Journalism Under Duress

Worlds of Journalism Study Report

(Wave 3: 2021–2025)



Edited by
Thomas Hanitzsch
Folker Hanusch
Corinna Lauerer
Vera Slavtcheva-Petkova

WORLDS OF JOURNALISM

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About the Editors



Thomas Hanitzsch heads the Worlds of Journalism Study since its establishment in 2006. He is Professor of Communication in the Department of Media and Communication at LMU Munich, Germany. A former journalist, his research focuses on global journalism cultures, the transformation of journalism, communication and mental health, and comparative methodology. He is a Fellow and current President of the International Communication Association.



Folker Hanusch has been a Vice-Chair of the Worlds of Journalism since 2006. He is Professor of Journalism at the University of Vienna, Austria, where he heads the Journalism Studies Center. He is Editor-in-Chief of Journalism Studies and co-editor of the International Encyclopedia of Journalism Studies. His research interests include comparative journalism studies, boundaries of journalism, the transformations of journalism and Indigenous journalism.



Corinna Lauerer is the Worlds of Journalism Study's International Data Manager. She is a post-doctoral researcher in the Department of Media and Communication at LMU Munich, Germany, and Associate Professor of Communication and Journalism in the Department of Media and Social Sciences at the University of Stavanger, Norway. Her research focuses on comparative journalism, hybrid forms of advertising in news media, influences on journalism and working conditions and diversity in journalism.



Vera Slavtcheva-Petkova is a Vice-Chair of the Worlds of Journalism Study and Regional Coordinator for Central and Eastern Europe. She joined WJS in 2016 as PI for Bulgaria. She is a Reader in Global Journalism and Media at the University of Liverpool, UK. She leads the one-stop platform on journalists' safety safetyofjournalists.org launched in 2023 in co-operation with UNESCO as well as the WJS global index on journalists' safety (safetyofjournalists.org/index).

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Foreword from the Editors

Thomas Hanitzsch, Folker Hanusch, Corinna Lauerer & Vera Slavtcheva-Petkova

This report comes at a time when journalism faces existential challenges on multiple fronts. Journalists are confronting disruptions and transformations in the political environment (e.g., rising authoritarianism), the news economy (e.g., growing influence of platforms), technological affordances (e.g., generative AI), and news consumption (e.g., increasing news avoidance and skepticism).

In other words, journalism around the world is under significant strain.

Since 2006, the Worlds of Journalism Study (WJS) has examined journalism's response to a changing environment. That year, researchers from seven countries met to discuss a draft questionnaire. Following further expansion and the addition of dozens of countries, WJS was officially founded in 2011 as a semi-institutional network of journalism researchers. To date, the network remains open to participation by colleagues from across the globe.

The study's mission has coalesced around assessing the state of journalism throughout the world. Its primary objective is to help researchers, media practitioners, and policymakers better understand journalists' professional views, the conditions under which they work, and the social roles of journalism in a transforming world.

WJS offers three key advantages over similar projects. First, it relies on a joint conceptual and methodological framework, continuously reviewed by global experts. This framework ensures that all researchers use a standardized questionnaire and adhere to the same research protocols.

Second, the study's conceptual and methodological tools were developed collaboratively through multiple iterations, with all network members having equal opportunities to contribute.

Third, WJS is guided by democratically elected researchers from all regions, allowing the project to leverage the cultural knowledge of its participants and present a truly global perspective. At the same time, the study functions as a democratic scholarly community rather than an academic empire.

This report presents findings from the third wave of the Worlds of Journalism Study (WJS3), conducted between 2021 and 2025. In this iteration, we focused on journalists' perceptions of risk and uncertainty in their profession and sought to identify key factors that shape how journalists navigate journalism's changing environment. These risks and uncertainties arise from four partially overlapping domains: politics, economy, technology, and news consumption. Accordingly, the WJS3 questionnaire addressed journalists' safety, editorial freedom, professional roles, news influences, and labor conditions.

Our survey confirms that journalism is under pressure. Journalists worldwide are often undercompensated, and more than one-third engage in secondary employment. Economic pressures on news organizations have intensified in most countries. Nearly half of journalists have been targeted with hate speech, while psychological, physical, and digital threats are more prevalent in the Global South than in the Global North.

More than 300 researchers from 75 countries participated in WJS3. This report provides a concise overview of key global findings. Subsequent publications will analyze specific topics in greater depth; please visit worldsofjournalism.org for more information.

This report would not have been possible without the dedication of our international network of researchers. We extend our deepest gratitude to all colleagues who contributed to the report and to those involved in WJS3 data collection. We thank the members of the WJS Executive Committee, Scientific Advisory Committee, and Statistical Advisory Committee (see worldsofjournalism.org/about/ for a full list), as well as Mia Grünewald at the WJS Center for her tireless work in data management and report production. We are also grateful to the German Research Foundation (DFG) and our partners, including UNESCO, Reporters Without Borders, and the International Federation of Journalists, for their generous support.

Finally, we sincerely thank the more than 32,000 journalists who generously contributed their time to complete our survey.

Executive Summary

EDSON TANDOC JR., JANARA NICOLETTI & DAVID BLANCO-HERRERO

From the rise of populism and the spread of fake news to the mainstreaming of artificial intelligence and the disruptions caused by the pandemic, journalism has experienced—and continues to experience—profound technological, political, economic, and cultural transformations. The Worlds of Journalism Study (WJS) documents and analyzes these changes through global surveys of journalists. In its third wave, WJS captures the perspectives of more than 32,350 journalists from diverse media systems, political regimes, and cultural contexts across 75 countries, providing a bottom-up view that complements institutional metrics and top-down analyses.

This report synthesizes the most important insights from the survey, showing how journalists worldwide navigate disruptions that shape their experiences with press freedom, perceptions of social roles, and beliefs about objectivity and transparency. The chapters that follow offer a rich, multifaceted portrait of today's journalists, revealing not only the challenges they face but also their resilience, adaptability, and professional commitment.

These WJS3 findings offer a crucial foundation for scholars, policymakers, media practitioners, and advocates seeking to support and strengthen journalism's role in society.

PERSONAL BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

- Just under half of the surveyed journalists identified as female, with women forming a numerical majority in 30 countries.
- Significant gender disparities persist in some regions: in 14 countries—particularly in South, Central, and East Asia—women constitute less than one-third of the journalistic workforce.
- The global average age of journalists is nearly 40, indicating a relatively mature workforce, though some countries, such as Poland and Albania, have notably younger demographics.
- The global median professional experience is 14 years, suggesting that journalists typically enter the field in their mid-to-late 20s after completing professional training.
- Most journalists hold college or university degrees, and three-quarters have received some form of professional training.
- Journalists in the Global North are generally older and possess more professional experience than their counterparts in the Global South.

EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS

- Most journalists hold full-time contracts, though more than a quarter work as freelancers or part-time employees. Freelancing is particularly common in Latin America, where more than one in five journalists are freelancers, while Italy has the highest global proportion at more than 40%.
- Globally, full-time journalists work on average 43.8 hours per week. Respondents in ten countries reported exceeding the 48-hour weekly limit set by the International Labour Organization.
- Nearly two-thirds of journalists are generalists, covering a range of news beats rather than specializing in a single thematic area.
- Globally, journalists are relatively undercompensated. Salaries often hover around national average wages, prompting almost one-third of journalists to seek a second source of income.
- On average, just over half of journalists belong to a professional association.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED RISKS

- Globally, the most common threats journalists face are psychological and digital, with these threats more prevalent in the Global South than in the Global North.
- Frequently reported psychological threats include demeaning or hateful speech, public discrediting of their work, and attacks on personal morality.
- Impunity is the most significant concern for journalists, as those who harm media professionals often go unpunished. This issue is particularly acute in Latin America.
- Digital surveillance, reported by more than two in five journalists—especially in the Middle East and Asia—has emerged as a major threat, alongside the physical risks posed by working in environments where COVID-19 spread easily.
- Journalists rely primarily on colleagues (more than two-thirds) and their news organizations (more than half) for support.
- To protect themselves, most journalists pay greater attention to fact verification. However, in more than half of the countries surveyed, journalists reported practicing self-censorship. Except for Ukraine, all countries where a majority indicated self-censorship are located in the Global South.

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND PRESS FREEDOM

- European countries rank highest in perceived editorial autonomy and media freedom, while countries in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East show greater variability.
- In the Americas, Chile, Costa Rica, and Canada lead in both perceived autonomy and media freedom. In Asia, the Philippines and Nepal score highest in autonomy and perceived freedom, respectively.
- In the Middle East, Israel ranks highest in editorial autonomy and perceived media freedom, while Yemen ranks lowest across all surveyed countries. In Africa, South Africa leads the region on all measures.
- Although the survey data generally align with global indices, some discrepancies highlight the nuanced, context-dependent nature of media freedom. Countries such as Singapore, the Philippines, and Cuba report higher perceived autonomy than their global rankings suggest.
- Countries where journalists report lower perceptions of media freedom are also those where symbolic forms of aggression are more frequent, indicating a clear link between autonomy and safety.
- Overall, journalists often feel free in daily tasks, such as selecting stories, but recognize broader systemic constraints, including political influence, ownership pressures, and legal threats.

PERCEIVED INFLUENCES

- The results show that regional variation is evident in perceived influences on news production. Ethics is considered most influential in North Macedonia, Chile, and the Philippines. Media regulation is strongest in Zambia, North Macedonia, Sierra Leone, and South Africa, while ownership and profit expectations are seen as least influential in Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and parts of Europe.
- Overall, procedural and organizational influences are perceived as the most significant, with procedural factors leading globally despite declines in 34 countries—possibly due to digital workflows and online-first strategies.
- Economic pressures on journalism have intensified post-pandemic, although perceptions vary: one-third of countries report a decline in economic influence.
- Political influences are rising, particularly in 15 countries, reflecting growing concerns about external interference in journalistic work.
- Personal network influences remain largely stable but have declined in 20 countries, with Portugal showing the sharpest drop.
- Journalists working in conflict zones report strong influence from military and paramilitary actors, notably in Yemen, Ukraine, and Pakistan.

PERCEPTIONS OF JOURNALISTIC ROLES

- Country-level patterns reflect the influence of political and media systems on journalistic roles. Journalists in authoritarian regimes tend to value collaborative roles more, while those in transitional democracies emphasize interventionist functions.
- Overall, most journalists prioritize roles related to checking political accountability—such as countering disinformation and monitoring those in power—over roles focused on lifestyle coverage or supporting state policy.
- The monitorial role remains dominant globally, with journalists prioritizing informing the public and scrutinizing power, particularly in democratic countries such as Denmark, Canada, and Sweden.
- Collaborative roles are least valued overall, particularly in countries with strong media freedom, but they receive more support in authoritarian contexts and parts of sub-Saharan Africa.
- Interventionist roles gain traction in transitional or politically disrupted environments, including North Cyprus, North Macedonia, and Ukraine.
- Accommodative roles vary regionally, with higher support in Europe and the United States, though this pattern is inconsistent across countries.

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

- Journalists balance realism with interpretation, recognizing that facts require contextualization rather than representing objective reality in isolation.
- Subjectivity is widely acknowledged, with most journalists agreeing that personal beliefs inevitably influence reporting despite efforts to maintain neutrality.
- Verification and transparency remain core professional norms, with strong support for fact-checking and increasing endorsement of disclosing personal standpoints.
- Some journalists, particularly in conflict-affected or politically complex contexts, view truth as socially constructed, though global consensus on this perspective is limited.
- Journalism is adapting to epistemological diversity, integrating traditional norms with evolving commitments to community engagement and interpretive practices.
- Country-level patterns reveal regional nuances: journalists in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland emphasize nuanced views of truth, while those in Yemen, Ukraine, and Thailand focus more on how power shapes truth.

ETHICAL VIEWS AND PRACTICES

- Most journalists adopt an absolutist approach to ethics, viewing professional standards as universally applicable. Exceptionist, situationist, and subjectivist approaches follow in prevalence.
- Since the last wave, absolutist approaches are decreasing slightly, while support for exceptionist stances is increasing.
- High-income countries in the Global North lean more toward exceptionist ethics, whereas the Global South predominantly favors absolutist ethics.
- Regarding specific practices, journalists were most accepting of hidden recording devices, with around two-thirds deeming them justifiable; however, nearly all rejected accepting money from sources.
- Controversial practices linked to watchdog journalism received greater approval. For example, a majority supported using documents from powerful individuals without permission but were less accepting when ordinary citizens were involved.
- A significant divide emerged regarding promotional journalism disguised as news: most journalists in Europe and North America rejected it outright, while greater tolerance was observed in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, reflecting differing media business pressures.

TECHNOLOGY IN THE NEWSROOM

- The rapid digital shift in journalism has transformed newsroom workflows and created new demands on journalists, who are increasingly expected to master multimedia skills and work under accelerated production timelines.
- Social media has become central to journalistic routines: two-thirds of journalists use it to find sources and news leads, while more than half use it to distribute their stories.
- Despite its importance, social media also poses risks, exposing journalists to harassment and hate speech that can encourage self-censorship.
- One-third of journalists use audience analytics, though there are concerns that overreliance on these tools may push newsrooms to prioritize engagement over the public interest.
- Automation and personalization technologies remain limited: only about one in ten journalists worked in newsrooms that use automated "robot journalism" to generate content, and fewer than one in five use software for personalized news delivery. However, most survey responses were collected before the recent surge in generative AI, which is expected to drive rapid growth in these technologies.

MEDIA PLATFORMS, FORMATS & NEWS CULTURES

- Most journalists knew on which platforms their work would appear. Websites were the most common distribution channel, followed by social media and print, highlighting both the centrality of digital platforms and the continued relevance of traditional platforms.
- The use of messaging apps as a distribution channel has grown rapidly, though global differences are notable: usage is higher in Central and South America, as well as in some countries in Asia, Eastern Europe, and Africa. Radio remains important in Africa and Latin America due to its accessibility and low costs.
- In terms of production formats, text is by far the most widely used, followed by photography, video, and audio. Graphics and multimedia formats are less common but show greater variation across countries.
- Most journalists are employed by legacy media organizations, with newspapers accounting for the largest share, followed by television and radio.
- Only about one in five journalists work for internet-native outlets. These outlets are more common in countries with weaker press freedom, where online platforms may offer greater capacity to circumvent censorship.

WJS3 Methodology

CORINNA LAUERER & MIA GRÜNEWALD

At its core, the Worlds of Journalism Study (WJS) is a collaborative project by researchers from around the world who have jointly developed a shared conceptual and methodological framework aiming for the highest standards of scientific cooperation. These efforts of joint preparation and implementation of the data collection process are described in the field manual, which is freely available on the project website. Following these guidelines, each national team selected journalists as respondents and conducted a standardized survey before submitting the data to the WJS Center in Munich for evaluation and data consolidation.

INCLUSION OF COUNTRIES

The outcomes of comparative studies can vary considerably depending on the selection of countries (Geddes, 2003; Hanitzsch, 2009; Hantrais, 1999). WJS aims for global representation and is guided by the principle of inclusivity. Accordingly, it welcomes researchers from all countries in the world who are prepared to investigate the state of journalism in their respective contexts following our shared methodological guidelines.

As in other projects, scholars from established Global North democracies with greater access to resources were more likely to be able to participate than colleagues from the Global South. We actively reached out to researchers in countries that are underrepresented in comparative studies and invited collaborators from financially privileged countries to provide funding. In this way, we were able to fund research in eleven rarely studied countries, selected through a standardized application process. Yet, despite these efforts, the Global South regrettably remains underrepresented, particularly with regard to the African continent.

SELECTING JOURNALISTS

WJS strives to investigate samples of news outlets and journalists that represent or speak to their respective national population of journalists working in the country. The study focuses on surveying professional journalists, broadly defined as those who have some editorial responsibility for the content they produce (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986). Consequently, they had to be either involved in producing or editing journalistic content or hold a position in editorial supervision or coordination. Further, to qualify as professional journalists, individuals had to earn at least 50% of their income from paid work in journalism or spend at least 50% of their working time on journalistic activities.

The selection of journalists for the survey as specified in the Field Manual consisted of three steps: (1) estimating the population of journalists, (2) randomly (simple random sample) or systematically (systematic random sample) selecting news media organizations, and (3) randomly or systematically choosing journalists working in these news organizations.

Yet, despite the greatest efforts of the national teams, limited access to data and journalists, fast-changing or challenging conditions on the ground – such as surveillance of journalists by government authorities or an omnipresent atmosphere of physical violence – sometimes prevented researchers from fully adhering to our field manual. Whichever strategy the national teams used to deal with challenges, the key principle was that national samples of journalists should provide a reasonable representation of the respective national populations of journalists. When evaluating the data, the WJS Center has been rigid regarding the sample size: We only fully integrated national data sets into the global data set if they included a sufficient number of interviews to ensure, with 95% confidence, that the responses from the interviewed journalists closely reflected those we would have obtained if all journalists in the country had been surveyed (i.e., a maximum margin of error of 5.1%). It should be noted, however, that the margin-of-error criterion tends to favor countries with larger populations of journalists. Despite the national researchers' best efforts, nine countries did not succeed in reaching the minimal required sample size: Ecuador, Hong Kong, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Netherlands, Serbia, Singapore, Ukraine, and Yemen. These are still part of the global data set but have been flagged to encourage more cautious interpretation.

However, we allowed a certain degree of flexibility beyond strict probability sampling if the conditions on the ground clearly required it and asked the national research teams to document the deviations. Although we thrive towards the highest methodological standards, we aspire to balance methodological rigor and inclusivity (Lauerer, 2022). Excluding countries that face serious challenges – such as economic crises or political conflicts – and which therefore struggle to fully meet all standards would risk reinforcing the Global North bias in journalism studies.

SURVEYING JOURNALISTS

The current wave of data collection is the Worlds of Journalism Study 3 (WJS3), which contains survey data from 32,354 journalists from 75 countries (Lauerer et al., 2025). The WJS3 builds on the work of the first two waves of the study and is thematically focused on journalism, risk, and uncertainty.

Response rates (i.e., how many people answered a survey compared to how many were invited to take part) varied considerably among countries (see Table 1). In 33 countries, response rates of 50% or higher were achieved, while in 9 countries, the response rate was below 10%.

Researchers were allowed to use different interview modes (see Table 1). The majority of surveys (65.5%) were conducted online, followed by telephone (11.8%), face to face (8.5%), paper-pencil (6.0%), video call (5.2%), and mail or e-mail (3.0%).

All participating countries used a shared questionnaire, which included a wide range of both mandatory questions that all national teams had to include (e.g., labor conditions, safety of journalists, influences on news work, journalistic roles, and ethics) and optional questions (e.g., technical aspects of news work, income, cultural group, and

political orientation). The questionnaire is accessible via the WJS website.

Many of the questions included in WJS3 were already part of the Worlds of Journalism Study 2 (WJS2), which had been the first to thrive for nationally representative samples (Lauerer & Hanitzsch, 2019). This allows for comparisons over time on several aspects. WJS2, fielded between 2012 and 2016, included interviews with more than 27,500 journalists across 67 countries. Both the methodological documentation and the global dataset of WJS2 are freely available for download on the WJS website.

Survey data reflect what journalists recall and report (e.g., their professional background), as well as their perceptions (e.g., influences on news work) and beliefs (e.g., journalistic roles). Accordingly, their responses do not necessarily fully represent objective reality, but their professional perspectives (Hanitzsch et al., 2019).

Although a complex project like WJS cannot be free of limitations, it is fair to say that it is grounded in ambitious methodological standards and carried out by a thriving global network of experienced journalism scholars. WJS represents the most comprehensive collaborative undertaking in communication research to date.

TABLE 1: POPULATIONS, SAMPLES, AND DATA COLLECTION

Country	Population	Sample	Response Rate	Data Collection Period	Survey Method
Albania	1100	284	87%	12/2021-01/2022	mixed (FTF, phone, video call, paper-pencil, mail/email, online)
Argentina	13000	376		05/2022-02/2023	online
Australia	4900	371	8%	11/2021-01/2023	mixed (online, phone)
Austria	4200	856	21%	02/2023-12/2023	online
Belgium	4783	574	14%	11/2024-03/2025	mixed (online, phone, FTF, mail/email)
Bhutan	118	90	80%	10/2023-10/2023	mail/email
Bolivia	11463	401	92%	04/2022-06/2023	video call
Brazil	48273	602	3%	01/2023-05/2023	mixed (online, mail/email)
Bulgaria	3800	390	39%	12/2021-03/2022	mixed (online, phone, FTF)
Canada	5500	383	21%	06/2022-01/2024	mixed (video call, online, phone)
Chile	6000	398	69%	12/2021-01/2024	mixed (phone, video call, FTF)
China	194263	1167	71%	07/2023-01/2024	paper-pencil
Colombia	10000	379	42%	03/2022-02/2024	mixed (FTF, phone, video call, paper-pencil, online)
Costa Rica	470	229	49%	07/2023-09/2023	mixed (online, video call & mail/email, phone)
Croatia	1500	313	30%	02/2022-12/2023	online
Cuba	3000	343	56%	01/2023-12/2023	mixed (online, mail/email, video call, phone, FTF)
Czech Republic	2150	331	37%	07/2022-11/2023	mixed (video call, mail/email, phone, FTF, online)
Denmark	6802	472	4%	11/2022-02/2024	mixed (mail/email, online)
Ecuador	11000	299	7%	10/2022-09/2023	online
Egypt	8890	436	45%	02/2023-04/2024	mixed (online, phone, paper-pencil, FTF)
El Salvador	475	208	47%	07/2022-10/2024	mixed (video call, online, phone, FTF)
Estonia	1200	299	28%	12/2022-02/2023	online
Ethiopia	5659	363	64%	03/2020-10/2024	mixed (paper-pencil, FTF, online, phone)
Finland	8047	409	5%	05/2021-03/2022	online
Germany	39769	1221	16%	09/2022-02/2023	mixed (phone, online)
Hong Kong	2500	289	30%	09/2024-10/2024	online
Hungary	6000	190	13%	01/2023-12/2023	mixed (online, mail/email, FTF, phone)
Iceland	442	239	54%	03/2021-05/2021	online
India	450000	487	62%	09/2023-03/2024	mixed (FTF, online, mail/email, paper-pencil)
Indonesia	235000	720	100%	08/2023-10/2023	online
Ireland	3406	363	33%	06/2021-10/2021	online
Israel	2337	336	26%	07/2021-10/2023	online
Italy	35700	648	12%	08/2021-04/2022	online
Kazakhstan	17000	273	80%	06/2022-01/2024	online
Kosovo	375	230	66%	10/2022-03/2023	mixed (mail/email, paper-pencil, FTF, online, phone)
Latvia	880	464	59%	03/2021-05/2021	online
Lithuania	1220	302	54%	10/2022-02/2023	mixed (phone, video call, mail/email, FTF)
Mexico	29906	443	55%	11/2021-11/2022	mixed (video call, paper-pencil, FTF, phone)
Moldova	500	305	69%	11/2022-08/2023	mixed (online, paper-pencil, FTF)
Nepal	6000	398	57%	05/2023-20/2023	mixed (FTF, video call, phone, paper-pencil, online)
Netherlands	9000	253		06/2022-03/2023	online
New Zealand	1635	338	23%	12/2021-05/2022	online
North Cyprus	166	122	73%	06/2022-12/2023	mixed (online, phone, FTF)
North Macedonia	580	232	70%	09/2023-04/2024	face-to-face
Norway	6400	982	19%	05/2021-06/2021	online
Pakistan	5000	363	17%	11/2024-03/2025	online
Paraguay	1000	680	68%	01/2022-01/2023	mixed (phone, FTF)
Peru	2913	335	73%	09/2021-03/2024	mixed (phone, mail/email, online, FTF, paper-pencil)
Philippines	2500	341	43%	04/2023-10/2023	online
Poland	20000	449	28%	10/2023-12/2023	mixed (online, mail/email, paper-pencil, phone)
Portugal	5425	366	53%	03/2023-12/2023	mixed (phone, FTF, video call, mail/email)
Romania	5000	367	26%	10/2022-09/2023	online
Serbia	6000	268	34%	12/2022-06/2022	online
Seychelles	70	63	91%	05/2022-08/2023	mixed (paper-pencil, online)
Sierra Leone	550	258	92%	05/2023-11/2023	mixed (phone, FTF, paper-pencil, mail/email)
Singapore	1400	184	27%	09/2023-11/2023	online
Slovakia	1508	342	25%	09/2021-12/2023	online
Slovenia	1207	339	28%	03/2023-12/2023	online
South Africa	1440	305	23%	08/2023-12/2023	online
South Korea	15000	370	16%	09/2022-01/2023	online
Spain	18000	391	66%	03/2023-07/2023	mixed (phone, FTF, paper-pencil)
Sweden	12000	483	7%	11/2021-12/2021	online
Switzerland	10000	1179	25%	11/2022-05/2023	online
Taiwan	3000	439	80%	08/2023	online
Tanzania	6000	865	61%	11/2023-12/2023	online
Thailand	20000	384	75%	04/2023-11/2023	mixed (online, paper-pencil, phone, FTF, video call)
Turkey	7464	369	50%	08/2022-02/2024	online
UAE	1600	311	85%	12/2020-10/2022	online
UK	68279	1130	7%	09/2023-11/2023	online
Ukraine	35000	185	5%	08/2023-02/2024	online
USA	47000	1326	8%	06/2023-11/2023	online
Uzbekistan	11000	479	70%	06/2023-09/2023	mixed (online, FTF, paper-pencil)
Venezuela	8460	398	33%	02/2022-04/2023	mixed (online, phone)
Yemen	1400	283	98%	07/2022-02/2023	mixed (phone, FTF, paper-pencil, video call, online)
Zambia	1001	294	100%	09/2022-10/2022	mixed (FTF, phone)

Personal Backgrounds of Journalists

Folker Hanusch & Beate Josephi with
Neil Thurman, Imke Henkel, Mireya Márquez Ramírez, Jan Frederik Hovden, Igor Micevski, Incilay Cangöz & Jolan Roka

Age and gender present the face of journalism, while years of professional experience indicate journalists' commitment to their work. Since the previous wave of the Worlds of Journalism Study (WJS2), conditions for journalism and journalists have undergone significant shifts. Changes in information channels, alongside political and economic headwinds, have left visible marks on journalists' age and experience profiles, while other demographic characteristics, such as gender and education level, have remained relatively stable.

GENDER

Globally, journalism remains slightly male-dominated, with just under half of respondents across the 75 countries identifying as female (see Table 2). This represents only a modest increase in female participation compared to WJS2 (Josephi et al., 2019) and earlier studies, which consistently identified journalism as predominantly male (Weaver et al., 2012).

Female representation varies considerably across countries, reflecting diverse national contexts and levels of gender empowerment. Women constitute a majority of journalists in 30 of the 75 countries surveyed, exceeding 60% in 11 countries. Most of these are in Northern and Eastern Europe, including Moldova—where nearly three in four journalists are female—as well as Ukraine, Latvia, Romania, Croatia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, and Finland. Southeast Asian countries such as Singapore and Thailand also report high female representation.

Conversely, significant gender disparities persist in favor of men in 14 countries, particularly in South, Central, and East Asia, including India, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, South Korea, and Indonesia. Women are also clearly outnumbered in several Arab countries, such as Yemen, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). In Latin America, women generally remain a minority, except in Brazil, Venezuela, and Cuba.

Worldwide, 135 journalists (0.4%) identified as "other." North America (Cuba: 2.9%; USA: 2.7%; Canada: 1.9%) and Thailand (2.4%) reported the highest percentages for non-binary genders.

AGE AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

The global mean age of nearly 40 years indicates a relatively mature journalistic workforce, particularly compared to previous studies (Josephi & Oller, 2021). In the majority of the 54 countries participating in both WJS2 and WJS3, the journalistic workforce has aged (see Table 2). This trend may reflect less attractive and less secure job prospects in journalism, discouraging young people from entering the profession as their first career choice.

Pronounced differences remain, however. Countries with younger median ages are generally found in Asia, Africa, and parts of Eastern Europe. For example, the median age of journalists in Poland, Albania, Kosovo, and Moldova is 30 years or less. In contrast, journalists in the Global North—particularly in the United States, Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden), and Central Europe—tend to be substantially older. Many Latin American

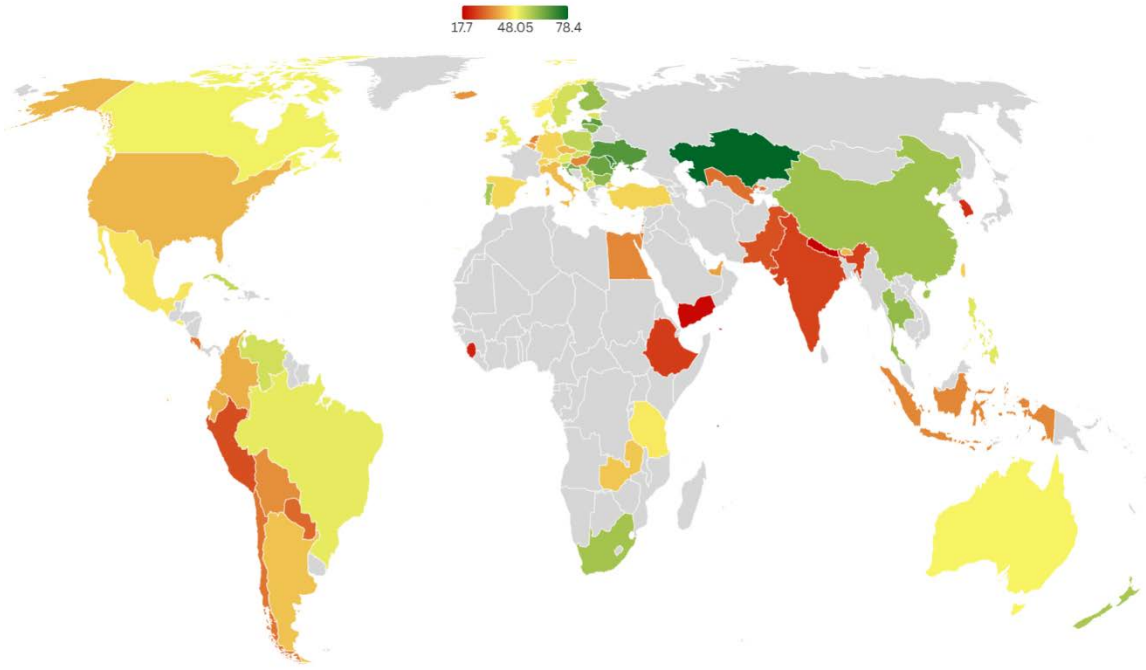


FIGURE 1: WOMEN JOURNALISTS AROUND THE WORLD
Percentages of women journalists

countries also report a workforce older than the global average.

Examining age alongside professional experience reveals further insights. The global median of 14 years of experience suggests that journalists typically enter the profession in their mid- to late twenties, likely after completing professional training, often at university. National differences are considerable, with median years of experience ranging from as little as three to 23 years.

Countries with younger workforces, such as Kazakhstan, Poland, and Zambia, also tend to have journalists with fewer years of professional experience. Low experience levels are also observed across parts of Eastern Europe, Africa, and South and Southeast Asia. Conversely, more experienced workforces—often indicative of more stable working conditions—are found in the Global North, including the Nordic countries, the United States, and Central Europe, as well as in some Latin American countries. Notably, mean experience figures are generally higher than medians, reflecting the presence of older journalists even in relatively young workforces.

EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Journalists' education has important implications for how they think about and practice their work (Becker et al., 1987). While journalism was traditionally learned on the job, the past four decades have seen a marked academization, with an increasing number of university-educated journalists (Josephi et al., 2019; Weaver & Willnat, 2012).

Our data show that a university degree is currently a near-universal prerequisite for journalism (see Table 2). In 55 of the 75 countries surveyed, at least eight out of ten journalists hold a university degree, rising to nine out of ten in 34 countries. University education is especially common in East and South Asia—including China, Taiwan, South Korea, India, Pakistan, and Kazakhstan—but is also prevalent across other geographically diverse regions. Countries in Central and Northern Europe, Oceania, and parts of Latin America have slightly lower proportions, though still more than seven out of ten journalists hold a university degree.

Only four countries—Seychelles, Zambia, Tanzania, and Sierra Leone—have fewer than two-thirds of journalists with a university education, likely reflecting limited access to higher education. A further relevant aspect of higher education in journalism is the extent to which journalists have completed a degree specifically in journalism, rather than in other disciplines, such as communication more broadly. Our data show that, globally, more than two-thirds of journalists hold a degree specifically in journalism. Historically, journalism education has followed a variety of approaches, including on-the-job training, university-based training, and combinations of both (Deuze, 2005). Even in countries where journalists were predominantly university-educated, the proportion who had studied journalism specifically varied considerably (Josephi et al., 2019; Weaver & Willnat, 2012). This gap, however, has now narrowed substantially.

Comparisons between WJS2 and WJS3 indicate growing prevalence of professional journalism training—whether through a university degree, apprenticeship, certificate, or short-term course. Three-quarters of journalists have received some form of professional training, demonstrating the growing institutionalization of the field. Levels are particularly low in the UAE, Indonesia, some other Southeast Asian countries, and parts of Eastern and Northern Europe. Training is highest in Latin American countries, as well as in Portugal, China, Germany, and Switzerland.

Regarding university degrees specifically in journalism, regional patterns are less apparent. Latin America and some Eastern European countries (e.g., Ukraine, Hungary, Albania, and Kosovo) place particular emphasis on journalism education. By contrast, journalism-specific degrees are rare in some African countries (Seychelles, Zambia, Sierra Leone), Nepal, and in Germany and Austria. In Germany, on-the-job training remains important, with nearly all correspondents reporting completion of cadet or apprenticeship programs.

CONCLUSION

WJS3 focused on examining the risks and uncertainties journalists face worldwide, with personal backgrounds—such as gender, age, and years in the profession—offering important insights. While the gradual feminization of journalism appears to continue, the age data suggest a more pressing concern: journalism may be becoming less attractive to new entrants. The steady influx of young reporters that once characterized the field (Josephi & Oller, 2021; Weaver, 1998) has diminished. Most journalists are college or university graduates, and three-quarters have received some form of professional training. This trend may reflect the broader academization of society, but it may also indicate that individuals with a strong commitment to journalism are the ones entering the profession. The rising average age and years of professional experience suggest that it is primarily those deeply committed to journalism who remain in the field.

TABLE 2: SHARE OF WOMEN JOURNALISTS, AGE, AND WORKING EXPERIENCE

Country	Women journalists		Average age (years)		Average working experience (years)		College/university degree		Journalism degree		Professional training / education in journalism
	WJS2	WJS3	WJS2	WJS3	WJS2	WJS3	WJS2	WJS3	WJS2	WJS3	WJS3
Albania	51.7%	55.8%	32.54	32.56	9.36	9.66	98.0%	96.8%	72.4%	89.7%	85.2%
Argentina	36.9%	41.8%	38.75	45.62	13.83	20.23	67.7%	76.6%	70.9%	75.0%	86.4%
Australia	55.5%	48.4%	37.74	46.37	14.45	21.14	82.1%	81.7%	70.2%	73.6%	77.9%
Austria	40.8%	50.7%	43.00	47.26	17.94	22.12	63.2%	70.0%	41.9%	44.6%	85.9%
Belgium	36.5%	38.2%	38.16	45.02	12.64	16.90	96.3%	97.7%	64.3%	78.4%	62.1%
Bhutan	50.0%	40.4%	27.89	34.01	4.57	10.09	98.9%	97.8%	23.0%	52.9%	57.3%
Bolivia		35.4%		43.25		16.80		78.1%		70.4%	91.0%
Brazil	49.2%	50.3%	34.68	40.28	11.61	15.87	88.8%	93.9%	90.8%	90.9%	97.4%
Bulgaria	64.6%	61.0%	41.74	49.81	19.36	22.84	96.6%	95.9%	60.1%	68.4%	59.6%
Canada	43.5%	49.1%	44.51	41.80	18.88	17.20	93.4%	93.1%	71.3%	83.6%	83.9%
Chile	43.2%	32.2%	32.99	41.11	8.46	15.80	96.5%	88.4%	86.5%	86.3%	91.5%
China	50.5%	59.1%	33.90	35.88	9.01	11.81	99.5%	99.1%	76.2%	59.9%	98.2%
Colombia	39.7%	39.3%	35.21	48.80	11.17	20.81	89.4%	91.0%	27.5%	87.6%	93.7%
Costa Rica		32.2%		39.08		15.00		90.2%		89.8%	92.1%
Croatia	53.9%	64.1%	44.69	43.97	19.73	18.78	71.7%	84.2%	48.4%	58.5%	73.9%
Cuba		54.8%		34.65		9.75		92.1%		80.4%	92.4%
Czech Republic	43.3%	40.5%	35.68	41.61	10.79	15.95	67.7%	66.5%	47.5%	66.0%	46.5%
Denmark	43.1%	49.5%	45.90	45.67	18.41	18.97	93.2%	86.5%	82.2%	87.7%	82.2%
Ecuador	33.2%	39.5%	35.22	35.80	10.04	11.13	80.1%	77.3%	77.2%	76.8%	87.3%
Egypt	36.5%	34.5%	36.73	40.62	12.00		97.3%	94.8%	71.8%	70.5%	85.0%
El Salvador	40.4%	46.8%	32.00	36.91		12.31	79.6%	92.1%	81.7%	89.1%	94.6%
Estonia	58.4%	51.9%	40.94	41.66	13.54	16.37	81.7%	81.4%	51.5%	80.6%	45.8%
Ethiopia	28.9%	25.1%	30.39	37.09	5.19	8.79	97.4%	92.4%	55.2%	64.0%	85.8%
Finland	55.2%	60.1%	43.40	47.38	17.27	20.42	74.6%	77.3%	55.6%	77.4%	54.0%
Germany	40.1%	44.0%	45.58	45.26	19.52	19.91	75.5%	70.2%	36.6%	33.1%	97.7%
Hong Kong	44.9%	57.4%	30.01	33.19	7.31		88.9%	92.1%	69.1%	88.7%	76.4%
Hungary	47.5%	34.2%	33.17	39.57	8.88	14.22	74.6%	86.8%	68.3%		57.4%
Iceland	35.0%	36.0%	39.58	43.99	11.99	15.12	68.4%	76.3%	24.9%	60.9%	43.7%
India	27.6%	25.8%	36.52	37.42	11.04	12.28	99.2%	96.7%	72.1%	85.0%	89.9%
Indonesia	21.5%	34.3%	34.43	34.56	8.48	8.22	87.0%	85.4%	33.9%	82.8%	30.5%
Ireland	41.9%	43.7%	39.18	43.51	15.25	18.67	85.6%	87.7%	73.0%	81.2%	70.0%
Israel	32.6%	32.8%	42.88	47.77	15.47	20.64	73.4%	76.7%	38.3%	50.9%	55.5%
Italy	42.4%	40.9%	42.98	46.88	16.84	19.82	72.9%	76.3%	50.1%	59.2%	55.7%
Kazakhstan		78.4%		29.37		6.53		96.7%		95.9%	84.6%
Kosovo	45.5%	56.4%	30.83	30.73	7.51	8.04	86.2%	98.1%	67.0%	79.9%	60.6%
Latvia	72.4%	67.4%	40.27	43.80	16.29	19.06	80.3%	80.8%	58.5%	78.1%	62.3%
Lithuania		62.3%		43.62		18.09		95.7%		79.6%	71.5%
Mexico	31.8%	45.8%	38.41	40.12		16.26	86.9%	90.7%	62.5%	80.7%	85.6%
Moldova	60.6%	72.8%	30.26	33.55	7.91	11.19	81.4%	70.5%	68.2%	75.1%	55.4%
Nepal		17.7%		38.02		10.68		74.2%		31.2%	76.8%
Netherlands	39.3%	33.8%	46.76	46.22	18.73	19.99	81.8%	86.8%	57.8%	80.6%	68.6%
New Zealand	50.4%	58.0%	43.66	45.92	17.00	18.69	85.1%	78.0%	65.3%	57.2%	81.8%
North Cyprus		45.0%		44.81		19.95		88.4%		76.1%	79.5%
North Macedonia		50.0%		43.95		19.08		87.9%		68.4%	81.0%
Norway	50.4%	46.7%	43.33	48.60	16.69	21.44	89.3%	89.1%	64.3%	79.1%	59.3%
Pakistan		27.8%		35.66		10.86		95.0%		81.9%	68.3%
Paraguay		30.7%		40.84		15.85		78.4%		64.6%	84.9%
Peru		27.3%		44.01		16.21		82.6%		76.3%	85.8%
Philippines	51.1%	51.1%	37.86	39.47	14.10	14.96	93.6%	94.2%	73.1%	82.9%	82.3%
Poland		55.3%		31.78		7.35		74.3%		70.6%	53.4%
Portugal	45.9%	57.7%	39.00	38.13	14.65	15.52	86.2%	97.0%	75.9%	77.7%	99.2%
Romania	62.5%	65.4%	30.65	36.91	7.81	14.41	70.7%	85.3%	64.7%	75.4%	69.8%
Serbia	53.8%	56.7%	40.92	41.56	15.99	16.35	68.6%	74.3%	48.5%	58.9%	77.2%
Seychelles		68.3%		38.08		11.45		37.7%		25.6%	63.9%
Sierra Leone	29.1%	21.8%	31.59	33.44	5.79	8.26	40.4%	54.6%	48.3%	14.5%	81.2%
Singapore	58.9%	68.3%	37.70	37.43	11.42	11.71	93.7%	96.7%	39.4%	76.0%	55.3%
Slovakia		53.5%		39.59		13.62		87.1%		81.8%	64.3%
Slovenia		58.3%		44.01		20.36		86.0%		80.9%	60.6%
South Africa	62.1%	58.6%	39.92	44.06	13.65	18.60	84.3%	82.7%	69.6%	81.7%	80.7%
South Korea	23.7%	23.5%	37.19	42.39	11.30		99.4%	98.1%	46.0%	60.6%	58.4%
Spain	41.0%	44.2%	39.23	42.06	15.91	17.41	96.7%	95.7%	88.6%	96.1%	91.6%
Sweden	45.9%	52.9%	51.32	49.10		22.55	60.5%	66.0%	68.0%	78.3%	72.7%
Switzerland	38.5%	43.6%	41.63	42.67	14.62	16.41	69.6%	80.0%	37.9%	48.5%	93.5%
Taiwan		43.2%		41.44		15.25		98.2%		71.9%	81.0%
Tanzania	45.2%	46.5%	27.63	31.81	6.80			48.8%	77.2%	46.1%	86.7%
Thailand	43.8%	60.5%	37.19	37.57	7.51	9.03	81.6%	88.5%	52.6%	79.6%	53.6%
Turkey	44.9%	43.9%	32.35	39.86	9.31	14.58	91.1%	93.1%	31.9%	82.7%	73.4%
UAE	50.2%	37.6%	37.73	43.75		18.21	91.8%	96.3%	72.6%	80.0%	15.8%
UK	45.2%	50.0%	43.17	45.09	18.53	19.86	86.3%	90.8%	41.2%	46.4%	66.1%
Ukraine		68.1%		39.05		15.29		96.8%		78.6%	68.1%
USA	27.1%	40.1%	46.91	48.14	22.74	20.84	93.7%	93.3%	78.9%	83.4%	80.7%
Uzbekistan		31.5%		36.25		11.41		92.7%		59.0%	80.4%
Venezuela		53.0%		44.36		17.64		98.2%		96.4%	97.2%
Yemen		18.7%		38.35		12.66		91.5%		87.1%	88.0%
Zambia		42.2%		32.72		7.23		40.4%		36.6%	89.5%
Average[1]	**44.6%**	**46.5%**	**38.07**	**40.75**	**12.95**	**15.50**	**83.7%**	**85.0%**	**60.2%**	**71.7%**	**74.4%**

[1]Average across the countries listed in the table (the original WJS2 sample included 67 countries)

Employment Conditions

JANARA NICOLETTI & DEIMANTAS JASTRAMSKIS
WITH JOSEF SEETHALER, ANNA VON GARMISSEN, VANESSA BRAVO, OLIVIER STANDAERT, GUÐBJÖRG HILDUR KOLBEINS & ANTONIJA ČUVALO

Journalists' working conditions have worsened dramatically worldwide over the past decades, even in regions with strong labor legislation and stable economies. Labor precarity is on the rise due to a variety of factors, with consequences extending beyond professional routines to affect journalists' health and the quality of information they produce (Gollmitzer, 2019; Nicoletti, 2020; O'Donnell & Zion, 2018; Örnebring, 2018; Rick & Hanitzsch, 2023; Steiner & Chadha, 2022).

The Worlds of Journalism Study (WJS) provides a global snapshot of journalists' working conditions, examining employment type, income, weekly working hours, workload, and membership in professional associations. Most respondents are qualified professionals with substantial experience and generally stable employment contracts. Nevertheless, a significant proportion are undercompensated and work long hours, often taking on additional activities to supplement their income. Indicators of job insecurity are evident across all regions analyzed, though to varying degrees.

TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT

Although digital intermediaries have weakened news organizations and their editorial offices economically (González-Tosat & Sádaba-Chalezquer, 2021; Nielsen & Ganter, 2018), most journalists in the 75 countries surveyed in the Worlds of Journalism Study 3 (WJS3) are employed full- or part-time, with freelancers accounting for an average of 13.9%. Part-time workers constitute a minority, averaging 12.4% globally, with the exception of Tanzania and Yemen. Comparisons between the Worlds of Journalism Study 2 (WJS2) and WJS3 for the 54 overlapping countries show an increase in freelancers by 4.6% and part-time workers by 2.9% (see Table 3).

Freelancing is most common in Latin America, averaging 22%, and exceeding 25% in five countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela. In Western Europe, freelancers represent an average of 16.5% of journalists, with notable variation: more than a quarter in the United Kingdom and the highest proportion globally in Italy (40.4%). In Australia and Canada, freelancers make up roughly 10%, while in the United States, only 2.6% of journalists are freelancers.

Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries have slightly fewer freelancers (14% on average), though Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia exceed 25%. Freelancing is less common in Africa and Asia, with no country on these continents exceeding the one-quarter mark. On average, 8% of journalists in Africa and 9% in Asia work as freelancers.

The highest proportion of part-time journalists, as well as freelancers, is found in Latin America (on average, 18%). In four countries in the region (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Peru), part-time journalists account for more than a quarter of the journalistic workforce. In Africa, the average share of part-time journalists is similar (16%), though this figure is heavily influenced by Tanzania, where more than half of all journalists work part-time.

In Asia, an average of 13% of journalists hold part-time positions, with Yemen standing out: three-quarters of its

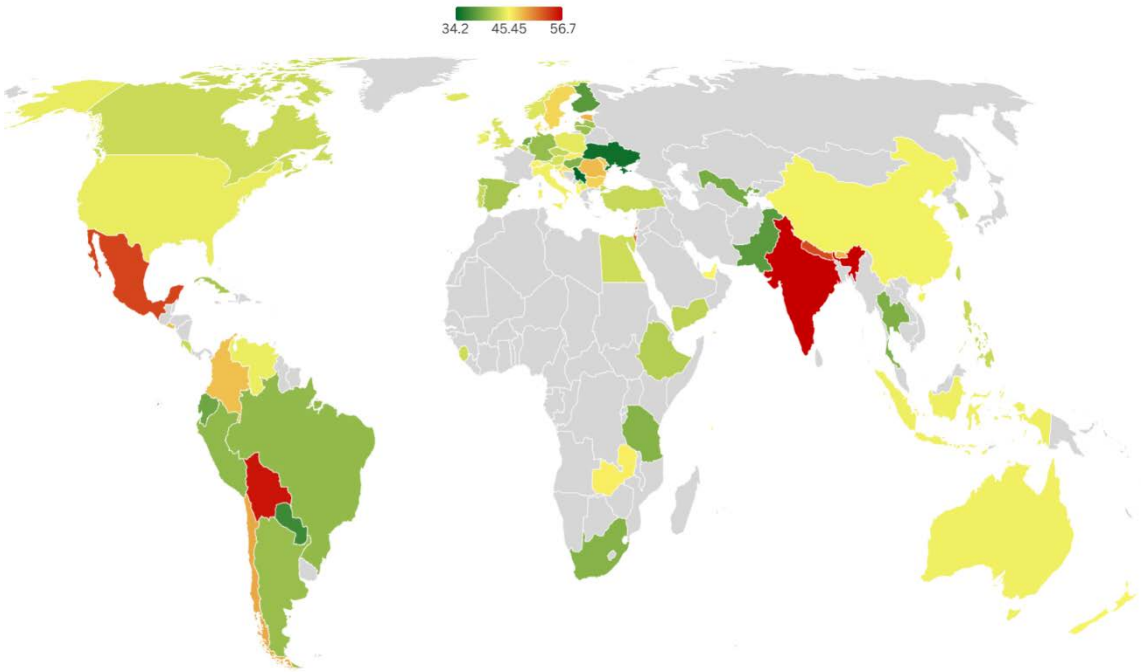


FIGURE 2: WORKLOAD OF FULL-TIME JOURNALISTS
Average working hours per week

journalists work part-time. In Western Europe, the average is slightly lower, at 12%, though Switzerland is an outlier, with nearly half of the surveyed journalists working part-time.

By contrast, CEE has relatively few part-time journalists, averaging 8%. Poland is an exception in this region, where almost one-third of journalists work part-time. In North America, the proportion is even smaller: only 2.1% of journalists in the United States and Canada work part-time.

WORKLOAD AND SPECIALIZATION

Globally, full-time journalists spend an average of 43.8 hours per week on work-related activities. In 10 countries, however, the weekly workload exceeds the 48-h limit established by the International Labour Organization for fair working time. These figures exclude additional hours spent on secondary roles beyond journalism, indicating that many journalists dedicate even more time to professional activities overall.

Regional differences in working hours are relatively minor compared to the variations between countries. Journalists in Bolivia, India, Israel, Mexico, and Nepal reported the highest workloads, with national averages exceeding 50 hours per week.

Even within the Global North, significant variation exists: journalists in Israel work roughly 14 hours more per week than their counterparts in Finland. These findings suggest that workloads are influenced not only by economic stability but also by local factors, such as labor laws, media systems, and levels of unionization.

Regarding specialization, 62.5% of respondents identified themselves as "generalists," covering a range of topics rather than focusing on a specific beat. Generalists are the majority in Zambia, Slovakia, Yemen, North Macedonia, Indonesia, and Paraguay. Conversely, only a small number of journalists in Hungary, Uzbekistan, Taiwan, Poland, and 13 other countries report covering multiple beats. The prevalence of generalists reflects editorial restructuring driven by shrinking markets, technological changes, and the reorganization of newsroom work.

MULTIPLE INCOME SOURCES

Globally, at least 36.4% of surveyed journalists reported a second source of income in addition to journalism. These supplementary earnings come from activities such as advertising, public relations, corporate communications, education, and governmental work. Journalists with multiple jobs are particularly prevalent in Sierra Leone, Tanzania, and Peru, while the lowest rates of secondary employment were observed in Portugal, followed by New Zealand, China, and Sweden.

The distribution of secondary income highlights the absence of consistent patterns across countries, similar to other employment indicators. Local factors—including labor regulations, economic stability, media systems, and media ownership structures—play key roles in shaping employment conditions and financial security.

Across all regions, Latin America stands out: in almost all countries surveyed (except Costa Rica), at least one-third of journalists reported a secondary source of income. In Peru, Cuba, Paraguay, Argentina, Chile, and Colombia, more than half of journalists reported additional employment. These figures reflect widespread precarity in the region, driven by highly concentrated media markets, economic instability, political parallelism, and social inequality (Márquez-Ramírez, Amado & Waisbord, 2021; Hughes & Prado, 2011)—conditions common to nearly all countries surveyed in Latin America.

MEMBERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

On average, just over half of journalists globally (51.2%) belong to a professional association. Compared to WJS2 data across 54 countries, this represents an increase of 4.3 percentage points (see Table 3).

On average, the majority (69%) of journalists belonging to professional organizations work in Western European countries. Canada and Australia lag slightly behind the Western European average, while in the United States, more than half of journalists hold membership in a professional association.

Journalists' professional associations are traditionally numerous and substantial in Scandinavian countries (Schroeder, 2020; Pies, 2024). Survey data show that in Norway, Denmark, and Sweden, all or almost all journalists are members of a trade association. By contrast, membership is lower in Southern Europe: slightly more than one-third of journalists in Spain and Italy are affiliated, and fewer than half in Portugal.

Journalists in CEE countries are least likely to belong to professional associations, averaging 36% across the region. The Czech Republic and Slovakia report the lowest percentages globally, with just over 10% membership. Compared to CEE, Latin American journalists are somewhat more active, averaging 44% membership. Meanwhile, in Asia and Africa, membership averages 53%, close to the global mean. Among the countries from these two continents, China and Nepal deviate the most, where 18.8% and 97.5% of journalists are members of a representative institution, respectively.

CONCLUSION

Most journalists in the countries surveyed hold full-time contracts, which provide better social protections than freelance or part-time work. At the same time, there is a clear trend toward increasing freelance and part-time employment over the past decade, driven, in part, by the platformization of news and the rise of global social networks.

Journalists' salaries often hover near national average wages, prompting many to seek additional paid work. Holding multiple jobs can increase the risk of conflicts of interest, particularly when supplementary work involves advertising or public relations.

The majority of journalists tend to be generalists rather than specialists, a pattern that appears to be growing. Membership in professional associations is also increasingly recognized as important; yet, on average, nearly half of the journalists surveyed do not consider it relevant. In authoritarian contexts—which have expanded since the previous WJS wave—joining a professional association can be especially challenging.

TABLE 3: EMPLOYMENT, WORKLOAD, SPECIALIZATION, MOONLIGHTING, AND UNION MEMBERSHIP

Country	Freelancers		Part-time workers		Average working hours[1]	Generalists		Additional jobs		Union members	
	WJS2	WJS3	WJS2	WJS3	WJS3	WJS2	WJS3	WJS2	WJS3	WJS2	WJS3
Albania	0.7%	2.6%	8.8%	5.3%	45.38	53.6%	45.4%	19.2%	31.2%	36.1%	32.5%
Argentina	10.5%	29.2%	31.2%	28.4%	41.13	61.5%	71.6%	41.3%	50.8%	36.2%	37.3%
Australia	3.0%	9.8%	7.9%	12.7%	44.99	67.1%	62.3%	18.7%	17.8%	47.8%	61.5%
Austria	8.3%	9.9%	14.4%	22.8%	43.77	38.9%	44.9%	20.2%	29.1%	49.4%	51.6%
Belgium	18.1%	18.1%	6.6%	11.1%	42.91	51.4%	56.3%	24.7%	16.3%	62.3%	88.0%
Bhutan	5.7%	0%	11.5%	3.7%	48.37	77.8%	52.8%	5.0%	55.6%	27.9%	
Bolivia		29.1%		14.8%	55.84		32.9%		46.6%		71.3%
Brazil	5.1%	18.4%	35.4%	31.8%	40.83	44.9%	67.9%	23.3%	34.1%	40.8%	39.0%
Bulgaria	10.3%	22.1%	4.2%	5.2%	47.06	56.3%	73.2%	34.2%	33.8%	38.8%	37.0%
Canada	17.0%	9.7%	3.4%	2.1%	43.32	49.7%	60.9%	29.3%	21.0%	56.4%	63.5%
Chile	9.6%	8.8%	10.0%	4.5%	49.02	59.4%	76.2%	28.5%	50.5%	23.7%	24.0%
China	0.3%	0.4%	1.2%	1.6%	45.11	55.2%	72.4%	8.3%	12.9%	14.5%	18.8%
Colombia	5.6%	39.3%	11.2%	7.2%	47.88	52.1%	72.8%	27.4%	50.1%	27.8%	42.0%
Costa Rica		21.2%		10.0%	43.21		63.8%		28.8%		43.2%
Croatia	15.0%	17.3%	1.3%	0%	46.39	85.3%	79.6%	21.0%	50.5%	46.5%	46.3%
Cuba		11.5%		11.7%	41.66		74.6%		64.7%		60.1%
Czech Republic	8.6%	23.2%	4.1%	10.7%	43.02	80.8%	52.9%	23.3%	46.2%	7.3%	11.5%
Denmark	20.5%	18.3%	5.4%	7.0%	46.32	59.2%	47.7%	17.5%	26.7%	100.0%	100.0%
Ecuador	4.9%	26.5%	23.6%	18.3%	39.21	55.9%	72.5%	32.0%	47.9%	22.1%	26.3%
Egypt	6.0%	7.0%	10.3%	7.3%	43.54	49.3%	47.0%	30.0%	52.2%	54.3%	72.9%
El Salvador	4.4%	8.9%	26.4%	12.0%	48.20	71.6%	68.8%	32.5%	37.1%	30.7%	26.7%
Estonia	1.5%	3.1%	4.8%	5.9%	48.50	75.9%	75.1%	18.0%	50.8%	24.3%	26.2%
Ethiopia	4.3%	9.8%	1.7%	8.1%	42.19	75.1%	73.2%	15.3%	40.2%	16.3%	39.0%
Finland	17.5%	22.9%	3.6%	7.8%	38.24	52.1%	60.1%	13.2%	30.6%	91.3%	86.5%
Germany	17.7%	19.7%	7.9%	9.0%	41.02	40.1%	34.4%	17.2%	18.0%	53.4%	55.1%
Hong Kong	0%	12.6%	8.3%	4.8%	45.51	48.9%	62.1%	13.9%	30.6%	19.4%	48.3%
Hungary	9.6%	25.5%	26.1%	20.0%	40.08	64.2%	6.3%	39.3%	52.6%	23.5%	30.7%
Iceland	5.3%	9.3%	4.8%	14.4%	44.29	70.4%	73.4%	23.2%	25.9%	82.7%	77.0%
India	2.1%	7.0%	10.0%	10.4%	56.69	57.9%	63.4%	11.6%	44.0%	36.3%	71.5%
Indonesia	17.2%	21.2%	8.2%	15.9%	44.85	66.6%	85.1%	37.5%	53.4%	69.5%	77.6%
Ireland	12.5%	13.3%	3.3%	5.8%	44.78	36.5%	65.3%	19.6%	28.4%	64.7%	61.4%
Israel	12.4%	17.4%	11.5%	7.7%	51.80	35.0%	67.0%	36.6%	46.4%	50.5%	44.9%
Italy	32.3%	40.4%	4.8%	5.4%	44.97	67.7%	59.7%	27.5%		100.0%	35.4%
Kazakhstan		8.6%		20.2%			34.4%		69.9%		41.5%
Kosovo	2.9%	5.1%	8.7%	8.7%	42.01	60.6%	50.4%	15.2%	26.6%	46.6%	62.6%
Latvia	8.2%	4.1%	4.4%	4.7%	41.30	74.7%	67.6%	17.4%	31.8%	26.6%	27.2%
Lithuania		20.7%		4.4%	41.06		65.6%		31.2%		29.2%
Mexico	5.6%	9.8%	10.4%	7.5%	53.62	78.5%	80.1%	34.8%	41.3%	25.2%	27.0%
Moldova	2.3%	11.7%	11.3%	19.4%	47.49	62.9%	80.3%	33.0%	67.1%	29.2%	30.2%
Nepal		2.6%		19.8%	53.33		76.6%		31.2%		97.5%
Netherlands	36.9%	24.5%	16.9%	22.0%	39.33	39.1%	66.7%	32.7%	21.6%	34.5%	62.7%
New Zealand	6.3%	11.2%	6.1%	7.2%	45.34	62.2%	65.3%	23.8%	12.7%	33.5%	43.6%
North Cyprus		6.1%		4.7%	38.77		76.5%		16.1%		96.7%
North Macedonia		0.9%		1.9%	44.61		85.8%		13.5%		72.0%
Norway	18.8%	8.0%	4.7%	5.8%	44.13	63.0%	66.2%	25.9%	13.6%	100.0%	100.0%
Pakistan		17.4%		14.8%	38.33		71.4%		63.9%		74.1%
Paraguay		24.2%		26.0%	37.03		84.1%		55.5%		47.6%
Peru		23.4%		40.5%	40.68		74.8%		83.9%		61.9%
Philippines	6.7%	17.1%	3.5%	11.3%	43.19	53.6%	60.8%	38.3%	53.3%	62.1%	71.6%
Poland		36.9%		32.5%	44.45		23.7%		49.7%		29.8%
Portugal	6.6%	10.1%	0.2%	0%	43.14	54.3%	79.5%	11.9%	1.6%	39.0%	46.7%
Romania	1.5%	8.4%	11.1%	4.3%	48.10	76.2%	47.7%	27.6%	47.1%	22.0%	24.5%
Serbia	6.1%	8.6%	2.5%	2.0%	34.16	64.6%	71.6%	17.9%	23.4%	43.0%	29.6%
Seychelles		9.7%		7.1%	45.38		79.0%		25.4%		40.0%
Sierra Leone	10.3%	5.4%	20.5%	19.0%	43.46	71.0%	32.6%	22.1%	92.9%	79.2%	71.1%
Singapore	1.1%	2.7%	0%	1.7%	44.32	55.8%	73.5%	3.2%	13.6%	34.0%	44.0%
Slovakia		34.0%		6.9%	45.95		87.4%		37.0%		12.3%
Slovenia		8.6%		1.7%	44.43		73.8%		21.9%		64.7%
South Africa	13.8%	10.2%	4.9%	4.0%	40.16	76.0%	73.0%	29.6%	30.3%	43.5%	44.6%
South Korea	0.3%	1.6%	2.8%	1.9%	43.26	9.0%	45.1%	4.5%	44.9%	87.8%	70.2%
Spain	9.2%	10.8%	5.1%	8.9%	41.65	67.2%	69.3%	12.8%	15.9%	41.1%	34.5%
Sweden	17.0%	18.9%	7.3%	8.5%	46.93	34.1%	68.2%	12.6%	13.0%	68.9%	99.4%
Switzerland	7.7%	4.5%	35.2%	48.6%	45.66	52.2%	52.0%	21.3%	24.6%	56.8%	50.9%
Taiwan		0.2%		0.9%	42.96		22.8%		49.2%		30.2%
Tanzania	11.0%	15.7%	16.2%	51.4%	40.18	89.3%	75.1%	31.6%	86.8%	89.3%	57.8%
Thailand	18.2%	16.5%	13.7%	9.2%	39.88	71.8%	71.6%	39.7%	15.1%	45.3%	28.3%
Turkey	6.4%	5.4%	1.1%	13.5%	43.12	50.5%	38.8%	11.6%	25.7%	31.6%	52.6%
UAE	1.8%	6.3%	8.6%	7.1%	45.36	47.6%	32.8%	16.5%	28.4%	43.5%	54.7%
UK	16.6%	29.0%	6.9%	8.4%	43.96	47.1%	42.7%	26.7%	24.7%	43.8%	52.6%
Ukraine		12.0%		7.1%	34.91		77.8%		47.6%		44.9%
USA	0.7%	2.6%	0.2%	2.1%	44.70	79.3%	67.3%	14.3%	20.5%	52.2%	55.2%
Uzbekistan		3.3%		10.2%	39.63		16.3%		24.0%		34.9%
Venezuela		33.4%		17.8%	44.80		79.1%		48.5%		68.8%
Yemen		19.9%		75.6%	42.66		86.9%		66.7%		46.4%
Zambia		1.0%		17.7%	45.79		91.0%		21.1%		47.3%
Average[2]	**9.3%**	**13.9%**	**9.5%**	**12.4%**	**43.82**	**59.3%**	**62.8%**	**22.9%**	**37.3%**	**46.9%**	**51.2%**

[1]Per week; full-time journalists only.
[2]Average across the countries listed in the table (the original WJS2 sample included 67 countries)

Safety and Work-related Risks

VERA SLAVTCHEVA-PETKOVA & JYOTIKA RAMAPRASAD
WITH MANASVI MAHESHWARI, AGNIESZKA WĘGLIŃSKA, KATARZYNA KONARSKA, ABIT HOXHA, JEANNINE RELLY, NINA SPRINGER, SONIA VIRGINIA MOREIRA, JAN VISNOVSKY & CELESTE GONZÁLEZ DE BUSTAMANTE

For the first time in its history, the Worlds of Journalism Study 3 (WJS3) included questions on journalists' safety, an issue that has recently garnered significant attention. The survey examined both safety threats directed at journalists and their concerns about these threats, as well as the support and protective measures journalists may avail when confronted with such risks. In particular, the questions addressed physical, psychological, digital, and financial threats; concerns about their physical and psychological well-being, of potentially losing their job in journalism; and the issue of impunity (that those who harm journalists go unpunished). By incorporating these questions, WJS3 recognized the multidimensional nature of safety, encompassing physical, psychological, digital, and financial aspects (Slavtcheva-Petkova et al., 2023). The questionnaire also included optional items to explore post-threat coping, including the support journalists receive and the protective measures they adopt. The inclusion of these questions underscores the fundamental role that journalists' safety plays in maintaining journalism as a functioning social institution.

JOURNALISTS' EXPERIENCE OF SAFETY THREATS

Referencing their past five years in the profession, journalists, including those in developed democracies, most commonly reported psychological threats. The three most prominent forms were demeaning or hateful speech, public discrediting of their work, and questioning of their personal morality (see Table 4). In over half of the countries surveyed, more than two-thirds of journalists reported experiencing hate speech. Country-level differences were notable: in Latin America; all but two countries exceeded the global average of journalists reporting such threats. New Zealand and Australia also reported some of the highest percentages worldwide, surpassed only by Yemen and South Korea. While responses regarding the questioning of their personal morality varied more widely, South Korea and New Zealand again ranked highest.

Following these psychological threats, the next most commonly reported threats were digital surveillance and the physical threat of being required to work in environments where COVID-19 spread easily—the latter being an optional question. In 21 countries, mostly in the Global South and a few in Central and Eastern Europe, more than half the journalists reported experiencing digital surveillance over the past five years. Surveillance was especially prevalent in the Middle East and Asia.

Another widespread safety concern was the digital threat of hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites. Regional differences were pronounced, with Global South countries reporting significantly higher prevalence than Global North countries, particularly in Europe.

JOURNALISTS' CONCERNS

Among the four types of concerns included in the questionnaire, the most significant globally was impunity—that is, the fear that those who harm journalists go unpunished (see Table 5). This was followed by concerns about

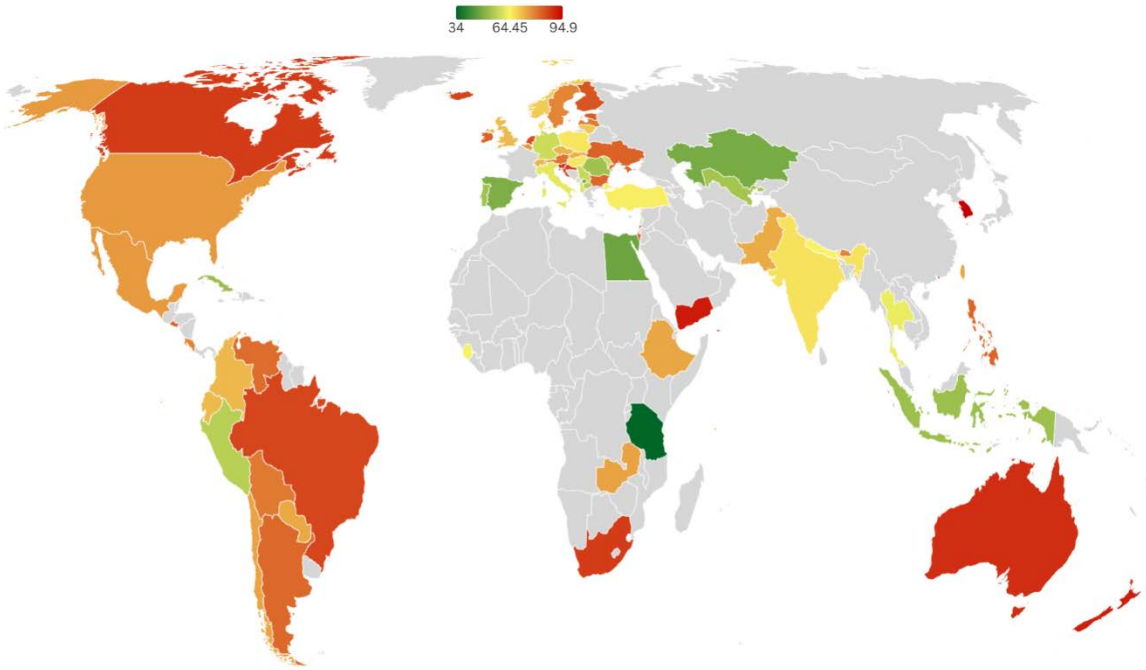


FIGURE 3: EXPERIENCE OF VERBAL ATTACKS
Percentages of journalists who experienced demeaning or hateful speech directed at them

emotional and mental well-being, physical well-being, and, finally, the possibility of losing one's job in journalism within the next 12 months.

Latin American journalists expressed the greatest concern regarding impunity, while journalists in Denmark and Norway reported the least worry about this issue. The highest levels of concern for emotional and mental well-being were also reported in Latin America, as well as in some countries in the Middle East, North Africa, and parts of Asia. Regarding physical well-being, the 10 countries with the most significant concerns were all located in the Global South. A similar pattern emerged for fear related to job loss within the next year; only Italy and Portugal from the Global North displayed comparable levels of concern.

PROTECTION AND PREVENTION

Only 47 countries included the optional questions regarding the types of support journalists received after experiencing a safety threat and the protective measures they had taken in the past five years (see Table 6). Some journalists indicated in open-ended responses that they did not seek help; therefore, these results should be interpreted as reflecting the sources of support when journalists actively sought it. On average, journalists relied most on their colleagues—both within their own news organization and in other outlets—and on their news organizations, including owners and top editors. Government authorities were the least consulted source of support, though Asian journalists reported slightly higher reliance on them compared to other regions.

The two most common protective measures adopted by journalists were increased attention to fact verification and modifications to work routines to reduce exposure to COVID-19—the latter reflecting the most tangible challenges experienced during the period of data collection (the rise of disinformation and the COVID-19 pandemic) (see Table 7). Latin American journalists were particularly attentive to fact-checking practices. The third most prevalent protective measure, reported by journalists in over half of the countries, was self-censorship. Except for Ukraine, all countries where more than half of the journalists practiced self-censorship were in the Global South. Notably, even in some European Union countries, levels of self-censorship were surprisingly high despite freedom of expression being enshrined as a fundamental right in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (Himma-Kadakas & Ivask, 2022). Seeking government protection was the least common measure, chosen by fewer than one in ten journalists—with higher prevalence largely restricted to countries in the Global South.

CONCLUSION

Overall, journalists worldwide face a range of safety threats, with psychological and digital threats being the most prevalent. Regional differences are pronounced: threats and related concerns are far more common among journalists in the Global South than in the Global North. These conditions underscore the importance of adopting protective strategies, particularly in contexts where trust in state protection is low. Fact verification and self-censorship are the most commonly reported protective measures, while government support is rarely sought. Although psychological and digital threats dominate globally, the intensity of these threats and the strategies used to mitigate them vary significantly across countries, reflecting persistent structural and systemic disparities in the media environment.

TABLE 4: EXPERIENCE OF THREATS TO SAFETY

Country	Demeaning or hateful speech	Public discrediting of work	Surveillance	Hacking / blocking of social media / websites	Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	Legal actions due to work	Stalking	Other threats or intimidation
Albania	61.5%	34.9%	56.4%	21.5%	2.5%	8.5%	8.9%	20.9%
Argentina	81.9%	75.5%	42.0%	31.1%	2.1%	23.1%	32.2%	42.3%
Australia	89.2%	78.7%	34.6%	32.1%	4.3%	35.7%	18.6%	54.3%
Austria	80.4%	68.0%	17.7%	13.1%	1.1%	16.1%	14.7%	42.2%
Belgium	76.6%	67.5%	37.2%	15.1%	2.4%	18.0%	19.2%	45.4%
Bhutan	78.9%	67.4%	67.8%	46.1%	10.1%	14.8%	32.6%	44.9%
Bolivia	79.8%	53.1%	58.2%	45.3%	5.7%	16.0%	47.6%	57.9%
Brazil	86.2%	82.9%	73.6%	28.4%	4.2%	24.3%	31.1%	55.6%
Bulgaria	82.3%	58.0%	37.3%	37.7%	1.8%	30.3%	19.2%	40.3%
Canada	87.5%	78.6%	31.9%	30.0%	3.7%	30.6%	13.4%	62.4%
Chile	74.6%	62.7%	24.9%	19.9%	4.8%	18.7%	25.0%	44.8%
Colombia	72.0%	57.3%	43.9%	39.7%	5.3%	26.9%	29.3%	44.3%
Costa Rica	78.6%	72.1%	32.8%	29.3%	2.2%	14.4%	31.4%	47.2%
Croatia	87.9%	73.5%	65.2%	33.2%	2.6%	32.6%	24.0%	61.7%
Cuba	52.8%	39.7%	39.7%	37.3%	7.0%	8.5%	25.4%	33.5%
Czech Republic	72.5%	78.5%	15.2%	15.7%	1.2%	22.1%	8.8%	42.3%
Denmark	67.2%	52.5%	9.6%	6.9%	0.9%	5.3%	4.9%	30.8%
Ecuador	71.9%	49.5%	41.1%	39.1%	7.7%	15.4%	31.1%	38.1%
Egypt	47.3%	42.9%	55.3%	33.7%	10.9%	17.9%	15.2%	24.0%
El Salvador	83.7%	76.9%	58.7%	43.8%	6.7%	17.8%	47.6%	56.3%
Estonia	83.6%	78.5%	31.9%	10.1%	1.3%	15.8%	16.1%	43.0%
Ethiopia	74.2%	67.4%	67.5%	49.3%	32.0%	35.1%	46.4%	56.9%
Finland	84.4%	79.5%	50.9%	9.8%	0.7%	6.1%	11.7%	35.5%
Germany	58.9%	62.1%	4.8%	6.9%	0.4%	9.5%	9.4%	26.5%
Hong Kong	83.0%	77.5%	61.5%	35.6%	9.3%	26.0%	22.6%	39.4%
Hungary	66.3%	60.5%	44.7%	38.9%	3.7%	24.7%	14.7%	37.4%
Iceland	86.5%	78.9%	46.4%	5.9%	0.4%	14.8%	16.0%	47.3%
India	66.9%	59.2%	55.2%	40.3%	26.4%	31.4%	38.4%	45.8%
Indonesia	53.1%	60.0%	17.4%	27.6%	6.3%	7.2%	40.3%	55.6%
Ireland	82.9%	78.5%	24.9%	21.5%	0.8%	34.1%	10.9%	42.7%
Israel	83.8%	77.7%	48.2%	20.7%	1.8%	49.6%	34.3%	57.4%
Italy	61.6%	61.3%	28.7%	13.5%	1.6%	29.7%	15.0%	38.3%
Kazakhstan	48.7%	46.9%	48.7%	39.2%	36.3%	34.4%	33.0%	35.2%
Kosovo	48.0%	32.9%	26.2%	25.4%	10.1%	15.0%	3.5%	25.9%
Latvia	79.5%	73.2%	23.2%	11.7%	0.6%	22.2%	13.9%	37.2%
Lithuania	70.2%	56.3%	9.3%	12.6%	0.7%	25.5%	12.9%	40.1%
Mexico	75.8%	65.6%	49.4%	38.1%	7.2%	17.2%	38.6%	46.6%
Moldova	58.4%	50.2%	46.9%	28.9%	3.0%	14.4%	18.4%	36.4%
Nepal	64.9%	55.4%	38.9%	38.5%	4.5%	6.5%	33.3%	40.8%
Netherlands	85.8%	84.6%	47.4%	25.0%	4.7%	24.1%	14.3%	48.6%
New Zealand	91.1%	83.7%	33.0%	28.1%	4.4%	37.9%	22.8%	61.5%
North Cyprus	72.1%	50.0%	35.2%	30.6%	14.8%	32.0%	52.1%	50.4%
North Macedonia	56.0%	44.8	16.7%	15.5%	0.9%	8.2%	8.6%	26.7%
Norway	69.6%	62.3%	17.4%	12.8%	1.7%	6.3%	5.3%	25.5%
Pakistan	73.6%	73.3%	76.9%	63.6%	35.8%	40.5%	59.0%	58.7%
Paraguay	74.0%	58.5%	31.3%	26.5%	3.8%	16.2%	28.8%	46.3%
Peru	56.5%	39.7%	33.9%	48.7%	4.8%	34.9%	27.2%	31.9%
Philippines	82.4%	76.0%	59.1%	46.3%	7.9%	26.1%	44.6%	53.4%
Poland	66.4%	58.2%	39.9%	45.3%	12.5%	27.4%	32.2%	37.9%
Portugal	53.3%	52.2%	4.4%	8.2%	0.5%	1.4%	1.9%	30.6%
Romania	53.4%	45.8%	44.1%	26.4%	3.0%	13.4%	21.5%	30.8%
Serbia	58.2%	41.8%	54.1%	19.0%	1.1%	23.9%	13.1%	40.7%
Seychelles	71.4%	57.1%	44.4%	27.0%	3.2%	12.7%	15.9%	28.6%
Sierra Leone	63.9%	40.9%	57.5%	33.2%	15.3%	15.9%	27.9%	48.0%
Singapore	75.0%	70.7%	46.2%	18.6%	2.7%	16.3%	11.4%	31.0%
Slovakia	72.8%	57.0%	16.4%	13.5%	2.0%	17.0%	15.8%	36.8%
Slovenia	88.8%	76.5%	66.0%	18.5%	0.6%	17.8%	11.2%	48.2%
South Africa	87.5%	77.0%	49.2%	42.6%	5.0%	37.5%	24.7%	56.9%
South Korea	94.9%	93.5%	79.5%	45.7%	12.7%	40.5%	19.7%	49.5%
Spain	49.4%	52.4%	34.0%	13.6%	0.8%	18.9%	21.1%	36.9%
Sweden	78.3%	75.1%	20.6%	17.2%	0.6%	2.7%	15.5%	33.7%
Switzerland	72.5%	66.8%	18.5%	10.3%	1.1%	17.8%	13.0%	36.7%
Taiwan	74.4%	68.9%	32.6%	17.0%	2.3%	31.6%	7.8%	34.3%
Tanzania	34.0%	38.0%	35.1%	25.3%	14.2%	16.8%	29.1%	28.7%
Thailand	62.5%	49.7%	38.9%	41.1%	13.3%	17.7%	19.5%	29.7%
Turkey	65.6%	43.9%	46.6%	20.1%	14.1%	23.3%	51.8%	45.3%
UAE		76.8%		77.3%		77.8%		
UK	71.8%	65.9%	20.9%	25.4%	2.4%	16.8%	8.7%	35.3%
Ukraine	82.7%	71.4%	25.4%	49.7%	5.4%	23.8%	17.3%	50.3%
USA	75.8%	65.8%	18.7%	28.5%	2.3%	22.8%	18.1%	55.3%
Uzbekistan	54.1%	74.1%	68.7%	69.3%	57.0%	62.6%	66.2%	66.6%
Venezuela	81.4%	65.8%	60.1%	56.0%	13.1%	20.1%	47.0%	57.8%
Yemen	91.5%	82.0%	91.2%	62.9%	55.5%	53.7%	55.8%	57.6%
Zambia	74.7%	60.1%	57.3%	31.6%	18.4%	18.7%	40.9%	58.2%
Average	**72.0%**	**63.4%**	**40.9%**	**29.9%**	**7.8%**	**22.9%**	**24.4%**	**43.1%**

Percentage of respondents saying "very often", "often", "sometimes" or "rarely." Question: “In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?”

