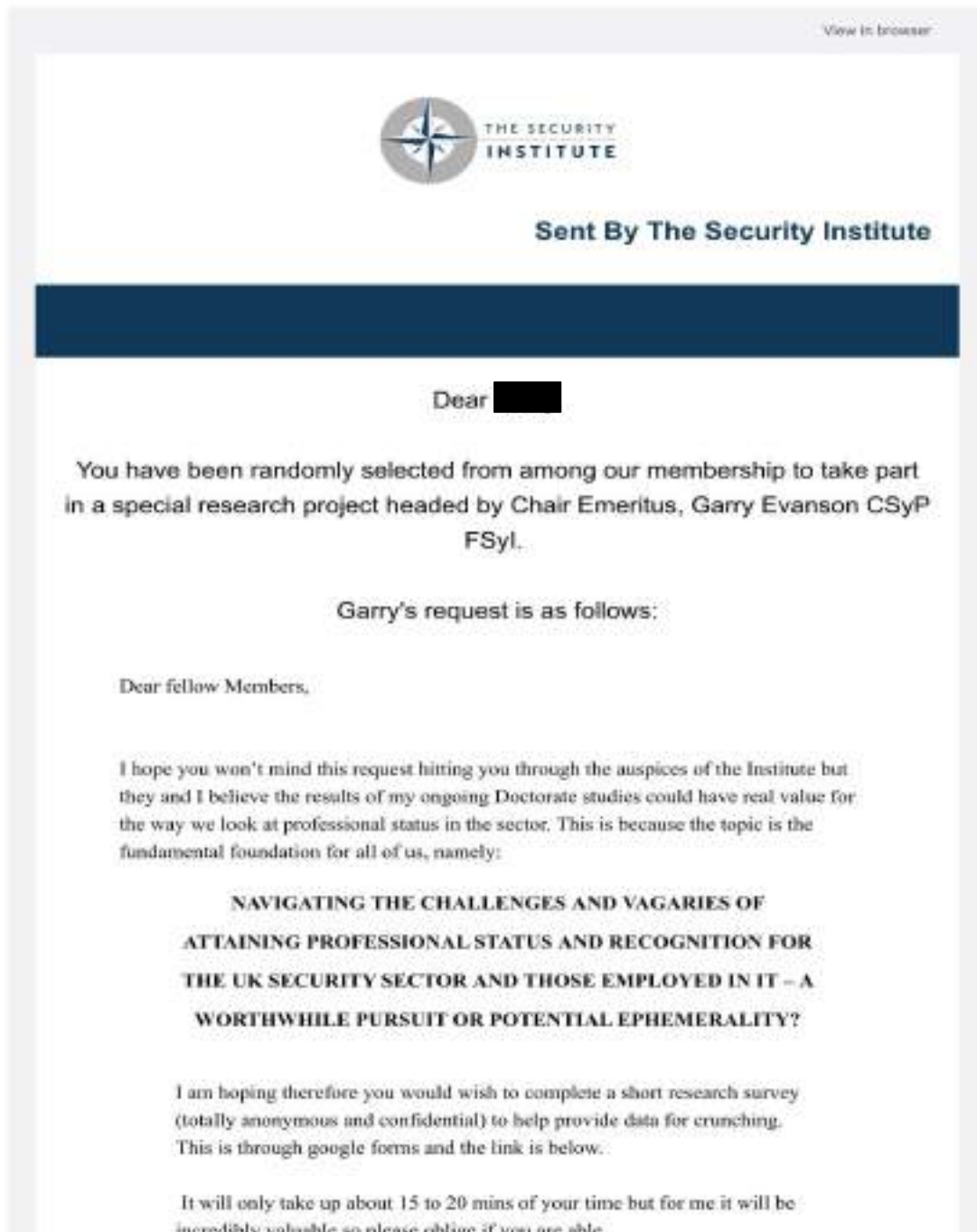
Thank you very much for giving up time to help me. This is the end of the interview. I will now use your answers and those from other Security practitioners to help me with my research. Is there anything you would like to ask me?

Finally:

Remember the information you have given me is completely confidential and your name will not be known to anyone.

⁴¹ This question is dependent on the experts own job/role/position and was a much more open discussion about security interaction from their expert standing).

APPENDIX 7



If you have any questions you can reach me on 07369 226363 or email garryevanson@btinternet.com. Also if you would like to be interviewed on this (again for my research) please let me know ~~and we can fix~~ a teams or zoom meet or just use a telephone call.

