

DENMARK

PROTECTIVE AND RISK FACTORS FOR MILITARY SUICIDE



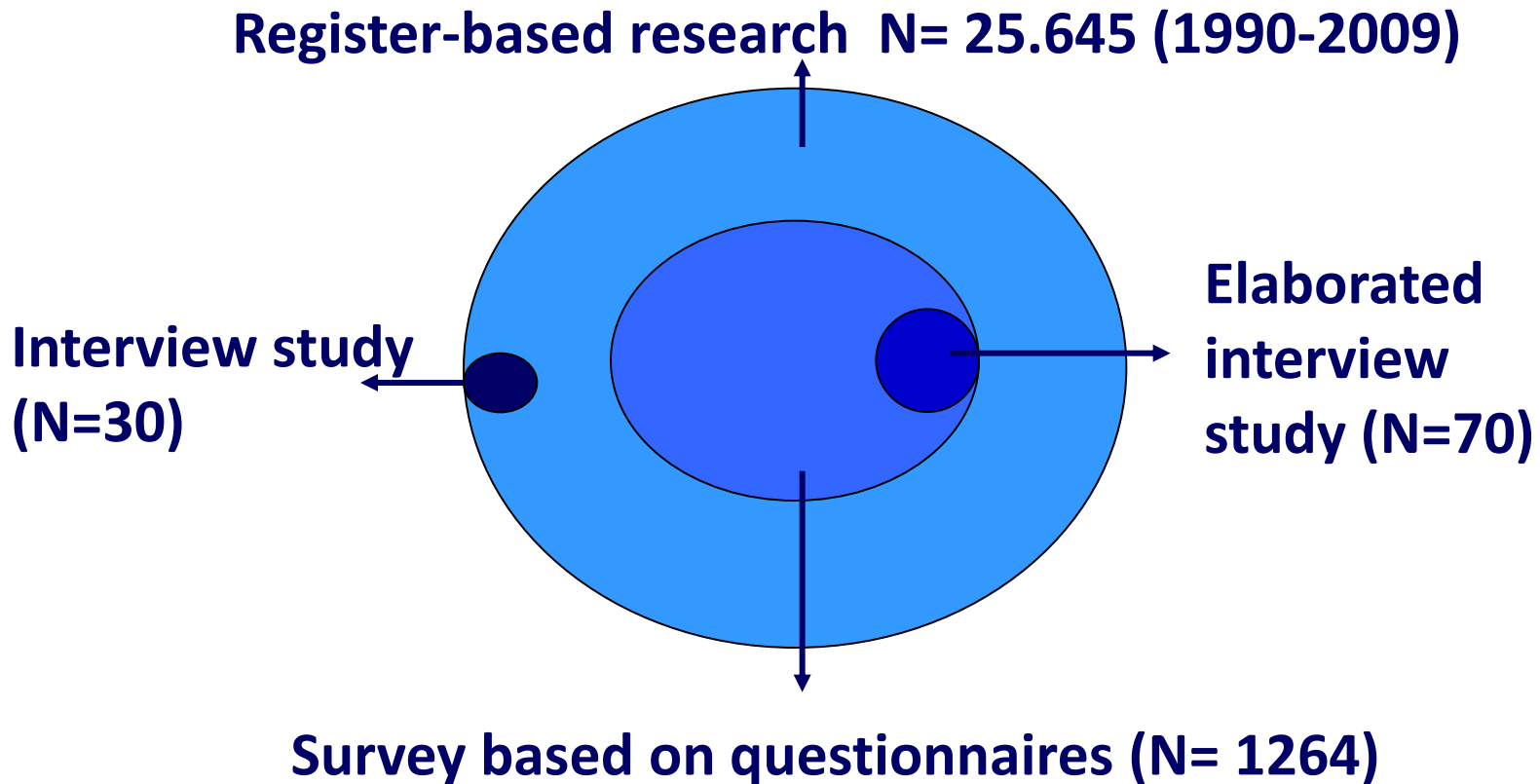
Ph.D. Lilian Zoellner, Centre for Suicide Research, Denmark

DEFINITION OF VETERAN

The term veteran describes a person who – as an individual or in a unit – has been deployed to at least one international operation. The person may still be employed in the Defence or another authority, but may also have transferred to the civilian educational system, labour market or elsewhere. (The Danish Government, October 2010).



RESEARCH DESIGN



RISK FACTORS FOR SUICIDE (N= 25.645)

In general, deployed soldiers do not have a higher suicide risk than the general population.

However, this risk appears to depend upon which missions the soldiers have been deployed, especially in relation to suicides.