TABLE 4: EXPERIENCE OF THREATS TO SAFETY (CONTINUED)

Country	Sexual assault or harassment	Other physical attacks	Coercion	Questioning of one's morality	Others using byline for fabricated stories	Others disseminating personal information	Workplace bullying
Albania	8.3%	11.8%	4.7%	18.5%	17.1%	26.2%	25.5%
Argentina	16.0%	10.6%	30.1%	63.0%	18.6%	31.6%	32.4%
Australia	17.2%	10.0%	23.7%	67.8%	15.9%	23.7%	45.0%
Austria	14.3%	4.9%				24.7%	30.5%
Belgium	6.6%	11.9%	13.6%	55.3%	7.4%	16.0%	14.0%
Bhutan	10.1%	6.7%					
Bolivia	10.0%	34.7%	30.8%	56.0%	31.8%	42.1%	32.4%
Brazil	25.2%	20.1%	42.4%	69.3%	22.3%	23.8%	41.5%
Bulgaria	7.7%	8.9%	21.6%	27.5%	23.8%	31.4%	14.5%
Canada	17.2%	12.3%					33.7%
Chile	10.6%	17.9%		53.1%		24.4%	23.5%
Colombia	13.2%	16.9%	32.0%	42.9%	17.5%	29.4%	37.8%
Costa Rica	8.7%	12.7%	16.6%	58.1%	18.3%	29.3%	19.2%
Croatia	20.1%	16.0%	10.9%	57.5%	48.2%	31.6%	33.9%
Cuba	10.2%	4.7%	25.1%	45.8%	11.1%	18.4%	16.6%
Czech Republic	9.7%	6.6%	50.2%	59.7%	7.2%	23.2%	16.9%
Denmark	4.8%	2.6%					
Ecuador	15.7%	21.7%	18.1%	46.8%	21.7%	35.5%	29.8%
Egypt	13.1%	13.6%	21.4%	26.9%	19.2%	23.6%	31.1%
El Salvador	28.4%	20.2%	22.1%	61.1%	14.9%	29.3%	31.7%
Estonia	3.0%	3.7%				22.8%	19.8%
Ethiopia	20.3%	27.6%					
Finland	10.0%	4.4%	53.3%	59.7%	14.7%	8.3%	19.8%
Germany	6.8%	5.2%				16.3%	15.7%
Hong Kong	11.4%	14.2%	18.3%	60.2%	14.2%	38.4%	29.4%
Hungary	4.7%	3.7%	14.7%	50.0%	26.8%	22.6%	6.3%
Iceland	12.7%	3.8%	24.3%	61.0%	9.7%	25.4%	14.8%
India	26.2%	29.8%	31.0%	46.1%	45.9%	43.8%	43.1%
Indonesia	15.4%	32.9%	22.1%	40.3%	27.4%	35.7%	25.1%
Ireland	9.4%	7.2%		63.9%		32.5%	28.7%
Israel	12.2%	13.4%					
Italy	7.1%	8.7%					
Kazakhstan	36.3%	29.3%	36.2%	43.5%	39.0%	37.7%	36.2%
Kosovo	9.2%	11.4%	3.1%	18.0%	8.8%	12.3%	1.8%
Latvia	5.2%	3.1%	4.8%	59.7%	24.1%	22.0%	13.2%
Lithuania	7.6%	5.3%	12.3%	48.3%	18.3%	20.2%	14.6%
Mexico	17.2%	26.9%	27.8%	52.7%	23.8%	32.8%	36.1%
Moldova	5.6%	10.2%	32.5%	30.5%	13.4%	16.4%	16.7%
Nepal	5.5%	6.0%	7.5%	8.3%	20.4%	23.6%	13.1%
Netherlands	5.2%	14.3%			10.3%	21.7%	15.8%
New Zealand	20.4%	14.5%	23.1%	79.9%	10.7%	29.0%	44.4%
North Cyprus	9.1%	19.2%	39.3%	32.2%	10.7%	15.7%	24.4%
North Macedonia	2.2%	6.0%	4.3%	24.1%	9.1%	8.2%	22.8%
Norway	9.1%	3.4%	8.1%	42.4%	4.4%	12.4%	20.5%
Pakistan	34.2%	45.5%	46.3%	62.8%	63.9%	64.2%	60.6%
Paraguay	14.1%	18.8%	20.0%	53.4%	27.6%	33.6%	21.2%
Peru	5.8%	14.5%	11.2%	23.1%	14.1%	20.1%	13.0%
Philippines	20.3%	13.0%			36.9%	46.3%	39.1%
Poland	9.6%	17.9%	29.4%	48.7%	32.4%	38.4%	20.3%
Portugal	3.0%	2.5%	6.6%	5.1%	0%	1.2%	1.6%
Romania	7.4%	6.8%	32.7%	33.2%	15.8%	17.4%	18.3%
Serbia	9.0%	7.5%	10.1%	40.8%	11.9%	23.9%	27.2%
Seychelles	11.1%	3.2%	12.7%	34.9%	22.2%	19.0%	17.5%
Sierra Leone	11.3%	35.5%	27.7%	32.7%	36.9%	40.6%	35.4%
Singapore	14.1%	3.3%			19.6%	29.3%	29.3%
Slovakia	7.3%	5.6%	38.9%	50.3%	7.9%	15.5%	17.5%
Slovenia	7.1%	5.1%	18.5%	62.8%	7.7%	28.7%	30.0%
South Africa	16.1%	16.8%	26.4%	65.3%	18.4%	38.5%	45.2%
South Korea	25.9%	25.7%	70.0%	73.8%	50.5%	58.6%	34.9%
Spain	4.9%	3.6%	38.6%				23.8%
Sweden	9.8%	6.0%				32.2%	21.2%
Switzerland	9.8%	4.5%				16.8%	22.2%
Taiwan	14.4%	13.7%	26.5%	25.2%	13.9%	15.6%	24.5%
Tanzania	26.8%	22.4%					
Thailand	15.1%	16.1%	26.6%	18.5%	22.2%	26.0%	30.2%
Turkey	15.2%	29.0%	50.4%	45.5%	50.9%	27.6%	26.6%
UAE				73.6%	39.4%	57.9%	
UK	12.9%	4.7%					
Ukraine	7.0%	13.0%	24.3%	65.9%	26.5%	38.9%	24.9%
USA	15.2%	8.9%	20.2%	65.9%	17.1%	32.2%	33.1%
Uzbekistan	51.1%	64.3%	63.9%	64.1%	53.4%	63.3%	64.5%
Venezuela	10.8%	28.1%	41.2%	49.7%	21.9%	26.4%	25.9%
Yemen	44.5%	52.3%	53.0%	49.8%	49.1%	50.2%	59.0%
Zambia	19.2%	30.0%	31.1%	42.2%	33.1%	35.5%	29.9%
Average	**13.6%**	**14.9%**	**26.4%**	**47.7%**	**22.8%**	**28.6%**	**26.8%**

Percentage of respondents saying "very often", "often", "sometimes" or "rarely." Question: “In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?”

TABLE 5: WORK-RELATED CONCERNS (MEAN SCORES)

Country	Losing job within the next 12 months	Physical well-being	Emotional and mental wellbeing	Concerned that those who harm journalists go unpunished
Albania	2.37	2.95	3.63	3.79
Argentina	2.99	2.21	3.63	4.25
Australia	2.52	2.22	3.03	3.27
Austria	2.04	2.55	2.69	2.96
Belgium	2.07	2.35	2.93	2.93
Bhutan	2.37	3.09	3.47	3.15
Bolivia	3.16	3.30	3.62	4.57
Brazil	3.27	3.25	4.16	4.65
Bulgaria	2.29	2.69	3.03	4.36
Canada	2.81	2.55	3.47	3.88
Chile	2.80	2.17	3.58	4.19
China	2.78	3.84	3.77	3.25
Colombia	3.27	3.04	3.77	4.53
Costa Rica	3.05	2.62	3.67	4.28
Croatia	2.17	1.97	3.03	3.93
Cuba	2.29	2.08	3.18	3.73
Czech Republic	2.01	1.38	2.26	2.94
Denmark	2.68	2.25	2.61	2.15
Ecuador	3.42	3.51	3.83	4.18
Egypt	3.40	2.74	3.18	3.16
El Salvador	3.21	3.77	4.18	4.64
Estonia	2.16	1.88	2.83	2.71
Ethiopia	2.64	2.91	3.12	3.87
Finland	1.98	2.37	2.91	3.49
Germany	1.89	2.45	2.29	2.96
Hong Kong	3.01	2.91	3.69	4.33
Hungary	2.61	2.54	3.09	3.31
Iceland	2.54	2.72	2.81	2.93
India	2.91	3.10	3.19	3.36
Indonesia	2.78	3.34	3.13	4.11
Ireland	2.48	2.41	3.09	3.35
Israel	2.71	2.74	2.88	3.98
Italy	3.17	3.08	3.40	4.08
Kazakhstan	2.43	2.81	2.77	3.38
Kosovo	2.41	2.54	3.07	4.04
Latvia	2.44	3.05	3.42	3.51
Lithuania	2.10	2.41	2.52	2.68
Mexico	3.29	3.36	3.98	4.83
Moldova	2.66	3.18	3.63	3.96
Nepal	2.35	1.82	2.61	2.64
Netherlands	1.80	2.12	2.47	3.50
New Zealand	2.52	2.46	3.15	3.37
North Cyprus	2.49	3.22	3.39	3.83
North Macedonia	1.84	2.42	2.75	4.58
Norway	1.69	1.96	2.20	2.59
Paraguay	2.73	2.75	3.52	4.56
Peru	3.16	3.80	4.02	4.52
Philippines	2.68	3.65	3.83	4.61
Poland	2.19	2.53	2.94	3.27
Portugal	3.01	1.33	3.70	4.13
Romania	2.00	2.91	3.06	3.71
Serbia	2.60	2.94	3.18	4.37
Seychelles	1.87	2.50	3.19	2.94
Sierra Leone	2.34	3.52	3.39	3.66
Singapore	2.24	2.77	3.40	2.90
Slovakia	2.30	2.06	2.66	3.75
Slovenia	2.58	3.39	3.55	4.26
South Africa	3.10	2.88	3.58	4.05
South Korea	2.04	3.39	3.35	3.25
Spain	2.21	1.34	2.99	3.85
Sweden	2.04	2.36	2.60	3.48
Switzerland	1.97	2.27	2.76	2.70
Taiwan	2.37	3.48	3.28	3.27
Tanzania	2.11	2.04	2.13	2.92
Thailand	3.03	3.42	3.28	3.47
Turkey	3.67	3.60	3.78	4.29
UAE	2.73	2.83	2.62	2.98
UK	2.76	2.44	3.11	3.52
Ukraine	2.95	3.45	3.88	4.16
USA	2.51	2.30	3.13	3.63
Uzbekistan	2.30	2.24	2.16	2.82
Venezuela	3.36	3.54	3.97	4.61
Yemen	4.23	4.09	4.10	4.39
Zambia	2.48	3.25	3.41	4.29
Average	**2.59**	**2.75**	**3.21**	**3.68**

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.

TABLE 6: SUPPORT RECEIVED

Country	News organization (owners and top editors)	Other journalists	Journalists' organizations	NGOs or human rights organizations that support journalists	Government authorities
Albania	74.7%	84.7%	23.1%	15.6%	7.9%
Argentina	62.6%	79.8%	36.9%	19.4%	12.3%
Belgium	71.9%	81.3%	39.0%	9.4%	9.6%
Bolivia	82.6%	91.8%	65.1%	30.0%	10.4%
Brazil	54.1%	80.0%	30.2%	12.7%	9.5%
Bulgaria	70.2%	71.2%	25.4%	18.2%	11.2%
Colombia	58.2%	70.5%	35.5%	25.9%	20.7%
Costa Rica	65.5%	68.0%	18.3%	10.2%	8.6%
Czech Republic	63.0%	85.2%	4.6%	4.3%	1.9%
Ecuador	68.1%	77.0%	33.7%	26.3%	16.7%
Egypt	53.5%	65.7%	37.3%	19.3%	22.1%
El Salvador	68.9%	75.3%	52.1%	35.8%	2.6%
Finland	54.9%	65.1%	17.9%	4.3%	7.2%
Hong Kong	55.0%	78.1%	44.6%	24.4%	4.3%
Iceland	73.2%	81.8%	46.7%	18.9%	3.2%
India	34.9%	26.8%	41.7%	44.4%	49.7%
Indonesia	77.3%	73.7%	77.3%	40.3%	23.6%
Kazakhstan	49.5%	93.5%	9.5%	16.7%	4.9%
Kosovo	75.0%	65.2%	52.8%	47.6%	27.4%
Latvia	72.5%	73.5%	16.5%	8.7%	9.0%
Lithuania	44.8%	50.6%	6.3%	4.0%	8.3%
Mexico	65.1%	79.8%	30.2%	20.6%	13.3%
Moldova	62.4%	56.4%	38.0%	33.3%	13.9%
Nepal	54.2%	63.2%	50.8%	18.7%	8.4%
North Cyprus	10.1%	9.2%	15.6%	5.5%	2.8%
North Macedonia	60.3%	64.5%	27.3%	10.7%	14.9%
Pakistan	66.4%	71.6%	58.1%	49.9%	36.7%
Paraguay	24.3%	96.6%	0%	0%	0%
Peru	73.0%	72.6%	52.1%	20.3%	7.9%
Poland	60.7%	74.0%	44.4%	32.5%	22.2%
Portugal	14.0%	17.8%	8.3%	1.9%	1.3%
Romania	52.6%	47.6%	16.3%	12.7%	6.0%
Serbia	63.7%	59.9%	31.8%	30.0%	8.4%
Seychelles	32.6%	51.2%	23.3%	9.3%	4.7%
Sierra Leone	38.3%	35.0%	52.1%	65.1%	73.6%
Slovakia	74.4%	71.7%	13.7%	17.1%	3.1%
Slovenia	60.1%	77.9%	40.6%	13.3%	4.6%
South Africa	73.9%	87.2%	35.3%	24.5%	9.1%
South Korea	52.4%	64.6%	26.7%	13.4%	7.8%
Sweden	62.9%	71.4%	28.0%	3.5%	8.2%
Taiwan	70.9%	78.4%	25.1%	16.5%	14.4%
Thailand	62.8%	77.6%	37.5%	27.1%	32.1%
Turkey	45.0%	65.8%	46.8%	11.7%	1.3%
Ukraine	80.1%	89.0%	41.3%	52.6%	16.6%
USA	74.0%	83.8%	28.1%	9.2%	14.7%
Uzbekistan	32.0%	33.9%	25.1%	23.0%	29.7%
Venezuela	75.8%	85.4%	61.0%	52.5%	8.5%
Zambia	54.6%	53.9%	37.2%	25.3%	19.3%
Average	**58.9%**	**68.3%**	**33.5%**	**21.6%**	**13.6%**

Percentage of respondents saying "Yes, received support." Question: "When you experienced, to any extent, these actions, did you receive support (for example, legal or emotional support, time off work) from any of the following sources?"

TABLE 7: MEASURES TAKEN FOR PROTECTION

Country	Taken safety training / used safety equipment and protocols	Sought government protection	Sought legal protection	Engaged in self-censorship	Changed news beats or jobs at news organization	Changed news organization	Changed personal or daily routines	Moved to another place
Albania	7.5%	1.6%	5.4%	25.8%	17.4%	17.8%	24.7%	5.4%
Argentina	28.5%	5.9%	14.6%	42.3%	35.6%	13.0%	23.9%	3.2%
Belgium	11.4%	4.4%	11.0%	17.7%	9.2%	6.8%	17.7%	2.6%
Bolivia	71.3%	24.6%	24.6%	32.7%	22.8%	8.8%	48.7%	4.5%
Brazil	36.9%	3.9%	4.5%	54.5%	17.5%	21.5%	42.5%	10.2%
Bulgaria	33.7%	3.7%	30.7%	28.3%	10.4%	14.5%	36.5%	3.9%
Chile			9.3%	31.5%	27.5%	12.9%	45.2%	
Colombia	43.0%	13.7%	16.6%	45.9%	31.1%	16.1%	37.2%	13.2%
Costa Rica	20.6%	4.0%	8.5%	30.5%	20.2%	6.3%	24.7%	5.4%
Croatia	16.5%	5.2%	19.7%	37.9%	19.1%	14.8%	30.0%	6.5%
Czech Republic	13.4%	0%	14.8%	23.7%	7.9%	7.5%	14.8%	3.3%
Ecuador	55.2%	16.7%	16.4%	33.4%	38.8%	20.7%	50.5%	14.4%
Egypt	33.9%	6.4%	13.7%	53.7%	18.8%	17.2%	40.1%	17.8%
El Salvador	75.0%	7.2%	32.2%	58.7%	25.5%	9.1%	57.2%	16.8%
Finland	18.1%	0.7%	2.7%	24.0%	3.7%	4.2%	9.3%	2.0%
Hong Kong	46.1%	1.8%	15.2%	78.7%	38.8%	34.9%	53.4%	4.3%
Iceland	6.4%	3.0%	11.6%	35.0%	11.6%	13.4%	20.7%	7.8%
India	33.5%	8.4%	18.7%	26.8%	29.2%	30.3%	41.8%	20.6%
Indonesia	64.6%	11.3%	26.8%	44.3%	14.4%	22.1%	33.9%	11.5%
Kazakhstan	21.7%	15.8%	18.9%	14.8%	21.3%	13.4%	4.6%	2.9%
Kosovo	30.1%	9.3%	15.9%	4.0%	9.0%	11.2%	12.0%	8.8%
Latvia	17.5%	1.5%	14.5%	26.4%	13.5%	15.5%	38.6%	5.4%
Lithuania	13.6%	0%	8.6%	26.2%	7.0%	4.3%	21.9%	1.3%
Mexico	56.6%	13.6%	14.3%	55.1%	24.4%	10.7%	45.9%	6.1%
Moldova	63.3%	2.3%	9.2%	40.3%	29.8%	17.7%	51.5%	11.8%
Nepal	11.3%	25.2%	6.3%	27.5%	3.5%	2.8%	7.6%	3.3%
Netherlands	30.0%	5.9%	9.1%	19.1%	10.7%	8.7%	18.2%	2.4%
North Cyprus	4.1%	1.6%	0.8%	34.7%	4.9%	13.1%	13.9%	0%
North Macedonia	27.6%	8.2%	9.9%	19.7%	11.4%	9.9%		
Pakistan	53.2%	26.7%	36.1%	54.8%	46.6%	49.0%	53.7%	33.2%
Paraguay	39.3%	11.5%	14.9%	41.3%	28.0%	17.4%	30.9%	6.6%
Peru	69.4%	21.2%	28.6%	9.5%	13.6%	13.5%	40.9%	6.3%
Philippines	46.9%	6.2%	14.7%	39.0%	19.4%	9.4%	42.2%	8.2%
Poland	45.4%	12.3%	34.1%	31.2%	15.6%	15.2%	35.2%	18.5%
Portugal	3.5%	0%	0.8%	2.7%	0%	3.9%	2.4%	0%
Romania	62.6%	1.9%	4.7%	26.9%	14.9%	15.0%	33.8%	9.7%
Serbia	20.9%	5.6%	10.8%	23.9%	16.8%	20.5%	27.2%	3.7%
Sierra Leone	26.3%	70.0%	66.4%	36.7%	62.3%	61.8%	46.5%	61.3%
Singapore	20.6%	1.9%	4.4%	44.4%	16.9%	6.9%	16.3%	1.3%
Slovakia	9.9%	1.2%	14.0%	22.2%	3.8%	9.1%	15.2%	2.6%
Slovenia	9.8%	0%	12.8%	32.0%	10.8%	6.6%	26.9%	1.8%
South Korea	24.6%	3.5%	7.8%	62.2%	25.1%	15.9%	42.2%	4.3%
Sweden	30.0%	1.5%	3.2%	20.8%	4.2%	4.6%	14.7%	2.3%
Taiwan	31.0%	5.0%	17.6%	61.2%	23.6%	20.6%	45.1%	7.6%
Tanzania	25.7%	9.1%	21.0%	45.7%	29.1%	25.0%	37.2%	20.7%
Thailand	56.8%	7.3%	7.3%	16.1%	8.3%	8.6%	22.4%	1.6%
Turkey	3.8%	2.0%	2.8%	24.1%	12.8%	8.1%	15.8%	2.3%
UAE	38.8%	7.8%	10.0%	55.1%	27.8%	26.8%	58.4%	21.9%
Ukraine	64.3%	8.6%	29.7%	50.3%	25.4%	27.6%	63.8%	36.8%
USA	48.9%	2.9%	10.6%	30.2%	17.2%		26.7%	8.7%
Uzbekistan	41.5%	38.8%	40.5%	39.2%	35.3%	27.1%	32.4%	25.1%
Venezuela	68.1%	11.3%	23.1%	63.8%	53.5%	20.9%	52.3%	11.1%
Yemen	49.2%	13.6%	28.8%	84.8%	45.5%	34.8%	62.1%	41.5%
Zambia	38.5%	28.6%	23.5%	57.8%	33.0%	22.9%	42.2%	20.7%
Average	**34.3%**	**9.5%**	**16.2%**	**36.5%**	**20.8%**	**16.4%**	**33.1%**	**10.6%**

Percentage of respondents saying "Yes." Question: "In the last five years, have you engaged in any of the following measures to protect yourself? Please choose all that apply."

TABLE 7: MEASURES TAKEN FOR PROTECTION (CONTINUED)

Country	Limited time spent in dangerous reporting areas	Removed or hidden press IDs	Published anonymously	Changed phone number / taken precautions to safeguard devices	Established communication networks with peers or supervisors for security	Filtered ideas / information to international media or published stories abroad	Paid greater attention to verification of facts
Albania	7.9%	18.7%	16.7%	8.9%	2.7%	8.9%	61.8%
Argentina	15.4%	9.6%	13.8%	10.9%	21.0%	5.1%	58.0%
Belgium	7.8%	18.8%	15.3%	10.4%	14.0%	4.4%	44.8%
Bolivia	42.0%	31.8%	22.2%	28.1%	56.0%	11.8%	96.5%
Brazil	29.3%	36.9%	27.7%	11.9%	18.9%	9.4%	81.8%
Bulgaria	13.0%	4.8%	14.9%	4.8%	21.4%	8.3%	64.0%
Chile		27.8%	15.2%	13.9%		7.4%	
Colombia	30.3%	29.8%	19.0%	17.2%	26.6%	9.0%	61.2%
Costa Rica	18.8%	22.9%	11.2%	10.8%	15.2%	6.3%	60.1%
Croatia	16.1%	17.4%	20.6%	10.3%	25.1%	18.8%	69.3%
Czech Republic	4.9%	11.5%	9.5%	4.9%	13.5%	2.3%	53.0%
Ecuador	39.5%	28.4%	20.1%	17.1%	29.1%	11.0%	68.9%
Egypt	21.0%	24.7%	15.4%	11.9%	17.2%	31.7%	59.0%
El Salvador	44.2%	50.0%	27.4%	51.0%	63.0%	24.5%	86.1%
Finland	2.9%	2.2%	12.7%	11.7%	5.9%	4.2%	46.0%
Hong Kong	27.1%	27.0%	50.4%	23.8%	38.7%	21.6%	83.3%
Iceland	6.3%	2.2%	17.2%	6.9%	9.5%	15.5%	44.8%
India	27.5%	18.4%	20.8%	17.3%	25.9%	18.3%	52.7%
Indonesia	44.6%	25.7%	21.7%	25.1%	54.2%	33.1%	87.8%
Kazakhstan	10.0%	3.8%	7.5%	2.1%	5.4%	4.2%	28.5%
Kosovo	9.4%	5.4%	9.4%	4.5%	9.4%	9.9%	35.1%
Latvia	7.2%	9.3%	17.2%	6.1%	6.7%	4.6%	65.1%
Lithuania	9.9%	13.6%	16.2%	2.0%	7.0%	0.7%	48.7%
Mexico	48.3%	40.3%	35.7%	30.1%	55.6%	13.1%	89.1%
Moldova	27.9%	12.5%	19.7%	10.5%	26.6%	22.0%	71.5%
Nepal	6.3%	12.2%	6.6%	6.8%	1.8%	1.3%	28.1%
Netherlands	7.9%	13.1%	11.9%	13.5%	14.3%	11.5%	27.3%
North Cyprus	19.3%	2.5%	1.7%	2.5%	15.7%	5.9%	67.8%
North Macedonia			4.3%	3.0%	10.8%		
Pakistan	49.6%	41.9%	37.7%	35.3%	39.7%	38.8%	63.9%
Paraguay	24.2%	20.8%	20.5%	17.1%	25.8%	16.0%	85.0%
Peru	21.1%	12.7%	6.6%	12.6%	18.6%	11.6%	73.8%
Philippines	24.9%	30.5%	15.2%	22.9%	36.1%	9.4%	76.2%
Poland	30.5%	19.7%	24.4%	24.4%	26.7%	20.1%	55.4%
Portugal	0.8%	2.4%	0.8%	0.8%	0.4%	0%	17.1%
Romania	21.9%	8.6%	18.4%	6.7%	16.1%	14.1%	68.6%
Serbia	19.0%	12.3%	19.4%	5.6%	17.2%	10.8%	69.4%
Sierra Leone	42.6%	51.3%	66.2%	65.4%	42.9%	57.1%	21.8%
Singapore	3.1%	10.6%	11.9%	7.5%	10.6%	3.1%	71.3%
Slovakia	23.4%	7.3%	5.8%	10.8%	15.2%	2.3%	51.5%
Slovenia	9.0%	9.5%	11.3%	8.0%	26.4%	9.0%	55.2%
South Korea	16.2%	13.2%	12.2%	4.1%	20.5%	4.1%	72.4%
Sweden	13.4%		9.9%	15.1%	10.5%		33.6%
Taiwan	27.6%	23.8%	18.3%	6.2%	20.9%	15.6%	66.0%
Tanzania	26.6%	31.7%	34.0%	23.9%	21.3%	23.6%	47.9%
Thailand	21.1%	12.5%	11.2%	5.7%	25.0%	3.4%	59.4%
Turkey	21.6%	3.1%	4.8%	11.5%	22.0%	4.6%	59.0%
UAE	31.7%	10.1%	9.0%	6.1%	7.4%		66.1%
Ukraine	39.5%	14.6%	33.5%	25.4%	53.0%	35.1%	86.5%
USA	25.8%	19.6%	7.8%	12.3%	28.4%	4.6%	72.6%
Uzbekistan	35.1%	24.6%	31.7%	33.2%	36.5%	24.6%	42.4%
Venezuela	52.8%	55.5%	39.7%	36.7%	55.5%	32.7%	87.9%
Yemen	36.9%	60.0%	47.0%	43.1%	33.3%	60.0%	84.6%
Zambia	45.9%	48.0%	26.2%	20.4%	40.5%	24.5%	76.9%
Average	**23.3%**	**20.5%**	**19.0%**	**15.5%**	**23.8%**	**14.7%**	**61.6%**

Percentage of respondents saying "Yes." Question: "In the last five years, have you engaged in any of the following measures to protect yourself? Please choose all that apply."

Editorial Autonomy and Media Freedom

EDSON TANDOC JR. & HANAN BADR
WITH SUMMER HARLOW, GRISEL SALAZAR REBOLLEDO, MOTTI NEIGER, SANDRA LÁBOVÁ, ANDREAS RIEDL & RUBÉN GONZÁLEZ

Journalistic autonomy refers to the freedom of journalists and news organizations to perform their democratic functions without undue interference from external actors, such as governments, corporations, or other societal institutions (Örnebring & Karlsson, 2019). In the Worlds of Journalism Study 3 (WJS3), the focus is on editorial autonomy, defined as the degree to which journalists can make independent decisions regarding the selection, framing, and presentation of news content. Closely related to the broader concept of media freedom, editorial autonomy has long been a key focus for scholars and experts assessing the state of press freedom across countries. These country-level assessments often reflect structural, legal, and political conditions and provide essential context for understanding the constraints under which journalists operate.

The Worlds of Journalism Study examines editorial autonomy from the perspective of journalists themselves. Assessing media freedom through journalists' own perceptions offers unique insight into their lived professional realities. Accordingly, WJS includes questions that measure both journalists' overall perceptions of media freedom in their countries and their personal experiences regarding the freedom to select stories and emphasize particular aspects of these stories. These measures complement institutional metrics by capturing the day-to-day limitations affecting professional autonomy.

OVERVIEW OF GLOBAL PATTERNS

European countries consistently rank highest across the three measures of editorial autonomy: perceived freedom in selecting stories, perceived freedom in emphasizing story aspects, and overall perceived media freedom (see Table 8). Journalists in Lithuania, Portugal, and Latvia—countries that have historically scored highly in global media freedom indices, such as Reporters Without Borders—report some of the highest levels of perceived autonomy in story selection and framing. Sweden and the Netherlands rank highest in overall perceived media freedom.

Countries in the Americas also perform well. Chile and Costa Rica lead the region in freedom to select and frame stories, while Canada ranks highest in perceived media freedom. New Zealand and Australia achieve moderately high scores across all three measures. In contrast, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East display greater variability. Some countries report moderate freedom, whereas others face significant constraints, often linked to political instability and governance challenges. In Asia, the Philippines ranks highest in editorial autonomy, while Nepal scores highest in perceived media freedom. In the Middle East, Israel ranks high in both editorial autonomy and media freedom, whereas Yemen ranks lowest across all measures, including freedom to select stories, freedom to emphasize story aspects, and perceived media freedom. In Africa, South Africa leads the region across all measures, while Zambia ranks moderately high in story selection and framing but low in perceived media freedom.

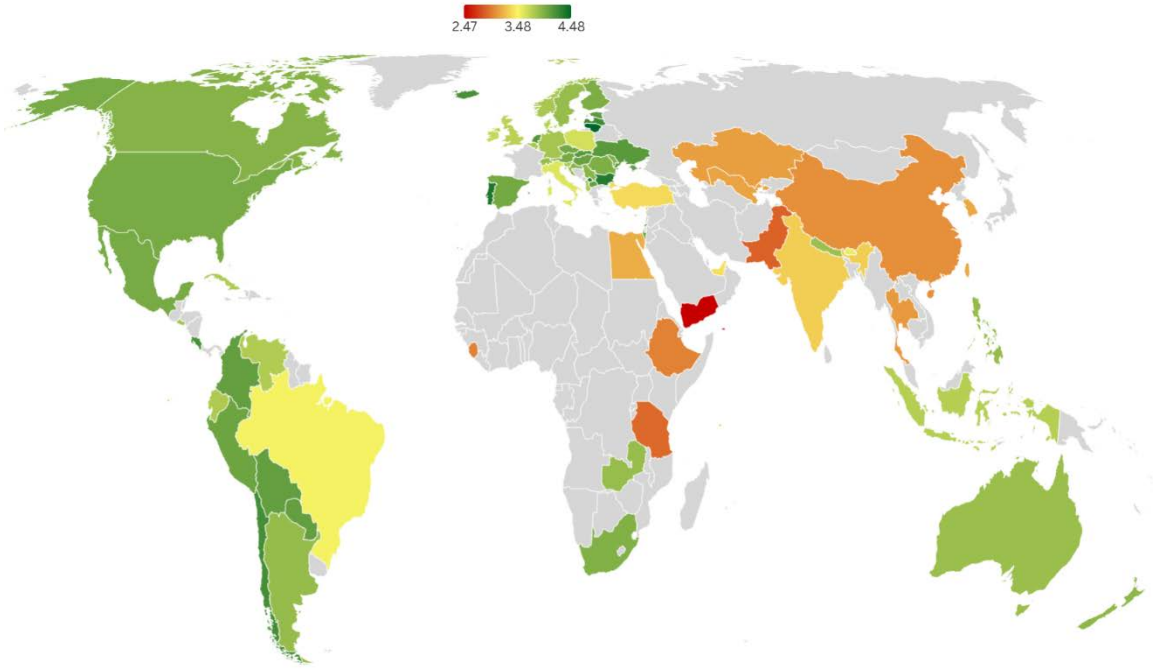


FIGURE 4: PERCEIVED EDITORIAL AUTONOMY
Average index scores (Scale: 5 = complete freedom … 1 = no freedom at all)

NOTABLE CASES

While many countries in Europe and the Americas consistently score strongly across all dimensions of perceived media freedom, some countries in Asia, such as Yemen and Pakistan, sit at the opposite end of the spectrum. Journalists in these contexts report substantially lower levels of perceived freedom, often citing limited editorial autonomy and external pressures that constrain their ability to report freely. Countries where journalists perceive lower media freedom are also those where symbolic forms of aggression—such as demeaning speech and public discrediting—are more common, further undermining autonomy and professional legitimacy. This highlights a clear connection between autonomy and safety. Gender also makes a difference in perceptions of editorial autonomy. In some countries, such as Brazil and Mexico, women journalists report significantly lower levels of perceived autonomy in their reporting than male journalists. These findings align with broader concerns about media repression, inequalities, and political interference in these countries.

Although journalists' perceptions of media freedom generally align with global indices, such as the World Media Freedom (WMF) index by Reporters Without Borders, notable discrepancies exist. For example, Singapore, which ranked 123 out of 180 countries in the WMF 2024 index, reports moderate levels of perceived autonomy among its journalists. Similarly, the Philippines (rank 116) and Cuba (rank 168) report higher perceived media freedom than expected, both scoring slightly above the WJS global mean.

These results underscore the importance of comparing journalists' day-to-day experiences with macrolevel assessments of media freedom based on structural, legal, and political aspects. Indeed, journalists in the WJS survey seem to be aware of such discrepancies, as in most countries, journalists perceive overall media freedom as lower than their individual freedom to select stories or emphasize certain aspects of coverage. Hungary provides a striking example: the country's journalists rate overall media freedom at 2.56, whereas freedom to select stories is rated 4.01 and freedom to emphasize aspects of stories is 4.12. This suggests that while journalists feel relatively free in performing their immediate tasks, they remain acutely aware of systemic pressures—such as political influence, ownership structures, legal constraints, and threats to colleagues—that shape, if not constrain, other aspects of their work and the media landscape where they operate. These external factors may not directly interfere with daily routines but contribute to a climate of restricted media freedom, influencing journalistic practices and professional well-being.

CONCLUSION

While global indices, such as those from Freedom House and Reporters Without Borders, provide essential macrolevel assessments grounded in legal, political, and structural conditions, they may not fully capture the day-to-day realities experienced by journalists, including the pressures and routines inherent in different work environments and employment contexts. By asking journalists directly about their autonomy in selecting stories, deciding which aspects of stories to emphasize, and their overall sense of media freedom, the WJS provides a bottom-up perspective that complements these top-down evaluations. These perceptions not only reveal how free journalists feel in their professional roles, but they also help explain how journalists navigate constraints that may not be visible in institutional metrics.

The findings show broad alignment with global indices, reinforcing the validity of both approaches. However, some discrepancies underscore the nuanced and context-dependent nature of media freedom. Such gaps suggest that perceived freedom is shaped by cultural norms, professional expectations, or even adaptive strategies, as individual journalists learn to work around structural restrictions to fulfill their professional responsibilities.

TABLE 8: PERCEIVED EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Country	Freedom in selecting stories WJS3	Freedom in emphasizing story aspect WJS3	Perceived media freedom WJS3	Editorial autonomy (index) WJS2	Editorial autonomy (index) WJS3
Albania	3.81	3.71	2.84	3.74	3.78
Argentina	3.90	3.86	3.06	3.98	3.88
Australia	3.81	3.92	3.55	3.99	3.86
Austria	3.82	4.19	3.21	4.06	4.00
Belgium	3.67	3.94	3.76	3.84	3.81
Bhutan	3.48	3.61	2.94	3.51	3.54
Bolivia	4.13	4.03	2.77		4.08
Brazil	3.44	3.56	2.73	3.55	3.50
Bulgaria	4.26	4.40	2.75	4.22	4.33
Canada	3.89	3.98	3.83	4.08	3.94
Chile	4.18	4.23	3.13	3.75	4.20
China	3.02	3.11	2.88	3.09	3.06
Colombia	4.07	4.08	2.82	4.18	4.08
Costa Rica	4.22	4.16	3.67		4.19
Croatia	3.94	3.92	2.83	4.15	3.93
Cuba	3.74	3.79	2.65		3.77
Czech Republic	3.96	4.08	3.67	3.95	4.02
Denmark	3.60	3.88	3.97	3.85	3.74
Ecuador	3.82	3.74	2.87	3.86	3.78
Egypt	3.19	3.17	2.62	3.38	3.18
El Salvador	3.90	3.76	2.59	3.63	3.83
Estonia	3.99	4.26	4.06	4.27	4.12
Ethiopia	2.96	3.04	2.29	3.44	3.00
Finland	3.91	4.05	3.88	3.88	3.98
Germany	3.71	3.92	3.90	4.06	3.82
Hong Kong	3.16	3.24	2.46	3.14	3.20
Hungary	4.01	4.12	2.56	3.68	4.06
Iceland	4.15	4.24	3.70	4.2	4.19
India	3.31	3.31	2.92	3.92	3.31
Indonesia	3.72	3.78	3.14	3.49	3.75
Ireland	3.63	3.75	3.65	3.78	3.69
Israel	3.97	4.11	3.33	4.32	4.04
Italy	3.53	3.65	2.88	3.6	3.59
Kazakhstan	3.09	3.15	2.85		3.12
Kosovo	4.40	4.39	3.64	3.95	4.39
Latvia	4.15	4.29	3.24	4.30	4.22
Lithuania	4.43	4.53	3.85		4.48
Mexico	4.02	3.99	2.83	4.07	4.00
Moldova	3.99	3.93	3.14	4.04	3.96
Nepal	3.79	3.90	3.52		3.85
Netherlands	4.15	4.13	4.16	4.34	4.14
New Zealand	3.87	3.95	3.85	4.01	3.91
North Cyprus	3.61	3.80	2.93		3.70
North Macedonia	4.05	4.10	2.81		4.08
Norway	3.75	3.86	3.99	3.72	3.80
Pakistan	2.86	2.88	2.48		2.87
Paraguay	4.14	4.03	2.75		4.08
Peru	4.07	4.00	3.06		4.04
Philippines	3.81	3.95	3.32	4.02	3.88
Poland	3.66	3.60	2.94		3.63
Portugal	4.13	4.59	3.33	4.11	4.36
Romania	4.03	3.94	3.05	4.08	3.97
Serbia	3.90	3.97	2.38	3.87	3.93
Seychelles	3.45	3.66	3.12		3.56
Sierra Leone	3.45	2.55	2.92	3.75	3.00
Singapore	3.29	3.46	2.71	3.61	3.37
Slovakia	4.12	4.14	3.58		4.13
Slovenia	3.70	3.87	3.31		3.79
South Africa	3.95	3.97	3.80	3.82	3.96
South Korea	3.19	3.14	3.16	3.33	3.16
Spain	3.93	4.08	2.80	4.03	4.01
Sweden	3.85	3.90	4.19	4.02	3.87
Switzerland	3.80	3.97	3.68	3.97	3.88
Taiwan	3.18	3.16	3.15		3.16
Tanzania	2.93	2.87	3.01	2.44	2.90
Thailand	3.09	3.10	3.21	3.78	3.10
Turkey	3.34	3.39	1.88	3.95	3.36
UAE	3.47	3.40		3.44	3.39
UK	3.67	3.78	3.54	3.97	3.73
Ukraine	4.06	4.18	3.47		4.12
USA	3.96	4.05	3.71	4.29	4.00
Uzbekistan	3.13	3.16	2.91		3.14
Venezuela	3.81	3.73	2.23		3.77
Yemen	2.25	2.68	1.64		2.47
Zambia	3.88	3.87	2.94		3.87
Average[1]	**3.72**	**3.78**	**3.15**	**3.84**	**3.75**

[1]Average across the countries listed in the table (the original WJS2 sample included 67 countries)
Question: "Thinking of your work overall, how much freedom do you personally have in selecting the news stories you work on?" / "And how much freedom do you personally have in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized?" / "In your view, how much freedom do the news media have in [country]?". Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.

Perceived Influences

Alice Němcová Tejkalová, Peter English & Corinna Lauerer
with Beatriz Herrero-Jiménez, Rosa Berganza, Azahara Ortiz-González & Ammina Kothari

Journalists do not operate in a vacuum. They interact with a wide range of actors and are embedded within private, organizational, media-systemic, and political contexts (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014). As a result, they face various influences on their work every day. Some of these influences can even escalate into pressures, depending on factors such as the topics journalists cover, the type of media organization they work for, or the region in which they operate. Both internal and external influences can affect journalists' well-being and the quality of their work, particularly when they are tied to time constraints or professional demands (Collins et al., 2022; Harro-Loit & Josephi, 2019). The following chapter presents findings from the Worlds of Journalism Study 3 (WJS3) on the influences that journalists perceive in their professional practice.

In the questionnaire, we included a comprehensive list of potential influences and asked respondents to rate each on a five-point scale, from "not influential" (1) to "extremely influential" (5), in response to the question "Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist."

A HIERARCHY OF INFLUENCES IN COMPARISON OVER TIME

For Table 9, the wide range of influences was collapsed into five formative indices (see Hanitzsch et al., 2019, pp. 107–109 for more details): political influences (politicians, government officials, and government censorship), economic influences (profit expectations, advertising considerations, and audience research and data), organizational influences (supervisors and higher-level editors, editorial policy, business managers and owners), procedural influences (availability of news-gathering resources, time limits, access to information, journalism ethics, and media laws and regulation), and personal networks influences (peers on the news staff, colleagues in other media, friends, acquaintances, and family).

Globally, procedural and organizational influences emerge as the most prominent factors that journalists perceive as shaping their work, followed by economic influences, personal network influences, and, finally, political influences. This hierarchy of perceived influence mirrors findings from WJS2 (2012–2016). Overall, only procedural influences have significantly decreased since WJS2. In some countries (e.g., Bhutan, El Salvador, Ireland, and Serbia) perceived influence across all indices has declined compared to the previous wave though.

With political populism on the rise worldwide, analyzing the development of perceived political influence is essential. Among the 54 countries surveyed in both WJS2 and WJS3, political influences increased in 15 countries. Yemen stands out as the country where journalists perceive the highest political influence of all the 75 countries included in WJS3, reflecting its extremely challenging humanitarian and political environment. Conversely, Sweden shows almost negligible perceived political influence.

Budget cuts in staffing and the broader economic challenges facing newsrooms have been widely discussed in

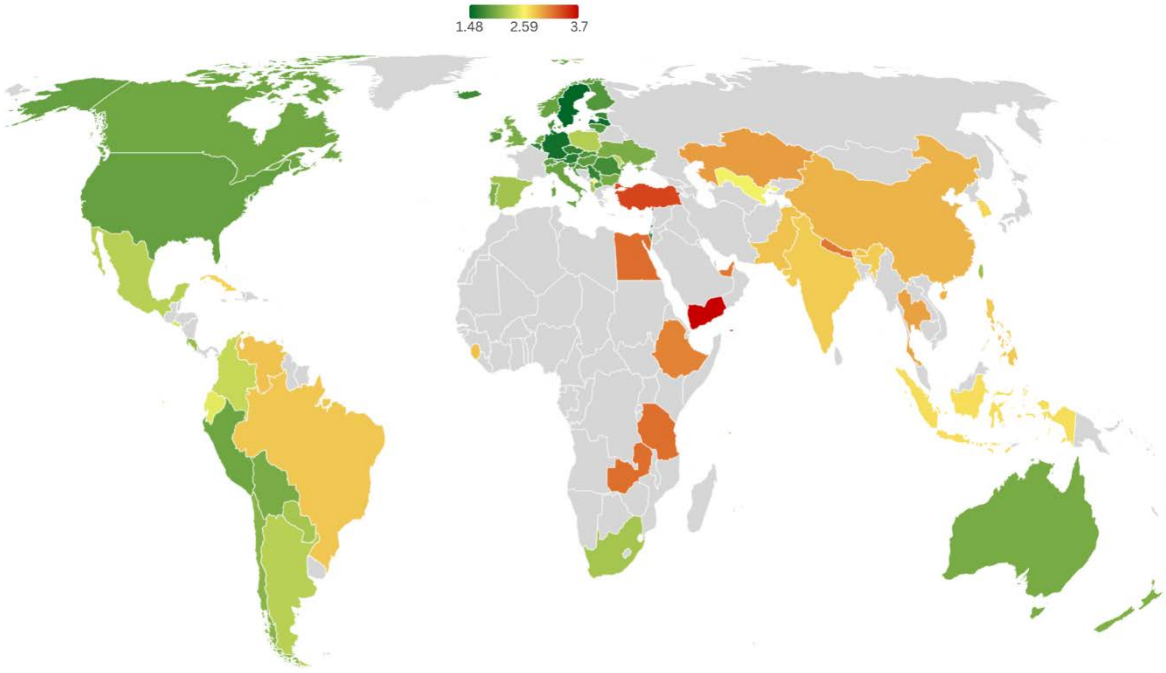


FIGURE 5: PERCEIVED POLITICAL INFLUENCES
Average index scores (Scale: 5 = extremely influential … 1 = not at all influential)

recent years, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Accordingly, in most of the 54 countries, journalists perceive economic influences to be higher than – or at least similar to – the levels reported in WJS2. However, in one-third of countries, perceptions of economic influence have declined. The strongest economic influence among all the 75 countries included in WJS3 was reported in Yemen, while the lowest was again found in a Northern European country, namely in Iceland – although even there, journalists showed an increase compared to WJS2.

In more than half of the countries surveyed in both WJS2 and WJS3, perceived organizational influences decreased over time. This shift may be partially explained by the organizational transformations triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, such as more remote work reducing journalists' daily exposure to newsroom hierarchies

Despite these changes, organizational and procedural aspects remain the influences perceived as most impactful on journalists' work across both WJS2 and WJS3. They are closely linked, as both directly affect routines and practices. Accordingly, procedural influences scored the highest of all measured influences in WJS3. They average above 3 in most countries, except for Uzbekistan, and score the highest in North Macedonia. Yet, procedural influences have declined in more than half of the 54 countries with comparable data since WJS2. Improvements in digital access to information and the continued rise of "online-first" content are likely contributing to this trend. Although journalists still face the pressure of meeting deadlines and outpacing competitors, they now have significantly better tools to manage multitasking and streamline workflows.

The perceived influence of personal networks has remained largely stable between WJS2 and WJS3. In competitive environments, personal relationships with sources appear to remain crucial for obtaining exclusive information, even as general information becomes more accessible. However, personal network influence decreased in 20 countries, with Portugal experiencing a substantial drop (from 2.49 to 1.86), making it the second lowest globally. Yemen again demonstrates high reliance on personal networks, arguably reflecting the practical importance of contacts in dangerous and uncertain contexts.

In the following section, we focus on the 75 countries surveyed in WJS3 and move beyond the five formative indices. We select singular key items from Table 10, beginning with the influence of politicians, government officials, and government censorship. Next, we examine the influence of military and paramilitary groups in conflict-affected regions. These aspects are particularly relevant in light of recent changes in reporting conditions across many regions, driven by political shifts and escalating conflicts. Then, we take a closer look at the influence of media ownership and profit expectations – two closely linked factors that shape both organizational and economic pressures on journalism. Finally, we consider journalism ethics and media regulation as critical elements of procedural influences.

POLITICAL INFLUENCES

Perceived government censorship is generally low in European countries. Among the 20 lowest-scoring cases, the United States is the only non-European country, although the data were collected prior to Donald Trump's 2024 re-election. Germany, Sweden, and Portugal report the lowest ratings. In contrast, journalists in several Middle Eastern, African, Asian, and Central and South American countries perceive higher levels of government censorship, with Egypt, Yemen, and Turkey scoring the highest. Only two European countries—Kosovo and North Cyprus—appear in the top 20, and they are also the only European countries scoring relatively high for the perceived influence of government officials and politicians.

European journalists' perceptions of a comparatively freer working environment are further reflected in lower perceived influence from government officials relative to other regions. Israel is the only non-European country among the lowest scorers in this category. The pattern is similar for the influence of politicians. In the United States, journalists rank 30th lowest out of 75 countries in perceived influence of government officials and 23rd lowest for politicians. At the opposite end, Turkey, Ethiopia, the UAE, and Yemen report the highest influence of government officials, while journalists in Turkey, Yemen, Ethiopia, Nepal, and Egypt perceive the greatest influence from politicians.

MILITARY AND CONFLICT ELEMENTS

As national teams could choose to include questions on these more specific sources of influence, they are not part of the grouped indices and, therefore, warrant separate attention. Depending on the item, responses were collected from between 46 and 53 countries.

Countries experiencing conflict reported the strongest perceived influence from military, paramilitary, militia, and terrorist groups. Yemen, Ukraine, and Pakistan exhibited the highest perceived military influence, while Kosovo, Latvia, and Croatia showed the lowest levels. These patterns likely reflect ongoing or recent conflicts over the past decade, including Yemen's civil war, the Russian-Ukrainian war, and recurring disputes between Pakistan and India. Yemen and Pakistan also scored highest for perceived influence from paramilitary groups and militias, followed by Turkey, Ethiopia, and Kazakhstan, with the lowest scores recorded in Kosovo, Latvia, and the USA. The pattern shifts slightly for terrorist group influence, with Yemen, Turkey, Kazakhstan, and Pakistan ranking highest. Note that the data were collected before the onset of the conflict in Gaza.

INFLUENCE OF OWNERSHIP AND PROFIT EXPECTATIONS

The influence of news organization owners was perceived as relatively low in many European countries. This pattern also holds for Central and Eastern Europe, which may indicate a stabilization following ownership turbulence observed during WJS2. Outside of Europe, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia were among the 20 lowest-scoring countries. Conversely, the highest perceived influence of owners was reported in Yemen, North Cyprus, Thailand, Egypt, and the UAE. Countries in the top 20 span multiple regions, including the Middle East, Asia (Philippines and South Korea), Africa (Sierra Leone and Ethiopia), Central America (El Salvador and Mexico), South America (Brazil), and Europe (Italy and Albania). Organizational differences within and across countries, such as those between commercial, state-owned, and public ownership—likely contribute to these variations.

Similarly, profit expectations were seen as a low-level influence in many European states, which accounted for more than half of the 20 lowest-scoring countries in this category. Several countries—including the Netherlands, Ireland, Austria, Belgium, Iceland, and Sweden—ranked low for both ownership influence and profit expectations. Other low-scoring countries include Canada, the USA, El

Salvador, Bolivia, New Zealand, Australia, Singapore, and Bhutan.

Yemen again emerged as the country where profit expectations exerted the strongest perceived influence, followed by Thailand, South Korea, Egypt, North Cyprus, and Brazil. Tanzania, Indonesia, Sierra Leone, and Italy also ranked among the top 20 for both ownership and profit influences. This pattern suggests that higher levels of perceived ownership influence may often coincide with stronger pressures to meet profit expectations.

JOURNALISM ETHICS AND MEDIA REGULATIONS

Journalists across all countries perceive journalism ethics as at least somewhat influential, with mean values rarely falling below 3.0, except in Turkey and Uzbekistan. Among the 20 comparatively lower-scoring countries, eight are European, including Germany, Iceland, and Poland. No African or Middle Eastern countries appear in this lower-scoring group, and Indonesia is the only Asian nation represented. Conversely, journalists in North Macedonia and Chile perceive journalism ethics as the most influential, followed by those in the Philippines, Lithuania, and El Salvador. South American countries also feature prominently among the 20 highest-scoring nations, including Brazil, Colombia, Bolivia, and Venezuela, alongside Costa Rica from Central America.

European countries also account for more than half of the 20 countries where media laws and regulations are perceived as a low-level influence (e.g., Portugal, Sweden, Germany, Iceland, and the Netherlands). This pattern may reflect that well-established laws and regulations in these countries are mainly designed to protect free speech and are, thereby, rather perceived as framework for autonomous work than as direct influence. In contrast, journalists in Zambia, North Macedonia, Sierra Leone, and South Africa perceived the strongest influence of media laws and regulations.

CONCLUSION

Perceived influences on journalists vary widely across regions. Western countries, particularly in Northern Europe, consistently report the lowest levels of influence across multiple dimensions. For example, regarding government censorship, the United States—before Trump's re-election—was the only non-European country among the 20 lowest-scoring nations, whereas journalists in the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Latin America reported substantially higher levels of influence. In conflict-affected contexts, journalists face particularly difficult conditions, with military influence perceived as highest in Yemen, Ukraine, and Pakistan.

Consistent with the previous WJS wave (Hanitzsch et al., 2019), journalists worldwide continue to perceive organizational and, in particular, procedural factors as the strongest influences on their work, likely because these aspects directly shape daily routines and professional practices. Personal network influences remain relatively stable, while economic and political pressures have intensified in several countries. Together, these patterns underscore that journalists cannot operate independently of their societal context and reflect growing concerns about external interference in journalistic work.

TABLE 9: PERCEIVED INFLUENCES ON NEWS PRODUCTION (INDEX SCORES)

Country	Political Influence		Economic Influence		Organizational Influence		Procedural Influence		Personal Network Influence	
	WJS2	WJS3	WJS2	WJS3	WJS2	WJS3	WJS2	WJS3	WJS2	WJS3
Albania	1.88	2.19	2.79	2.94	3.14	3.50	3.87	3.80	2.30	2.35
Argentina	2.26	2.30	2.49	2.78	3.46	3.27	3.58	3.41	2.78	2.45
Australia	2.25	2.01	2.50	2.65	3.10	3.00	4.07	3.65	2.47	2.57
Austria	1.58	1.65	2.22	2.22	2.57	2.53	3.46	3.34	2.27	2.38
Belgium	1.68	1.69	2.08	2.05	2.77	2.77	3.54	3.26	2.47	2.56
Bhutan	3.18	2.83	3.19	2.54	3.61	2.97	3.61	3.38	3.63	2.57
Bolivia		2.02		2.54		2.73		3.44		2.04
Brazil	2.09	2.80	2.78	3.30	3.44	3.73	3.71	3.78	2.67	2.90
Bulgaria	2.01	2.01	3.12	2.73	3.41	3.09	3.95	3.72	2.63	2.44
Canada	1.65	1.98	1.90	2.05	2.81	2.72	3.88	3.69	2.31	2.55
Chile	2.17	2.09	2.71	2.62	3.52	3.18	3.62	3.79	2.51	2.38
China	2.91	2.89	3.10	3.29	3.55	3.63	3.59	3.68	2.69	2.56
Colombia	2.56	2.36	3.09	2.81	3.70	3.18	3.59	3.65	2.60	2.50
Costa Rica		2.15		2.67		3.01		3.57		2.51
Croatia	2.15	1.84	2.75	2.60	3.04	3.16	3.88	3.69	2.69	2.31
Cuba		2.75		2.58		3.48		3.73		2.67
Czech Republic	1.64	1.69	2.48	2.63	3.19	2.94	4.09	3.85	2.88	2.62
Denmark	1.98	1.79	2.22	2.23	3.00	2.98	3.44	3.75	2.38	2.40
Ecuador	2.79	2.49	2.99	3.08	3.60	3.34	3.83	3.51	2.80	2.63
Egypt	2.64	3.21	3.28	3.43	3.54	3.87	3.94	3.94	2.65	3.16
El Salvador	2.81	2.45	3.16	2.49	3.99	3.39	3.81	3.69	2.57	2.29
Estonia	1.72	1.74	2.53	2.52	2.91	2.92	3.77	3.63	2.59	2.65
Ethiopia	3.15	3.11	2.86	2.70	3.82	3.49	3.75	3.55	2.55	2.47
Finland	1.97	1.85	2.27	2.59	2.83	3.04	3.83	3.82	2.54	2.49
Germany	1.58	1.56	2.58	2.47	2.86	2.48	3.60	3.20	2.41	2.19
Hong Kong	2.25	2.83	2.31	2.52	3.30	3.78	3.23	3.44	2.56	2.82
Hungary	1.98	1.89	3.11	2.61	3.40	2.66	3.74	3.41	2.92	2.33
Iceland	1.61	1.76	1.75	2.03	2.47	2.85	3.77	3.47	2.65	2.72
India	2.54	2.78	3.38	3.02	3.64	3.21	4.05	3.36	2.58	2.93
Indonesia	2.30	2.70	3.01	3.24	3.36	3.69	3.74	3.93	2.79	3.10
Ireland	2.14	1.88	2.34	2.22	2.98	2.76	3.91	3.44	2.53	2.38
Israel	1.71	1.72	2.38	2.51	3.06	3.08	3.67	3.45	2.48	2.50
Italy	1.63	1.95	2.34	3.01	2.67	3.58	3.51	3.47	2.18	2.34
Kazakhstan		2.99		3.16		3.00		3.39		3.03
Kosovo	2.16	2.58	2.50	2.54	3.06	2.67	3.76	3.50	2.31	2.02
Latvia	1.42	1.53	2.46	2.37	2.84	2.77	3.49	3.41	2.47	2.30
Lithuania		1.84		2.74		3.23		4.02		2.61
Mexico	2.53	2.30	2.90	2.91	3.78	3.30	3.73	3.46	2.42	2.32
Moldova	1.83	2.29	2.90	3.03	3.15	3.46	3.88	3.82	2.52	2.45
Nepal		3.16		3.02		2.88		3.49		2.50
Netherlands	1.89	1.99	2.41	2.17	2.85	3.04	3.05	3.37	2.50	2.81
New Zealand	2.02	2.05	2.52	2.11	3.04	2.83	3.88	3.64	2.63	2.58
North Cyprus		3.02		3.36		3.89		3.76		2.96
North Macedonia		1.92		2.72		3.15		4.08		2.42
Norway	1.82	1.94	2.02	2.24	2.62	2.74	3.54	3.61	2.51	2.57
Pakistan		2.82		2.94		3.12		3.17		2.57
Paraguay		2.22		3.07		3.11		3.34		2.43
Peru		1.97		2.84		2.66		3.05		2.11
Philippines	2.39	2.79	2.98	3.04	3.61	3.71	4.08	4.05	2.55	2.75
Poland		2.28		3.13		3.00		3.41		2.67
Portugal	1.60	2.04	2.35	2.65	3.18	2.81	3.83	3.55	2.49	1.86
Romania	1.80	1.78	2.86	2.55	3.01	3.03	4.03	3.51	2.65	2.10
Serbia	2.13	1.71	2.93	2.40	3.36	3.06	3.76	3.64	2.63	2.14
Seychelles		2.27		2.57		3.24		3.57		2.29
Sierra Leone	2.73	2.83	3.39	3.18	4.00	3.57	4.22	3.71	2.85	3.02
Singapore	2.91	2.42	2.95	2.56	2.98	3.44	3.19	3.66	2.88	2.28
Slovakia		1.82		2.32		2.99		3.56		2.45
Slovenia		1.80		2.87		3.68		3.66		2.66
South Africa	2.39	2.21	2.91	2.66	3.57	3.20	4.19	3.98	2.65	2.61
South Korea	2.67	2.73	3.26	3.35	3.55	3.90	3.77	3.52	3.09	3.41
Spain	2.23	2.20	2.85	2.93	3.39	3.23	3.78	3.57	2.42	2.54
Sweden	1.67	1.48	2.34	2.29	2.94	2.87	3.50	3.25	2.42	2.64
Switzerland	1.88	1.90	2.19	2.21	2.54	2.65	3.38	3.46	2.42	2.45
Taiwan		2.18		2.89		3.08		3.04		2.00
Tanzania	2.55	3.20	2.14	3.40	4.05	3.36	3.87	3.52	2.18	3.06
Thailand	3.73	2.97	3.76	3.44	3.96	3.86	3.96	3.81	3.77	2.99
Turkey	3.03	3.39	2.42	2.93	2.92	3.03	3.41	3.30	2.36	2.33
UAE	3.10	3.15	3.27	2.94	3.74	3.82	3.96	3.85	3.14	2.97
UK	2.05	2.03	2.72	2.64	3.20	3.10	3.80	3.55	2.65	2.60
Ukraine		2.03		2.75		3.29		3.91		2.52
USA	1.93	1.93	2.23	2.20	3.37	2.87	4.06	3.53	2.70	2.55
Uzbekistan		2.55		2.49		2.72		2.91		2.56
Venezuela		2.82		2.74		3.34		3.70		2.39
Yemen		3.70		3.67		4.09		3.87		4.12
Zambia		3.21		3.39		3.60		3.93		2.92
Average[1]	**2.21**	**2.31**	**2.68**	**2.74**	**3.25**	**3.18**	**3.74**	**3.58**	**2.62**	**2.56**

Mean scores. Question: "Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist." (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

[1]Average across the countries listed in the table (the original WJS2 sample included 67 countries)

TABLE 10: PERCEIVED INFLUENCES ON NEWS PRODUCTION

Country	Peers on the news staff	Editorial supervisors and higher editors	Business managers of news organization	Owners of news organization	Editorial policy	Advertising considerations	Profit expectations	Audience research and data	Availability of news-gathering resources	Time limits	Journalism ethics
Albania	2.82	3.62	3.29	3.45	3.65	3.17	2.45	3.16	3.69	3.82	4.25
Argentina	2.91	3.40	3.02	3.15	3.45	2.85	2.47	3.01	3.46	3.48	3.91
Australia	3.12	3.67	2.23	2.19	3.44	2.00	2.21	3.21	3.40	3.66	3.85
Austria	3.08	3.18	2.10	1.86	2.85	1.89	1.91	2.75	3.46	3.70	3.69
Belgium	3.31	3.60	2.19	1.82	3.32	1.57	1.96	2.52	3.16	3.50	3.47
Bhutan	2.69	3.27	2.53	2.76	3.25	2.53	2.16	2.88	3.22	3.26	3.69
Bolivia	2.48	3.03	2.40	2.56	2.89	2.47	2.14	3.00	3.21	3.04	4.28
Brazil	3.47	3.92	3.50	3.61	3.92	3.18	3.28	3.46	3.66	3.78	4.32
Bulgaria	2.90	3.07	3.02	2.75	3.43	2.52	2.56	3.12	3.37	3.39	4.20
Canada	3.29	3.69	1.72	1.79	3.29	1.39	1.72	2.87	3.67	3.71	4.22
Chile	3.18	3.79	2.58	2.63	3.67	2.39	2.28	3.12	3.60	3.48	4.47
China	2.81	3.86	3.88	3.06	3.63	3.03	3.18	3.64	3.68	3.37	3.95
Colombia	2.93	3.38	2.79	2.96	3.42	2.70	2.50	3.14	3.46	3.40	4.31
Costa Rica	3.10	3.60	2.53	2.53	3.17	2.46	2.30	3.23	3.51	3.48	4.21
Croatia	2.83	3.24	2.89	2.92	3.42	2.36	2.58	2.81	3.59	3.73	4.37
Cuba	3.11	3.67	2.86	3.10	4.07	2.04	2.61	2.89	3.74	3.47	4.19
Czech Republic	3.41	3.77	2.41	2.23	3.04	2.33	2.30	3.16	3.65	3.54	4.30
Denmark	3.50	3.81	2.05	1.93	3.66	1.44	2.13	2.96	3.71	3.81	4.17
Ecuador	3.08	3.43	3.20	3.31	3.36	2.88	2.94	3.36	3.49	3.24	4.00
Egypt	3.42	3.90	3.50	3.77	4.21	3.30	3.33	3.48	3.86	3.80	4.01
El Salvador	2.97	3.73	2.94	3.24	3.64	2.36	1.98	3.07	3.59	3.38	4.38
Estonia	3.38	3.55	2.33	2.17	3.26	2.08	2.64	2.66	3.49	3.83	3.91
Ethiopia	2.67	3.53	3.07	3.56	3.82	2.58	2.73	2.87	3.21	3.38	3.47
Finland	3.20	3.58	2.33	2.11	3.76	1.77	2.44	3.26	3.89	3.78	4.05
Germany	2.73	3.08	2.14	1.67	2.80	2.01	2.29	2.96	3.34	3.60	3.23
Hong Kong	3.18	3.99	3.87	3.42	3.87	2.47	2.67	2.47	3.55	3.55	3.30
Hungary	2.27	2.90	2.36	2.48	2.88	2.39	2.48	2.94	2.62	3.37	3.88
Iceland	3.77	3.72	2.26	1.83	3.49	1.57	1.97	2.56	3.67	3.80	3.38
India	3.11	3.36	3.01	3.17	3.33	3.03	2.91	3.18	3.29	3.41	3.58
Indonesia	3.17	3.80	3.53	3.49	3.93	3.23	3.13	3.37	3.80	3.61	4.20
Ireland	2.93	3.44	1.92	1.96	3.16	1.83	1.86	2.67	3.12	3.40	3.67
Israel	3.11	3.67	2.99	2.36	3.01	2.08	2.19	3.17	3.41	3.69	4.16
Italy	3.11	3.39	3.71	3.40	3.77	2.91	3.02	3.09	3.38	3.65	3.74
Kazakhstan	3.03	3.01	3.12	3.06	3.02	3.03	3.21	3.32	3.53	3.26	3.50
Kosovo	2.16	2.97	2.28	2.48	2.96	2.28	2.30	3.05	3.25	3.73	3.53
Latvia	2.85	3.27	2.22	2.11	3.22	2.00	2.20	2.75	3.32	3.46	3.54
Lithuania	3.41	3.76	3.07	2.61	3.53	2.36	2.53	3.25	3.96	3.81	4.40
Mexico	2.79	3.55	2.75	3.31	3.58	2.88	2.58	3.28	3.31	3.27	4.12
Moldova	2.70	3.61	3.26	3.03	3.67	2.45	3.06	3.49	3.72	3.54	3.98
Nepal	2.90	2.75	2.70	2.94	3.13	3.08	3.22	2.79	3.12	3.67	3.46
Netherlands	3.73	3.63	2.72	1.93	3.54	1.59	1.69	3.05	3.35	3.55	3.79
New Zealand	3.21	3.76	1.98	1.96	3.31	1.65	1.84	2.68	3.41	3.63	3.84
North Cyprus	3.79	3.90	3.88	3.94	3.97	3.40	3.31	3.37	3.66	3.58	4.12
North Macedonia	2.94	3.48	3.01	2.68	3.42	2.37	2.28	3.50	3.96	3.62	4.47
Norway	3.36	3.64	1.72	1.75	3.54	1.51	2.34	2.54	2.69	3.50	4.00
Pakistan	2.69	3.08	3.02	3.22	3.13	2.98	2.81	3.01	3.05	3.13	3.31
Paraguay	2.94	3.25	2.96	3.16	3.12	3.01	2.96	3.24	3.40	3.05	3.94
Peru	2.36	2.60	2.45	2.44	3.01	2.60	2.72	3.16	3.07	2.55	3.62
Philippines	3.00	3.83	3.32	3.69	4.04	2.88	2.80	3.44	4.08	3.77	4.44
Poland	2.67	3.12	2.82	2.96	3.01	3.01	3.27	3.06	3.22	3.41	3.40
Portugal	2.22	3.48	2.23	1.53	4.02	2.52	2.44	3.03	3.77	4.10	4.29
Romania	2.39	3.13	2.84	2.66	3.25	2.08	2.31	2.99	3.39	3.16	3.89
Serbia	2.77	3.18	2.55	2.78	3.62	1.98	2.23	2.88	3.64	3.45	4.28
Seychelles	2.74	3.49	2.94	3.02	3.30	2.42	2.31	2.94	3.39	3.67	3.91
Sierra Leone	3.31	3.79	3.33	3.58	3.72	3.24	3.13	3.33	3.60	3.54	4.07
Singapore	2.69	4.04	2.68	2.93	3.86	1.99	2.10	3.24	3.69	3.64	3.84
Slovakia	3.14	3.55	2.07	2.09	3.58	1.90	2.28	2.67	3.41	3.66	4.16
Slovenia	3.51	4.13	3.35	3.07	3.94	2.44	3.06	3.03	3.50	3.80	4.00
South Africa	3.18	3.73	2.48	2.49	3.80	2.16	2.41	3.19	3.61	3.81	4.30
South Korea	3.61	4.27	3.82	3.63	3.85	3.46	3.34	3.26	3.57	3.53	3.86
Spain	3.41	3.69	2.94	2.98	3.28	2.83	2.89	3.10	3.38	3.64	4.25
Sweden	3.57	3.95	1.82	1.73	3.52	1.30	2.02	3.06	3.19	3.50	3.60
Switzerland	3.07	3.18	2.19	1.92	3.16	1.84	2.06	2.66	3.61	3.71	4.03
Taiwan	1.97	3.13	3.26	2.92	3.00	2.72	2.68	3.27	2.75	3.43	3.04
Tanzania	2.99	3.34	3.20	3.43	3.45	3.38	3.27	3.49	3.56	3.27	3.65
Thailand	3.24	3.93	3.89	3.81	3.84	3.25	3.48	3.64	3.82	3.80	4.00
Turkey	2.37	2.73	2.98	3.11	3.31	3.08	3.20	2.51	2.50	3.59	2.71
UAE	3.33	3.91	3.69	3.72	3.92	2.87	2.85	3.14	3.82	3.66	3.95
UK	3.29	3.75	2.36	2.28	3.60	2.20	2.38	3.11	3.35	3.61	3.74
Ukraine	2.92	3.49	2.85	2.55	3.81	2.00	2.60	3.35	3.82	3.54	4.26
USA	3.28	3.67	2.20	2.34	3.20	1.68	1.95	2.88	3.34	3.57	4.16
Uzbekistan	2.62	2.83	2.53	2.63	2.85	2.49	2.46	2.47	2.81	2.68	2.93
Venezuela	2.73	3.45	3.02	3.26	3.62	2.40	2.70	3.07	3.52	3.26	4.21
Yemen	4.16	4.24	3.92	4.19	4.05	3.64	3.57	3.80	3.86	3.84	3.79
Zambia	3.16	3.74	3.23	3.39	4.00	3.30	3.33	3.62	3.73	3.93	4.18
Average	**3.03**	**3.52**	**2.81**	**2.78**	**3.48**	**2.47**	**2.58**	**3.08**	**3.46**	**3.53**	**3.91**

Mean scores. Question: "Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist." (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

TABLE 10: PERCEIVED INFLUENCES ON NEWS PRODUCTION (CONTINUED)

Country	Self-Censorship	Personal values and beliefs	Colleagues in other media	Friends, acquaintances and family	Feedback from the audience	Competing news organizations	Media laws and regulation	Access to information	Government censorship	Government officials	Politicians
Albania	2.72	3.42	2.21	2.02	3.19	2.65	3.52	3.78	2.64	2.42	2.35
Argentina	2.40	3.42	2.27	2.23	3.20	2.62	2.62	3.52	2.49	2.44	2.42
Australia	2.52	3.08	2.50	2.14	2.85	2.55	3.61	3.79	2.23	1.96	2.02
Austria	2.30	3.37	1.97	2.08	2.71	2.36	2.74	3.04	1.28	1.32	1.56
Belgium	1.70	2.68	2.31	2.10	2.39	2.59	2.74	3.35	1.33	1.50	1.71
Bhutan	3.18	3.14	2.60	2.48	3.23	3.20	3.20	3.73	3.16	3.12	2.85
Bolivia	2.43	3.44	1.85	1.79	3.27	2.56	3.02	3.66	2.55	2.24	2.06
Brazil	2.97	3.14	2.78	2.46	3.43	3.13	3.22	3.89	2.66	2.78	2.73
Bulgaria	2.67	4.09	2.22	2.28	3.52	2.81	3.65	4.04	2.33	2.12	2.08
Canada	2.21	2.79	2.38	2.01	2.56	2.62	3.06	3.70	1.98	1.94	1.92
Chile	2.21	3.11	2.01	1.90	3.47	2.72	3.22	4.16	2.14	2.07	2.06
China	3.75	3.81	2.58	2.29	3.38	3.11	3.73	3.69	3.76	3.38	3.17
Colombia	2.85	3.36	2.33	2.23	3.54	2.71	3.21	3.81	2.51	2.36	2.29
Costa Rica	2.23	3.28	2.19	2.19	3.35	2.75	2.79	3.78	2.27	2.30	2.21
Croatia	2.26	3.88	2.10	1.97	3.24	2.24	3.24	3.53	1.79	1.66	1.87
Cuba	2.90	3.72	2.41	2.51	3.69	2.78	3.21	4.02	3.27	3.21	3.14
Czech Republic	2.39	3.73	2.08	2.40	3.13	2.42	3.73	4.02	1.39	1.43	1.71
Denmark	1.96	2.93	1.87	1.80	2.54	2.31	3.22	3.79	1.47	1.68	1.85
Ecuador	2.83	3.32	2.44	2.43	3.48	2.71	3.12	3.63	2.85	2.61	2.54
Egypt	4.17	4.05	3.19	2.70	3.38	3.77	3.93	4.13	4.09	3.49	3.27
El Salvador	2.75	3.00	2.02	1.88	3.12	2.46	3.07	4.01	3.32	2.81	2.64
Estonia	3.01	3.65	2.22	2.30	2.92	2.77	3.16	3.75	1.57	1.81	1.76
Ethiopia	3.36	3.07	2.37	2.40	3.15	3.10	3.75	3.99	3.82	3.86	3.56
Finland	1.99	3.13	2.29	2.10	2.65	2.63	3.70	3.70	1.80	1.90	1.85
Germany	2.00	3.03	1.83	1.98	2.64	2.14	2.61	3.17	1.11	1.18	1.44
Hong Kong	3.48	3.19	2.89	2.38	2.78	2.72	3.34	3.54	3.73	3.36	2.82
Hungary	2.39	3.79	2.40	2.32	2.70	2.48	3.52	3.65	2.09	1.97	1.93
Iceland	2.79	3.44	2.10	2.30	2.73	2.78	2.64	3.89	1.82	1.80	1.70
India	3.22	3.34	2.93	2.84	3.31	3.05	3.21	3.39	2.93	2.80	2.79
Indonesia	3.53	3.59	3.01	3.13	3.52	3.31	4.00	4.05	3.11	2.87	2.67
Ireland	2.28	2.73	2.22	1.98	2.55	2.51	3.50	3.61	1.65	1.76	1.84
Israel	2.87	3.94	2.35	2.09	2.73	2.67	2.53	3.35	1.95	1.68	1.78
Italy	2.61	3.43	2.19	1.66	2.86	2.38	2.91	3.69	1.92	1.70	1.85
Kazakhstan	2.97	3.12	3.16	2.96	3.45	3.42	3.40	3.34	3.12	3.09	2.99
Kosovo	2.32	2.77	1.87	2.00	2.67	2.25	3.18	3.86	3.14	3.08	2.83
Latvia	2.70	3.57	2.00	2.02	2.98	2.43	3.03	3.66	1.43	1.49	1.39
Lithuania	2.76	3.63	2.30	2.04	3.44	2.66	3.83	4.13	1.78	1.74	1.67
Mexico	2.62	2.95	2.17	1.99	3.49	2.78	2.98	3.63	2.80	2.43	2.37
Moldova	2.84	3.20	2.54	2.07	3.56	2.81	3.76	3.98	2.56	2.18	2.10
Nepal	3.26	3.43	2.36	2.24	2.97	2.52	3.51	3.71	3.52	3.55	3.29
Netherlands	1.98	3.29	2.45	2.26	2.89	2.70	2.65	3.50	1.89	2.15	2.06
New Zealand	2.59	3.12	2.45	2.16	2.56	2.46	3.48	3.84	2.00	2.03	1.95
North Cyprus	3.61	3.37	2.54	2.46	3.37	2.87	3.55	3.86	3.25	3.16	3.05
North Macedonia	2.22	3.92	2.07	2.26	3.48	2.77	4.07	4.26	2.17	1.86	1.87
Norway	2.72	3.11	2.19	2.10	2.81	2.68	4.00	3.74	1.56	1.95	1.98
Pakistan	3.11	3.10	2.52	2.48	2.89	2.86	3.16	3.19	3.20	3.05	2.93
Paraguay	2.54	3.41	2.19	2.20	3.21	2.46	2.72	3.56	2.30	2.09	2.30
Peru	1.99	3.08	2.10	1.91	3.20	2.63	2.70	3.21	2.15	1.98	1.95
Philippines	2.92	3.75	2.80	2.52	3.37	3.02	3.80	4.16	2.68	2.80	2.55
Poland	2.80	3.40	2.49	2.70	3.51	2.82	3.26	3.64	2.41	2.19	2.06
Portugal	1.61	1.35	2.13	1.22	2.43	3.01	1.70	3.86	1.17	1.45	2.61
Romania	2.23	3.10	2.15	1.76	3.20	2.37	3.40	3.63	1.87	1.67	1.68
Serbia	2.05	3.83	1.81	1.80	3.06	1.95	3.53	3.27	2.10	1.63	1.89
Seychelles	2.52	3.02	2.30	1.89	3.14	2.67	3.28	3.58	2.62	2.44	2.19
Sierra Leone	3.52	3.65	3.19	2.66	3.53	3.41	4.02	3.85	3.00	2.79	2.57
Singapore	2.63	3.21	2.19	1.89	3.02	3.02	3.40	3.75	2.88	2.79	2.61
Slovakia	2.32	2.66	2.22	1.95	2.83	2.37	2.95	3.65	1.94	1.75	1.79
Slovenia	2.46	3.38	2.38	2.09	2.88	2.52	3.23	3.77	1.72	1.63	1.77
South Africa	2.64	3.30	2.60	2.13	3.22	2.95	4.01	4.17	2.17	2.04	1.93
South Korea	3.78	3.83	3.56	3.06	3.55	3.59	3.16	3.47	2.56	2.59	2.60
Spain	2.73	3.08	2.05	2.12	2.65	2.51	2.77	3.76	2.28	1.87	2.36
Sweden	1.75	3.00	2.31	2.02	2.80	2.69	2.39	3.49	1.15	1.32	1.49
Switzerland	2.10	3.31	2.07	2.18	2.79	2.54	2.72	3.21	1.31	1.74	1.99
Taiwan	2.81	3.03	2.37	1.65	2.60	2.81	2.89	3.07	2.47	2.27	2.28
Tanzania	3.30	3.42	3.10	3.13	3.80	3.54	3.53	3.58	3.33	3.15	3.12
Thailand	3.51	3.41	2.95	2.79	3.35	3.18	3.72	3.74	3.36	3.15	3.05
Turkey	2.82	2.29	2.28	2.34	2.51	2.57	3.87	3.83	3.94	3.87	3.79
UAE	4.01	3.78	3.02	2.63	3.55	3.64	3.91	3.98		3.86	
UK	2.43	3.01	2.59	2.00	2.91	2.80	3.44	3.75	1.68	1.75	1.82
Ukraine	2.98	3.90	2.49	2.16	3.23	2.79	3.74	4.10	2.46	2.09	1.85
USA	2.18	2.90	2.32	2.03	2.98	2.52	3.00	3.60	1.31	2.03	1.89
Uzbekistan	2.85	2.78	2.41	2.63	2.73	2.69	3.05	2.98	2.72	2.61	2.69
Venezuela	3.00	3.49	2.18	2.26	3.46	2.56	3.53	3.98	3.76	3.31	2.89
Yemen	3.82	3.85	4.16	4.10	4.00	3.74	3.85	3.99	3.95	3.81	3.65
Zambia	3.84	3.68	2.99	2.72	3.96	3.59	4.12	3.78	3.44	3.27	3.06
Average	**2.73**	**3.30**	**2.41**	**2.25**	**3.11**	**2.77**	**3.29**	**3.71**	**2.43**	**2.36**	**2.31**

Mean scores. Question: "Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist." (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

TABLE 10: PERCEIVED INFLUENCES ON NEWS PRODUCTION (CONTINUED)

Country	Business people	Public relations	Relation-ships with news sources	Police	Issue advocacy groups	Scientists or health experts	Religious groups and insti-tutions	Military	Paramilita-ry groups, militias etc.	Organized crime and criminal groups	Terrorist groups
Albania	2.18	2.45	3.19	2.16	1.82	2.44	1.51	1.30	1.26	1.62	1.29
Argentina	2.33	2.38	3.06	1.81	1.99		1.68	1.37	1.24	1.38	1.16
Australia	1.96	2.01	2.91	2.20	2.14	2.83	1.58				
Austria	1.61	2.00	2.52	1.55	2.02						
Belgium	1.53	1.74	2.82	1.63	1.99	2.55	1.34	1.25	1.11	1.16	1.13
Bhutan	2.44	3.23	3.44	3.06	2.95	3.01					
Bolivia	1.97	2.02	3.02	1.77	1.80		1.59	1.48			
Brazil	2.72	2.81	3.48	2.57	2.93	3.35	2.24	1.97	1.76	1.83	1.62
Bulgaria	2.01	2.49	3.12	1.80	1.82	2.98	1.52	1.38		1.34	1.18
Canada	1.74	2.09	3.18	1.92	2.29	2.94					
Chile	2.14	2.23	3.50	2.32	2.08	3.11	1.74	1.78	1.37	1.54	
China	2.64	2.99	3.34	2.86	2.32	3.00					
Colombia	2.47	2.71	3.13	2.22	2.22		1.93	2.15	1.98	2.00	1.86
Costa Rica	2.11	2.25	3.12	1.86	1.96	2.61	1.85	1.28	1.20	1.79	1.29
Croatia	1.91	2.19	2.61	1.48	1.88	2.59	1.49	1.19	1.18	1.23	1.11
Cuba	2.39	2.69	3.65	2.20	2.05	2.70	1.86	2.20	1.55	1.41	1.38
Czech Republic	1.64	2.05	3.09	1.99	1.91	2.92	1.41	1.46		1.19	
Denmark	1.65	2.14	3.30	1.64	1.86	2.46					
Ecuador	2.44	2.81	3.12	2.53	2.33		2.20	2.28	2.13	2.35	2.15
Egypt	3.00	3.32	3.73	3.42	2.93	3.20					
El Salvador	2.26	2.41	3.20	2.15	2.09		1.74	1.96	1.76	1.94	1.72
Estonia	1.67	2.23	3.19	1.78	1.67	2.45					
Ethiopia	2.63	2.87	3.09	2.64	2.36	2.35	2.58	2.91	2.77	2.46	2.29
Finland	1.79	1.92	2.75	1.80	1.74	2.67	1.45	1.47	1.17	1.15	1.10
Germany	1.55	1.98	2.42	1.56	1.99						
Hong Kong	2.50	2.60	3.20	3.23	2.69	2.23	1.82	1.92	1.74	1.75	1.66
Hungary	1.78	1.94	2.54	1.43	1.90	2.02	1.42	1.25	1.20	1.14	1.14
Iceland	1.68	1.94	3.17	2.07	1.86	2.39					
India	2.74	3.06	3.18	2.80	2.82	2.91	2.66	2.59	2.51	2.35	2.18
Indonesia	2.68	2.73	3.31	2.78	2.56	3.11	2.94	2.58			
Ireland	1.69	1.90	2.82	1.73	2.05	2.57	1.37				
Israel	1.67	2.22	2.86	1.55	1.71		1.50	1.66			
Italy	1.99	2.87	3.47	2.34	2.14	2.95					
Kazakhstan	2.99	3.34	3.19	2.84	2.90	2.99	2.79	2.70	2.69	2.57	2.73
Kosovo	2.52	2.94	3.00	1.85	1.80	1.77	1.28	1.15	1.07	1.16	1.12
Latvia	1.43	2.09	2.91	1.42	1.70	2.41	1.21	1.19	1.09	1.08	1.05
Lithuania	1.80	2.48	3.49	1.88	2.03	2.64	1.62	1.79	1.19	1.08	1.03
Mexico	2.19	2.57	3.08		2.18		1.69	1.82	1.57	2.27	1.31
Moldova	1.98	2.62	3.33	2.18	2.76	2.74	1.82	1.73	1.63	1.67	1.60
Nepal	3.26	2.76	3.06	2.65	2.56	3.21	2.17	2.23	1.47	2.16	1.60
Netherlands	1.70	2.03	2.92	2.02	2.02	2.34	1.44			1.35	1.15
New Zealand	1.94	2.09	3.17	2.00	2.25	3.01	1.48				
North Cyprus	2.82	2.91	3.48	2.98	2.99	3.05	2.17	2.93		2.16	1.92
North Macedonia	1.84	1.98	2.57	1.72	2.02	2.57	1.68			1.50	
Norway	1.73	1.82	2.91	1.83	2.07	2.44					
Pakistan	2.80	2.78	2.88	2.59	2.48	2.41	2.84	3.23	2.94	2.70	2.72
Paraguay	2.53	2.67	3.04	2.18	1.95	1.35	2.07	1.65	1.58	1.97	1.67
Peru	1.99	2.65	2.79	2.15	1.87	2.65	1.93	1.71	1.56	1.55	1.46
Philippines	2.80	2.77	3.33	2.47	3.07	3.58	2.51	2.38	2.08	2.17	2.00
Poland	2.33	2.86	2.89	1.90	2.19	2.32	1.84	1.66	1.68	1.61	1.60
Portugal	2.58	2.89	3.98	1.39	1.53	2.19	1.60	1.29	1.22	1.23	1.47
Romania	1.54	2.55	2.98	1.88	1.96	2.62	1.87	1.74	1.45	1.40	1.32
Serbia	1.59	2.11	2.65	1.40	1.63	2.35	1.39	1.25	1.11	1.22	1.08
Seychelles	2.22	2.31	2.80	2.13	2.19	2.42	1.75	1.67	1.35	1.33	1.22
Sierra Leone	2.89	3.17	3.43	2.87	3.09	3.06	2.98	2.47	2.37	2.17	2.16
Singapore	2.24	2.24	3.03	2.25	2.11	2.79	1.88	1.80	1.46	1.40	1.32
Slovakia	1.54	2.24	2.75	1.59	1.99	2.49	1.64	1.32	1.13	1.09	1.07
Slovenia	1.69	2.18	3.06	1.51	2.08	2.70	1.38	1.28	1.10	1.12	1.04
South Africa	2.06	2.06	3.36	2.47	2.79	3.20					
South Korea	3.01	3.31	3.69	2.43	2.67	2.77	2.26	1.91	1.71	1.63	1.57
Spain	2.32	2.29	3.45	2.18	2.25	2.62					
Sweden	1.40	1.54	2.53	1.72	1.66	2.16	1.24			1.13	
Switzerland	1.82	2.14	2.77	1.56	2.03						
Taiwan	2.16	2.44	2.70	2.01	2.00	2.06	1.75	1.56	1.33	1.30	1.20
Tanzania	3.24	3.56	3.56	3.02	3.27	3.32					
Thailand	2.90	3.05	3.46	2.90	2.83	2.85	3.10	2.82	2.63	2.60	2.55
Turkey	3.38	2.70	2.62	3.15	2.53	2.14	2.88	2.86	2.89	2.94	2.86
UAE	2.78	3.40	3.83		2.65	3.30	2.59			2.27	
UK	2.11	2.33	3.02	1.66	2.20	2.70	1.48				
Ukraine	1.76	1.74	2.79	1.92	2.36	2.51	1.62	3.28	2.49	1.24	1.29
USA	1.95	2.09	2.99	1.95	1.84	2.80	1.56	1.39	1.10	1.17	1.07
Uzbekistan	2.48	2.95	2.85	2.26	2.31	2.36	2.18	2.18	2.21	2.21	2.21
Venezuela	2.39	2.66	3.38	2.55	2.61		2.26	2.59	2.39	2.45	2.02
Yemen	3.60	3.68	3.81	3.75	3.75	3.84	3.73	3.72	3.74	3.69	3.61
Zambia	3.18	3.42	3.57	2.93	3.43	3.31	3.32	2.15	1.98	1.87	1.23
Average	**2.23**	**2.50**	**3.12**	**2.18**	**2.26**	**2.69**	**1.94**	**1.94**	**1.74**	**1.74**	**1.61**

Mean scores. Question: "Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist." (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Perceptions of Journalistic Roles

THOMAS HANITZSCH & BASYOUNI HAMADA
WITH VALGERÐUR JÓHANNSDÓTTIR, RUI ALEXANDRE NOVAIS, DASNIEL OLIVERA, DARIYA ORLOVA, TINEKE PRINS, WILLIAM PORATH, LAURA STORCH, KEREN TENENBOIM-WEINBLATT & BAOHUA ZHOU

The study of journalistic roles is central to our understanding of journalism's identity and place in society. Such research is particularly relevant at a time when journalism's identity faces existential challenges and its professional ideals have become increasingly ambivalent and fluid. Journalistic roles capture the institutional values, attitudes, and beliefs that journalists embrace as a result of their occupational socialization, and these guide their everyday practice (Hanitzsch & Vos, 2017).