Once research is complete you will be welcome to a soft copy of the completed thesis. I will also be at the Conference if you want to touch base.

I look forward to receiving completed surveys - you just need to hit the submit button at the bottom of the survey and it will be magically sent to the platform anonymously.

I do hope you will want to help and take part. Meantime many thanks in anticipation.

Best wishes,
Garry

Garry Evanson
(a Chair Emeritus of Syl and former Deputy Registrar)

[SURVEY LINK](#)

Please DO NOT share this link with anyone else. It is strictly confidential and must remain so.

Thank you for your consideration in participating in this research project.

APPENDIX 8

CODE BOOK

**FINAL
level snapshot
(status as at 3rd Feb 2025)**

Codebook

Garry Evanson

Security and the Professions Research Project

Thesis.mx24

03/02/2025

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***(VERY SMALL SECTION OF CODE DESCRIPTORS
TO ILLUSTRATE BASIS)***

3.2 Final Themes >> DEFINITIONS CHARACTERISTICS CONCEPT COMPONENTS AND CONSTITUENTS

What makes a profession a profession? This code looks for definitions and characteristics as well as component parts which might constitute the meaning of a profession.

15/12/2024 16:56 - Garry Evanson

1. KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE

- Specialized academic and vocational training in security-related disciplines
- Continuous professional development to stay up to date with evolving security threats and best practices
- Demonstration of in-depth, evidence-based security knowledge and problem-solving skills

2. ETHICAL CONDUCT AND INTEGRITY

- Adherence to a professional code of ethics and standards of practice
- Commitment to providing impartial, trustworthy security services in the public interest
- Accountability for one's actions and decisions

3. GOVERNANCE AND REGULATION

- Oversight by an independent regulatory body that sets entry requirements and enforces professional standards
- Internal disciplinary mechanisms to address misconduct and uphold the profession's reputation
- Formal recognition and legal status as a regulated profession

4. SOCIETAL IMPACT AND TRUST

- Provision of essential security services that enhance public safety and community resilience
- Earning the confidence and respect of the general public through demonstrated competence and reliability
- Contributing to the development and implementation of security-related policies and legislation

5. CAREER PROGRESSION AND DEVELOPMENT

- Defined educational and experiential pathways for entry, advancement, and specialization within the profession
- Opportunities for continuous learning, mentorship, and leadership roles
- Portability of skills and qualifications across different security domains

6. PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND CULTURE

- Shared sense of purpose, values, and pride in belonging to the security profession
- Active participation in professional associations and networking activities
- Collective advocacy for the profession's interests and recognition within society

1. ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING

- Degree-level education or equivalent (e.g. professional qualifications, vocational training) as the baseline for entry

- Combination of academic and vocational learning is ideal for well-rounded professionals
- Ongoing Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is essential to maintain and enhance knowledge and skills

2. PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE AND COMPETENCE

- Practical, hands-on experience is just as important as academic knowledge
- Ability to apply knowledge and skills effectively in real-world situations
- Demonstration of competence through performance, not just qualifications

3. PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND STANDARDS

- Adherence to a code of ethics and professional conduct
- Commitment to upholding standards set by the profession
- Accountability and self-regulation within the profession

4. PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION AND STATUS

- Societal recognition and respect for the profession
- Formal professional body or institute to represent and govern the profession
- Clearly defined entry requirements and career progression pathways

5. PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND CULTURE

- Strong sense of professional identity and belonging to the profession
- Shared values, norms, and practices within the professional community
- Continuous learning and development to maintain professional competence

6. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

- Formal regulation and licensing requirements for the profession
- Oversight and enforcement of professional standards by a regulatory authority
- Consequences for breaching professional codes of conduct

7. SOCIETAL CONTRIBUTION AND TRUST

- Profession provides a valuable service that benefits society
- Public trust in the competence and integrity of professionals
- Professionals held accountable for their actions and decisions
- Distinction between the perception of professionalism and the formal recognition of a profession
- Addressing the public's understanding and acceptance of security as a profession

22/01/2025 22:37 - Garry Evanson

1. SPECIALIZED EXPERTISE AND CREDENTIALS

- Requires specialized knowledge, skills, and training in a specific domain
- Holds formal qualifications, certifications, or licenses to practice
- Demonstrates expertise through continuous professional development

2. PROFESSIONAL BODY AND STANDARDS

- Governed by a recognized professional association or regulatory body
- Adheres to a code of ethics and professional standards
- Maintains accountability through disciplinary procedures