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SELECTED MISSIONS

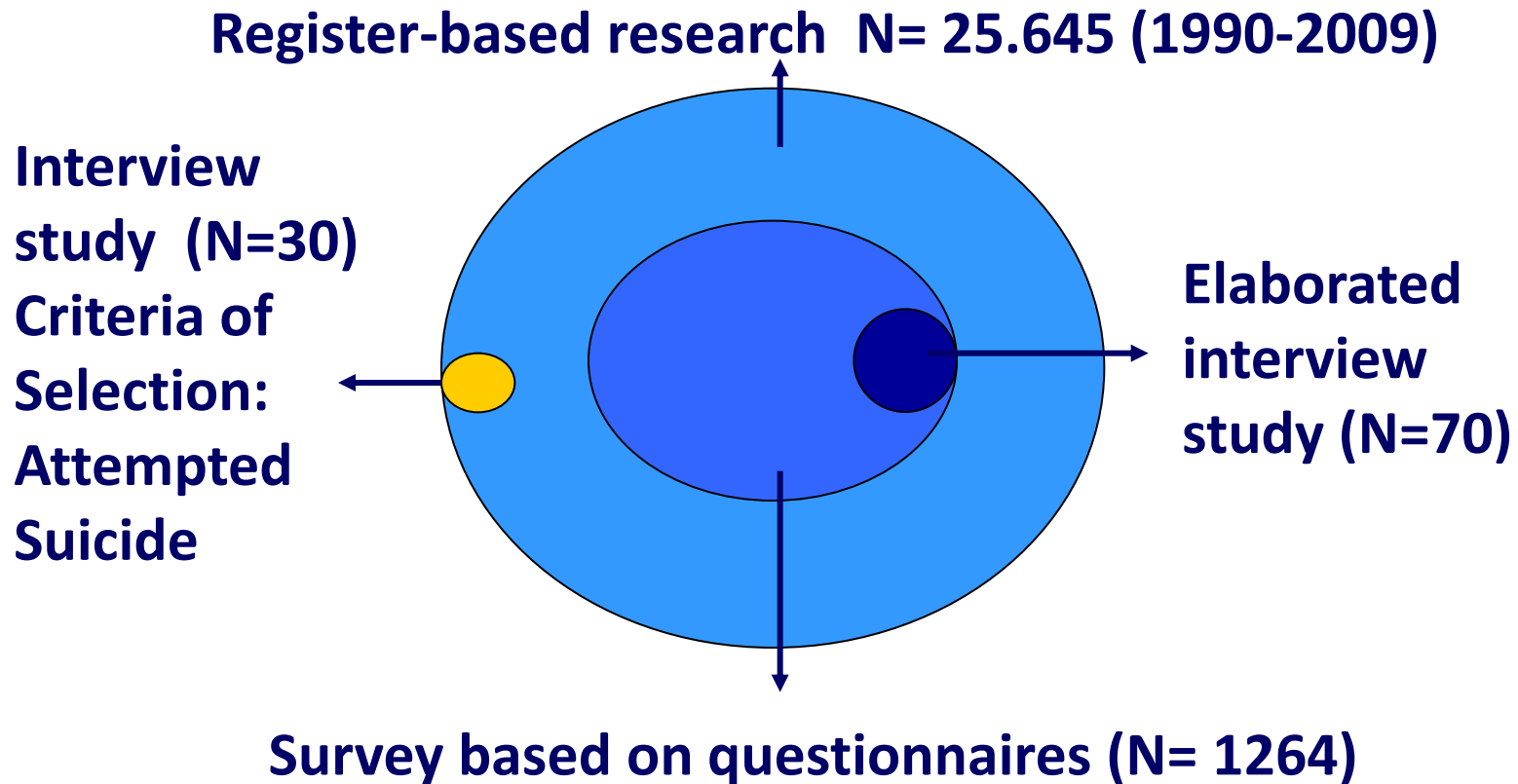
SUICIDES

UNPROFOR 4/CROATIA	7	(986 deployed)
UNPROFOR 3/CROATIA	6	(818 deployed)
UNCRO 8	5	(1002 deployed)



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RESEARCH ON RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS (N=30)



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RISK FACTORS FOR ATTEMPTED SUICIDE (N=30)



POOR CHILDHOOD



SERIOUS SUICIDAL IDEATION



SUICIDE AMONG THE CLOSEST RELATIVES

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RISK FACTORS FOR ATTEMPTED SUICIDE (N=30)

- **Mission type/authorisation**
- **Job functions**
- **Straining incidents**



- **Atrocities against civilians**
- **Family at home**
- **Management/superiors**

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PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR ATTEMPTED SUICIDE (N=30)