In the Worlds of Journalism Study 3 (WJS3), journalistic ambitions were assessed based on respondents' perceived importance of 24 specific roles. Participants rated each role on a five-point scale, ranging from 1 = "not at all important" to 5 = "extremely important." A subset of these roles was further used to construct four formative indices following the approach detailed in Hanitzsch et al. (2019). Each index groups related role aspects:

- Monitorial role ("provide information people need to form political opinion," "monitor and scrutinize those in power," and "motivate people to participate in politics)
- Collaborative role ("support government policy" and "convey a positive image of political leaders")
- Interventionist role ("advocate for social change," "influence public opinion," "set the political agenda," and "support national development")
  Accommodative role ("provide entertainment and relaxation," "provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience," and "provide advice, orientation, and direction for daily life")

A HIERARCHY OF JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Table 11 provides an overview of journalists' average scores across the four role indices. The table reports centered mean scores to mitigate acquiescence bias—the tendency for respondents to agree with statements regardless of content. Centering converts "raw" country mean scores into relative scores, so that each value reflects the deviation from the overall mean across all four role indices (Fischer, 2004).

The results reveal a clear hierarchy among the roles. Globally, the monitorial role was rated most highly, while the collaborative role was the least valued. The interventionist and accommodative roles were rated almost equally. Journalists in Western countries prioritized the monitorial role, with Denmark, Canada, and Sweden leading the ranking. In contrast, this role was considered least important in authoritarian contexts, including Tanzania, China, and the UAE (see Figure 6). Notably, journalists in China and the UAE were the only ones to positively value the collaborative role—a role largely rejected by European journalists. More broadly, a collaborative role resonated most in countries with limited media freedom, restricted political liberties, and lower socioeconomic development, such as in sub-Saharan Africa.

The interventionist role was more strongly embraced in countries experiencing or recently undergoing political disruption, where journalists could take a proactive part in public discourse. Examples include North Cyprus, North Macedonia, Ukraine, and other Eastern European nations.

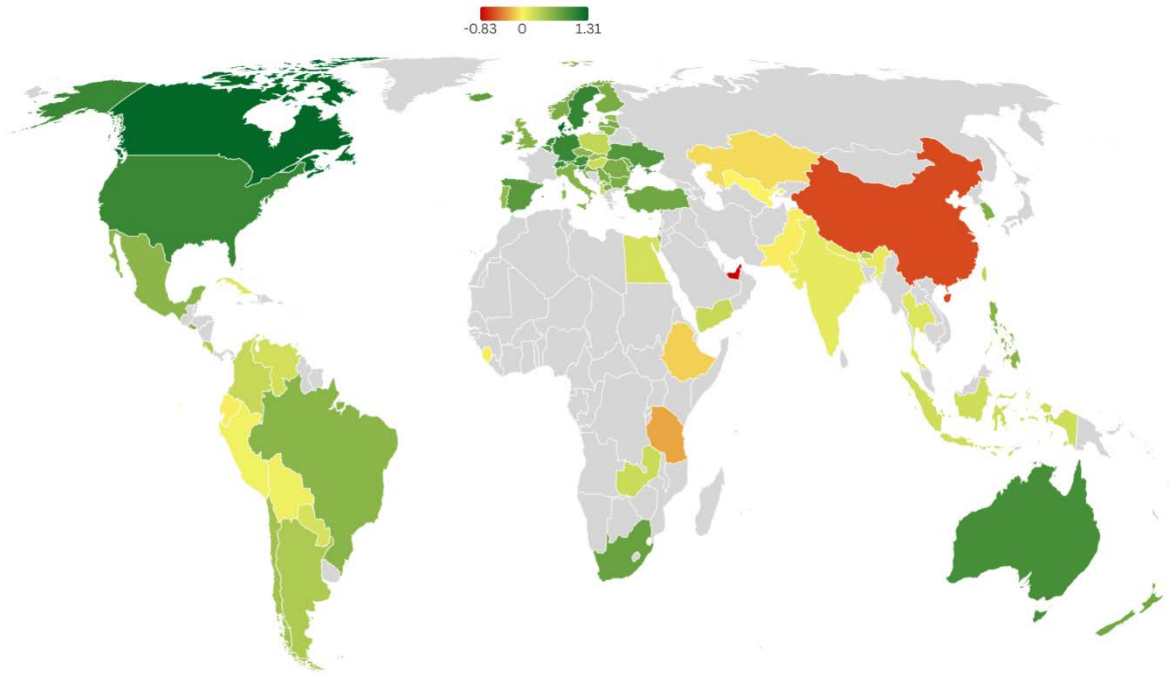


FIGURE 6: GLOBAL RELEVANCE OF MONITORIAL ROLE
Average index scores (centered mean values; higher scores indicate greater importance)

Conversely, this role was least valued in most Western societies and authoritarian states, including China and the UAE. Finally, the accommodative role was most prominent among journalists in Europe and the United States, although its distribution does not strictly follow typical geographic or political patterns.

MONITORIAL ROLE GAINED IN IMPORTANCE

The data in Table 11 also allow for comparisons between the most recent and previous waves of the Worlds of Journalism Study. Overall, 54 countries participated in both the Worlds of Journalism Study 2 (WJS2) (2012–14) and WJS3 (2021–25). As before, the scores presented are centered around the overall mean across the four journalistic role indices.

Globally, the relative importance of the monitorial role has slightly increased (from 0.46 to 0.48), as has the collaborative role (from -0.97 to -0.84). In contrast, the interventionist (from 0.26 to 0.20) and accommodative roles (from 0.27 to 0.16) have modestly declined in perceived relevance. While these changes are minor on a global scale, substantive variation exists across countries in both magnitude and direction.

Table 11 suggests that the monitorial role has grown in importance in the majority of the 54 countries. Notable growth is visible in many Western European countries, particularly Germany and the Netherlands, where right-wing populist parties gained significant influence during the survey period. Several Eastern European countries, such as Latvia, Moldova, and Romania, also show increased emphasis on the monitorial role. In these cases, journalistic culture appears to gradually shift from an interventionist toward a monitorial approach as societies advance through political transition. Conversely, some countries break this general pattern: the relative importance of the monitorial role declined in authoritarian contexts, including China, Egypt, and the UAEs, as well as in democratic societies such as Croatia, Portugal, South Korea, Sweden, and the United States.

Temporal changes in the collaborative role were less pronounced. Overall, countries showing growth in the importance of this role slightly outnumber those reporting a decline. Notably, the collaborative role has increased most substantively in several authoritarian societies, including China, Egypt, and Tanzania.

Both the interventionist and accommodative roles have seen modest declines. This trend is most pronounced for the accommodative role, which lost relative importance in most of the 54 countries participating in both waves. Table 11 also reports noteworthy declines for this role in several Eastern and Western European countries. Declines are particularly evident in Australia, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Bulgaria, Estonia, and Latvia, while journalists in Croatia, Singapore, and the UAE reported substantive growth in support of an accommodative approach.

For the interventionist role, we observed a notable decline for most countries where we observed substantive changes in the relative importance of this role. Journalists reported a comparably smaller appetite for an interventionist approach to news-making in several African, Eastern European, and Latin American countries—examples are Chile, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, and Tanzania. Some Western nations also deviate from the regional norm: journalists in Portugal and the United States reported a significant drop in interventionist emphasis. Conversely, the greatest growth in interventionism occurred in Bhutan and Ethiopia.

POLITICAL ROLES MORE IMPORTANT THAN ROLES RELATED TO EVERYDAY LIFE

Table 12 presents the complete data for all 24 journalistic roles measured in the survey. To enable more intuitive interpretation, the role statements were grouped into clusters of similar roles, following the suggestion of Hanitzsch and Vos (2018). Notably, the scores in this table are not centered; thus, interpretation may be complicated by cultural variability and acquiescence bias, as noted earlier.

Of the seven role clusters, six pertain to political life (informational-instructive, analytical-deliberative, critical-monitorial, advocative-radical, developmental-educative, and collaborative-facilitative), while one cluster captures roles in everyday life. Overall, the results indicate that journalists around the world assign greater importance to political roles than to those related to everyday life. All four roles in the latter category—"telling stories that emotionally move the audience," "providing the kind of news that attracts the largest audience," "providing advice, orientation, and direction for daily life," and "providing entertainment and relaxation"—rank comparatively low on a global scale.

Among the six political role bundles, the critical-monitorial cluster is the most highly valued globally. Within this cluster, two roles—"counteracting disinformation" and "shining a light on society's problems"—received the highest average scores. The third role, "monitoring and scrutinizing those in power," also received relatively strong support. By contrast, roles in the collaborative-facilitative cluster garnered little endorsement, particularly "supporting government policy" and "conveying a positive image of political leaders," which are often viewed as antithetical to the critical-monitorial approach. Journalists were more divided regarding "supporting national development," though it was still rated higher than the other two collaborative-facilitative roles.

Roles in the analytical-deliberative cluster received relatively strong support worldwide, especially "providing analysis of current affairs," "letting people express their views," and "discussing future implications." However, the fourth role in this cluster, "motivating people to participate in politics," was less appealing to journalists in most countries. Similarly, several roles in the advocative-radical cluster, which emphasize substantive political activism—such as "setting the political agenda" and "influencing public opinion"—did not receive strong support globally.

Finally, the informational-instructive cluster ("being a detached observer" and "providing information people need to form political opinion") and the developmental-educative bundle were also rated highly. Within the latter, "educating the audience" ranked third overall among all 24 roles. Other roles, such as "pointing toward possible solutions to society's problems" and "promoting peace and tolerance," were slightly less prominent but still valued. Interestingly, "supporting efforts to protect public health," a role added in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, received the least support within this cluster, though it still ranked around the middle of the overall ranking.

CONCLUSION

Consistent with findings reported by Hanitzsch et al. (2019) from the previous WJS wave, journalists around the world generally prioritize the monitorial role over other journalistic roles measured in the survey. In contrast, the collaborative role received the least support. The monitorial role is especially prominent among journalists in Western countries, whereas the collaborative role finds its strongest support in authoritarian contexts and low-income regions. Over time, the monitorial role has gained further importance, while the interventionist and accommodative roles have become modestly less relevant on a global scale. Overall, journalists continue to assign greater importance to roles linked to journalism's obligations in political life than to those related to everyday life.

TABLE 11: PERCEPTIONS OF JOURNALISTIC ROLES (CENTERED INDEX SCORES)

Country	Monitorial role		Collaborative role		Interventionist role		Accommodative role	
	WJS2	WJS3	WJS2	WJS3	WJS2	WJS3	WJS2	WJS3
Albania	-0.22	0.29	-0.88	-1.16	0.49	0.57	0.61	0.29
Argentina	0.57	0.40	-0.87	-0.48	0.42	0.21	-0.11	-0.13
Australia	0.53	0.94	-1.15	-1.19	-0.07	0.09	0.69	0.17
Austria	0.62	0.95	-1.38	-1.47	-0.15	-0.31	0.91	0.83
Belgium	0.62	0.88	-1.03	-1.07	0.04	-0.06	0.36	0.25
Bhutan	0.44	0.34	-0.50	-0.56	-0.07	0.19	0.14	0.03
Bolivia		0.06		-0.75		0.36		0.33
Brazil	0.49	0.59	-1.07	-0.74	0.42	0.22	0.15	-0.06
Bulgaria	0.46	0.67	-1.46	-1.28	0.66	0.63	0.34	-0.02
Canada	1.05	1.29	-1.28	-1.23	0.12	-0.04	0.11	-0.01
Chile	0.30	0.46	-0.95	-0.59	0.46	0.12	0.19	0.02
China	-0.21	-0.58	0.07	0.76	0.00	-0.13	0.15	-0.05
Colombia	0.30	0.27	-0.92	-0.39	0.47	0.16	0.15	-0.04
Costa Rica		0.38		-0.51		0.16		-0.03
Croatia	1.05	0.68	-1.40	-1.42	0.61	0.56	-0.26	0.18
Cuba		0.14		-0.40		0.36		-0.09
Czech Republic	0.47	0.59	-1.12	-1.11	0.19	0.22	0.45	0.30
Denmark	1.32	1.31	-1.40	-1.38	0.19	0.17	-0.10	-0.09
Ecuador	0.20	-0.03	-0.53	-0.27	0.32	0.15	0.01	0.15
Egypt	0.46	0.20	-0.95	-0.49	0.44	0.24	0.05	0.05
El Salvador	0.36	0.63	-0.82	-0.72	0.54	0.37	-0.08	-0.28
Estonia	0.25	0.53	-1.34	-1.36	0.42	0.45	0.67	0.38
Ethiopia	-0.07	-0.13	-0.33	-0.52	-0.02	0.39	0.46	0.26
Finland	0.70	0.67	-1.43	-1.11	0.20	0.04	0.53	0.40
Germany	0.40	1.01	-1.37	-1.36	-0.18	-0.42	1.15	0.76
Hong Kong	0.80	0.80	-1.01	-1.00	0.10	0.12	0.11	0.08
Hungary	0.02	0.25	-0.89	-1.08	0.20	0.16	0.67	0.67
Iceland	0.67	0.81	-1.13	-1.22	-0.33	-0.11	0.79	0.51
India	0.12	0.11	-0.56	-0.35	0.24	0.25	0.19	-0.01
Indonesia	0.09	0.23	-0.29	-0.44	0.03	0.11	0.17	0.09
Ireland	0.62	0.85	-1.20	-1.18	0.14	0.08	0.44	0.25
Israel	0.34	0.66	-1.40	-1.44	0.77	0.61	0.29	0.17
Italy	0.68	0.61	-1.08	-1.07	0.00	0.18	0.40	0.28
Kazakhstan		-0.09		-0.24		0.21		0.13
Kosovo	0.07	0.45	-0.85	-1.02	0.46	0.47	0.31	0.10
Latvia	0.38	0.68	-1.26	-0.99	0.64	0.45	0.24	-0.14
Lithuania		0.60		-1.23		0.39		0.24
Mexico	0.37	0.58	-0.97	-0.95	0.56	0.41	0.04	-0.04
Moldova	0.27	0.68	-1.11	-1.09	0.57	0.36	0.27	0.06
Nepal		0.12		-0.41		0.26		0.02
Netherlands	0.20	0.98	-0.97	-1.17	-0.06	-0.19	0.82	0.38
NewZealand	0.75	0.71	-1.23	-0.87	0.09	0.09	0.39	0.07
North Cyprus		0.39		-1.24		0.84		0.01
North Macedonia		0.67		-1.68		0.81		0.20
Norway	0.42	0.67	-1.08	-1.11	0.34	0.20	0.32	0.25
Pakistan		-0.03		-0.51		0.24		0.30
Paraguay		0.19		-0.31		0.09		0.03
Peru		0.05		-0.34		0.28		0.01
Philippines	0.60	0.59	-0.84	-0.97	0.41	0.35	-0.18	0.03
Poland		0.29		-0.97		0.26		0.42
Portugal	0.94	0.55	-1.26	-0.47	0.36	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04
Romania	0.19	0.66	-1.19	-0.96	0.55	0.22	0.46	0.08
Serbia	0.42	0.65	-1.27	-1.19	0.66	0.34	0.19	0.20
Seychelles		0.32		-0.92		0.19		0.41
Sierra Leone	0.13	-0.03	-0.70	-0.22	0.40	0.15	0.18	0.10
Singapore	0.05	0.26	-0.01	-0.59	0.01	0.03	-0.06	0.30
Slovakia		0.51		-0.83		-0.05		0.37
Slovenia		1.00		-1.51		0.57		-0.06
South Africa	0.40	0.76	-1.10	-1.22	0.20	0.26	0.50	0.21
South Korea	0.92	0.64	-0.99	-0.90	0.40	0.36	-0.33	-0.11
Spain	0.85	0.85	-1.15	-1.31	0.38	0.35	-0.08	0.11
Sweden	1.36	1.03	-1.37	-1.11	-0.01	-0.11	0.02	0.19
Switzerland	0.72	0.99	-1.22	-1.23	-0.11	-0.29	0.61	0.54
Taiwan		0.30		-0.64		0.18		0.16
Tanzania	0.41	-0.27	-1.34	-0.17	0.90	0.22	0.03	0.22
Thailand	0.10	0.15	-0.21	-0.27	0.06	0.05	0.05	0.07
Turkey	0.50	0.72	-1.18	-1.32	0.71	0.55	-0.04	0.05
UAE	-0.52	-0.83	0.54	0.80	-0.19	-0.47	0.17	0.50
UK	0.48	0.61	-1.10	-1.11	0.06	0.09	0.57	0.42
Ukraine		0.87		-1.14		0.72		-0.46
USA	1.24	1.01	-1.10	-1.09	0.06	-0.37	0.34	0.45
Uzbekistan		-0.01		-0.09		0.05		0.05
Venezuela		0.21		-0.52		0.17		0.14
Yemen		0.27		-0.40		0.14		-0.01
Zambia		0.25		-0.56		0.17		0.14
Average[1]	**0.46**	**0.48**	**-0.97**	**-0.84**	**0.26**	**0.20**	**0.27**	**0.16**

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

[1]Average across the countries listed in the table (the original WJS2 sample included 67 countries)

TABLE 12: PERCEPTIONS OF JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Country	INFORMATIONAL-INSTRUCTIVE		ANALYTICAL-DELIBERATIVE				CRITICAL-MONITORIAL		
	Be a detached observer	Provide information people need to form political opinion	Provide analysis of current affairs	Let people express their views	Discuss future implications	Motivate people to participate in politics	Counteract disinformation	Shine a light on society's problems	Monitor and scrutinize those in power
Albania	4.30	3.68	3.71	4.31	3.89	2.19	4.56	4.50	3.63
Argentina	3.77	4.09	4.11	4.27	3.85	2.81	4.41	4.34	3.92
Australia	4.02	3.73	3.67	3.90	N/A	2.53	4.29	4.24	4.25
Austria	4.37	4.30	4.16	3.40	3.86	3.12	4.37	3.98	3.54
Belgium	4.25	3.70	4.09	3.59	3.80	2.61	4.38	4.30	3.63
Bhutan	4.22	3.93	4.44	4.74	4.19	3.51	4.55	4.60	4.16
Bolivia	4.09	3.78	4.13	4.25	4.61	2.38	4.33	4.47	3.84
Brazil	4.04	4.39	4.31	4.19	4.36	3.68	4.74	4.67	4.35
Bulgaria	4.38	4.27	4.45	4.49	4.21	2.96	4.75	4.58	3.90
Canada	3.84	4.08	4.05	3.81	4.05	2.68	4.53	4.53	4.37
Chile	4.41	4.42	4.45	4.62	4.23	3.12	4.76	4.72	4.55
China	3.43	3.35	3.78	3.70	N/A	2.81	4.50	3.76	2.93
Colombia	4.27	4.30	4.36	4.47	4.04	3.14	4.57	4.60	4.19
Costa Rica	4.16	4.38	4.38	4.42	4.11	3.21	4.66	4.59	4.33
Croatia	4.07	4.08	4.18	4.23	4.05	3.41	4.42	4.38	3.94
Cuba	3.60	4.18	4.35	4.25	3.96	2.83	4.38	4.31	3.26
Czech Republic	4.42	3.38	3.76	3.82	3.21	2.25	4.29	4.06	3.92
Denmark	4.00	4.19	3.80	3.39	N/A	2.90	4.61	4.58	4.23
Ecuador	3.97	3.92	4.10	4.16	4.55	3.07	4.16	4.30	3.79
Egypt	4.75	4.13	4.24	3.96	4.12	3.71	4.67	4.44	3.91
El Salvador	4.05	4.40	4.33	4.39	4.19	3.09	4.64	4.61	4.41
Estonia	4.47	3.63	3.90	3.97	3.76	2.58	4.36	4.52	4.18
Ethiopia	3.62	3.53	4.17	4.32	N/A	3.11	4.15	4.34	3.46
Finland	4.06	3.31	4.04	3.75	3.64	2.67	4.21	4.07	3.66
Germany	4.16	4.34	4.27	3.55	3.81	3.23	4.38	4.09	3.52
Hong Kong	3.71	3.70	3.91	4.15	3.79	2.50	4.05	4.30	4.13
Hungary	4.22	3.11	2.90	3.28	3.24	2.29	4.01	3.89	3.31
Iceland	4.32	3.53	4.57	3.92	N/A	2.06	4.38	4.15	4.17
India	4.11	3.73	4.11	4.05	4.03	3.21	4.01	4.27	3.74
Indonesia	3.46	4.26	4.29	4.40	4.06	3.46	4.58	4.53	3.84
Ireland	3.91	3.58	3.65	3.66	3.75	2.22	4.29	4.20	4.09
Israel	3.04	3.96	3.98	3.90	4.24	2.80	4.53	4.44	4.23
Italy	4.41	3.63	4.13	3.71	N/A	2.62	4.48	4.04	3.60
Kazakhstan	3.31	3.40	3.78	3.85	3.62	3.38	3.96	3.80	3.17
Kosovo	4.26	3.22	3.38	3.92	4.13	2.39	4.54	4.38	4.42
Latvia	3.86	3.59	4.19	3.98	3.91	3.16	4.44	4.39	3.88
Lithuania	4.63	3.68	4.05	3.88	3.99	2.56	4.41	4.53	4.03
Mexico	4.41	4.31	4.31	4.41	4.12	3.15	4.66	4.68	4.31
Moldova	3.77	3.99	4.15	4.03	3.85	3.23	4.48	4.42	3.78
Nepal	4.37	3.94	4.05	4.33	4.03	3.48	4.15	4.25	3.96
Netherlands	3.65	3.52	3.97	3.37	3.72	2.39	3.90	4.10	4.13
New Zealand	3.53	3.38	3.42	3.56	N/A	2.76	3.95	3.97	3.92
North Cyprus	4.66	3.82	4.47	4.61	4.30	2.66	4.52	4.81	4.42
North Macedonia	4.68	3.85	4.75	4.59	4.53	3.15	4.88	4.86	4.68
Norway	3.81	3.51	3.42	3.88	3.64	2.71	4.17	4.19	3.38
Pakistan	3.33	3.46	3.59	3.85	3.69	2.78	3.90	3.89	3.33
Paraguay	3.88	4.18	4.26	4.24	4.19	3.52	4.49	4.38	4.13
Peru	4.03	3.83	4.13	4.13	4.05	2.92	4.19	4.29	4.01
Philippines	3.48	4.23	4.32	4.35	4.45	3.62	4.83	4.51	4.35
Poland	3.99	3.69	4.16	3.99	3.65	3.20	4.10	4.10	3.46
Portugal	4.88	3.61	4.30	4.01	3.87	3.29	4.11	4.11	4.71
Romania	4.06	3.99	4.08	4.08	3.99	3.15	4.49	4.36	3.66
Serbia	4.51	3.90	4.30	4.16	4.05	3.09	4.58	4.44	3.99
Seychelles	3.89	3.73	4.00	4.44	3.75	2.97	4.16	4.40	3.83
Sierra Leone	3.30	4.10	4.23	4.33	4.02	3.37	3.97	4.26	3.98
Singapore	3.76	3.40	4.10	3.60	4.04	2.11	4.30	4.20	3.38
Slovakia	4.38	3.38	3.66	3.27	3.65	2.75	3.96	4.06	3.46
Slovenia	4.37	4.38	4.32	3.81	4.16	2.36	4.64	4.64	4.26
South Africa	3.88	3.85	4.04	4.14	4.14	2.90	4.56	4.58	4.34
South Korea	3.99	3.80	3.78	3.48	3.88	3.37	4.09	4.28	4.26
Spain	4.59	4.29	4.38	4.39	3.94	2.66	4.70	4.85	4.33
Sweden	4.23	3.52	3.88	4.26	N/A	2.34	4.39	4.31	4.21
Switzerland	4.17	4.32	4.10	3.43	3.72	3.14	4.12	3.88	3.44
Taiwan	4.22	3.75	4.05	3.98	4.01	3.20	4.24	4.24	4.01
Tanzania	2.14	3.53	3.67	3.90	3.69	2.93	3.93	3.85	2.78
Thailand	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.34	3.99	3.92	4.41	4.42	4.10
Turkey	4.57	4.63	4.10	4.32	4.05	3.28	4.29	4.38	4.01
UAE	4.67	3.40	2.59	2.86	3.51	2.32	4.13	2.64	2.32
UK	3.93	2.95	3.45	3.58	3.60	2.20	3.94	3.78	3.78
Ukraine	2.96	3.74	4.18	3.94	4.19	3.45	4.78	4.54	4.18
USA	3.80	3.54	3.58	3.66	3.78	2.64	4.24	3.97	4.05
Uzbekistan	3.20	2.88	2.96	2.98	2.84	2.74	2.98	2.89	2.72
Venezuela	4.11	4.08	4.24	4.31	3.94	2.91	4.61	4.53	4.08
Yemen	4.45	3.98	4.02	4.00	3.84	3.98	3.93	4.23	4.35
Zambia	3.49	4.25	4.42	4.57	4.31	3.75	3.49	4.41	4.31
Average	**4.02**	**3.84**	**4.02**	**4.00**	**3.95**	**2.94**	**4.33**	**4.28**	**3.90**

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

TABLE 12: PERCEPTIONS OF JOURNALISTIC ROLES (CONTINUED)

Country	ADVOCATIVE-RADICAL				DEVELOPMENTAL-EDUCATIVE			
	Speak on behalf of the marginalized	Advocate for social change	Influence public opinion	Set the political agenda	Educate the audience	Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	Promote peace and tolerance	Support efforts to protect public health
Albania	3.77	4.00	3.46	2.16	4.19	4.19	4.16	4.20
Argentina	3.86	3.77	3.20	3.09	3.84	3.74	4.07	3.87
Australia	3.54	2.99	2.56	2.28	4.33	3.53	3.17	3.41
Austria	3.52	2.93	2.33	1.98	3.78	3.79	3.52	3.01
Belgium	2.99	2.70	2.29	2.18	4.07	3.60	3.29	2.98
Bhutan	4.24	4.34	3.24	2.67	4.78	4.41	4.23	4.44
Bolivia	3.73	4.13	3.48	2.88	4.31	4.11	4.48	3.98
Brazil	3.97	4.20	3.60	3.26	4.04	4.19	4.36	4.27
Bulgaria	3.71	4.02	3.68	2.80	4.52	4.12	4.39	4.29
Canada	3.65	2.92	2.44	2.01	4.59	3.72	3.04	3.22
Chile	4.20	3.77	3.72	3.10	4.33	4.01	4.35	4.20
China	3.68	3.07	3.59	2.76	3.55	3.80	3.83	4.00
Colombia	4.24	4.11	3.77	3.12	4.47	4.12	4.52	4.14
Costa Rica	4.28	4.12	3.65	2.99	4.44	4.18	4.34	4.13
Croatia	4.27	4.21	3.85	2.99	4.50	4.34	4.51	4.23
Cuba	3.97	3.64	3.85	3.14	4.19	3.98	4.06	3.78
Czech Republic	3.38	2.77	2.72	2.86	3.99	3.73	3.75	3.41
Denmark	3.29	2.50	2.44	2.95	3.56	3.58	2.83	2.33
Ecuador	4.28	4.18	3.52	3.13	4.33	4.14	4.31	3.97
Egypt	4.18	3.85	4.13	3.48	4.49	4.25	4.40	4.23
El Salvador	4.41	4.06	3.80	3.09	4.38	4.13	4.21	4.02
Estonia	3.42	3.37	3.32	3.37	4.29	4.12	3.81	3.47
Ethiopia	4.27	4.27	3.76	3.15	4.43	4.46	4.62	4.10
Finland	3.22	2.80	2.78	1.76	3.77	3.48	3.56	2.84
Germany	3.48	2.58	2.39	1.90	3.96	3.81	3.67	2.81
Hong Kong	4.14	3.34	3.10	2.54	3.91	3.45	3.45	3.24
Hungary	3.02	3.26	2.74	2.18	3.93	3.68	3.53	3.03
Iceland	3.27	2.80	2.29	1.48	4.45	3.37	2.87	2.94
India	4.01	4.03	3.61	3.06	4.21	4.10	4.19	3.95
Indonesia	4.39	4.17	3.57	3.06	4.61	4.42	4.64	4.42
Ireland	3.62	2.94	2.47	2.11	4.19	3.32	2.92	3.19
Israel	4.15	3.92	4.01	3.37	2.88	3.98	3.79	3.76
Italy	3.38	3.48	2.49	2.18	3.31	3.43	3.49	3.69
Kazakhstan	2.89	3.57	3.72	3.27	3.91	3.81	3.77	3.55
Kosovo	4.25	4.00	3.46	2.39	4.24	3.97	4.54	4.26
Latvia	2.87	3.61	3.43	2.83	4.44	4.03	3.94	3.91
Lithuania	3.67	3.93	3.05	2.17	4.49	3.96	4.21	3.71
Mexico	4.38	4.21	3.71	3.21	3.91	4.10	4.37	4.23
Moldova	3.66	3.73	3.00	2.72	4.36	3.97	4.28	3.88
Nepal	4.07	4.21	3.83	3.60	4.21	4.13	4.21	4.07
Netherlands	3.15	2.18	2.26	2.57	3.79	3.33	2.94	2.36
New Zealand	3.55	3.16	2.70	2.28	3.99	3.43	3.12	3.29
North Cyprus	3.19	4.01	4.05	3.85	3.86	4.34	4.61	4.44
North Macedonia	4.70	4.67	4.57	2.16	4.85	4.61	4.84	4.69
Norway	3.45	2.92	2.45	2.85	4.46	3.50	3.07	2.64
Pakistan	3.62	3.76	3.48	2.61	4.34	3.83	4.25	4.04
Paraguay	4.34	4.16	3.77	3.19	4.34	4.16	4.37	4.25
Peru	4.39	4.14	3.65	3.36	4.10	4.22	4.32	4.14
Philippines	4.27	4.27	3.79	3.14	4.75	4.35	4.21	4.43
Poland	3.45	3.79	3.55	2.62	4.10	3.76	4.07	3.42
Portugal	2.94	3.40	3.63	3.30	3.13	3.07	3.22	3.56
Romania	3.74	3.58	2.74	2.40	4.29	3.81	4.16	3.99
Serbia	4.24	3.69	3.91	2.29	4.25	4.31	4.43	4.19
Seychelles	4.08	4.02	3.40	2.11	4.78	4.29	4.38	3.87
Sierra Leone	4.26	4.27	3.91	3.53	4.55	4.35	4.44	4.15
Singapore	3.58	3.14	2.85	1.93	4.39	3.67	3.38	3.53
Slovakia	3.35	2.54	2.71	1.95	4.06	3.91	3.83	3.77
Slovenia	4.05	3.55	2.97	3.08	4.32	4.03	4.28	3.78
South Africa	4.09	3.73	3.14	2.42	4.60	4.00	3.85	3.59
South Korea	4.01	3.65	3.65	3.45	3.12	3.78	3.36	3.55
Spain	4.01	3.77	3.15	2.60	3.69	3.75	4.23	4.11
Sweden	2.75	2.68	2.28	2.00	3.84	3.04	3.01	2.43
Switzerland	3.23	2.58	2.28	2.24	3.49	3.49	3.02	2.58
Taiwan	4.22	3.77	3.50	3.23	4.03	3.97	3.68	3.90
Tanzania	3.92	3.85	3.61	2.93	3.97	3.94	3.96	3.91
Thailand	4.30	4.13	3.82	3.69	4.53	4.31	4.12	4.36
Turkey	3.09	4.06	4.12	3.24	3.85	4.16	4.22	4.15
UAE	4.09	2.96	3.01	3.11	4.50	4.40	2.60	3.25
UK	3.14	2.72	2.65	2.13	4.41	3.16	2.77	2.66
Ukraine	2.56	4.05	3.68	2.65	4.26	4.09	3.78	3.77
USA	3.55	2.40	2.20	1.56	4.58	3.45	2.89	3.42
Uzbekistan	2.65	2.94	2.85	2.57	3.05	2.91	3.12	2.75
Venezuela	4.38	4.08	3.71	2.64	4.53	4.21	4.32	4.14
Yemen	3.95	4.10	4.01	3.76	4.15	4.03	4.06	3.98
Zambia	4.44	4.40	3.92	3.38	4.57	4.35	4.49	4.32
Average	**3.76**	**3.59**	**3.28**	**2.75**	**4.16**	**3.91**	**3.88**	**3.71**

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

TABLE 12: PERCEPTIONS OF JOURNALISTIC ROLES (CONTINUED)

Country	COLLABORATIVE-FACILITATIVE						EVERYDAY LIFE
	Support national development	Support government policy	Convey a positive image of political leaders	Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	Provide entertainment and relaxation
Albania	4.12	1.76	1.70	3.12	3.32	3.53	2.66
Argentina	3.59	2.87	2.59	3.58	3.28	3.01	2.96
Australia	2.77	1.49	1.26	3.58	2.96	2.32	2.92
Austria	2.32	1.27	1.21	3.89	3.71	3.66	3.25
Belgium	2.32	1.31	1.43	2.99	2.63	2.87	2.58
Bhutan	4.59	3.61	2.36	3.55	3.92	3.45	3.31
Bolivia	4.09	3.33	1.73	3.92	3.97	3.87	2.99
Brazil	4.03	3.30	2.31	3.48	3.78	3.41	3.27
Bulgaria	4.14	1.93	1.59	3.51	3.26	3.02	2.77
Canada	2.16	1.29	1.10	3.41	2.67	2.31	2.24
Chile	4.13	3.14	2.81	3.63	3.91	3.50	3.33
China	4.41	4.40	4.38	3.86	3.84	3.89	3.01
Colombia	4.08	3.46	2.97	4.14	3.89	3.65	3.18
Costa Rica	4.28	3.14	3.02	3.93	3.84	3.70	3.14
Croatia	3.70	1.78	1.64	3.50	3.48	3.66	2.80
Cuba	3.95	3.42	2.35	4.01	3.46	3.24	2.90
Czech Republic	2.92	1.50	1.48	3.35	3.00	2.69	3.01
Denmark	2.66	1.05	1.11	2.76	2.21	2.78	2.15
Ecuador	4.25	3.47	3.24	4.08	3.96	3.82	3.53
Egypt	4.37	3.37	3.07	3.09	3.84	3.77	3.68
El Salvador	3.85	2.75	2.48	3.65	3.57	3.05	2.54
Estonia	3.49	1.79	1.35	3.98	3.81	3.21	2.92
Ethiopia	4.34	3.25	2.70	3.09	4.01	3.62	3.61
Finland	2.99	1.47	1.40	3.15	2.98	3.02	2.81
Germany	2.16	1.39	1.28	3.49	3.54	3.67	3.13
Hong Kong	2.10	1.79	1.51	3.19	2.90	2.91	2.38
Hungary	3.06	1.61	1.52	3.15	3.06	3.26	3.63
Iceland	2.82	1.24	1.23	3.19	3.13	2.57	3.16
India	4.11	3.35	2.85	3.27	3.66	3.41	3.26
Indonesia	4.13	3.45	2.91	4.17	4.02	3.55	3.56
Ireland	2.58	1.33	1.20	3.31	2.86	2.28	2.94
Israel	3.16	1.60	1.52	3.67	3.57	3.03	2.91
Italy	3.19	1.78	1.42	3.34	3.35	2.92	2.55
Kazakhstan	3.91	3.31	3.02	3.30	3.76	3.59	3.26
Kosovo	3.60	1.93	1.83	2.86	3.12	2.96	2.96
Latvia	3.35	2.14	1.60	3.37	2.87	2.65	2.62
Lithuania	3.69	1.78	1.40	3.23	3.63	2.98	2.60
Mexico	3.88	3.01	1.77	3.99	3.78	3.35	2.78
Moldova	3.94	2.33	1.46	2.73	3.24	3.09	2.82
Nepal	4.08	3.57	2.95	3.73	3.51	4.16	3.42
Netherlands	1.72	1.21	1.19	3.17	2.56	2.98	2.72
New Zealand	2.80	1.88	1.68	3.14	2.81	2.45	2.88
North Cyprus	4.43	1.92	2.04	2.93	3.10	3.44	3.22
North Macedonia	4.67	1.74	1.47	3.60	3.43	3.57	3.46
Norway	2.68	1.32	1.51	3.82	2.83	2.67	2.83
Pakistan	4.01	2.89	2.54	3.25	3.76	3.47	3.34
Paraguay	4.21	3.64	3.24	3.74	4.04	3.79	3.49
Peru	4.13	3.51	2.89	3.80	3.83	3.66	3.17
Philippines	4.08	3.01	2.00	3.80	3.79	3.67	3.04
Poland	3.71	2.28	2.11	3.49	3.80	3.31	3.61
Portugal	2.79	2.98	2.73	3.25	3.39	3.27	3.19
Romania	3.92	2.43	1.54	2.71	3.29	3.03	2.74
Serbia	3.50	1.87	1.76	3.49	3.30	3.41	2.93
Seychelles	4.00	2.78	1.76	3.59	3.84	3.62	3.33
Sierra Leone	4.31	3.98	3.32	3.91	4.19	3.98	3.73
Singapore	2.99	2.40	1.82	3.47	3.28	2.89	2.82
Slovakia	3.34	2.38	1.33	2.63	3.24	3.42	2.49
Slovenia	3.35	1.18	1.13	2.46	3.08	2.65	2.08
South Africa	3.49	2.09	1.34	3.80	3.45	3.08	2.90
South Korea	3.36	2.52	2.02	3.26	3.27	3.13	2.79
Spain	3.52	1.63	1.58	3.48	3.15	3.05	2.88
Sweden	1.96	1.12	1.33	3.65	2.11	2.80	2.68
Switzerland	2.31	1.47	1.36	3.57	3.41	3.25	2.89
Taiwan	3.65	3.04	2.39	3.86	3.72	3.71	3.11
Tanzania	3.90	3.32	3.05	3.74	3.63	3.63	3.47
Thailand	4.27	3.81	3.51	3.90	4.05	4.04	3.88
Turkey	3.82	1.92	1.96	2.87	3.67	3.29	2.96
UAE	3.29	4.35	4.35	4.04	3.86	4.16	4.14
UK	2.32	1.34	1.18	3.25	2.93	2.37	3.07
Ukraine	4.21	2.09	1.48	3.43	2.59	2.82	1.98
USA	1.94	1.44	1.19	3.80	3.21	2.57	2.79
Uzbekistan	3.02	2.88	2.53	2.85	2.95	2.83	2.73
Venezuela	4.18	3.10	2.81	4.06	3.99	3.68	3.18
Yemen	4.04	3.53	3.33	3.85	3.77	3.99	3.73
Zambia	4.40	3.82	2.76	3.98	4.18	3.95	3.86
Average	**3.52**	**2.44**	**2.07**	**3.48**	**3.42**	**3.27**	**3.04**

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

Journalistic Epistemologies

Jesús Arroyave, Tim Vos & Wiebke Loosen
with Timothy Klein, Rachel Reis Mourao, Taewoo Kang, Marcos Paulo da Silva, Lourdes Cueva Chacón, Samiksaha Koirala, Esther Thorson & Sergio Splendore

The Worlds of Journalism Study 3 (WJS3) provides unprecedented insight into how journalists across the globe conceptualize the truth-seeking and truth-sharing facets of their profession. Drawing on cross-national survey data from 75 countries, this chapter examines the epistemological assumptions that underpin journalistic practice worldwide.

By epistemologies, we mean the ways journalists think about what they are able to know about the world and how what is known is communicated to their audiences. Objectivity, rooted in a realist perspective, has long been the epistemological heart of Western journalism (Maras, 2013). This approach assumes that the world is knowable, that fact and opinion can be distinguished, and that knowledge can be imparted to others impartially and fairly (Thomas, 2019). Yet objectivity is only one approach. Other perspectives, such as subjectivity as a journalistic ideal (Steensen, 2017) or more activist forms of journalism (Ginosar & Reich, 2022), illustrate the pluralistic epistemologies that exist globally. Hence, we use the plural epistemologies to recognize the diverse approaches to seeking and sharing truth across contexts.

What's more, journalists have been contending with challenges to traditional approaches. Transparency has gained traction, with journalists increasingly acknowledging the need to be open about their motives and professional positioning (Karlsson, 2022). A fact-checking movement has taken hold around the world, where journalists have wrestled with the ambiguities of facts and interpretations (Graves & Lauer, 2020). The notion of a "balanced presentation" of the news has drawn critics, leading to new outlooks (Hiles & Hinnant, 2014), and seemingly all media systems now feature more partisan and advocacy outlets (Waisbord, 2009). Finally, in light of the challenges of misinformation and fragile public trust in the media that journalism faces in many countries (Newman et al., 2025), the question of its epistemic foundations becomes increasingly pressing. This underscores the need for a deeper understanding of journalistic epistemologies.

The main conceptual contours in journalistic epistemologies are often anchored in realism (also identified as naturalism and positivism), interpretivism (also known as constructivism), or intuition (Potter, 2017). Realism – in line with objectivity, sees the world as knowable and knowledge as readily transferable. Interpretivism, by contrast, views knowledge as inseparable from human and social experience, conveyed only through the perspectives of those whose experiences are relied upon. In this context, objectivity can also be interpreted as a strategic ritual within journalism rather than a direct mirror of reality (Tuchman, 1972). More recently, constructivist perspectives have also become visible in journalism as an epistemological orientation that places greater emphasis on the media's specific principles of selection and construction and abandons the belief that reality can be represented independently of the (journalistic) observer (Pörksen, 2013), which may be the result of new journalistic actors taking a leading role in the field. Meanwhile, intuition is a matter of

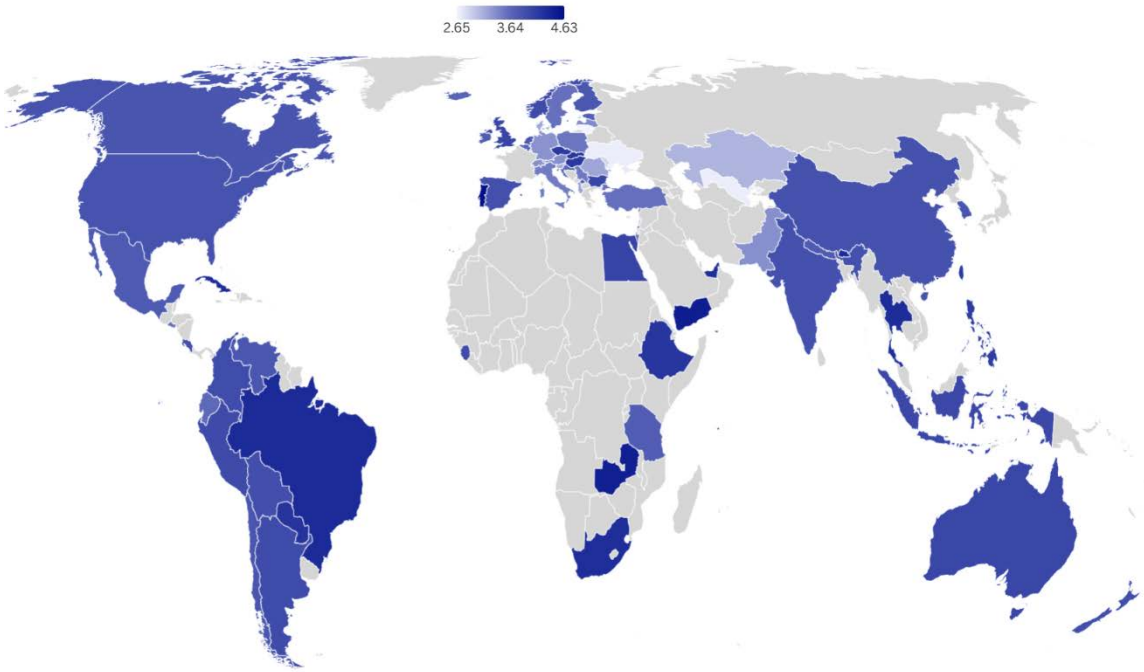


FIGURE 7: RELEVANCE OF INTERPRETATION IN NEWS MAKING
Average ratings of "Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts" (Scale: 5 = strongly agree … 1 = strongly disagree)

believing in one's instincts or gut feelings, often referred to as a "journalistic instinct" that journalists develop through newsroom experience, allowing them to "know" what is true (Schultz, 2007).

This theoretical overview provides a conceptual foundation to better understand the diverse epistemological assumptions underpinning journalistic practice identified through the analysis of data gathered from journalists in 75 countries. To assess journalists' epistemological views, we posed a series of questions, asking them to rate their agreement with a series of statements on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

INTERPRETATION, OBJECTIVITY, AND THE NATURE OF TRUTH

While the data on journalistic epistemologies reveal considerable variation shaped by national and regional contexts, they also highlight convergences in how journalists approach knowledge production, evidence, and social responsibility in the digital age. For example, there is broad international agreement that facts do not speak for themselves. In nearly all countries, the average level of agreement with the statement, "Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts," exceeds the midpoint of the 5-point scale, often substantially (see Table 13). Countries such as Portugal, Yemen, Zambia, Brazil, and Cuba stand out, yet the general pattern indicates that many journalists believe facts are not self-explanatory but require context to be understandable, departing from a pure realist perspective.

This understanding coexists with a persistent, though more moderate belief that "It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting." In many countries, journalists express agreement with this idea, with values above 3.5 in places such as Albania, Moldova, Bulgaria, Zambia, and Lithuania. However, endorsement of the notion that journalists can completely withhold their personal beliefs is less consistent. Only a few countries—Yemen, Taiwan, Ukraine, Hong Kong, and Cuba—show average agreement above 3.4; in most cases, agreement hovers around or below the scale midpoint.

Support for a binary view of truth is similarly limited. Countries including Australia, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria, and Germany show low agreement with the statement, "Things are either true or false, there is no in-between." These responses suggest that journalists globally prefer more nuanced, context-sensitive understandings of truth over rigid, absolute interpretations.

POWER, BIAS, AND STRUCTURAL AWARENESS

Beyond questions of objectivity and interpretation, many journalists also recognize the structural forces that shape what is considered true. In countries such as Yemen, Ukraine, Thailand, Bhutan, and Hong Kong, agreement with the statement "Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power" is particularly high. This perspective reflects an acute awareness of the political and institutional contexts that influence journalism, especially in societies where trust in authority is contested. However, on a global average, this viewpoint receives the lowest support among all surveyed items (global mean = 2.77).

Similarly, journalists across regions demonstrate awareness of the limits of neutrality. Agreement with the notion that it is impossible to fully separate personal beliefs from reporting is often moderate to high, indicating a widely shared acknowledgment of subjectivity in news work (global mean = 2.88).

PROFESSIONAL NORMS AND SOCIAL COMMITMENTS

Amid epistemological complexity, certain professional principles emerge with remarkable clarity. Across nearly all countries, there is strong support for the statement, "Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful." Slovakia, Moldova, Austria, and Canada exhibit particularly high averages, though support is robust globally (global mean = 4.07). This indicates that verification remains not merely an ideal but a core communicative practice, moving beyond simple stenography ("he said, she said") toward adjudication—a practice that underpins journalism's relationship with audiences in an era of growing uncertainty (see Table 14).

Consistent with this emphasis on verification, transparency now enjoys substantial endorsement across many media systems. In Thailand, the UAE, Slovakia, Moldova, Zambia, and Paraguay, journalists express support for making their own standpoint visible in their work (global mean = 3.33). While historically resisted in some cultures, transparency is increasingly recognized as a marker of professional responsibility rather than bias.

The data also reflect support for relational or proximity-based approaches to reporting. Journalists in Thailand, North Cyprus, the UAE, Zambia, and Iceland show strong agreement with the notion that they should be embedded in the communities they cover to represent them accurately (global mean = 3.06). These responses suggest that community engagement and local connectedness are viewed as important strengths of contemporary journalistic practice.

INTUITION, EVIDENCE, AND THE ROLE OF JUDGMENT

More intuitive or instinctive approaches to truth-finding elicit greater ambivalence among journalists. While some countries, including India and the UAE, show relatively high agreement with the statement "Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not," many other countries report scores near or below the scale midpoint (global mean = 2.80).

Conversely, the principle that "journalists should let the facts speak for themselves" receives broad endorsement. Journalists in Iceland, Slovakia, Hong Kong, and South Africa report the highest levels of agreement. Even in countries where interpretation is highly valued, respondents maintain strong support for evidence-based reporting (global mean = 3.83). This suggests an epistemological balance: journalists acknowledge the role of interpretation and subjectivity while upholding factual rigor. Journalists seemingly recognize that instinct as a way of knowing has the vulnerability of reproducing bias and stereotypes.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this chapter suggest that journalistic epistemologies are marked by a dynamic interplay between traditional professional norms and evolving interpretive commitments. This addresses the question of what journalism itself means in a global and multicultural context. While foundational ideals such as factual verification and the responsibility to convey truth to audiences remain widely upheld, journalists increasingly recognize that truth is not merely discovered but actively constructed through interpretation and situated practice. The near-universal agreement that journalists should alert audiences when

sources are untruthful shows that commitment to factual accuracy continues to anchor professional identity. This coexistence of verification imperatives and interpretive awareness highlights a pluralistic epistemological landscape rather than a departure from tradition.

A more expansive view of knowledge production also emerges through the strong endorsement of transparency, reflexivity, and community embeddedness across many countries. Journalists increasingly support the idea that they should disclose their perspectives and be connected to the communities they cover in order to portray them accurately, highlighting the role of subjectivity in newsgathering. This signals a shift away from a model of detached, neutral observers toward a more embedded and contextually aware professional role. Crucially, this evolution does not suggest the abandonment of objectivity; rather, it represents a reconfiguration of what objectivity means in practice—one that combines evidentiary rigor with interpretive honesty and, in certain contexts, advocacy on behalf of marginalized groups.

Contemporary journalism thus appears to be negotiating an epistemological middle ground: upholding core values of truth-telling and verification while simultaneously adapting to the complexities of a fragmented and contested information environment. Rather than signaling crisis or incoherence, this pluralism reflects an effort to sustain journalism's democratic function through a more reflective and context-sensitive approach to knowledge. By integrating verification with transparency, and facts with interpretation, journalists are cultivating an epistemic posture that could be better suited to addressing the challenges of misinformation, declining trust, and shifting audience expectations.

TABLE 13: JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES (MANDATORY QUESTIONS)

Country	Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting
Albania	3.21	2.52	2.32	3.23	4.37
Argentina	3.94	2.16	3.26	2.51	3.15
Australia	4.00	2.95	2.69	2.37	3.75
Austria	3.35	2.43	2.62	1.61	3.56
Belgium	3.70	2.83	2.76	2.09	3.66
Bhutan	4.31	3.71	3.28	3.43	3.88
Bolivia	3.90	2.15	2.96	3.60	3.87
Brazil	4.32	3.05	3.23	3.00	3.74
Bulgaria	4.01	1.98	2.82	2.92	4.27
Canada	3.82	2.67	2.83	2.17	3.51
Chile	3.82	1.98	2.95	2.86	3.60
China	3.87	3.37	3.08	2.60	3.87
Colombia	3.93	2.21	3.07	2.89	3.69
Costa Rica	3.91	2.33	3.31	3.07	3.72
Croatia	3.69	1.95	2.67	2.52	3.71
Cuba	4.30	2.52	3.45	2.50	3.61
Czech Republic	4.15	2.01	2.32	2.42	3.64
Denmark	3.20	2.79	2.66	2.05	3.39
Ecuador	3.62	2.77	3.09	3.52	3.67
Egypt	4.03	3.14	3.26	3.12	4.01
El Salvador	3.56	2.07	2.96	2.94	3.39
Estonia	3.72	3.54	3.03	2.12	3.68
Ethiopia	4.19	3.33	3.04	3.13	3.70
Finland	3.80	3.58	2.67	2.13	3.15
Germany	3.33	1.95	2.35	1.41	3.55
Hong Kong	4.38	3.66	3.56	2.53	3.82
Hungary	4.16	3.40	2.85	3.01	3.70
Iceland	3.65	2.56	2.12	2.69	3.78
India	3.88	3.30	3.19	3.26	3.74
Indonesia	3.98	2.38	2.52	2.93	4.18
Ireland	3.75	2.93	2.42	2.39	3.79
Israel	3.56	3.04	3.11	2.81	3.60
Italy	3.49	3.06	2.84	2.70	3.60
Kazakhstan	3.10	2.80	3.04	3.17	3.04
Kosovo	3.82	1.86	2.17	3.00	3.35
Latvia	3.38	2.29	3.16	3.28	3.82
Lithuania	2.65	1.65	2.40	2.44	4.02
Mexico	3.77	2.08	3.07	2.98	3.58
Moldova	2.87	2.97	2.71	3.34	4.30
Nepal	3.76	3.36	2.92	3.58	3.55
Netherlands	3.82	2.16	2.61	2.28	3.18
New Zealand	3.91	3.06	2.84	2.46	3.68
North Cyprus	3.29	2.69	3.02	3.19	4.13
Norway	3.94	2.73	3.17	2.06	3.37
Pakistan	3.35	3.33	3.07	3.25	3.42
Paraguay	4.21	2.50	3.20	3.50	3.75
Peru	3.95	2.14	2.88	3.90	3.98
Philippines	4.11	3.28	3.10	3.41	3.90
Poland	3.53	2.96	2.83	3.01	3.58
Portugal	4.63	2.69	2.53	2.35	3.90
Romania	3.20	2.97	2.71	3.13	4.13
Serbia	3.51	2.54	2.81	3.22	3.96
Seychelles	3.69	2.92	2.57	3.18	3.61
Sierra Leone	3.93	3.28	3.29	3.67	3.95
Singapore	4.01	3.57	2.93	2.35	3.59
Slovakia	4.20	2.18	2.44	3.43	3.87
Slovenia	3.16	1.86	2.50	3.06	3.12
South Africa	4.29	3.00	2.99	2.90	3.71
South Korea	3.84	2.56	2.54	2.59	3.19
Spain	3.89	3.30	2.55	2.15	3.46
Sweden	3.57	2.49	2.42	2.33	3.40
Switzerland	3.35	2.59	2.70	1.71	3.52
Taiwan	4.13	2.41	3.64	2.17	3.43
Tanzania	3.74	2.64	3.15	3.34	3.42
Thailand	4.30	3.76	2.36	3.38	4.16
Turkey	3.57	2.50	3.14	3.44	3.97
UAE	4.27	3.41	3.09	3.37	3.83
UK	4.01	3.27	2.69	2.49	3.68
Ukraine	2.71	4.03	3.58	2.54	2.15
USA	3.86	2.92	2.63	2.55	3.82
Uzbekistan	2.71	2.67	2.71	2.82	2.83
Venezuela	3.81	2.17	3.04	3.15	3.62
Yemen	4.47	4.12	3.87	4.00	4.07
Zambia	4.45	2.87	2.97	3.83	4.22
Average	**3.77**	**2.77**	**2.88**	**2.85**	**3.67**

Mean scores. Questions: “The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree.” / “Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs.” (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 14: JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES (OPTIONAL QUESTIONS)

Country	Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful
Albania	2.19	2.58	4.25	2.70	4.11	4.36
Argentina	2.48	2.37	3.49	2.99	3.75	4.12
Australia	2.94	2.54	4.01	3.47	3.03	4.28
Austria	1.97	2.40	4.01	1.91	2.85	4.54
Belgium	2.06	2.77	3.60	2.32	2.60	4.30
Bolivia	2.68		3.98		3.51	3.96
Brazil	2.61	2.37	3.62	2.82	3.29	4.11
Bulgaria	3.28	3.24	4.05	2.57	4.04	4.53
Canada	2.44	2.01	3.88	2.77	2.73	4.53
Chile	2.51		3.86		3.37	4.14
Colombia	2.60	2.53	3.74	2.67	3.76	4.07
Costa Rica	2.68	2.56	3.80	2.75	3.51	3.97
Croatia	2.95	3.15	3.45	2.75	3.62	4.20
Cuba	2.87	2.68	3.79	2.85	3.85	4.18
Czech Republic	2.95	3.06	3.82	2.50	2.91	4.16
Ecuador	2.77	2.70	3.67	3.18	3.82	3.90
El Salvador	2.31	2.36	3.85	2.58	3.67	4.04
Finland	2.22	2.75	3.92	1.98	2.76	4.25
Germany	1.94	2.23	3.84	1.82	2.93	4.40
Hong Kong	2.67	2.92	4.40	3.30	2.63	4.21
Hungary	3.32	2.84	3.76	2.38	2.31	4.14
Iceland	2.92	3.04	4.54	4.03	1.88	4.29
India	3.65	3.64	3.86	3.44	3.82	3.83
Indonesia	3.07	4.05	3.78	3.23	2.92	3.41
Ireland	2.74		3.96	2.98	2.95	4.33
Kazakhstan	3.35	3.39	3.45	3.45	3.55	3.67
Kosovo	2.53	2.27	3.61	2.30	2.46	2.56
Latvia	2.71	3.25	3.78	3.03	2.56	4.18
Lithuania	2.17	2.12	4.19	2.90	1.96	4.33
Mexico	2.83	2.84	4.04	3.08	3.66	4.03
Moldova	2.94	3.57	4.08	2.97	3.86	4.58
Nepal	2.63	2.69	3.58	3.49	3.61	3.93
New Zealand	2.98	2.53	3.94	3.25	2.95	4.40
North Cyprus	3.22	3.54	3.58	4.19	3.65	4.28
Pakistan	3.13	3.24	3.58	3.44	3.69	3.63
Paraguay	3.06	2.88	3.88	3.56	4.17	4.24
Peru	3.07	3.09	3.83	2.72	4.04	4.14
Poland	3.09	2.85	3.74	3.49	3.73	4.09
Portugal	2.91	2.69	3.31	2.55	3.37	3.93
Romania	2.87	3.46	3.91	2.56	3.75	4.42
Serbia	2.81	3.21	3.90	3.17	2.48	4.21
Sierra Leone	3.26	3.44	4.14	4.00	4.16	4.04
Slovakia	2.78	3.33	4.49	3.24	4.27	4.59
Slovenia	2.88	2.27	3.36	2.74	2.08	4.35
South Africa	2.91	2.74	4.30	3.23	2.86	4.30
South Korea	2.83	3.28	3.94	2.55	3.79	3.74
Taiwan	2.56	2.63	4.28	2.37	2.54	4.18
Tanzania	2.83	3.47	3.51	3.90	3.48	3.40
Thailand	3.27	3.14	4.12	4.53	4.60	4.42
Turkey	2.71	2.50	2.82	3.73	3.60	4.41
UAE	3.53	3.57	3.92	4.13	4.31	4.12
Ukraine	2.63	2.77	3.92	3.06	3.46	4.29
USA	2.74	2.35	4.05	3.55	2.75	4.39
Uzbekistan	2.30	2.34	2.47	2.79	2.66	2.74
Venezuela	2.71	2.73	3.89	2.69	3.46	3.84
Yemen	3.13	3.26	3.32	3.36	3.26	3.33
Zambia	3.28	3.57	4.50	4.08	4.22	3.94
Average	**2.80**	**2.89**	**3.83**	**3.06**	**3.33**	**4.09**

Mean scores. Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

Ethical Orientations and Practices

TERJE SKJERDAL & MARENET JORDAAN
WITH ELSAYED DARWISH, JAMES HOLLINGS, KENNETH ANDRESEN, ANDA ROŽUKALNE, LAVINIA ROTILI, BIRGIR GUÐMUNDSSON & FRIÐRIK ÞÓR GUÐMUNDSSON

The Worlds of Journalism Study 3 (WJS3) included two series of questions related to professional ethics. The first series examined journalists' principal ethical positions, aiming to establish how media professionals situate themselves along moral frameworks discussed in recognized ethical theory. The second series focused on specific ethical situations that may arise in journalistic practice, particularly in newsgathering and news production, to assess the likelihood of journalists engaging in controversial methods.

Both sets of questions were also included in the previous Worlds of Journalism Study 2 (WJS2). All items in each series were mandatory, with approximately 99% valid responses for each item. However, in WJS3, some ethically challenging scenarios were phrased slightly differently, and a few new practices were added—for example, a question regarding the publication of promotional content disguised as news.

ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

The Worlds of Journalism Study examines four principal ethical positions: absolutist, exceptionist, situationist, and subjectivist. These archetypes are derived from the Ethics Position Questionnaire developed by the American social psychologist Donelson Forsyth (1980), which identifies people's ethical preferences along two dimensions: idealism (concern for consequences) and relativism (concern for principles). In WJS3, the survey measured the four archetypes through four statements, with responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Globally, journalists expressed the strongest support for the absolutist position, associated with high idealism and low relativism, with a mean country score of 4.02 (see Table 15). This position was captured by the statement "What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment." The results indicate that, across the globe, journalists generally anchor their ethical judgments in externally agreed professional standards rather than individual ethical considerations. These findings reflect journalists' perceptions and opinions, rather than an assessment of their actual practices.

The mean scores for the other positions were substantially lower, in the following order: exceptionist (3.31), which holds that ethics should follow professional standards except in "extraordinary circumstances"; situationist (2.78), advocating ethical behavior based on "each specific situation"; and subjectivist (2.36), which emphasizes "personal judgment" in ethical decision-making. These results are slightly different from WJS2. In particular, we see one interesting trend emerge over time: In the majority of the 53 countries included in both WJS2 and WJS3, journalists were less likely to support an absolutist stance, and more likely to support an exceptionist stance. This suggests that journalists may be becoming less idealistic in their ethical

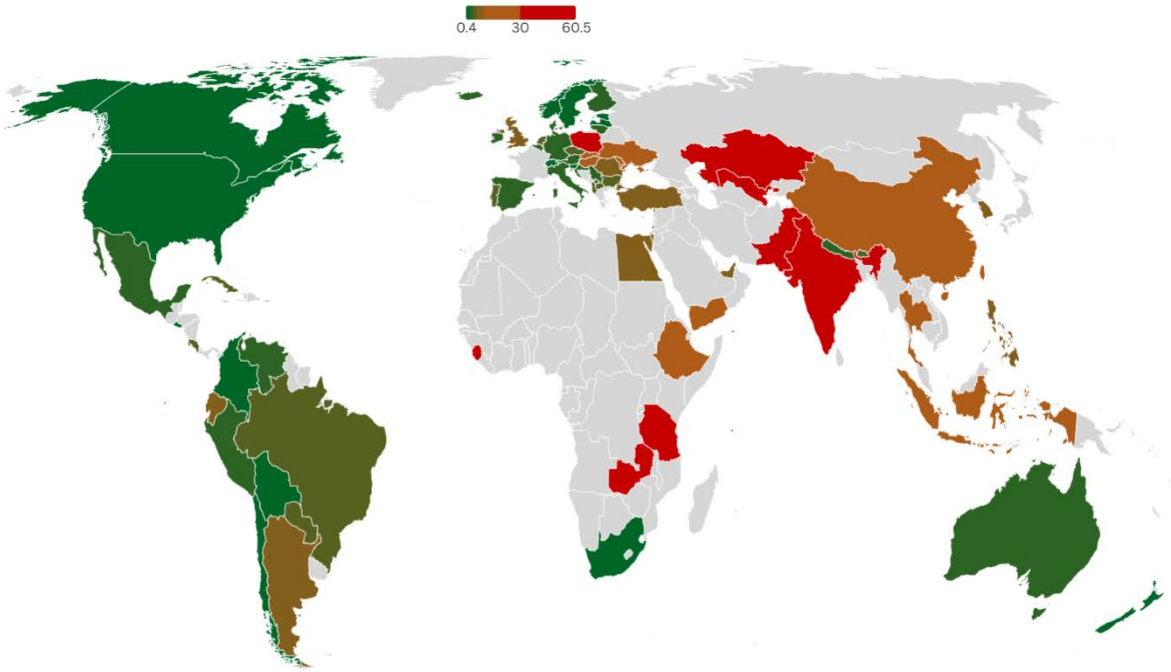


FIGURE 8: ACCEPTANCE OF BROWN ENVELOPES
Percentages of journalists who justified the acceptance of money from sources

stances.

Some cultural and regional patterns emerge in general. The exceptionist position, characterized by low idealism and low relativism, was more prevalent in high-income countries of the Global North. Eleven out of twelve countries where the exceptionist score exceeded the absolutist score were high-income economies in Europe, North America, Oceania, or Asia. Conversely, nearly all countries in the Global South, including China, showed stronger adherence to absolutist ethics. The highest scores for situationist and subjectivist positions also emerged in low- and middle-income Global South countries, although overall support for these positions remained comparatively low.

At the country level, ethical preferences sometimes produced seemingly paradoxical results. Certain countries, such as Bhutan, Thailand, and North Macedonia, ranked among the top 10 in all four positions, despite the partial contradictions among them. This can be explained by the survey design, which allowed respondents to rate each position independently, and by acquiescence bias—the tendency for respondents, particularly from collectivist cultures, to agree with statements more strongly than those from individualist cultures (Franzen & Vogl, 2011).

ETHICAL PRACTICES

The survey asked respondents to react to 10 professional dilemmas drawn from global journalism practice. Journalists could indicate whether such actions would be "always" justified, justified "on occasion," or not approved of "under any circumstances".

Overall, journalists were most likely to approve the use of hidden recording devices (69%), while accepting money from sources received the lowest approval (10%) (see Table 16). Publishing or broadcasting news based on unverified information was also widely disapproved of, with only 21% seeing it as acceptable, suggesting a general awareness of disinformation. Country-level differences were substantial: journalists in Latin America were highly skeptical of publishing unverified information, whereas around half of Nordic journalists considered it justifiable on occasion.

Practices associated with "watchdog" journalism, aimed at holding the powerful accountable, tended to receive more support. A good example is the use of personal documents without permission, which was split into two questions to distinguish between documents of powerful individuals and those of "ordinary" people. Journalists were far more accepting of using the personal documents of powerful people (56%) than of ordinary people (31%), indicating broad global support for holding the powerful accountable. A closer look at the data reveals that journalists from Nordic and other European countries often justified controversial methods when necessary to expose misbehavior or retrieve information. One of the practices generally accepted at least occasionally by European journalists was the use of materials of powerful people without permission and the adoption of a concealed identity to uncover information. Local laws and practices, however, play an important role: US journalists are among the most cautious globally regarding assuming another identity and are less approving of hidden recording devices than many other Western journalists, reflecting the explicit legal restrictions on secret recordings in the United States.

Journalists in the East and South, in contrast, were more inclined to accept practices associated with personal gain or corruption. A notable example is the acceptance of money from sources, known as "brown envelope journalism" in Africa, which was completely rejected by almost all journalists in Western countries (as well as South Africa and Bolivia) but accepted on occasion by many journalists in Asia and Latin America (see Figure 8). It is noteworthy that some acceptance of this practice was observed in Poland and Hungary.

A new topic introduced in WJS3 concerns promotional material disguised as news. The exploitation of news formats by advertisers and the blurring of lines between marketing and journalism have grown rapidly worldwide in recent years. This trend reflects the increasing tension within media organizations as they strive to sustain or develop viable business models in an environment where most advertising revenue is channeled toward global digital platforms. Our analysis shows that more than three-quarters of journalists (77%) completely rejected promotional journalism. At the same time, some journalists admitted to being tempted by the practice and could justify it under certain circumstances. The findings reveal a clear variation along cultural and economic lines: journalists in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia were relatively permissive, whereas those in Europe and North America strongly rejected it. This pattern may be explained by the historically strong separation between journalism and public relations in Europe and North America. Journalists in Latin America and several emerging economies fell somewhere in between.

CONCLUSION

Journalists worldwide showed strong support for the absolutist ethical position, which holds that journalistic rules and professional behavior should remain consistent regardless of changing contexts. Simultaneously, a notable number of journalists in Western countries rated the exceptionist position even higher, acknowledging that there are circumstances in which universal codes may be justifiably bypassed for a higher purpose. When faced with specific ethical dilemmas, media professionals in Western countries generally justified controversial reporting methods aimed at exposing wrongdoing. In contrast, journalists in the Global South were more likely to accept behaviors motivated by monetary or material gain, though most still rejected such practices outright.

Overall, the findings on journalists' interactions with information sources highlight a strong commitment to normative professional principles in daily practice. Respondents consistently endorsed the avoidance of conflicts of interest, resistance to corrupt practices, and a general rejection of publishing unverified information. At the same time, the data suggest that occasional deviations from strict ethical absolutism are considered acceptable, particularly when journalists prioritize the public's right to access essential information. The results also reveal internal heterogeneity within the profession, showing that certain regions and countries are more open to controversial practices that may compromise established journalistic standards. Importantly, there remain country- and regional-level differences, even among states with ostensibly similar media systems.

TABLE 15: ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS ("WHAT IS ETHICAL FOR JOURNALISTS SHOULD...")