3. SOCIETAL RECOGNITION AND TRUST

- Provides a valued service that is recognized and trusted by the public
- Upholds a social contract to prioritize the interests of clients/society
- Enjoys a respected status and professional autonomy

4. DEFINED CAREER PATHWAY

- Follows a structured progression from entry-level to advanced roles
- Involves a combination of academic education and practical experience
- Provides opportunities for continuous learning and advancement

5. REGULATED PRACTICE

- Requires licensing, certification, or registration to legally practice
- Enforces minimum competency requirements and ongoing compliance
- Protects the public from unqualified or unethical practitioners

6. SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE BASE

- Possesses a comprehensive, field-specific body of knowledge
- Continuously expands knowledge through research and innovation
- Applies theoretical and practical expertise to complex problems

7. PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND CULTURE

- Cultivates a strong sense of professional identity and community
- Promotes shared values, norms, and pride in the profession
- Encourages ongoing professional development and mentorship

3.2.1 Final Themes >> DEFINITIONS CHARACTERISTICS CONCEPT COMPONENTS AND CONSTITUENTS >> AUTONOMY

The extent professions control themselves and are generally autonomous in operability and outlook

22/01/2025 22:36 - Garry Evanson

Subcodes for 'CATEGORIES 1st pass > AUTONOMY':

1. Regulatory Oversight

- Need for a governing body to oversee the security profession
- Establishing codes of ethics and conduct to regulate professional behavior
- Disciplinary mechanisms to address malpractice or misconduct

2. Standardization and Accreditation

- Developing common training and qualification frameworks across the industry
- Establishing a central registry or certification for security professionals
- Ensuring consistent competency standards and entry requirements

3. Professional Representation

- Role of industry associations in advocating for the profession
- Unifying diverse security disciplines under a single professional body
- Enhancing the public recognition and credibility of the security profession

23/01/2025 13:27 - Garry Evanson

E.T.C

APPENDIX 9

A SHORT SELECTION OF RESPONSES FROM INTERVIEWS AND OPEN SEGMENTS OF SURVEYS

(MAXQDA 24 – captured on 14th February 2025)

DEFINITIONAL AND CONCEPT THEME

One that is regulated and enforces clearly defined standards

Code: • Q11 How do you define profession? > Accredited qualifications Weight score: 0
CSyP Survey > C9, Pos. 3

Must be similar to medical profession, i.e. a qualification to operate, a body of knowledge, a defined purpose, a defined common good for society and be a regulated sector where individuals can be struck off.

Code: • SURVEY > Q11 How do you define profession? Weight score: 0
CSyP Survey > C45, Pos. 3

Individuals working within the profession should be both Suitably Qualified and Experienced Personnel (SWEP)

Code: • SURVEY > Q11 How do you define profession? Weight score: 0
CSyP Survey > C10, Pos. 3

An occupation that requires specialist knowledge, extensive training and often a formal qualification or licence to practice. It is characterised by needing a high degree of autonomy, a commitment to serving the public good, and adherence to a code of ethics.

Code: • SURVEY > Q11 How do you define profession? Weight score: 0
CSyP Survey > C50, Pos. 3

It is a career that requires specialised education/training, and adherence to established standards and ethics.

Code: • SURVEY > Q11 How do you define profession? Weight score: 0
Syl Survey > S1, Pos. 1

Trust in a profession and in business or society

Code: • Q11 How do you define profession? > Public Trust and Accountability Weight score: 0
Syl Survey > S1, Pos. 6

A demonstrable certification awarded by a widely recognised professional body which uses a rigid set of criteria with which to evaluate a person's understanding of a topic, and their ability to practice that discipline.

Code: • SURVEY > Q11 How do you define profession? Weight score: 0
Syl Survey > S2, Pos. 1

In my opinion a professional hat requires specific educational qualifications to carry out the role.

Code: • SURVEY > Q11 How do you define profession? Weight score: 0
Syl Survey > S3, Pos. 1

Nationally or Internationally recognised

Code: • SURVEY > Q11 How do you define profession? Weight score: 0
Syl Survey > S4, Pos. 1

I would understand a formal profession to be a recognised one, with a high level of qualification, knowledge and standing. Immediate professions that jump out to me in this category would be Solicitor, Doctor or Engineer for instance.

Code: • SURVEY > Q11 How do you define profession? Weight score: 0
Syl Survey > S5, Pos. 1

a recognised certificated following a learning module exam or assignment

Code: • SURVEY > Q11 How do you define profession? Weight score: 0
Syl Survey > S6, Pos. 1

A profession that has a dedicated career path and qualifications structure.