Work



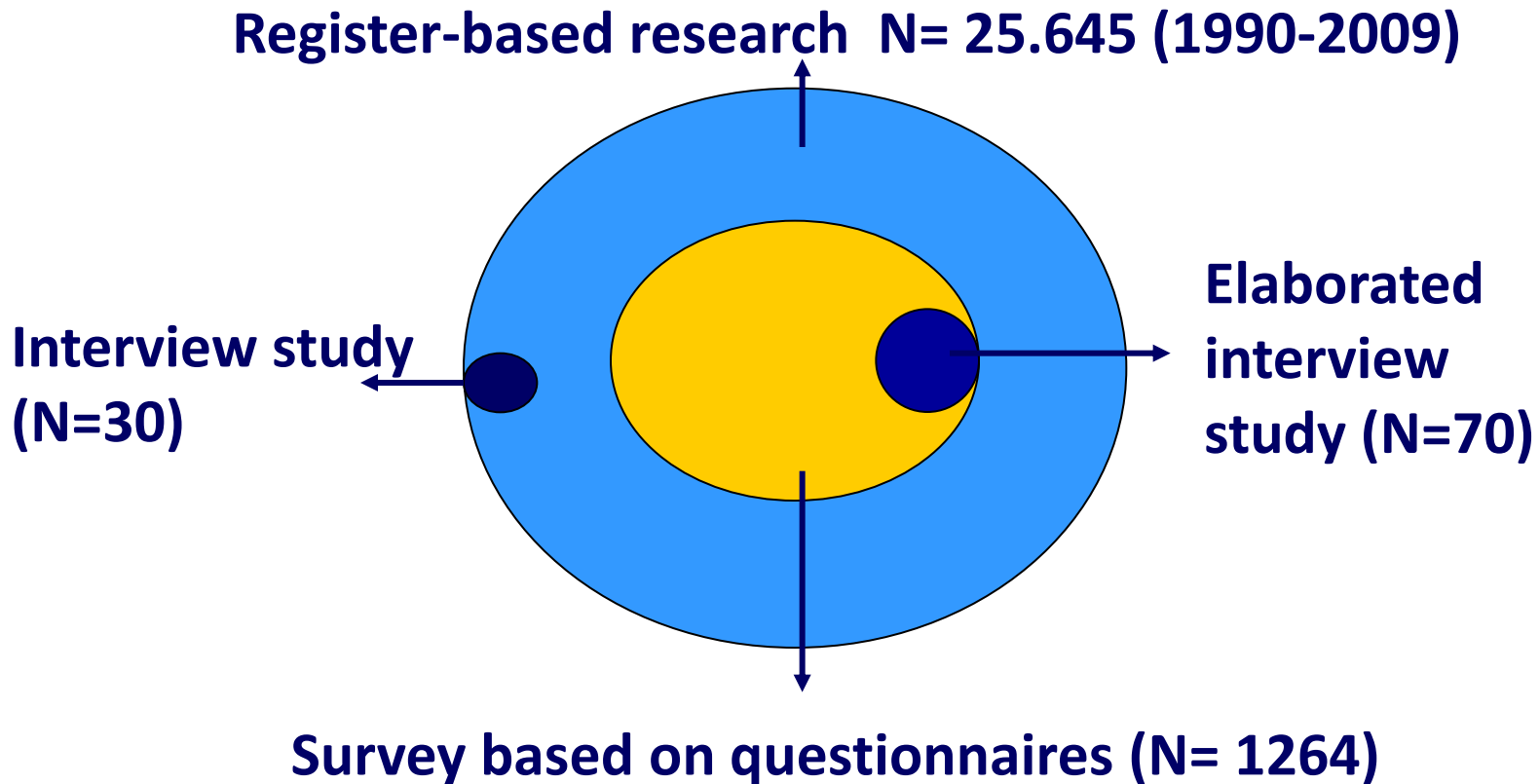
Fear of dying



Will to live

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RESEARCH ON RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS (N=1264)



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RISK FACTORS FOR SUICIDAL IDEATION (N=1264)

Prior to first deployment:

- Drug abuse
- Poor financial circumstances



- A childhood with mentally ill parents
- A childhood with parents suffering from suicidal behaviour

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RISK FACTORS FOR SUICIDAL IDEATION (N=1264)

During deployment

- Being repatriated
- Enlisted private rather than officer
- Nervous breakdown
- Powerlessness in difficult situations
- Meaningless tasks

- See dead or wounded people fellow soldiers
- Witnessing atrocities against civilians
- Being under fire or firing at others
- Thoughts of the risk of being killed
- Supporting family under strain
- Immense workload



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PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR SUICIDAL IDEATION (N=1264)

During deployment: receiving positive support from

- partner
- closest relatives
- friends at home



superiors

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PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR SUICIDAL IDEATION (N=1264)