Country	...always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment		...be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them		...depend on each specific situation		...be a matter of personal judgment	
	WJS2	WJS3	WJS2	WJS3	WJS2	WJS3	WJS2	WJS3
Albania	4.43	4.64	3.01	3.39	3.47	2.33	2.89	1.75
Argentina	4.38	3.93	2.27	2.67	2.76	2.10	2.54	2.25
Australia	4.67	3.53	2.49	3.53	2.98	3.09	2.23	2.34
Austria	4.64	4.11	1.95	2.91	3.03	2.61	2.31	1.88
Belgium	4.39	3.35	2.73	3.34	3.29	2.77	2.32	1.90
Bhutan	4.72	4.52	3.43	3.97	4.14	3.63	3.35	2.90
Bolivia		4.44		2.92		2.18		2.47
Brazil	4.40	4.10	2.31	3.13	2.76	2.48	2.21	1.76
Bulgaria		4.19		3.24		2.72		2.39
Canada	4.51	3.36	2.70	3.53	3.15	2.82	2.16	1.96
Chile	4.49	4.58	2.41	2.59	2.73	2.25	2.34	2.18
China	4.51	4.47	2.55	2.26	2.82	2.48	2.31	2.20
Colombia	4.52	4.32	2.02	2.40	2.60	2.09	2.75	2.47
Costa Rica		4.32		2.64		2.38		2.23
Croatia	4.69	4.37	2.09	2.15	2.57	2.30	2.60	2.35
Cuba		3.99		3.04		2.54		1.94
Czech Republic	4.33	3.71	3.52	3.43	3.37	2.75	2.61	2.45
Denmark	3.98	3.48	3.12	3.80	3.02	2.84	2.47	2.22
Ecuador	4.79	4.21	2.60	2.87	2.93	2.48	3.05	2.76
Egypt	4.56	4.35	2.63	3.49	2.85	3.20	3.30	2.63
El Salvador	4.71	4.38	2.53	2.75	3.19	2.41	2.80	2.26
Estonia	4.49	4.30	2.33	3.32	3.23	2.76	2.27	2.83
Ethiopia	3.11	4.02	3.53	3.63	3.27	3.23	2.59	2.37
Finland	4.65	3.97	1.97	2.99	2.60	2.22	2.40	1.79
Germany	4.60	4.34	2.03	2.51	3.15	2.40	2.08	1.74
Hong Kong	4.32	4.23	2.87	3.33	3.30	3.31	3.01	2.95
Hungary	4.30	3.88	2.91	3.28	3.29	2.58	2.48	2.08
Iceland	4.35	4.36	2.49	3.60	2.42	2.45	2.42	2.46
India	4.10	4.04	3.08	3.69	3.64	3.44	2.99	3.13
Indonesia	4.77	4.69	2.47	3.29	2.67		2.24	2.14
Ireland	4.37	3.42	2.78	3.48	3.28	2.88	2.64	2.35
Israel	4.29	3.64	2.75	3.49	3.09	2.62	2.31	2.07
Italy	4.62	3.98	2.31	3.01	2.57	2.32	1.86	1.70
Kazakhstan		3.70		3.62		3.42		3.14
Kosovo	4.76	4.14	2.66	3.14	3.22	2.48	2.53	1.95
Latvia	4.66	4.17	2.75	3.36	2.98	2.84	2.90	2.38
Lithuania		4.20		3.57		2.52		1.71
Mexico	4.73	4.49	2.93	3.29	3.36	2.46	3.00	2.45
Moldova	4.48	4.24	2.54	3.57	3.35	2.88	2.39	2.28
Nepal		4.29		3.82		2.55		2.53
Netherlands	4.30	3.09	3.14	3.72	3.61	3.12	2.99	2.47
New Zealand	4.64	3.25	2.63	3.65	3.24	3.17	2.63	2.46
North Cyprus		4.36		2.85		2.64		2.45
North Macedonia		4.85		3.83		3.36		2.84
Norway	4.68	4.19	2.55	3.56	3.17	2.80	2.86	2.48
Pakistan		3.76		3.41		3.27		2.76
Paraguay		4.25		3.07		2.64		2.91
Peru		3.69		2.70		2.17		2.63
Philippines	4.60	4.07	2.78	3.77	3.34	3.25	3.00	2.64
Poland		3.31		3.30		3.45		3.06
Portugal	4.60	4.09	2.40	4.60	2.58	2.16	1.98	1.54
Romania	4.50	4.20	2.39	3.13	3.11	2.45	2.27	1.97
Serbia	4.67	4.16	1.93	3.19	2.62	2.59	2.41	2.27
Seychelles		3.76		3.24		2.87		2.38
Sierra Leone	4.80	4.38	3.72	3.65	3.53	3.29	2.99	2.82
Singapore	3.06	3.55	3.03	3.70	3.14	3.05	2.71	2.22
Slovakia		4.29		3.16		2.30		1.90
Slovenia		4.44		3.16		2.03		1.57
South Africa	4.54	4.12	2.49	3.56	2.77	2.66	2.36	1.94
South Korea	4.36	3.69	2.16	3.76	2.38	3.12	2.33	2.43
Spain	4.39	3.87	2.17	3.19	2.58	2.71	2.14	2.09
Sweden	4.58	4.50	3.53	4.23	3.30	2.69	2.93	2.43
Switzerland	4.50	3.79	2.36	3.17	3.24	2.72	2.17	1.81
Taiwan		3.01		3.37		3.95		2.21
Tanzania	4.19	3.61	3.19	3.39	3.18	3.41	3.19	2.47
Thailand	4.76	4.67	3.87	3.85	3.95	3.50	3.90	3.35
Turkey	4.40	4.14	2.12	3.14	2.90	3.18	2.38	2.40
UAE	4.75	4.02	2.67	3.79	3.72	3.46	3.08	2.96
UK	4.56	3.59	2.79	3.71	3.49	3.01	2.74	2.37
Ukraine		3.83		3.43		2.56		2.37
USA	4.66	3.23	2.11	3.66	2.67	2.94	1.93	2.23
Uzbekistan		2.82		2.94		2.87		2.84
Venezuela		4.15		2.70		2.24		2.28
Yemen		3.98		3.04		3.01		4.01
Zambia		4.31		3.84		2.99		2.42
Average[1]	**4.47**	**4.02**	**2.66**	**3.31**	**3.09**	**2.78**	**2.59**	**2.36**

[1]Average across the countries listed in the table (the original WJS2 sample included 67 countries)

Mean scores. Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 16: ETHICAL PRACTICES

Country	Claiming to be somebody else		Using hidden recording devices		Using confidential business or government documents without authorization		Using personal documents without permission	Using personal materials of powerful people without permission	Using personal materials of ordinary people without permission
	WJS2	WJS3	WJS2	WJS3	WJS2	WJS3	WJS2	WJS3	WJS3
Albania	46.8%	27.9%	81.4%	72.8%	68.6%	62.5%	46.0%	64.9%	31.2%
Argentina	42.2%	24.2%	61.7%	56.6%	72.5%	66.2%	27.4%	53.2%	23.4%
Australia	13.4%	17.6%	42.4%	54.4%	76.2%	80.3%	48.3%	74.3%	55.0%
Austria	48.6%	41.6%	66.4%	59.4%	80.0%	74.6%	21.7%	59.4%	12.4%
Belgium	56.0%	68.6%	83.4%	92.0%	79.4%	87.4%	36.0%	72.4%	32.6%
Bhutan	49.4%	46.6%	70.1%	62.1%	69.3%	46.6%	51.1%	47.7%	33.7%
Bolivia		16.1%		48.4%		33.3%		35.4%	20.1%
Brazil	56.7%	50.0%	88.0%	87.7%	77.9%	79.1%	36.9%	74.8%	41.9%
Bulgaria	56.7%	44.1%	86.2%	71.5%	75.2%	59.4%	24.4%	38.1%	14.2%
Canada	38.7%	49.7%	85.1%	86.9%	89.9%	89.9%	57.5%	86.8%	61.8%
Chile	48.6%	24.4%	64.7%	52.4%	71.1%	59.5%	36.5%	56.4%	29.9%
China	86.3%	90.0%	81.3%	85.0%	38.1%	14.4%	27.5%	25.0%	20.2%
Colombia	20.2%	22.2%	34.4%	52.0%	22.7%	45.4%	10.4%	43.8%	20.8%
Costa Rica		34.1%		70.7%		66.8%		57.6%	25.3%
Croatia	46.9%	42.5%	59.2%	66.5%	74.5%	73.5%	27.2%	66.5%	18.8%
Cuba		31.2%		60.5%		49.3%		39.1%	17.0%
Czech Republic	66.5%	61.5%	89.6%	84.8%	80.5%	65.8%	44.0%	70.3%	36.5%
Denmark	70.4%	81.6%	95.1%	99.2%	90.9%	94.9%	54.3%	89.2%	55.1%
Ecuador	31.2%	17.4%	47.2%	53.2%	36.7%	40.5%	24.2%	39.8%	25.1%
Egypt	38.4%	39.9%	47.7%	52.5%	50.5%	32.3%	38.4%	22.5%	15.1%
El Salvador	31.7%	38.9%	42.9%	55.8%	48.0%	63.5%	21.1%	60.1%	16.3%
Estonia	62.7%	64.6%	63.8%	64.9%	68.3%	69.1%	25.5%	56.5%	28.1%
Ethiopia	40.4%	59.2%	39.3%	66.9%	22.5%	48.9%	20.7%	40.1%	34.4%
Finland	64.6%	59.7%	70.2%	77.5%	84.1%	74.3%	30.7%	62.1%	14.9%
Germany	49.9%	39.1%	54.9%	45.2%	77.6%	65.9%	16.7%	65.1%	12.5%
Hong Kong	71.8%	82.7%	78.8%	96.5%	74.5%	92.7%	62.4%	92.0%	64.1%
Hungary	56.7%	52.6%	71.9%	65.3%	56.9%	53.4%	47.3%	47.9%	16.8%
Iceland	36.4%	59.9%	77.9%	80.2%	84.1%	86.0%	39.3%	79.5%	48.0%
India	49.5%	59.0%	75.0%	74.3%	49.9%	54.7%	31.6%	52.3%	43.5%
Indonesia	30.7%	29.4%	83.8%	69.6%	52.2%	41.7%	23.5%	23.1%	32.8%
Ireland	44.5%	46.1%	88.0%	76.9%	91.7%	85.9%	55.5%	79.1%	43.8%
Israel	58.3%	60.7%	84.7%	91.4%	65.1%	69.9%	42.3%	68.5%	38.4%
Italy	60.2%	47.4%	76.6%	74.3%	76.5%	69.5%	41.7%	58.7%	26.3%
Kazakhstan		54.2%		67.4%		45.4%		49.1%	42.5%
Kosovo	35.9%	39.6%	63.4%	66.7%	58.9%	48.4%	29.9%	51.1%	29.0%
Latvia	78.3%	77.0%	91.2%	93.3%	75.6%	81.1%	36.8%	71.6%	38.6%
Lithuania		47.7%		57.6%		60.5%		40.7%	14.2%
Mexico	41.4%	41.0%	59.6%	65.7%	58.5%	56.9%	22.1%	57.5%	19.2%
Moldova	83.2%	58.0%	85.8%	88.2%	67.0%	59.0%	39.5%	59.0%	29.5%
Nepal		39.3%		49.7%		26.7%		32.5%	17.7%
Netherlands	54.0%	67.2%	84.3%	88.1%	84.4%	92.1%	46.3%	72.9%	44.3%
New Zealand	25.9%	35.4%	74.9%	75.6%	83.4%	86.6%	49.6%	79.5%	54.1%
North Cyprus		62.0%		51.6%		54.6%		42.1%	15.8%
North Macedonia		34.2%		51.7%		53.3%		46.5%	19.7%
Norway	67.5%	75.0%	93.7%	95.9%	90.1%	91.4%	51.4%	84.5%	49.9%
Pakistan		57.2%		67.2%		55.4%		50.1%	42.1%
Paraguay		22.8%		62.8%		42.6%		45.9%	21.1%
Peru		10.4%		46.2%		34.3%		31.0%	22.6%
Philippines	24.7%	18.2%	64.0%	58.7%	67.8%	51.3%	29.9%	50.4%	22.9%
Poland		40.0%		56.3%		40.0%		36.1%	25.4%
Portugal	58.6%	65.6%	80.6%	83.3%	78.3%	91.8%	53.3%	92.6%	35.5%
Romania	87.2%	48.8%	86.7%	76.0%	60.5%	45.2%	29.2%	35.4%	16.3%
Serbia	36.3%	33.6%	48.2%	49.8%	62.9%	62.9%	16.4%	52.1%	14.2%
Seychelles		33.3%		52.4%		50.8%		36.5%	28.6%
Sierra Leone	55.1%	44.4%	79.8%	82.3%	44.6%	51.2%	38.2%	50.2%	49.0%
Singapore	33.0%	34.8%	55.4%	75.0%	46.7%	53.8%	33.3%	62.0%	45.7%
Slovakia		49.1%		61.7%		52.3%		50.0%	21.3%
Slovenia		60.9%		79.9%		83.1%		70.2%	20.7%
South Africa	39.7%	33.1%	77.5%	71.2%	75.3%	76.8%	46.9%	72.4%	47.0%
South Korea	85.9%	35.1%	68.6%	84.1%	85.9%	73.0%	43.3%	75.7%	29.7%
Spain	46.8%	29.4%	54.9%	49.6%	81.8%	60.8%	35.0%	56.3%	21.5%
Sweden	85.1%	81.1%	98.1%	95.2%	96.5%	90.2%		85.0%	36.2%
Switzerland	49.8%	52.6%	66.6%	71.3%	82.9%	84.6%	28.9%	74.4%	18.6%
Taiwan		19.4%		82.2%		54.0%		56.5%	36.9%
Tanzania	1.5%	59.9%	9.7%	69.7%	4.4%	60.2%	9.7%	54.9%	53.6%
Thailand	43.2%	21.9%	62.0%	49.5%	46.4%	19.5%	40.4%	20.1%	18.8%
Turkey	77.7%	77.5%	60.0%	62.3%	79.6%	68.6%	33.7%	58.0%	42.3%
UAE	28.4%	28.3%	23.6%	26.2%	22.7%	14.6%	17.4%	15.6%	10.0%
UK	46.4%	55.0%	78.4%	79.6%	81.3%	84.7%	47.2%	79.8%	47.3%
Ukraine		54.6%		78.4%		58.9%		65.9%	31.4%
USA	11.6%	13.4%	63.8%	57.8%	75.8%	69.4%	41.1%	69.9%	37.8%
Uzbekistan		50.9%		76.2%		62.8%		72.2%	53.0%
Venezuela		31.9%		69.3%		62.8%		50.8%	23.6%
Yemen		11.0%		61.8%		50.5%		29.0%	14.1%
Zambia		31.5%		65.8%		33.6%		26.6%	20.3%
Average[1]	**49.5%**	**44.9%**	**68.9%**	**68.8%**	**67.0%**	**61.2%**	**35.7%**	**56.2%**	**30.6%**

[1]Average across the countries listed in the table (the original WJS2 sample included 67 countries)
Percentage of respondents saying "always justified" or "justified on occasion." Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

TABLE 16: ETHICAL PRACTICES (CONTINUED)

Country	Paying people for confidential information		Accepting money from sources		Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified		Accepting a free product or service from sources	Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature
	WJS2	WJS3	WJS2	WJS3	WJS2	WJS3	WJS3	WJS3
Albania	73.1%	50.9%	7.5%	4.6%	9.5%	13.9%	12.1%	32.9%
Argentina	30.1%	33.5%	4.5%	9.6%	5.3%	25.5%	74.5%	32.2%
Australia	28.4%	31.3%	1.3%	2.2%	35.7%	29.4%	31.6%	10.4%
Austria	44.6%	31.6%	1.5%	2.1%	44.1%	45.6%	19.6%	6.3%
Belgium	33.0%	25.7%	3.2%	2.4%	11.2%	22.8%	33.7%	6.3%
Bhutan	71.6%	35.2%	41.7%	5.7%	38.6%	26.1%	30.2%	40.2%
Bolivia		29.2%		0.7%		7.3%	19.6%	23.7%
Brazil	19.8%	24.3%	1.3%	5.6%	3.2%	9.0%	36.7%	20.3%
Bulgaria	51.7%	35.3%	1.9%	4.7%	3.8%	19.6%	21.6%	23.5%
Canada	34.2%	18.2%	0.9%	0.8%	16.1%	26.0%	26.8%	4.2%
Chile	35.9%	14.4%	10.1%	1.0%	12.9%	9.1%	25.7%	23.7%
China	81.9%	52.7%	18.8%	10.8%	17.7%	6.2%	27.7%	33.2%
Colombia	14.8%	19.3%	3.8%	1.8%	6.6%	6.6%	35.6%	16.1%
Costa Rica		21.4%		4.8%		5.2%	41.5%	19.7%
Croatia	42.4%	31.3%	5.5%	3.2%	12.1%	8.3%	24.3%	19.2%
Cuba		27.7%		4.7%		6.7%	30.9%	19.5%
Czech Republic	59.1%	41.8%	1.7%	4.2%	21.8%	23.3%	29.4%	23.9%
Denmark	21.1%	19.3%	3.0%	2.3%	41.0%	58.9%	23.7%	22.0%
Ecuador	31.9%	33.4%	11.9%	6.4%	13.3%	9.4%	33.1%	24.1%
Egypt	49.3%	48.3%	6.5%	9.0%	10.1%	11.1%	27.6%	45.8%
El Salvador	26.2%	13.0%	4.4%	0.5%	9.3%	1.0%	12.0%	8.2%
Estonia	55.8%	35.2%	12.1%	1.8%	13.2%	11.2%	41.7%	15.1%
Ethiopia	28.4%	43.3%	15.3%	14.2%	10.9%	19.6%	30.2%	36.1%
Finland	41.4%	22.0%	0.5%	2.0%	46.0%	49.9%	32.0%	5.4%
Germany	56.1%	36.9%	4.1%	2.0%	37.5%	40.5%	13.2%	8.0%
Hong Kong	49.7%	40.5%	10.5%	5.5%	34.8%	17.0%	29.4%	15.6%
Hungary	49.6%	48.4%	27.8%	20.5%	45.9%	13.7%	33.2%	27.4%
Iceland	35.1%	49.3%	1.1%	3.0%	37.4%	43.7%	19.0%	5.1%
India	53.4%	50.8%	12.7%	33.0%	17.4%	40.2%	42.9%	44.7%
Indonesia	64.3%	51.8%	16.0%	20.4%	6.9%	9.9%	26.8%	58.9%
Ireland	52.1%	31.4%	3.0%	2.2%	17.7%	17.7%	29.3%	7.7%
Israel	56.0%	59.8%	14.2%	7.4%	23.1%	11.6%	22.0%	17.0%
Italy	38.7%	28.9%	2.3%	2.5%	7.6%	15.3%	37.0%	19.6%
Kazakhstan		53.1%		49.8%		37.7%	48.4%	62.6%
Kosovo	43.1%	33.9%	8.9%	5.4%	10.5%	12.2%	9.0%	9.0%
Latvia	40.9%	34.5%	4.5%	0.4%	19.3%	30.8%	19.1%	9.8%
Lithuania		31.3%		3.3%		41.1%	17.3%	15.9%
Mexico	29.1%	25.5%	5.9%	3.8%	8.0%	7.5%	32.2%	30.2%
Moldova	55.0%	48.2%	5.9%	13.8%	11.4%	18.0%	30.2%	23.0%
Nepal		22.1%		3.5%		7.6%	5.8%	29.2%
Netherlands	42.8%	34.0%	4.7%	4.7%	17.4%	21.1%	37.2%	8.4%
New Zealand	35.7%	19.1%	1.9%	1.2%	23.4%	34.7%	38.1%	6.1%
North Cyprus		27.3%		4.2%		6.6%	14.2%	29.4%
North Macedonia		21.6%		4.4%		7.4%	10.6%	18.8%
Norway	26.8%	24.7%	0.3%	0.8%	27.5%	23.7%	16.4%	3.2%
Pakistan		63.1%		33.6%		37.2%	44.4%	54.3%
Paraguay		33.2%		4.3%		8.7%	28.9%	26.2%
Peru		17.0%		2.4%		2.7%	5.7%	4.8%
Philippines	29.7%	25.8%	4.7%	7.6%	10.8%	7.6%	43.1%	24.9%
Poland		46.3%		32.8%		28.2%	46.4%	32.6%
Portugal	48.6%	65.8%	34.9%	5.2%	47.2%	2.5%	42.1%	1.6%
Romania	58.8%	35.7%	10.4%	7.1%	12.1%	7.6%	17.2%	14.2%
Serbia	47.5%	30.6%	5.2%	2.6%	11.9%	22.4%	23.5%	23.9%
Seychelles		33.3%		11.1%		19.0%	23.8%	20.6%
Sierra Leone	52.2%	62.1%	16.1%	47.2%	14.9%	34.5%	59.1%	59.1%
Singapore	21.5%	39.1%	1.1%	6.5%	15.1%	21.2%	39.7%	21.7%
Slovakia		28.1%		17.5%		22.8%	23.4%	15.8%
Slovenia		25.1%		1.2%		34.9%	4.7%	12.7%
South Africa	21.3%	18.7%	1.1%	0.7%	10.9%	12.5%	25.9%	13.6%
South Korea	61.9%	67.8%	3.7%	9.5%	8.2%	17.0%	19.5%	41.6%
Spain	39.8%	30.2%	2.3%	3.6%	2.1%	12.3%	24.0%	22.5%
Sweden	49.0%	34.4%	0.9%	1.7%	42.9%	53.2%	8.1%	1.7%
Switzerland	28.5%	25.8%	1.1%	1.4%	32.9%	38.4%	26.6%	6.1%
Taiwan		42.5%		15.1%		18.1%	41.6%	53.2%
Tanzania	4.4%	57.0%	79.0%	45.2%	38.6%	41.5%	46.9%	62.0%
Thailand	46.4%	25.5%	34.8%	17.7%	41.4%	21.1%	45.1%	46.4%
Turkey	46.2%	29.8%	3.2%	6.5%	35.8%	11.9%	13.8%	17.3%
UAE	25.2%	22.2%	5.0%	8.1%	6.8%	7.4%	36.1%	40.0%
UK	52.9%	45.8%	4.0%	6.1%	25.2%	30.8%	44.0%	9.1%
Ukraine		51.9%		14.1%		23.2%	42.7%	17.8%
USA	12.7%	13.4%	3.4%	0.7%	10.5%	17.8%	25.4%	6.0%
Uzbekistan		68.5%		60.5%		64.1%	59.7%	62.2%
Venezuela		27.1%		3.8%		5.8%	34.4%	17.3%
Yemen		24.4%		15.5%		21.9%	24.0%	27.2%
Zambia		31.5%		38.8%		13.0%	50.3%	30.5%
Average[1]	**41.7%**	**35.1%**	**9.1%**	**9.7%**	**20.3%**	**20.9%**	**29.6%**	**23.3%**

[1]Average across the countries listed in the table (the original WJS2 sample included 67 countries)
Percentage of respondents saying "always justified" or "justified on occasion." Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

Technology in the Newsroom

David Blanco-Herrero & Carlos Arcila Calderón
with Daniela Grassau, Jón Gunnar Ólafsson, Seungahn Nah, Sarah Bomkapre Koroma & Víctor O. Quintanilla

Like many other fields, journalism has undergone a rapid digital transformation, reshaping how news is discovered, produced, distributed, and consumed. While emerging technologies have long influenced journalistic practice (Pavlik, 2000), digital tools in particular have had a profound impact on newsroom workflows and on journalists' day-to-day work. These tools speed up and simplify processes, but their adoption has also increased the demand for multimedia journalists, requiring new skills and greater time resources (Spyridou & Veglis, 2016).

Digital technologies have also redefined the relationship between journalists and their audiences. Social media platforms, for instance, offer new spaces for public debate and the distribution of journalistic content. At the same time, they introduce challenges such as heightened competition for legacy media (Nielsen et al., 2016) and indirect communication risks like misinformation (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). These developments contribute to a redefinition of the journalist's traditional gatekeeping role. As content flows more freely across platforms, journalists face growing challenges in maintaining editorial authority and curatorial control (Scheffauer et al., 2024).

The Worlds of Journalism Study 3 (WJS3) examined these dynamics in detail. This chapter focuses on journalists' use of technologies for analyzing online audiences and the use of social media as journalistic tools, as well as the use of automation technologies in newsrooms (see Table 17). Notably, the first two types of technologies were measured at the individual level, whereas the use of automation was assessed as newsroom-level practice.

TECHNOLOGIES TO ANALYZE ONLINE AUDIENCES

Contemporary journalists have the ability to monitor their audiences almost in real time, tracking behaviors and characteristics. Nearly one-third of surveyed journalists reported that they always or often use technologies that track and analyze information about online audience behavior. While this is more directly relevant to digital media than to print, radio, or television, the near-universal online presence of news outlets makes this practice increasingly important across all media types. Regional differences are modest, but the highest usage is observed in Southeast Asia, particularly in Indonesia (more than three-quarters of respondents) and Thailand (more than half), with India, Singapore, and the Philippines also ranking among the top 10. Conversely, journalists in Portugal and Nepal reported the lowest adoption, with fewer than one in ten using such technologies frequently.

SOCIAL MEDIA AS A TOOL FOR JOURNALISTS

The use of social media among journalists is considerably more widespread than the use of technologies to analyze online audiences. About two-thirds of surveyed journalists reported that they always or often use social media to dis-

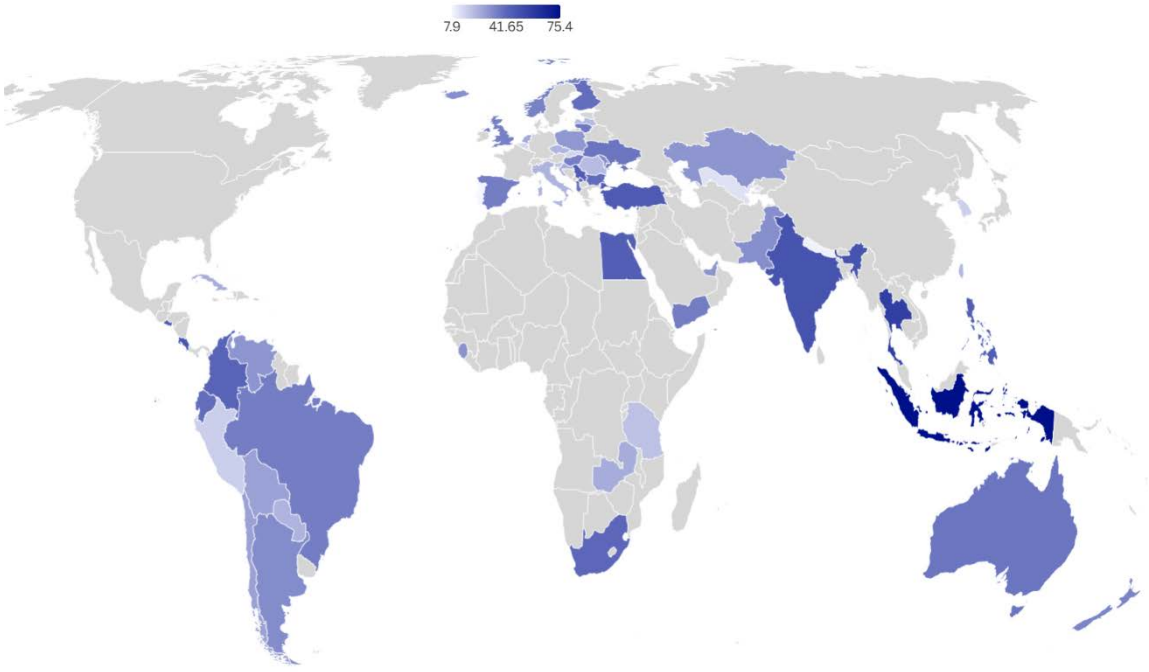


FIGURE 9: USING TECHNOLOGIES TO TRACK THE AUDIENCE
Percentages of journalists who "always" or "often" used technology that tracks and analyses information about the characteristics and behavior of online audiences

cover potentially newsworthy events, find sources, and gather information or opinions for their stories. Additionally, more than half of the journalists reported using social media to promote journalism produced for other platforms, effectively employing it as an additional distribution channel.

Social media thus function primarily as a tool for sourcing and research, although they are also important for content distribution. Notably, there is a strong correlation between these two uses: journalists who rely on social media as a source are more likely to also use them as a distribution channel, and vice versa. Regional differences are less pronounced, but Latin American countries rank among the highest in social media adoption for journalistic purposes.

While journalists in the Philippines most frequently report using social media to discover news, sources, or information, many Latin American countries appear in the top 15 globally. Similarly, for promotion of journalism across platforms, Cuban journalists show the highest usage worldwide, with several other Latin American countries also in the top 15. In contrast, journalists in North Cyprus and Uzbekistan report comparatively lower use of social media in their professional work.

TECHNOLOGIES TO AUTOMATIZE JOURNALISTIC PROCESSES

Much less frequent is the use of technologies that automate journalistic work—those in which the decisions of human journalists are either aided or directly substituted by machines. Around 12% of the surveyed journalists claimed that "automated" or "robot" journalism, in which computer software automatically converts data into news texts, is used in their newsrooms.

"News personalization," where computer software automatically selects which stories are shown to audience members and how prominently, is used in 18% of newsrooms. In the majority of countries, adoption of these technologies is at or below 10%, while only in a few countries do usage rates reach one-third to one-half of newsrooms.

Once again, newsrooms in Southeast Asian countries tend to adopt these technologies more commonly. Indonesian newsrooms report the highest use of "automated" or "robot" journalism, with more than four in ten journalists indicating its presence. Countries like Singapore, Pakistan, and Thailand also show above-average adoption. Similarly, more than half of journalists in Thailand claim their newsrooms use "news personalization," with Singapore, Indonesia, Pakistan, and the Philippines also above average. In contrast, all surveyed Paraguayan journalists claimed that these technologies are not used in their newsrooms.

CONCLUSIONS

Three main interpretations emerge from these findings.

First, there is a growing trend among news organizations to base decisions on audience analytics (Dodds et al., 2023), but this does not necessarily reflect frequent use of such technologies by individual journalists. Two potential explanations can be offered: (1) media analytics are often handled at the organizational rather than individual level, and (2) despite their potential, adoption of these tools has been uneven and has not fully met the expectations set when they were first introduced (Nelson & Tandoc Jr., 2019). Furthermore, these tools may intensify audience-driven pressures on newsrooms, favoring content likely to generate engagement over stories grounded in traditional public interest criteria (Focás, 2023).

Second, social media platforms play a central role in journalistic work, even though they carry potential risks, such as exposure to hate speech targeted at journalists (see Chapter 4). Despite these challenges, it is evident that social media have become an indispensable tool for sourcing, reporting, and distributing news.

Third, the limited use of automated technologies in newsrooms may be due to their lack of refinement and limited performance at the time of the study. However, these technologies have improved rapidly in recent years, and systems such as generative AI chatbots have quickly become normalized among journalists and newsrooms (Diakopoulos et al., 2024). Consequently, while automation was not widespread during data collection, its adoption is likely to have increased since then.

Regarding national and regional differences, Southeast Asian countries tend to use digital technologies more frequently, whereas Latin American countries appear to dominate social media use for journalistic purposes. Nevertheless, the study does not allow for precise comparisons or the identification of clear global patterns.

TABLE 17: TECHNOLOGY USAGE IN NEWS PRODUCTION

Country	Technology that tracks and analyses information about the characteristics and behavior of online audiences[1]	Social media for purposes such as to discover potentially newsworthy events, and/or to find sources, information and opinions for stories[1]	Social media to promote journalism produced for other platforms[1]	"Automated" or "robot" journalism in which computer software automatically converts data into news texts[2]	"News personalization" where software automatically selects which stories are shown to audience members and how prominently[2]
Albania	38.3%	77.2%	69.6%	5.7%	4.0%
Argentina	32.6%	82.1%	80.9%	8.8%	23.5%
Australia	38.0%	66.9%	58.9%	8.1%	23.3%
Austria				11.3%	17.8%
Belgium	15.5%	61.1%	40.2%	10.2%	28.7%
Bolivia	27.6%	84.5%	67.6%		
Brazil	36.0%	81.1%	79.7%	7.4%	12.8%
Bulgaria	40.1%	71.2%	59.1%	5.8%	6.7%
Chile	27.7%	83.2%	58.5%		
Colombia	42.3%	82.0%	73.6%	6.5%	27.2%
Costa Rica	48.8%	83.9%	75.0%	8.9%	15.8%
Croatia	25.3%	71.9%	58.0%	4.3%	6.3%
Cuba	24.7%	85.3%	85.0%	11.1%	12.5%
Czech Republic	23.0%	70.0%	42.1%	8.7%	11.6%
Ecuador	39.8%	77.8%	71.1%	19.1%	36.7%
Egypt	44.3%	68.1%	64.6%	14.9%	18.5%
El Salvador	45.8%	85.8%	84.3%	19.1%	27.0%
Finland	39.7%	62.8%	51.2%	11.8%	24.4%
Germany				10.7%	18.1%
Hong Kong	11.8%	67.9%	41.2%	9.2%	11.7%
Hungary	35.8%	62.6%	39.5%		
Iceland	31.8%	68.2%	58.0%		
India	48.9%	54.7%	51.7%		
Indonesia	75.4%	52.2%	55.0%	43.6%	34.4%
Italy	23.3%	63.3%	35.0%		
Kazakhstan	30.5%	47.5%	35.0%	36.6%	46.2%
Kosovo	42.9%	77.6%	61.3%	7.9%	6.7%
Latvia	21.4%	77.4%	55.0%	1.8%	8.3%
Lithuania	36.9%	82.8%	44.5%	8.1%	9.1%
Moldova	32.1%	74.6%	65.2%	4.8%	5.2%
Nepal	8.8%	32.2%	35.7%	1.3%	2.8%
Netherlands	26.0%	77.1%	47.3%	10.8%	32.3%
New Zealand	34.5%	67.3%	40.4%	6.2%	9.8%
North Cyprus	44.1%	15.8%	18.6%	10.3%	8.5%
Norway	35.2%	64.9%	48.0%	16.3%	27.6%
Pakistan	32.0%	47.4%	50.1%	24.5%	25.6%
Paraguay	23.3%	75.7%	59.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Peru	17.0%	72.6%	72.3%	24.0%	28.8%
Philippines	44.5%	88.7%	79.9%	8.8%	18.8%
Poland	29.9%	62.5%	50.5%	31.5%	38.9%
Portugal	7.9%	85.0%	39.0%	0.5%	6.6%
Romania	21.5%	59.2%	51.9%	7.8%	5.2%
Serbia	45.0%	68.7%	57.6%	2.9%	5.0%
Sierra Leone	31.3%	52.2%	56.8%	8.6%	3.9%
Singapore	45.0%	77.8%	57.8%	38.2%	43.0%
Slovakia	15.7%	59.4%	38.8%	8.6%	13.3%
Slovenia	19.7%	54.2%	47.2%	6.0%	5.5%
South Africa	41.3%	77.3%	61.7%		
South Korea	16.8%	61.1%	35.5%	13.0%	18.9%
Spain	36.1%	72.6%	66.5%	4.9%	8.4%
Switzerland				15.3%	21.2%
Taiwan	22.2%	54.5%	49.8%	13.4%	30.3%
Tanzania	20.2%	42.5%	42.7%	13.3%	37.3%
Thailand	56.8%	79.8%	82.0%	19.9%	56.8%
Turkey	45.8%	63.1%	53.1%	14.0%	11.3%
UAE	30.8%	63.9%	56.6%	15.1%	14.7%
UK	35.5%	70.7%	58.1%	9.2%	14.8%
Ukraine	37.9%	82.0%	62.4%	7.1%	4.2%
USA				8.3%	13.5%
Uzbekistan	12.8%	16.5%	15.9%	34.1%	27.2%
Venezuela	30.5%	84.3%	76.3%	7.3%	15.4%
Yemen	36.2%	75.0%	69.6%	15.0%	5.6%
Zambia	24.9%	62.9%	59.9%	4.0%	4.3%
Average	**32.4%**	**67.6%**	**56.0%**	**12.2%**	**17.8%**

[1]Percentage of respondents saying "always" or "often." Question: "Please tell me how frequently you use the following technologies for journalistic purposes." (Scale: 5 = Always; 4 = Often; 3 = Sometimes; 2 = Rarely; 1 = Never.)
[2]Percentage of respondents saying "yes." Question: "Please tell us whether these technologies are used in any of the newsrooms you work in."

Media Platforms, Formats, and News Cultures

NEIL THURMAN & ADRIANA AMADO
WITH BIANKA FRANCISTYOVÁ, SILVIA DALBEN FURTADO, WARAT KARUCHIT, MANASVI MAHESHWARI & KÉRLEY WINQUES

The Worlds of Journalism Study 3 (WJS3) introduced three new questions aimed at capturing journalists' media environments more comprehensively. These questions addressed the distribution platforms journalists used, the media formats they produced, and the cultural backgrounds of the media organizations they worked for. In contrast, the previous survey, WJS2, included only a single question on the "type of medium," such as daily newspaper. The rationale for these additions is discussed in detail elsewhere (Thurman, 2025, pp. 19–20), but in essence, the new questions were designed to provide more precise information on the formats journalists produce in, the specific internet-based platforms they use for distribution, and, for the first time, the cultural context of the media institutions employing them.

MEDIA PLATFORMS

In nearly all countries, a large majority of journalists knew in advance which platform(s) their work would reach (see Table 18). Across the global sample, websites were the platform most regularly used ("always" or "often") by journalists (70%), followed by social media (53%), print (40%), news apps (35%), TV (31%), radio (26%), messaging apps (25%), email newsletters (20%), and podcasts (13%).

Behind this overall ranking, notable differences exist between countries, and the magnitude of these differences varies by platform. Before examining these differences, it is important to note that some may stem from differences in the sampling strategies employed to select the journalists for the survey. Globally, there is relatively little variation in the proportion of journalists who regularly produce for websites, social media, and print. This, coupled with the fact that these platforms are the most frequently produced for, underscores their global importance for news distribution.

The prominence of websites highlights the central role of digital distribution for nearly all journalism outlets. Social media, ranking second, remain a significant dissemination platform, even though many publishers have been working to reduce their reliance on them (Hartley et al., 2023). This adjustment is partly a response to changes in platform algorithms that have reduced referrals to news sites. A substantial proportion of journalists continue to produce content for print on a regular basis, which may seem surprising given the declining readership. However, print still accounted for 77% of newspapers' advertising and circulation revenues globally in 2023–2024 (Radcliffe et al., 2025, p. 11). To sustain this vital income stream, 40% of the journalists surveyed contributed regularly to print publications.

In contrast, messaging apps, radio, and email newsletters show greater cross-country variation. Messaging apps, produced for almost as frequently as radio, have risen quickly in importance, aided by WhatsApp's "Channels"

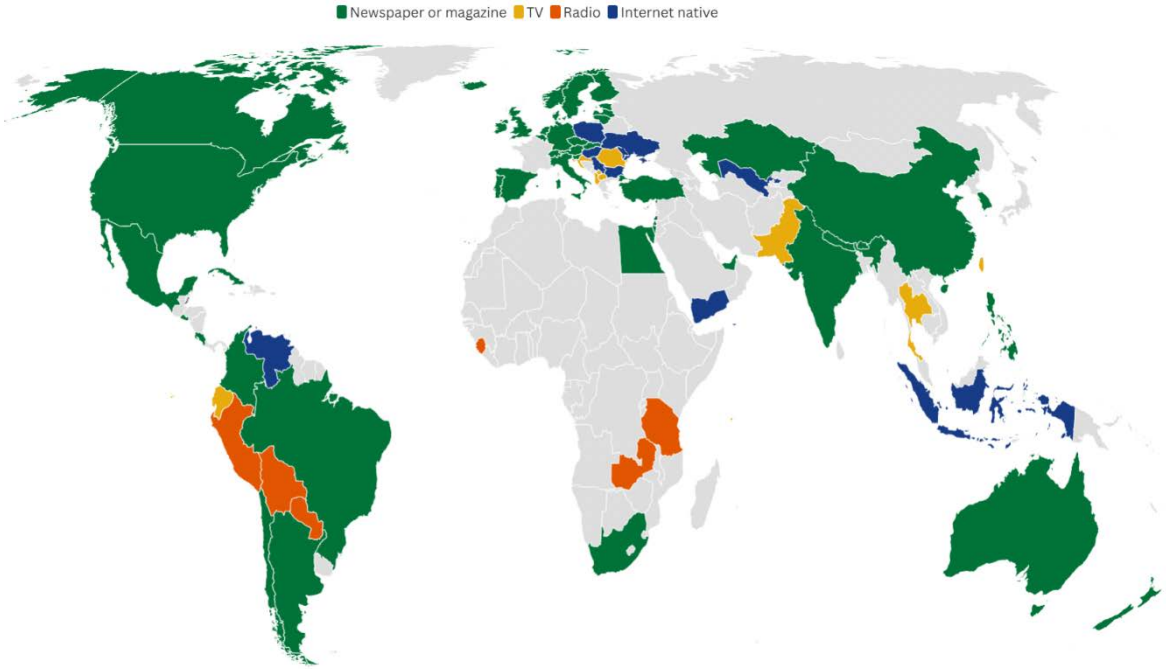


FIGURE 10: NEWS CULTURES AROUND THE WORLD
Cultural background of journalists' main employer – top category

feature launched globally in September 2023 (Meta, 2023). They are particularly prominent in Central and South America (around two-thirds of journalists in Peru and Ecuador) and in some Asian, Eastern European, and African countries, but much less so in Northern Europe and Anglo-Saxon countries (e.g., fewer than 5% in the USA, Australia, and Austria).

Radio remains a relatively important distribution platform in African and Central and South American countries, as well as in some Asian states, likely due to the comparatively low costs of production, distribution, and reception of journalism on this platform. For instance, at least 60% of journalists in both Zambia and Paraguay reported produced for radio regularly.

In contrast, the proportion of journalists producing content for email newsletters shows considerable variation between countries and does not appear to correlate clearly with geography. For example, fewer than 3% of journalists in both Iceland and Nepal reported producing for this platform at least "often," while in the United Kingdom and Indonesia—–two very different countries—the proportions exceeded ten times that figure.

MEDIA FORMATS

The survey included an optional question on the media formats journalists produced, ranging from text to animation. Data from the 51 countries that included this question show that text was the most frequently produced format, with 80% of journalists creating it regularly ("always" or "often"), followed by photographs (46%), video (43%), audio (39%), and graphics (18%). About one-third of journalists produced multimedia stories combining multiple formats (see Table 19).

This global ranking hides differences between countries, with the magnitude of these differences varying by media format. There is relatively little variation worldwide in the proportion of journalists who regularly produce journalism in text. This, combined with text being the most frequently produced format, underscores its central importance in news production. Text typically serves as a fundamental component for journalism across websites, social media, print, email newsletters, and news or messaging apps. Even in content ultimately delivered as video or audio, scripting is common, making written text a crucial step in the production process.

By contrast, other media formats show higher cross-country variability. Audio is particularly important in many African and Central and South American countries, likely due to the prevalence of radio as a distribution platform. Video is prominent in some Asian, Eastern European, and Central and South American countries, reflecting the relative importance of television and social media platforms in these regions. Photographs, graphics, and multimedia stories also display considerable variation, but this does not appear to follow clear geographic patterns.

JOURNALISTS' EMPLOYERS' MEDIA CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS

Among journalists in our sample who had a single main employer and knew its background, the most common affiliation was with newspapers or magazines (34%), followed by television (23%), internet-native outlets (20%), radio (16%), news agencies (6%), and telecommunications (1%) (see Table 20).

Magazine-based employers were more prevalent in Northern and Southern Europe and relatively rare in Eastern Europe, Africa, Central and South America, and Asia. This likely reflects differences in advertiser and consumer disposable incomes, as magazines are relatively costly to produce and purchase, often relying on high-priced advertisements. Radio employers were relatively common in African countries, consistent with the importance of audio as a news format on the continent.

Journalists whose employer had an internet-native background were relatively prevalent in countries with lower press freedom (as measured by the RSF's World Press Freedom Index), such as Uzbekistan, Venezuela, and Serbia, perhaps indicating how online platforms can better evade government censorship. By contrast, in several Northern European and Anglo-Saxon countries, few journalists were employed by internet-native outlets, indicating the continued strength of legacy media in those regions.

Overall, 79% of journalists had a main employer with a legacy media background. The financial future of these institutions remains uncertain, particularly as digital tech giants dominate global advertising. In 2023, Meta earned US$131.9 billion in advertising revenue, surpassing the combined global ad income of newspapers, magazines, cinemas, radio, and outdoor media, while Alphabet earned over US$237 billion (Brownsell, 2024; WARC). Despite this massive shift in advertising revenue toward digital tech companies, there has not been a commensurate shift in who funds the employment of journalists. While digital-native media outlets are contributing to job creation globally, our data show they still represent a relatively small portion of employment in journalism – an industry essential to democratic societies.

CONCLUSION

The frequencies with which journalists produced for different distribution platforms show the global centrality of news websites, alongside the persistence of print and social media. Messaging apps are also gaining traction, particularly in certain regions. Similarly, data on media formats reveal the global primacy of text, with audio and video holding particular importance in parts of the Global South and Eastern Europe. Finally, the fact that 79% of journalists are employed by legacy media outlets raises concerns about the profession's future, especially as print faces potential collapse and broadcaster revenues continue to decline in real terms.

TABLE 18: MEDIA PLATFORMS

Country	Know platforms in advance[1]	Print[2]	Radio[2]	TV[2]	Websites[2]	News App[2]	Podcast[2]	Social Media[2]	Messaging App[2]	E-Mail newsletter[2]
Albania	96.1%	13.2%	7.9%	79.7%	69.4%	46.1%	1.6%	65.3%	23.0%	6.1%
Argentina	93.8%	41.0%	52.6%	36.1%	74.3%	25.2%	17.2%	64.0%	35.6%	20.4%
Australia	96.3%	61.4%	30.4%	19.8%	82.0%	51.4%	13.0%	49.5%	4.6%	28.4%
Austria	96.4%	51.3%	26.7%	30.8%	63.5%	24.4%	9.7%	35.1%	4.4%	18.6%
Belgium	92.1%	53.5%	20.9%	30.2%	75.5%	48.5%	8.2%	36.8%	3.4%	24.9%
Bhutan	88.8%	34.2%	61.8%	42.6%	48.0%	31.9%	18.5%	64.9%	32.9%	31.5%
Bolivia	97.5%	18.2%	48.6%	41.4%	74.9%	22.4%	11.3%	83.6%	59.8%	13.6%
Brazil	89.0%	33.3%	23.3%	33.5%	78.5%	38.4%	16.7%	56.7%	36.5%	20.0%
Bulgaria	95.6%	37.5%	24.0%	25.2%	85.3%	25.5%	13.7%	62.2%	16.1%	20.3%
Canada	97.1%	48.5%	22.4%	25.1%	89.4%	58.0%	10.0%	43.4%	3.6%	28.3%
Chile	98.5%	33.2%	40.7%	32.5%	65.6%	22.1%	12.6%	58.2%	21.5%	14.3%
China	81.9%	39.2%	15.6%	33.4%	49.1%	71.4%	7.8%	48.3%	38.4%	0%
Colombia	95.3%	42.0%	39.4%	32.9%	85.9%	34.2%	22.7%	73.7%	50.6%	36.1%
Costa Rica	98.1%	44.8%	24.4%	29.4%	86.9%	37.3%	14.8%	80.9%	41.9%	32.2%
Croatia	90.5%	25.5%	17.5%	38.3%	74.8%	22.4%	6.6%	59.5%	17.6%	17.2%
Cuba	98.8%	30.1%	24.8%	27.1%	82.3%	9.7%	17.4%	76.4%	18.0%	12.7%
Czech Republic	97.6%	47.4%	20.7%	17.6%	75.9%	19.5%	12.4%	39.0%	2.5%	6.3%
Denmark	97.1%	45.8%	13.6%	26.7%	70.7%	35.0%	8.5%	29.7%	2.6%	0%
Ecuador	91.1%	41.6%	40.9%	46.3%	68.5%	40.1%	22.5%	78.2%	61.6%	32.1%
Egypt	84.8%	50.9%	20.1%	38.6%	78.5%	48.1%	15.8%	60.9%	25.0%	32.1%
El Salvador	93.2%	26.7%	12.9%	15.5%	91.5%	24.7%	17.0%	74.1%	23.4%	22.0%
Estonia	98.0%	51.2%	17.6%	15.2%	75.3%	27.1%	14.9%	24.9%	3.4%	10.9%
Ethiopia	95.2%	17.5%	46.6%	55.0%	34.1%	21.6%	13.1%	54.5%	35.8%	25.4%
Finland	94.1%	68.1%	14.9%	12.2%	81.8%	36.5%	5.7%	55.6%	6.3%	15.1%
Germany	93.8%	57.7%	22.0%	20.9%	60.4%	35.9%	14.1%	57.6%	16.0%	25.0%
Hong Kong	89.1%	31.0%	11.3%	24.0%	76.7%	60.3%	7.4%	49.3%	9.4%	9.7%
Hungary	96.3%	30.1%	13.1%	3.8%	89.1%	17.5%	18.0%	66.1%	3.8%	12.0%
Iceland	99.5%	37.4%	34.9%	30.7%	79.0%	7.1%	10.6%	36.0%	6.0%	2.5%
India	81.2%	70.1%	20.8%	40.7%	60.3%	50.5%	26.3%	59.7%	52.6%	43.1%
Indonesia	92.6%	32.5%	10.3%	18.1%	68.2%	34.0%	14.1%	39.3%	38.2%	33.4%
Ireland	96.6%	62.5%	20.4%	13.9%	81.7%	60.2%	17.7%	59.2%	5.0%	22.0%
Israel	98.0%	47.1%	18.6%	20.3%	78.0%	48.6%	15.6%	53.6%	29.8%	15.1%
Italy	93.0%	60.3%	12.8%	22.7%	77.0%	21.2%	8.9%	54.2%	16.0%	28.8%
Kazakhstan	78.4%	25.3%	23.8%	48.9%	41.3%	41.1%	34.8%	45.1%	38.0%	28.7%
Kosovo	70.5%	10.4%	11.9%	65.1%	68.2%	32.1%	4.4%	50.0%	4.9%	1.7%
Latvia	98.3%	45.2%	18.8%	28.0%	62.6%	22.2%	10.8%	41.4%	7.1%	12.2%
Lithuania	97.7%	49.2%	16.6%	16.6%	73.2%	24.8%	9.8%	46.1%	3.7%	8.9%
Mexico	96.2%	38.4%	37.6%	27.6%	88.4%	36.4%	15.8%	84.2%	41.1%	23.9%
Moldova	96.4%	31.6%	20.1%	32.6%	75.3%	17.1%	12.0%	21.5%	44.1%	18.3%
Nepal	94.7%	35.1%	33.2%	22.9%	64.4%	32.7%	3.2%	37.3%	21.5%	2.2%
Netherlands	96.1%	51.2%	33.0%	37.0%	90.4%	71.0%	11.6%	56.9%	11.0%	30.2%
New Zealand	97.0%	60.6%	15.2%	15.6%	80.3%	48.8%	8.1%	35.9%	5.7%	21.2%
North Cyprus	95.0%	59.6%	36.9%	55.4%	80.7%	53.6%	4.6%	67.9%	32.4%	13.8%
North Macedonia	91.4%	8.5%	15.6%	51.4%	67.0%	5.2%	3.8%	50.0%	10.9%	0%
Norway	95.9%	52.4%	15.2%	21.9%	79.8%	35.1%	7.3%	39.0%	2.7%	0%
Pakistan	77.2%	39.5%	15.9%	48.4%	51.1%	33.3%	25.7%	54.2%	34.8%	22.3%
Paraguay	95.0%	26.5%	59.5%	38.2%	63.0%	30.9%	9.6%	73.4%	57.2%	13.1%
Peru	95.5%	58.8%	58.8%	45.9%	76.7%	19.1%	15.1%	81.5%	64.1%	40.5%
Philippines	93.3%	44.4%	19.9%	26.6%	77.9%	40.3%	10.3%	76.2%	38.7%	0%
Poland	84.0%	37.3%	22.4%	18.1%	74.7%	34.9%	18.6%	69.2%	30.7%	20.7%
Portugal	37.8%	37.2%	15.3%	28.5%	24.1%	2.9%	2.2%	3.7%	0.7%	2.9%
Romania	96.2%	28.3%	29.1%	37.5%	67.3%	24.6%	16.3%	26.7%	38.3%	16.0%
Serbia	94.8%	28.1%	7.2%	36.2%	64.8%	32.4%	12.2%	37.8%	21.3%	10.3%
Seychelles	93.7%	29.8%	45.6%	51.7%	23.2%	9.4%	5.5%	31.0%	28.1%	13.8%
Sierra Leone	92.7%	38.5%	81.2%	21.9%	27.2%	26.3%	23.0%	53.6%	48.4%	23.0%
Singapore	97.2%	27.0%	10.4%	32.6%	78.0%	63.2%	7.5%	52.6%	14.9%	0%
Slovakia	94.7%	37.1%	28.1%	33.6%	59.7%	23.8%	13.8%	43.9%	10.7%	6.7%
Slovenia	96.7%	35.0%	29.8%	27.7%	66.7%	29.7%	13.6%	39.2%	3.6%	11.6%
South Africa	95.5%	55.2%	21.2%	17.3%	76.4%	50.0%	17.1%	54.3%	25.3%	32.0%
South Korea	93.5%	51.3%	9.0%	20.9%	78.6%	51.9%	4.1%	31.9%	19.4%	10.1%
Spain	95.1%	40.1%	19.6%	28.2%	74.5%	30.4%	9.1%	47.6%	15.9%	19.4%
Sweden	95.2%	55.8%	18.7%	15.9%	77.3%	52.6%	8.9%	38.0%	0.8%	0%
Switzerland	95.5%	44.9%	25.5%	25.6%	75.0%	51.6%	10.2%	38.7%	2.6%	21.9%
Taiwan	79.6%	25.8%	8.4%	54.1%	82.9%	65.4%	10.3%	53.1%	27.9%	6.1%
Tanzania	85.8%	30.9%	49.9%	36.6%	34.9%	22.8%	23.6%	44.6%	39.0%	29.0%
Thailand	81.0%	23.6%	35.0%	50.2%	54.7%	42.8%	16.0%	67.4%	64.6%	29.8%
Turkey	93.0%	51.3%	7.9%	34.7%	0%	27.1%	9.0%	56.3%	24.8%	20.4%
UAE	89.6%	62.7%	16.2%	40.8%	68.1%	47.3%	20.7%	71.1%	27.2%	35.8%
UK	95.4%	52.9%	12.0%	10.9%	82.6%	31.2%	13.7%	45.0%	9.1%	35.4%
Ukraine	95.7%	21.7%	8.5%	30.7%	84.7%	26.6%	8.0%	68.2%	53.1%	12.7%
USA	97.1%	57.8%	15.2%	31.3%	87.2%	47.5%	11.9%	61.5%	4.5%	32.8%
Uzbekistan	90.0%	28.7%	16.1%	19.1%	29.3%	11.4%	8.8%	26.5%	21.3%	4.0%
Venezuela	94.0%	36.8%	36.9%	20.6%	84.4%	32.3%	13.7%	80.2%	63.7%	27.6%
Yemen	71.4%	27.3%	31.1%	40.2%	86.5%	61.1%	29.7%	83.3%	55.1%	27.0%
Zambia	81.3%	26.4%	63.0%	27.0%	27.2%	20.8%	9.9%	55.1%	21.2%	18.5%
Average	**91.8%**	**40.2%**	**25.7%**	**31.4%**	**69.8%**	**34.9%**	**12.9%**	**53.2%**	**24.5%**	**20.1%**

[1]Note: Percentage of respondents saying "yes." Question: "Journalists can produce content for a variety of platforms, such as print, TV, radio, websites, and so on. When you produce or edit journalism content, or when you supervise its production, do you usually know in advance on which platforms it will be delivered to the audience?"

[2]Note: Percentage of respondents saying “always” or “often.” Question: "How often do you produce or edit content, or supervise its production, specifically for these platforms?" (Scale: 5 = Always; 4 = Often; 3 = Sometimes; 2 = Rarely; 1 = Never.) The percentages shown are based on responses from journalists who know in advance on which platforms their content will be delivered to audiences.

TABLE 19: MEDIA FORMATS

Country	Text	Photographs	Audio	Video	Graphics, cartoons, illustrations, or animation	Multimedia stories that use a combination of the former
Albania	93.3%	49.8%	50.0%	83.6%	21.4%	68.4%
Argentina	78.5%	36.7%	54.3%	41.8%	12.5%	38.2%
Australia	85.6%	51.3%	36.6%	27.3%	12.1%	44.8%
Belgium	80.4%	18.4%	23.4%	32.0%	6.1%	19.8%
Bolivia	81.5%	53.9%	65.8%	67.1%	12.2%	46.5%
Brazil	91.5%	39.2%	44.6%	46.6%	17.1%	35.5%
Bulgaria	96.6%	65.8%	37.9%	34.5%	15.1%	21.1%
China	72.8%	38.4%	27.0%	62.5%	20.1%	56.2%
Colombia	83.1%	47.2%	56.9%	54.8%	21.3%	43.5%
Costa Rica	70.1%	38.8%	36.9%	49.1%	24.3%	39.7%
Croatia	83.3%	54.5%	46.9%	55.5%	21.4%	28.1%
Cuba	86.0%	47.5%	38.8%	36.4%	17.2%	34.2%
Czech Republic	90.0%	48.9%	33.4%	31.8%	10.1%	29.8%
Ecuador	50.5%	31.3%	39.9%	48.5%	23.7%	35.7%
Egypt	88.4%	63.7%	41.2%	47.5%	31.0%	30.5%
Hong Kong	76.9%	51.7%	31.5%	36.3%	22.6%	49.2%
Hungary	96.3%	50.5%	11.6%	21.6%	10.0%	15.8%
India	86.5%	62.4%	37.5%	45.7%	38.6%	47.7%
Indonesia	81.0%	59.0%	29.7%	37.8%	13.9%	34.7%
Ireland	85.4%	46.7%	30.6%	23.4%	16.7%	34.4%
Kazakhstan	52.0%	39.1%	34.3%	40.9%	26.0%	32.4%
Kosovo	90.1%	53.7%	51.6%	63.4%	36.7%	41.7%
Latvia	91.4%	54.0%	33.7%	35.6%	21.4%	40.0%
Lithuania	93.4%	55.3%	27.2%	23.8%	11.6%	4.3%
Moldova	88.5%	53.3%	37.3%	51.0%	14.6%	38.2%
Nepal	55.4%	15.6%	35.2%	27.9%	0.5%	9.3%
New Zealand	87.4%	52.2%	28.6%	35.1%	12.8%	46.9%
North Cyprus	90.9%	57.5%	30.6%	43.3%	12.6%	12.1%
Pakistan	52.3%	28.4%	30.9%	44.1%	21.2%	30.7%
Paraguay	66.3%	39.1%	55.1%	47.2%	13.5%	35.0%
Peru	79.8%	62.9%	71.8%	66.1%	24.5%	38.4%
Poland	63.3%	46.5%	34.7%	39.8%	31.5%	29.7%
Portugal	98.0%	6.7%	15.3%	25.9%	0.4%	8.0%
Romania	86.4%	48.8%	51.3%	50.4%	16.7%	43.4%
Serbia	92.5%	55.2%	32.1%	52.2%	29.5%	47.8%
Sierra Leone	53.7%	29.8%	73.2%	29.3%	21.3%	10.5%
Slovakia	84.8%	41.2%	45.3%	37.7%	7.9%	31.6%
Slovenia	92.0%	47.2%	45.3%	32.7%	21.5%	7.7%
South Korea	82.7%	61.1%	14.1%	23.8%	17.6%	15.7%
Switzerland	79.0%	47.7%	32.1%	33.6%	17.0%	28.8%
Taiwan	71.1%	38.2%	46.7%	62.8%	23.3%	46.2%
Tanzania	45.1%	37.7%	59.1%	38.5%	15.1%	15.8%
Thailand	67.1%	57.6%	58.7%	62.9%	33.1%	44.1%
Turkey	88.6%	44.7%	22.8%	39.0%	9.5%	42.0%
UAE	87.7%	66.6%	41.2%	58.8%	15.6%	38.5%
UK	86.3%	38.7%	21.1%	20.2%	13.1%	35.6%
Ukraine	89.2%	50.3%	15.1%	45.4%	17.8%	33.0%
Uzbekistan	40.3%	29.4%	12.5%	26.9%	11.9%	16.9%
Venezuela	68.6%	39.4%	41.7%	39.4%	11.3%	38.2%
Yemen	89.8%	62.3%	45.8%	44.2%	20.8%	35.8%
Zambia	83.3%	47.3%	82.3%	39.1%	20.1%	22.8%
Average	**79.5%**	**46.3%**	**39.2%**	**42.5%**	**18.0%**	**32.8%**

Percentage of respondents saying “always” or “often.” Question: "How often do you produce, edit or supervise the production of journalism content in any of these formats?" (Scale: 5 = Always; 4 = Often; 3 = Sometimes; 2 = Rarely; 1 = Never.)

TABLE 20: MAIN EMPLOYERS' MEDIA CULTURAL BACKGROUND

	Newspapers or magazines	TV	Radio	News agency	Internet native	Telecommu-nications	Other
Albania	1.8%	77.3%	0.7%	2.8%	10.3%	0.4%	6.7%
Argentina	33.4%	18.5%	29.3%	1.8%	11.7%	1.8%	3.5%
Australia	53.9%	14.9%	12.5%	5.5%	4.7%	0	8.5%
Austria	50.9%	2.4%	40.6%	3.9%	2.2%	0	0
Belgium	52.0%	23.0%	7.1%	6.7%	2.5%	2.3%	6.4%
Bhutan	40.0%	24.7%	27.1%	8.2%	0	0	0
Bolivia	12.7%	31.9%	38.4%	0.7%	15.7%	0.5%	0
Brazil	30.3%	30.1%	9.9%	12.1%	15.7%	2.0%	0
Bulgaria	22.3%	15.2%	16.8%	10.2%	32.2%	1.3%	2.1%
Canada	43.7%	21.7%	8.9%	15.0%	10.6%	0	0
Chile	28.2%	23.9%	31.2%	0.5%	14.1%	2.0%	0
China	54.2%	34.7%	10.8%		0.3%	0	0
Colombia	27.2%	15.1%	21.1%	4.2%	24.2%	0.9%	7.3%
Costa Rica	46.0%	22.8%	5.3%	1.6%	19.0%	1.1%	4.2%
Croatia	14.8%	37.8%	14.8%	2.1%	30.0%	0.4%	0
Cuba	35.7%	21.3%	17.7%	8.2%	17.1%	0	0
Czech Republic	46.2%	15.0%	18.8%	2.2%	17.8%	0	0
Denmark	42.6%	31.7%	7.5%	1.2%	13.8%	0	3.1%
Ecuador	15.8%	23.3%	22.5%	3.8%	18.8%	1.3%	14.6%
Egypt	52.0%	19.5%	8.4%	7.7%	11.3%	0	1.0%
El Salvador	41.0%	8.2%	9.7%	6.2%	34.9%	0	0
Estonia	40.3%	12.8%	10.7%	1.0%	30.9%	0	4.4%
Ethiopia	8.7%	40.8%	37.0%	2.9%	10.5%	0	0
Finland	71.2%	8.3%	9.1%	2.1%	3.5%	0	5.9%
Germany	58.0%	17.6%	17.5%	3.6%	3.2%	0.2%	0
Hong Kong	30.6%	20.9%	9.7%	5.8%	32.6%	0.4%	0
Hungary	27.6%	2.2%	1.6%	8.1%	52.4%	8.1%	0
Iceland	48.5%	15.0%	23.8%	1.9%	8.7%	1.5%	0.5%
India	56.8%	24.6%	1.3%	8.1%	8.7%	0.4%	0
Indonesia	17.3%	11.6%	4.9%	4.9%	58.5%	0.6%	2.4%
Ireland	59.5%	10.2%	12.5%	2.6%	13.4%	0	1.7%
Israel	40.1%	16.2%	9.4%	0.3%	28.3%	0	5.7%
Italy	61.0%	13.6%	3.1%	5.6%	16.6%	0.2%	0
Kazakhstan	28.2%	9.7%	8.3%	12.6%	23.8%	3.9%	13.6%
Kosovo	10.7%	45.4%	4.9%	10.2%	2.4%	0	26.3%
Latvia	39.4%	19.7%	11.8%	6.1%	22.9%	0.2%	0
Lithuania	42.3%	12.6%	10.9%	3.1%	31.1%	0	0
Mexico	31.7%	15.5%	19.4%	3.5%	21.3%	8.6%	0
Moldova	13.2%	24.6%	10.0%	3.6%	47.3%	0.4%	1.1%
Nepal	28.2%	17.3%	28.0%	5.1%	21.4%	0	0
Netherlands	44.1%	28.7%	8.7%	7.2%	11.3%	0	0
New Zealand	50.0%	17.7%	12.6%	5.8%	13.9%	0	0
North Cyprus	25.2%	20.9%	1.7%	21.7%	27.0%	0	3.5%
North Macedonia	7.8%	52.6%	14.8%	2.2%	22.6%	0	0
Norway	56.5%	16.0%	8.2%	1.7%	10.0%	0	7.5%
Pakistan	21.0%	45.0%	2.7%	11.8%	16.0%	3.4%	0
Paraguay	17.8%	14.4%	39.9%	3.1%	9.6%	1.9%	13.2%
Peru	19.1%	9.0%	40.3%	4.5%	22.4%	0	4.8%
Philippines	35.7%	20.5%	9.8%	8.1%	19.5%	0.3%	6.1%
Poland	24.3%	8.4%	10.7%	10.7%	42.6%	3.2%	0
Portugal	41.8%	21.3%	9.3%	2.7%	17.2%	0	7.7%
Romania	5.3%	31.2%	18.9%	13.9%	29.0%	0.6%	1.1%
Serbia	24.3%	33.5%	2.7%	3.0%	36.1%	0.4%	0
Seychelles	22.0%	45.8%	22.0%	10.2%	0	0	0
Sierra Leone	7.6%	5.9%	83.6%	0	0	0	2.9%
Singapore	27.9%	30.2%	1.1%	25.7%	10.6%	0	4.5%
Slovakia	29.9%	28.7%	19.0%	8.4%	14.0%	0	0
Slovenia	27.8%	24.6%	23.7%	8.0%	15.1%	0.3%	0.6%
South Africa	42.7%	12.7%	14.6%	6.4%	23.2%	0.4%	0
South Korea	51.5%	17.3%	1.4%	5.2%	24.4%	0	0.3%
Spain	37.3%	22.5%	9.0%	2.8%	28.4%	0	0
Sweden	59.3%	15.8%	18.1%	2.8%	1.0%	0	3.1%
Switzerland	46.3%	3.1%	39.9%	3.1%	7.1%	0.5%	0
Taiwan	22.0%	58.8%	3.5%	2.8%	12.9%	0	0
Tanzania	20.1%	25.7%	36.5%	7.9%	8.7%	1.2%	0
Thailand	3.8%	45.8%	16.8%	6.0%	27.6%	0	0
Turkey	41.2%	25.2%	0.9%	9.9%	14.5%	0	8.4%
UAE	52.0%	24.8%	4.0%	9.9%	4.0%	0.3%	5.0%
UK	59.3%	10.6%	6.9%	7.3%	15.8%	0.1%	0
Ukraine	9.8%	15.8%	2.7%	13.7%	55.2%	0	2.7%
USA	49.7%	27.9%	10.0%	3.9%	7.0%	0.8%	0.7%
Uzbekistan	17.1%	11.7%	5.0%	2.0%	64.0%	0.2%	0
Venezuela	24.7%	7.6%	15.2%	7.6%	42.4%	0.6%	1.8%
Yemen	14.7%	29.7%	9.9%	9.5%	35.9%	0.4%	0
Zambia	11.9%	23.5%	62.6%	1.7%	0.3%	0	0
Average	**33.5%**	**22.5%**	**15.7%**	**6.1%**	**19.9%**	**1.4%**	**5.4%**

Question: "How would you describe the background of your main employer, or the main outlet where you work?"

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Albania

JONILA GODOLE, RRAPO ZGURI & BESMIR GODOLJA

INTRODUCTION

During the WJS3 data collection (2021–2022), Albania's media environment was shaped by political dominance, economic fragility, and declining press freedom. The ruling Socialist Party consolidated power following the 2021 elections, while media outlets faced pressure from both political actors and media owners with economic interests. Journalists operated under precarious conditions: low pay, job insecurity, and limited editorial autonomy.

In 2022, Albania dropped to 103rd in the World Press Freedom Index, its worst ranking to date. This reflected political interference, threats against journalists, and the rise of online harassment, especially targeting women. A proposed anti-defamation package and the creation of the Media and Information Agency further restricted access to official information.

Despite these challenges, Albanian journalists continue to uphold their roles, navigating a complex landscape marked by censorship risks, economic pressures, and a polarized public sphere.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

Albanian journalists are generally young and well-educated. Women make up 55.8% of the sample, with an average age of 32.6 years (SD = 8.7). Approximately 97.3% hold a university degree: Bachelor's (37.1%), Master's (57.6%), or Doctorate (2.1%). About 85.2% have formal journalism training, predominantly (91.4%) from universities or colleges. Many others entered the field after training in different disciplines, reflecting a broadly professionalized and academically qualified journalistic workforce.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

Most journalists (94.7%) are employed full-time, while a smaller group (5.3%) work part-time, and only 2.6% are freelancers. Even though 74.2% hold permanent contracts, job insecurity persists: approximately 25% of journalists have an additional job outside journalism to supplement their income. Journalists have an average of 9.7 years of experience (SD = 7.6; Median = 7), reflecting a blend of mid-career professionals and relatively newer entrants. Membership in journalists' unions remains limited, with only 32.5% affiliated, indicating weak collective representation.

Journalists typically face demanding workloads, averaging 45.4 hours per week (SD = 7.8; Median = 45) for those in full-time employment, and 56.8% report frequently experiencing stress at work (often or very often). Around 54.6% of journalists cover specific beats, indicating a near-even split between specialists and generalists. Television continues as the primary background of employer (approximately 40%), followed by print outlets including newspapers and magazines (25%) and radio stations. Digital-native outlets are steadily growing, employing around 15% of journalists, signaling a gradual digital shift. Employment in news agencies remains minimal (under 5%). While most journalists operate within urban settings, a significant portion (29.3%) work for local or regional media outlets.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Among Albanian journalists, harassment and intimidation, including threats or demeaning speech, were among the most frequently experienced threats (see Table 1). Although incidents of direct physical attacks and legal threats were reported less frequently, these remain concerning, significantly influencing journalists' overall sense of safety. A notable portion (about one-fourth) of journalists expressed worry about potential job loss within the next year, while a clear majority were concerned about their emotional and mental well-being, as well as their physical safety (see Table 2). Furthermore, approximately two-thirds of respondents expressed significant concern about impunity for those who perpetrate violence against journalists.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	283	3.5%	9.8%	27.3%	21.3%	38.1%
Public discrediting of your work	283	0.7%	5.2%	13.3%	15.7%	65.0%
Surveillance	282	2.5%	16.3%	19.5%	18.1%	43.6%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	269	1.0%	4.5%	4.5%	11.8%	78.0%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	280	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	1.8%	97.2%
Legal actions against you because of your work	280	0.7%	0.4%	1.4%	6.4%	91.2%
Stalking	280	0.0%	1.1%	1.8%	6.3%	90.8%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	282	0.0%	1.8%	6.3%	13.0%	78.9%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	282	0.0%	0.4%	3.6%	4.3%	91.8%
Other physical attacks	274	0.0%	0.4%	3.2%	8.2%	88.3%
Coercion	279	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	4.6%	95.0%
Questioning of your personal morality	278	3.1%	0.8%	5.0%	9.9%	81.3%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	281	1.9%	1.5%	3.3%	11.9%	81.4%
Others disseminating your personal information	281	1.5%	1.9%	10.2%	13.2%	73.3%
Workplace bullying	281	1.5%	0.0%	8.5%	14.2%	75.8%
Abductions	266	0.0%	0.0%	1.5%	0.4%	98.1%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	268	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	2.3%	96.9%
Intimidation that targets family	280	0.0%	0.4%	0.8%	1.5%	97.3%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	283	23.8%	2.37	1.35
Concerned about physical well-being	284	38.2%	2.97	1.33
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	282	63.8%	3.63	1.21
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Albania go unpunished	282	67.5%	3.79	1.17

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Albanian journalists expressed strong support for objectivist roles, while audience-oriented and educative approaches remain significantly valued but somewhat less prominent (see Table 3). Politically assertive or advocacy-related roles were among the least valued. Nonetheless, substantial minorities – around one-third – of the interviewed journalists viewed roles such as advocating for social change (37.0%) or monitoring those in power (34.6%) as extremely or very important. Explicitly political functions like setting the political agenda (8.7%) or motivating political participation (12.9%) were least appreciated but still received notable support from a minority of respondents.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	**Very/ Extremely important**	**Mean**	**SD**
Be a detached observer	283	61.8%	4.30	1.03
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	283	34.6%	3.63	1.26
Shine a light on society's problems	282	63.5%	4.50	0.79
Motivate people to participate in politics	269	12.9%	2.19	1.41
Provide analysis of current affairs	280	32.3%	3.71	1.17
Let people express their views	280	56.4%	4.31	0.94
Provide information people need to form political opinion	280	37.9%	3.68	1.35
Advocate for social change	282	37.0%	4.00	0.96
Influence public opinion	282	25.7%	3.46	1.25
Set the political agenda	274	8.7%	2.16	1.35
Promote peace and tolerance	279	52.3%	4.16	1.08
Educate the audience	278	53.0%	4.19	1.04
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	281	49.8%	4.19	1.00
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	281	36.3%	3.77	1.24
Support national development	281	48.1%	4.12	1.02
Support government policy	266	5.2%	1.76	1.15
Convey a positive image of political leaders	268	6.3%	1.70	1.19
Provide entertainment and relaxation	280	17.2%	2.66	1.45
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	281	30.5%	3.32	1.46
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	281	28.3%	3.53	1.27

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

There was considerable agreement among Albanian journalists regarding their perceptions of journalistic epistemologies (see Table 4). Respondents strongly concurred on the possibility of objectively representing reality, the importance of letting facts speak for themselves, and the necessity of alerting audiences about untruthful claims. Conversely, the idea that interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts, and that journalists' personal beliefs inevitably influence reporting, received notably less support.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	281	15.7%	3.21	1.35
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	277	6.4%	2.52	1.25
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	282	7.7%	2.32	1.28
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	282	21.8%	3.23	1.35
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	279	48.4%	4.37	0.85
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	272	4.7%	2.19	1.19
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	271	6.6%	2.58	1.24
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	272	48.6%	4.25	0.92
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	270	11.8%	2.70	1.41
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	273	44.6%	4.11	1.07
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	270	48.0%	4.36	0.74

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Journalists in Albania strongly agreed on the centrality of professional ethical standards over subjective or situational considerations in journalistic decision-making (see Table 5). When evaluating controversial reporting methods (see Table 6), accepting money from sources or fabricating stories were overwhelmingly rejected. However, many journalists found it acceptable to use hidden recordings and, in certain cases, justified adopting false identities to obtain information.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	282	92.2%	4.64	0.78
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	279	47.7%	3.39	1.18
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	277	15.5%	2.33	1.15
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	273	8.8%	1.75	1.12

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	276	1.1%	26.8%
Using hidden recording devices	283	7.4%	65.4%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	280	7.5%	55.0%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	282	14.9%	50.0%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	282	1.1%	30.1%
Paying people for confidential information	283	7.4%	43.5%
Accepting money from sources	283	0.4%	4.2%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	282	1.1%	11.0%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	280	1.8%	31.1%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	281	0.7%	13.2%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Albanian journalists indicated moderate levels of editorial autonomy, with around half reporting significant freedom in choosing news stories (50.3%) and determining their emphasis (46.5%) (see Table 7). Nevertheless, perceptions of media freedom in Albania as a whole were much lower (20.8%), highlighting a critical awareness of systemic constraints. This contrast suggests that individual autonomy in newsroom decisions exists, but is heavily influenced by broader structural pressures, including political interference, economic control, and ongoing challenges such as self-censorship and restricted access to official information.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	280	50.3%	3.81	0.84
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	263	46.5%	3.71	0.91
Media freedom in Albania	283	20.8%	2.84	0.89

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Albanian journalists identified journalism ethics (46.1%), time limits (28.7%), availability of news-gathering resources (26.7%), and editorial policy (27.6%) as the strongest internal influences on news production (see Table 8). Additionally, personal values and beliefs (34.2%) significantly shaped journalistic decisions. Among external factors, media laws and regulations (29.4%), access to information (28.5%), and organizational ownership (25.2%) were reported as notably influential. Direct political pressures from government officials (10.2%) or politicians (7.7%) ranked lower, yet indirect influences through ownership structures, advertising considerations, and economic pressures remain substantial challenges to editorial independence in Albanian media.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	282	8.1%	2.82	1.17
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	277	19.6%	3.62	0.97
The business managers of the news organization	274	18.0%	3.29	1.29
The owners of the news organization	265	25.2%	3.45	1.32
Editorial policy	280	27.6%	3.65	1.20
Advertising considerations	274	15.4%	3.17	1.29
Profit expectations	264	9.7%	2.45	1.36
Audience research and data	273	16.7%	3.16	1.28
Availability of news-gathering resources	278	26.7%	3.69	1.12
Time limits	279	28.7%	3.82	1.02
Journalism ethics	281	46.1%	4.25	0.86
Self-censorship	260	7.2%	2.72	1.20
Personal values and beliefs	272	34.2%	3.42	1.52
Colleagues in other media	265	4.9%	2.21	1.21
Friends, acquaintances and family	226	6.3%	2.02	1.24
Feedback from the audience	280	16.1%	3.19	1.20
Competing news organizations	272	11.7%	2.65	1.30
Media laws and regulation	284	29.4%	3.52	1.27
Access to information	281	28.5%	3.78	1.07
Government censorship	267	10.6%	2.64	1.36
Government officials	262	10.2%	2.42	1.40
Politicians	258	7.7%	2.35	1.36
Business	256	6.7%	2.18	1.29
Public relations	269	9.1%	2.45	1.27
Relationships with news sources	278	17.0%	3.19	1.31
Police	234	7.7%	2.16	1.36
Issue advocacy groups	223	4.4%	1.82	1.21
Scientists or health experts	229	9.7%	2.44	1.41
Religious groups and institutions	180	0.8%	1.51	0.92
Military	166	0.8%	1.30	0.74
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	164	0.4%	1.26	0.65
Organized crime and criminal groups	180	6.9%	1.62	1.26
Terrorist groups	168	1.7%	1.29	0.80

Question: "Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist." (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Argentina

Adriana Amado

INTRODUCTION

Between 2022 and 2023, Argentina underwent a period of profound political and economic upheaval. Inflation surged to over 211% in 2023, while poverty rates climbed sharply, particularly among young people, more than half of whom have lived in poverty at some point over the past decade. This instability deeply affected the country's media landscape, which was already grappling with economic fragility, intense political polarization, and a steady erosion of public trust.

The survey was conducted in 2023, before the presidential elections, resulting in a political shift from a left-wing administration that had ruled the country for twenty years of this century to a new brand of libertarian government. This increasingly polarized environment created fertile ground for threats to press freedom, complicating the conditions under which journalists operate.

Despite Argentina's relatively high physical and digital safety rankings, the profession remains constrained by a legacy of political harassment and a heavy reliance on state funding. These structural vulnerabilities not only limit journalistic independence but also affect the psychological well-being of media professionals.

Media reform in 2009 promoted the creation of media outlets based on generous subsidies to public and community-based media and state advertisement for private media. This policy turned Argentina into the country with the most radio outlets in Latin America. Flourishing digital ventures failed to support professional journalism, so finding journalists for this sample who fulfilled this study's definition was hard. Besides the extended poverty level conspiring against subscriptions, interest in news dropped significantly, with an increasing number of Argentines actively avoiding the news.

As part of the policy, national and local governments have become major advertisers and leading providers of diverse subsidies. The imbalance between supply and demand creates a weak financial infrastructure, resulting in a high dependency on government funding and informative subsidies from public relations and state sources.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

Argentinian journalists in this sample were on average 45.6 years old (SD = 10.6; Median = 45.5), and 41.8% were women. Regarding educational attainment, 48.5% held a bachelor's degree or equivalent, 26.4% a master's degree or equivalent, and 1.6% had obtained a doctorate. Additionally, 16.1% had completed some university studies without earning a degree. Furthermore, 86.4% of respondents had received formal education or professional training in journalism. This training was most acquired at a university or college (75.0%), but also through apprenticeships or cadetships (67.4%) and short-term courses (77.5%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

In the country, professional journalism is mainly possible on private media, where most respondents work (72.6%), while 14.4% work for different kinds of public service, community, or non-profit. The state-run media is represented by 5.3% of the sample. Regarding area of coverage, 52.4% primarily catered to local or regional media, 44.4% of the journalists reported mainly working for (trans)national media, while 3.2% declared no main media. The sample included top management positions (27.7%), middle management roles (44.4%), and no management role (27.7%).

Argentina has a record number of radio stations in the region, so one third of the sample works for an outlet with this background (27.9%), followed by organizations focused on newspaper publishing (27.6%), television (17.5%), digital native (11.1%), and magazines (4,2%). Few journalists worked for news agencies and outlets with a telecommunications background (1.6%, respectively). Only 5% of the interviewed journalists claimed not to have a main employer, although the norm is to have multiple jobs, which is why half of the sample has additional income.

About half of the interviewed journalists in Argentina had a full-time contract (44.5% permanent contract and 4.5% fixed-term contract), and one in five was part-time (19.5%). Almost a third (28.3%) worked as freelancers or were self-employed, and an additional 3.2% had other forms of employment. The precarious employment situation is evident because half of the respondents (50.8%) reported having additional jobs outside journalism.

On average, Argentinian journalists had 20.2 years of professional experience (SD = 20.3; Median = 20). Most worked on several beats or subject areas (71.6%) rather than a specific beat (28.4%). The average working week of Argentinian full-time professional journalists was 41.1 hours (SD = 16.4; Median = 41.5). Relatedly, 55.3% of the respondents reported they felt stressed out at work often or very often during the previous six months; only 14.5% had never or rarely felt that way. Only one third of Argentinian journalists (37.3%) declared to be members of any kind of union or professional association.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

More than half of the respondents expressed concern about losing their jobs, while a majority reported anxiety over their physical and emotional well-being (see Table 2). Demeaning or hateful speech and public discrediting of journalistic work emerged as two of the most common safety threats faced by journalists in Argentina (see Table 1). Alarmingly, nearly all surveyed journalists feared that those who perpetrate harm against members of the press would not be held accountable.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	376	5.9%	12.0%	39.9%	24.2%	18.1%
Public discrediting of your work	376	5.6%	10.4%	34.6%	25.0%	24.5%
Surveillance	376	2.1%	4.5%	13.8%	21.5%	58.0%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	376	1.1%	2.7%	14.9%	12.5%	68.9%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	376	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	1.6%	97.9%
Legal actions against you because of your work	376	0.8%	1.9%	7.4%	13.0%	76.9%
Stalking	376	1.9%	2.9%	9.6%	17.8%	67.8%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	376	2.1%	3.2%	15.4%	21.5%	57.7%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	376	0.5%	1.3%	6.1%	8.0%	84.0%
Other physical attacks	376	0.5%	0.8%	2.4%	6.9%	89.4%
Coercion	376	0.8%	3.7%	8.8%	16.8%	69.9%
Questioning of your personal morality	376	3.2%	8.8%	26.6%	24.5%	37.0%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	376	1.3%	1.9%	4.5%	10.9%	81.4%
Others disseminating your personal information	376	1.3%	3.5%	9.3%	17.6%	68.4%
Workplace bullying	376	1.3%	3.5%	13.6%	14.1%	67.6%
Abductions	376	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.5%	98.9%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	376	0.3%	0.8%	2.1%	2.4%	94.4%
Intimidation that targets family	376	0.5%	0.8%	2.7%	4.8%	91.2%

Question: “In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?”

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	376	39.9%	2.99	1.29
Concerned about physical well-being	376	16.8%	2.21	1.18
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	376	68.4%	3.63	1.19
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Argentina go unpunished	376	85.6%	4.25	0.99

Question: “Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.” (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Argentinian journalists considered focusing on society’s problems and counteracting disinformation to be their essential roles. In general, they showed strong support for interventionist roles as providing analysis, advocating, and promoting peace. Audience-oriented roles and service-oriented journalism are less appreciated (see Table 3). Likewise, politically assertive roles were among the least valued ones (considered combined percentage for “extremely” and “very important”).

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	376	68.1%	3.77	1.04
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	376	70.7%	3.92	0.99
Shine a light on society’s problems	376	89.6%	4.34	0.78
Motivate people to participate in politics	376	31.4%	2.81	1.17
Provide analysis of current affairs	376	80.6%	4.11	0.81
Let people express their views	376	86.4%	4.27	0.80
Provide information people need to form political opinion	376	80.1%	4.09	0.87
Advocate for social change	376	65.4%	3.77	1.06
Influence public opinion	376	40.7%	3.20	1.08
Set the political agenda	376	38.3%	3.09	1.16
Promote peace and tolerance	376	76.1%	4.07	1.03
Educate the audience	376	67.8%	3.84	1.03
Point toward possible solutions to society’s problems	376	65.4%	3.74	1.01
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	376	70.2%	3.86	1.06
Support national development	376	58.0%	3.59	1.05
Support government policy	376	26.9%	2.87	1.09
Convey a positive image of political leaders	376	23.7%	2.59	1.18
Provide entertainment and relaxation	376	33.0%	2.96	1.13
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	376	45.5%	3.28	1.11
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	376	34.3%	3.01	1.12
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	376	56.4%	3.58	1.01
Support efforts to protect public health	376	69.9%	3.87	1.02
Counteract disinformation	376	87.2%	4.41	0.80
Discuss future implications of current events	376	69.9%	3.85	0.95

Question: “Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Most respondents agreed that it is essential to alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful, even though the factual basis of the statement was among the least commonly endorsed by participants. Reflecting an appreciation for an interventionist role orientation, Argentinian journalists also regarded interpretation as a crucial journalistic function, as indicated by the combined percentage of "strongly agree" and "agree" responses (see Table 4).