Code: • SURVEY > Q11 How do you define profession? Weight score: 0
Syl Survey > S7, Pos. 1

Tangible and credible

Code: • SURVEY > Q11 How do you define profession? Weight score: 0
Syl Survey > S8, Pos. 1

One in which the practitioner has experience and qualification and practices this as part of day to day work

Code: • SURVEY > Q11 How do you define profession? Weight score: 0
Syl Survey > S9, Pos. 1

One requiring professionally recognised qualifications

Code: • SURVEY > Q11 How do you define profession? Weight score: 0
Syl Survey > S10, Pos. 1

And profession which has defined characteristics and skill requirements and a professional body to maintain these requirements and assess members against it.

Code: • SURVEY > Q11 How do you define profession? Weight score: 0
Syl Survey > S11, Pos. 1

a role that you are required to have knowledge, skills and experience and that you are paid to perform

Code: • SURVEY > Q11 How do you define profession? Weight score: 0
Syl Survey > S12, Pos. 1

One which requires consistent high standards to be maintained, must/ideally is linked to a professional body, requires practitioners to sign up to an industry-wide code of conduct.

Code: • SURVEY > Q11 How do you define profession? Weight score: 0
Syl Survey > S13, Pos. 1

A profession which is tied to the government, healthcare, education etc.

Code: • SURVEY > Q11 How do you define profession? Weight score: 0
Syl Survey > S14, Pos. 1

A universally identifiable and discrete occupation, requiring an academically vigorous, continuous, specific/specialised training and experiential development.

Code: • CATEGORIES 1st pass > DEFINITIONS CHARACTERISTICS CONCEPT COMPONENTS AND CONSTITUENTS Weight score: 0
Surveys pdf > Syl Survey pdf > S134, p. 4

A category of jobs which would be recognised by most people

Code: • CATEGORIES 1st pass > DEFINITIONS CHARACTERISTICS CONCEPT COMPONENTS AND CONSTITUENTS Weight score: 0
Surveys pdf > Syl Survey pdf > S133, p. 4

One with a professional body, which accredits its members and membership is mandatory to practice.

Code: • CATEGORIES 1st pass > DEFINITIONS CHARACTERISTICS CONCEPT COMPONENTS AND CONSTITUENTS Weight score: 0
Surveys pdf > Syl Survey pdf > S132, p. 4

One that requires a minimum level of education and at least 5 years working experience in the sector

Code: • CATEGORIES 1st pass > DEFINITIONS CHARACTERISTICS CONCEPT COMPONENTS AND CONSTITUENTS Weight score: 0

Surveys pdf > Syl Survey pdf > S131, p. 4

a profession is 'paid occupation, especially one that involves prolonged training and a formal qualification; "his chosen profession of teaching" '. I feel this goes some way to describe how I interpret a profession; it is a practiced vocational which requires continually practice to retain the skill to be able to apply the craft, which may not always be readily available to the generalist, or lay person.

Code: • CATEGORIES 1st pass > DEFINITIONS CHARACTERISTICS CONCEPT COMPONENTS AND CONSTITUENTS Weight score: 0

Surveys pdf > Syl Survey pdf > S129, p. 4

a profession that has a particular title that is dictated by the role that the person fulfils and has specific qualifications that are associated.

Code: • CATEGORIES 1st pass > DEFINITIONS CHARACTERISTICS CONCEPT COMPONENTS AND CONSTITUENTS Weight score: 0

Surveys pdf > Syl Survey pdf > S128, p. 4

Something that requires a professional qualification and credentials to practice.

Code: • CATEGORIES 1st pass > DEFINITIONS CHARACTERISTICS CONCEPT COMPONENTS AND CONSTITUENTS Weight score: 0

Surveys pdf > Syl Survey pdf > S127, p. 4

Recognise discipline with legal professional qualifications

Code: • CATEGORIES 1st pass > DEFINITIONS CHARACTERISTICS CONCEPT COMPONENTS AND CONSTITUENTS Weight score: 0

Surveys pdf > Syl Survey pdf > S126, p. 4

Qualified & certified with experience

Code: • CATEGORIES 1st pass > DEFINITIONS CHARACTERISTICS CONCEPT COMPONENTS AND CONSTITUENTS Weight score: 0

Surveys pdf > Syl Survey pdf > S125, p. 4

Work in a specialist area that requires lengthy training, education, and a level of qualification, normally governed by a code of conduct or some form of regulation.