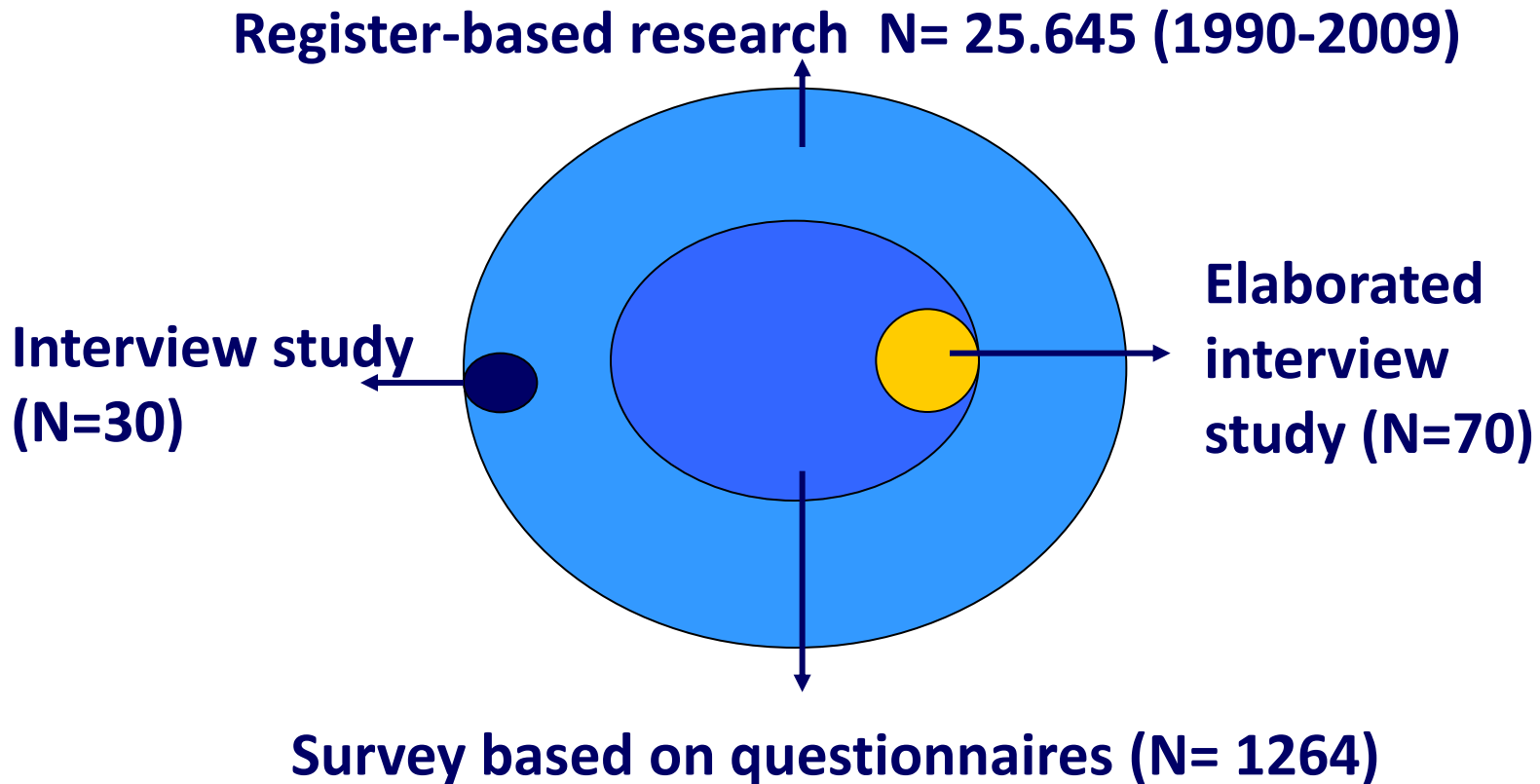
After deployment: receiving positive support

- in a good homecoming programme
- from partner
- from fellow soldiers (from the unit)
- through recognition from the population



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RESEARCH ON RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS (N=70)



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CRITERIA OF SELECTION (N=70)



- has been under fire personally
- the camp has been under fire
- suicidal ideation
- attempted suicide

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PROTECTIVE FACTORS (N=70)

- RELATIONS WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS
- VALUES
- ONE'S LIFE PHILOSOPHY



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BEST PRACTICES

- **RECOGNITION FROM THE POPULATION**
- **HOMECOMING PROGRAMME**
- **SOCIAL SUPPORT (A VETERAN FOR EVER)**



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THE RESEARCH INTO RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS CONTINUES IN 2014 (A VETERAN FOR EVER)

FOCUS

- **WHAT HAVE PROTECTED THE VETERANS SINCE LAST INTERVIEW?**
- **POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH**





RELATIONS