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	370	76.5%	3.94	0.97
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	370	8.1%	2.16	0.94
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	370	49.5%	3.26	1.11
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	370	24.1%	2.51	1.23
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	370	47.3%	3.15	1.15
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	370	16.2%	2.48	0.99
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	370	13.2%	2.37	0.94
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	370	59.2%	3.49	1.00
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	370	38.6%	2.99	1.11
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	370	70.3%	3.75	0.95
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	370	86.5%	4.12	0.78

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

There is strong consensus on the importance of professional standards for ethical reporting (see Table 5), despite the absence of explicit ethical principles or style manuals within the Argentinian media landscape. Many journalists considered it acceptable to receive products or services from sources (see Table 7), a practice often linked to the financial constraints they face. Additionally, half of the respondents expressed agreement with the use of confidential documents without authorization.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	376	76.1%	3.93	1.06
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	376	30.1%	2.67	1.18
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	376	14.6%	2.10	1.09
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	376	19.4%	2.25	1.18

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	376	0.5%	23.7%
Using hidden recording devices	376	1.3%	55.3%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	376	9.3%	56.9%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	376	3.7%	49.5%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	376	0.5%	22.9%
Paying people for confidential information	376	1.1%	32.4%
Accepting money from sources	376	0.8%	8.8%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	376	6.4%	68.1%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	376	4.0%	28.2%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	376	2.1%	23.4%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

About two-thirds of Argentinian journalists claimed to have complete or a great deal of freedom in selecting their stories and deciding which aspects to emphasize (see Table 7). However, only one-third reported media freedom in general.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	376	72.1%	3.90	0.84
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	376	70.2%	3.86	0.86
Media freedom in Argentina	366	29.2%	3.06	0.86

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Argentinian journalists found journalism ethics, editorial policy, and editors to fare highest among the internal factors influencing news production (see Table 8). Half of the respondents mentioned information-related factors, such as availability of news-gathering resources and relationships with news sources. Three out of four respondents consider access to information and government censorship extremely or very influential.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	332	28.9%	2.91	1.06
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	340	51.5%	3.40	1.11
The business managers of the news organization	338	39.1%	3.02	1.24
The owners of the news organization	342	45.6%	3.15	1.35
Editorial policy	355	51.3%	3.45	1.12
Advertising considerations	356	28.1%	2.85	1.23
Profit expectations	352	21.6%	2.47	1.25
Audience research and data	356	37.1%	3.01	1.24
Availability of news-gathering resources	358	50.8%	3.46	1.04
Time limits	360	53.6%	3.48	1.05
Journalism ethics	370	73.0%	3.91	1.00
Self-censorship	362	16.3%	2.40	1.09
Personal values and beliefs	362	53.0%	3.42	1.14
Colleagues in other media	359	9.5%	2.27	0.96
Friends. acquaintances and family	360	8.1%	2.23	0.93
Feedback from the audience	364	40.4%	3.20	0.99
Competing news organizations	359	18.4%	2.62	1.03
Media laws and regulation	357	18.5%	2.62	1.01
Access to information	363	53.4%	3.52	1.04
Government censorship	354	21.2%	2.49	1.27
Government officials	358	22.9%	2.44	1.24
Politicians	355	20.3%	2.42	1.22
Business people	356	16.6%	2.33	1.13
Public relations	358	14.2%	2.38	1.05
Relationships with news sources	361	33.5%	3.06	1.06
Police	344	6.7%	1.81	0.96
Issue advocacy groups	349	7.2%	1.99	1.00
Religious groups and institutions	347	4.6%	1.68	0.89
Military	338	0.6%	1.37	0.62
Para-military groups. militias and similar groups	335	0.6%	1.24	0.54
Organized crime and criminal groups	334	2.1%	1.38	0.74
Terrorist groups	325	1.2%	1.16	0.56

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Australia

Folker Hanusch, Peter English & Kim Löhmann

INTRODUCTION

After nearly ten years of conservative rule, the elections of 2022 resulted in the establishment of a Labor Party government under Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, who went on to also win the most recent election in 2025. The government's focus has been on addressing climate change and enhancing social policies, while an attempt to recognize the First Peoples of Australia in the constitution failed in 2023. The Covid-19 pandemic had severe impacts on the Australian economy, particularly its tertiary education sector, due to first the closure of the country's borders, as well as subsequently various lockdowns in some parts of the country that lasted for considerable amounts of time.

Australian journalism traditionally follows an Anglo-American approach that places emphasis on journalism's role as the Fourth Estate. It is thus marked by a commitment to journalism's monitorial role, independence from the state and strong professional standards to guide journalistic behavior. While journalism education used to be based on the apprenticeship model, the past 40 years have seen a substantial growth in university courses as a key, additional component.

The digital transformation across the globe has also had considerable impact on Australian journalism, which has operated in a highly centralized market. The recent decade has seen substantial challenges to established business models of the industry, resulting in large-scale job losses, mergers of some news organizations as well as the disappearance of countless news outlets, particularly in local and regional areas. Journalism as such has become increasingly more precarious as an occupation. A range of new, so-called peripheral actors have emerged, who are also challenging established journalism's cultural authority in society. In 2023, Rupert Murdoch stepped down from his position as chairman of News Corp, one of the country's most influential news organizations, which has traditionally pursued a strong conservative agenda. He was followed by his son, Lachlan Murdoch.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

Australian journalism is marked by an almost even gender split. While 50.7% of those surveyed identified as male, 48.4% identified as female. The average age is 46.4 years (SD = 14.6; Median = 47.0). On the whole, Australian journalists are highly educated: Two-thirds (68.3%) have attained a Bachelor's degree, 10.9% a Master's degree and a further 2.6% a doctorate. In addition, three-quarters (77.9%) have received formal education or professional training in journalism. Of those, 75.5% studied a journalism degree at university, 48.3% completed a journalism apprenticeship or cadetship, while 27.5% completed a short-term course or diploma.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

Two-thirds of our sample were in non-management roles (67.6%), while 14.6% worked in top management and 17.9% in middle management. Journalists' average work experience in journalism was relatively high at 21.1 years (SD: 13.7; Median: 20 years). On average, Australian full-time journalists work 45.0 hours per week (SD: 9.20, Median 45).

Most Australian journalists in our sample reported having a permanent contract (71.4% on a full-time and 8.9% on a part-time basis). Only a small number had fixed-terms contracts (4.3% full-time and 2.2% part-time), while there were 9.4% freelance or self-employed journalists. The vast majority (82.2%) received all their income from journalism, while 17.8% also received income from other sources. Union membership stands at 61.5%. Relatively few journalists specialize in just one beat – only 37.7% do so, while 62.3% work across a range of beats.

Print journalism still holds much sway in Australia. Almost half (46.3%) of journalists work at an organization that has traditionally focused on newspaper publishing. A further 14.6% work in a TV organization, while 12.3% work in radio. The remainder are spread somewhat evenly across magazine companies (6.6%), and news agencies (5.4%). Only a few work at native online news media organizations (4.6%).

The vast majority (73.0%) of our sample worked for news organizations that were national or transnational in scope, while one-quarter (24.4%) worked in local or regional organizations. Of those in salaried employment, one-quarter (25.0%) worked for public service media, whereas the remainder (74.5%) were employed in private or commercial media organizations.

Stress levels are considerable. One third (33.4%) said they felt stressed out at work very often, while a further 28.8% said they did so often. Only 11% rarely or never felt stressed, while 26.7% did so sometimes.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Australian journalists' biggest concerns regarding threats they have experienced relate to demeaning or hateful speech directed at them, as well as public discrediting of their work (see Table 1). Other, slightly less frequent but nevertheless worrying concerns revolve around workplace bullying, intimidation and questioning of journalists' personal morality. Physical attacks, arrests or office raids appear to be extremely rare occurrences.

In relation to broader work-related concerns, nearly half of Australian journalists in our sample say they are concerned about their emotional and mental well-being, as well as that those who harm journalists in Australia go unpunished (Table 2). Only around two in ten are concerned about their physical well-being or worried about losing their job in journalism within the next 12 months.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	371	7.5%	20.5%	36.9%	24.3%	10.8%
Public discrediting of your work	371	6.2%	15.6%	33.7%	23.2%	21.3%
Surveillance	370	0.8%	1.6%	11.4%	20.8%	65.4%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	371	0.8%	1.9%	10.2%	19.1%	67.9%
Arrests. detentions or imprisonment	370	0.3%	0.0%	0.8%	3.2%	95.7%
Legal actions against you because of your work	370	0.3%	4.1%	11.6%	19.7%	64.3%
Stalking	371	0.3%	1.3%	5.7%	11.3%	81.4%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	370	2.4%	4.9%	17.8%	29.2%	45.7%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	361	0.3%	0.8%	5.3%	10.8%	82.8%
Other physical attacks	370	0.0%	0.8%	1.9%	7.3%	90.0%
Coercion	371	0.3%	1.3%	4.9%	17.3%	76.3%
Questioning of your personal morality	370	6.2%	9.5%	24.9%	27.3%	32.2%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	370	0.5%	1.1%	6.2%	8.1%	84.1%
Others disseminating your personal information	371	0.3%	2.2%	5.9%	15.4%	76.3%
Workplace bullying	371	1.9%	4.0%	15.4%	23.7%	55.0%
Abductions	371	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	370	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%	4.1%	94.3%
Intimidation that targets family	370	0.3%	0.3%	2.4%	4.6%	92.4%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	370	23.5%	2.52	1.16
Concerned about physical well-being	370	20.8%	2.22	1.20
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	370	44.6%	3.03	1.23
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Australia go unpunished	370	44.3%	3.27	1.07

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Australian journalists are highly supportive of journalism's monitorial role which includes holding those in power to account and being a detached observer (Table 3). At the same time, they strongly reject collaborative roles aimed at supporting those in power. Interventionist roles also receive some small support among journalists, while accommodative roles focusing on entertainment and everyday life are supported by around one-third.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	370	74.6%	4.02	1.01
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	371	83.3%	4.25	1.04
Shine a light on society's problems	371	80.3%	4.24	1.00
Motivate people to participate in politics	370	21.9%	2.53	1.28
Provide analysis of current affairs	371	61.7%	3.67	1.24
Let people express their views	371	70.1%	3.90	1.04
Provide information people need to form political opinion	371	67.4%	3.73	1.33
Advocate for social change	371	38.8%	2.99	1.37
Influence public opinion	371	21.6%	2.56	1.18
Set the political agenda	370	16.5%	2.28	1.21
Promote peace and tolerance	371	42.0%	3.17	1.29
Educate the audience	370	84.3%	4.33	0.96
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	371	57.7%	3.53	1.22
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	369	58.0%	3.54	1.27
Support national development	371	32.1%	2.77	1.28
Support government policy	370	2.4%	1.49	0.82
Convey a positive image of political leaders	371	0.3%	1.26	0.56
Provide entertainment and relaxation	371	34.8%	2.92	1.27
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	370	35.7%	2.96	1.22
Provide advice. orientation and direction for daily life	371	15.9%	2.32	1.18
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	371	58.2%	3.58	1.08
Support efforts to protect public health	370	55.9%	3.41	1.30
Counteract disinformation	371	83.6%	4.29	1.01

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

In line with their roles, a substantial number of journalists feel it is possible to represent objective reality in their reporting (Table 4). There is a strong emphasis on facts, albeit with some apparent contradictions. While a large majority believe facts must still be interpreted to be made sense of and that journalists should alert audiences about untrue claims, they also believe that journalists should let the facts speak for themselves. Journalists also broadly reject subjective approaches and believe they can keep their personal beliefs out of their work.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	354	80.8%	4.00	0.77
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	356	33.7%	2.95	1.01
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	355	23.4%	2.69	0.97
Things are either true or false. there is no in-between	355	14.6%	2.37	0.97
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	355	70.4%	3.75	0.78
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	356	36.2%	2.94	1.03
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	356	16.6%	2.54	0.93
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	354	83.3%	4.01	0.79
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	355	54.6%	3.47	1.11
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	355	36.9%	3.03	1.09
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	355	90.7%	4.28	0.70

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Australian journalists mostly place emphasis on professional standards as guidance in ethically difficult situations (Table 5). However, a substantial number also believe that specific situations may also guide such behavior. A subjective approach is overwhelmingly rejected. In terms of controversial reporting methods, journalists tend to feel that those that reveal wrongdoing by those in power can be justified most easily, while accepting money from sources, claiming to be somebody else or misrepresenting promotional content as news are typically rejected.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	371	56.1%	3.53	1.13
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	370	61.4%	3.53	1.04
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	370	44.1%	3.09	1.20
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	368	16.8%	2.34	1.06

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	353	0.0%	17.6%
Using hidden recording devices	351	0.0%	54.4%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	350	8.9%	71.4%
Using the personal materials of powerful people. such as documents and photos. without their permission	354	4.8%	69.5%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people. such as documents and photos. without their permission	351	0.9%	54.1%
Paying people for confidential information	351	0.9%	30.5%
Accepting money from sources	358	0.0%	2.2%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	348	0.3%	31.3%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	355	0.0%	10.4%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	354	0.3%	29.1%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Australian journalists' perceived autonomy is relatively high. Around one-quarter believe they are free to select the news stories they work on or to decide which aspects of a story should be emphasized (Table 7). At the same time, only 57% believe there is substantial media freedom in Australia.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	370	72.2%	3.81	0.76
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	370	76.2%	3.92	0.76
Media freedom in Australia	358	57.0%	3.55	0.63

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Procedural aspects like journalism ethics, access to information, time limits, media laws and regulation, as well as availability of news-gathering resources, are the influences most acutely felt by Australian journalists. Organizational influences rank second, while economic and especially political influences are perceived the least strongly. It is important to bear in mind that these are journalists' perceptions, however, which are subject to potential desirability bias and the fact such influences may often operate more strongly at senior editorial levels and are less acutely noticed by reporters.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	347	35.2%	3.12	1.01
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	341	61.3%	3.67	1.03
The business managers of the news organization	283	17.3%	2.23	1.23
The owners of the news organization	267	18.4%	2.19	1.32
Editorial policy	339	53.1%	3.44	1.24
Advertising considerations	255	12.2%	2.00	1.14
Profit expectations	244	17.6%	2.21	1.29
Audience research and data	342	43.3%	3.21	1.20
Availability of news-gathering resources	348	51.7%	3.40	1.10
Time limits	357	60.5%	3.66	1.10
Journalism ethics	355	69.3%	3.85	1.17
Self-censorship	320	26.6%	2.52	1.29
Personal values and beliefs	346	39.3%	3.08	1.25
Colleagues in other media	353	14.2%	2.50	1.03
Friends. acquaintances and family	349	6.3%	2.14	0.95
Feedback from the audience	362	24.0%	2.85	1.01
Competing news organizations	353	17.6%	2.55	1.06
Media laws and regulation	346	59.5%	3.61	1.15
Access to information	358	69.3%	3.79	0.93
Government censorship	295	20.7%	2.23	1.24
Government officials	316	8.9%	1.96	1.04
Politicians	322	9.9%	2.02	1.08
Business people	329	8.8%	1.96	1.02
Public relations	335	6.9%	2.01	0.96
Relationships with news sources	343	30.3%	2.91	1.16
Police	298	16.1%	2.20	1.16
Issue advocacy groups	316	11.4%	2.14	1.04
Scientists or health experts	328	31.1%	2.83	1.17
Religious groups and institutions	285	2.8%	1.58	0.81

Question: "Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist." (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Austria

Raoul Mitterstainer, Folker Hanusch, Kim Löhmann, Ramona Meier, Kai Daniel Preibisch, Andreas Riedl & Josef Seethaler

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Austria has been governed by a coalition of the conservative Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) and the Greens. Following the national elections in September 2024, which saw the right-wing Freedom Party emerge victorious with 28.85% of the vote, the Conservatives formed a government with the Social Democrats and the Liberals, which can count on 60% of the seats in parliament. Not least due to extensive state subsidies during the COVID-19 crisis, the economy is weakening, and harsh austerity measures are needed.

A strong public media sector, significant foreign investment, dependence on state support and state advertising, and the vibrant legacy of a long-standing media-party parallelism are among the most defining features of the Austrian media and journalism. Despite or even partly because of these characteristics, a relatively stable media market had developed, which, on the one hand, contributed to strong loyalty among significant sections of the population towards certain large media brands, but on the other hand, only allowed investigative and innovative journalism to emerge in niche areas.

Although television remains the most important source of information, social media platforms have gained in importance since the pandemic. However, the stability mentioned above meant that the effects of these changes in media offerings and media usage were not taken seriously for a long time. As a result, the Austrian media ecosystem is currently undergoing a period of upheaval to which the industry and journalism are responding only slowly.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The Austrian sample comprises 50.7% women and 49.3% men, with a mean age of 47.3 years (SD = 11.0; Median = 48.0). While 28.2% are aged 46–55, only 17.9 % are under 35. Austrian journalists show a high level of education: 70.0% hold a university degree – women outperform men on average – and 50.0 % possess a master's or equivalent. Furthermore, 85.9% received formal journalism education: 63.0% completed a journalistic apprenticeship, 55.6 % attended short-term courses (e.g., workshops and seminars), and 45.8% studied journalism at university. These figures reflect a highly academic and professionally trained journalistic workforce.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

Most Austrian journalists are employed by an organization that has focused on newspaper publishing (43.5%), followed closely by television and radio outlets (43.0%), particularly by public service outlets (ORF). Weekly or monthly magazine companies employ 7.3% of Austrian journalists, news agencies 3.9%, and native online media 2.2%. In terms of ownership, 59.3% of these media companies are private, while the single largest employer, ORF, employs two out of five journalists. A majority of media outlets (57.4%) target a national audience; 34.3% operate regionally, 6.9% locally, and 1.3% transnationally.

At the individual level, 68.8% of journalists work full-time, 20.3% part-time, and 9.8% as freelancers. Middle management positions are held by 21.8%, with a further 14.4% in top management, meaning that over one-third of the respondents occupy some form of leadership role. Specialization is widespread, with 55.1% of respondents having a dedicated beat or subject area.

On average, Austrian journalists have 22.1 years of professional experience (SD = 10.6; Median = 23.0) and work 43.8 hours per week (SD = 9.1; Median = 40; only full-time journalists). Most (70.9%) derive all their income from journalism, and only 4.3% earn less than half of their total income from journalistic work. Union membership stands at 51.6%.

When asked about work-related stress, only 6.7% said they are rarely or never stressed by their journalistic duties. A further 27.5% reported occasional stress, while 34.1% and 31.7% feel stressed "often" or "very often" – meaning two-thirds of respondents suffer from high levels of stress, which points to potential occupational health issues in this profession.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Most Austrian journalists face demeaning or hateful speech and efforts to undermine their credibility to varying degrees, while more severe threats – surveillance, hacking, arrests, lawsuits, stalking, or physical attacks are rather rare and never experienced by the vast majority. Workplace bullying and other intimidation are reported by more than 40%.

On the job, a significant share of respondents worries about their physical, emotional, and mental well-being, as well as possible impunity for those who harm journalists. These findings show that, although extreme threats remain uncommon, everyday verbal abuse and ongoing anxiety about safety and justice profoundly affect journalistic work. Given the challenging economic situation, particularly in the print sector, almost 15% of Austrian journalists fear losing their jobs.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	853	2.9%	10.2%	32.1%	35.2%	19.6%
Public discrediting of your work	854	3.5%	9.5%	25.4%	29.6%	32.0%
Surveillance	778	0.8%	0.6%	4.4%	12-0%	82.3%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	850	0.1%	1.2%	3.2%	8.6%	86.9%
Arrests, detentions, or imprisonment	854	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.7%	98.9%
Legal actions against you because of your work	855	0.0%	0.4%	4.3%	11.5%	83.9%
Stalking	850	0.1%	0.4%	3.2%	11.1%	85.3%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	854	1.2%	1.6%	11.2%	28.1%	57.8%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	855	0.2%	0.6%	4.4%	9.0%	85.7%
Other physical attacks	855	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	4.3%	95.1%
Others disseminating your personal information	837	0.8%	0.8%	5.7%	17.3%	75.3%
Workplace bullying	855	1.9%	4.3%	9.6%	14.7%	59.5%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	852	0.0%	0.1%	0.6%	5.2%	94.1%

Question: “In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?”

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	844	14.9%	2.04	1.17
Concerned about physical well-being	847	33.1%	2.55	1.38
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	845	38.1%	2.69	1.40
Concerned that those who harm journalists in [country] go unpunished	824	43.4%	2.96	1.34

Question: “Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.” (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Neutral information delivery and the fight against disinformation are regarded as the most essential tasks for Austrian journalists. Solution-oriented reporting, highlighting social problems and outlining their future impacts are also relatively widespread. Much emphasis is also placed on providing analysis of current affairs, supporting the audience’s independent formation of opinion, and telling stories that emotionally move the audience. On the other hand, collaborative roles that promote government agendas or cast political leaders in a favorable light are largely rejected.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	850	86.1%	4.37	0.91
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	836	57.1%	3.54	1.29
Shine a light on society’s problems	847	72.7%	3.98	1.02
Motivate people to participate in politics	842	40.4%	3.12	1.21
Provide analysis of current affairs	852	79.2%	4.16	1.02
Let people express their views	847	50.2%	3.40	1.12
Provide information people need to form political opinion	853	84.3%	4.30	0.87
Advocate for social change	819	31.4%	2.93	1.18
Influence public opinion	812	11.9%	2.33	1.04
Set the political agenda	819	7.6%	1.98	1.01
Promote peace and tolerance	830	52.9%	3.52	1.11
Educate the audience	840	64.2%	3.78	0.95
Point toward possible solutions to society’s problems	847	65.9%	3.79	1.02
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	846	52.6%	3.52	1.06
Support national development	799	13.9%	2.32	1.09
Support government policy	827	0.7%	1.27	0.57
Convey a positive image of political leaders	828	0.7%	1.21	0.54
Provide entertainment and relaxation	847	44.0%	3.25	1.21
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	847	60.0%	3.71	1.08
Provide advice, orientation, and direction for daily life	847	60.8%	3.66	1.11
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	851	67.7%	3.89	1.03
Support efforts to protect public health	831	34.7%	3.01	1.16
Counteract disinformation	851	86.1%	4.37	0.89
Discuss future implications of current events	850	71.5%	3.86	1.00

Question: “Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Austrian journalists prioritize fact-based reporting and the ideal of objectivity – most see it as essential to let facts speak for themselves, convey objective reality, and alert audiences to false claims. At the same time, they acknowledge that interpretation is necessary and favor transparency about their own standpoint. Just a few trust their intuition and instincts, or embed themselves in specific communities, and only a very few believe that things are either true or false.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	802	57.9%	3.35	1.20
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	810	26.3%	2.43	1.18
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	823	28.2%	2.62	1.11
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	824	4.1%	1.61	0.87
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	813	65.4%	3.56	1.04
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	823	11.1%	1.97	1.02
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	819	23.0%	2.40	1.14
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	829	82.6%	4.01	0.84
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	823	7.5%	1.91	0.94
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	809	37.8%	2.85	1.34
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	818	94.0%	4.54	0.73

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Most Austrian journalists agree that professional standards alone should govern ethical decisions, though many acknowledge that exceptional circumstances or specific situations may justify deviations. Only a small fraction of respondents think that personal judgment should determine whether something is ethical. Consistent with these high ethical standards, nearly all reject practices like taking money from sources or disguising ads as journalism, and most also oppose gifts, paid trips, and adopting false identities. The majority considers the use of confidential or personal documents without authorization to be justified in some instances.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	831	82.3%	4.11	0.99
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	805	41.4%	2.91	1.25
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	823	32.7%	2.61	1.32
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	832	12.7%	1.88	1.11

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	854	0.4%	41.2%
Using hidden recording devices	853	1.3%	58.1%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	853	8.0%	66.6%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	855	1.9%	57.5%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	853	0.2%	12.2%
Paying people for confidential information	854	0.4%	31.3%
Accepting money from sources	855	0.0%	2.1%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	855	0.2%	19.4%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	854	0.2%	6.1%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	853	0.0%	45.6%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

While Austrian journalists overwhelmingly report great freedom in selecting their news stories and even greater autonomy in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized, they are significantly more pessimistic regarding journalists in other media organizations than their own. Less than a third of respondents consider Austrian media outlets generally very or entirely free.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	854	70.6%	3.82	0.75
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	852	86.0%	4.19	0.70
Media freedom in Austria	829	28.8%	3.21	0.65

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Austrian journalists experience the most significant influence on their work from pervasive time constraints and ethical standards. The available resources and access to information are also perceived as influential, as well as newsroom factors such as supervisors, higher editors, colleagues, and the editorial policy. Any form of influence from censorship, politicians, or other government officials appears to have little relevance – at least in the perception of Austrian journalists.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	825	35.3%	3.08	0.96
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	830	39.8%	3.18	0.99
The business managers of the news organization	807	12.9%	2.10	1.11
The owners of the news organization	771	9.6%	1.86	1.06
Editorial policy	805	31.8%	2.85	1.15
Advertising considerations	798	9.5%	1.89	1.08
Profit expectations	761	11.0%	1.91	1.13
Audience research and data	819	27.5%	2.75	1.18
Availability of news-gathering resources	827	54.1%	3.46	1.15
Time limits	846	63.9%	3.70	0.97
Journalism ethics	829	65.0%	3.69	1.10
Self-censorship	786	14.6%	2.30	1.10
Personal values and beliefs	836	48.2%	3.37	1.08
Colleagues in other media	812	6.0%	1.97	0.90
Friends, acquaintances and family	818	4.4%	2.08	0.86
Feedback from the audience	834	17.7%	2.71	0.91
Competing news organizations	822	13.4%	2.36	0.99
Media laws and regulation	796	30.2%	2.74	1.22
Access to information	810	39.1%	3.04	1.14
Government censorship	773	2.1%	1.28	0.69
Government officials	780	1.4%	1.32	0.64
Politicians	796	3.5%	1.56	0.82
Business people	804	4.2%	1.61	0.87
Public relations	824	7.2%	2.00	0.94
Relationships with news sources	823	21.6%	2.52	1.18
Police	781	5.2%	1.55	0.93
Issue advocacy groups	810	8.0%	2.02	1.01

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Belgium

Olivier Standaert, Stefan Mertens & Lavinia Rotili

INTRODUCTION

Belgium is a federal country in which the linguistic communities – Flemish, French-speaking and German-speaking – enjoy substantial autonomy in a wide range of policy areas, including media. Although Belgium is a wealthy country, it faces a significant public debt (103.1% of the country's GDP in 2023). Marked economic disparities also exist between Flanders (the more prosperous northern region), Brussels (the capital and home to many European Union institutions), and Wallonia (the southern region).

Belgium enjoys a high level of press freedom and journalist protection (Belgium ranks 18th out of 180 countries in the 2025 World Press Freedom Index). However, the context of the past few years has shown clear signs of increasing intimidation, threats, and assaults – both online and physical – targeting journalists. Journalists have also increasingly reported threats of legal action aimed at discouraging investigation or the publication of their work. Despite its small population (11.7 million inhabitants) divided in different media markets, the country still hosts a relatively high number of print, radio, television, and digital media outlets. Nevertheless, the ongoing trend of media market concentration raises concerns among many observers, particularly regarding issues of pluralism and economic sustainability.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The average age of Belgian journalists is 45.0 years (Median age: 45; SD = 11.6). The majority of journalists are men (61.8%). While the profession is gradually becoming more gender-balanced, the pace of feminization remains slow. 82.2% of journalists hold a master's degree (14.5% hold a bachelor's degree or equivalent), and 62.1% of the profession has completed specialized training in journalism, most commonly through a university or high school program.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

A total of 69.5% of Belgian journalists work full time under a permanent contract, while 8.4% hold part-time permanent contracts. Freelancers represent 17.8% of the total, and 2% are employed full time on fixed-term contracts. Overall, 83.7% of journalists derive their entire income from journalistic work, while the remainder most often supplement their earnings through employment in the education sector and audiovisual production. Additionally, 18.1% of respondents hold managerial or supervisory positions in their newsroom.

More than two-thirds of Belgian journalists (67%) work for private media outlets. A total of 31.1% are employed by public service broadcasters operating within the country's three linguistic communities. Less than one percent report working for other types of media, such as community media. Due to the size of their newsrooms and the number of titles, the daily newspaper sector is the country's largest media employer (33.1%), followed by TV organizations (22.8%), magazine companies (18.2%), radio outlets (7%), and news agencies (6.7%). The majority of Belgian journalists (68.5%) work for local or regional news media, and this is partly due to the weight of the language factor in Belgium (each linguistic community has its own media market, and there are very few truly national media outlets in terms of scope).

Belgian journalists have an average of 16.5 years of professional experience (Median experience: 15 years; SD = 10.1), raising some concern about the stability of the journalistic career, especially among women. On average, they report working 42.9 hours per week (Median: 40 hours; SD = 8.1; for those in full-time employment). A total of 42.7% of respondents report experiencing work-related stress from time to time, while 30% report feeling it often and 13.2% very often. Finally, 88% are members of a professional union.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Without any doubts, safety concerns have raised among Belgian journalists, especially regarding online hateful speech directed at journalists or news media, public discrediting and the questioning of journalists' personal morality. Most of the threats listed below occur infrequently, yet the overall climate surrounding the profession has deteriorated – particularly due to the Covid-19 crisis and online intimidation – gradually prompting journalists to seek both individual and organizational responses. Legal actions against journalists have also increased, attracting growing media attention due to the threats they pose to the autonomy of journalistic work. Echoing the issue of work-related stress, 41.7% of the journalists are concerned about their emotional and mental wellbeing.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	573	2.4%	8.4%	33.3%	32.5%	23.4%
Public discrediting of your work	572	1.6%	7.2%	28%	30.8%	32.5%
Surveillance	562	0.7%	2.8%	12.8%	20.8%	62.8%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	571	0.4%	0.7%	3.2%	10.9%	84.9%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	572	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	2.3%	97.6%
Legal actions against you because of your work	573	0.0%	0.8%	4.4%	12.7%	82.0%
Stalking	573	0.5%	0.2%	5.1%	13.4%	80.8%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	571	0.4%	1.9%	12.8%	30.3%	54.6%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	573	0.0%	0.2%	1.2%	5.2%	93.4%
Other physical attacks	571	0.0%	0.6%	2.8%	8.6%	88.1%
Coercion	552	0.0%	0.7%	2.7%	10.1%	86.4%
Questioning of your personal morality	557	0.5%	4.8%	16.7%	33.2%	44.7%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	556	0.2%	0.0%	2.0%	5.2%	92.6%
Others disseminating your personal information	556	0.2%	0.7%	5.0%	10.1%	84.0%
Workplace bullying	556	0.2%	0.5%	4.5%	8.8%	86.0%
Abductions	556	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	99.6%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	557	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	2.2%	96.8%
Intimidation that targets family	557	0.2%	0.0%	1.3%	3.1%	95.5%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	571	14.9%	2.07	1.15
Concerned about physical well-being	573	23.7%	2.35	1.23
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	573	41.7%	2.93	1.24
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Belgium go unpunished	572	37.6%	2.93	1.24

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Informational and instructive roles are central to the professional identity of Belgian journalists (being a detached observer, shedding light on society's problem and providing analysis on current affairs). Besides this deeply rooted trend, it is noteworthy that journalists strongly endorse roles such as educating audiences and countering disinformation. These functions reflect broader transformations in the perceived roles of journalism, shaped by the current information environment, increasing polarization, and the spread of online dis- and misinformation.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	569	87.2%	4.25	0.75
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	572	63.1%	3.63	1.19
Shine a light on society's problems	574	88%	4.30	0.80
Motivate people to participate in politics	572	23.8%	2.61	1.17
Provide analysis of current affairs	570	81.4%	4.09	0.83
Let people express their views	570	57.6%	3.59	0.92
Provide information people need to form political opinion	573	63.3%	3.70	1.19
Advocate for social change	570	24.4%	2.70	1.11
Influence public opinion	568	12.7%	2.29	1.02
Set the political agenda	571	10.7%	2.18	1.02
Promote peace and tolerance	570	47.5%	3.29	1.19
Educate the audience	569	80.8%	4.07	0.85
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	571	61.1%	3.60	1.02
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	566	36.0%	2.99	1.16
Support national development	563	13.7%	2.32	1.04
Support government policy	567	0.7%	1.31	0.61
Convey a positive image of political leaders	571	1.4%	1.43	0.71
Provide entertainment and relaxation	573	23.9%	2.58	1.25
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	572	22.1%	2.63	1.14
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	572	28.5%	2.87	1.08
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	571	34.8%	2.99	1.14
Support efforts to protect public health	569	36.9%	2.98	1.13
Counteract disinformation	574	87.5%	4.38	0.86
Discuss future implications of current events	559	71.9%	3.80	0.99

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

A large majority of the respondents (68%) think it is possible to represent "objective reality" in reporting and that journalists should let the facts speak for themselves (64.7%). At the same time, results show that interpretation is considered necessary to make sense of facts. Intuitions and professional instincts, at least without evidence-based approaches, receive little support among Belgian journalists.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	565	69.2%	3.70	0.90
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	572	31.8%	2.83	1.05
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	572	25.3%	2.76	1.01
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	573	8.9%	2.09	0.92
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	573	68.2%	3.66	0.92
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	540	7.2%	2.06	0.86
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	537	27%	2.77	0.98
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	538	64.7%	3.60	0.86
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	538	13.6%	2.32	0.96
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	538	23.6%	2.60	1.10
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	539	91.7%	4.30	0.73

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

A majority of Belgian journalists (63.1%) believe they should primarily (and only) rely on professional standards when making decisions related to journalistic ethics. This does not prevent half of the respondents from agreeing that extraordinary circumstances might lead them to disregard these professional standards. In this context, personal judgment is not regarded as an appropriate basis for ethical decisions.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	570	63.1%	3.35	1.08
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	570	51.9%	3.34	0.98
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	572	30.6%	2.77	1.09
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	571	7.4%	1.90	0.93

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	573	0.3%	68.2%
Using hidden recording devices	572	0.9%	91.1%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	572	11.2%	76.2%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	572	3.3%	69.1%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	565	0.4%	32.2%
Paying people for confidential information	571	0.7%	25%
Accepting money from sources	574	0.3%	2.1%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	569	0.7%	33%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	572	0.5%	5.8%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	574	0.3%	22.5%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Media freedom is perceived as high for 72.9% of the respondents, and the same is true for the freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized. A symbolically important aspect of journalistic work, the freedom in *selecting* news stories, scores lower, which indicates different influences, both internal and external, in editorial autonomy.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	573	62.8%	3.67	0.80
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	573	78%	3.94	0.70
Media freedom in Belgium	561	72.9%	3.76	0.65

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

On the intra-organizational level, major influences include colleagues, such as peers and editorial supervisors/higher editors. The other important internal influences are non-human: the availability of news-gathering resources, journalism ethics, time limits and the editorial policy of the media. External influences are potentially numerous. In Belgium, few of them are really perceived as very influential, except the access to information. Among the various stakeholders gravitating around journalists, scientists and health experts have gained a significant influence on journalists since the Covid-19 crisis.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	574	42%	3.44	1.13
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	574	59.8%	3.71	1.09
The business managers of the news organization	565	15.6%	2.49	1.72
The owners of the news organization	555	6.5%	2.35	1.98
Editorial policy	566	46.4%	3.41	1.21
Advertising considerations	557	4.1%	2.25	2.16
Profit expectations	556	9.2%	2.67	2.21
Audience research and data	559	18.6%	2.83	1.67
Availability of news-gathering resources	557	37.7%	3.38	1.45
Time limits	574	51.9%	3.58	1.17
Journalism ethics	573	56.2%	3.58	1.35
Self-censorship	558	3.5%	2.11	1.77
Personal values and beliefs	570	21.4%	2.78	1.26
Colleagues in other media	571	8.6%	2.42	1.20
Friends, acquaintances and family	572	4.6%	2.17	1.09
Feedback from the audience	573	8.9%	2.46	1.10
Competing news organizations	574	14.4%	2.67	1.14
Media laws and regulation	542	27.7%	2.87	1.37
Access to information	562	47.3%	3.45	1.16
Government censorship	563	1.7%	2.29	2.43
Government officials	558	1.8%	2.14	2.08
Politicians	568	4.3%	2.20	1.91
Business people	564	2.7%	2.12	2.00
Public relations	564	3.7%	2.11	1.69
Relationships with news sources	568	28%	3.00	1.45
Police	568	3.9%	2.63	2.47
Issue advocacy groups	567	5%	2.44	1.83
Scientists or health experts	569	20.4%	3.04	1.90
Religious groups and institutions	344	0.9%	2.37	2.48
Military	337	1.2%	2.57	2.74
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	338	0.6%	2.62	2.88
Organized crime and criminal groups	548	0.6%	3.09	3.11
Terrorist groups	332	0.3%	2.76	2.96

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Bhutan

Bunty Avieson, Beate Josephi, Tshering Palden & Alicia Wang Sin

INTRODUCTION

Bhutan is a peaceful country of less than a million people, with a benevolent monarchy which voluntarily handed power to a government elected by the people in 2008. For most of the 20th century Bhutan had a policy of self-isolation and rejected foreign influences brought by mass media. While local radio and newspaper appeared in the late 1970s and 1980s, it was the last country to get television, which arrived in 1999 along with the Internet.

In 2006 the King granted licences for independent newspapers as part of the country's move to democracy, however these gained limited penetration, while mobile phones, Facebook and social media were immediately adopted, better suiting Bhutan's oral culture. Bhutan bypassed print capitalism, with media sustained not by commercial advertising but mostly by government advertising and funding.

The two strongest media houses are Bhutan Broadcast Service TV & Radio, which is state-owned, and *Kuensel* newspaper, which is 51% state-owned and 49% by the national pension fund (NPPF) and individual shareholders. There are 7 independent newspapers which employ one to four regular staff, augmented with freelancers. The country suffered economically from the pandemic and many journalists left for study and work opportunities overseas. The data were collected in September 2023 via a Qualtrics online survey.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The journalist cohort in Bhutan comprised significantly more women than men, with 59.6% female and 40.4% men. The average age is 34.0 (SD = 9.9; Median = 32). Bhutanese journalists are generally well educated with 86.5% having a Bachelor's degree or equivalent and 11.2% having a Master´s degree or equivalent. In terms of formal education or training in journalism, 57.3% have received training, with 49.0% via an apprenticeship or cadetship; 54.9% through university or college; and 78.4% via a short-term course.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

The major background of employers of journalists in Bhutan is print, with 40% of journalists working for organizations that focus on newspaper publishing, 24.7% on state-owned TV; 27.1% on radio and 8.2% for a news agency. Nearly 80% (79.5%) of journalists in Bhutan were employed on full-time contracts, and 9.1% on fixed term contracts. Of the part-time workers, 2.3% were on permanent contracts and 1.1% on fixed-term contracts. A further 8% felt their terms of employment didn't fit into such categories.

The work was not enough for self-sufficiency with 55.6% reporting that they had other sources of income, while 44.4% reported their journalistic work was their sole employment.

The average length of experience was 10.1 years (SD = 8.8; Median = 8) and the average number of hours worked each week was 48.4 (SD = 19.1; Median = 50; for those in full-time employment). This would reflect the fact that the Bhutanese working week includes Saturday mornings.

Nearly half the respondents interviewed (47.2%) said they work on specific beats, covering the same subject areas for their employer, with the remaining 52.8% saying they work across various beats.

The state-owned BBS TV and Radio, and the half-state owned *Kuensel* newspaper, are the major employers, with modern newsrooms that broadcast and publish in both Dzongkha, the national language, and English. BBS TV and radio are broadcast across the kingdom, reaching further via the Internet and social media. *Kuensel* newspaper produces a print edition in English six days a week and a Dzongkha weekend edition, that are distributed nationally, as well as via Facebook and as a PDF. The independent newspapers, publish in Thimphu only but also disseminate via Facebook and PDF.

These independent media exist in a state of precarity related to their small share of limited government advertising and funding. There is not a union for journalists in Bhutan, representing their interests in the workplace, but the Journalists Association of Bhutan is a social society where they meet and network with stakeholders.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Journalists in Bhutan express low fear of physical harm from their reporting, but express slightly more concerns about digital and psychological safety, with 14.6% experiencing hacking or blocking of their social media accounts or websites. This may reflect the pressures of reporting in a small society, with strong familial networks, all highly connected by social media as well as cultural sensitivities around public shaming. However, the sense of safety provided by job security is significantly low, which reflects the economic precarity that has faced the print media since its inception, as income comes mostly from the government, augmented by NGOs, with virtually no commercial advertising. It would also be the result of the severe economic hardship facing the country coming out of the pandemic. This has resulted in reduced media funding, and staffing, as many journalists left for jobs or study overseas.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	90	4.4%	14.4%	33.3%	26.7%	21.1%
Public discrediting of your work	89	3.4%	14.6%	23.6%	25.8%	32.6%
Surveillance	90	7.8%	10.0%	21.1%	28.9%	32.2%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	89	2.2%	3.4%	14.6%	25.8%	53.9%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	89	0.0%	1.1%	3.4%	5.6%	89.9%
Legal actions against you because of your work	88	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	11.4%	85.2%
Stalking	89	1.1%	3.4%	5.6%	22.5%	67.4%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	89	1.1%	1.1%	13.5%	29.2%	55.1%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	89	0.0%	0.0%	4.5%	5.6%	89.9%
Other physical attacks	90	0.0%	1.1%	1.1%	4.4%	93.3%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	90	11.1%	2.37	0.94
Concerned about physical well-being	90	41.1%	3.09	1.17
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	90	60.0%	3.47	1.16
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Bhutan go unpunished	89	38.2%	3.15	1.06

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Bhutanese journalists are in near unanimous agreement that their most important roles are educating the audience (98.9%), letting people express their views (98.8%), supporting national development (97.7%), shining a light on society's problems (96.6%), counteracting disinformation (94.3%) and pointing towards possible solutions (94.2%). This collaborative focus reflects the effects of the pandemic such as needing to rebuild the economy and provide accurate health information, as well as the effects of social media on public discourse.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	90	82.2%	4.22	0.90
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	86	83.7%	4.16	0.89
Shine a light on society's problems	89	96.6%	4.60	0.56
Motivate people to participate in politics	86	50.0%	3.51	1.09
Provide analysis of current affairs	89	87.6%	4.44	0.74
Let people express their views	86	98.8%	4.74	0.51
Provide information people need to form political opinion	89	71.9%	3.93	1.10
Advocate for social change	87	88.5%	4.34	0.93
Influence public opinion	87	47.1%	3.24	1.36
Set the political agenda	85	35.3%	2.67	1.43
Promote peace and tolerance	87	81.6%	4.23	0.90
Educate the audience	87	98.9%	4.78	0.44
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	86	94.2%	4.41	0.68
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	87	86.2%	4.24	0.78
Support national development	88	97.7%	4.59	0.54
Support government policy	89	49.4%	3.61	1.01
Convey a positive image of political leaders	88	22.7%	2.36	1.28
Provide entertainment and relaxation	88	37.5%	3.31	1.05
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	90	70.0%	3.92	1.06
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	88	50.0%	3.45	1.03
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	89	52.8%	3.55	1.09
Support efforts to protect public health	89	89.9%	4.44	0.67
Counteract disinformation	87	94.3%	4.55	0.68
Discuss future implications of current events	90	85.6%	4.19	0.76

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

The journalists surveyed were almost unanimous that the public needed interpretation to make sense of facts, with a strong belief that journalists could represent objective reality (71.9%), though 44% believe strongly that it is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from their reporting.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	89	92.1%	4.31	0.73
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	90	57.8%	3.71	0.97
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	90	44.4%	3.28	1.00
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	89	51.7%	3.43	0.96
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	89	71.9%	3.88	0.72

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Journalists in Bhutan strongly agreed on the importance of professional standards rather than subjective and situational considerations for ethical reporting. When it comes to the justification of controversial reporting methods, however, accepting money from sources was most strongly rejected (3.4%), and publishing unverified information (8.0%) also highly unpopular. About half (55.2%) found it acceptable to use hidden recording devices on occasion, and just 40% to use confidential documents without authorization.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	89	93.3%	4.52	0.66
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	89	73.0%	3.97	0.78
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	89	61.8%	3.63	1.00
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	88	34.1%	2.90	1.19

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	88	9.1%	37.5%
Using hidden recording devices	87	6.9%	55.2%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	88	5.7%	40.9%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	88	4.5%	43.2%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	89	3.4%	30.3%
Paying people for confidential information	88	8.0%	27.3%
Accepting money from sources	88	3.4%	2.3%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	86	4.7%	25.6%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	87	4.6%	35.6%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	88	8.0%	18.2%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Bhutanese journalists reported limited freedom in their work. Nearly half claimed to have complete or a great deal of freedom in selecting their stories (48.9%) and just over half claimed freedom in deciding which aspects to emphasize in a story (56.7%). Media freedom was rated low at just over 30%.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	90	48.9%	3.48	1.03
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	90	56.7%	3.61	0.98
Media freedom in Bhutan	86	31.4%	2.94	0.94

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Bhutan journalists considered journalism ethics, access to information and their relationship to news sources to be the most significant factors influencing their work as news producers (see Table 8). Public relations also rated highly at nearly 50%, indicating the significant role played by communications professionals in government and civil society, in providing information and influencing media output.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/ extremely important	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	86	26.7%	2.69	1.14
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	86	53.5%	3.27	1.30
The business managers of the news organization	79	22.8%	2.53	1.24
The owners of the news organization	75	34.7%	2.76	1.27
Editorial policy	85	49.4%	3.25	1.39
Advertising considerations	75	24.0%	2.53	1.18
Profit expectations	73	12.3%	2.16	1.13
Audience research and data	81	33.3%	2.88	1.22
Availability of news-gathering resources	85	41.2%	3.22	1.24
Time limits	82	48.8%	3.26	1.27
Journalism ethics	85	64.7%	3.69	1.13
Self-censorship	85	40.0%	3.18	1.18
Personal values and beliefs	86	40.7%	3.14	1.29
Colleagues in other media	85	24.7%	2.60	1.19
Friends, acquaintances and family	87	20.7%	2.48	1.19
Feedback from the audience	87	44.8%	3.23	1.14
Competing news organizations	88	43.2%	3.20	1.20
Media laws and regulation	88	40.9%	3.20	1.21
Access to information	86	60.5%	3.73	1.18
Government censorship	87	43.7%	3.16	1.24
Government officials	86	37.2%	3.12	1.21
Politicians	86	29.1%	2.85	1.32
Business people	84	17.9%	2.44	1.19
Public relations	88	47.7%	3.23	1.26
Relationships with news sources	86	57.0%	3.44	1.31
Police	85	36.5%	3.06	1.32
Issue advocacy groups	83	37.3%	2.95	1.26
Scientists or health experts	81	34.6%	3.01	1.19

Question: "Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist." (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Bolivia

Mireya Márquez-Ramírez, Víctor Oliver Quintanilla-Sangüeza & Miguel Ángel Flores-Olmos

INTRODUCTION

In Bolivia, the controversial departure of President Evo Morales after 13 years in power triggered an unprecedented political crisis. The elections in 2020 and their aftermath ignited protests and tensions that continued into 2023, a year marked by internal conflicts within Morales' party and significant political fallout from the election results. The political crisis intensified already existing societal divisions and created challenges for governance. While deep-rooted social, economic, and political divisions are endemic, Morales' populist style often resorted to divisive rhetoric, resulting in polarizing effects that are still felt today.

The press emerged in the mid-19th century as an intellectual tool for literate elites participating in post-independence state-building. As for broadcast media, Bolivia did not experience the same high levels of media ownership concentration as its neighboring countries. Today, news media are often vulnerable to political instrumentalization due to their dependence on official advertising. Journalists often engage in disseminative journalism, relying heavily on institutional and official sources either as a protective measure against potential government backlash or to mitigate the partisan biases of some media owners in a polarized political climate.

At the time of data collection (2022-2023), the COVID-19 pandemic had significantly impacted newsrooms, leading to staff shortages, increased workloads, layoffs, and overall instability.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The Bolivian journalistic workforce is mainly male, with 64.5% identifying as male and only 35.4% as female. Just 10.2% of journalists identify as indigenous, despite indigenous people making up 40% to 60% of the Bolivian population. Approximately 43% practice a religion, mostly Christianity. The average age of journalists is 43.2 years (Median = 42; SD = 11.3), and over two-thirds (68.8%) hold a university degree, while 9.2% have a postgraduate degree. A notable 91% have formal journalism education, with 87.1% attending university apprenticeships (78.9%) and short-term courses (94.2%) to learn or update journalistic skills.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

Bolivian journalists primarily work in an outlet with a radio (38.4%) and television (31.9%) background, with a smaller portion in online digital media organization (15.7%). A minority is employed in an organization that has traditionally focused on newspaper publishing (5.2%), magazines (5.2%), or news agencies (0.5%). Nearly half of these outlets have a national (47.3%) or transnational (1.3%) reach, while others are regional (29.5%) or local (22%). Journalists work mostly for private, commercially oriented outlets (71.2%), with fewer in public service (4%), state-run (6%), community (3.5%), and non-profit (4.5%) media.

Bolivian journalists are experienced, with a median of 15 years in the profession (Mean = 16.7; SD = 10.6). They tend to hold middle management positions (43.1%) or no managerial roles (21.4%). Over a third are top managers (35.4%) who oversee strategic decisions. Two-thirds of Bolivian journalists (67.1%) work in or manage a specific thematic area or beat.

Regarding labor conditions, Bolivian full-time journalists work 55.8 weekly hours on average (Median = 55; SD = 16.0). Unsurprisingly, half of the journalists frequently experience work-related stress (49.3%), while only 15.2% report never or rarely feeling stressed at work. Less than half hold either a full-time (41.7%) or part-time (5.5%) permanent contract. Additionally, 14.1% have either full or part-time fixed contracts, while a quarter (25.1%) are freelancers or self-employed. Finally, 13.6% work under other non-contractual arrangements.

Only half of the journalists (53.3%) rely solely on journalism for their main income, indicating that the other half have additional jobs or sources of income, primarily in advertising (43.9%), public relations (20.9%), or education (25.1%). However, there is strong collegiality within the profession, as three-quarters (71.3%) belong to a professional association dedicated to journalism.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Attacks on journalists in Bolivia are infrequent, but many express concerns that such crimes go unpunished, with 60.4% sharing this worry. Common types of attacks reported as frequent or very frequent include hateful speech (19%), public discrediting (10.4%), surveillance (10.6%), threats (7.4%), and hacking of digital accounts (7.8%). In contrast, office raids and legal actions are extremely rare.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	401	4.0%	15.0%	42.1%	18.7%	20.2%
Public discrediting of your work	401	1.7%	8.7%	20.7%	21.9%	46.9%
Surveillance	368	2.2%	8.4%	23.4%	24.2%	41.8%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	397	1.3%	6.5%	19.4%	18.1%	54.7%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	378	0.5%	0.0%	1.2%	4.0%	94.3%
Legal actions against you because of your work	337	0.2%	1.5%	5.0%	9.2%	84.0%
Stalking	395	0.8%	4.3%	18.7%	23.8%	52.4%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	401	1.2%	6.2%	24.4%	25.9%	42.1%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	401	0.0%	0.7%	3.2%	6.0%	90.0%
Other physical attacks	401	0.7%	2.7%	10.7%	20.4%	65.3%
Coercion	400	0.8%	1.0%	12.3%	16.8%	69.3%
Questioning of your personal morality	400	2.0%	4.5%	20.0%	29.5%	44.0%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	393	0.5%	2.3%	10.7%	18.3%	68.2%
Others disseminating your personal information	390	0.0%	3.8%	14.1%	24.1%	57.9%
Workplace bullying	271	1.0%	2.5%	13.0%	16.0%	67.6%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	337	0.2%	0.5%	4.0%	11.2%	84.0%

Question: “In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?”

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	394	13.2%	3.16	1.21
Concerned about physical well-being	399	14.3%	3.30	1.23
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	399	18.5%	3.62	1.01
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Bolivia go unpunished	401	60.6%	4.57	0.60

Question: “Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.” (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

The most endorsed roles by respondents include discussing future implications of current affairs (96.5%), promoting peace and tolerance (94.8%), shedding light on social issues (93.8%), and combating disinformation (91.3%). Following closely is educating audiences (89%), acting as a detached observer (87.3%), and offering multiple viewpoints (86.8%). Maintaining political neutrality and providing analysis of current events are also valued at 86.3%.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	400	87.3%	4.09	0.81
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	398	73.1%	3.84	0.98
Shine a light on society’s problems	401	93.8%	4.47	0.70
Motivate people to participate in politics	395	19.0%	2.38	1.18
Provide analysis of current affairs	401	86.3%	4.13	0.80
Let people express their views	401	86.8%	4.25	0.72
Provide information people need to form political opinion	400	70.3%	3.78	1.21
Advocate for social change	398	82.7%	4.13	0.92
Influence public opinion	398	56.5%	3.48	1.11
Set the political agenda	397	33.5%	2.88	1.19
Promote peace and tolerance	401	94.8%	4.48	0.68
Educate the audience	401	89.0%	4.31	0.77
Point toward possible solutions to society’s problems	399	83.7%	4.11	0.85
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	394	67.8%	3.73	1.17
Support national development	400	84.5%	4.09	0.81
Support government policy	392	49.5%	3.33	1.08
Convey a positive image of political leaders	395	5.8%	1.73	0.96
Provide entertainment and relaxation	400	36.0%	2.99	1.15
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	401	74.8%	3.97	0.90
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	398	71.4%	3.87	0.87
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	400	72.5%	3.92	0.95
Support efforts to protect public health	401	79.1%	3.98	0.82
Counteract disinformation	400	91.3%	4.33	0.74
Discuss future implications of current events	400	96.5%	4.61	0.59

Question: “Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Bolivian journalists exhibit a mixture of epistemological orientations, with 85.8% agreeing that "facts speak for themselves" and 78.9% believing in the possibility of objectivity. In contrast, 79.8% support the idea of interpreting facts, and 81.3% feel it is important to alert others to untruthful claims. Furthermore, about four in ten journalists acknowledge that it is impossible to completely set aside their beliefs when reporting.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	401	79.8%	3.90	0.91
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	398	12.3%	2.15	0.96
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	400	39.0%	2.96	1.01
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	397	69.0%	3.60	1.11
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	399	78.9%	3.87	0.91
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	401	28.7%	2.68	1.09
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	408	85.8%	3.98	0.74
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	400	63.0%	3.52	1.17
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	395	81.3%	3.96	0.98

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Journalists generally favor absolute ethical values, with 91.5% adhering to profession-driven standards over extraordinary circumstances (40.7%), personal judgment (31.1%), or specific situations (18.3%). Regarding controversial reporting methods, nearly half (48.4%) occasionally justify practices like using hidden recording devices, while about a third support unauthorized use of personal materials from powerful individuals (35.4%) or confidential documents (33.3%). However, there's minimal support for accepting money from sources.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	401	91.5%	4.44	0.77
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	398	40.7%	2.92	1.26
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	399	18.3%	2.18	1.09
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	399	31.1%	2.47	1.29

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	398	0.8%	16.1%
Using hidden recording devices	399	2.3%	48.4%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	396	3.3%	33.3%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	393	3.6%	35.4%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	398	0.8%	20.1%
Paying people for confidential information	397	1.0%	29.2%
Accepting money from sources	401	0.0%	0.7%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	397	0.8%	19.6%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	401	1.3%	23.7%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	398	0.8%	23.7%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Three quarters (73.8%) of those surveyed feel they have a great deal or complete freedom in selecting the information they cover, while only 4.2% feel restricted. Similarly, 73.3% believe they have significant freedom in choosing news aspects to highlight, with only 5.4% reporting little or no freedom. In contrast, just 17% think there is great or complete freedom in their country, and 42.3% believe press freedom is either nonexistent or limited.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	401	73.8%	4.13	0.91
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	401	73.3%	4.03	0.91
Media freedom in Bolivia	397	13.4%	2.77	0.85

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

The main influence on Bolivian journalists is ethics, cited by 88.5%. Access to information is also significant for 66.2%. Other influences include personal values (56%), resource availability (45.5%), audience feedback (44.4%), and editors and supervisors (42%). Friends, colleagues, religious groups, and the military are considered important by fewer than 5% of respondents.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	399	19.0%	2.48	1.05
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	376	42.0%	3.03	1.18
The business managers of the news organization	381	23.1%	2.40	1.24
The owners of the news organization	381	27.6%	2.56	1.35
Editorial policy	390	37.9%	2.89	1.27
Advertising considerations	394	25.4%	2.47	1.28
Profit expectations	396	14.9%	2.14	1.14
Audience research and data	399	35.8%	3.00	1.10
Availability of news-gathering resources	400	45.5%	3.21	1.08
Time limits	401	39.4%	3.04	1.11
Journalism ethics	401	88.5%	4.28	0.83
Self-censorship	396	23.0%	2.43	1.23
Personal values and beliefs	399	55.9%	3.44	1.30
Colleagues in other media	401	4.7%	1.85	0.86
Friends, acquaintances and family	401	5.0%	1.79	0.87
Feedback from the audience	401	44.4%	3.27	0.97
Competing news organizations	400	18.3%	2.56	1.06
Media laws and regulation	396	35.9%	3.02	1.11
Access to information	400	62.7%	3.66	0.97
Government censorship	396	28.5%	2.55	1.32
Government officials	397	20.4%	2.24	1.26
Politicians	395	14.4%	2.06	1.20
Business people	398	10.1%	1.97	1.04
Public relations	397	8.1%	2.02	0.96
Relationships with news sources	401	6.5%	3.02	1.09
Police	399	7.0%	1.77	0.97
Issue advocacy groups	398	5.5%	1.80	0.93
Religious groups and institutions	399	4.0%	1.59	0.86
Military	400	3.3%	1.48	0.81

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Brazil

Marcos Paulo Silva, Laura Storch, Janara Nicoletti, Kérley Winques, Sonia Virginia Moreira, Netília Seixas, Giovana Mesquita, Iluska Coutinho, Claudia Lago, Maria José Baldessar & Cézar Franco dos Santos Martins

INTRODUCTION

As of 2025, Brazil, the largest country in Latin America with a population of 212 million, continues to experience deep regional, economic, and cultural inequalities. The country has recently emerged from a turbulent period of political transition, marked by a shift from a far-right to a left-wing government and a failed coup attempt. The January 8, 2023 invasion of Brazil's federal buildings by extremist groups shocked the nation and further destabilized democratic institutions. While the current administration has signaled a return to democratic norms, the country still faces major challenges related to political polarization, judicial harassment, and structural inequality. The current media landscape is marked by instability and threats to press freedom.

Brazil has a strong journalistic tradition, with major media conglomerates concentrated in metropolitan areas such as São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Brasília. At the same time, journalistic practices vary widely across the country, with local outlets, independent media, and community journalism operating under different constraints in more remote or underserved regions, including the Amazon region.

The study comprises 602 responses from journalists in an estimated population of 43,273 media workers, collected between January and May 2023. The findings reveal a hostile environment with increased violence, intimidation, and discrediting of the press. Although there was a decline in press freedom violations in 2023, cases of judicial harassment and censorship remain concerning. According to the 2025 Safety of Journalists Index, launched by the Worlds of Journalism project in partnership with the University of Liverpool and UNESCO, Brazil ranks 62nd out of 73 countries evaluated, highlighting the persistent risks faced by journalists in the country.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

According to the study, 50.3% of Brazilian journalists are women, 49.5% are men, and 0.2% identify themselves in a manner other than the binary categories. The average age is 40.3 years (SD = 12.0; Median = 38). General journalism training is nearly universal (97.4%). The majority hold a bachelor's degree (62.9%), while 28.1% have also completed a master's and 2.9% a doctorate. Educational levels are similar across genders: women slightly lead in bachelor's degrees (32.5% vs. 30.3%), while men are more represented at the doctorate level (1.7% vs. 1.2%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

Nearly half of the surveyed journalists hold no management role (49.7%), 36.2% are in middle management, and 14.1% occupy top management positions. Most work for private or commercial media (77.5%), followed by public service (9%), non-profit organizations (5.5%), state-run media (3.3%), and community media (1.9%). Their main outlets are primarily regional (43.7%) or national (36.9%), with smaller shares in local (10.4%) or transnational (8.3%) media.

Regarding employment, 51.1% hold full-time and 22% part-time permanent contracts, 6.5% have fixed-term contracts, and 18% work as freelancers or are self-employed. More than a third (33.4%) report having an additional job outside journalism, underscoring the economic pressures of the profession. On average, they have 15.9 years of experience (SD = 11.1; Median = 13 years) and work 40.8 hours per week (SD = 10.1; Median = 40; for those in full-time employment), with extremes reaching up to 105 hours per week. More than a third (39%) declared being a member of professional associations.

About 32.1% report working on a specific beat or subject area. The main employer backgrounds are TV (28.3%), newspapers (24.5%), internet-native media (14.7%), and news agencies (11.3%), with smaller shares in radio (9.3%) and magazines (3.9%). Stress levels are a significant issue: half of the respondents (50%) report feeling stressed "very often," and 24% "often," while only 6.6% experience it rarely or never. These data reflect a workforce characterized by precarious employment, frequent multitasking (inside and outside journalism), and widespread exposure to stressful working environments.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Safety concerns are high in Brazil: 71.9% of surveyed journalists believe that aggressors go unpunished, 43.9% are concerned about emotional well-being, and 16.9% about physical safety. Demeaning or hateful speech (66.2%) and public discrediting (58.6%) are the most frequent threats experienced by journalists, followed by surveillance (51.2%) and the questioning of personal morality (44.6%). Psychological threats are also present, including workplace bullying (23%), coercion (20.9%), and stalking (15.5%). Journalists also report other types of threats, such as hacking (16.5%) and legal actions (13.6%). Job insecurity affects 22.6% of respondents.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	602	11.5%	15.3%	39.4%	20.1%	13.8%
Public discrediting of your work	602	13.3%	15.1%	30.2%	24.3%	17.1%
Surveillance	602	10.0%	16.6%	24.6%	22.4%	26.4%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	602	2.2%	3.7%	10.6%	12.0%	71.6%
Arrests, detentions, or imprisonment	602	0.2%	0.2%	2.2%	1.7%	95.8%
Legal actions against you because of your work	602	0.8%	2.2%	8.0%	13.3%	75.7%
Stalking	602	2.0%	2.0%	11.5%	15.6%	68.9%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	602	3.5%	4.5%	22.9%	24.8%	44.4%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	602	1.5%	3.0%	9.8%	11.0%	74.8%
Other physical attacks	602	0.5%	1.3%	6.1%	12.1%	79.9%
Coercion	602	1.3%	4.3%	15.3%	21.4%	57.6%
Questioning of your personal morality	602	5.0%	11.5%	28.1%	24.8%	30.7%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	602	0.7%	3.7%	7.6%	10.3%	77.7%
Others disseminating your personal information	602	1.2%	2.2%	8.0%	12.5%	76.2%
Workplace bullying	602	2.0%	5.6%	15.4%	18.4%	58.5%
Abductions	602	0.2%	0.7%	0.8%	0.8%	97.5%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	602	0.3%	0.5%	2.7%	7.1%	89.4%
Intimidation that targets family	602	0.7%	0.7%	3.0%	6.8%	88.9%

Question: “In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?”

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	602	22.6%	3.27	1.35
Concerned about physical well-being	602	16.9%	3.25	1.24
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	602	43.9%	4.16	0.99
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Brazil go unpunished	602	71.9%	4.65	0.65

Question: “Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.” (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Journalists in Brazil prioritize public-service roles, notably counteracting disinformation (94.7% considering this role as very or extremely important), exposing societal problems (92.8%), and providing political information (86%). Watchdog functions (84.7%) and analysis (85%) are highly valued, along with peace promotion (83.4%). In contrast, roles centered on entertainment (44.4%) or aligned with political elites (17.8%) rank significantly lower.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	602	72.6%	4.04	1.03
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	602	84.7%	4.35	0.90
Shine a light on society’s problems	602	92.8%	4.67	0.72
Motivate people to participate in politics	602	60.1%	3.68	1.13
Provide analysis of current affairs	602	85.0%	4.31	0.85
Let people express their views	602	79.6%	4.19	0.90
Provide information people need to form political opinion	602	86.0%	4.39	0.88
Advocate for social change	602	77.7%	4.20	0.97
Influence public opinion	602	53.0%	3.60	1.10
Set the political agenda	602	41.1%	3.26	1.11
Promote peace and tolerance	602	83.4%	4.36	0.97
Educate the audience	602	74.7%	4.04	1.03
Point toward possible solutions to society’s problems	602	80.6%	4.19	1.02
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	602	72.3%	3.97	1.16
Support national development	602	74.0%	4.03	1.05
Support government policy	602	45.7%	3.30	1.23
Convey a positive image of political leaders	602	17.8%	2.31	1.27
Provide entertainment and relaxation	602	44.4%	3.27	1.26
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	602	52.2%	3.78	1.02
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	602	49.5%	3.41	1.25
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	602	49.8%	3.48	1.13
Support efforts to protect public health	602	83.4%	4.27	1.03
Counteract disinformation	602	94.7%	4.74	0.64
Discuss future implications of current events	602	87.7%	4.36	0.84

Question: “Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIE

A significant proportion of Brazilian journalists indicated an active epistemology. For instance, 47.2% believe that interpretation is necessary for understanding facts, and 35.8% emphasize the importance of identifying false claims. Conversely, 20.3% believe in absolute objectivity, and 15% agree with the rigid view that "facts speak for themselves." The data suggest a balanced but cautious and sometimes conflicting approach to truth-making.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	602	47.2%	4.32	0.80
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	602	8.5%	3.05	1.10
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	602	12.1%	3.23	1.11
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	602	13.8%	3.00	1.21
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	602	20.3%	3.74	0.97
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	602	5.5%	2.61	1.11
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	602	3.0%	2.37	1.01
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	601	15.0%	3.62	0.96
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	601	5.8%	2.82	1.02
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	601	11.6%	3.29	1.08
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	601	35.8%	4.11	0.86

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Most respondents (81.2%) believe that journalists should always adhere to professional standards. There is strong rejection of unethical practices, such as accepting money from sources (4.8%) or publishing unverified information (7.5%). However, some controversial methods gain conditional support. For example, 83.2% of respondents justify the occasional use of hidden recording devices, and 48.7% agree with claiming to be somebody else in specific situations. This suggests that ethical boundaries may shift according to perceived public interest.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	602	81.2%	4.10	0.96
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	602	45.5%	3.13	1.22
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	602	22.9%	2.48	1.16
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	602	7.0%	1.76	0.94

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	602	1.3%	48.7%
Using hidden recording devices	602	4.5%	83.2%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	602	8.8%	70.3%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	602	6.8%	67.9%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	602	3.3%	38.5%
Paying people for confidential information	602	2.2%	22.1%
Accepting money from sources	602	0.8%	4.8%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	602	2.7%	34.1%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	602	1.7%	18.6%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	602	1.5%	7.5%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

The results show moderate editorial autonomy. Fewer than half of the respondents (48.4%) reported having a great deal or complete freedom in selecting news, and 54.5% reported having the same level of freedom in deciding which aspects to emphasize. However, only 12.4% perceive the same level of overall media freedom in Brazil, indicating a gap between individual editorial control and broader structural constraints.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	602	48.4%	3.44	0.97
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	602	54.5%	3.56	0.95
Media freedom in Brazil	598	12.4%	2.73	0.75

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Editorial decisions are shaped mainly by internal and structural factors. Ethics stands out as the most influential element (83.4%), followed by supervisors, editorial policy, access to information, and time constraints (all above 65%). These results suggest that journalists prioritize professional norms and newsroom routines. Political, commercial, and social pressures are perceived as much less influential, with most below 30%. On the other hand, 32.6% indicates that self-censorship is a factor.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	579	48.9%	3.47	1.00
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	577	72.1%	3.92	0.95
The business managers of the news organization	548	53.5%	3.50	1.20
The owners of the news organization	542	57.6%	3.61	1.24
Editorial policy	582	70.6%	3.92	1.02
Advertising considerations	533	43.3%	3.18	1.31
Profit expectations	531	47.6%	3.28	1.35
Audience research and data	570	52.8%	3.46	1.19
Availability of news-gathering resources	582	61.3%	3.66	1.11
Time limits	585	65.1%	3.78	1.07
Journalism ethics	591	83.4%	4.32	0.89
Self-censorship	543	32.6%	2.97	1.21
Personal values and beliefs	564	39.0%	3.14	1.29
Colleagues in other media	569	25.0%	2.78	1.11
Friends, acquaintances and family	564	17.6%	2.46	1.08
Feedback from the audience	584	50.2%	3.43	1.06
Competing news organizations	575	37.4%	3.13	1.06
Media laws and regulation	577	44.9%	3.22	1.17
Access to information	591	69.9%	3.89	1.05
Government censorship	551	29.9%	2.66	1.36
Government officials	556	31.7%	2.78	1.33
Politicians	546	29.5%	2.73	1.31
Business people	550	28.9%	2.72	1.28
Public relations	568	27.6%	2.81	1.15
Relationships with news sources	588	53.6%	3.48	1.11
Police	516	24.4%	2.57	1.32
Issue advocacy groups	560	31.8%	2.93	1.17
Scientists or health experts	553	48.6%	3.35	1.23
Religious groups and institutions	503	16.1%	2.24	1.22
Military	456	12.1%	1.97	1.15
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	404	9.9%	1.76	1.08
Organized crime and criminal groups	395	12.2%	1.83	1.18
Terrorist groups	368	8.7%	1.62	1.05

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Bulgaria

Vera Slavtcheva-Petkova & Christopher Karadjov

INTRODUCTION

The political situation in Bulgaria has been rather turbulent in the last decade or so. There have been as many as seven snap elections since 2021 with no stable government in place over that period of time. Prior to that, while there was a period of political stability, it was notable that media freedom significantly deteriorated in the country and for years Bulgaria had the lowest press freedom country ranking among all European Union member states according to Reporters without Borders annual press freedom index.

While the initial period of democratization after the end of the Cold War led to a burgeoning of private news media in the country and an influx of foreign investors who had a reputation for not interfering in editorial policy, these trends changed in the aftermath of the global recession. Most news media were appropriated by local business moguls with very strong political interests with the most notorious example being of oligarch Delyan Peevski.

These processes inevitably contributed to a significant deterioration in journalistic freedoms and standards coupled with financial precarity and an overall depletion of journalism as a social institution. The number of journalists in Bulgaria significantly fell from 5,800 in 2016 to 3,800 in 2020 according to official data from the National Statistics Institute. In the previous wave of the Worlds of Journalism Study, Bulgarian journalists described the state of journalism in their country as "dire", "lamentable", "at rock bottom" and "critical".

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

Our sample of Bulgarian journalists includes more women than men (61% vs. 39%, respectively). On average, journalists were 49.8 years old (SD = 11.6; Median = 50). They are generally very well educated: 16% of them held a Bachelor's degree or equivalent, 74.2% a Master's degree or equivalent, and an additional 5.7% have obtained a doctorate. Moreover, 59.6% of the respondents have acquired formal education or professional training in journalism. This education or training is usually obtained at university or in college (68.9%) but also via apprenticeships or cadetships (50.8%) and short-term courses (48.7%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

The Bulgarian journalists in our sample were predominantly in middle management (37.3%) or no management roles (40.5%) with only 22.2% being in a top management role. The majority of journalists worked for national media (60.1%) although still a significant minority worked for local and regional media – 38.1%. Over two-thirds were employed by private/commercial media (65%), 19.7% by public service media, 6.7% by state-run media and 5.4% by non-profit media. Roughly a third of journalists in Bulgaria (31.6%) worked for an organization with a background of native online media, a fifth (19%) for an organization focused on newspaper publishing, 16.5% for a radio outlet, 14.9% for a TV organization, and 10% for news agencies, respectively. Very few journalists worked for magazine companies (2.8%) and outlets with a telecommunications background (1.3%, respectively). Finally, 2.1% worked for other type of media and 1.3% of the interviewed journalists claimed not to have a main employer.

More than three quarters of the interviewed journalists in Bulgaria had a full-time contract (69.2% permanently and 1% temporarily employed). 21% worked as freelancers or were self-employed, and an additional 4.9% had other forms of employment. Finally, 3.4% had a part-time permanent contract, and 0.5% had a part-time temporary contract. In addition, 33.8% of the respondents reported that they had additional jobs outside journalism, which suggests an increasingly precarious working environment.

Bulgarian journalists are very experienced. On average they had 22.8 years of professional experience (SD = 10.6; Median = 23). 26.8% worked on a beat. Slightly more than a third (37%) were union members.

The average working week of Bulgarian full-time journalists was 47.1 hours (SD = 14.0; Median = 45). Over a third of the respondents (38.8%) reported they felt stressed out at work often or very often during the previous six months, 31.1% sometimes felt stressed out, 19.5% rarely felt that way and 10% had never felt stressed out at work.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Attacks such as demeaning or hateful speech or public discrediting of journalists' work fared among the most common safety threats experienced by Bulgarian journalists (see Table 1). Other types of threats experienced were surveillance, hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites, legal actions against them and others disseminating their personal information.

The vast majority of Bulgarian journalists were concerned that those who harm journalists would go unpunished. Less than half were worried about their emotional and mental well-being, and about a third about their physical well-being (see Table 2). 16% of the surveyed journalists were concerned about losing their job in journalism in the next 12 months.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	390	11.3%	15.4%	30.0%	25.6%	17.7%
Public discrediting of your work	388	5.9%	9.3%	19.1%	23.7%	42.0%
Surveillance	367	2.2%	5.7%	12.3%	17.2%	62.7%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	387	2.6%	4.1%	12.7%	18.3%	62.3%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	386	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	1.3%	98.2%
Legal actions against you because of your work	389	2.3%	3.3%	8.5%	16.2%	69.7%
Stalking	385	1.6%	1.8%	5.7%	10.1%	80.8%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	355	1.1%	3.4%	12.1%	23.7%	59.7%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	389	0.5%	0.5%	2.3%	4.4%	92.3%
Other physical attacks	358	0.3%	0.0%	2.0%	6.7%	91.1%
Coercion	385	0.5%	0.5%	4.2%	16.4%	78.4%
Questioning of your personal morality	382	0.5%	2.1%	7.3%	17.5%	72.5%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	386	1.8%	2.6%	8.8%	10.6%	76.2%
Others disseminating your personal information	385	2.9%	2.6%	9.9%	16.1%	68.6%
Workplace bullying	385	0.3%	1.0%	2.1%	11.2%	85.5%
Abductions	389	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	388	0.3%	0.5%	2.3%	5.4%	91.5%
Intimidation that targets family	386	0.8%	1.8%	1.8%	5.2%	90.4%

Question: “In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?”

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	387	16%	2.29	1.15
Concerned about physical well-being	386	31.1%	2.69	1.26
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	387	41.9%	3.03	1.25
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Bulgaria go unpunished	386	87.3%	4.36	0.85

Question: “Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.” (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Bulgarian journalists showed the strongest support for the countering disinformation role, which is understandable in the context of the current war in Ukraine and in the aftermath of the Covid19 pandemic (see Table 3). The next most popular roles were shine a light on society’s problems, educate the audience, let people express their views and provide analysis of current affairs. More Bulgarian journalists say their role is to support national development than to monitor and scrutinize those in power. Support for national development does not equate support for government policy, which is very low or indeed convey a positive image of political leaders, which has the lowest level of support by Bulgarian journalists.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	384	85.9%	4.38	0.89
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	383	67.1%	3.90	1.04
Shine a light on society’s problems	389	92.8%	4.58	0.70
Motivate people to participate in politics	384	30.5%	2.96	1.21
Provide analysis of current affairs	389	90.0%	4.45	0.74
Let people express their views	386	90.4%	4.49	0.73
Provide information people need to form political opinion	382	81.2%	4.27	0.94
Advocate for social change	382	72.5%	4.02	0.99
Influence public opinion	382	57.1%	3.68	1.07
Set the political agenda	372	26.3%	2.80	1.20
Promote peace and tolerance	388	85.8%	4.39	0.88
Educate the audience	387	91.7%	4.52	0.73
Point toward possible solutions to society’s problems	386	76.7%	4.12	0.94
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	381	62.5%	3.71	1.13
Support national development	380	78.4%	4.14	0.95
Support government policy	381	6.0%	1.93	1.04
Convey a positive image of political leaders	377	2.9%	1.59	0.88
Provide entertainment and relaxation	386	26.7%	2.77	1.23
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	385	45.5%	3.26	1.23
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	387	34.1%	3.02	1.17
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	387	54.3%	3.51	1.14
Support efforts to protect public health	389	84.3%	4.29	0.88
Counteract disinformation	389	95.9%	4.75	0.52
Discuss future implications of current events	385	81.8%	4.21	0.85

Question: “Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Bulgarian journalists' responses to the epistemological questions place a heavy emphasis on the need to alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful (Table 4). The majority of journalists also believed that it is possible to represent objective reality in reporting while the smallest percentage of journalists said that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that truth is inevitably shaped by those in power.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	385	76.4%	4.01	0.99
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	386	8.5%	1.98	0.94
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	386	28.2%	2.82	1.08
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	383	30.3%	2.92	1.16
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	388	89.4%	4.27	0.76
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	387	45.0%	3.28	1.05
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	386	42.7%	3.24	1.03
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	388	78.1%	4.05	0.90
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	384	15.4%	2.57	0.94
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	385	76.9%	4.04	0.88
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	386	95.3%	4.53	0.60

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Journalists in Bulgaria strongly agreed on the importance of professional standards rather than subjective and situational considerations for ethical reporting (see Table 5). Slightly less than half said that extraordinary circumstances might require disregarding those professional standards. When it comes to the justification of controversial reporting methods, accepting money from sources and using the personal materials of ordinary people were most strongly rejected (see Table 6). The majority of journalists found it acceptable to use hidden recording devices and use confidential documents without authorization on occasion.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	389	81.2%	4.19	0.94
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	384	48.7%	3.24	1.22
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	383	32.4%	2.72	1.30
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	381	21.0%	2.39	1.24

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	388	2.3%	41.8%
Using hidden recording devices	389	3.1%	68.4%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	387	4.9%	54.5%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	388	0.5%	37.6%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	388	0.0%	14.2%
Paying people for confidential information	388	2.6%	32.7%
Accepting money from sources	386	0.0%	4.7%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	385	0.5%	21.0%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	387	0.5%	23.0%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	387	0.0%	19.6%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Bulgarian journalists reported that they had a great deal or complete freedom in selecting the news stories and which aspects of a story should be emphasized but only 14.4% said there was a great deal or complete media freedom in Bulgaria. This is one of the lowest percentage of media freedom worldwide, which is a clear reflection of the over decade-long trend of diminishing media freedom in the country despite recent improvements.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	387	84.8%	4.26	0.78
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	388	87.6%	4.40	0.77
Media freedom in Bulgaria	374	14.4%	2.75	0.80

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Bulgarian journalists found journalism ethics and personal beliefs and values to fare highest among the internal factors influencing news production (see Table 8). Among the external factors, most journalists considered access to information and media laws and regulation as being extremely or very influential. The lowest influence was attributed to terrorist groups and the military.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	351	32.5%	2.90	1.15
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	317	39.4%	3.07	1.15
The business managers of the news organization	316	40.2%	3.02	1.26
The owners of the news organization	297	33.0%	2.75	1.36
Editorial policy	350	54.3%	3.43	1.20
Advertising considerations	331	26.3%	2.52	1.32
Profit expectations	321	25.9%	2.56	1.27
Audience research and data	349	40.1%	3.12	1.17
Availability of news-gathering resources	354	50.8%	3.37	1.16
Time limits	359	51.5%	3.39	1.21
Journalism ethics	374	85.3%	4.20	0.92
Self-censorship	342	28.4%	2.67	1.28
Personal values and beliefs	372	75.3%	4.09	1.09
Colleagues in other media	364	9.6%	2.22	1.02
Friends, acquaintances and family	367	15.0%	2.28	1.13
Feedback from the audience	378	51.9%	3.52	0.98
Competing news organizations	361	28.0%	2.81	1.11
Media laws and regulation	368	61.4%	3.65	1.12
Access to information	373	76.7%	4.04	0.90
Government censorship	316	21.8%	2.33	1.34
Government officials	320	15.0%	2.12	1.22
Politicians	339	13.3%	2.08	1.18
Business people	330	13.0%	2.01	1.16
Public relations	366	22.4%	2.49	1.23
Relationships with news sources	355	42.0%	3.12	1.24
Police	298	9.4%	1.80	1.07
Issue advocacy groups	326	5.8%	1.82	0.98
Scientists or health experts	345	36.8%	2.98	1.20
Religious groups and institutions	282	4.3%	1.52	0.89
Military	262	4.2%	1.38	0.82
Organized crime and criminal groups	249	4.0%	1.34	0.80
Terrorist groups	221	2.3%	1.18	0.61

Question: "Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist." (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Canada

Terra Tailleur, Lisa Taylor & Megan Krempa

INTRODUCTION

Canada is a stable democracy that continues to rank highly for civil liberties and political rights compared to most other countries. The country has a history of independent journalism dominated by a few large media organizations. The news media industry in Canada has been shrinking for two decades now; in that time, hundreds of newsrooms have closed. The federal government has increased its support of local news, launching the Local Journalism Initiative and the Canadian Journalism Labour Tax Credit in 2019.

In the data collection period (2022-2024), there were more layoffs at Bell Media, which owns CTV News, and at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Metroland Media Group and Métro Média laid off approximately 68 journalists. Québecor, a media giant in the Francophone market, cut one-third of its workforce at Groupe TVA.