Code: • CATEGORIES 1st pass > DEFINITIONS CHARACTERISTICS CONCEPT COMPONENTS AND CONSTITUENTS Weight score: 0

Surveys pdf > Syl Survey pdf > S117, p. 4 (Defs 24th Jan, Pos. 2-49)

Knowledge Themes

It is a career that requires specialised education/training, and adherence to established standards and ethics.

Code: ● DEFINITIONS CHARACTERISTICS CONCEPT COMPONENTS AND CONSTITUENTS > Knowledge and Expertise Weight score: 0
Surveys pdf > Syl Survey pdf > S1, p. 4

Recognised academic qualifications

Code: ● DEFINITIONS CHARACTERISTICS CONCEPT COMPONENTS AND CONSTITUENTS > Knowledge and Expertise Weight score: 0
Surveys pdf > CSyP Survey pdf > C14, p. 4

Ideal if entry is degree but depends on role spectrum and also if other entry points exist like Legal Exec in law.

Code: ● DEFINITIONS CHARACTERISTICS CONCEPT COMPONENTS AND CONSTITUENTS > Knowledge and Expertise Weight score: 0
Surveys pdf > CSyP Survey pdf > C3, p. 7

I feel that this is not important at all. I have no first degree yet I am at the top of this profession. Degree requirements are very likely to exclude good people and work against efforts to diversify the profession.

Code: ● DEFINITIONS CHARACTERISTICS CONCEPT COMPONENTS AND CONSTITUENTS > Knowledge and Expertise Weight score: 0
Surveys pdf > CSyP Survey pdf > C2, p. 7

I think that we already identify as a profession. And thus definitions of terms would be off assistance to those completing the survey.

Code: ● DEFINITIONS CHARACTERISTICS CONCEPT COMPONENTS AND CONSTITUENTS > Knowledge and Expertise Weight score: 0
Surveys pdf > CSyP Survey pdf > C2, p. 8

Having a degree will ensure certain standards have been met although there always needs to be a way to achieve the same outcome via an unconventional (non-formal educational) route.

Code: ● DEFINITIONS CHARACTERISTICS CONCEPT COMPONENTS AND CONSTITUENTS > Knowledge and Expertise Weight score: 0
Surveys pdf > CSyP Survey pdf > C1, p. 7

demonstrable certification awarded by a widely recognised professional body which uses a rigid set of criteria with which to evaluate a person's understanding of a topic, and their ability to practice that discipline.

By proving the individuals have an understanding of a complex topic which has historical relied on lived work experience to gain any level of competence.

Code: ● Knowledge and Expertise > EXPERTISE Weight score: 0
Syl Survey > S2, Pos. 1-2

If a profession is formally recognised, it is usually held in higher regard and considered more valuable to those who use its services, resulting in higher pay

Code: ● Knowledge and Expertise > MERIT Weight score: 0
Syl Survey > S11, Pos. 3

It acts as recognition and makes being seen as a subject matter expert easier to those outside of the profession.

Code: ● Knowledge and Expertise > MERIT Weight score: 0
Syl Survey > S11, Pos. 4

I don't have a degree but have achieved a high level of success and recognition. In addition, many degrees, including those in cyber security related subjects are struggling to keep up with the pace of change, resulting in degree holders who have few relevant skills.

Code: ● Knowledge and Expertise > MERIT Weight score: 0
Syl Survey > S11, Pos. 5

The ability to bar members who deliberately misbehave is a powerful incentive to keep bad practice out of the profession as does the ability to have a central standards authority. By having a central authority who is responsible for setting professional standards and enforcing them, these professions are held in higher regard than security does at present.

Code: ● Knowledge and Expertise > MERIT Weight score: 0
Syl Survey > S11, Pos. 8

The nature of the industry has tended toward middle to senior individuals obtaining a postgrad degree

Code: ● Knowledge and Expertise > Academic Foundation Weight score: 0
CSyP Survey > C57, Pos. 5

By requiring a degree and pushing too many school leavers in that direction they incur high debt levels, sometimes take degrees with poor prospects of employment and can't find work at the end of their studies.