In 2023, the federal government's Online News Act took effect, requiring the two big tech companies, Google and Meta, to compensate Canadian news organizations for sharing their content. This prompted Meta to ban Canadian news from its platforms, including Facebook and Instagram, negatively impacting the reach of news organizations. The company also ended its contract with The Canadian Press to fund approximately 30 early-career journalists. Google has since sought an exemption from the act and agreed to fund $100 million CDN annually for five years to Canadian news organizations.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

In terms of gender, the sample is balanced: 49.1% female; 49.1% male. An additional 1.9% indicated they didn't fit in either category. On average, the Canadian journalist was 41.8 years old (Median = 40; SD = 12.7). They were well educated, with 57.0% reporting a bachelor's degree or equivalent, 33.2% a master's degree or equivalent, and 2.4% a doctorate. In addition, 83.9% have received professional training or formal education in journalism. This training was largely obtained at a university or college (85.2%), and/or via a journalism internship or apprenticeship (75.4%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

The journalists who responded to the survey were mostly permanent staff working full-time hours at traditional media organizations. They were also experienced, with an average of 17.2 years in journalism (Median = 15; SD = 12.0).

Specifically, 78.7% were full-time, permanent employees, with only 9.5% identifying as freelance or self-employed, 7.6% as full-time contract, and 1.9% as part-time. In addition, 2.4% indicated they didn't fit in any of those categories.

They worked an average of 43.3 hours a week (Median = 40; SD = 8.2; for those in full-time employment). Additionally, 79.0% received all of their work-related income from journalism, while 21.0% earned additional income in other ways.

Newspapers were identified as the background of the main employer for 39.4% of the journalists, followed by TV at 21.0%, news agencies at 14.6%, native online media at 10.2%, radio at 8.6%, and magazines at 3.0%. Another 3.2% of journalists said they had no main employer.

Only 39.1% of the journalists had a specific beat or subject area, compared to 60.9% who considered themselves generalists.

Of those respondents whose editorial rank was known, 70.7% had no management role, 22.0% were middle management, and 7.3% were top management. Notably, more than one-quarter of the total respondents (28.7%) could not be categorized into traditional editorial hierarchies, reflecting, in part, the shifting nature of job descriptions and responsibilities.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

The data suggest that most Canadian journalists are relatively unburdened by safety concerns. The most common negative experiences cited include being on the receiving end of demeaning or hateful speech. Almost 40% of journalists reported being subject to such comments "sometimes," while a minority were exposed "often" or "very often" (see Table 1). And, while just over one-third of journalists surveyed agreed or strongly agreed they are worried about losing their job in the next year, perhaps the most noteworthy finding is that a majority of journalists surveyed agree or strongly agree that they are very concerned about their mental health; they also report strong agreement with the statement, "I am concerned that those who harm journalists in Canada go unpunished" (see Table 2).

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	383	6.8%	10.7%	39.2%	30.8%	12.5%
Public discrediting of your work	378	7.1%	9.8%	29.6%	32.0%	21.4%
Surveillance	364	1.4%	0.8%	7.7%	22.0%	68.1%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	377	1.6%	2.4%	9.8%	16.2%	70.0%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	383	0.3%	0.3%	1.0%	2.1%	96.3%
Legal actions against you because of your work	382	0.3%	1.8%	7.3%	21.2%	69.4%
Stalking	380	0.3%	0.3%	4.5%	8.4%	86.6%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	380	2.4%	3.4%	21.1%	35.5%	37.6%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	383	0.0%	0.8%	5.2%	11.2%	82.8%
Other physical attacks	382	0.3%	0.3%	1.6%	10.2%	87.7%
Workplace bullying	329	0.9%	3.6%	10.6%	18.5%	66.3%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	379	36.9%	2.81	1.34
Concerned about physical well-being	382	27.5%	2.55	1.26
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	381	60.9%	3.47	1.23
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Canada go unpunished	379	69.7%	3.88	0.96

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Canadian journalists report that educating audiences and shining a light on society's problems are the most important aspects of their work (see Table 3). Counteracting disinformation and monitoring and scrutinizing those in power are also identified by respondents as important journalistic roles. Conversely, Canadian journalists place little value on roles such as conveying a positive image of political leaders or supporting government policy.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	378	65.6%	3.84	0.99
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	380	85.5%	4.37	0.88
Shine a light on society's problems	380	91.1%	4.53	0.77
Motivate people to participate in politics	376	23.4%	2.68	1.18
Provide analysis of current affairs	380	76.3%	4.05	1.06
Let people express their views	378	67.2%	3.81	1.03
Provide information people need to form political opinion	379	75.7%	4.08	1.07
Advocate for social change	372	33.6%	2.92	1.30
Influence public opinion	374	19.8%	2.44	1.22
Set the political agenda	370	11.1%	2.01	1.13
Promote peace and tolerance	373	37.3%	3.04	1.29
Educate the audience	381	93.7%	4.59	0.70
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	377	63.4%	3.72	1.07
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	372	60.8%	3.65	1.22
Support national development	361	12.5%	2.16	1.08
Support government policy	373	1.6%	1.29	0.66
Convey a positive image of political leaders	375	0.8%	1.10	0.44
Provide entertainment and relaxation	377	15.6%	2.24	1.15
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	380	22.4%	2.67	1.15
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	376	14.6%	2.31	1.11
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	382	46.1%	3.41	0.99
Support efforts to protect public health	376	43.4%	3.22	1.22
Counteract disinformation	377	88.6%	4.53	0.82
Discuss future implications of current events	378	77.8%	4.05	0.70

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

There is less consistency in response to epistemological questions among Canadian journalist respondents. One noteworthy exception is a belief in the need to alert audiences when a claim is untruthful, to which a significant proportion of respondents either responded "agree" or "strongly agree" (see Table 4). And, while Canadian journalists' survey responses show robust support for the proposition that "facts should speak for themselves," they also signaled strong adherence to the notion that "interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts."

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	379	34.2%	2.83	1.16
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	380	26.8%	2.67	1.15
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	380	34.2%	2.83	1.16
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	381	12.9%	1.17	1.09
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	379	61.2%	3.51	1.10
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	381	19.4%	2.44	1.06
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	380	8.2%	2.01	0.92
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	382	74.3%	3.88	0.87
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	378	25.4%	2.77	1.11
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	372	26.9%	2.73	1.20
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	379	93.1%	4.53	0.70

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Canadian journalists largely reject the contention that ethics is a matter of personal judgment, with a majority of respondents agreeing with the statement that "what is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them" (see Table 5). When asked about potentially controversial techniques often employed by investigative journalists, a majority indicated that approaches such as using hidden recording devices and accessing confidential government documents and the personal information of powerful people without their permission are justified on occasion (see Table 6).

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	380	52.4%	3.36	1.24
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	377	62.9%	3.53	1.12
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	381	34.9%	2.82	1.22
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	382	9.4%	1.96	0.98

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	378	0.0%	49.7%
Using hidden recording devices	381	3.7%	83.2%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	376	21.8%	68.1%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	379	10.0%	76.8%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	380	2.1%	59.7%
Paying people for confidential information	380	0.0%	18.2%
Accepting money from sources	383	0.3%	0.5%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	381	0.5%	26.3%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	383	0.3%	3.9%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	381	0.00%	26.0%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Canadian journalists appear to enjoy significant editorial freedom, with more than three-quarters of respondents indicating they have "a great deal" or "complete" editorial freedom to select stories and choose what aspects of a story should be emphasized (see Table 7). A similar number also indicated that news media in Canada have "a great deal" or "complete" freedom.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	380	76.3%	3.89	0.75
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	379	81.3%	3.98	0.67
Media freedom in Canada	374	77.0%	3.83	0.60

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Data suggest journalism ethics is the most significant editorial influence on Canadian journalists. Other influences cited by a majority are almost all internal, such as time limits and access to newsgathering resources (see Table 8). In contrast, very few Canadian journalists report being influenced by external sources such as government officials, advocacy groups, and their friends and family.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	362	45.9%	3.29	1.00
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	369	60.4%	3.69	0.91
The business managers of the news organization	343	8.7%	1.72	1.04
The owners of the news organization	335	10.1%	1.79	1.10
Editorial policy	357	47.3%	3.29	1.26
Advertising considerations	337	3.0%	1.39	0.80
Profit expectations	341	8.5%	1.72	1.06
Audience research and data	364	28.0%	2.87	1.16
Availability of news-gathering resources	362	61.6%	3.67	1.01
Time limits	378	60.8%	3.71	0.97
Journalism ethics	375	82.9%	4.22	0.97
Self-censorship	339	12.4%	2.21	1.04
Personal values and beliefs	368	29.1%	2.79	1.20
Colleagues in other media	377	10.3%	2.38	0.94
Friends, acquaintances and family	378	4.8%	2.01	0.87
Feedback from the audience	379	14.5%	2.56	0.91
Competing news organizations	381	15.5%	2.62	0.92
Media laws and regulation	356	41.6%	3.06	1.31
Access to information	369	60.3%	3.70	1.05
Government censorship	343	15.2%	1.98	1.21
Government officials	356	8.7%	1.94	1.07
Politicians	358	10.9%	1.92	1.08
Businesspeople	364	6.6%	1.74	0.94
Public relations	368	10.6%	2.09	1.04
Relationships with news sources	375	40.5%	3.18	1.08
Police	351	11.1%	1.92	1.09
Issue advocacy groups	367	9.3%	2.29	0.99
Scientists or health experts	359	33.1%	2.94	1.15

Question: "Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist." (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.

Chile

William Porath, Daniela Grassau & Constanza Ortega-Gunckel

INTRODUCTION

Following a series of protests in late 2019, known as the "social outburst," which included both peaceful mass demonstrations and violent clashes with police and episodes of looting, Chile underwent two unsuccessful attempts to replace the constitution inherited from the Pinochet dictatorship. The country is currently facing a relatively stagnant economy, widespread public distrust in institutions and the media – especially in politics – significant fragmentation of political parties, and a sharp increase in criminal violence.

The Chilean media system is characterized by a commercial model based on private ownership, primarily financed through advertising revenue. It is highly centralized in the capital, Santiago, marked by a high degree of media concentration, and shaped by an ideological and value alignment between major media owners and the country's largest advertisers. This alignment tends to favor conservative sectors and the dominant economic interests of the country.

Three major events have profoundly shaped the media landscape and journalistic practice in Chile. First, the exhaustion of the traditional commercial model has resulted in the closure of numerous media outlets and widespread layoffs. Second, the social unrest of 2019 disrupted the media in four significant ways: the breakdown of established journalistic routines; difficulties in on-the-ground reporting due to violence; widespread public criticism of the media's role in society, which in some cases escalated into physical attacks on journalists and media facilities; and the withdrawal of advertising revenue, which further exacerbated the financial crisis. Third, the COVID-19 pandemic heightened the demand for continuous news coverage while restricting physical mobility, pushing journalists to adopt remote work practices and accelerating the implementation of new technologies that empowered sources and altered information flows. Although both the social unrest and the pandemic occurred prior to the data collection for this chapter, their consequences continue to shape journalistic routines today – particularly by intensifying job insecurity and negatively impacting the physical and mental well-being of media professionals.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

Newsrooms in Chile have an average age of 41.1 years and a standard deviation of 11.9 (Median: 40 years), which shows a wide variation around that average. They tend to be made up mostly of men, with women accounting for 32.2% of the workforce. They are generally well educated: 64.4% of them held a Bachelor's degree or equivalent, 23.2% a Master's degree or equivalent, and an additional 0.8% have obtained a doctorate. Moreover, 91.5% of the respondents have acquired formal education or professional training in journalism. This education or training is usually obtained at university or in college (88.7%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

One third of journalists in Chile (31.2%) worked for an employer with a radio background, 28.0% for companies focused on publishing newspapers, 23.9% for television outlets, and 14.1% for native online media. Very few journalists worked for magazine companies (0.3%), news agency (0.5%) and in the telecommunications sector (2.0%). Regarding area of coverage, 46.2% of the journalists reported they mainly worked for (trans)national media, while 53.8% primarily catered to local or regional media. The great majority was working for private/commercial media (86.1%) and only 7.1% for state-run media and 1.3% for public service media. In the non-profit media were 4.8% of the interviewees, and in the community media 0.8%.

On average, Chilean journalists had 15.8 years of professional experience, but with a great dispersion (SD = 10.8; Median = 15). A majority of them (76.2%) worked on a variety of beats or subject areas rather than on a single one. In relation with the rank of the respondent, 35.7% didn't have a management role, 34.9% had a middle management role, and 24.4% were from top management roles.

Near to a quarter of Chilean journalists (24.0%) were members of professional associations or unions.

About three-quarters of the interviewed journalists in Chile had a full-time permanent contract (73.2%), 3.5% worked with a part-time permanent contract, 2.0% with a full-time fixed-term contract, 7.6% worked as freelancers or were self-employed, and an additional 13.7% had other forms of employment. Among them, 3.0% were media owners who worked as journalists, 5.5% had full-time jobs but no contract, and 3.5% worked part-time but also had no contract. These results no suggest a precarious employment situation, but 50.5% of the respondents reported that they had additional jobs outside media. These data are influenced by the selection criteria used in this survey, which only surveyed journalists who earned at least 50% of their income from their work in the media or, failing that, who devoted at least 50% of their working hours to journalism.

The average working week of Chilean full-time journalists was 49.0 hours (SD = 12.1; Median = 48.5) which reflects that many journalists work more than their stipulated hours. Relatedly, 50.8% of the respondents reported they felt stressed out at work often or very often during the previous six months; only 18.6% had never or rarely felt that way.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Verbal attacks such as demeaning or hateful speech, public discrediting of journalists' work, and questioning of personal morality fared among the most common safety threats experienced by Chilean journalists (see Table 1). And the number of journalists who have suffered legal action, physical attacks, or sexual assault/harassment in the last five years remains a cause for concern.

On another note, but related to a safe and peaceful working environment, a broad majority were concerned about their physical or emotional well-being and just over a third were worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months (see Table 2). This seems to be related to the precarious working conditions that Chilean journalists experience today.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	397	6.3%	10.3%	32.0%	25.9%	25.4%
Public discrediting of your work	397	4.0%	8.3%	22.2%	28.2%	37.3%
Surveillance	393	1.3%	2.3%	7.6%	13.7%	75.1%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	397	1.0%	3.3%	7.1%	8.6%	80.1%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	397	0.3%	0.0%	0.5%	4.0%	95.2%
Legal actions against you because of your work	396	0.8%	0.8%	6.6%	10.6%	81.3%
Stalking	396	1.0%	1.5%	7.3%	15.2%	75.0%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	397	1.8%	4.3%	14.1%	24.7%	55.2%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	396	0.5%	1.5%	1.5%	7.1%	89.4%
Other physical attacks	396	0.3%	0.5%	4.8%	12.4%	82.1%
Questioning of your personal morality	397	3.0%	7.6%	17.6%	24.9%	46.9%
Others disseminating your personal information	397	0.8%	3.0%	9.1%	11.6%	75.6%
Workplace bullying	395	0.8%	4.6%	8.4%	9.9%	76.5%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	398	35.9%	2.80	1.46
Concerned about physical well-being	396	20.2%	2.17	1.36
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	398	60.8%	3.58	1.32
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Chile go unpunished	397	79.1%	4.19	1.07

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

In a context in which 19 of the 24 proposed roles receive majority support (see Table 3), Chilean journalists showed stronger support for traditional monitorial roles. Further behind are roles linked to interventionist journalism. In this context, roles linked to accommodative journalism, which seeks to attract, entertain, and excite large audiences, received less support, especially those related to collaborative journalism.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	396	88.4%	4.41	0.84
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	396	90.9%	4.55	0.73
Shine a light on society's problems	397	96.0%	4.72	0.57
Motivate people to participate in politics	398	40.2%	3.12	1.23
Provide analysis of current affairs	397	88.9%	4.45	0.75
Let people express their views	396	95.5%	4.62	0.63
Provide information people need to form political opinion	397	89.2%	4.42	0.86
Advocate for social change	393	63.1%	3.77	1.08
Influence public opinion	395	63.3%	3.72	1.15
Set the political agenda	397	38.8%	3.10	1.17
Promote peace and tolerance	398	83.7%	4.35	0.93
Educate the audience	398	83.2%	4.33	0.89
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	398	72.4%	4.01	0.98
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	396	79.8%	4.20	1.02
Support national development	396	78.0%	4.13	0.97
Support government policy	391	38.4%	3.14	1.12
Convey a positive image of political leaders	391	28.9%	2.81	1.33
Provide entertainment and relaxation	397	44.3%	3.33	1.24
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	397	69.0%	3.91	1.00
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	397	55.9%	3.50	1.13
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	396	59.3%	3.63	1.08
Support efforts to protect public health	397	80.6%	4.20	0.95
Counteract disinformation	397	94.7%	4.76	0.59
Discuss future implications of current events	397	83.1%	4.23	0.88

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

In relation with the journalistic epistemologies, Chilean journalists agreed the most with the statement "Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful" (see Table 4). Secondly, there are two statements that may be contradictory: "Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves" and "Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts". The other two statements, which receive majority support, may also sound contradictory: "It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting" and "Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work".

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	396	66.2%	3.82	1.06
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	397	8.8%	1.98	1.05
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	397	32.5%	2.95	1.20
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	397	32.7%	2.86	1.43
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	397	59.7%	3.60	1.19
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	398	23.9%	2.51	1.23
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	397	68.8%	3.86	1.04
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	395	52.4%	3.37	1.35
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	390	81.0%	4.14	1.11

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Interviewees strongly agreed on the importance of professional standards rather than subjective and situational considerations for ethical reporting (see Table 5). However, a third of them stated that "what is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them".

When it comes to the justification of controversial reporting methods, accepting money from sources and publishing unverified information were most strongly rejected (see Table 7). Most journalists found it acceptable to use confidential documents and personal materials of powerful people without authorization, and use hidden recording devices.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	398	91.5%	4.58	0.74
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	395	32.4%	2.59	1.40
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	398	23.6%	2.25	1.37
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	397	18.9%	2.18	1.35

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	398	0.8%	23.6%
Using hidden recording devices	397	3.5%	48.9%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	398	6.3%	53.3%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	397	4.0%	52.4%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	398	1.3%	28.6%
Paying people for confidential information	396	0.8%	13.6%
Accepting money from sources	398	0.0%	1.0%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	397	1.0%	24.7%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	397	1.5%	22.2%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	397	0.8%	8.3%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Chilean journalists reported a great amount of freedom in their work (see Table 7). More than 80% claimed to have complete or a great deal of freedom in selecting their stories and in deciding which aspects to emphasize in a story. However, media freedom in the country was rated low by the respondents.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	398	81.7%	4.18	0.83
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	397	84.9%	4.23	0.79
Media freedom in Chile	393	31.0%	3.13	0.90

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Chilean journalists found journalism ethics, editorial supervisors and editorial policy to fare highest among the internal factors influencing news production (see Table 8). Among the external factors, most journalists considered access to information and relationships with news sources as being extremely or very influential.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	386	42.0%	3.18	1.16
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	363	68.6%	3.79	1.07
The business managers of the news organization	365	27.9%	2.58	1.36
The owners of the news organization	360	28.9%	2.63	1.44
Editorial policy	384	64.1%	3.67	1.22
Advertising considerations	381	20.5%	2.39	1.28
Profit expectations	380	19.5%	2.28	1.30
Audience research and data	391	41.4%	3.12	1.29
Availability of news-gathering resources	391	59.3%	3.60	1.12
Time limits	393	56.0%	3.48	1.19
Journalism ethics	396	90.2%	4.47	0.80
Self-censorship	374	16.6%	2.21	1.21
Personal values and beliefs	387	40.1%	3.11	1.35
Colleagues in other media	381	8.4%	2.01	1.06
Friends, acquaintances and family	383	9.1%	1.90	1.05
Feedback from the audience	393	50.9%	3.47	1.07
Competing news organizations	385	26.0%	2.72	1.15
Media laws and regulation	385	46.2%	3.22	1.27
Access to information	395	81.3%	4.16	0.86
Government censorship	374	17.6%	2.14	1.29
Government officials	380	10.8%	2.07	1.11
Politicians	385	11.2%	2.06	1.11
Business people	384	14.8%	2.14	1.16
Public relations	384	15.6%	2.23	1.19
Relationships with news sources	394	54.6%	3.50	1.16
Police	382	22.8%	2.32	1.31
Issue advocacy groups	384	9.9%	2.08	1.07
Scientists or health experts	388	43.8%	3.11	1.27
Religious groups and institutions	381	6.6%	1.74	0.99
Military	381	7.6%	1.78	1.05
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	364	3.0%	1.37	0.79
Organized crime and criminal groups	371	8.6%	1.54	1.06

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

China

BAOHUA ZHOU & JINGWEN XUE

INTRODUCTION

As of 2025, China remains one of the world's most geopolitically significant nations, operating under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Politically centralized yet increasingly technocratic, the government has sought to balance national security with continued economic modernization. Economically, China has faced slowing growth, particularly in the real estate and manufacturing sectors, alongside rising youth unemployment and demographic challenges. However, strategic investments in the digital economy, green energy, and Belt and Road projects continue to sustain global influence.

Journalism in China has historically operated under state oversight, shaped by Marxist-Leninist principles of media as a tool for social harmony and political education. Since the market reforms of the 1980s, commercial media grew under a controlled pluralism, creating space for investigative journalism within official bounds.

The fieldwork of this study took place throughout the year of 2023, during which China's journalistic landscape evolved rapidly. The continuous rise of digital platforms has introduced complex new dynamics, with "self-media" and AI-generated content adding richness and challenges to the information ecosystem.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The surveyed journalists in China were predominantly male (59.1%) with 40.9% female. Their average age was approximately 35.9 years (SD = 8.8), with a median age of 35. They are highly educated: 77.3% hold a Bachelor's degree or equivalent, while 21.8% have obtained a Master's degree or equivalent. A vast majority (98.2%) received formal education or professional training in journalism, mostly through universities or colleges (60.2%), followed by journalism apprenticeships or cadetships (29.7%) and short-term courses (10.1%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

The majority of surveyed Chinese journalists worked in traditional, state-run media organizations: 53% for newspapers, 34.1% for television, and 10.6% for radio. Very few worked for magazines (0.2%) or internet-native platforms (0.3%). Notably, 1.8% indicated they did not have a main employer. In terms of geographical scope, 32.8% worked for local media, while 67.2% were based in regional or central outlets. All respondents reported working in state-run media organizations.

Employment conditions were relatively stable but heavily institutionalized. Most journalists were formally employed: 45% on permanent contracts and 51.6% on temporary contracts. Only 1.6% were part-time employees, and just 0.3% worked as freelancers or are self-employed. On average, Chinese journalists had accumulated 11.8 years of professional experience (SD = 8.7; Median = 10). A total of 27.6% of journalists were assigned to specific beats or subject areas, such as politics, society, or business. However, the majority continued to work on general assignment, often covering a variety of topics based on editorial needs.

Professional affiliation remained low: only 18.8% of respondents were members of professional associations. This may reflect both the top-down nature of media governance and limited bottom-up professional mobilization. Financially, 12.9% reported earning income from sources outside journalism, which could include teaching, consulting, or online content creation. Full-time journalists reported an average working week of 45.1 hours (SD = 11.0; Median = 45), indicating a relatively high workload typical of media systems with strong output demands and time-sensitive production cycles.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Chinese journalists expressed significant concern over work-related well-being (see Table 1). 66.8% of the respondents were strongly concerned about their physical well-being and 64.3% about emotional and mental well-being. 21.7% expressed strong worry about losing their journalism job within the next 12 months.

TABLE 1. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	1146	21.7%	2.78	1.03
Concerned about physical well-being	1158	66.8%	3.84	0.93
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	1158	64.3%	3.77	0.98

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Chinese journalists strongly supported instrumental and interpretative roles. Over 88% found it very or extremely important to support national development and government policy, while 85.9% favored conveying a positive image of political leaders. Providing analysis (65.7%), raising public awareness (64.5%), and promoting peace and health (over 90%) were also widely endorsed roles.

TABLE 2. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	1130	49.2%	3.43	1.03
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	1105	32.9%	2.93	1.19
Shine a light on society's problems	1145	64.5%	3.76	0.92
Motivate people to participate in politics	1119	28.9%	2.81	1.14
Provide analysis of current affairs	1151	65.7%	3.78	0.94
Let people express their views	1145	61.8%	3.70	0.96
Provide information people need to form political opinion	1123	48.0%	3.35	1.09
Advocate for social change	1103	37.6%	3.07	1.16
Influence public opinion	1123	57.0%	3.59	1.02
Set the political agenda	1085	29.1%	2.76	1.21
Promote peace and tolerance	1138	65.9%	3.83	1.03
Educate the audience	1140	53.9%	3.55	1.07
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	1140	64.9%	3.80	0.99
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	1142	59.0%	3.68	1.03
Support national development	1163	88.4%	4.41	0.80
Support government policy	1162	88.4%	4.40	0.75
Convey a positive image of political leaders	1155	85.9%	4.38	0.85
Provide entertainment and relaxation	1155	29.8%	3.01	1.06
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	1159	65.9%	3.84	0.97
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	1163	70.1%	3.89	0.87
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	1162	67.6%	3.86	0.91
Support efforts to protect public health	1162	72.7%	4.00	0.89
Counteract disinformation	1165	90.1%	4.50	0.72

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Epistemologically, most Chinese journalists agreed that interpretation is essential to make sense of facts (74.8%) and that objective reality can be represented in reporting (75.2%). However, nearly half (48.5%) believed that truth is shaped by those in power. About one-third (32.6%) thought journalists cannot fully separate personal beliefs from reporting, indicating moderate epistemic relativism.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	1146	74.8%	3.87	0.77
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	1122	48.5%	3.37	0.97
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	1117	32.6%	3.08	0.94
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	1146	20.9%	2.60	1.05
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	1141	75.2%	3.87	0.78

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Ethical standards were viewed rigidly: 93.4% of respondents believed journalism ethics should always be determined by professional codes. Only 11% considered ethics a matter of personal judgment. In practice, controversial methods such as claiming false identity (19.1% always justified, 70.9% justified on occasion) or hidden recording (9.1%, 75.9%) received high conditional acceptance. Use of unverified content or accepting money was widely rejected (see Table 5).

TABLE 4. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	1165	93.4%	4.47	0.75
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	1162	15.6%	2.26	1.07
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	1164	21.9%	2.48	1.10
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	1163	11.0%	2.20	0.96

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 5. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	1142	19.1%	70.9%
Using hidden recording devices	1132	9.1%	75.9%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	1119	0.7%	13.7%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	1071	1.8%	23.2%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	1123	0.5%	19.7%
Paying people for confidential information	1105	6.2%	46.5%
Accepting money from sources	1109	1.2%	9.6%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	1103	1.9%	25.7%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	1101	1.7%	31.4%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	1132	0.4%	5.7%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

15.4% reported a great deal or complete freedom in choosing news stories, and 18.9% in emphasizing aspects of coverage.

TABLE 6. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	1151	15.4%	3.02	0.59
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	1148	18.9%	3.11	0.55

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

The most influential factors on editorial decisions included journalism ethics (69.1%), editorial supervisors (69.9%), business managers (66.7%), censorship (63.1%), and personal beliefs (64.9%). External pressures from government officials (44.5%) and media regulation (60.8%) were also prominent. Peers, audience feedback, and competing organizations exerted relatively lower influence.

TABLE 7. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	1149	19.9%	2.81	1.00
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	1160	70.2%	3.86	0.85
The business managers of the news organization	1137	67.3%	3.88	0.95
The owners of the news organization	1012	35.6%	3.06	1.16
Editorial policy	1135	55.9%	3.63	0.91
Advertising considerations	1119	28.7%	3.03	1.04
Profit expectations	1122	36.6%	3.18	1.09
Audience research and data	1150	55.3%	3.64	0.95
Availability of news-gathering resources	1143	58.4%	3.68	0.88
Time limits	1140	41.2%	3.37	0.90
Journalism ethics	1146	69.6%	3.95	0.98
Self-censorship	1145	61.9%	3.75	0.98
Personal values and beliefs	1143	65.5%	3.81	1.01
Colleagues in other media	1145	8.8%	2.58	0.83
Friends, acquaintances and family	1132	6.5%	2.29	0.88
Feedback from the audience	1156	41.7%	3.38	0.80
Competing news organizations	1157	30.1%	3.11	0.86
Media laws and regulation	1154	61.0%	3.73	0.99
Access to information	1150	58.3%	3.69	0.86
Government censorship	1148	63.2%	3.76	0.95
Government officials	1129	44.8%	3.38	1.03
Politicians	1094	36.8%	3.17	1.10
Business people	1089	14.7%	2.64	0.95
Public relations	1107	26.4%	2.99	0.93
Relationships with news sources	1130	39.7%	3.34	0.94
Police	1100	24.8%	2.86	1.06
Issue advocacy groups	1078	8.0%	2.32	0.93
Scientists or health experts	1105	28.2%	3.00	1.03

Question: "Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist." (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Colombia

Jesús Arroyave-Cabrera & Miguel Garcés-Prettel

INTRODUCTION

This report provides an overview of journalism in Colombia, drawing on data collected between 2021 and 2023 as part of the third wave of the Worlds of Journalism Study (WJS3). This period coincided with a significant political transition from the presidency of Iván Duque to Gustavo Petro, marking the first left-leaning administration in Colombia's modern history. The shift occurred amidst post-COVID-19 recovery, institutional uncertainty, social fragmentation, and ongoing debates about journalism's role in a democracy characterized by persistent inequality and unresolved armed conflict.

Despite legal protections for freedom of expression, Colombian journalists face increasing challenges. The Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa (FLIP, 2022–2024) reports ongoing legal intimidation, public discrediting, and regions where reporting is nearly impossible due to security risks. These pressures are compounded by restricted access to public information, weakened institutional safeguards, and financial instability, particularly for local and independent media.

The Colombian media landscape is dominated by national conglomerates, while regional and digital outlets struggle with resource constraints. However, digital initiatives have diversified voices, especially in underserved areas. According to the Digital News Report 2022 (Reuters Institute), mobile news consumption is prevalent, but trust in media remains low, and few Colombians pay for news, exacerbating sustainability challenges. This report examines how journalists navigate these dynamics, focusing on their backgrounds, roles, epistemologies, ethics, autonomy, and influences.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

Of the Colombian journalists sampled, 60.4% identified as male, 39.3% as female, and 0.3% as another gender category. The average age was 48.8 years (SD = 13.1), indicating an experienced workforce. Education levels were high: 48.5% held a bachelor's degree, 40.9% a master's degree, and 1.6% a doctoral degree, with fewer than 10.0% lacking a completed university degree. Most (93.7%) had formal journalism training, primarily through university programs (92.1%), supplemented by apprenticeships (72.7%) or short-term courses (80.6%), reflecting a blend of academic and practical preparation.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

Colombian journalists operate in a diverse media ecosystem, with 21.8% employed in organizations focused on newspaper publishing, 21.6% in internet-native outlets, 18.9% in radio, 13.5% in television, 3.8% in news agencies, 2.4% in magazines, and 0.8% work for an outlet with a telecommunications background (N = 379). Notably, 10.0% reported no primary employer, reflecting the rise of freelance and multi-platform work. Media outlets vary in scope: 34.2% are regional, 34.0% national, 19.5% transnational, and 10.7% local, highlighting a balance between centralized and decentralized journalism.

Journalists averaged 20.8 years of experience (SD = 12.2), with 72.8% adopting a generalist profile, adapting to the demands of a fragmented media market. Only 42.0% were affiliated with professional associations, suggesting limited collective representation. Employment conditions remain precarious: 43.3% held full-time permanent contracts, 11.1% fixed-term contracts, and 38.0% were freelance or self-employed. The average workweek was 43.2 hours (SD = 21.30; for those in full-time employment), but 50.1% relied on non-journalistic income, underscoring financial instability. This precarity, coupled with the shift to digital platforms noted in the Digital News Report 2022, pressures journalists to diversify skills and revenue streams, often at the expense of in-depth reporting.

Work-related stress was significant, with 31.5% experiencing it "very often" and 19.2% "often" in the past six months. These stressors, linked to job insecurity and external threats (FLIP, 2022–2024), challenge journalists' resilience in a polarized socio-political context, shaping their professional practices and mental well-being.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Table 1 details threats experienced by journalists over the past five years. Verbal and reputational threats were most common: 46.0% faced demeaning or hateful speech, and 32.0% public discrediting. Digital threats included surveillance (21.9%) and hacking attempts (22.2%). Legal actions affected 12.0%, while physical attacks (7.0%) and sexual harassment (8.0%) were less frequent but notable. Coercion (14.5%) and intimidation targeting family (11.8%) further underscored risks.

Work-related concerns (Table 2) were significant: 93.9% agreed that those who harm journalists face little accountability (M = 4.53, SD = 0.79). Emotional and mental strain concerned 70.5% (M = 3.77, SD = 1.27), while physical well-being (45.9%, M = 3.04, SD = 1.43) and job stability (52.5%, M = 3.27, SD = 1.45) were also notable issues.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	379	6.6%	11.6%	27.7%	26.1%	28.0%
Public discrediting of your work	379	5.3%	8.4%	18.7%	24.8%	42.7%
Surveillance	378	3.4%	6.3%	12.2%	22.0%	56.1%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	378	3.2%	4.2%	14.8%	17.5%	60.3%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	378	0%	1.6%	0.5%	3.2%	94.7%
Legal actions against you because of your work	379	1.6%	2.1%	7.7%	15.6%	73.1%
Stalking	379	2.4%	2.6%	9.5%	14.8%	70.7%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	379	2.4%	6.1%	13.5%	22.4%	55.7%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	378	1.1%	1.6%	5.6%	5.0%	86.8%
Other physical attacks	378	0.8%	1.1%	5.0%	10.1%	83.1%
Coercion	378	2.1%	4.2%	8.2%	17.5%	68.0%
Questioning of your personal morality	378	4.0%	6.9%	13.0%	19.0%	57.1%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	378	1.9%	1.9%	4.0%	9.8%	82.5%
Others disseminating your personal information	377	1.6%	4.2%	7.7%	15.9%	70.6%
Workplace bullying	378	4.0%	3.2%	12.4%	18.3%	62.2%
Abductions	379	0.0%	0.3%	1.1%	3.4%	95.3%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	378	0.5%	0.5%	2.4%	4.0%	92.6%
Intimidation that targets family	378	0.5%	0.5%	5.0%	6.3%	87.6%

Question: “In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?”

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	379	52.5%	3.27	1.45
Concerned about physical well-being	379	45.9%	3.04	1.43
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	379	70.5%	3.77	1.27
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Colombia go unpunished	379	93.9%	4.53	0.79

Question: “Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.” (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Journalists prioritized roles such as identifying social problems (94.2%, M = 4.60, SD = 0.69), countering disinformation (92.8%, M = 4.57, SD = 0.71), promoting peace and tolerance (90.5%, M = 4.52, SD = 0.75), educating the public (87.8%, M = 4.47, SD = 0.76), and enabling diverse viewpoints (90.7%, M = 4.47, SD = 0.75) (Table 3). Supporting government policy (49.6%, M = 3.46, SD = 1.13), conveying positive images of leaders (41.7%, M = 2.97, SD = 1.38), and providing entertainment (41.2%, M = 3.18, SD = 1.22 were considered less important, reflecting a focus on social and informative functions rather than emphasis on promotional or entertainment-driven ones.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	379	86.3%	4.27	0.92
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	379	83.1%	4.19	0.91
Shine a light on society’s problems	379	94.2%	4.60	0.69
Motivate people to participate in politics	379	43.0%	3.14	1.24
Provide analysis of current affairs	379	89.7%	4.36	0.78
Let people express their views	379	90.7%	4.47	0.75
Provide information people need to form political opinion	379	85.2%	4.30	0.95
Advocate for social change	379	79.9%	4.11	0.98
Influence public opinion	379	64.2%	3.77	1.09
Set the political agenda	379	39.3%	3.12	1.19
Promote peace and tolerance	379	90.5%	4.52	0.75
Educate the audience	379	87.8%	4.47	0.76
Point toward possible solutions to society’s problems	379	79.4%	4.12	0.95
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	379	83.4%	4.24	0.96
Support national development	379	76.5%	4.08	1.01
Support government policy	379	49.6%	3.46	1.13
Convey a positive image of political leaders	379	41.7%	2.97	1.38
Provide entertainment and relaxation	379	41.2%	3.18	1.22
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	379	69.6%	3.89	1.04
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	379	60.7%	3.65	1.13
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	379	78.4%	4.14	0.95
Support efforts to protect public health	379	79.7%	4.14	0.96
Counteract disinformation	379	92.8%	4.57	0.71
Discuss future implications of current events	379	77.8%	4.04	0.95

Question: “Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Most journalists agreed that interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts (75.5%, M = 3.93, SD = 1.04) and that facts should speak for themselves (68.9%, M = 3.74, SD = 1.08) (Table 4). Objective reality was deemed representable by 67.8% (M = 3.69, SD = 1.10). Fewer believed personal beliefs are unavoidable in reporting (44.1%, M = 3.07, SD = 1.20) or that truth is binary (38.2%, M = 2.89, SD = 1.36). Only 15.6% agreed that truth is shaped by power (M = 2.21, SD = 1.11). Transparency was valued: 83.1% supported alerting audiences to untruthful claims (M = 4.07, SD = 1.01), and 71.3% favored making standpoints transparent (M = 3.76, SD = 1.16). Intuitive approaches, such as trusting instincts (27.9%, M = 2.60, SD = 1.22), were less endorsed. Overall, the distribution of responses reflects a pattern that prioritizes factual reporting, transparency, and distance from purely intuitive or relativist approaches.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	379	75.5%	3.93	1.05
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	379	15.6%	2.21	1.12
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	379	44.1%	3.07	1.20
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	379	38.2%	2.89	1.36
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	379	67.8%	3.69	1.11
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	379	27.9%	2.6	1.23
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	379	24.8%	2.53	1.19
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	379	68.9%	3.74	1.08
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	379	27.9%	2.67	1.23
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	379	71.3%	3.76	1.16
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	379	83.1%	4.07	1.01

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Journalists strongly favored professional standards in ethical decision-making (86.0%, M = 4.32, SD = 0.94), with low support for situational (18.8%, M = 2.09, SD = 1.29), circumstantial (25.1%, M = 2.40, SD = 1.31), or personal judgment-based approaches (28.7%, M = 2.47, SD = 1.43) (Table 5). Controversial methods were rarely justified: hidden recording (50.7% justified on occasion) and unauthorized use of documents (39.3%) had some acceptance, but practices like paying sources (18.2%), deception (21.1%), or publishing unverified content (5.8%) were widely rejected (Table 6). Journalists tend to draw a clear line when ethical risks involve intrusion, manipulation, or factual uncertainty.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	379	86.0%	4.32	0.95
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	379	25.1%	2.4	1.31
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	379	18.8%	2.09	1.29
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	379	28.7%	2.47	1.44

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	379	1.1%	21.1%
Using hidden recording devices	379	1.3%	50.7%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	379	6.1%	39.3%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	379	3.2%	40.6%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	379	0.3%	20.6%
Paying people for confidential information	379	1.1%	18.2%
Accepting money from sources	379	0.8%	1.1%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	379	2.1%	33.5%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	379	1.1%	15.0%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	379	0.85	5.8%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Journalists reported high autonomy in selecting news stories (74.9%, M = 4.07, SD = 0.92) and emphasizing story aspects (73.1%, M = 4.08, SD = 0.88). However, only 18.1% perceived a great deal of media freedom in Colombia (M = 2.82, SD = 0.81) (Table 7), highlighting a gap between individual discretion and systemic constraints.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	379	74.9%	4.07	0.92
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	379	73.1%	4.08	0.88
Media freedom in Colombia	374	18.2%	2.82	0.82

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Internal factors dominated editorial influences: journalism ethics (87.5%, M = 4.31, SD = 0.96), access to information (71.3%, M = 3.81, SD = 1.12), and audience feedback (58.6%, M = 3.54, SD = 1.05) were highly influential (Table 8). Editorial policy (57.4%, M = 3.42, SD = 1.38), higher editors (55.1%, M = 3.38, SD = 1.32), and news-gathering resources (56.7%, M = 3.46, SD = 1.26) also shaped decisions. External actors like politicians (M = 2.29, SD = 1.32), religious groups (M = 1.93, SD = 1.10), or criminal groups (M = 2.00, SD = 1.33) had lower influence.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	344	34.3%	2.93	1.20
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	347	55.0%	3.38	1.33
The business managers of the news organization	342	35.1%	2.79	1.42
The owners of the news organization	331	41.4%	2.96	1.48
Editorial policy	350	57.4%	3.42	1.38
Advertising considerations	350	30.3%	2.7	1.36
Profit expectations	353	25.8%	2.5	1.35
Audience research and data	363	44.1%	3.14	1.31
Availability of news-gathering resources	370	56.8%	3.46	1.26
Time limits	363	55.4%	3.4	1.27
Journalism ethics	376	87.5%	4.31	0.96
Self-censorship	366	34.4%	2.85	1.32
Personal values and beliefs	374	52.7%	3.36	1.33
Colleagues in other media	362	15.7%	2.33	1.12
Friends, acquaintances and family	360	15.3%	2.23	1.13
Feedback from the audience	372	58.6%	3.54	1.05
Competing news organizations	361	29.9%	2.71	1.25
Media laws and regulation	370	46.5%	3.21	1.25
Access to information	370	71.3%	3.81	1.13
Government censorship	360	27.2%	2.51	1.38
Government officials	359	22.0%	2.36	1.33
Politicians	357	21.0%	2.29	1.33
Business people	357	29.7%	2.47	1.32
Public relations	364	29.7%	2.71	1.31
Relationships with news sources	365	30.5%	3.13	1.31
Police	356	19.6%	2.22	1.26
Issue advocacy groups	355	9.9%	2.22	1.13
Religious groups and institutions	355	9.9%	1.93	1.10
Military	357	17.4%	2.15	1.28
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	352	16.5%	1.98	1.29
Organized crime and criminal groups	351	17.4%	2.00	1.33
Terrorist groups	356	14.9%	1.86	1.27

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Costa Rica

Celeste González de Bustamante, Jeannine E. Relly, Vanessa Bravo & Silvia DalBen Furtado

INTRODUCTION

With just over 5.1 million inhabitants, Costa Rica is far from the largest country in the Americas, in terms of population or land mass. As one of the most stable and long-standing democracies in the region with the highest minimum wage in Latin America as of 2024 ($687 USD/month), Costa Rica plays an influential role in Central America and Latin America. Press freedoms, freedom of expression and access to information are protected by the Costa Rican Constitution. Political and economic stability have led to Costa Rica being a place of refuge for journalists and intellectuals from other parts of Central and Latin America. For decades, and more recently with authoritarian regimes in Venezuela, Nicaragua, and El Salvador, journalists have moved to Costa Rica searching for a safe place where they can continue to practice their profession outside of their countries of origin.

For more than a decade, Costa Rica had ranked among the top 10 nations in the world with the most press freedoms. In 2022, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) ranked Costa Rica eighth out of 180 countries, while other nations in Central America, specifically El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua, ranked 112, 124, and 160, respectively. According to Freedom House's 2024 Report, Costa Rica continues to have "one of the most open online environments" among all nations. In 2024, it became one of the last countries in Latin America to implement a national access to information law, which offers further freedoms beyond the protective jurisprudence of the Constitutional Court.

Despite the longstanding strength of press freedoms in the country, with the election of President Rodrigo Chaves Robles in May 2022, it became apparent that Costa Rica's journalists and press freedoms were entering a new and perhaps unprecedented phase. In 2023, with a new administration in place in Costa Rica, and attacks on the press increasing, the country's RSF ranking dropped from 8 to 23. President Chaves has intimidated some of the most powerful media outlets in the country, calling some journalists "rats" and filing lawsuits against news outlets. He also has called members of the professional press "sicarios políticos" (political hitmen). By 2024, Costa Rica had dropped to 26 out of 180 countries on the RSF Press Freedom Index. Beyond the political environment, despite new legislation regarding minimum wages, economic conditions for journalists worsened considerably during and after the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. As in many other parts of Latin America, and the world, media outlets have also struggled to adapt to technological changes. Moreover, drug trafficking and violence have increased in the country, further complicating the environment in which reporters and news media workers perform their jobs.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

Our survey included 229 journalists with 32% identifying as women, 67% identifying as men, and less than one percent identifying as non-binary. The average age of journalists was 39.1 years (SD = 12.3; Median = 38). Ninety-two percent of the participants had formal education or training in journalism and an average of 15 years of professional journalism experience. Among those surveyed, 83.8% received training through journalism apprenticeships or cadetships and 80.2% did short-term courses.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

Most journalists interviewed (40.5%) worked for an employer with a background of print-based media. Twenty-one percent worked for a television news media organization, 18% worked at an online site, 5% worked for radio outlets, and 3% in magazine companies. According to our findings, the majority of Costa Rican journalists (61.6%) had full-time permanent contracts; 18.8% worked as freelancers or were self-employed, with 4.4% having part-time permanent contracts. Regarding specific areas of news coverage, the majority (63.8%) indicated that they did not work on a specific beat or subject area, while over a third (36.2%) of participants said they covered a specific beat (e.g. economy, politics, news events, sports, entertainment). On average, journalists worked for 15.0 years (SD = 11.0) in the profession, with the range of years the journalists worked being between two months and 48 years.

As far as how much time journalists devoted per week to the profession, full-time journalists worked on average 46.4 hours/week (SD = 13.0), with the median hours per week being 48. Journalism unions do not appear to be strong in Costa Rica with 43.2% of thejournalists reporting that they were members of unions. With most journalists working more than 40 hours per week, it might not be surprising that slightly more than half (60.4%) indicated that they felt stressed out "very often" (35.6%) and "often" (24.8%) because of their work. Just under one-third (28.4%) experienced stress sometimes from work, with 6.8% "rarely" experiencing stress, and 4.5% "never" feeling stressed from work.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Demeaning or hateful speech directed at journalists, public discrediting of journalists' work and questioning personal morality were reported as the most frequent threats experienced by Costa Rican journalists (Table 1). Other less frequent yet existing concerns included surveillance, hacking or blocking social media accounts, stalking, workplace bullying and other forms of threats or intimidation.

Nearly nine out of 10 journalists were concerned with the impunity of those who harm journalists without punishment (Table 2). More than two-thirds of journalists were concerned about their emotional and mental well-being. Job security, too, was a strong concern as was concern about physical well-being.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	229	5.7%	16.2%	25.3%	31.4%	21.4%
Public discrediting of your work	229	5.2%	16.2%	24.0%	26.6%	27.9%
Surveillance	229	1.3%	1.7%	7.0%	22.7%	67.2%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	229	0.9%	1.7%	10.9%	15.7%	70.7%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	229	0.0%	0.9%	0.4%	0.9%	97.8%
Legal actions against you because of your work	229	0.0%	0.4%	5.7%	8.3%	85.6%
Stalking	229	0.9%	0.9%	8.7%	21.0%	68.6%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	229	0.4%	2.2%	17.0%	27.5%	52.8%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	229	0.0%	0.0%	3.5%	5.2%	91.3%
Other physical attacks	229	0.0%	0.0%	3.5%	9.2%	87.3%
Coercion	229	0.0%	0.0%	5.2%	11.4%	83.4%
Questioning of your personal morality	229	1.7%	5.2%	21.8%	29.3%	41.9%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	229	0.4%	0.4%	5.7%	11.8%	81.7%
Others disseminating your personal information	229	0.0%	2.6%	10.0%	16.6%	70.7%
Workplace bullying	229	0.4%	0.9%	7.9%	10.0%	80.8%
Abductions	229	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	229	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	2.2%	96.9%
Intimidation that targets family	229	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	4.4%	95.2%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	229	42.1%	3.05	1.41
Concerned about physical well-being	229	29.6%	2.62	1.35
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	229	67.2%	3.67	1.28
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Costa Rica go unpunished	229	87.5%	4.28	1.04

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Most Costa Rican journalists indicated that they perceived their role as traditional (Table 3). More interventionist roles, such as motivating people to participate in politics, setting the political agenda, supporting government policy, and creating a positive image of political leaders were not among the majority of journalists' role perceptions. Moreover, those considering their role as providing entertainment and relaxation were not in the majority.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	229	81.2%	4.16	0.90
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	229	87.3%	4.33	0.81
Shine a light on society's problems	229	95.2%	4.59	0.60
Motivate people to participate in politics	229	43.7%	3.21	1.19
Provide analysis of current affairs	229	87.4%	4.38	0.82
Let people express their views	229	91.2%	4.42	0.68
Provide information people need to form political opinion	229	88.3%	4.38	0.84
Advocate for social change	229	77.7%	4.12	0.89
Influence public opinion	229	57.7%	3.65	1.05
Set the political agenda	229	34.9%	2.99	1.17
Promote peace and tolerance	229	83.4%	4.34	0.87
Educate the audience	229	90.0%	4.44	0.87
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	229	82.1%	4.18	0.89
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	229	84.7%	4.28	0.91
Support national development	229	83.9%	4.28	0.80
Support government policy	229	39.3%	3.14	1.18
Convey a positive image of political leaders	229	41.0%	3.02	1.34
Provide entertainment and relaxation	229	38.4%	3.14	1.22
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	229	67.7%	3.84	0.99
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	229	62.9%	3.70	1.08
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	229	68.6%	3.93	1.03
Support efforts to protect public health	229	79.5%	4.13	1.01
Counteract disinformation	229	93.4%	4.66	0.71
Discuss future implications of current events	229	80.3%	4.11	0.85

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

A majority of Costa Rican journalists perceive that interpretation is necessary for audiences to make sense of facts, that it is possible to report objectively, that journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work and that they should alert the public when a source's claims are not true (Table 4). Nearly half believe it is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting with nearly the same percentage believing that things are either true or false, there is no in-between. Up to one-fifth strongly agree that journalists intuitively know what the final story will be and that truth is inevitably shaped by those in power. One in four believe journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what is true and that journalists should be a part of a community to accurately portray it.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	218	73.9%	3.91	0.93
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	218	15.6%	2.33	1.12
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	218	48.7%	3.31	1.13
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	218	42.7%	3.07	1.23
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	218	67.0%	3.72	1.03
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	218	25.7%	2.68	1.15
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	218	21.1%	2.56	1.11
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	218	67.9%	3.80	0.96
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	218	27.0%	2.75	1.11
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	218	58.7%	3.51	1.17
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	218	77.0%	3.97	1.01

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

More than eight in 10 Costa Rican journalists believe that what is ethical for journalists should always be determined by standards set up in the profession regardless of personal judgment or the situation (Table 5). Close to one in four journalists believe extraordinary situations may require journalists to disregard professional ethics standards and similarly nearly one in four believe ethics for journalists are situation dependent. Less than one in five journalists believe that ethics for journalists is largely personal judgment. Costa Rican journalists were nuanced about the justification of controversial reporting methods. Majority believed using hidden recording devices, confidential business or government documents without authorization, or using the personal materials of powerful people with permission was justified on occasion (Table 6). A third or fewer of the journalists in the study justified on occasion that claiming to be someone else for reporting was justified as was using personal materials of ordinary people without permission. Around money, less than one in five believed paying people for confidential information, accepting money from sources, producing promotional content that mimics stories and publishing unverified information was justified on occasion.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	229	86.5%	4.32	0.92
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	229	28.8%	2.64	1.32
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	229	22.7%	2.38	1.33
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	229	17.9%	2.23	1.24

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	229	0.4%	33.6%
Using hidden recording devices	229	1.7%	69.0%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	229	7.4%	59.4%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	229	4.8%	52.8%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	229	1.3%	24.0%
Paying people for confidential information	229	0.9%	20.5%
Accepting money from sources	229	0.4%	4.4%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	229	1.3%	40.2%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	229	0.0%	19.7%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	229	0.4%	4.8%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

More than eight in 10 journalists in the study perceived that they had a great lead or complete freedom to select news stories and freedom to decide aspects that would be emphasized. More than half believed they had a great deal or complete media freedom.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	222	83.3%	4.22	0.80
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	222	81.5%	4.16	0.81
Media freedom in Costa Rica	217	57.6%	3.67	0.83

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Two-thirds of Costa Rican journalists believed editorial supervisors and higher editors, along with access to information, were very or extremely influential. Close to half believed editorial policy, audience research and data, and relationships with news sources were very/extremely influential. The remainder of the editorial influences were perceived to have less impact.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	216	40.3%	3.10	1.17
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	216	65.9%	3.60	1.27
The business managers of the news organization	214	25.1%	2.53	1.32
The owners of the news organization	216	28.6%	2.53	1.41
Editorial policy	216	44.7%	3.17	1.30
Advertising considerations	217	20.9%	2.46	1.27
Profit expectations	217	19.7%	2.30	1.26
Audience research and data	219	47.9%	3.23	1.28
Availability of news-gathering resources	219	56.8%	3.51	1.15
Time limits	217	55.9%	3.48	1.22
Journalism ethics	219	84.4%	4.21	1.02
Self-censorship	215	18.7%	2.23	1.23
Personal values and beliefs	219	47.6%	3.28	1.24
Colleagues in other media	218	10.0%	2.19	1.04
Friends, acquaintances and family	218	11.4%	2.19	1.04
Feedback from the audience	219	44.4%	3.35	0.93
Competing news organizations	218	24.3%	2.75	1.13
Media laws and regulation	219	28.5%	2.79	1.16
Access to information	217	66.4%	3.78	1.05
Government censorship	218	21.3%	2.27	1.27
Government officials	218	20.3%	2.30	1.21
Politicians	218	17.4%	2.21	1.19
Business people	218	12.2%	2.11	1.13
Public relations	218	13.1%	2.25	1.07
Relationships with news sources	218	46.3%	3.12	1.26
Police	214	12.3%	1.86	1.12
Issue advocacy groups	215	11.5%	1.96	1.10
Scientists or health experts	216	29.1%	1.85	1.31
Religious groups and institutions	216	7.7%	1.28	1.02
Military	214	2.1%	1.20	0.71
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	214	1.1%	1.79	0.58
Organized crime and criminal groups	219	11.5%	1.29	1.16
Terrorist groups	216	3.6%	2.61	0.74

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Croatia

Antonija Čuvalo

INTRODUCTION

Croatia is a parliamentary multiparty democracy with regular free and fair elections, generally respected civil liberties, and political stability, though corruption, minority rights (ethnic and LGBT+), and media freedom issues persist. An EU member since July 2013, Croatia's economy is growing (GDP +3% in 2025), driven by consumption and low unemployment, but faces high inflation and an aging, shrinking population threatening labor market sustainability. Socially, Croatia ranks high on the Human Development Index, but demographic decline, skill shortages, and political polarization pose challenges.

The media system aims for transparency but faces obstacles: journalists work under poor conditions, political/economic pressures, media capture, editorial interventions, and financial instability. While regulation provides media freedom, law enforcement and journalist safety remain problematic.

Data collection for this study took place between autumn 2022 and the end of 2023 when the number of strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs) increased. At the same time, the government proposed a draft law that would allow authorities to pressure journalists to reveal their sources, and editors to withhold articles without explanations. Though not directly criminalizing journalists, these Criminal Code amendments may chill sources and whistleblowers, restricting investigative journalism.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

Croatian journalists are on average 44.0 years old (SD = 12.0, Median = 43), and 64.0% of respondents were women. Majority of them have university degrees: 68.1% have master's or equivalent degree, 12.5% are with bachelor's or equivalent degree and 3.6% acquired doctorate. Therefore, 73.9% have formal education or professional training in journalism. Almost 80.0% of respondents have acquired professional training through journalism apprenticeship/cadetship while 44.6% have been trained via short-term courses.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

In terms of the background of their main employers, the most common are TV organizations (36.1%) and online media (28.7%), while 14.2% work for a radio outlet, 11.0% for an organization focused on newspaper publishing, 3.0% for magazine companies, 2.0% for news agencies and 4.4% have no main employer. Majority of journalists in Croatia perform no managerial role (45.4%), while 28.9% are top managers and 25.7% is on middle management positions. Regarding area of coverage, most journalists work in national/transnational media (60.1%) while 38.0% work in local media. Also, majority of surveyed journalists work in commercial media (55.0%), 18.5% work for public service media, 12.6% in non-profit media, 9.6% in state run media and 2.3% of journalists claim not to have a main employer. Only one of five Croatian journalists cover a specific topic while almost 80% work on variety of beats or subject areas.

On average, Croatian journalists had 18.6 years working experience (SD = 11.4; Median = 18) and work on average 41.7 hours per week (SD = 13.1; Median = 40; for those in full-time employment). Reported stress level is relatively high, and 62% of journalists felt stressed at work often or very often.

More than two thirds of Croatian journalists have full-time contract (74% permanently and 5.4% temporary employed) and 16.7% are self-employed or freelance journalists. About half of surveyed journalists (50.5%) have some additional income apart from journalism which indicates that journalists' salaries in Croatia are relatively low and do not cover basic living needs. Nevertheless, majority of respondents (53.7%) were not members of any professional association.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Among the most common threats to safety experienced by the Croatian journalists (see Table 1) are verbal attacks or hateful speech, public discrediting of journalists' work and surveillance. Despite respondents experiencing them less frequently, worrying are occurrences of threats like questioning journalists' personal morality, other threats and intimidations directed to journalists and situations when others used journalists' byline for fabricated or manipulated stories.

Croatian journalists are the most concerned that those who harm journalists go unpunished and about their emotional and mental wellbeing while concerns about losing job within next 12 months and their physical well-being are of relatively low occurrence (see Table 2).

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	313	8.6%	15.7%	39.9%	23.6%	12.1%
Public discrediting of your work	313	6.4%	10.9%	32.3%	24.0%	26.5%
Surveillance	313	4.2%	13.4%	28.8%	18.8%	34.8%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	313	0.6%	3.8%	14.4%	14.4%	66.8%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	313	0.0%	3.8%	0.3%	1.9%	97.4%
Legal actions against you because of your work	313	1.3%	3.8%	12.8%	15.0%	67.4%
Stalking	313	0.0%	1.9%	6.4%	15.7%	76.0%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	313	2.9%	5.8%	19.2%	33.9%	38.3%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	313	0.3%	2.2%	7.7%	9.9%	79.9%
Other physical attacks	313	0.0%	1.0%	3.8%	11.2%	84.0%
Coercion	313	0.0%	0.3%	3.5%	7.0%	89.1%
Questioning of your personal morality	313	2.9%	6.7%	20.1%	27.8%	42.5%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	313	1.0%	3.5%	17.6%	26.2%	51.8%
Others disseminating your personal information	313	1.0%	2.9%	9.3%	18.5%	68.4%
Workplace bullying	313	1.0%	3.2%	12.1%	17.6%	66.1%
Abductions	313	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.6%	99.0%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	313	0.3%	0.0%	1.9%	1.9%	95.8%
Intimidation that targets family	313	0.0%	0.6%	7.3%	12.1%	95.8%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	313	10.9%	2.17	1.07
Concerned about physical well-being	313	7.7%	1.97	0.96
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	313	41.2%	3.03	1.27
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Croatia go unpunished	313	79.2%	3.93	0.86

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Croatian journalists strongly support interventionist roles (see Table 3) like educating public, promotion of peace and tolerance, shining a light on society problems, pointing toward possible solutions, counteract disinformation, etc. Traditional journalistic roles continue to be pertinent, although they are less widely endorsed. Only a very small percentage of respondents identified politically supportive journalistic roles as relevant.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	313	75.7%	4.07	1.04
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	313	72.8%	3.94	1.13
Shine a light on society's problems	313	90.4%	4.38	0.80
Motivate people to participate in politics	313	52.1%	3.41	1.18
Provide analysis of current affairs	313	85.6%	4.18	0.82
Let people express their views	313	86.3%	4.23	0.82
Provide information people need to form political opinion	313	78.3%	4.08	1.01
Advocate for social change	313	80.2%	4.21	0.87
Influence public opinion	313	71.2%	3.85	0.90
Set the political agenda	313	32.9%	2.99	1.10
Promote peace and tolerance	313	93.9%	4.51	0.68
Educate the audience	313	94.6%	4.50	0.70
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	313	89.8%	4.34	0.83
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	313	85.6%	4.27	0.86
Support national development	313	62.6%	3.70	0.97
Support government policy	313	3.2%	1.78	0.95
Convey a positive image of political leaders	313	3.5%	1.64	0.91
Provide entertainment and relaxation	313	31.6%	2.80	1.19
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	313	55.6%	3.48	1.14
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	313	62.6%	3.66	0.93
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	313	52.1%	3.50	0.97
Support efforts to protect public health	313	87.5%	4.23	0.85
Counteract disinformation	313	89.1%	4.42	0.94
Discuss future implications of current events	313	80.8%	4.05	0.87

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Several epistemological claims are widely shared among the Croatian journalists (see Table 4). Respondents agreed the most with the claim that journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful. They also agree that it is possible to represent objective reality in reporting. At the same time more than two thirds of Croatian journalists claim interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts and that journalist should make their standpoint transparent in their work. The greatest disagreement was with the claim that truth is inevitably shaped by those in power.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	304	69.1%	3.69	0.84
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	304	7.9%	1.95	0.97
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	304	23.0%	2.67	0.99
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	304	17.4%	2.52	1.01
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	304	70.4%	3.71	0.82
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	304	29.6%	2.95	0.94
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	304	42.8%	3.15	1.02
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	304	52.3%	3.45	0.89
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	304	25.0%	2.75	1.00
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	302	62.6%	3.62	0.90
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	302	89.5%	3.62	0.71

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Journalists in Croatia strongly agreed on the importance of professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgments (see Table 5). When evaluating the acceptability of controversial reporting practices (see Table 6), journalists found accepting money from sources, producing hidden promotional stories and publishing stories with unverified information as the most unacceptable. Most journalists found it acceptable to use hidden recording devices, publish unauthorized government or public documents and use the personal materials of powerful people without their permission.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	313	88.5%	4.37	0.82
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	313	13.7%	2.15	1.04
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	313	18.2%	2.30	1.07
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	313	19.8%	2.35	1.14

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	313	0.6%	41.9%
Using hidden recording devices	313	0.6%	65.8%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	313	8.0%	65.5%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	313	5.1%	61.3%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	313	0.6%	18.2%
Paying people for confidential information	313	1.3%	30.0%
Accepting money from sources	313	0.3%	2.9%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	313	1.3%	23.0%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	313	0.6%	18.5%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	313	0.3%	8.0%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Croatian journalists reported moderate to low general level of media freedom in the country and a higher level of their editorial autonomy. More than two thirds of journalists asserted a complete or great deal of freedom in selecting news stories and in deciding which aspects of the story should be emphasized.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	313	75.7%	3.94	0.91
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	313	72.8%	3.92	0.95
Media freedom in Croatia	300	16.0%	2.83	0.72

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Croatian journalists found journalism ethics, personal values and beliefs, time limits, availability of news-gathering resources and audience research and data as the most influential internal factors influencing news production (see Table 8). The most influential external factors were access to information, media laws and regulations and feedback from the audiences.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	297	34.3%	2.83	1.22
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	283	50.9%	3.24	1.35
The business managers of the news organization	281	42.3%	2.89	1.50
The owners of the news organization	276	42.4%	2.92	1.49
Editorial policy	292	53.8%	3.42	1.30
Advertising considerations	286	26.9%	2.36	1.44
Profit expectations	291	33.3%	2.58	1.49
Audience research and data	290	35.2%	2.81	1.34
Availability of news-gathering resources	299	62.2%	3.59	1.25
Time limits	301	63.8%	3.73	1.23
Journalism ethics	300	87.7%	4.37	0.99
Self-censorship	299	20.4%	2.26	1.25
Personal values and beliefs	295	69.5%	3.88	1.17
Colleagues in other media	303	12.5%	2.10	1.07
Friends, acquaintances and family	301	13.0%	1.97	1.12
Feedback from the audience	300	46.7%	3.24	1.26
Competing news organizations	299	20.1%	2.24	1.27
Media laws and regulation	297	49.8%	3.24	1.26
Access to information	302	56.3%	3.53	1.16
Government censorship	299	11.0%	1.79	1.13
Government officials	295	10.8%	1.66	1.10
Politicians	301	14.0%	1.87	1.22
Business people	293	13.7%	1.91	1.19
Public relations	300	18.0%	2.19	1.27
Relationships with news sources	294	26.5%	2.61	1.28
Police	299	6.0%	1.48	0.95
Issue advocacy groups	295	10.5%	1.88	1.09
Scientists or health experts	296	31.6%	1.49	0.97
Religious groups and institutions	293	7.8%	1.19	0.66
Military	294	2.7%	1.18	0.62
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	287	3.1%	1.23	0.71
Organized crime and criminal groups	292	3.8%	1.11	0.48
Terrorist groups	291	1.4%	2.59	1.34

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Cuba

Dasniel Olivera Pérez & Carlos Fernández Hernández

INTRODUCTION

Cuba is facing a complex political, economic, and social crisis marked by a prolonged structural downturn and tightened unilateral, coercive sanctions imposed by the United States, affecting nearly all aspects of daily life. Shortages of basic goods, deteriorating public services, and growing inequality have intensified public frustration, while a historic wave of migration reflects increasing disengagement from the socialist project.

Cuba's journalistic tradition has long operated within a state-centered model subordinated to the revolutionary government and the Communist Party. Despite this, academic and professional communities, particularly within universities, have fostered critical thinking about journalism's roles, ethics, and its relationship with the public, laying the groundwork for more reflexive approaches to media practice.

Today, journalism in Cuba is marked by a polycrisis: precarious working conditions, shrinking institutional space for criticism, a growing disconnect with audiences, and the rise of an unrecognized independent press subject to sanctions, censorship, and political stigmatization. In this context, many journalists resort to thematic displacement, multiple jobs or career changes, or even exile as strategies to safeguard their autonomy, personal safety and economic survival.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The sample of Cuban journalists is balanced in terms of gender: 54.8% were female and 42.3% were male. It is a young population, on average, 34.7 years old (SD = 10.6; Median = 32). They are generally well educated: 68.8% of them held a Bachelor's degree or equivalent, 18.7% a Master's degree or equivalent, and an additional 4.7% have obtained a doctorate. Moreover, 92.4% of the respondents have acquired formal education or professional training in journalism. This education or training is usually obtained at university or in college (85.5%) but also via apprenticeships or cadetships (37.2%) and short-term courses (41.6%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

In terms of the background of their main employer, approximately two in five journalists in Cuba worked for TV (20.6 %) or newspaper (19.1 %) organizations, 17.1% for radio outlets, 16.5% for native media, 15.3% for magazine companies, and 7.9% for news agencies. Only 3.5% of the interviewed journalists claimed not to have a main employer. Regarding area of coverage, 55.1% of the journalists reported they mainly worked for (trans)national media, while 41.4% primarily catered to local or regional media.

On average, Cuban journalists had 9.8 years of professional experience (SD = 8.4; Median = 8). A majority of them (74.6%) worked on a variety of beats or subject areas rather than on a single one. More than a half of Cuba journalists (59.8%) were members of professional associations.

More than three-quarters of the interviewed journalists in Cuba had a full-time contract (65.9% permanently and 11.4% temporarily employed). A tenth of them (11.4 %) worked as freelancers or were self-employed, and an additional 1.2% had other forms of employment. Finally, 7.3% had a part-time permanent contract, and 2.6% had a part-time temporary contract. These results suggest a contradictory employment situation, as does the fact that 35.3% of the respondents reported that they had additional jobs outside journalism.

The average working week of Cuban journalists was 43.0 hours (SD = 13.6; Median = 40; for those in full-time employment). Relatedly, almost two thirds (63.8%) of the respondents reported they felt stressed out at work often or very often during the previous six months; only 11.7% had never or rarely felt that way.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Questioning of personal morality, surveillance, demeaning or hateful speech, public discrediting and hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites fared among the most common safety threats experienced by Cuban journalists (see Table 1). However, despite experienced less frequently, experiences of more dangerous threats, such as coercion and disseminating personal information, are worrying. These experiences also impact the concerns expressed by Cuban journalists; more than half were concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing, and almost a quarter were concerned about losing their job (see Table 2). Moreover, two thirds all of the surveyed journalists feared that those who harm journalists would go unpunished.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	343	3.5%	9.3%	23.6%	16.3%	47.2%
Public discrediting of your work	343	2.9%	5.5%	16.3%	14.9%	60.3%
Surveillance	343	7.0%	6.4%	14.9%	11.4%	60.3%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	343	3.2%	7.9%	16.0%	10.2%	62.7%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	343	1.2%	1.7%	2.0%	2.0%	93.0%
Legal actions against you because of your work	343	0.6%	1.5%	2.9%	3.5%	91.5%
Stalking	343	3.5%	4.7%	8.5%	8.7%	74.6%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	343	2.6%	4.7%	12.5%	13.7%	66.5%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	343	0.9%	1.5%	3.5%	4.4%	89.8%
Other physical attacks	343	0.9%	0.3%	1.2%	2.3%	95.3%
Coercion	343	1.5%	4.4%	8.7%	10.5%	74.9%
Questioning of your personal morality	343	6.4%	7.9%	15.5%	16.0%	54.2%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	343	0.0%	0.6%	3.2%	7.3%	88.9%
Others disseminating your personal information	343	1.7%	2.3%	6.7%	7.6%	81.6%
Workplace bullying	342	1.7%	1.2%	5.2%	8.5%	83.4%
Abductions	343	0.9%	0.0%	0.6%	2.6%	95.9%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	343	0.3%	0.3%	0.6%	3.8%	95.0%
Intimidation that targets family	343	1.2%	0.9%	3.5%	4.4%	90.1%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	343	24.2%	2.29	1.36
Concerned about physical well-being	343	16.9%	2.08	1.21
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	343	55.4%	3.18	1.40
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Cuba go unpunished	343	68.8%	3.73	1.40

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Cuban journalists showed strong support for informative, civic and public service roles, while more traditional approaches remain relevant but less appreciated (see Table 3). Politically assertive and entertainment roles were among the least valued ones. Even in those cases, significant portions (around a quarter or more) of the interviewed journalists considered these roles extremely or very important.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	343	63.8%	3.60	1.20
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	342	49.1%	3.26	1.31
Shine a light on society's problems	343	83.7%	4.31	0.95
Motivate people to participate in politics	343	25.7%	2.83	1.12
Provide analysis of current affairs	343	84.8%	4.35	0.77
Let people express their views	343	81.9%	4.25	0.85
Provide information people need to form political opinion	343	81.9%	4.18	0.95
Advocate for social change	343	60.1%	3.64	1.15
Influence public opinion	343	66.2%	3.85	0.98
Set the political agenda	342	38.9%	3.14	1.21
Promote peace and tolerance	343	71.4%	4.06	1.02
Educate the audience	343	79.3%	4.19	0.90
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	343	74.9%	3.98	0.97
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	343	72.9%	3.97	1.08
Support national development	343	72.9%	3.95	1.06
Support government policy	342	56.1%	3.42	1.20
Convey a positive image of political leaders	342	24.6%	2.35	1.36
Provide entertainment and relaxation	343	30.0%	2.90	1.16
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	343	53.9%	3.46	1.26
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	343	44.3%	3.24	1.17
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	343	74.6%	4.01	.998
Discuss future implications of current events	343	64.1%	3.78	1.11
Support efforts to protect public health	343	86.3%	4.38	.836
Counteract disinformation	343	74.3%	3.96	1.00
Discuss future implications of current events	343	63.8%	3.60	1.20

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

There was greater disagreement among Cuban journalists regarding their perceptions of journalistic epistemology (see Table 4). Respondents agreed on the importance of valuing interpretation to make sense of facts, alerting audiences about untruthful claims, and making journalists' standpoints transparent in their work.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	343	87.5%	4.30	0.84
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	342	19.9%	2.52	1.15
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	342	54.7%	3.45	1.10
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	343	24.8%	2.50	1.25
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	343	64.4%	3.61	1.07
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	343	32.1%	2.87	1.08
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	343	21.0%	2.68	0.97
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	343	68.5%	3.79	0.89
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	343	31.2%	2.85	1.10
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	343	70.6%	3.85	0.98
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	343	84.5%	4.18	0.89

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Journalists in Cuba strongly agreed on the importance of professional standards rather than subjective and situational considerations for ethical reporting (see Table 5). When it comes to the justification of controversial reporting methods, using personal materials without permission, publishing unverified information and accepting money from sources was most strongly rejected (see Table 7). Most journalists found it acceptable to use hidden recording devices and use confidential documents without authorization.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	343	76.1%	3.99	1.05
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	342	41.2%	3.04	1.25
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	343	25.7%	2.54	1.27
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	343	11.7%	1.94	1.06

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	343	1.2%	30.0%
Using hidden recording devices	342	1.8%	58.8%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	343	1.7%	47.5%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	343	0.6%	38.5%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	342	0.6%	16.4%
Paying people for confidential information	343	2.0%	25.7%
Accepting money from sources	343	1.2%	3.5%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	343	0.6%	30.3%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	343	0.9%	18.7%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	343	0.0%	6.7%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Cuban journalists reported a limited but fair amount of freedom in their work (see Table 7). About two thirds claimed to have complete or a great deal of freedom in selecting their stories and in deciding which aspects to emphasize in a story. Media freedom was rated extremely low by the respondents.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	343	64.4%	3.74	0.86
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	343	62.4%	3.79	0.87
Media freedom in Cuba	343	9.6%	2.65	0.82

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Cuban journalists found journalism ethics and editorial policy to fare highest among the internal factors influencing news production (see Table 8). Among the external factors, most journalists considered access to information, feedback from the audience, and relationships with news sources as being extremely or very influential.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	328	36.0%	3.11	1.01
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	337	62.0%	3.67	0.98
The business managers of the news organization	306	34.3%	2.86	1.23
The owners of the news organization	282	44.3%	3.10	1.44
Editorial policy	340	77.4%	4.07	0.90
Advertising considerations	264	9.8%	2.04	1.01
Profit expectations	292	29.1%	2.61	1.33
Audience research and data	313	29.7%	2.89	1.19
Availability of news-gathering resources	330	64.8%	3.74	1.13
Time limits	330	55.2%	3.47	1.18
Journalism ethics	336	83.9%	4.19	0.92
Self-censorship	314	33.1%	2.90	1.28
Personal values and beliefs	327	63.0%	3.72	1.10
Colleagues in other media	330	9.1%	2.41	0.95
Friends, acquaintances and family	336	17.6%	2.51	1.01
Feedback from the audience	341	66.6%	3.69	0.95
Competing news organizations	329	24.3%	2.78	1.05
Media laws and regulation	333	42.9%	3.21	1.15
Access to information	338	76.9%	4.02	1.06
Government censorship	330	47.6%	3.27	1.42
Government officials	324	47.8%	3.21	1.32
Politicians	323	45.8%	3.14	1.38
Business people	309	20.1%	2.39	1.22
Public relations	328	23.8%	2.69	1.13
Relationships with news sources	337	64.1%	3.65	1.17
Police	299	15.7%	2.20	1.21
Issue advocacy groups	298	10.7%	2.05	1.09
Scientists or health experts	311	30.5%	2.70	1.27
Religious groups and institutions	290	7.9%	1.86	0.98
Military	291	15.1%	2.20	1.29
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	267	6.4%	1.55	0.98
Organized crime and criminal groups	255	4.3%	1.41	0.84
Terrorist groups	253	4.0%	1.38	0.83

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Czech Republic

Alice Němcová Tejkalová, Sandra Lábová, Barbora Součková & Anna Hrbáčková

INTRODUCTION

The Czech Republic experienced four years under a stable liberal government, supporting media freedom and fighting against disinformation, making it an outlier not only in the Central and Eastern European region. Even though, according to the election polls, it seems that the Czech Republic will have a populist government again under the more or less visible leadership of a former media business tycoon, Andrej Babiš, in the autumn of 2025, the data collection for WJS3 took place in 2022–2023. The improving position of Czech journalism has been reflected in the World Press Index by Reporters Without Borders, where the Czech Republic climbed up from 40th in 2021 to 10th place in 2025.

Even though the Czech journalists' economic situation is quite precarious, their perceived autonomy is high, and not so many middle-aged people leave the field as they did in the past. The generational gap caused by the massive departure of experienced journalists but also profaned due to the collaboration with the Communist party in 1989 and their replacement with very young people has started to close.

While the increasing media concentration and its possible threats were the main topics connected to the media during the WJS2 data collection between 2012 and 2014, currently, it is a more important issue for journalists in regions than for journalists in national media outlets. The new liberal media founded by the journalists who did not want to be a part of the publishing houses purchased by local businessmen in 2013–2014 still exist, accompanied by a new nationwide daily, Deník N (founded in 2018).

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

Czech journalism is particularly male-dominated, which was also visible in our sample, where 59.5% of journalists identified as men. The average age was 41.6 years (SD = 11.4; Median = 41). The majority of journalists were highly educated: 40.5% completed a Master's degree or its equivalent, 21.8% a Bachelor's degree, and 4.2% a PhD. Some attended university without earning a degree (4.2%). 29.0% finished high school as their highest education. Just under half of them (46.5%) received formal education in journalism, out of which 66.7% obtained it at the university level, others through apprenticeships or cadetships (39.9%), and short-term courses (14.4%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

Most Czech journalists from our sample (64.0%) hold non-managerial positions, 27.5% are in middle management roles, and 8.5% in top management roles. Employment arrangements vary: 56.5% have full-time permanent contracts, while part-time permanent contracts account for 5.7%. Fixed-term contracts cover 8.8% (full-time) and 2.1% (part-time). Freelancers and self-employed comprise 22.1% of respondents, and 4.8% report other arrangements. Nearly half (46.2%) earn additional income from jobs outside journalism, pointing to financial insecurity and precariousness in the field.

Journalists report an average of 15.95 years of professional experience (SD = 9.96; Median = 15.0). Only 11.5% are union members. There is a relative specialization split, with 47.1% working on a specific beat and 52.9% covering various topics. The average working week is 46.3 hours (SD = 9.1; Median = 40; for those in full-time employment).

Regarding the media reach, 50.2% of journalists from our sample work for national or transnational outlets, and 49.5% for local or regional ones. Most people (72.8%) are employed by private or commercial media, followed by public service media (22.4%). Community (1.2%) and nonprofit (2.4%) media play a marginal role. Employer background types also vary: 33.5% work for an outlet focusing on newspaper publishing, 17.8% for radio, 14.2% for TV, 16.9% for internet-native media, 10.3% for magazines, and 2.1% for news agencies.

These figures illustrate a diverse professional landscape that is commercially driven and flexible. At the same time, the journalistic labor market is often unstable and has low levels of union representation.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

There are relatively few factors in the Czech media landscape that journalists perceive as a threat that would significantly impact their work. Thus, the Czech media landscape can be perceived as relatively safe, as journalists have not experienced legal actions against them due to their work or do not face attacks of physical or sexual violence (see Table 1). The most significant threats are related to attacks on personal morality, coercion, discrediting journalistic work, or public hate speech. This is also reflected in work-related concerns (see Table 2), as journalists think that those who harm journalists in the Czech Republic go unpunished.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	331	7.3%	11.2%	28.1%	26.0%	27.5%
Public discrediting of your work	331	8.5%	15.1%	30.2%	24.8%	21.5%
Surveillance	330	0.3%	1.2%	4.8%	8.8%	84.8%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	331	0.3%	0.9%	5.1%	9.4%	84.3%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	331	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%	0.6%	98.8%
Legal actions against you because of your work	331	0.0%	0.9%	6.0%	15.1%	77.9%
Stalking	331	0.0%	0.6%	1.5%	6.6%	91.2%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	331	0.6%	2.4%	13.6%	25.7%	57.7%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	331	0.0%	0.3%	1.8%	7.6%	90.3%
Other physical attacks	331	0.0%	0.0%	1.5%	5.1%	93.4%
Coercion	321	0.6%	3.4%	18.1%	28.0%	49.8%
Questioning of your personal morality	318	3.8%	6.6%	22.0%	27.4%	40.3%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	320	0.0%	0.3%	1.3%	5.6%	92.8%
Others disseminating your personal information	319	0.6%	0.3%	6.6%	15.7%	76.8%
Workplace bullying	320	0.3%	0.9%	6.9%	8.8%	83.1%
Intimidation that targets family	319	0.0%	0.3%	1.9%	4.1%	93.7%

Question: “In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?”

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	330	10.0%	2.01	1.06
Concerned about physical well-being	331	2.7%	1.38	0.72
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	331	16.0%	2.26	1.15
Concerned that those who harm journalists in the Czech Republic go unpunished	331	37.8%	2.94	1.15

Question: “Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.” (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Czech journalists significantly value being detached observers (88.8%), emphasizing the importance of counteracting disinformation (81.8%, for more data see Table 3). Other roles traditionally connected to journalism, such as spotlighting society’s problems or educating the audience, also received substantial support. Conversely, political engagement, especially supporting government policy (2.1%) and conveying a positive image of political leaders (3.3%), was unequivocally the least valued.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	331	88.8%	4.42	0.81
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	331	71.0%	3.92	1.22
Shine a light on society’s problems	331	75.8%	4.06	1.03
Motivate people to participate in politics	331	11.8%	2.25	1.07
Provide analysis of current affairs	331	65.6%	3.76	1.15
Let people express their views	331	65.0%	3.82	1.11
Provide information people need to form political opinion	331	52.9%	3.38	1.37
Advocate for social change	329	28.0%	2.77	1.24
Influence public opinion	330	23.9%	2.72	1.19
Set the political agenda	331	33.8%	2.86	1.27
Promote peace and tolerance	331	62.5%	3.75	1.23
Educate the audience	331	73.7%	3.99	1.00
Point toward possible solutions to society’s problems	331	63.4%	3.73	1.03
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	331	49.2%	3.38	1.14
Support national development	330	29.7%	2.92	1.21
Support government policy	331	2.1%	1.50	0.81
Convey a positive image of political leaders	330	3.3%	1.48	0.87
Provide entertainment and relaxation	331	34.4%	3.01	1.21
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	331	36.0%	3.00	1.23
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	330	27.3%	2.69	1.21
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	331	47.1%	3.35	1.12
Support efforts to protect public health	330	49.7%	3.41	1.15
Counteract disinformation	330	81.8%	4.29	1.03
Discuss future implications of current events	278	45.3%	3.21	1.15

Question: “Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Czech journalists show varied views on specific journalistic epistemology issues (see Table 4). They strongly support interpretive practices (79.7%) and the importance of alerting audiences to falsehoods (80.3%). At the same time, almost two-thirds (65.7%) value objective reporting. Strong views suggesting the truth and reporting are inevitably shaped by journalists' personal beliefs (13.6%) or those in power (8.8%) are less embraced.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	330	79.7%	4.15	0.91
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	330	8.8%	2.01	1.03
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	330	13.6%	2.32	1.02
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	330	17.9%	2.42	1.20
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	329	65.7%	3.64	1.05
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	309	35.0%	2.95	1.12
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	307	42.3%	3.06	1.13
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	306	68.0%	3.82	0.91
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	307	16.3%	2.50	1.00
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	306	39.5%	2.91	1.37
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	304	80.3%	4.16	1.01

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Compared to the WJS2 results, there is a significant decrease in the belief that what is ethical should always be determined by professional standards, regardless of the situation and personal judgment. Currently, only 60.5% of Czech journalists think this (see Table 5); in WJS 2, these were 86.9%. On the other hand, compared with WJS2, there is also a significant decrease in the percentage of those who think it is always or occasionally justified to use controversial methods (see Table 6). Therefore, in everyday situations, journalists consider and evaluate the ethical principles for each of the causes they work on.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	329	60.5%	3.71	1.07
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	329	53.2%	3.43	1.10
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	329	34.3%	2.75	1.30
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	330	23.0%	2.45	1.26

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	330	1.5%	60.0%
Using hidden recording devices	330	4.8%	80.0%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	330	7.3%	58.5%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	330	7.6%	62.7%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	329	0.3%	36.2%
Paying people for confidential information	330	4.8%	37.0%
Accepting money from sources	330	0.3%	3.9%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	330	0.9%	28.5%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	330	1.8%	22.1%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	330	0.6%	22.7%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Czech journalists report relatively high levels of editorial autonomy (see Table 7). A majority strongly agree that they perceive a high degree of freedom in selecting stories (76.7%) and deciding how to frame them (81.9%). However, only 57.7% expressed the same confidence level in overall media freedom in the country, indicating a more cautious view of the broader context.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	331	76.7%	3.96	0.69
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	331	81.9%	4.08	0.73
Media freedom in the Czech Republic	331	57.7%	3.67	0.78

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

The most important factors shaping Czech journalists' work are journalism ethics and personal values. They also find the influence of editorial supervisors, availability of news-gathering resources, and access to information or time limits significant (see Table 8). Czech journalists perceive media law and regulations as the most influential external factors. In comparison to WJS2, there is a decrease in the perception of the media owners' influence on the editorial content. It is currently perceived as extremely or very influential at 18.4%, while in 2012–2014, when the most important ownership changes were happening, it was 24.5%.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	321	49.2%	3.41	1.17
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	316	66.5%	3.77	0.98
The business managers of the news organization	299	18.4%	2.41	1.16
The owners of the news organization	264	18.2%	2.23	1.27
Editorial policy	305	37.0%	3.04	1.21
Advertising considerations	274	18.2%	2.33	1.21
Profit expectations	270	17.4%	2.30	1.22
Audience research and data	307	45.3%	3.16	1.18
Availability of news-gathering resources	322	58.4%	3.65	1.04
Time limits	330	53.9%	3.54	1.09
Journalism ethics	329	84.2%	4.30	0.83
Self-censorship	310	16.8%	2.39	1.19
Personal values and beliefs	328	63.1%	3.73	1.11
Colleagues in other media	319	7.5%	2.08	0.96
Friends, acquaintances and family	317	19.2%	2.40	1.20
Feedback from the audience	330	38.8%	3.13	1.08
Competing news organizations	319	12.2%	2.42	0.98
Media laws and regulation	323	61.3%	3.73	1.27
Access to information	328	75.6%	4.02	0.98
Government censorship	262	4.2%	1.39	0.85
Government officials	279	2.2%	1.43	0.79
Politicians	294	6.8%	1.71	1.00
Business people	293	4.4%	1.64	0.91
Public relations	307	8.8%	2.05	1.00
Relationships with news sources	319	38.2%	3.09	1.16
Police	292	13.0%	1.99	1.17
Issue advocacy groups	306	6.5%	1.91	0.98
Scientists or health experts	307	30.9%	2.92	1.15
Religious groups and institutions	254	2.0%	1.41	0.75
Military	243	3.7%	1.46	0.86
Organized crime and criminal groups	221	0.5%	1.19	0.52

Question: "Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist." (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Denmark

Roger Buch, Arjen van Dalen, Nicholas Haas, Kresten Roland Johansen & Morten Skovsgaard

INTRODUCTION

The Danish society is a traditional Nordic welfare state with approximately 6 million inhabitants. After many economic crises and frequent elections in the 1970s to early 1990s, the political and economic situation became more stable with historic low unemployment and a decline in public debt. The global financial crisis in 2007-2008 and COVID-19 were generally viewed as having been managed better than in most other countries. The 2022 election led to the first majority government in decades, comprising parties from both the right and left. According to Eurobarometer, support for and satisfaction with democracy in Denmark is number one in Europe. Denmark was also rated highly in the University of Gothenburg V-Dem Institute's global ranking of democracies in 2025. The journalistic tradition until the 1960s in Denmark was economically independent party press, which changed to strong economic support for public service media and the primarily foundation-owned newspapers. Press freedom is strong, but newspapers – especially local ones – have for decades fought against declines in subscriptions and advertising, which have led to major staff cuts. Many journalists are under pressure because of the increase in their daily workload and a strong focus on performance and clicks.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

Our sample of Danish journalists is balanced in terms of gender: 49.6% of the sample were women. On average, they were 45.7 years old (SD = 14.1; Median = 45). They were largely well educated: 62.8% of them held a Bachelor's degree or equivalent, and 23.7% had obtained a Master's degree or equivalent. Further, 82.2% had acquired formal education or professional training in journalism. This education was usually obtained at university or college (97.0%) as opposed to via apprenticeships or cadetships (2.7%) or short-term courses (0.3%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

In terms of the background of their main employers, the most common are organizations focused on newspaper publishing (28.1%) or TV organizations (27.9%), with the remainder divided between native online media (12.1%), magazine companies (9.4%), radio outlets (6.6%), or news agencies (1.1%); an additional 14.9% reported either no main employer (12.1%) or a different type of employer than the options listed (2.8%). Regarding area of coverage, 59% of journalists reported working for (trans)national media and 29.3% for local or regional media, with 11.7% reporting no main medium (and thus, area of coverage) in which they worked. A majority (54.9%) said they worked for private or commercial media; 33.7% said they worked for public service media, and 11.4% of respondents to this question reported no main medium.

On average, journalists in our sample had 19.0 years of professional experience (SD = 13.5; Median = 18). A slight majority (52.3%) said that they worked a specific beat or subject area, as opposed to a variety (47.7%). Journalists reported working an average of 39.2 hours per week (SD = 5.6; Median = 37; for those in full-time employment). Most respondents (75.0%) reported no management role, with smaller percentages in middle management (20.9%) or top management (4.1%) positions.

A majority of respondents (62.5%) said that they were employed on full-time permanent contracts, with smaller percentages reporting full-time fixed-term contracts (11.2%), part-time permanent contracts (4.4%), part-time fixed-term contracts (1.1%), freelance or self-employed work (17.8%), or other work arrangements than those listed (3.0%). 73.3% of those in our sample said that they obtained all of their income from journalism, with 26.7% reporting that they obtained some portion from other work.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

Overall, journalists did not report a high prevalence of experienced threats (see Table 1) or work-related concerns (see Table 2). Demeaning or hateful speech or public discrediting of journalists' work were among the most cited safety threats experienced by those in our sample. Turning to work-related concerns, 15% of respondents strongly agreed that they were worried about losing their job in journalism within the next 12 months; less than 10% reported concerns regarding physical, emotional, or mental well-being, or that those who harmed journalists in the country would go unpunished.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	454	2.4%	4.4%	21.8%	38.5%	32.8%
Public discrediting of your work	453	1.3%	2.2%	16.1%	32.9%	47.5%
Surveillance	426	0.0%	0.5%	2.6%	6.6%	90.4%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	450	0.0%	0.2%	1.3%	5.3%	93.1%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	453	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.7%	99.1%
Legal actions against you because of your work	453	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	4.6%	94.7%
Stalking	452	0.0%	0.2%	0.9%	3.8%	95.1%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	454	0.9%	0.9%	7.5%	21.6%	69.2%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	454	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	3.7%	95.2%
Other physical attacks	454	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	2.2%	97.4%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	443	32.5%	2.68	1.41
Concerned about physical well-being	449	20.5%	2.25	1.18
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	448	29.2%	2.61	1.25
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Denmark go unpunished	416	14.9%	2.15	1.14

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Danish journalists in our sample strongly supported the notion that a central role of journalists is to shine a light on society's problems (93.9% said doing so was "very" or "extremely" important), as is counteracting disinformation (91.4%), monitoring those in power (82.1%), providing information to the public to help them to develop informed political opinions (81.8%), and acting as a detached observer (72.7%). Journalists were particularly opposed to the notion that a role for their profession was to support government policy or convey a positive image of political leaders (see Table 3).

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	469	72.7%	4.00	0.95
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	470	82.1%	4.23	0.93
Shine a light on society's problems	472	93.9%	4.58	0.66
Motivate people to participate in politics	454	32.8%	2.90	1.18
Provide analysis of current affairs	470	66.2%	3.80	0.94
Let people express their views	469	48.4%	3.39	1.10
Provide information people need to form political opinion	467	81.8%	4.19	0.89
Advocate for social change	433	24.0%	2.50	1.24
Influence public opinion	438	20.3%	2.44	1.20
Set the political agenda	452	35.2%	2.95	1.16
Promote peace and tolerance	438	31.5%	2.83	1.26
Educate the audience	460	55.9%	3.56	1.19
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	467	56.1%	3.58	1.01
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	458	45.6%	3.29	1.15
Support national development	401	27.2%	2.66	1.21
Support government policy	468	0.2%	1.05	0.31
Convey a positive image of political leaders	463	0.7%	1.11	0.42
Provide entertainment and relaxation	469	10.5%	2.15	1.02
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	460	11.1%	2.21	1.02
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	468	24.8%	2.78	1.03
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	460	25.7%	2.76	1.06
Support efforts to protect public health	432	16.2%	2.33	1.12
Counteract disinformation	467	91.4%	4.61	0.73

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

There was a fair amount of disagreement between journalists as regards journalistic epistemologies (see Table 4). However, journalists generally disagreed that things are either true or false, there is no in-between (76.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed).

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	408	42.9%	3.20	1.03
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	434	32.0%	2.79	1.11
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	443	26.2%	2.66	1.07
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	443	6.3%	2.05	0.89
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	445	56.4%	3.39	1.00

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Journalists in our sample generally agreed (48.0% agreed and 24.3% strongly agreed) that ethics should be dictated by professional standards except for in extraordinary circumstances (Table 5). Regarding the ethics of specific reporting methods (Table 6), respondents overwhelmingly felt that accepting money from sources was unacceptable under any circumstances. They were, however, more approving of the ethics of using hidden recording devices, as well as confidential business or government documents and the personal materials of powerful people without prior authorization.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	423	55.1%	3.48	1.16
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	408	72.3%	3.80	1.02
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	434	33.9%	2.84	1.20
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	441	15.6%	2.22	1.09

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	472	0.2%	81.4%
Using hidden recording devices	472	0.9%	98.3%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	472	6.6%	88.4%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	472	2.8%	86.4%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	472	0.6%	54.5%
Paying people for confidential information	472	0.9%	18.4%
Accepting money from sources	472	0.9%	1.5%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	472	0.6%	23.1%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	472	1.7%	20.3%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	472	0.4%	58.5%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Journalists perceived high levels of editorial autonomy and media freedom in Denmark (see Table 7). Majorities of respondents said there was a great deal or complete freedom in selecting news stories (62.3%), deciding which aspects of stories to emphasize (72.0%), and as regards media freedom (84.4%).

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	472	62.3%	3.60	0.89
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	472	72.0%	3.88	0.87
Media freedom in Denmark	467	84.4%	3.97	0.58

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Journalists in our sample reported journalism ethics, editorial supervisors, access to information, and time limits as the strongest editorial influences (see Table 8). Comparatively few perceived advertising, politicians, government, business, or the police as having a significant editorial influence.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	456	52.6%	3.50	1.03
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	460	66.1%	3.81	0.95
The business managers of the news organization	409	12.7%	2.05	1.12
The owners of the news organization	412	11.9%	1.93	1.15
Editorial policy	453	59.8%	3.66	1.06
Advertising considerations	414	3.1%	1.44	0.82
Profit expectations	425	14.6%	2.13	1.22
Audience research and data	450	31.3%	2.96	1.14
Availability of news-gathering resources	440	60.0%	3.71	1.00
Time limits	467	65.1%	3.81	1.04
Journalism ethics	467	80.9%	4.17	0.82
Self-censorship	403	8.9%	1.96	1.03
Personal values and beliefs	457	32.2%	2.93	1.19
Colleagues in other media	448	4.2%	1.87	0.89
Friends, acquaintances and family	456	4.4%	1.80	0.86
Feedback from the audience	455	15.4%	2.54	0.97
Competing news organizations	450	10.2%	2.31	0.94
Media laws and regulation	435	42.8%	3.22	1.17
Access to information	446	65.5%	3.79	0.98
Government censorship	412	5.8%	1.47	0.89
Government officials	416	6.0%	1.68	0.94
Politicians	421	9.0%	1.85	1.03
Business people	416	5.5%	1.65	0.93
Public relations	434	9.0%	2.14	0.98
Relationships with news sources	445	44.3%	3.30	1.13
Police	410	5.9%	1.64	0.91
Issue advocacy groups	425	7.1%	1.86	0.99
Scientists or health experts	422	22.0%	2.46	1.25

Question: "Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist." (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Ecuador[1]

Martín Oller Alonso

INTRODUCTION

Ecuador continues to face severe political instability, escalating violence, and persistent economic challenges. President Daniel Noboa was re-elected on April 6, 2025, amidst unprecedented violence linked to drug trafficking, resulting in a record-high homicide rate and significant internal displacement. An important event that underscored the nation's instability was the assassination of presidential candidate Fernando Villavicencio on August 9, 2023, just eleven days before the general election. This turmoil follows years of political turbulence, notably Rafael Correa's presidency (2007–2017), marked by the establishment and consolidation of a state-owned media conglomerate, epitomized by his emblematic Saturday morning broadcasts (*sabatinas*) and the controversial Communication Law (LOC) (2013); Lenin Moreno's administration (2017–2021), characterised by political betrayals and massive social protests against fuel price hikes (2017–2020); and Guillermo Lasso's brief yet chaotic presidency (2021–2023), ending abruptly amid increasing criminal violence, exemplified by the Ecuadorian prison massacre on February 23, 2021. Economically, the nation remains vulnerable following recurrent crises: the "feriado bancario" of 1999, the global financial crash of 2008, and the devastating COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Ecuadorian journalists historically navigated heavy political pressures and censorship, but the current environment is particularly hostile, marked by assassinations, digital harassment, and self-censorship driven by safety fears. In 2022, three journalists were assassinated, and in 2023, death threats against journalists in Ecuador doubled compared to previous years, with at least 15 journalists receiving death threats, while overall violence escalated, intensifying fears and self-censorship amid growing attacks by organised crime linked to drug trafficking.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

Of the Ecuadorian journalists surveyed, 39.5% were female, 59.8% male, and 0.7% identified as other, indicating a notable gender imbalance in favour of men. The mean age was 35.8 years (SD = 9.9; Median = 36). Most respondents had a college or university degree (GED, 74.6%), while 74.9% had completed a journalism apprenticeship or cadetship, and 69.1% had obtained a certificate or diploma from a short-term journalism course. Overall, the sample reflects a highly educated and professionally trained workforce, but with a clear predominance of men.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

A mix of stability and precarity characterises the professional landscape for Ecuadorian journalists. Notably, only 74.7% are union members, highlighting a moderate level of collective organisation within the profession. Most journalists report feeling some stress at work, with a mean of 3.20 (SD = 1.13) on a 1–5 scale, suggesting that work-related pressure is a salient issue.

Regarding employment, the mean years of work experience as a journalist are 11.1 (SD = 8.9; Median = 9), reflecting a workforce with both early-career and highly experienced professionals. Only 17.2% report working in a specific beat or subject area, indicating a predominance of generalist roles. Journalists report working an average of 43.5 hours per week (SD = 12.9; Median = 43; for those in full-time employment). The significant range of standard deviation reveals a substantial variation in weekly workload. However, when asked about hours spent at home working, the average is lower (Mean = 9.6, SD = 12.6), suggesting some boundary between work and home life. A notable proportion of journalists also hold additional jobs outside journalism, illustrating the need for supplementary income and the prevalence of portfolio careers.

[1] Country sample does not fully align with WJS specifications regarding maximum margin of error (see WJS3 Methodology).

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Ecuadorian journalists report frequent exposure to various safety threats. 33.7% have sometimes, often, or very frequently faced demeaning or hateful speech, and 19.8% have experienced public discrediting. Surveillance (17.3%), hacking (15.1%), and intimidation (13.7%) are also notable. Rarely, more severe threats, such as arrest (7.7%), legal action (15.4%), or physical attacks (6.7%), occur. Work-related concerns are high: 55.5% fear job loss, 59.4% are concerned about their physical well-being, 70.6% about their emotional health, and 84.6% agree that those who harm journalists often go unpunished.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	299	2.0%	6.4%	23.7%	39.8%	28.1%
Public discrediting of your work	299	2.0%	5.4%	13.4%	28.8%	50.5%
Surveillance	299	1.0%	4.7%	13.7%	21.7%	58.9%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	299	1.0%	2.3%	11.7%	24.1%	60.9%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	299	0.3%	0.7%	1.3%	5.4%	92.3%
Legal actions against you because of your work	299	0.7%	1.0%	4.3%	10.0%	84.6%
Stalking	299	0.7%	1.7%	8.7%	20.1%	68.9%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	299	1.7%	1.7%	11.0%	25.4%	61.9%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	299	0.3%	1.7%	4.0%	9.7%	84.3%
Other physical attacks	299	0.7%	0.7%	3.3%	17.1%	78.3%
Coercion	299	1.0%	0.7%	4.7%	12.4%	81.9%
Questioning of your personal morality	299	2.7%	2.7%	12.7%	31.4%	53.2%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	299	0.7%	2.0%	4.3%	14.7%	78.3%
Others disseminating your personal information	299	0.3%	1.7%	9.0%	24.4%	64.5%
Workplace bullying	299	0.3%	2.3%	9.0%	18.1%	70.2%
Abductions	299	0.3%	0.7%	0.7%	2.7%	95.7%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	299	0.7%	1.0%	0.7%	5.7%	92.0%
Intimidation that targets family	299	0.7%	0%	2.3%	8.4%	88.6%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	299	55.5%	3.42	1.29
Concerned about physical well-being	299	59.4%	3.51	1.30
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	299	70.6%	3.83	1.18
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Ecuador go unpunished	299	84.6%	4.25	0.89

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Ecuadorian journalists assign high importance to roles such as "discussing future implications of current events" (92.6%), "educating the audience" (86%), "promoting peace and tolerance" (86.0%), and "counteracting disinformation" (83.3%). In contrast, roles such as "motivating political participation" or "supporting government policies" are considered less of a priority.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	299	79.9%	3.97	0.87
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	299	69.2%	3.79	0.98
Shine a light on society's problems	299	86.3%	4.30	0.80
Motivate people to participate in politics	299	40.8%	3.07	1.22
Provide analysis of current affairs	299	82.6%	4.10	0.81
Let people express their views	299	83.9%	4.16	0.78
Provide information people need to form political opinion	299	73.6%	3.92	1.00
Advocate for social change	299	83.6%	4.18	0.81
Influence public opinion	299	55.5%	3.52	1.05
Set the political agenda	299	41.8%	3.13	1.15
Promote peace and tolerance	299	86.0%	4.31	0.74
Educate the audience	299	87.0%	4.33	0.82
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	299	82.3%	4.14	0.84
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	299	85.3%	4.28	0.78
Support national development	299	86.3%	4.25	0.78
Support government policy	299	49.8%	3.47	1.05
Convey a positive image of political leaders	299	45.5%	3.24	1.20
Provide entertainment and relaxation	299	56.5%	3.53	1.07
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	299	76.6%	3.96	0.94
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	299	68.2%	3.82	0.91
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	299	79.9%	4.08	0.82
Support efforts to protect public health	299	76.9%	3.97	0.81
Counteract disinformation	299	83.3%	4.16	0.83
Discuss future implications of current events	299	92.6%	4.55	0.67

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

A large majority of Ecuadorian journalists believe interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts (65.6%), and 61.5% agree that things are either true or false. However, only 29.8% agree that truth is inevitably shaped by those in power, and 38.5% say it is impossible to withhold personal beliefs. Objectivity is valued, with 68.6% agreeing it is possible to represent reality in reporting. Most journalists endorse transparency (73.5%) and alert audiences when claims are untruthful (77.3%). Intuitive and community-oriented epistemologies are less prominent.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	299	65.6%	3.62	1.11
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	299	29.8%	2.77	1.16
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	299	38.5%	2.09	1.09
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	299	61.5%	3.52	1.21
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	299	68.6%	3.67	0.99
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	299	29.4%	2.77	1.12
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	299	25.1%	2.70	1.07
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	299	67.2%	3.67	0.94
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	299	46.5%	3.18	1.72
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	299	73.6%	3.82	1.01
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	299	77.3%	3.90	0.94

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Most Ecuadorian journalists (86%) believe that professional standards should always guide their ethical decisions. However, 35.1% accept using confidential documents on occasion, and 49.2% justify the use of hidden recording devices in certain situations. Only a minority consistently justify controversial practices such as impersonation (2%) or using unverified information (3.3%).

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	299	86.0%	4.21	1.03
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	299	35.1%	2.87	1.23
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	299	25.1%	2.48	1.23
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	299	35.1%	2.76	1.34

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	299	2.0%	15.4%
Using hidden recording devices	299	4.0%	49.2%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	299	5.4%	35.1%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	299	4.3%	35.5%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	299	3.7%	21.4%
Paying people for confidential information	299	2.7%	30.8%
Accepting money from sources	299	1.7%	4.7%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	299	3.0%	30.1%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	299	2.3%	21.7%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	299	3.3%	6.0%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Most Ecuadorian journalists report high editorial autonomy: 64.2% experience “a great deal” or “complete” freedom in selecting stories, and 61.5% in deciding which aspects to emphasize. In contrast, only 20.9% perceive a similar level of overall media freedom in the country, highlighting a gap between individual autonomy and the perceived broader media environment.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	299	64.2%	3.82	1.00
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	299	61.5%	3.74	0.98
Media freedom in Ecuador	292	21.2%	2.87	0.94

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

The strongest internal influences come from journalistic ethics (77.1%), editorial supervisors (58.1%), and news-gathering resources (57.6%). Among external factors, media laws/regulations (41.7%) and audience feedback (54.6%) stand out. Influences from groups such as organized crime (22.9%) and terrorist groups (18.5%) are low but not absent.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	276	39.1%	3.08	1.13
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	282	58.2%	3.43	1.13
The business managers of the news organization	282	44.7%	3.20	1.22
The owners of the news organization	281	52.7%	3.31	1.29
Editorial policy	278	52.5%	3.36	1.16
Advertising considerations	282	35.1%	3.88	1.25
Profit expectations	282	38.7%	2.94	1.28
Audience research and data	284	54.2%	3.36	1.15
Availability of news-gathering resources	287	56.8%	3.49	1.15
Time limits	286	46.9%	3.24	1.15
Journalism ethics	290	77.2%	4.00	1.09
Self-censorship	276	31.5%	2.83	1.20
Personal values and beliefs	287	52.3%	3.32	1.33
Colleagues in other media	288	19.4%	2.44	1.13
Friends, acquaintances and family	284	19.4%	2.43	1.10
Feedback from the audience	291	54.6%	3.48	1.06
Competing news organizations	279	25.8%	2.71	1.12
Media laws and regulation	283	41.7%	3.12	1.16
Access to information	290	61.4%	3.63	1.14
Government censorship	279	36.2%	2.85	1.32
Government officials	278	28.4%	2.61	1.29
Politicians	279	22.9%	2.54	1.24
Business people	280	21.4%	2.44	1.21
Public relations	285	34.4%	2.81	1.21
Relationships with news sources	282	40.4%	3.12	1.16
Police	280	24.3%	2.53	1.21
Issue advocacy groups	273	17.9%	2.33	1.15
Religious groups and institutions	276	14.1%	2.20	1.11
Military	274	17.5%	2.28	1.16
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	266	15.0%	2.13	1.14
Organized crime and criminal groups	266	22.9%	2.35	1.29
Terrorist groups	270	18.5%	2.15	1.27

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Egypt

BASYOUNI HAMADA, FATMA ELZAHRAA ELSAYED & HANAN BADR

INTRODUCTION

The journalistic tradition in Egypt is both rich and complex, formed by a long-lasting interplay of intellectual activism, resistance and state control. Historically, Egypt served as a leading hub for journalism, media and the publishing industry in the Arab world. Egyptian journalists and news media have significantly influenced Arab media landscapes, with Cairo regarded as a central media capital for decades until the late 20th century. In the past decade, however, Egypt has transitioned into a tightly controlled authoritarian state, where political pluralism and press freedom have been severely restricted. Despite IMF economic reforms and support, Egypt has experienced persistent economic decline, including high inflation and repeated currency devaluations. As in many other contexts, press freedom in Egypt is closely intertwined with broader political and economic structures and legal frameworks; it not only reflects the nature of political and economic structures but also functions as a tool to sustain them

Most media outlets in Egypt, whether they are state or privately owned, largely operate as instruments of regime legitimacy. Legacy party press had lost its relevance in the past years. Current media play a key role in suppressing dissent, influencing public sphere, and downgrading alternative narratives. Throughout the last decade, Freedom House and Reporters without Borders classified Egypt as "not free". Despite this outlook, there are persistent small pockets of marginalized independent media amid a hybrid media landscape. This study draws on data collected from a representative sample of journalists working across various media platforms. A combination of face-to-face interviews, online surveys, and telephone calls was employed to reach respondents during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic posed logistical challenges, often delaying data collection and requiring multiple contacts to complete individual questionnaires.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The Egyptian sample of journalists is, to some extent, gender-balanced (65.5% men) with an average age of 40.6 years. Most are well educated: 77% hold a bachelor's, 9.4% a master's degree, and 8.4% a doctorate. Additionally, 85% have formal journalism education or training, mainly through university (74.3%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

Slightly more than half of Egyptian journalists worked for an organization focused on newspaper publishing. Less than 20% for a TV organization, 11.2% for native online media, and 8.3% for a radio outlet; few worked for magazine companies. Around 37.1% served in transnational media, while 23.7% focused on local/regional outlets. Journalists had, on average, 16.8 years of experience, with most (53%) covering multiple beats. A large majority are members of professional associations. Most held full-time permanent contracts, but half of journalists also had other jobs, reflecting job insecurity. Egyptian full-time journalists, on average, report working 39.9 hours per week.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

The data in the table 1 below show that Egyptian journalists face more psychological and digital threats than physical or financial ones. The most common problems are surveillance, followed directly by demeaning or hateful speech, public discrediting of work, workplace bullying, hacking or blocking of accounts, questioning of personal morality, intimidations and coercion. Although less common, imprisonment, assault, and legal action are still serious threats to press freedom.

Table 2 highlights significant work-related concerns among journalists. Over half of journalists express worry about losing their job within the next year, reflecting widespread job insecurity. Emotional and mental well-being is also a major concern, alongside fears of impunity for those who harm journalists. While concerns about physical well-being are somewhat lower, they remain notable.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	421	5.2%	3.8%	19.2%	19.0%	52.7%
Public discrediting of your work	427	5.2%	7.0%	16.9%	13.8%	57.1%
Surveillance	418	6.5%	8.4%	23.7%	16.7%	44.7%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	418	4.1%	4.3%	13.4%	12.0%	66.3%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	404	1.2%	2.0%	3.5%	4.2%	89.1%
Legal actions against you because of your work	413	1.9%	1.7%	7.0%	7.3%	82.1%
Stalking	407	3.2%	1.7%	5.2%	5.2%	84.8%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	412	2.7%	1.9%	8.5%	10.9%	76.0%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	413	3.6%	1.5%	2.4%	5.6%	86.9%
Other physical attacks	411	2.4%	0.5%	3.9%	6.8%	86.4%
Coercion	411	2.7%	4.1%	6.3%	8.3%	78.6%
Questioning of your personal morality	416	3.8%	2.2%	8.4%	12.5%	73.1%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	411	3.6%	2.2%	4.1%	9.2%	80.8%
Others disseminating your personal information	415	4.1%	3.1%	6.3%	10.1%	76.4%
Workplace bullying	418	3.6%	3.8%	10.8%	12.9%	68.9%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	396	53.5%	3.40	1.37
Concerned about physical well-being	409	30.3%	2.74	1.30
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	404	46.8%	3.18	1.36
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Egypt go unpunished	395	45.6%	3.16	1.36

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Table 3 shows that journalists overwhelmingly value traditional normative roles, with being a detached observer and counteracting disinformation ranked highest in importance. Roles focused on education, public service, and problem solving, such as shining a light on society's problems, promoting peace, and supporting public health, also received high importance ratings. In contrast, roles tied to alignment with power, such as supporting government, policy and conveying a positive image of political leaders were rated as less important.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	432	97.5%	4.75	0.55
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	403	71.0%	3.91	1.14
Shine a light on society's problems	422	89.1%	4.44	0.85
Motivate people to participate in politics	411	61.6%	3.71	1.13
Provide analysis of current affairs	414	82.1%	4.24	1.04
Let people express their views	419	73.0%	3.96	1.10
Provide information people need to form political opinion	421	77.9%	4.13	1.12
Advocate for social change	412	69.2%	3.85	1.09
Influence public opinion	413	78.7%	4.13	1.06
Set the political agenda	394	56.4%	3.48	1.22
Promote peace and tolerance	423	85.1%	4.40	0.94
Educate the audience	426	87.8%	4.49	0.87
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	426	81.9%	4.25	0.94
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	409	77.5%	4.18	1.04
Support national development	418	84.5%	4.37	0.89
Support government policy	382	50.8%	3.37	1.42
Convey a positive image of political leaders	388	38.7%	3.07	1.40
Provide entertainment and relaxation	415	62.9%	3.68	1.16
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	414	68.6%	3.84	1.15
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	413	65.9%	3.77	1.12
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	407	41.0%	3.09	1.32
Support efforts to protect public health	418	83.7%	4.23	0.95
Counteract disinformation	423	93.9%	4.67	0.69
Discuss future implications of current events	423	80.4%	4.12	1.00

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Table 4 indicates that respondents largely endorse a pragmatic view of journalism, recognizing both the need for interpretation and the possibility of objective reporting. While most journalists agree that facts require interpretation and that objectivity is achievable, fewer support more relativistic views, such as truth being shaped by power, or the inevitability of personal bias.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	412	75.2%	4.03	0.96
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	387	36.7%	3.14	1.19
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	402	44.3%	3.26	1.15
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	413	34.4%	3.12	1.17
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	403	76.2%	4.01	0.91

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Table 5 reveals strong support for adherence to professional standards in ethical decision-making. The overwhelming majority agree that these standards should guide journalists regardless of context. A majority also recognize the need for flexibility in extraordinary circumstances. While nearly half support a situational approach, significantly fewer endorse relying on personal judgment alone.

Table 6 shows that journalists basically view controversial reporting methods as ethically challenging, with very low support for these practices being "always justified." However, a notable minority consider some methods acceptable "on occasion," particularly using hidden recording devices and paying for confidential information. Justifications drop significantly for more ethically sensitive actions, such as using personal materials without permission.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	428	81.5%	4.35	0.94
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	415	56.4%	3.49	1.19
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	416	47.4%	3.20	1.28
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	409	28.6%	2.63	1.39

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

Table 6. Justification of controversial reporting methods

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	421	3.8%	36.1%
Using hidden recording devices	421	4.0%	48.5%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	405	2.5%	29.9%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	408	5.4%	17.2%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	416	2.2%	13.0%
Paying people for confidential information	414	8.7%	39.6%
Accepting money from sources	420	4.3%	4.8%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	416	6.7%	20.9%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	408	13.2%	32.6%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	415	2.9%	8.2%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Table 7 indicates a minority of journalists see press freedom as low, however, higher percentage of them feel they have considerable freedom in choosing and shaping news stories as well as deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized. A considerable gap exists between individual editorial autonomy and the wider structural and political constraints.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	415	42.9%	3.19	1.22
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	409	43.5%	3.17	1.20
Media freedom in Egypt	395	27.1%	2.62	1.23

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Table 8 reveals a complex structure of editorial influences. Internal factors such as editorial policy, journalism ethics and self-censorship are perceived as highly influential, along with structural constraints like access to information and government censorship. Supervisors, owners, and time/resource pressures also exert strong influence. Surprisingly, external actors like politicians, businesspeople, and advocacy groups are seen as less influential.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	368	43.5%	3.42	1.18
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	409	667.0%	3.90	1.03
The business managers of the news organization	379	55.7%	3.50	1.28
The owners of the news organization	366	65.03%	3.77	1.26
Editorial policy	406	79.3%	4.21	0.99
Advertising considerations	338	46.2%	3.30	1.36
Profit expectations	337	46.9%	3.33	1.34
Audience research and data	348	52.9%	3.48	1.29
Availability of news-gathering resources	376	67.3%	3.86	1.16
Time limits	384	66.2%	3.80	1.08
Journalism ethics	389	71.7%	4.01	1.08
Self-censorship	393	77.9%	4.17	1.06
Personal values and beliefs	390	75.1%	4.05	1.17
Colleagues in other media	354	37.9%	3.19	1.34
Friends, acquaintances and family	332	24.4%	2.70	1.24
Feedback from the audience	359	46.8%	3.38	1.22
Competing news organizations	374	62.0%	3.77	1.12
Media laws and regulation	377	69.2%	3.93	1.08
Access to information	381	78.5%	4.13	0.99
Government censorship	375	73.3%	4.09	1.08
Government officials	347	53.9%	3.49	1.37
Politicians	340	45.0%	3.27	1.31
Business people	323	35.9%	3.00	1.32
Public relations	334	44.9%	3.32	1.29
Relationships with news sources	360	64.7%	3.73	1.16
Police	319	48.6%	3.42	1.30
Issue advocacy groups	303	33.0%	2.93	1.31
Scientists or health experts	44	40.9%	3.20	1.42

Question: "Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist." (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

El Salvador

Summer Harlow & Alexia Raquel Ávalos Rivera

INTRODUCTION

El Salvador has transitioned toward a hybrid-authoritarian regime characterized by the progressive weakening of the rule of law and institutional checks and balances, consolidating a personalized model of governance based on political, judicial, and communicational control, under a punitive security narrative. President Nayib Bukele began a second period through an unconstitutional re-election, within the framework of a State of Exception that has remained in effect permanently since 2022, compromising civil liberties and due process. Broad sectors of the population support the president due to the drastic reduction in homicides; however, this outcome appears to have been achieved through negotiations between the government and the country's main gangs.

Traditional journalism in El Salvador has historically been aligned with economic and political elites; however, in the postwar period, a form of autonomous digital investigative journalism emerged as a form of oversight over de facto powers and critical counterbalance.

During the fieldwork for this study (between 2022 and 2024), Salvadoran journalists have been exposed to constant hate speech, physical surveillance, espionage through Pegasus software, and financial difficulties caused by both international and national factors, such as administrative persecution and the approval of various laws. Press freedom has deteriorated, and the Salvadoran Association of Journalists (APES) reports a yearly increase in violations and infringements by the government, military, and police against journalistic practice.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The sample of journalists was somewhat gender-balanced, with 46.8% of respondents identifying as female and 53.2% as male. Journalists were fairly young, with a mean age of 36.9 (Median =36, SD = 8.8). Most respondents had a bachelor's degree or the equivalent (65%), and more than a quarter combined had a master's degree (25.1%) or doctorate (2%). Nearly all (94.6%) said they had received formal education or professional training in journalism. That training was most often received at a university or college (95.8%), as well as via short-term courses (92.7%) and journalism apprenticeships/internships (86.5%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

Salvadoran journalists who responded to the survey said they had a mean of 12.3 years of experience working as a journalist (Median = 10, SD = 8.0). On average they worked 48.2 hours per week (Median = 44, SD = 11.6; for those in full-time employment), which is just slightly more than the standard workweek of 44 hours. More than three-fourths said they worked full-time on a permanent contract (64.4%) or full-time on a fixed-term contract (13.5%). Just under 10% (8.7%) said they were freelancers or self-employed. More than a third (37.1%) of respondents said at least some of their income came from work outside of their jobs as journalists.

In terms of the background of their main employers, most surveyed journalists worked at a digital-native news outlet (36%), followed by newspapers (28%), magazine companies (12%), radio outlets (9.5%), TV organizations (8%), and news agencies (6%). The media outlets respondents worked at were mostly national or transnational in their reach (81.8%) as opposed to local or regional (17.7%). These outlets were primarily private or commercial (81.7), although some respondents also worked for community media (6.4%), non-profit media (5.4%), and state-run media (5%).

The typical journalist surveyed had no management role (41.3%), while 35.8 worked in middle-management roles and 22.9% in top-management roles. Most (68.8%) said they did not cover a specific beat or subject area.

Only about a quarter (26.7%) of surveyed Salvadoran journalists said they belonged to a union.

Notably, journalists overwhelmingly said they very often (54.9%), often (18.9%) or sometimes (20.9%) felt stressed out because of their work. Only 1% said they never felt stressed out from work.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Salvadoran journalists' survey responses underscored the risk of exercising their profession in a context of deteriorating press freedom. While arrests, abductions, office raids, and other types of physical attacks mostly never happened (see Table 1), the threats that most journalists had experienced at least sometimes were related to demeaning or hateful speech (64.8%), as well as public discrediting of their work (59.6%). Journalists also said they very often, often, or sometimes experienced surveillance (42.3%) hacking or blocking of social media accounts (27.9%), and other types of threats and intimidation (35.6%). It follows, then, that the vast majority of journalists were concerned about their emotional and mental wellbeing (69.2%), physical wellbeing (69.2%), and impunity in crimes against journalists (91.8%) (see Table 2).

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	208	13.9%	21.6%	29.3%	18.8%	16.3%
Public discrediting of your work	208	13.9%	19.7%	26.0%	17.3%	23.1%
Surveillance	208	11.1%	7.2%	24.0%	16.3%	41.3%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	208	3.4%	9.1%	15.4%	15.9%	56.3%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	208	1.0%	0.0%	1.4%	4.3%	93.3%
Legal actions against you because of your work	208	1.4%	1.0%	7.7%	7.7%	82.2%
Stalking	208	2.9%	6.3%	20.2%	18.3%	52.4%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	208	4.8%	10.1%	20.7%	20.7%	43.8%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	208	1.9%	4.3%	13.0%	9.1%	71.6%
Other physical attacks	208	1.4%	1.0%	7.2%	10.6%	79.8%
Coercion	208	1.0%	3.4%	5.8%	12.0%	77.9%
Questioning of your personal morality	208	5.3%	13.5%	21.6%	20.7%	38.9%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	208	0.5%	0.0%	4.8%	9.6%	85.1%
Others disseminating your personal information	208	1.9%	0.5%	14.4%	12.5%	70.7%
Workplace bullying	208	1.0%	4.3%	11.1%	15.4%	68.3%
Abductions	208	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	2.4%	96.6%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	208	0.0%	1.0%	2.4%	5.8%	90.9%
Intimidation that targets family	208	0.5%	2.4%	6.3%	8.7%	82.2%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	208	50.0%	3.21	1.43
Concerned about physical well-being	208	69.2%	3.77	1.15
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	208	83.2%	4.18	1.01
Concerned that those who harm journalists in El Salvador go unpunished	208	91.8%	4.64	0.68

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Most surveyed journalists saw their main roles as shining a light on society's problems (94.2%) and counteracting disinformation (94.2%) (see Table 3). They also emphasized the importance of roles related to monitoring and scrutinizing power (85.6%), analyzing current affairs (87.5%), providing information so the public can form a political opinion (87%), letting people express their views (88%), educating the audience (86.1%), and speaking on behalf of marginalized voices (87.5%). It's interesting to note that roughly the same percentage of respondents who said it was very or extremely important to be a detached observer (77.4%) also said it was important to advocate for social chance (75.5%), indicating that journalists don't necessarily see these two roles as mutually exclusive.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	208	77.4%	4.05	1.04
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	208	85.6%	4.41	0.89
Shine a light on society's problems	208	94.2%	4.61	0.69
Motivate people to participate in politics	208	39.4%	3.09	1.32
Provide analysis of current affairs	208	87.5%	4.33	0.80
Let people express their views	208	88.0%	4.39	0.83
Provide information people need to form political opinion	208	87.0%	4.40	0.86
Advocate for social change	208	75.5%	4.06	0.97
Influence public opinion	208	64.4%	3.80	1.04
Set the political agenda	208	40.9%	3.09	1.31
Promote peace and tolerance	208	80.3%	4.21	0.88
Educate the audience	208	86.1%	4.38	0.83
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	208	79.8%	4.13	0.93
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	208	87.5%	4.41	0.94
Support national development	208	66.8%	3.85	1.11
Support government policy	208	30.8%	2.75	1.35
Convey a positive image of political leaders	208	26.9%	2.48	1.44
Provide entertainment and relaxation	208	22.6%	2.54	1.29
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	208	52.9%	3.57	1.17
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	208	37.5%	3.05	1.27
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	208	57.2%	3.65	1.12
Support efforts to protect public health	208	75.0%	4.02	0.99
Counteract disinformation	208	94.2%	4.64	0.72
Discuss future implications of current events	208	82.7%	4.19	0.87

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

The need for journalists to alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful emerged as a top belief among surveyed journalists (see Table 4), with three-fourths (75.6%) agreeing that it was key to do so. Only about half (52.7%) agreed that objectivity in reporting is possible, while more than half said journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work (61.5%), and 66.8% said journalists should let the facts speak for themselves.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	205	62.9%	3.56	1.14
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	205	9.8%	2.07	1.06
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	205	34.1%	2.96	1.17
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	205	38.0%	2.94	1.34
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	205	52.7%	3.39	1.10
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	205	14.1%	2.31	1.03
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	205	15.6%	2.36	1.07
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	205	66.8%	3.85	0.96
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	205	20.5%	2.58	1.10
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	205	61.5%	3.67	1.08
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	205	75.6%	4.04	0.99

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Surveyed Salvadoran journalists indicated they uphold professional journalistic standards (see Table 5). Most (88%) agreed or strongly agreed that ethical considerations should always be based on professional standards, regardless of the situation or personal judgment. Very rarely did respondents say that controversial reporting methods were always justified (see Table 6). However, when it came to controversial techniques often used in investigative reporting, it was more typical for journalists to say these techniques were sometimes justified: more than half (52.4%) said the use of hidden recording devices was justified on occasion, as was using confidential business or government documents without authorization (50%).

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	208	88.0%	4.38	0.87
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	208	32.2%	2.75	1.23
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	208	22.1%	2.41	1.31
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	208	19.2%	2.26	1.27

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	208	1.4%	37.5%
Using hidden recording devices	208	3.4%	52.4%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	208	13.5%	50.0%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	208	8.2%	51.9%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	208	0.5%	15.9%
Paying people for confidential information	208	1.0%	12.0%
Accepting money from sources	208	0.0%	0.5%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	208	1.0%	11.1%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	208	0.5%	7.7%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	208	0.5%	0.5%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Most surveyed journalists said they had individual autonomy when it came to editorial decisions (see Table 7). More than two two-thirds (68.1%) said they had complete or a great deal of freedom to choose the news stories they covered, and 62.3% said they were free to decide what aspects of a story to emphasize. However, responses painted a different picture when it came to media freedom generally: Only 8.3% said there was complete or a great deal of media freedom in El Salvador.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	207	68.1%	3.90	0.96
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	207	62.3%	3.76	1.03
Media freedom in El Salvador	207	8.3%	2.59	0.75

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Journalism ethics (88.2%) and practical constraints like time limits (56.4%) and access to information (75.2%) emerged as the top editorial influences from Salvadoran journalists' perspective (see Table 8). Owners of the news outlets also were identified by most journalists (51.5%) as very or extremely influential on editorial processes. Nearly half (48.8%) of respondents said government censorship was influential, and about a third named government officials (33.5%), politicians (28.1%), and media laws and regulation (35%).

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	203	37.4%	2.97	1.20
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	203	68.0%	3.73	1.06
The business managers of the news organization	199	38.7%	2.94	1.33
The owners of the news organization	196	51.5%	3.24	1.40
Editorial policy	203	65.0%	3.64	1.18
Advertising considerations	193	24.9%	2.36	1.40
Profit expectations	194	17.5%	1.98	1.36
Audience research and data	202	38.1%	3.07	1.23
Availability of news-gathering resources	205	62.0%	3.59	1.18
Time limits	204	56.4%	3.38	1.28
Journalism ethics	204	88.2%	4.38	0.81
Self-censorship	204	29.4%	2.75	1.35
Personal values and beliefs	204	39.7%	3.0	1.38
Colleagues in other media	200	9.0%	2.02	1.07
Friends, acquaintances and family	200	8.0%	1.88	1.05
Feedback from the audience	201	34.5%	2.46	1.23
Competing news organizations	201	18.4%	2.46	1.23
Media laws and regulation	203	35.0%	3.07	1.23
Access to information	202	75.2%	4.01	1.05
Government censorship	201	48.8%	3.32	1.30
Government officials	200	33.5%	2.80	1.40
Politicians	196	28.1%	2.64	1.36
Business people	198	19.2%	2.26	1.34
Public relations	197	22.3%	2.41	1.34
Relationships with news sources	204	46.1%	3.20	1.26
Police	198	13.6%	2.15	1.22
Issue advocacy groups	195	13.8%	2.09	1.25
Religious groups and institutions	194	7.7%	1.74	1.09
Military	197	12.7%	1.96	1.19
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	196	12.2%	1.76	1.17
Organized crime and criminal groups	198	13.1%	1.94	1.23
Terrorist groups	193	9.8%	1.72	1.14

Question: "Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist." (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Estonia

Ragne Kõuts-Klemm & Liis Auväärt

INTRODUCTION

Estonia is a member of the European Union and NATO, and a country with a rather stable political system. Since 1991 it has been a democratic country. While having diversity on the party landscape, the last decades' coalitions, including mainly liberal parties, have been ruling. However, the conservative parties have significant support among the population, too. Estonia is well known worldwide as an innovative country with a digitally advanced public sector. The population is highly educated, and the country stands high in different international rankings, including a high media literacy level among various population groups.

Estonian journalistic tradition started centuries ago as a part of the Baltic-German press system. The development of modern journalism was disrupted by Soviet rule, where journalists, for almost 50 years, worked in the conditions of censorship by the ruling Communist Party. After regaining independence, the dual media system was built with strong public service media, diverse private media, and relatively high trust in media among audiences.

Estonia has politically independent media and high press freedom (in 2025 the 2nd place according to Reporters Without Borders). Any political attempt to influence journalism or threaten its autonomy will be responded to with heavy public discussion. Since being a small media market, the sustainability of the media is more threatened by economic factors. Advertising money flows out of the market due to global capitalism and very large online platforms. However, in the last decades the domestic digital media have been successful in selling digital subscriptions: and the future goal is to fine tune digital subscriptions further to offer a more personalized approach content-wise to the subscriber. After the start of the full-scale war in Ukraine, the Estonian government gave more support to the domestic media for producing quality news content in both Estonian and Russian language, since Estonia has a substantial Russian-speaking population group. There is widespread support for Ukraine in Estonia.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The sample of Estonian journalists (N = 299) is balanced in terms of gender: 51.9% of them defined themselves as female. On average, they were 41.7 years old (SD = 12.4; Median = 41.0). They were highly educated: 45.9% of them have obtained a Bachelor's degree or equivalent, 34.5% hold a Master's degree or equivalent and 1.0% obtained a doctorate, 18.2% listed high-school education as their highest educational level and some of them have been visiting university courses, but did not obtain a degree. Almost half of the journalists report their educational background in journalism (45.8%) and got their training from a university.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

In terms of the background of their main employers, most of the journalists in the Estonian sample worked for newspapers (38.3%) or for internet-native media (30.9%). The sample included 12.8% of journalists working for TV organizations and 10.7% for radio outlets only. Very few journalists worked for magazine companies (2.0%) or for a news agency (1.0%). The biggest share of them worked for national (82.3%) and fewer for local or regional media (16.7%), 77.4% for private and 20.5% for public service media. Most of the questioned journalists had a full-time permanent contract (86.9%). However, at least a half of journalists reported to get additional income from outside the field of journalism (50.8%). They worked on average 42.2 hours a week (SD = 10.4; Median = 40; for those in full-time employment). The majority of journalists were not members of a union (73.8%).

The Estonian sample consisted of 72.6% journalists having no management role, 20.6% having middle management role, and 7.0% of journalists having top management role. Their working experience in journalism is on average 16.4 years (SD = 11.7; Median = 15). Most of them were not specialized in any specific beat and covered different topics (75.1%). Journalists in the Estonian sample perceived their work as rather stressful, while 33.7% of them reported feeling stressed out often and 34.4% having it sometimes.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Journalists in the Estonian sample did not report serious safety concerns related to their work. However, they had experiences with demeaning or hateful speech and public discrediting of their work (see Table 1). Additionally, some journalists have experienced surveillance (only 68.1% never experienced), disseminating their personal information (77.2% never experienced), stalking (83.9% never experienced) and legal actions against their work (84.2% never experienced). Physical and other serious actions against them have been rare or almost non-existent. However, any attack against journalists needs to be treated with the utmost attention.

13.4% of the respondents were concerned about their physical well-being (see Table 2) – the number is considerably high for Estonian society, which is one of the safest in the world. More than one third report that they are concerned about their emotional and mental wellbeing (38.4%).

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	298	6.7%	12.8%	33.6%	30.5%	16.4%
Public discrediting of your work	298	8.4%	15.8%	29.5%	24.8%	21.5%
Surveillance	298	1.7%	2.7%	12.4%	15.1%	68.1%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	298	0.7%	0.3%	3.7%	5.4%	89.9%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	298	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	98.7%
Legal actions against you because of your work	298	0.7%	0.7%	5.4%	9.1%	84.2%
Stalking	298	0.0%	1.0%	3.7%	11.4%	83.9%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	298	0.7%	2.7%	13.4%	26.2%	57.0%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	298	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	1.7%	97.0%
Other physical attacks	298	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	2.7%	96.3%
Others disseminating your personal information	298	0.3%	1.3%	4.7%	16.4%	77.2%
Workplace bullying	298	0.7%	2.0%	4.4%	12.8%	80.2%

Question: “In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?”

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	292	14.0%	2.16	1.10
Concerned about physical well-being	292	13.4%	1.88	1.15
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	292	38.4%	2.83	1.36
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Estonia go unpunished	292	33.2%	2.71	1.33

Question: “Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.” (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Journalists in the Estonian sample perceived having mainly a monitorial role in society (see Table 3). Only a few of them expressed willingness to intervene with politics or, even fewer, collaborate with government and politicians.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	299	90.3%	4.47	0.73
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	299	79.6%	4.18	1.01
Shine a light on society’s problems	299	88.0%	4.52	0.79
Motivate people to participate in politics	299	22.1%	2.58	1.21
Provide analysis of current affairs	299	68.9%	3.90	1.10
Let people express their views	299	72.6%	3.97	0.99
Provide information people need to form political opinion	299	60.5%	3.63	1.25
Advocate for social change	299	48.8%	3.37	1.23
Influence public opinion	299	43.1%	3.32	1.17
Set the political agenda	299	47.5%	3.37	1.21
Promote peace and tolerance	299	64.2%	3.81	1.14
Educate the audience	299	80.3%	4.29	1.00
Point toward possible solutions to society’s problems	298	77.5%	4.12	0.95
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	299	49.8%	3.42	1.13
Support national development	297	51.5%	3.49	1.13
Support government policy	297	5.4%	1.79	0.96
Convey a positive image of political leaders	299	2.4%	1.35	0.73
Provide entertainment and relaxation	298	33.6%	2.92	1.28
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	298	66.8%	3.81	1.10
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	297	44.1%	3.21	1.23
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	299	70.6%	3.98	1.07
Support efforts to protect public health	298	52.3%	3.47	1.19
Counteract disinformation	299	85.3%	4.36	0.95
Discuss future implications of current events	299	65.5%	3.76	1.08

Question: “Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Journalists in the Estonian sample perceived the importance of context and interpretations in reporting. There were few respondents who felt strongly that there is an universal truth, the majority of respondents perceived the world as a rather relational one. However, most of the respondents believed that it is possible to represent objective reality in reporting (see Table 4).

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	274	67.2%	3.72	1.01
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	274	60.6%	3.54	1.02
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	274	35.4%	3.03	1.01
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	274	9.9%	2.12	1.02
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	273	68.5%	3.68	0.97

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Journalists in the Estonian sample stressed the relevance of ethics for their work (see Table 5). As visible from Table 6, Estonian journalists claimed it unacceptable to take money from sources, publish stories without verifying information, and publish promotional stories.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	283	86.9%	4.30	0.79
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	283	51.9%	3.32	1.21
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	283	35.0%	2.76	1.29
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	283	34.3%	2.83	1.32

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	285	1.1%	63,5%
Using hidden recording devices	285	1.1%	63.9%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	285	8.8%	60.4%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	285	1.8%	54.7%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	285	1.4%	26.7%
Paying people for confidential information	284	2.8%	32.4%
Accepting money from sources	285	0.4%	1.4%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	283	1.4%	40.3%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	285	0.7%	14.4%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	285	1.1%	10.2%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Journalists in the Estonian sample perceived a great deal of freedom in their everyday work (see Table 7).

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	298	82.2%	3.99	0.72
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	298	87.9%	4.26	0.71
Media freedom in Estonia	298	90.6%	4.06	0.52

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Estonian journalists perceived internal factors like editorial policy, journalism ethics, and guidance by the editorial supervisors as the most influential related to their work (see Table 8). On the other hand, they perceived that external factors characterizing society also have an impact, e.g. time limits, availability of sources, and access to information. There was almost a consensus that no particular social group has impact on editorial decisions and journalists' work in Estonia.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	272	48.5%	3.38	0.98
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	273	54.2%	3.55	0.97
The business managers of the news organization	233	20.2%	2.33	1.26
The owners of the news organization	227	16.3%	2.17	1.26
Editorial policy	256	42.6%	3.26	1.09
Advertising considerations	206	15.0%	2.08	1.19
Profit expectations	218	26.1%	2.64	1.27
Audience research and data	247	24.3%	2.66	1.15
Availability of news-gathering resources	260	49.6%	3.49	1.07
Time limits	276	67.0%	3.83	0.97
Journalism ethics	269	71.4%	3.91	1.16
Self-censorship	264	39.0%	3.01	1.31
Personal values and beliefs	266	57.1%	3.65	1.11
Colleagues in other media	262	12.2%	2.22	1.04
Friends, acquaintances and family	269	13.8%	2.30	1.03
Feedback from the audience	271	26.9%	2.92	0.98
Competing news organizations	269	23.4%	2.77	1.06
Media laws and regulation	262	38.2%	3.16	1.18
Access to information	270	63.3%	3.75	1.12
Government censorship	227	5.7%	1.57	0.98
Government officials	248	8.5%	1.81	1.06
Politicians	246	6.1%	1.76	0.98
Business people	247	3.2%	1.67	0.91
Public relations	258	10.5%	2.23	1.02
Relationships with news sources	265	44.2%	3.19	1.19
Police	232	8.2%	1.78	1.05
Issue advocacy groups	234	5.1%	1.67	0.92
Scientists or health experts	244	21.7%	2.45	1.26

Question: "Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist." (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Ethiopia

Timothy Klein & Terje Skjerdal

INTRODUCTION

Ethiopia is Africa's second most populated country with over 120 million people, who belong to over 80 different ethnic groups. Prior to 1974, Ethiopia was governed by a monarchy, until Emperor Haile Selassie was overthrown by a communist military committee known as the "Derg." In 1991, after a long-running civil war the Derg was defeated and Ethiopia has since followed a controversial system of "ethnic federalism," where each ethnic group has retained a degree of autonomy from the federal government. Despite strong economic growth in recent decades and declining poverty levels, Ethiopia's per capita gross national income is $1,020 (2023/24).

With limited financial support for journalism from advertisers and audience subscriptions, the state has played a central role in journalism in Ethiopia. The majority of journalists work for state-owned news organizations. With a change in government leadership in 2018, journalists were released from prison and Ethiopia's journalistic freedom seemed to be expanding. This changed towards the beginning of our data collection period, with arrests and detention of journalists increasing in 2022. War between the federal government and Tigray in late 2020, as well as numerous ongoing conflicts in Amhara, Benishangul-Gumuz, Oromia, and other areas have produced vastly different experiences for Ethiopians and for Ethiopian journalists.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The average age of Ethiopian journalists in our sample was 37 years (SD = 7.9, Median = 36). The vast majority of Ethiopian journalists have a college degree, with 92.4% holding a college degree, and 39.5% holding a master's degree or above. Additionally, 85.8% of Ethiopian journalists have completed formal journalism training, with 68.2% studying journalism in university or college, 16.4% reported receiving training via apprenticeships or cadetships, and 27.2% had completed short-term journalism trainings. Among Ethiopian journalists who took part in the survey, only 25.1% were female. This is likely lower than the actual population of female journalists, as our pre-study census of news organizations reported 37.9% of journalists were female.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

In terms of the background of their main employers, the majority of journalists surveyed worked in either television (40.1%) or radio (36.4%). About 10% of Ethiopian journalists reported working for native online media and 7.7% for print newspapers. Very few journalists worked for magazines (0.9%) and only 1.7% of the interviewed journalists claimed not to have a main employer. Most journalists (67.5%) worked for national (or trans-national) media, while 31.0% worked for local or regional media.

On average, Ethiopian journalists had 8.8 years of professional experience (SD = 5.8; Median = 7). A majority of journalists (73.2%) worked on a variety of beats or subject areas rather than on a single one. In terms of belonging to a union or a professional association, 39.0% reported having a membership.

Of the Ethiopian journalists who were interviewed, 91.9% had a full-time contract; with 73.6% reported having a full-time permanent contract. Only 9.8% worked as freelancers or were self-employed. A substantial percentage (40.4%) of journalists reported getting some income from outside of journalism. Only 8.1% reported having a part-time permanent contract, with 5.6% reporting a part-time permanent contract and only 1.7% having a part-time, temporary contract.

The average number of hours worked each week by Ethiopian full-time journalists was reported at 48.5 hours (SD = 14.6; Median = 48). When asked about the stress of being a journalist, 55.2% reported feeling stressed out at work often or very often during the previous six months, where only 18.1% never or rarely felt stressed at work.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Demeaning or hateful speech was the most common threat experienced by Ethiopian journalists (see Table 1). The next most common threats were surveillance and the discrediting of their work. Arrests, detention, legal threats, and stalking are not particularly uncommon, with nearly 25% reporting experiencing these threats at least sometimes. Similarly, experiencing physical assault was reported, at least to some degree, by over 20% of journalists in Ethiopia, and more than 15% report experiencing sexual assault at least sometimes. Nearly half were concerned about their emotional well-being, and 37.6% were concerned about their physical wellbeing (see Table 2). Nearly 70% of Ethiopian journalists strongly agree that they are "concerned that those who harm journalists in Ethiopia go unpunished."

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	356	12.4%	9.3%	29.8%	22.8%	25.8%
Surveillance	348	9.2%	12.9%	23.9%	21.6%	32.5%
Public discrediting of your work	353	6.5%	13.0%	26.9%	21.0%	32.6%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	355	5.6%	9.3%	23.7%	10.7%	50.7%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	355	5.6%	7.3%	22.3%	21.7%	43.1%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	356	4.5%	7.0%	15.2%	5.3%	68.0%
Legal actions against you because of your work	353	4.0%	4.8%	15.3%	11.0%	64.9%
Stalking	351	3.4%	6.6%	17.7%	18.8%	53.6%
Other physical attacks	351	3.1%	4.8%	12.5%	7.1%	72.4%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	350	2.9%	4.0%	8.3%	5.1%	79.7%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Ethiopia go unpunished	358	69.0%	3.87	1.19
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	358	47.5%	3.12	1.30
Concerned about physical well-being	359	37.6%	2.91	1.24
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	359	25.3%	2.64	1.26

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Ethiopian journalists found interventionist roles very or extremely important, while more detached journalistic roles were relevant but less appreciated (see Table 3). Promoting peace, solutions to society's problems, and educating the audience were the top three most important roles fitting with the "development journalism" and "solutions" journalism ideals. The political roles of journalists were among the least valued, with five of the lowest six roles being related to the role of journalism in politics; this included low scores for both the oppositional journalistic role of monitoring those in power and an even lower score for conveying a positive image of the political leaders.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Promote peace and tolerance	360	93.1%	4.62	0.69
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	361	88.6%	4.46	0.76
Educate the audience	359	87.2%	4.43	0.76
Let people express their views	357	86.0%	4.32	0.84
Shine a light on society's problems	355	85.9%	4.34	0.91
Support national development	358	85.2%	4.34	0.92
Advocate for social change	353	83.3%	4.27	0.89
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	357	82.4%	4.27	0.89
Provide analysis of current affairs	357	81.5%	4.17	0.92
Counteract disinformation	355	80.6%	4.15	1.09
Support efforts to protect public health	356	78.4%	4.10	1.00
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	359	73.8%	4.01	1.00
Influence public opinion	354	64.1%	3.76	1.14
Be a detached observer	359	62.4%	3.62	1.29
Provide information people need to form political opinion	359	57.9%	3.53	1.23
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	352	57.7%	3.62	1.04
Provide entertainment and relaxation	357	57.7%	3.61	1.05
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	352	57.7%	3.46	1.18
Support government policy	356	43.5%	3.25	1.17
Motivate people to participate in politics	351	40.5%	3.11	1.25
Set the political agenda	358	43.0%	3.15	1.28
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	355	38.6%	3.09	1.22
Convey a positive image of political leaders	359	27.3%	2.70	1.24

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

There was disagreement among Ethiopian journalists about the nature of truth and objectivity in reporting (see Table 4). While the highest agreement among journalists was regarding the need for interpreting facts which is more aligned with the subjective view of journalism the second highest agreement was that objective reporting was possible.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	359	85.50%	4.19	0.80
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	355	67.30%	3.70	0.99
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	357	51.00%	3.33	1.20
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	358	41.30%	3.13	1.18
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	357	37.30%	3.04	1.13

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Journalists in Ethiopia strongly agreed that what is ethical should be decided by professional standards rather than personal judgment (see Table 5). When it comes to controversial reporting methods, using some deception hidden recording devices and claiming to be someone else were at least justified on occasion by over half of journalists (see Table 6). The two least acceptable practices were publishing unverified information (20.2% found it justified on occasion or always) and accepting money from a source (14.2% said it was justified on occasion or always).

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	362	73.8%	4.02	1.07
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	358	59.5%	3.63	1.09
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	359	47.4%	3.23	1.15
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	358	17.3%	2.37	1.14

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Using hidden recording devices	360	5.0%	61.9%
Claiming to be somebody else	360	7.5%	51.7%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	362	8.3%	40.6%
Paying people for confidential information	360	10.0%	33.3%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	362	4.4%	35.6%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	363	6.3%	29.8%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	363	6.1%	28.4%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	361	5.0%	25.2%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	362	3.9%	15.7%
Accepting money from sources	359	3.6%	10.6%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

A little less than a third of Ethiopian journalists reported having a great deal/complete freedom to select news stories and to decide which aspects to focus on (see Table 7). But only one in ten journalists agreed that journalism in Ethiopia had a great deal/complete freedom.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	359	26.5%	2.96	1.03
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	359	30.4%	3.04	1.02
Media freedom in Ethiopia	357	10.1%	2.29	1.00

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Ethiopian journalists found external factors to be most influential – with top three influential sources being access to information, government censorship, and government officials. The internal factors that were most influential were their news organization's editorial policy, followed by the influence of owners and editorial supervisors (see Table 8).

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Access to information	348	77.0%	3.99	0.91
Government censorship	349	69.1%	3.82	1.15
Government officials	345	67.8%	3.86	1.17
Editorial policy	348	67.5%	3.82	1.18
Media laws and regulation	354	65.5%	3.75	1.18
The owners of the news organization	327	61.8%	3.56	1.26
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	349	59.3%	3.53	1.19
Journalism ethics	335	58.2%	3.47	1.26
Politicians	336	58.0%	3.56	1.26
Time limits	340	52.4%	3.38	1.15
Self-censorship	341	49.6%	3.36	1.21
Availability of news-gathering resources	329	45.9%	3.21	1.20
The business managers of the news organization	325	44.6%	3.07	1.31
Personal values and beliefs	334	44.6%	3.07	1.34
Relationships with news sources	339	41.9%	3.09	1.22
Feedback from the audience	342	40.4%	3.15	1.12
Competing news organizations	343	39.9%	3.10	1.19
Military	294	39.7%	2.77	1.45
Public relations	331	34.4%	2.87	1.25
Audience research and data	296	33.1%	2.87	1.29
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	270	33.0%	2.46	1.50
Profit expectations	288	29.9%	2.73	1.21
Police	314	28.7%	2.64	1.38
Organized crime and criminal groups	241	28.5%	2.29	1.50
Business people	326	27.0%	2.63	1.30
Religious groups and institutions	295	25.2%	2.91	1.48
Terrorist groups	296	24.9%	2.35	1.33
Advertising considerations	292	24.0%	2.58	1.17
Scientists or health experts	325	22.6%	2.58	1.29
Peers on the news staff	338	22.5%	2.67	1.13
Friends, acquaintances and family	338	21.3%	2.40	1.19
Colleagues in other media	337	20.2%	2.37	1.20
Issue advocacy groups	316	18.7%	2.36	1.18

Question: "Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist." (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Finland

Jari Väliverronen, Mikko Villi & Reeta Pöyhtäri

INTRODUCTION

Finland enjoys a stable political environment with a multiparty system. The current government is right-leaning. Economic challenges stem from global market volatility, yet growth is supported by a robust technology and education sector. Socially, Finland is renowned for its egalitarianism and comprehensive welfare system, but an aging population presents challenges.

The media system in Finland leans historically on strong democratic corporatist and media welfare state traditions. Journalistic tradition is rooted in freedom of the press and freedom of expression, journalistic integrity, and high ethical standards. Finland consistently ranks among the top performers in international press freedom indices.

However, hostility towards the work of journalists has been increasing and digital transition has resulted in substantial transformations and layoffs in the media industry since the 2010s. While Finland's press fares better compared to many other European countries, concerns are mounting about the quality and future of journalism, particularly in local and regional media outlets.

The fieldwork for this study in Finland took place in 2021–22 when the country was suffering under the COVID pandemic and began to see the economic effects of the Russian attack on Ukraine in February 2022. For Finnish journalism, these developments marked another episode in a long line of challenges that have increased pressures on journalists to rethink their professional values and working ways.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The gender and age distribution of Finnish respondents indicates a relatively experienced and predominantly female journalist population. 60.1% identified as female, and the average age was 47.4 years (SD = 11.7, Median = 47.5). Both figures closely align with the membership data by the Finnish Union of Journalists. Respondents were highly educated: 77.3% had a university degree, most often a master's (48.9%). A slight majority (54.0%) had completed a journalism-related degree or professional training. In this group, a university or college degree was by far the most prevalent (80.5%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

In terms of the background of their main employers, almost two thirds worked primarily in print media organizations (newspapers: 37.5%, magazines: 27.9%). 8.3% worked for radio outlets and 7.6% for TV organizations. 58.9% represented commercial outlets, but the single biggest employer was the public service media YLE with a 20.0% share of respondents. A slight majority (52.1%) worked for national media while regional and local media accounted for 19.1% and 18.8%, respectively.

The average professional experience in journalism among the respondents was 20.4 years (SD = 11.5, Median = 20), up from the 17.3 years observed in the previous WJS survey in 2013. 56.4% identified themselves as rank-and-file journalists, while 13.1% placed themselves in middle management and 30.5% in top management. Challenges in data collection led to particularly editors-in-chief of small newspapers being overrepresented in the sample. A clear majority (86.5%) were members in a professional association.

Most informants, 62.8%, had full-time permanent contracts. However, as a sign of increasing precarity, the proportion of such respondents had declined by approximately six percentage points from the previous WJS survey. Freelancers comprised 22.2% of the sample. Almost one in three (30.6%) had income from other jobs than journalism. The most common occupations mentioned were education, public relations/corporate communications, and advertising.

On average, respondents worked approximately 38.2 hours per week (SD = 6.6, Median = 37.5; for those in full-time employment). 39.9% specialized in one or more subject areas, while the rest classified themselves as generalists. Generalist journalism appears to have gained prominence since the previous WJS survey. The three most common areas of specialization among respondents were culture, economics, and news and current affairs.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Finnish journalists can operate in a relatively safe environment: almost half of the safety threats inquired had been experienced by no more than 10% of respondents (see Table 1). Different forms of verbal harassment were the most common threats while physical attacks, arrests and intimidation targeting journalists' families were the least frequent ones. Of work-related concerns (see Table 2), impunity for those who obstruct journalists' work was the strongest, with an alarming three in five respondents (strongly) concerned about this. Moreover, around 40% were worried about the mental strain of journalistic work. However, only one in nine respondents expressed their apprehension about losing their journalistic job.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	409	2.9%	7.6%	34.2%	39.6%	15.6%
Public discrediting of your work	409	3.9%	10.0%	33.7%	31.8%	20.5%
Surveillance	409	1.5%	4.6%	17.1%	27.6%	49.1%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	409	0.5%	0.5%	2.0%	6.8%	90.2%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	409	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.2%	99.3%
Legal actions against you because of your work	409	0.2%	0.2%	0.7%	4.9%	93.9%
Stalking	409	0.2%	1.2%	1.7%	8.6%	88.3%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	409	0.5%	1.7%	9.3%	24.0%	64.5%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	409	0.2%	0.5%	2.2%	7.1%	90.0%
Other physical attacks	409	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%	3.2%	95.6%
Coercion	409	1.2%	2.0%	14.2%	35.9%	46.7%
Questioning of your personal morality	409	2.0%	4.2%	22.5%	31.1%	40.3%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	409	0.5%	0.2%	2.9%	11.0%	85.3%
Others disseminating your personal information	409	0.0%	0.5%	2.2%	5.6%	91.7%
Workplace bullying	409	1.2%	1.0%	5.1%	12.5%	80.2%
Intimidation that targets family	409	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	3.2%	95.8%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	409	11.0%	1.98	1.07
Concerned about physical well-being	409	23.5%	2.37	1.17
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	409	40.6%	2.91	1.22
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Finland go unpunished	409	60.4%	3.49	1.08

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Finnish journalists' role perceptions highlight primarily their critical and analytical approach, and their aspirations for relaying objective and neutral information (see Table 3). Counteracting disinformation was regarded as the most crucial professional role. At the other end of the scale, maintaining critical distance to political actors and political agenda-setting were imperative.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	409	76.8%	4.06	0.87
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	409	59.4%	3.66	1.14
Shine a light on society's problems	409	72.6%	4.07	0.96
Motivate people to participate in politics	409	22.0%	2.67	1.12
Provide analysis of current affairs	409	74.3%	4.04	0.94
Let people express their views	409	61.9%	3.75	1.00
Provide information people need to form political opinion	409	48.4%	3.31	1.30
Advocate for social change	409	24.2%	2.80	1.08
Influence public opinion	409	22.2%	2.78	1.05
Set the political agenda	409	3.4%	1.76	0.85
Promote peace and tolerance	409	54.0%	3.56	1.16
Educate the audience	409	65.0%	3.77	1.00
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	409	51.3%	3.48	1.01
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	409	37.7%	3.22	1.10
Support national development	409	29.8%	2.99	1.08
Support government policy	409	2.0%	1.47	0.73
Convey a positive image of political leaders	409	1.5%	1.40	0.66
Provide entertainment and relaxation	409	27.9%	2.81	1.11
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	409	34.5%	2.98	1.11
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	409	31.8%	3.02	1.09
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	409	38.6%	3.15	1.11
Support efforts to protect public health	409	26.9%	2.84	1.15
Counteract disinformation	409	79.2%	4.21	1.00
Discuss future implications of current events	409	57.5%	3.64	1.02

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Finnish journalists' responses indicate their strong commitment to fact-based reporting and their resolute stance against mis-/disinformation on one hand, and their notable skepticism and different interpretations of objectivity on the other hand (see Table 4). This ambivalence suggests an ongoing reworking of objectivity. The idea of transparency as its replacement was still met with doubt.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	409	73.3%	3.80	0.87
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	409	61.1%	3.58	0.85
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	409	22.0%	2.67	0.95
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	409	9.5%	2.13	0.92
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	409	42.1%	3.15	0.96
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	409	10.3%	2.22	0.91
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	409	28.6%	2.75	0.99
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	409	80.4%	3.92	0.73
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	409	6.1%	1.98	0.82
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	409	23.2%	2.76	1.00
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	409	90.7%	4.25	0.74

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Finnish journalists exhibit a robust confidence in professional standards (see Table 5). They harbor a generally negative perception of controversial practices (see Table 6), which can mostly be attributed to their support for the national ethical code, and to the way its specific clauses are written (see https://jsn.fi/en/journalists-guidelines/). The most widely accepted measures focus on monitoring the actions of authorities and those in positions of power, which aligns with journalists' watchdog orientation.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	409	75.3%	3.97	0.86
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	409	35.9%	2.99	1.08
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	409	13.0%	2.22	1.00
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	409	6.8%	1.79	0.92

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	409	0.2%	59.4%
Using hidden recording devices	409	0.5%	77.0%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	409	3.4%	70.9%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	409	0.7%	61.4%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	409	0.5%	14.4%
Paying people for confidential information	409	0.2%	21.8%
Accepting money from sources	409	0.5%	1.5%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	409	0.7%	31.3%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	409	0.2%	5.1%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	409	0.0%	49.9%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Finnish journalists have a high level of autonomy to select their news topics and to decide their story angles. Journalists' responses regarding media freedom closely align with their individual experiences of autonomy: the vast majority believe that the news media in Finland has at least a great deal of freedom. Few respondents reported about lack of personal autonomy or media freedom.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	409	74.8%	3.91	0.82
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	409	83.1%	4.05	0.70
Media freedom in Finland	404	83.9%	3.88	0.55

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Among factors influencing Finnish journalists, internal elements are strongly emphasized, in line with the previous WJS survey. Eight out of ten of the most influential factors are internal, with journalism ethics at the top of the list. At the bottom of the list, there are several external factors that are virtually unknown in Finland (e.g., paramilitary groups or terrorist groups).

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	358	39.9%	3.20	1.07
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	373	58.4%	3.58	1.09
The business managers of the news organization	350	15.1%	2.33	1.17
The owners of the news organization	342	12.3%	2.11	1.15
Editorial policy	393	63.1%	3.76	1.01
Advertising considerations	341	5.6%	1.77	0.94
Profit expectations	339	20.1%	2.44	1.25
Audience research and data	378	39.2%	3.26	1.12
Availability of news-gathering resources	373	65.7%	3.89	1.07
Time limits	400	61.3%	3.78	1.00
Journalism ethics	393	73.3%	4.05	1.07
Self-censorship	380	4.7%	1.99	0.84
Personal values and beliefs	399	30.8%	3.13	1.02
Colleagues in other media	400	6.8%	2.29	0.86
Friends, acquaintances and family	397	5.5%	2.10	0.84
Feedback from the audience	405	11.9%	2.65	0.84
Competing news organizations	396	14.6%	2.63	0.89
Media laws and regulation	395	60.3%	3.70	1.05
Access to information	396	62.9%	3.70	0.99
Government censorship	362	7.2%	1.80	1.01
Government officials	379	7.4%	1.90	1.00
Politicians	376	6.4%	1.85	0.98
Business people	379	4.0%	1.79	0.89
Public relations	379	4.5%	1.92	0.89
Relationships with news sources	389	23.1%	2.75	1.10
Police	372	7.8%	1.80	0.99
Issue advocacy groups	385	3.6%	1.74	0.84
Scientists or health experts	395	23.3%	2.67	1.20
Religious groups and institutions	377	1.3%	1.45	0.69
Military	364	2.7%	1.47	0.78
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	348	1.1%	1.17	0.56
Organized crime and criminal groups	358	0.6%	1.15	0.47
Terrorist groups	353	0.6%	1.10	0.44

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Germany

Anna von Garmissen, Mia Grünewald, Corinna Lauerer, Thomas Hanitzsch & Wiebke Loosen

INTRODUCTION

With around 84 million inhabitants (a quarter of which have a migration background), Germany is the largest and economically most significant member state of the European Union. The country consists of 16 federal states; politics follows a model of parliamentary democracy. At the time of data collection (2022-2023), Germany was governed by a three-party coalition consisting of the Social Democrats (SPD), Greens, and Liberal Party. Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Germany experiences a continued economic recession.

The constitution guarantees freedom of speech and press freedom; Germany's media system is self-regulated. The country and its federal states maintain a strong Public Service Broadcasting sector funded through mandatory license fees. Journalism is an open vocation and working as a journalist does not require certification. Typically, individuals enter the profession via an institutionalized form of cadetship ("Volontariat").

During the field phase several major publishing houses faced job cuts (e.g. Gruner+Jahr/RTL, Springer), which underlines the ongoing economic crisis in the journalistic sector in Germany. Besides, several scandals involving leading journalists were uncovered: One dealt with nepotism and waste of money in Public Service Broadcasting, another concerned abuse of power and sexual harassment at Germany's largest tabloid newspaper Bild. Also, the country was still under the impression of the fading pandemic.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The typical journalist in Germany is male, in his mid-forties, and holds a university degree. The proportion of women journalists has grown from 40.1 (WJS2) to 44.0%. Journalists are on average 45.3 years old (SD = 11.0; Median = 45). They are well educated: 54.7% of them hold an MA degree or "Magister," 12.4% a bachelor's degree, and 3.1% obtained a doctoral degree. Another 7.7% undertook some university studies but have not obtained a degree. Overall, 97.7% of the respondents went through formal education or professional training in journalism. Most of them have completed apprenticeships or cadetships (97.9%), 51.6% have participated in short-term courses, and 34.5% have attended university.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

More than one third of journalists in Germany (36.5%) mainly work for a news organization with a newspaper background. For the remaining journalists, the main employer's background is magazine (20.5%), television (17.3%), radio (17.2%), news agency (3.5%), and Internet-native (3.1%). Regarding the area of coverage, 43.8% of the journalists report they mainly work for (trans)national media, while 52.5% primarily cater to local or regional media. Three quarters (73.9%) work for commercial news, another 20.5% for public service broadcasting.

German journalists are relatively experienced. They have on average 19.9 years of professional experience (SD = 10.4; Median = 20). The majority (65.6%) work on a specific beat or subject area. More than half of the journalists (55.1%) are members of professional associations.

The vast majority of the German respondents work on a full-time contract (63.1% permanently and 9.9% temporarily employed). One out of five (19.6%) work as freelancers or are self-employed, and very few work part-time in journalism (5.4% with permanent and 1.8% with temporary contracts). One in five journalists (18.0%) report an additional employment/job outside journalism.

The average working week of German full-time journalists has 40.1 hours (SD = 5.7; Median = 40). Relatedly, 49.8% of the respondents report they felt stressed out at work often or very often during the previous six months; only 7.2% have never or rarely felt that way.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Demeaning or hateful speech and public discrediting of their work are the most frequently experienced threats among journalists in Germany (Table 1). Other threats or intimidations have been experienced by over a quarter, and the dissemination of personal information as well as workplace bullying have each been reported by almost one out of six respondents. More severe threats like legal actions, stalking, surveillance, hacking, or physical attacks have never been experienced by the vast majority.