Code: ● Knowledge and Expertise > Academic Foundation Weight score: 0
CSyP Survey > C56, Pos. 5

A degree shows focus and academic rigour

Code: ● Knowledge and Expertise > Academic Foundation Weight score: 0
CSyP Survey > C49, Pos. 5

A degree is a must, whether a first degree or masters. I believe without a degree security will never be accepted at the top table of professionals or the wider public. Experience follows in any professional discipline but to attain the highest standing in a given

profession one must be expected and indeed demonstrate a high degree of academic learning. Quite different to a trade e.g. a carpenter

Code: • Knowledge and Expertise > Academic Foundation Weight score: 0
CSyP Survey > C48, Pos. 5

Power and Autonomy Themes

It buys credibility with c-suite to engage on difficult issues

Code: • POWER > Credibility and Influence Weight score: 0
CSyP Survey > C49, Pos. 4

It provides credibility to both internal and external stakeholders, which enables members of the "profession" to have a seat at the table with executive decision-makers, ensures appropriate departmental and activity funding, and will incorporate risk management as an integral part of organizational planning and implementation.

Code: • POWER > Credibility and Influence Weight score: 0
CSyP Survey > C43, Pos. 4

Very important in terms of credibility with senior management

Code: • POWER > Credibility and Influence Weight score: 0
CSyP Survey > C32, Pos. 4

Associations that actually do something- where CSyP isn't such an old boys club that does very little in regard to making industry breakthroughs etc.

Code: • POWER > Tiered Approach Weight score: 0
CSyP Survey > C11, Pos. 6

Recognition and influencing stakeholders.

Code: • POWER > Credibility and Influence Weight score: 0
CSyP Survey > C6, Pos. 3

A Guild or Institute approach or possible apprentice route initially - graduated merit and segmented in sector.

Code: • POWER > Tiered Approach Weight score: 0
CSyP Survey > C4, Pos. 5

I believe the CSyP route is viable but a tiered approach - where e.g. Security Institute membership is mandatory for all sector professionals with managerial responsibilities and CSyP above a certain level - could work.

Code: ● POWER > Tiered Approach Weight score: 0
CSyP Survey > C2, Pos. 5

A Profession?

I already think of security as a profession, indeed my profession. That helps me to communicate who I am and what I do. It aids my credibility and authority. All of this help me to command a higher salary.

Code: ● POWER > Credibility and Influence Weight score: 0
CSyP Survey > C1, Pos. 3

SOCIETAL MATTERS

I am a Chartered Engineer, Chartered IT Professional and CSyP. Sadly I have not seen any impact on my salary or standing in organizations where I have worked. The problem seems to be a lack of awareness by those with influence and there not being a critical mass of qualified people in security.

Code: ● SOCIETY > CULTURAL FACTORS Weight score: 0
CSyP Survey > C56, Pos. 3

By requiring a degree and pushing too many school leavers in that direction they incur high debt levels, sometimes take degrees with poor prospects of employment and can't find work at the end of their studies.

Code: ● SOCIETY > CULTURAL FACTORS Weight score: 0
CSyP Survey > C56, Pos. 5

I have been very successful, witnessed many changes within the profession, and worked on multiple developments within the sector; however, times have changed, and today, society is far more interested in security following the Manchester Arena inquiry and terrorism awareness. Therefore, today, clients are looking for more expertise, knowledge, and skills from those they employ and tend to come to sources with a reputation they can trust. For those entering the profession, that journey is more challenging, which is where professionalisation will be really beneficial.

Code: ● SOCIETY > TRUST Weight score: 0
CSyP Survey > C54, Pos. 4

Because I see the value and importance of the security field to society (e.g. individual security, community security, national security and international security) and there is merit in being perceived as a profession

Code: ● SOCIETY > Contextual Relevance Weight score: 0
CSyP Survey > C36, Pos. 4

It shows your commitment to the industry and will give trust to clients

Code: ● SOCIETY > TRUST Weight score: 0

CSyP Survey > C34, Pos. 4

Being a member of a profession enhances reputation and builds trust with clients, employers, and colleagues. It encourages ongoing education and training ensuring you stay updated with best practices. Also requires adherence to ethical standards, enhancing professional integrity.

Code: ● SOCIETY > ETHICS & MORALITY Weight score: 0

CSyP Survey > C30, Pos. 3

Being a member of a profession enhances reputation and builds trust with clients, employers, and colleagues. It encourages ongoing education and training ensuring you stay updated with best practices. Also requires adherence to ethical standards, enhancing professional integrity.

Code: ● SOCIETY > TRUST Weight score: 0

CSyP Survey > C30, Pos. 3

It doesn't impact my clients. They purchase from me because I solve a problem for them.

Code: ● SOCIETY > Contextual Relevance Weight score: 0

CSyP Survey > C28, Pos. 4

I have spent 40 years in commercial security and seen the benefits of professionalisation in the industry. I am a founder member of the Syl and have a personal invested interest in seeing us recognised more widely as professionals.

Code: ● SOCIETY > Contextual Relevance Weight score: 0

CSyP Survey > C27, Pos. 3

I've got more of my career behind me than ahead. I think it's important to keep pushing at becoming a profession but this isn't going to impact me at all.

Code: ● SOCIETY > Contextual Relevance Weight score: 0

CSyP Survey > C22, Pos. 8

The importance lies in the specialised value it brings to the table, however, and this applies more so to traditional security. Many outside the profession believe they are security experts because how difficult is it to be a guard or put up a fence? They would think the same of a doctor, nurse, accountant, etc. because they recognise they don't understand it or have not had the experience.

Code: ● SOCIETY > Contextual Relevance Weight score: 0

CSyP Survey > C19, Pos. 3

I feel I am reasonably well established and qualified with fellowship and chartership. Security becoming a profession will benefit those less established more.

Code: ● SOCIETY > Contextual Relevance Weight score: 0

CSyP Survey > C8, Pos. 4

profession to the wider community, and so it's essential that those who are going to be buying

Code: ● SOCIETY > SOCIETAL IMPACT AND TRUST Weight score: 0

Interviews > Expert Interviews > E10 - R, p. 2

Altruism

It has to be extremely altruistic because of the fact that we're concerned with the safety and security of people and assets which involve people's lives, so you know it's absolutely essential. Within that, there is a caring and sharing kind of culture built into the. Attitudes of security professionals.

Code: ● SOCIETY > Service to Society and Altruism Weight score: 0

Interviews > Expert Interviews > E10 - R, p. 5

Ethics

I've just upgraded this at the moment is for two assist that we're speaking today because the other conversation I'm having today is with an advisor on this very thing from the foundation of science and technology where we're signing off a new code of ethic Code of Ethics, ethics, and disciplinary code. We've got a code of conduct that's been in place. Sometime so. Again, Gary, these are evolving issues. You know it's still this is a new a new profession

Code: ● SOCIETY > ETHICS & MORALITY Weight score: 0

Interviews > Expert Interviews > E10 - R, p. 7

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Code: ● SOCIETY > ETHICAL CONDUCT AND INTEGRITY Weight score: 0

Interviews > Expert Interviews > E10 - R, p. 7

Identity and Culture

It is the wider societal recognition that the people operating within it are operating professionally, that they meet certain standards which could be regulatory, or they could be, based upon the, the sort of, the, the published expected requirements of that industry sector.

Code: ● DEFINITIONS CHARACTERISTICS CONCEPT COMPONENTS AND CONSTITUENTS > PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND CULTURE Weight score: 0

Interviews > Expert Interviews > E2, Pos. 4

And it's a difficult thing to achieve, though, of course, because we are such a wide, diverse network of people with so many different skills, you know?

Code: ● DEFINITIONS CHARACTERISTICS CONCEPT COMPONENTS AND CONSTITUENTS > PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND CULTURE Weight score: 0

Interviews > Expert Interviews > E2, Pos. 29

Oh gosh, I think they are becoming separate things because I think there are quite a few people who say they're professional, but they don't belong to a profession.

Code: ● DEFINITIONS CHARACTERISTICS CONCEPT COMPONENTS AND CONSTITUENTS > PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND CULTURE Weight score: 0

Interviews > Expert Interviews > E3-E, Pos. 6

It's still being quite a significant part of our identity, almost in our culture.

Code: ● DEFINITIONS CHARACTERISTICS CONCEPT COMPONENTS AND CONSTITUENTS > PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND CULTURE Weight score: 0

Interviews > Expert Interviews > E4, Pos. 38

INCOME AND PAY MATTERS

I mean, there are problems with, with, retaining staff because of low wages. So, I mean, the whole way of financial remuneration is, is critical as well. And companies have got to cut their costs. Easiest way is to cut the amount that they pay their staff to, you know, attend a football match or a concert.

Code: ● Final Themes > SALARY and INCOME Weight score: 0

Interviews > Expert Interviews > E5-E, Pos. 45

There's always going to be this difficulty and that people a lot of organizations want the cheapest option. And it's so and to get the cheapest option you offer the worst pay rates to your security guard that stands at the gate. And I think the biggest challenge for the security industry is how can you demonstrate value to get more money

Code: ● Final Themes > SALARY and INCOME Weight score: 0

Interviews > Expert Interviews > E5-E, Pos. 52

And I guess we're never going to get the respect and recognition from parents and teachers if we keep the wages remaining so low that we are paying peanuts and we get monkeys. So there's a horrible circle. We don't we don't, society doesn't recognize them. So businesses won't pay adequate pay wages, which means we are not attracting talent into the lowest roles of security officers that are most visible in the shop window. Of Tesco superstore and therefore, that does not inspire parents to push their kids to become security officers. And then we go back around to low wages and, you know, the lowest common denominator. So if we're going to break that cycle, the wages need to be brought up to attract talent that looks smart, like a police officer. And then they gain the respect and In recognition that a police officer might get. And then, you know, we start getting some newer talent through.

Code: ● Final Themes > SALARY and INCOME Weight score: 0

Interviews > Expert Interviews > E7-CEO, Pos. 12

S2: I, (..) We need to spend money in order to stay secure in whatever shape or form it is. But security is never seen to be and it's always a grudge purchase, isn't it? Even today. So, you know, it's not seen as, as a, as a sexy industry, a great industry to join. You know, it's not it doesn't attract big bucks, high salaries and stuff. So if you're judging it purely on, on financial aspects, it's never it's never a positive, happy conversation that you're going to get a good financial return for whatever money you invest. You know, it's always a grudge purchase. Apart from, you know, a few very enlightened people that see it as the business enabler, that that we in security know that it is or should be. Okay.

Code: ● Final Themes > SALARY and INCOME Weight score: 0

Interviews > Syl Interviews > SI10, Pos. 36

REGULATORY THEMES

As above, we have a template thanks to the Engineering sector, but we can also learn from countries where effective regulation has been brought in for the licensing of qualified security professionals e.g. New South Wales, Australia

Code: ● REGULATION INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL > International benchmarking Weight score: 0

CSyP Survey > C48, Pos. 7

Lots. The law has separate elements and indeed separate professional bodies (e.g. Law Society et al) so that might help as a framework. So Security is a profession but rep by separate bodies.

Code: ● REGULATION INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL > Regulatory Framework Weight score: 0

CSyP Survey > C47, Pos. 7

needs to be fully defined and wide enough to hold many specialisms (e.g. medicine and then cardiology) so General security and Personnel security - which has not even be identified in your

questionnaire - people centered security is not personnel security and it is one of the main protective security disciplines.

Code: ● REGULATION INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL > International benchmarking Weight score: 0
CSyP Survey > C46, Pos. 5

Develop codified standards and practices, establish career pathway qualifications and experienced requirements, establish learning goals drawing on government and commercial resources.

Code: ● REGULATION INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL > International benchmarking Weight score: 0
CSyP Survey > C43, Pos. 7

In security, valuable lessons can be drawn from professions like medicine and law, particularly in their emphasis on protocols and risk assessment. Law shows the need for clear and enforced regulations, promoting accountability and due process, which can help establish trust in security measures.

Code: ● REGULATION INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL > Regulatory Framework Weight score: 0
CSyP Survey > C34, Pos. 6

Structures and policies may be learnt from other professions.

Many other countries have stricter licensing requirements than the UK and have for a long time. good and bad lessons could be learnt from them.

Code: ● REGULATION INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL > International benchmarking Weight score: 0
CSyP Survey > C33, Pos. 7-8

Safety has both international, national and local standards and is a potential framework to us as a handrail

Code: ● REGULATION INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL > Regulatory Framework Weight score: 0
CSyP Survey > C32, Pos. 6

Security Professionals, the maintenance of the ASIS, DPP or, the cyber security certifications. You need to maintain your your CPD record. (..) I think, (9) Ways of perhaps, enforcing codes of ethics

NB: Just a small selection given above.

Informed Consent Form



INFORMED CONSENT FOR INTERVIEW

PROFESSIONAL STATUS AND RECOGNITION FOR THE UK SECURITY SECTOR

I, [REDACTED], agree to be interviewed for the research which will be conducted by Garry Evanson a (DBA) doctorate student at the Swiss School of Business and Management, Geneva, Switzerland.

I certify that I have been told of the confidentiality of information collected for this research and the anonymity of my participation; that I have been given satisfactory answers to my inquiries concerning research procedures and other matters; and that I have been advised that I am free to withdraw my consent and to discontinue participation in the research or activity at any time without prejudice.

I agree to participate in one or more **electronically recorded** interviews for this research. I understand that such interviews and related materials will be kept completely anonymous and that the results of this study may be published in a form that may serve the titled research best but totally anonymously.

I agree that any information obtained from this research may be used the way thought best for this study noting the guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity.

.....Electronic.....

2024.....

APPENDIX 11

SCREENSHOT OF MAXQDA 24 - ANALYSIS IN ACTION