More than 40% of journalists are concerned that those who harm journalists in Germany go unpunished, while around a fifth are concerned about their physical wellbeing, respectively, emotional and mental wellbeing (Table 2). This culminates in more than one out of ten journalists worrying about losing their job within the next 12 months.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	1220	1.8%	3.7%	17.3%	36.1%	41.1%
Public discrediting of your work	1219	1.7%	4.1%	19.9%	36.3%	37.9%
Surveillance	1196	0.0%	0.7%	0.8%	3.3%	95.2%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	1217	0.1%	0.5%	1.6%	4.7%	93.1%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	1221	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	99.6%
Legal actions against you because of your work	1219	0.2%	0.4%	1.6%	7.3%	90.5%
Stalking	1218	0.2%	0.1%	1.7%	7.3%	90.6%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	1221	0.5%	1.4%	4.8%	19.8%	73.5%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	1220	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	5.5%	93.2%
Other physical attacks	1219	0.0%	0.2%	0.7%	4.3%	94.8%
Others disseminating your personal information	1210	0.1%	1.2%	3.6%	11.4%	83.7%
Workplace bullying	1218	0.1%	0.9%	4.5%	10.2%	84.3%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	1218	0.0%	0.1%	0.6%	7.4%	92.0%

Question: “In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?”

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	1219	10.3%	1.89	1.07
Concerned about physical well-being	1220	22.6%	2.45	1.19
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	1220	19.2%	2.29	1.15
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Germany go unpunished	1218	41.4%	2.96	1.25

Question: “Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.” (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Journalists in Germany combine informational-instructive, analytical-deliberative, and critical-monitoring role orientations (Table 3). They consider it most important to provide people with information they need to form political opinion as well as with current analysis, to counteract disinformation, and to act as detached observers (all above 80%). For three out of four respondents it is also of great importance to shine a light on society’s problems. Roles that can be understood as government-supporting, on the other hand, are clearly rejected.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	1220	80.9%	4.16	0.92
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	1206	57.6%	3.52	1.39
Shine a light on society’s problems	1219	76.6%	4.09	1.08
Motivate people to participate in politics	1212	43.2%	3.23	1.12
Provide analysis of current affairs	1220	83.9%	4.27	0.93
Let people express their views	1217	55.8%	3.55	0.98
Provide information people need to form political opinion	1219	87.2%	4.34	0.83
Advocate for social change	1199	21.9%	2.58	1.14
Influence public opinion	1205	13.3%	2.39	1.01
Set the political agenda	1189	7.8%	1.90	1.03
Promote peace and tolerance	1210	61.7%	3.67	1.01
Educate the audience	1216	69.4%	3.96	0.99
Point toward possible solutions to society’s problems	1215	68.9%	3.81	1.01
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	1213	51.9%	3.48	1.01
Support national development	1158	9.7%	2.16	1.00
Support government policy	1196	0.8%	1.39	0.68
Convey a positive image of political leaders	1203	0.7%	1.28	0.61
Provide entertainment and relaxation	1216	39.6%	3.13	1.27
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	1218	54.9%	3.54	1.14
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	1220	60.3%	3.67	0.99
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	1219	56.2%	3.49	1.18
Support efforts to protect public health	1207	29.7%	2.81	1.17
Counteract disinformation	1218	85.9%	4.38	0.89
Discuss future implications of current events	1214	70.5%	3.81	0.94

Question: “Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Epistemological perceptions of journalists in Germany diverge to some extent and reveal a wide range of thoughts about limits and possibilities of journalism (Table 4). Thus, 61.1% agree on the possibility to represent objective reality in reporting, while just under half consider interpretation to be necessary to make sense of facts. However, there is hardly any disagreement about alerting audiences when a source's claim is untruthful (85.6%). A clear majority of 71.8% also believe that journalists should let the facts speak for themselves.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	1203	49.3%	3.33	1.07
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	1202	12.8%	1.95	1.07
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	1206	19.6%	2.35	1.11
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	1209	3.5%	1.41	0.79
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	1205	61.1%	3.55	1.02
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	1206	9.0%	1.94	0.97
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	1198	13.9%	2.23	1.03
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	1204	71.8%	3.84	0.91
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	1197	7.8%	1.82	0.98
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	1195	37.6%	2.93	1.33
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	1205	85.6%	4.40	0.80

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Professional standards are still upheld among journalists in Germany: Most respondents agree that ethical acceptability should always be determined by professional standards and independent of the respective situation (Table 5). When it comes to controversial reporting methods the results show strong concerns against accepting money from sources and claiming promotional content as journalism. A majority, on the other hand, consider it occasionally justified to use personal material of powerful people without their permission (Table 6).

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	1207	87.6%	4.34	0.88
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	1182	30.7%	2.51	1.35
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	1201	29.6%	2.40	1.40
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	1200	10.4%	1.74	1.08

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	1220	0.2%	38.9%
Using hidden recording devices	1220	0.7%	44.6%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	1220	7.6%	58.3%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	1219	2.5%	62.6%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	1220	0.0%	12.5%
Paying people for confidential information	1217	0.5%	36.4%
Accepting money from sources	1221	0.0%	2.0%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	1220	0.1%	13.1%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	1215	0.2%	7.8%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	1220	0.4%	40.1%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

The state of media freedom in Germany is rated well by most respondents: Three out of four journalists claim a great deal or even complete freedom for news media. However, when it comes to their personal autonomy, the reactions are more reserved: 62% feel very much or entirely free in selecting the stories they work on (Table 7). The perceived autonomy tends to be higher in terms of deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized (75%).

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	1218	62.0%	3.71	0.75
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	1217	74.7%	3.92	0.70
Media freedom in Germany	1210	76.4%	3.90	0.69

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Journalists in Germany perceive work-related influences like time limits and the availability of news-gathering resources as the strongest editorial influences (above 50%), followed by journalism ethics and access to information (above 40%), as well as personal values and beliefs and editorial supervisors/higher editors (above 30%). Political influences like government censorship or the influence of politicians are scarcest among the editorial influences considered very or extremely influential (Table 8).

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	1188	27.0%	2.73	1.09
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	1180	32.5%	3.08	0.98
The business managers of the news organization	1141	11.9%	2.14	1.07
The owners of the news organization	1025	8.1%	1.67	1.03
Editorial policy	1145	25.4%	2.80	1.03
Advertising considerations	1081	13.1%	2.01	1.16
Profit expectations	1084	17.1%	2.29	1.17
Audience research and data	1182	30.5%	2.96	1.05
Availability of news-gathering resources	1185	50.5%	3.34	1.09
Time limits	1216	57.9%	3.60	0.90
Journalism ethics	1202	48.3%	3.23	1.22
Self-censorship	1122	10.5%	2.00	1.05
Personal values and beliefs	1204	39.5%	3.03	1.19
Colleagues in other media	1162	4.9%	1.83	0.92
Friends, acquaintances and family	1182	3.5%	1.98	0.82
Feedback from the audience	1199	21.2%	2.64	1.05
Competing news organizations	1177	11.0%	2.14	1.03
Media laws and regulation	1155	24.0%	2.61	1.14
Access to information	1168	44.8%	3.17	1.15
Government censorship	1086	0.5%	1.11	0.40
Government officials	1103	0.7%	1.18	0.50
Politicians	1121	1.2%	1.44	0.72
Business people	1130	3.5%	1.55	0.82
Public relations	1171	6.1%	1.98	0.93
Relationships with news sources	1176	17.5%	2.42	1.07
Police	1122	4.5%	1.56	0.86
Issue advocacy groups	1145	4.0%	1.99	0.87

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Hong Kong[1]

Francis L. F. Lee

INTRODUCTION

A Special Administrative Region of China, Hong Kong experienced a quick process of democratic regression after the enactment of the National Security Law in June 2020. Its ranking in Reporters Without Border's world press freedom index dropped abruptly from 80 in 2021 to 148 in 2022 (it stands at 140 in 2025). The economy has recovered from COVID and registered an annual growth of about 3% in GDP since 2023, but the outlook is clouded by a wave of emigration driven largely by the political changes, and there are concerns about the city's declining status as an international financial hub.

Historically, Hong Kong journalists adopted the liberal conception of journalistic professionalism as their legitimating creed since the 1980s. They saw themselves as autonomous actors serving the interests of the local public through disseminating timely information and monitoring the powerholders. A significant degree of political parallelism used to be present in the media system. Media organizations ranged from a couple of most explicitly pro-democracy to a few newspapers under the command of the Chinese Communist Party. The spectrum was truncated in recent years, however, with the prosecution and closure of the pro-democracy *Apple Daily* and online news outlet *Stand News*.

The current survey was rolled out in September 2024, weeks after the two former chiefs of *Stand News* were convicted of sedition and about the same time as the Hong Kong Journalist Association publicized systematic harassment of journalists from 13 organizations in summer of the year.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The Hong Kong sample has a balanced gender distribution, with 57.4% of the respondents being women. The respondents had an average age of 33.2 years (SD = 9.4), with a Median age being 31 years old. The majority of the respondents were well educated: 71.2% held a Bachelor's degree or its equivalent, while 21.0% had obtained a Master's degree or its equivalent. Furthermore, 76.4% of the respondents reported having received formal education or professional training in journalism. Among those, the most common mode of training was through university or college (88.7%), followed by journalism apprenticeships or cadetships (77.2%) and short-term courses (32.3%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

Nearly one-third of the Hong Kong respondents (31.8%) were employed by a native online media outlet, followed by 26.5% working for organizations focused on publishing newspapers and 20.5% for television organizations. Smaller proportions were affiliated with radio (9.5%), news agencies (5.7%), and magazine companies (3.4%). Only a minimal number of respondents (0.4%) reported working in the telecommunications sector, while 2.3% indicated that they did not have a main employer. Regarding area of coverage, 77.3% of the respondents reported working for local or regional outlets, while only 13.3% catered to (trans)national media.

The vast majority of the Hong Kong respondents (90.6%) were employed by privately owned or commercial media organizations. Most of them held non-managerial positions (86.5%), while only a small proportion occupied middle (9.8%) or top (3.6%) management roles. As for employment status, 76.1% of the respondents worked on a full-time permanent basis, whereas others engaged in journalistic work through part-time permanent (2.1%), full-time fixed-term (6.2%), part-time fixed-term (2.1%), or freelance or self-employed arrangements (12.5%). 1.0% selected the option of "other forms of employment." 30.6% reported having additional income sources beyond journalism.

On average, journalists in Hong Kong reported working 45.5 hours per week (SD = 9.8; Median = 48; for those in full-time employment). A majority (62.1%) worked on a variety of beats or subject areas rather than being specialized in a single area. 48.3% of the respondents were members of a journalists' union. Work-related stress was prevalent: 61.1% of journalists reported they felt stressed out at work often or very often, while only 6.8% reported rarely experiencing stress.

[1] Country sample does not fully align with WJS specifications regarding maximum margin of error (see WJS3 Methodology).

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Hong Kong journalists were relatively less concerned about physical safety, as violent attacks and murders of journalists had been extremely rare throughout the city's history. For instance, 97.9% of the respondents reported "never" when it comes to abductions, and 88.6% reported "never" for sexual assault or harassment. Political changes in the most recent years have led to heightened concerns with psychological and digital safety, however. Only 17% of the respondents never experienced demanding or hateful speech; 32.9% experienced surveillance at least sometimes. Although the majority of journalists did not experience many threats regularly, they were aware of the experiences of some of their colleagues, and the respondents were highly concerned that those who harm journalists in Hong Kong would go unpunished.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	289	2.1%	13.5%	36.0%	31.5%	17.0%
Public discrediting of your work	289	3.1%	12.5%	28.0%	33.9%	22.5%
Surveillance	288	3.8%	8.3%	20.8%	28.5%	38.5%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	289	0.0%	1.4%	11.1%	23.2%	64.4%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	289	0.7%	0.7%	0.3%	7.6%	90.7%
Legal actions against you because of your work	289	0.7%	2.1%	8.7%	14.5%	74.0%
Stalking	288	1.0%	1.0%	4.9%	15.6%	77.4%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	287	0.3%	3.8%	15.0%	20.2%	60.6%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	289	1.0%	0.7%	2.1%	7.6%	88.6%
Other physical attacks	289	0.0%	0.7%	1.7%	11.8%	85.8%
Coercion	289	0.0%	1.4%	3.5%	13.5%	81.7%
Questioning of your personal morality	289	1.0%	6.2%	23.9%	29.1%	39.8%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	289	0.3%	0.7%	4.5%	8.7%	85.8%
Others disseminating your personal information	289	1.0%	3.5%	14.5%	19.4%	61.6%
Workplace bullying	289	0.3%	2.4%	9.0%	17.6%	70.6%
Abductions	289	0.0%	0.3%	0.7%	1.0%	97.9%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	289	0.3%	1.0%	5.2%	9.7%	83.7%
Intimidation that targets family	289	0.3%	0.3%	2.4%	8.0%	88.9%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	284	34.2%	3.01	1.17
Concerned about physical well-being	285	27.0%	2.91	1.02
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	285	61.8%	3.69	1.02
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Hong Kong go unpunished	285	86.3%	4.33	0.83

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

The Hong Kong respondents saw themselves as engaged professionals. They placed a relatively stronger emphasis on shining a light on the problems of the society, monitoring and scrutinizing those in power, and speaking on behalf of the marginalized than on being a detached observer. Nonetheless, they did not see themselves as political actors / activists, as they did not emphasize motivating people to participate in politics, influencing public opinion, and setting the political agenda.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	289	60.6%	3.71	0.83
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	289	78.2%	4.13	0.95
Shine a light on society's problems	289	83.7%	4.30	0.87
Motivate people to participate in politics	289	15.2%	2.50	1.02
Provide analysis of current affairs	289	70.2%	3.91	0.99
Let people express their views	289	78.9%	4.15	0.89
Provide information people need to form political opinion	289	59.2%	3.70	1.09
Advocate for social change	289	45.3%	3.34	1.09
Influence public opinion	289	32.2%	3.10	1.00
Set the political agenda	289	17.0%	2.54	1.04
Promote peace and tolerance	289	47.8%	3.45	1.10
Educate the audience	289	68.9%	3.91	0.98
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	289	49.1%	3.45	1.07
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	289	77.5%	4.14	0.90
Support national development	288	12.2%	2.10	1.14
Support government policy	289	7.6%	1.79	1.02
Convey a positive image of political leaders	289	6.2%	1.51	0.91
Provide entertainment and relaxation	289	12.1%	2.38	1.00
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	289	27.3%	2.90	1.04
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	289	29.4%	2.91	1.04
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	289	36.3%	3.19	1.03
Support efforts to protect public health	289	39.1%	3.24	1.07
Counteract disinformation	289	73.7%	4.05	1.03
Discuss future implications of current events	288	64.6%	3.79	0.99

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

The Hong Kong respondents had somewhat "contradictory" views on journalistic epistemologies. An absolute majority of 93.4% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that "interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts," yet 96.3% agreed or strongly agreed that "journalists should let the facts speak for themselves." 76.4% agreed or strongly agreed that "it is possible to represent objective reality in reporting," though 63.1% also agreed that "truth is inevitably shaped by those in power."

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	271	93.4%	4.38	0.67
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	271	63.1%	3.66	0.93
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	271	60.5%	3.56	0.98
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	271	16.2%	2.53	0.91
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	271	76.4%	3.82	0.72
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	271	18.8%	2.67	0.97
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	271	34.7%	2.92	1.02
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	271	96.3%	4.40	0.59
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	271	42.1%	3.30	1.00
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	271	22.9%	2.63	1.06
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	271	91.1%	4.21	0.67

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Put in general terms, 87.5% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that "what is ethical journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment," whereas only 51.9% agreed that "what is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation." However, what specific reporting methods are concerned, more than 80% of the respondents saw claiming to be somebody else, using hidden recording devices, using confidential business or government documents without authorization, and using the personal materials of powerful people as "justified on occasion."

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	288	87.5%	4.23	0.79
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	289	50.5%	3.33	0.97
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	289	51.9%	3.31	1.04
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	289	36.0%	2.95	1.08

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	289	2.1%	80.6%
Using hidden recording devices	289	2.1%	94.5%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	288	4.5%	88.2%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	288	4.9%	87.2%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	287	1.0%	63.1%
Paying people for confidential information	289	2.8%	37.7%
Accepting money from sources	289	0.3%	5.2%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	289	0.7%	28.7%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	289	0.3%	15.2%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	289	0.0%	17.0%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Given the rapid democratic regression in the most recent years, not surprisingly only 1.5% of the respondents indicated that there is a great deal or complete media freedom in Hong Kong. Nonetheless, 28.7% of the respondents still believed that there is a great deal or complete freedom in selecting news stories, and 33.7% believed that there is a great deal or complete freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	279	28.7%	3.16	0.75
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	279	33.7%	3.24	0.73
Media freedom in Hong Kong	275	1.5%	2.46	0.67

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

The majority of the respondents saw editorial supervisors or higher editors as very or extremely influential on news decisions. Notably, 70.6% of the respondents also saw the business managers of the news organization as influential, though only 16.9% saw advertising considerations and 23.3% saw profit expectations as influential. 61.8% and 47.7% of the respondents saw government censorship and government officials, respectively, as influential.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	269	36.4%	3.18	0.94
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	270	75.9%	3.99	0.97
The business managers of the news organization	255	70.6%	3.87	0.97
The owners of the news organization	238	53.4%	3.42	1.25
Editorial policy	268	68.3%	3.87	0.95
Advertising considerations	219	16.9%	2.47	1.15
Profit expectations	227	23.3%	2.67	1.21
Audience research and data	230	15.2%	2.47	1.07
Availability of news-gathering resources	266	55.6%	3.55	1.01
Time limits	270	50.0%	3.55	0.98
Journalism ethics	266	42.9%	3.30	1.05
Self-censorship	269	50.2%	3.48	1.07
Personal values and beliefs	267	42.3%	3.19	1.12
Colleagues in other media	270	23.7%	2.89	1.02
Friends, acquaintances and family	260	11.2%	2.38	1.08
Feedback from the audience	269	19.3%	2.78	0.96
Competing news organizations	261	21.1%	2.72	1.03
Media laws and regulation	268	41.8%	3.34	1.13
Access to information	270	51.1%	3.54	0.99
Government censorship	262	61.8%	3.73	1.11
Government officials	258	47.7%	3.36	1.21
Politicians	253	29.6%	2.82	1.16
Business people	248	18.1%	2.50	1.11
Public relations	250	18.8%	2.60	1.08
Relationships with news sources	262	37.4%	3.20	1.05
Police	241	44.0%	3.23	1.36
Issue advocacy groups	243	24.3%	2.69	1.17
Scientists or health experts	225	10.2%	2.23	1.03
Religious groups and institutions	218	2.8%	1.82	0.79
Military	154	13.0%	1.92	1.25
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	148	10.8%	1.74	1.14
Organized crime and criminal groups	154	8.4%	1.75	1.01
Terrorist groups	141	9.2%	1.66	1.05

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Hungary[1]

RÓKA JOLÁN

INTRODUCTION

Democracy was institutionalized in Hungary in 1989, as a result of which a multi-tier system came into being. The first democratically elected government in 1990 began abolishing the centrally planned economy in order to develop a new market-based economy. The most prominent state organ is the 199-member parliament, the Hungarian National Assembly. Its legal status and functions are regulated by the Constitution, and its members are elected every four years in the course of a regular election campaign.

As of 2025, Hungary is characterized by democratic backsliding, crucial political and economic crisis, national conservative majority (2/3) in the parliament. Victor Orbán, the Prime Minister of Hungary calls his political system illiberal Christian Democracy, where democracy has been gradually disappearing since his first term in 1998. His party (FIDESZ) in coalition with the Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP) was elected for the fifth times in 2022 (1998-2002, 2010-2014, 2014-2018,2018-2022, 2022-).

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The sample of Hungarian journalists shows male dominance compared to female journalists: 65.8% male, 34.2% female. On average, they were 39.4 years old. They are generally well educated: 50% has Bachelor's degree or equivalent, 35.8% has Master's degree or equivalent, 7.4% has some university studies, 5.8% completed high school and 1.1% has Doctorate degree.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

The vast majority of Hungarian journalists (75.3%) worked for private, commercial media, 11.1% for public service media, 4.2% for state-run media, and 3.7% for community media. 5.8% claimed not to have a major medium. Regarding area of coverage, 77.4% of journalists reported they mainly work for national, transnational media, while 17.4% primarily hold jobs at local or regional media.

As for the main employer, 51.1% of the interviewed journalists worked for native online media, 15.8% for magazines, 11.1% for newspapers, 7.9% for news agencies, 7.9% for telecommunications, 2.1% for television channels, 1.6% for radio channels, and 2.6% had no main employer.

More than half (58.9%) of the interviewed journalists had a full-time, permanent contract. Almost a third of them (25.3%) worked as freelancers or self-employed, 14.7% had a part-time, permanent contract. In addition, 52.6% of the respondents confessed that they have income only from journalism, but 47.4% had income from other sources as well.

The average working week for Hungarian journalists has 40.1 hours (SD = 8.8; Median = 40). Relatedly, 11.6% reported they felt stressed out at work very often, 30.5% often, only 16.3% (2.6% and 13.7%) had never or rarely experienced that feeling.

[1] Country sample does not fully align with WJS specifications regarding maximum margin of error (see WJS3 Methodology).

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Verbal harassment such as demeaning or hateful speech, public discrediting of journalists' work, surveillance, questioning of personal morality were among the most common safety threats experienced by Hungarian journalists (see Table 1). Hacking or blocking, legal action, stalking, others using byline, disseminating personal information were also among the threats that worried the journalists. Hungarian journalists are concerned about losing their jobs. That was the reason why the majority of the journalists refused to fill out the questionnaire or they were willing to answer just some of the questions. They experience a huge political, economic, emotional, and sometimes physical pressure on themselves. They don't feel safe except for those who serve the „legal political power and propaganda". They are aware of the fact that those who harm the journalists go unpunished (see Table 2.)

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	190	5.3%	13.7%	28.9%	18.4%	33.7%
Public discrediting of your work	190	4.2%	11.6%	23.7%	21.1%	39.5%
Surveillance	190	1.1%	8.4%	12.6%	22.6%	55.3%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	190	1.1%	3.2%	8.4%	26.3%	61.1%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	190	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%	2.1%	96.3%
Legal actions against you because of your work	190	1.1%	0.5%	6.3%	16.8%	75.3%
Stalking	190	0.5%	1.1%	4.7%	8.4%	85.3%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	190	1.1%	1.6%	11.1%	23.7%	62.6%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	190	0.0%	0.0%	2.6%	2.1%	95.3%
Other physical attacks	190	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%	2.1%	96.3%
Coercion	190	0.0%	1.1%	1.1%	12.6%	85.3%
Questioning of your personal morality	190	4.2%	6.3%	16.8%	22.6%	50.0%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	190	0.5%	7.9%	3.2%	15.3%	73.2%
Others disseminating your personal information	190	0.0%	3.2%	3.7%	15.8%	77.4%
Workplace bullying	190	0.5%	0.0%	1.1%	4.7%	93.7%
Abductions	190	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	99.5%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	190	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	3.2%	96.3%
Intimidation that targets family	190	0.0%	0.5%	2.6%	6.8%	90.0%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	190	22.1%	2.61	1.19
Concerned about physical well-being	190	22.1%	2.54	1.17
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	190	41.1%	3.09	1.23
Concerned that those who harm journalists in [country] go unpunished	190	47.9%	3.31	1.25

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Most of the Hungarian journalists who were willing to participate in the survey expressed firm belief that a journalist should be a detached observer who highlights society's problems providing information, pointing toward possible solutions and educating. They are motivated to provide analysis of the political, social agenda, and support national development. Most of them declared that they counteract disinformation.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	190	88.4%	4.22	0.88
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	190	48.4%	3.31	1.28
Shine a light on society's problems	190	67.9%	3.89	1.02
Motivate people to participate in politics	190	10.5%	2.29	1.09
Provide analysis of current affairs	190	33.2%	2.90	1.27
Let people express their views	190	48.4%	3.28	1.26
Provide information people need to form political opinion	190	43.2%	3.11	1.36
Advocate for social change	190	45.3%	3.26	1.23
Influence public opinion	190	25.8%	2.74	1.21
Set the political agenda	190	11.1%	2.18	1.05
Promote peace and tolerance	190	56.3%	3.53	1.20
Educate the audience	190	70.0%	3.93	1.01
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	190	64.7%	3.68	1.12
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	190	34.7%	3.02	1.26
Support national development	190	41.6%	3.06	1.24
Support government policy	190	5.3%	1.61	0.97
Convey a positive image of political leaders	190	4.7%	1.52	0.94
Provide entertainment and relaxation	190	55.8%	3.63	1.20
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	190	34.2%	3.06	1.12
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	190	41.6%	3.26	1.17
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	190	40.5%	3.15	1.23
Support efforts to protect public health	190	38.4%	3.03	1.23
Counteract disinformation	190	72.1%	4.01	1.15
Discuss future implications of current events	190	50.0%	3.24	1.19

Questions: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work". (Scale: 5 = Extremely important, 4 = Very important, 3 = Moderately important, 2 = Slightly important, 1 = Not at all important).

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Most of the interviewed Hungarian journalists agree that the journalist should interpret what's going on in the society, they should show the facts and represent the objective reality. Half of them believe that "truth" is shaped by the politicians in power, that's why they have to alert the audience when a claim, a statement, or propaganda representation is untruthful.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	190	79.5%	4.16	0.95
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	190	57.4%	3.40	1.12
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	190	23.2%	2.85	0.98
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	190	33.7%	3.01	1.14
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	190	59.5%	3.70	0.99
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	190	44.7%	3.32	0.96
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	190	26.8%	2.84	1.15
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	190	67.4%	3.76	0.84
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	190	15.3%	2.38	1.05
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	190	13.2%	2.31	1.03
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	190	74.2%	4.14	0.84

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree". / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs". (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree).

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Journalists in Hungary strongly agreed on the necessity of professional standards rather than on personal judgement except for extraordinary circumstances. A quarter of the interviewed journalists think they have to consider the specific situation and then make the decision. Half of the journalists can justify and claim to be somebody else, use hidden recording devices and confidential documents without authorization, and also accepting money from sources.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	190	71.1%	3.88	0.90
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	190	45.3%	3.28	1.09
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	190	25.8%	2.58	1.23
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	190	10.5%	2.08	1.05

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree". (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree).

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	190	5.3%	47.4%
Using hidden recording devices	190	7.9%	57.4%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	190	11.6%	41.8%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	190	5.8%	42.1%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	190	1.6%	15.3%
Paying people for confidential information	190	6.3%	42.1%
Accepting money from sources	190	2.1%	18.4%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	190	4.2%	28.9%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	190	4.2%	23.2%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	190	1.6%	2.1%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Hungarian journalists reported great deal of freedom in selecting the stories and deciding which aspect of the story to emphasize. Media freedom was rated very low. It is due to the fact that the vast majority of Hungarian media is under strict governmental control and censorship.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	190	77.9%	4.01	0.82
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	190	79.5%	4.12	0.81
Media freedom in [country]	190	12.1%	2.56	0.87

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom, 4 = A great deal of freedom, 3 = Some freedom, 2 = Little freedom, 1 = No freedom at all).

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Hungarian journalists found journalism ethics very high among the internal factors influencing news production. Among the external factors, a great number of the journalists agreed that personal values and beliefs, media laws and regulations, access to information, time limits are extremely influential.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	190	9.5%	2.27	1.02
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	190	36.3%	2.90	1.19
The business managers of the news organization	190	20.0%	2.36	1.22
The owners of the news organization	190	25.8%	2.48	1.35
Editorial policy	190	31.6%	2.88	1.22
Advertising considerations	190	23.2%	2.39	1.22
Profit expectations	190	25.8%	2.48	1.23
Audience research and data	190	31.6%	2.94	1.18
Availability of news-gathering resources	190	28.4%	2.62	1.28
Time limits	190	47.9%	3.37	1.17
Journalism ethics	190	68.4%	3.88	1.08
Self-censorship	190	17.4%	2.39	1.25
Personal values and beliefs	190	63.2%	3.79	1.23
Colleagues in other media	190	18.4%	2.40	1.19
Friends, acquaintances and family	190	13.2%	2.32	1.07
Feedback from the audience	190	19.5%	2.70	.99
Competing news organizations	190	19.5%	2.48	1.10
Media laws and regulation	190	55.8%	3.52	1.13
Access to information	190	56.8%	3.65	1.09
Government censorship	190	17.4%	2.09	1.29
Government officials	190	12.6%	1.97	1.15
Politicians	190	10.0%	1.93	1.15
Business people	190	6.8%	1.78	1.03
Public relations	190	7.4%	1.94	1.05
Relationships with news sources	190	14.2%	2.54	1.13
Police	190	4.2%	1.43	.83
Issue advocacy groups	190	11.6%	1.90	1.06
Scientists or health experts	190	13.7%	2.02	.77
Religious groups and institutions	190	2.1%	1.42	.59
Military	190	1.6%	1.25	.48
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	190	0.5%	1.20	.44
Organized crime and criminal groups	190	0.5%	1.14	.38
Terrorist groups	190	0.0%	1.14	1.18

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist”. (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential, 4 = Very influential, 3 = Moderately influential, 2 = Slightly influential, 1 = Not at all influential).

Iceland

Birgir Guðmundsson, Guðbjörg Hildur Kolbeins, Jón Gunnar Ólafsson & Valgerður Jóhannsdóttir.

INTRODUCTION

Iceland has a stable democratic system, high standard of living, and a strong social welfare infrastructure. The country's economy, built on tourism, renewable energy and fisheries, has shown resilience, although economic and social challenges persist. Iceland remains a progressive society with high levels of civic engagement and gender equality.

Journalism in Iceland has traditionally enjoyed a strong foundation, rooted in democratic values, with legal protections for press freedom and a commitment to public service broadcasting. However, there has long been a perception of political parallelism in the media, which continues to influence public trust in the media, despite ongoing efforts to maintain editorial independence and journalistic integrity.

The data for the WJS survey were collected in the spring of 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic and in the run-up to the national parliamentary elections held in September of that year. These circumstances created a challenging news environment, with journalists covering both politics and the public health crisis. Since the data were collected, the Icelandic media landscape has faced significant disruption as some media outlets have had to downsize or even shut down, including one of the country's two leading newspapers. In 2025, Iceland ranked number 17 on Reporters Without Borders' World Press Freedom Index, whilst the other Nordic states were all ranked in the top six. At the same time, the main threats to journalism in Iceland were financial instability and political uncertainty regarding the future of publicly funded support for the private media sector.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The Icelandic news journalism profession is male dominated: 63.5% identified as men and 36.0% as women when our study was conducted. On average, Icelandic journalists were 44.0 years old (SD = 12.7; Median = 42). Most were highly educated: 33.8% holding a bachelor's degree, and 42.5% a master's degree or equivalent. While nearly half (56.3%) had no formal education or training in journalism, 63.2% of those with such training received it at university or college, 36.0% did so via journalism apprenticeships or cadetships, and one in three (32.6%) through short-term courses.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

Most Icelandic journalists (71.5%) worked for privately owned commercial media, while 28.5% were employed by the Public Service Media (RÚV). A vast majority (90.0%) reported working mainly for national media and only 10.0% for local or regional audiences. When asked about their professional role within their organization, 76.4% said they had no management responsibility, 6.3% were in middle management, and 17.3% reported holding top management positions.

On average, Icelandic journalists had 15.1 years of professional experience (SD = 11.9; Median = 12). Most of them (73.4%) described themselves as generalists, working across a range of beats rather than focusing on a single subject area. Only about one in four (26.6%) reported having a specific beat. This aligns with the relatively small size of the Icelandic media market, where specialization is often limited by staffing and resource constraints.

In terms of employment conditions, 70.6% held a full-time permanent contract, 12.2% were employed part-time, and 6.7% had full-time fixed-term contracts. Freelancers or self-employed journalists made up 9.2% of the journalistic population. While most journalists relied fully on journalism for their income (74.1%), about a quarter (25.9%) said they had additional sources of income outside journalism.

Over 90 percent of Icelanders were members of a labor union in 2021, according to Statistics Iceland, but only 77.0% of journalists reported belonging to a professional or labor union. Work-related stress appeared quite common, 63.5% said they often or very often felt stressed at work during the past six months. On average, full-time journalists reported working 44.3 hours per week (SD = 9.2; Median = 40).

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

When it came to safety threats, Icelandic journalists most frequently reported experiencing demeaning or hateful speech directed at them (see Table 1), with around a third reporting having experienced this often or very often. Moreover, close to a quarter had experienced public discrediting of their work. Surveillance was less common, with around one in ten journalists having experienced this very often or often. Few journalists had commonly experienced threats such as stalking, sexual assault, sexual harassment or workplace bullying. Nearly a quarter were worried about losing their job in journalism in the following 12 months (see Table 2). It is troubling to see that around a third of journalists were worried about their physical well-being and a similar number were concerned about their emotional and mental well-being.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	237	13.5%	16.5%	27.4%	29.1%	13.5%
Public discrediting of your work	237	9.7%	12.7%	25.7%	30.8%	21.1%
Surveillance	235	3.8%	6.0%	11.1%	25.5%	53.6%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	238	0.0%	0.4%	0.8%	4.6%	94.1%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	237	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	99.6%
Legal actions against you because of your work	237	0.8%	0.8%	4.6%	8.4%	85.2%
Stalking	238	1.3%	1.3%	2.5%	10.9%	84.0%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	237	1.3%	5.5%	11.8%	28.7%	52.7%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	236	0.0%	0.0%	4.2%	8.5%	87.3%
Other physical attacks	236	0.0%	0.4%	0.8%	2.5%	96.2%
Coercion	235	0.4%	0.4%	3.8%	19.6%	75.7%
Questioning of your personal morality	236	5.1%	6.8%	20.3%	28.8%	39.0%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	236	0.4%	1.3%	3.0%	5.1%	90.3%
Others disseminating your personal information	236	0.4%	1.3%	8.5%	15.3%	74.6%
Workplace bullying	236	0.0%	1.3%	2.1%	11.4%	85.2%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	237	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%	4.6%	93.7%
Intimidation that targets family	237	0.0%	0.4%	1.3%	5.5%	92.8%

Question: “In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?”

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	238	24.8%	2.54	1.26
Concerned about physical well-being	237	34.6%	2.72	1.28
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	237	37.6%	2.81	1.34
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Iceland go unpunished	228	39.0%	2.93	1.23

Question: “Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.” (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Icelandic journalists strongly supported informative and monitorial roles (see Table 3). A vast majority of them valued providing analysis and being detached observers, and countering disinformation. Most journalists also considered educating the audience very or extremely important as well as monitoring and scrutinizing those in power. Roles like setting the political agenda, supporting government policy or conveying a positive image of political leaders received very little support.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	236	84.7%	4.32	0.80
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	237	81.0%	4.17	1.04
Shine a light on society’s problems	237	77.6%	4.15	1.02
Motivate people to participate in politics	233	11.2%	2.06	1.10
Provide analysis of current affairs	238	92.0%	4.57	0.71
Let people express their views	238	67.6%	3.92	1.01
Provide information people need to form political opinion	231	55.4%	3.53	1.29
Advocate for social change	229	27.5%	2.80	1.23
Influence public opinion	226	15.9%	2.29	1.12
Set the political agenda	228	3.1%	1.48	0.77
Promote peace and tolerance	228	31.6%	2.87	1.24
Educate the audience	237	89.5%	4.45	0.83
Point toward possible solutions to society’s problems	233	50.6%	3.37	1.14
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	230	42.2%	3.27	1.21
Support national development	218	32.1%	2.82	1.28
Support government policy	229	1.3%	1.24	0.61
Convey a positive image of political leaders	232	2.2%	1.23	0.67
Provide entertainment and relaxation	237	38.0%	3.16	1.20
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	238	37.0%	3.13	1.16
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	235	19.6%	2.57	1.13
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	237	40.5%	3.19	1.09
Support efforts to protect public health	233	30.9%	2.94	1.17
Counteract disinformation	237	84.8%	4.38	0.87

Question: “Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

There appeared to be a consensus among Icelandic journalists that they should let the facts speak for themselves (see Table 4). However, they also agreed that it was the role of journalists to alert audiences when a source's claim was untruthful. Also, nearly eight out of ten journalists agreed that journalists should be a part of a community to portray it accurately, and they generally rejected the idea that it was impossible for journalists to withhold their beliefs or that they should make their standpoint clear in their work.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	214	65.9%	3.65	1.03
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	211	25.1%	2.56	1.22
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	218	14.7%	2.12	1.11
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	219	28.8%	2.69	1.22
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	199	70.9%	3.78	0.91
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	209	40.7%	2.92	1.26
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	208	40.9%	3.04	1.14
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	211	95.3%	4.54	0.60
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	210	78.1%	4.03	0.96
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	212	10.4%	1.88	1.03
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	203	88.2%	4.29	0.88

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

The large majority of the Icelandic journalists, who participated in the study, agreed that journalists should adhere to professional standards when it came to determining what was ethical, regardless of situation or personal judgement (see Table 5). Although they generally rejected the idea of controversial reporting methods being always justified, they took a more lenient view towards using confidential business or government documents without authorization and using the personal material of powerful people (see Table 6). Using hidden recording devices was most often believed to be justified on occasion.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	232	87.1%	4.36	0.84
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	226	60.6%	3.60	1.25
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	226	24.3%	2.45	1.27
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	224	28.6%	2.46	1.36

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	232	0.9%	59.1%
Using hidden recording devices	232	0.9%	79.3%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	229	12.7%	73.4%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	229	7.0%	72.5%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	223	1.8%	46.2%
Paying people for confidential information	225	1.3%	48.0%
Accepting money from sources	236	0.0%	3.0%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	232	0.0%	19.0%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	235	0.0%	5.1%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	231	0.4%	43.3%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Most Icelandic journalists reported enjoying editorial freedom (see Table 7); with an overwhelming majority saying that they had a great deal or complete freedom in selecting stories, as well as deciding the angle or emphasis of a story. Perceived media freedom was ranked slightly lower.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	227	87.7%	4.15	0.68
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	228	89.9%	4.24	0.72
Media freedom in Iceland	225	66.2%	3.70	0.73

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Time limits, availability of resources, and editorial supervision were seen as the most influential internal pressures in the journalists' work. Access to information and relationships with sources were the most impactful external factors. The influence of external actors like politicians, businesspeople or the government was, on the other hand, perceived as being weak.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	220	65.5%	3.77	1.05
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	212	66.0%	3.72	0.97
The business managers of the news organization	213	19.7%	2.26	1.24
The owners of the news organization	207	10.6%	1.83	1.10
Editorial policy	217	53.0%	3.49	1.08
Advertising considerations	222	5.4%	1.57	0.93
Profit expectations	215	13.5%	1.97	1.19
Audience research and data	215	21.9%	2.56	1.22
Availability of news-gathering resources	215	62.8%	3.67	1.24
Time limits	223	65.9%	3.80	1.16
Journalism ethics	226	51.8%	3.38	1.28
Self-censorship	219	30.1%	2.79	1.24
Personal values and beliefs	224	50.9%	3.44	1.20
Colleagues in other media	221	10.4%	2.10	1.02
Friends, acquaintances and family	222	12.6%	2.30	1.00
Feedback from the audience	223	21.1%	2.73	0.98
Competing news organizations	223	27.8%	2.78	1.14
Media laws and regulation	216	25.5%	2.64	1.20
Access to information	221	68.8%	3.89	1.09
Government censorship	213	10.8%	1.82	1.16
Government officials	215	10.2%	1.80	1.07
Politicians	216	8.8%	1.70	1.03
Businesspeople	217	6.9%	1.68	0.98
Public relations	219	5.9%	1.94	0.94
Relationships with news sources	214	41.6%	3.17	1.27
Police	212	14.6%	2.07	1.22
Issue advocacy groups	212	4.7%	1.86	0.96
Scientists or health experts	210	18.6%	2.39	1.18

Question: "Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist." (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

India

JYOTIKA RAMAPRASAD, AMBRISH SAXENA & MANASVI MAHESHWARI

INTRODUCTION

India, a multiparty democracy, has a constitution that guarantees civil liberties including freedom of expression and of religion. Its parties represent views across the political spectrum, and its policies provide considerable opportunites for women and members of religious and ethnic minorities for political representation (https://freedomhouse.org/country/india/freedom-world/2024). Still, growing concern over democratic backsliding, suppression of dissent, and increasing polarization is present (https://doi.org/10.1177/00027162241307742). Civil liberties, including press freedom, continue to face mounting threats, with journalists frequently targeted through legal, political, and digital means (https://rsf.org/en/country/india).

India's journalistic tradition is deeply rooted in its freedom struggle, historically characterised by a pluralistic and multilingual press. In the past decade, however, corporate ownership of media has intensified, with top businessmen in India investing huge sums to create monopolies; this has resulted in an increasingly commercialized and political media and diminishing editorial independence and public trust (https://cpj.org/2023/10/cpj-says-indian-police-raids-on-newsclick-office-journalists-homes-are-an-attack-on-press-freedom/; https://thewire.in/media/attack-on-free-press-indian-government).

Economically, the country has recovered after the COVID-19 pandemic, driven by digital growth and services, but unemployment, inflation, and social inequality remain pressing challenges (https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/india/overview).

Data collection for this study took place from September 2023 to March 2024, a period of heightened political tension leading up to the 2024 general elections.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

In our sample of Indian journalists, 25.8% are women and 74% men. Their average age is 37.4 years (SD = 10.9; Median = 36). These journalists are generally well educated, with 37.6% of them having earned a bachelor's degree or equivalent, 57.2% a master's degree or equivalent, and 1.9% a doctorate. Further, 89.9% have received formal education or professional training in journalism, usually at a university or in a college (85.5%), but also through apprenticeships or cadetships (77.7%) and short-term courses (75%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

On average, journalists in our sample had 12.3 years of professional experience (SD = 9.4; Median = 10). Most of them (63.4%) worked on a variety of beats or subject areas. More than one-third (71.5%) were members of professional associations. Altogether, 40.3% of these journalists worked mainly for media with international or national reach, while 57.9% primarily had positions in media with local or regional reach.

The majority of the sample in India held full-time contracts, with 70.8% employed permanently and 12.3% employed temporarily. Only 7% worked as freelancers or were self-employed. Further, 5.8% had a part-time, permanent contract, and 3.9% had a part-time, temporary contract. Altogether, 56% of these journalists earned 100% of their income from journalism.

The average work week of journalists was 55.8 hours (SD = 11.9; Median = 54; for those in full-time employment). About one-fourth of the journalists (23.5%) reported feeling stressed at work often or very often, and 44.8% felt stressed sometimes.

In terms of the background of their main employers, roughly half (53.8%) of the journalists worked for organizations publishing newspapers, 23.4% for TV news channels, and 7.7% for news agencies. Very few journalists worked for radio and magazines (1.3% and 0.2%, respectively), and 4.9% reported not having a main employer.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Demeaning/hateful speech and public discrediting topped the safety threats our sample journalists faced very often or often (Table 1). Though legal actions and sexual harassment were less frequent, their very presence is alarming. Covert threats, such as workplace bullying and questioning of morality, also featured prominently. These threats likely generate broader work-related anxieties. Roughly 45% of the respondents were concerned about their physical and emotional well-being, and one-third feared job loss (Table 2). Almost half of the journalists were concerned that, in India, those who harm journalists often go unpunished, reflecting a deep sense of vulnerability (*M* = 3.36, on a 5 point scale).

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	484	13.2%	13.2%	23.3%	17.1%	33.1%
Public discrediting of your work	483	5.6%	14.1%	20.7%	18.8%	40.8%
Surveillance	458	6.1%	9.0%	23.6%	16.6%	44.8%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	476	4.2%	8.8%	11.3%	16.0%	59.7%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	478	4.2%	6.1%	8.2%	7.9%	73.6%
Legal actions against you because of your work	484	4.1%	6.8%	10.1%	10.3%	68.6%
Stalking	458	4.1%	7.0%	16.2%	11.1%	61.6%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	476	5.0%	9.7%	15.5%	15.5%	54.2%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	478	5.0%	4.0%	11.5%	5.6%	73.8%
Other physical attacks	483	4.3%	7.7%	10.1%	7.7%	70.2%
Coercion	458	3.1%	5.0%	15.7%	7.2%	69.0%
Questioning of your personal morality	477	4.2%	9.4%	14.5%	18.0%	53.9%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	481	4.4%	10.8%	17.3%	13.5%	54.1%
Others disseminating your personal information	484	3.1%	9.3%	15.1%	16.3%	56.2%
Workplace bullying	483	4.3%	10.6%	16.8%	11.4%	56.9%
Abductions	466	3.0%	6.7%	10.3%	4.3%	75.8%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	480	6.3%	5.8%	10.4%	6.0%	71.5%
Intimidation that targets family	484	2.5%	9.1%	10.1%	7.6%	70.7%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	482	33.4%	2.91	1.26
Concerned about physical well-being	480	44.6%	3.10	1.21
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	480	44.0%	3.19	1.21
Concerned that those who harm journalists in India go unpunished	477	48.8%	3.36	1.21

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Roles about advancing social causes held the highest to middle ranks, by means, likely a reflection of the expected role of Indian news media in national development; the top three roles were highlight societal issues, educate the public, and promote peace (Table 3). Politically assertive roles, such as setting the poitical agenda and motivating political participation, had low means, just above the last ranked role of conveying a positive image of political leaders.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	482	76.6%	4.11	1.00
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	474	66.0%	3.74	1.10
Shine a light on society's problems	483	79.3%	4.27	0.94
Motivate people to participate in politics	478	46.0%	3.21	1.26
Provide analysis of current affairs	482	76.8%	4.11	1.05
Let people express their views	479	77.0%	4.05	0.99
Provide information people need to form political opinion	478	62.3%	3.73	1.15
Advocate for social change	482	72.2%	4.03	0.96
Influence public opinion	477	58.9%	3.61	1.21
Set the political agenda	476	42.2%	3.06	1.35
Promote peace and tolerance	481	78.4%	4.19	0.97
Educate the audience	479	80.6%	4.21	0.96
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	481	76.9%	4.10	1.02
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	485	72.6%	4.01	1.04
Support national development	478	76.6%	4.11	0.93
Support government policy	477	48.8%	3.35	1.20
Convey a positive image of political leaders	480	35.6%	2.85	1.36
Provide entertainment and relaxation	481	44.3%	3.26	1.14
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	480	60.0%	3.66	1.13
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	481	51.1%	3.41	1.11
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	480	47.3%	3.27	1.23
Support efforts to protect public health	481	70.9%	3.95	1.00
Counteract disinformation	471	69.2%	4.01	1.09
Discuss future implications of current events	480	75.6%	4.03	0.88

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

A means analysis indicated a rather mixed picture of Indian journalists' views on journalistic epistemologies. While "Interpretation is necessary…" had the highest mean (*M* = 3.88), the next highest means were for statements about factual claims, transparency, and objectivity. These, in turn, were followed by means for statements that departed from factuality and spoke about journalists' instincts, intuition, and community involvement in storytelling (Table 4).

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	474	67.9%	3.88	0.96
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	474	45.6%	3.30	1.08
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	477	41.3%	3.19	1.07
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	474	43.5%	3.26	1.07
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	470	64.9%	3.74	1.07
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	476	60.5%	3.65	1.00
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	473	61.1%	3.64	1.00
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	468	67.3%	3.86	1.00
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	473	51.2%	3.44	1.15
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	470	67.0%	3.82	1.05
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	473	67.4%	3.83	1.03

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Among ethical orientations, "Professional ethical standards regardless of context" had the highest mean (*M* = 4.04) and percent agreement (73.1%) (Table 5). Among controversial practices, accepting money from sources and using personal materials and hidden recording had the lowest percent of journalists (9.1% and less) accepting them as always justified. "Claiming to be somebody else" had the highest such percent (16.4%). The percentages accepting the controversial practices as "occasionally justified" ranged from 25.7% to 59.8% (Table 6).

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	480	73.1%	4.04	0.99
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	469	62.5%	3.69	0.97
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	469	51.6%	3.44	1.14
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	471	44.4%	3.13	1.24

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	483	16.4%	41.0%
Using hidden recording devices	460	9.1%	25.7%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	472	10.4%	45.3%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	482	9.1%	47.7%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	481	10.0%	56.5%
Paying people for confidential information	476	9.7%	49.2%
Accepting money from sources	473	8.9%	67.0%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	478	10.0%	57.1%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	472	10.2%	55.3%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	478	10.5%	59.8%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Indian journalists reported moderate editorial autonomy, with 42.6% stating they had a significant amount of freedom in story selection and 41.4% stating they had such freedom in emphasizing story aspects (Table 7). However, fewer than one-third perceived high overall media freedom in India. This suggests a disconnect between individual autonomy and broader systemic constraints within the media environment.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	484	42.6%	3.31	1.12
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	485	41.4%	3.31	1.13
Media freedom in India	474	29.3%	2.92	1.08

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

The five top influences on sample journalists were, in order, journalism ethics (*M* = 3.58*)*, time limits, access to information, editorial supervisors, and personal values (*M* = 3.58) (Table 8). External sources of influence, such as government officials, business, and religious groups were among the lowest influences, suggesting a more substantial perceived influence from professional and organizational norms than from political or commercial actors.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	428	36.4%	3.11	1.15
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	433	47.6%	3.36	1.12
The business managers of the news organization	417	34.8%	3.01	1.22
The owners of the news organization	415	43.1%	3.17	1.32
Editorial policy	421	47.5%	3.33	1.24
Advertising considerations	397	36.5%	3.03	1.22
Profit expectations	395	37.0%	2.91	1.28
Audience research and data	412	42.7%	3.18	1.18
Availability of news-gathering resources	428	43.0%	3.29	1.15
Time limits	422	51.2%	3.41	1.11
Journalism ethics	423	57.4%	3.58	1.18
Self-censorship	399	45.9%	3.22	1.21
Personal values and beliefs	424	49.1%	3.34	1.24
Colleagues in other media	437	32.3%	2.93	1.18
Friends, acquaintances and family	428	34.6%	2.84	1.29
Feedback from the audience	425	45.9%	3.31	1.11
Competing news organizations	427	34.0%	3.05	1.14
Media laws and regulation	418	42.6%	3.21	1.18
Access to information	415	47.7%	3.39	1.09
Government censorship	407	34.2%	2.93	1.21
Government officials	406	30.5%	2.80	1.21
Politicians	412	30.6%	2.79	1.23
Business people	401	28.9%	2.74	1.23
Public relations	417	36.7%	3.06	1.25
Relationships with news sources	417	41.0%	3.18	1.17
Police	399	29.6%	2.80	1.22
Issue advocacy groups	415	28.0%	2.82	1.15
Scientists or health experts	418	31.3%	2.91	1.20
Religious groups and institutions	399	24.3%	2.66	1.20
Military	364	25.5%	2.59	1.25
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	375	22.4%	2.51	1.20
Organized crime and criminal groups	377	19.4%	2.35	1.21
Terrorist groups	361	18.8%	2.18	1.22

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Indonesia

Nurhaya Muchtar & Masduki

INTRODUCTION

As of 2025, Indonesian journalists continued to face pressure from the government. The newly elected President Prabowo, who assumed power in October 2024, introduced a form of liberal authoritarianism. The former general has expanded the role of the military in the government, not only for national defense but also for serving key roles in socio-political development – a similar role that they played during the New Order Government.

Current journalistic landscape in Indonesia has primarily been influenced by COVID19 and sociopolitical situation. Media ownership, particularly in mainstream media outlets, has been controlled by media conglomerates. The pandemic caused economic crisis heavily affected the mainstream media, resulting in the closure of numerous media outlets. The 2025 data from the Indonesian Press Council indicates that at least 1,200 journalists lost their jobs. At the same time, the pandemic also motivated the emergence of numerous digital news outlets due to easy access for people to news and information through social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. The critical role of social media has motivated governments to use it as a tool for propaganda. The new government also could easily threaten or bully journalists who conducted investigative reporting as well as publishing news stories that appear to be critical to the government. The new government placed journalists as enemies. The government also favors disinformation through social media as a tool for propaganda.

The fieldwork for this study took place in 2023, approximately four months before the Presidential election. At the time of data collection, political campaigns were conducted in different areas in Indonesia influenced the nature of journalist' works and their perception toward their works.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

On a sample of Indonesian journalists in terms of gender, 65.7% are male, and 34.3% are females. On average, they are 34.6 years old (SD = 8.0). They are generally well-educated; 78.8% of them held a bachelor's degree or equivalent, and 6.7% had a master's degree or equivalent. Moreover, 30.5% of the respondents have acquired formal education or professional training in journalism. This education or training is usually obtained at university or in college (98.5%) but also via apprenticeships or cadetships (2.6%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

In terms of the background of their main employers, more than half of journalists in Indonesia (58.4%) worked for native online media, 16.4% for newspapers, 4.9% for radio outlets, and 11.5% for television news agencies, respectively. Very few journalists worked for magazines (0.8%) and telecommunications (0.6%, respectively).

On average, Indonesian journalists had 8.2 years of professional experience (SD = 5.5; Median = 7). A majority of them (85.1%) worked on a variety of beats or subject areas rather than on a single one. More than two-thirds of Indonesian journalists (77.6%) were members of professional associations.

About one-third of the interviewed journalists in Indonesia had a full-time contract (38.8% permanently and 3.9% temporarily employed). About 21.0% worked as freelancers or were self-employed, and an additional 0.8% had other forms of employment. Finally, 3.9% had a part-time permanent contract, and 8.5% had a part-time temporary contract. These results suggest a precarious employment situation, as evidenced by the fact that 53.4% of respondents reported having additional jobs outside journalism.

The average working week of Indonesian full-time journalists was 44.8 hours (SD = 20.8; Median = 48). Relatedly, 36.0% of the respondents reported they felt stressed out at work often or very often during the previous six months; only 28.3% had never or rarely felt that way.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Threats or intimidation directed at journalists, demeaning or hateful speech, and public discrediting of journalists' work fared among the most common safety threats experienced by Indonesian journalists (see Table 1). However, despite experienced less frequently, experiences of more dangerous threats, such as stalking hacking or blocking social media accounts are worrying. These experiences also impact the concerns expressed by Indonesian journalists; although less than one-third of journalists were concerned about losing their job, a broad majority were concerned that those who harm journalists in Indonesia go unpunished, while almost half of the journalists were concerned about their physical or emotional well-being (see Table 2). Moreover, nearly all of the surveyed journalists feared that those who harm journalists would go unpunished.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	720	3.6%	9.6%	23.9%	16.0%	46.9%
Public discrediting of your work	720	3.6%	8.9%	28.1%	19.4%	40.0%
Surveillance	720	1.5%	2.6%	7.1%	6.1%	82.6%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	720	2.8%	5.1%	11.8%	7.9%	72.4%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	720	0.6%	1.0%	2.6%	2.1%	93.8%
Legal actions against you because of your work	720	0.6%	1.4%	3.3%	1.9%	92.8%
Stalking	720	3.5%	7.5%	16.5%	12.8%	59.7%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	720	6.1%	12.1%	22.2%	15.1%	44.4%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	720	0.7%	2.8%	6.1%	5.8%	84.6%
Other physical attacks	720	1.5%	3.2%	16.7%	11.5%	67.1%
Coercion	720	1.3%	2.5%	8.3%	10.0%	77.9%
Questioning of your personal morality	720	3.1%	6.3%	16.1%	14.9%	59.7%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	720	1.5%	3.9%	11.5%	10.4%	72.6%
Others disseminating your personal information	720	2.8%	4.6%	13.3%	15.0%	64.3%
Workplace bullying	720	1.0%	4.2%	8.9%	11.1%	74.9%
Abductions	720	0.3%	0.8%	1.9%	1.8%	95.1%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	720	0.3%	1.1%	5.7%	6.1%	86.8%
Intimidation that targets family	720	0.4%	2.2%	4.6%	6.8%	86.0%

Question: “In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?”

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing the job in journalism within the next 12 months	720	29.3%	2.77	1.44
Concerned about physical well-being	720	45.1%	3.34	1.32
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	720	40.6%	3.13	1.40
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Indonesia go unpunished	720	73.6%	4.11	1.19

Question: “Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.” (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

In regard to professional roles, Indonesian journalists found that educating the audience, promoting peace and information as well as counteracting disinformation, as the most important roles in their profession. Interviewed journalists also found that it is very important for them to shine a light on society’s problems and let people express their views. Nevertheless, only 22.8 percent found that it is acceptable to convey a positive image of political leaders and set political agenda. The time when data collection was conducted might be the main reason for how they perceived these roles.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	720	47.1%	3.46	1.21
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	720	64.0%	3.84	1.13
Shine a light on society’s problems	720	89.2%	4.53	0.82
Motivate people to participate in politics	720	48.6%	3.46	1.22
Provide analysis of current affairs	720	81.5%	4.29	0.89
Let people express their views	720	86.0%	4.40	0.85
Provide information people need to form a political opinion	720	80.7%	4.26	0.94
Advocate for social change	720	76.4%	4.17	0.91
Influence public opinion	720	52.8%	3.57	1.18
Set the political agenda	720	33.8%	3.06	1.23
Promote peace and tolerance	720	90.8%	4.64	0.79
Educate the audience	720	90.0%	4.61	0.76
Point toward possible solutions to society’s problems	720	84.0%	4.42	0.86
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	720	81.8%	4.39	0.94
Support national development	720	71.8%	4.13	0.99
Support government policy	720	39.0%	3.45	1.00
Convey a positive image of political leaders	720	22.8%	2.91	1.15
Provide entertainment and relaxation	720	49.2%	3.56	1.01
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	720	68.5%	4.02	0.93
Provide advice, orientation, and direction for daily life	720	50.3%	3.55	1.08
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	720	77.7%	4.17	0.84
Support efforts to protect public health	720	85.6%	4.42	0.82
Counteract disinformation	720	89.9%	4.58	0.82
Discuss future implications of current events	720	73.5%	4.06	0.90

Question: “Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

There was greater disagreement among Indonesian journalists regarding their perceptions of journalistic epistemology (see Table 4). Respondents agreed on the importance of representing objective reality in reporting, intuitively knowing what the final story will be, and interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	720	69.7%	3.98	1.02
Those in power inevitably shape the truth	720	22.5%	2.38	1.36
Journalists can't withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	720	21.5%	2.52	1.27
Things are either true or false; there is no in-between	720	29.7%	2.92	1.30
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	720	75.8%	4.18	1.02
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	720	36.5%	3.07	1.28
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	720	73.5%	4.05	1.05
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	720	63.6%	3.78	1.21
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	720	38.6%	3.23	1.26
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	720	33.2%	2.92	1.39
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	720	45.4%	3.41	1.20

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Journalists in Indonesia strongly agreed on the importance of professional standards rather than subjective and situational considerations for ethical reporting (see Table 5). When it comes to the justification of controversial reporting methods, however, using hidden records and paying people for information was most strongly rejected (see Table 6). Most journalists found it acceptable to use hidden recording devices and paying people for confidential information.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of the situation and personal judgment	720	73.8%	4.69	0.73
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	720	48.5%	3.29	1.45
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	720	0.0%		
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	720	17.1%	2.14	1.30

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	720	6.0%	23.5%
Using hidden recording devices	720	16.3%	53.3%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	720	7.2%	34.4%
Using the personal materials of influential people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	720	3.8%	19.3%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	720	7.6%	25.1%
Paying people for confidential information	720	9.2%	42.6%
Accepting money from sources	720	2.4%	18.1%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	720	3.3%	23.5%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	720	7.6%	51.3%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	720	2.1%	7.8%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Indonesian journalists reported a limited but fair amount of freedom in their work (see Table 7). About two-thirds claimed to have complete or a great deal of freedom in selecting their stories and in deciding which aspects to emphasize in a story. Media freedom was rated extremely low by the respondents.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	720	61.0%	3.72	1.00
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	720	62.5%	3.78	0.98
Media freedom in Indonesia	720	30.4%	3.14	0.93

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Indonesian journalists found journalism ethics and editorial policy to fare highest among the internal factors influencing news production (see Table 8). Among the external factors, most journalists considered access to information and media laws and regulations to be extremely or very influential.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	720	41.9%	3.17	1.28
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	720	65.0%	3.80	1.18
The business managers of the news organization	720	52.5%	3.53	1.25
The owners of the news organization	720	52.4%	3.49	1.32
Editorial policy	720	67.5%	3.93	1.14
Advertising considerations	720	44.2%	3.23	1.36
Profit expectations	720	40.1%	3.13	1.33
Audience research and data	720	47.2%	3.37	1.25
Availability of news-gathering resources	720	62.1%	3.80	1.12
Time limits	720	55.6%	3.61	1.13
Journalism ethics	720	76.5%	4.20	1.09
Self-censorship	720	50.3%	3.53	1.20
Personal values and beliefs	720	53.9%	3.59	1.18
Colleagues in other media	720	33.9%	3.01	1.21
Friends, acquaintances, and family	720	36.7%	3.13	1.21
Feedback from the audience	720	50.7%	3.52	1.11
Competing news organizations	720	45.1%	3.31	1.23
Media laws and regulation	720	69.0%	4.00	1.07
Access to information	720	71.9%	4.05	1.00
Government censorship	720	36.4%	3.11	1.28
Government officials	720	28.6%	2.87	1.25
Politicians	720	23.9%	2.67	1.26
Business people	720	23.9%	2.68	1.23
Public relations	720	25.3%	2.73	1.23
Relationships with news sources	720	42.9%	3.31	1.22
Police	720	27.2%	2.78	1.24
Issue advocacy groups	720	20.4%	2.56	1.22
Religious groups and institutions	720	29.4%	2.94	1.17
Military	720	20.8%	2.58	1.24
Scientists or health experts	720	0.0%	3.11	1.23

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Ireland

Dawn Wheatley & Kevin Rafter

INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Ireland in 2025 remains a stable parliamentary democracy, with centre-right coalition governments continuing to shape its political landscape following national elections in 2020 and 2024. Issues such as housing supply, migration and post-Brexit relationships with the UK and EU are staples of political and social discourse as economic growth continues, underpinned by foreign investment particularly from technology companies.

Journalism in Ireland has been shaped by traditional, western "fourth estate" models of professionalism, with strong embedded values around holding power to account and objectivity. Codes of practice from publishers and broadcasters are generally widely respected, while delays in defamation law reform has been a long-standing frustration for the media sector. Public service broadcasting has a strong tradition with radio remaining particularly popular, while highly partisan media is not a trademark of the Irish landscape.

Over the past two decades, local and national newspapers have seen strong declines in circulation and advertising revenue – particularly challenging for the industry because of the relatively small population (5.3 million in 2025) – but most have made a relatively stable transition online. Social media regulation around dis/misinformation is a particularly pertinent issue in Ireland because it is home to many of the platforms' European headquarters. Data collection in Ireland took place in summer 2021 while the Covid-19 pandemic was still impacting day-to-day life and journalistic work.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The sample was relatively gender balanced with 55.7% of respondents being men, reflecting an ongoing male dominance within the sector. The mean age was 43.5 years (SD = 12.4; Median = 43.5). The level of formal education among Irish journalists is high: 93.5% had some form of third-level education (39.6% had a Bachelor's degree, 46.2% had a Master's degree, 2% had a PhD, while 5.7% had some university studies but not a degree). Specifically, in terms of journalism education, two-thirds (67.5%) had some formal training in the profession, with 83% of those respondents receiving it via college or university; 36% had completed apprenticeships or cadetships, while 46% had completed short courses.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

The majority of journalists surveyed (81.8%) worked for national or transnational news organisations, with the remainder in local outlets. In terms of the main media format of their employers, the sample primarily drew on journalists working in organisations with a newspaper background (55.6%), followed by internet natives (13.1%), radio (12.3%) and TV (10%). News agencies (2.6%) and magazines (2.6%) were also represented to a lesser degree, while 4% of respondents said "other" or "no main employer".

The average years of journalistic work experience in Ireland was 18.7 years (SD = 11.9; Median = 19). One-third (34.7%) worked on a specific beat (such as politics, business, health), while the remaining respondents had a more general scope in their daily work. Most of the samples – 60.4% – had no management role, while 29% were in middle management and 10.7% in top management. The average working week for full-time journalists was 44.8 hours (SD = 7.6; Median = 42).

Regarding working and labour conditions, almost two-thirds (61.4%) of journalists are members of a trade union or professional association. Full-time permanent contracts were the most prevalent employment type (74.4%) in Ireland, suggesting a certain level of stability, with part-time permanent (3.6%), full-time fixed-term (7.2%) and part-time, fixed-term (1.4%) less common. Freelance/self-employed journalists accounted for 13.3% of the respondents. Among the overall sample, 28.4% had some additional stream of income beyond journalism.

Elsewhere, there are clearly pressures and strain embedded into contemporary journalism work in Ireland: when asked if they had felt stressed at work over the past six months, 57.5% said they had felt stressed often or very often; 29.8% said sometimes, and 12.7% said rarely or never.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Ireland is generally a physically safe environment for journalists, with the overwhelming majority never experiencing arrests, detentions or imprisonments (99.2%), sexual assault/harassment (90.6%), stalking (89.1%) or other physical attacks (92.8%). Instead, more verbal criticism is apparent (see Table 1): 20.9% have often/very often experienced demeaning or hateful speech, 19% faced frequent public discrediting of their work, and 15.2% often have their personal morality questioned. In the context of Irish defamation laws, it is worth highlighting that 16.7% had sometimes, often, or very often experienced legal actions. Table 2 highlights wellbeing, where 46.8% said they strongly agreed that they were concerned about their emotional and mental wellbeing; the figure dropped to 25.6% for physical well-being.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	363	6.3%	14.6%	33.3%	28.7%	17.1%
Public discrediting of your work	363	7.7%	11.3%	28.9%	30.6%	21.5%
Surveillance	358	0.8%	1.1%	8.4%	14.5%	75.1%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	362	0.0%	1.7%	8.8%	11.0%	78.5%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	363	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	99.2%
Legal actions against you because of your work	361	1.4%	4.2%	11.1%	17.5%	65.9%
Stalking	358	0.0%	0.3%	5.0%	5.6%	89.1%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	363	0.8%	4.1%	16.5%	21.2%	57.3%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	363	0.3%	0.0%	1.7%	7.4%	90.6%
Other physical attacks	362	0.0%	0.6%	1.4%	5.2%	92.8%
Questioning of your personal morality	360	3.3%	11.9%	22.5%	26.1%	36.1%
Others disseminating your personal information	363	0.0%	3.6%	13.8%	15.2%	67.5%
Workplace bullying	363	1.7%	3.3%	11.3%	12.4%	71.3%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	363	24.8%	2.48	1.22
Concerned about physical well-being	363	25.6%	2.41	1.22
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	363	46.8%	3.09	1.22
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Ireland go unpunished	362	50.6%	3.35	1.05

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Three specific roles are seen as very/extremely important for more than 80% of Irish journalists: educating the audience, counteracting disinformation, and shining a light on society's problems (see Table 3). Conversely, there is much less support for conveying a positive image of political leaders or supporting government policy. Notably, as the survey took place in 2021 with the Covid-19 pandemic still an issue, 44% of people said it was very/extremely important to support efforts to protect public health.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	362	71.3%	3.91	1.03
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	362	77.6%	4.09	1.05
Shine a light on society's problems	360	80.6%	4.20	1.02
Motivate people to participate in politics	361	12.5%	2.22	1.15
Provide analysis of current affairs	362	61.0%	3.65	1.25
Let people express their views	360	60.3%	3.66	1.07
Provide information people need to form political opinion	362	59.4%	3.58	1.26
Advocate for social change	361	35.5%	2.94	1.31
Influence public opinion	359	19.5%	2.47	1.19
Set the political agenda	359	13.6%	2.11	1.14
Promote peace and tolerance	359	35.9%	2.92	1.33
Educate the audience	361	83.7%	4.19	0.88
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	362	50.3%	3.32	1.18
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	360	62.2%	3.62	1.27
Support national development	358	23.5%	2.58	1.24
Support government policy	360	0.80%	1.33	0.69
Convey a positive image of political leaders	361	1.70%	1.20	0.59
Provide entertainment and relaxation	363	36.4%	2.94	1.30
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	362	30.9%	2.86	1.22
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	361	17.2%	2.28	1.22
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	363	48.5%	3.31	1.20
Support efforts to protect public health	361	44.0%	3.19	1.33
Counteract disinformation	360	82.5%	4.29	1.01
Discuss future implications of current events	361	65.9%	3.75	1.09

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Journalists in Ireland demonstrate strong commitment to balance and detachment (see Table 4), with 82.6% saying journalists should let the facts speak for themselves and 75.8% strongly agreeing that "it is possible to represent objective reality in reporting". The strongest response (89.5%) was evident in the journalists' belief in the need to alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	363	72.7%	3.75	0.82
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	362	34.8%	2.93	1.04
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	363	17.6%	2.42	1.00
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	363	17.1%	2.39	1.00
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	360	75.8%	3.79	0.85
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	363	27.0%	2.74	1.00
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	363	82.6%	3.96	0.75
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	363	36.6%	2.98	1.12
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	363	35.5%	2.95	1.13
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	361	89.5%	4.33	0.75

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Journalists in Ireland have moderate agreement with overarching statements regarding ethical content, suggesting that some decision-making is still depending on the situation and specific circumstances (see Table 5). Nevertheless, there is resistance – with fewer than one in five agreeing – that ethics come down to personal judgment. In terms of specific scenarios, there was low support for many of the controversial reporting methods presented in Table 6, such as only 2.2% saying it was always justified/justified on occasion to accept money from sources. Respondents found it much more acceptable to use hidden recording devices, and to use confidential documents or personal material of powerful people.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	361	53.5%	3.42	1.12
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	363	60.6%	3.48	1.03
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	361	34.6%	2.88	1.16
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	361	18.6%	2.35	1.13

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	362	0.0%	46.1%
Using hidden recording devices	363	1.1%	75.8%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	362	14.4%	71.5%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	363	5.5%	73.6%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	363	0.3%	43.5%
Paying people for confidential information	363	1.4%	30.0%
Accepting money from sources	361	0.3%	1.9%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	362	0.6%	28.7%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	363	0.3%	7.4%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	361	0.0%	17.7%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Irish journalists' attitudes towards the level of autonomy and freedom they have in their work was broadly consistent across all three indicators, with around two-thirds suggesting they have a great deal or complete freedom in selecting news stories, in deciding what to emphasise, and in their assessment of overall media freedom in Ireland.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	363	63.4%	3.63	0.83
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	363	69.4%	3.75	0.79
Media freedom in Ireland	357	66.1%	3.65	0.67

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

The single most influential factor for Irish journalists was journalism ethics, with two-thirds stating they were very/extremely influential on their work. Other highly ranked influences were editorial supervisors and higher editors, time limits, access to information, and media laws and regulations. On the lower end, religious groups and institutions, and friends, acquaintances and family were not deemed particularly relevant, while journalists also said they resisted commercial pressures such as advertising considerations and profit expectations.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	329	30.4%	2.93	0.97
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	345	53.9%	3.44	1.01
The business managers of the news organization	273	9.9%	1.92	1.08
The owners of the news organization	255	14.1%	1.96	1.21
Editorial policy	337	44.2%	3.16	1.18
Advertising considerations	246	8.1%	1.83	1.04
Profit expectations	235	8.9%	1.86	1.08
Audience research and data	321	23.4%	2.67	1.10
Availability of news-gathering resources	328	38.4%	3.12	1.10
Time limits	338	50.9%	3.40	1.10
Journalism ethics	339	65.5%	3.67	1.10
Self-censorship	291	21.0%	2.28	1.25
Personal values and beliefs	322	28.9%	2.73	1.20
Colleagues in other media	336	8.0%	2.22	0.91
Friends, acquaintances and family	319	6.9%	1.98	0.90
Feedback from the audience	355	17.5%	2.55	0.98
Competing news organizations	348	13.8%	2.51	0.94
Media laws and regulation	348	54.3%	3.50	1.16
Access to information	348	60.1%	3.61	1.01
Government censorship	256	9.4%	1.65	1.07
Government officials	280	7.1%	1.76	1.00
Politicians	285	8.8%	1.84	1.04
Business people	278	8.6%	1.69	1.01
Public relations	320	8.1%	1.90	1.01
Relationships with news sources	328	31.4%	2.82	1.15
Police	247	7.7%	1.73	1.00
Issue advocacy groups	297	10.8%	2.05	1.00
Scientists or health experts	300	25.3%	2.57	1.15
Religious groups and institutions	240	1.7%	1.37	0.68

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Israel

KEREN TENENBOIM-WEINBLATT & MOTTI NEIGER

INTRODUCTION

As of 2025, Israel continues to face profound political, social, and security challenges, which were further exacerbated by the Hamas-led attack of October 7, 2023, and the ensuing war in Gaza. These events unfolded amid deepening internal polarization and mounting strain on democratic institutions. The economy remains technologically advanced, but is increasingly burdened by the costs of prolonged conflict, political instability, and persistent social inequalities.

Israel's journalistic tradition is rooted in a diverse and hybrid media system, shaped by strong influences of the Western liberal model alongside significant interventionist tendencies, which have been intensified by the polarized political environment. Journalism has long played a central role in shaping national discourse, and journalists have historically operated with a relatively high degree of freedom and personal safety. Yet rising employment insecurity and a hostile environment, marked by discursive attacks on the news media and threats to public broadcasting, have increasingly challenged journalistic autonomy and safety in recent years.

The fieldwork for this study took place between July 2021 and October 2023, concluding just before the outbreak of the war. This period was marked by the final stages of the COVID-19 crisis, a fifth round of national elections in less than four years, mass protests over the government's proposed judicial overhaul, and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's ongoing corruption trial, including two media-related cases. Against this backdrop, the survey reveals a journalistic field that upholds key professional norms and roles, while contending with growing pressures.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The Israeli sample is predominantly male (66.9%), reflecting the gender distribution of the country's journalistic workforce. The average age of journalists in the sample is 47.8 years (SD = 12.9; Median = 46). Most journalists have completed higher education: 42.9% hold a Bachelor's degree, 31.9% a Master's degree, and 2% a Doctorate. Over half (55.5%) have received professional education or training in journalism. Among them, 50.9% studied at a university or college, 63.2% completed an apprenticeship or cadetship, and 52.8% participated in short-term courses.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

The majority of Israeli journalists in the sample work for national or transnational media (89.7%), while only 10.0% are employed by local or regional outlets. In terms of media ownership, most journalists (78.1%) are affiliated with private or commercial media, followed by 11.4% who work for public service media. Others are employed by non-profit, state-run (e.g., Israeli Army Radio), or community media. Regarding employer type, 32.4% of journalists work for organizations with a newspaper background, 28.1% for internet-native platforms, and smaller proportions are employed in television (16.1%), radio (9.4%), and magazines (7.4%). Only a third (33%) report working on a specific beat or subject area.

About half of the journalists (51.2%) have no management role, while 30.7% occupy middle management positions, and 18.2% are in top management. In terms of work experience, journalists in the sample have worked in the profession for an average of 20.6 years (SD = 12.1; Median = 19). Their average weekly workload is relatively high, at 51.8 hours (SD = 17.2; Median = 48; for those in full-time employment).

Employment conditions reflect a mix of stability and precarity. While 29.3% of journalists hold full-time permanent contracts, a larger group (45.5%) are employed on full-time fixed-term contracts. Freelance or self-employed journalists comprise 17.1% of the sample, and only a small minority work part-time or under other arrangements. Nearly half (46.4%) of the respondents report having additional sources of income outside journalism. A considerable share (44.9%) report belonging to a union.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Verbal threats were the most common safety issues reported by Israeli journalists, with more than half experiencing demeaning or hateful speech (sometimes, often, or very often) and over 45% encountering public discrediting of their work (see Table 1). Although more severe threats – such as surveillance, stalking, or legal action – were less frequent, they were not negligible. Concerns about mental and emotional well-being were relatively common (37.8%), and almost a third of the journalists expressed worry about their physical safety (see Table 2). Over one in four journalists feared losing their job within the coming year, highlighting a significant sense of job insecurity. A striking 75.3% of journalists were concerned that those who harm journalists in Israel often go unpunished.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	334	12.3%	11.7%	32.6%	27.2%	16.2%
Public discrediting of your work	336	8.6%	7.7%	28.9%	32.4%	22.3%
Surveillance	328	3.7%	6.7%	17.4%	20.4%	51.8%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	334	0.0%	0.9%	6.0%	13.8%	79.3%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	334	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	1.5%	98.2%
Legal actions against you because of your work	335	0.6%	2.4%	13.1%	33.4%	50.4%
Stalking	335	1.8%	1.5%	8.4%	22.7%	65.7%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	336	1.8%	2.7%	14.9%	38.1%	42.6%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	335	0.0%	0.9%	2.7%	8.7%	87.8%
Other physical attacks	336	0.6%	0.0%	1.8%	11.0%	86.6%
Intimidation that targets family	336	0.0%	0.0%	3.0%	6.5%	90.5%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	336	26.2%	2.71	1.20
Concerned about physical well-being	336	31.8%	2.74	1.26
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	336	37.8%	2.88	1.28
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Israel go unpunished	336	75.3%	3.98	0.99

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Israeli journalists strongly support monitorial and interventionist roles, with particularly high importance placed on monitoring and scrutinizing those in power, shining a light on society's problems, and counteracting disinformation (see Table 3). Roles related to social advocacy, public voice, and future-oriented reporting also received broad endorsement. In contrast, collaborative roles (such as supporting government policy or portraying leaders positively) were valued by only a small minority. The detached observer role received only moderate support.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	336	39.6%	3.04	1.30
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	336	81.5%	4.23	0.97
Shine a light on society's problems	336	90.8%	4.44	0.86
Motivate people to participate in politics	336	31.5%	2.80	1.31
Provide analysis of current affairs	336	72.9%	3.98	1.06
Let people express their views	336	67.3%	3.90	1.11
Provide information people need to form political opinion	336	73.5%	3.96	1.25
Advocate for social change	336	68.5%	3.92	1.14
Influence public opinion	336	73.8%	4.01	1.11
Set the political agenda	336	52.4%	3.37	1.29
Promote peace and tolerance	336	64.9%	3.79	1.23
Educate the audience	336	35.1%	2.88	1.37
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	336	74.4%	3.98	1.05
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	336	79.5%	4.15	1.06
Support national development	336	43.8%	3.16	1.31
Support government policy	336	6.3%	1.60	0.98
Convey a positive image of political leaders	336	5.4%	1.52	0.92
Provide entertainment and relaxation	336	39.3%	2.91	1.34
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	336	57.7%	3.57	1.23
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	336	41.4%	3.03	1.36
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	336	60.4%	3.67	1.23
Support efforts to protect public health	336	65.5%	3.76	1.21
Counteract disinformation	336	91.1%	4.53	0.82
Discuss future implications of current events	336	81.8%	4.24	0.96

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Israeli journalists expressed mixed views on epistemological questions (see Table 4). While 62.4% agreed that it is possible to represent objective reality in reporting, a nearly equal proportion (59.2%) believed that interpretation (i.e., involving subjective evaluation) is necessary to make sense of facts and 45.8% think it is impossible to fully withhold personal beliefs from reporting. Only a minority (30.4%) supported the absolutist notion that things are either true or false, with no in-between. These findings suggest that while most journalists value objectivity, many also acknowledge the complex, constructed nature of truth in journalistic practice.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	306	59.2%	3.56	0.96
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	306	37.3%	3.04	1.04
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	306	45.8%	3.11	1.15
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	306	30.4%	2.81	1.13
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	306	62.4%	3.60	0.99

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Israeli journalists expressed a strong orientation toward professional ethical standards. While there is some openness to contextual considerations, professional norms remain the dominant ethical compass for most respondents (see Table 5). At the same time, many expressed conditional acceptance of controversial reporting methods – particularly the use of hidden recording devices and confidential documents – in specific circumstances (see Table 6). The data suggest that while Israeli journalists uphold strong professional ethics, many are willing to make pragmatic exceptions, especially when reporting involves powerful actors.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	336	57.7%	3.64	1.11
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	336	60.7%	3.49	1.03
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	336	26.2%	2.62	1.16
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	336	11.0%	2.07	1.07

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	336	1.2%	59.5%
Using hidden recording devices	336	19.6%	71.7%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	336	19.0%	50.9%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	336	7.7%	60.7%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	336	1.5%	36.9%
Paying people for confidential information	336	1.8%	58.0%
Accepting money from sources	336	0.6%	6.8%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	336	0.9%	21.1%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	336	0.6%	16.4%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	336	0.0%	11.6%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Israeli journalists reported high levels of editorial autonomy in their day-to-day work, with over three-quarters indicating that they enjoy a great deal or complete freedom in choosing and framing stories (see Table 7). However, only 42.9% expressed similar confidence in the overall level of media freedom in Israel.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	327	76.5%	3.97	0.88
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	327	77.1%	4.11	0.85
Media freedom in Israel	326	42.9%	3.33	0.81

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Israeli journalists identified journalism ethics and personal values as the most influential factors shaping their work (see Table 8). Editorial supervisors, time constraints, and resource availability were also considered important. In contrast, external influences – such as political actors, government censorship, and business interests – were generally perceived as weak.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	301	40.2%	3.11	1.23
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	298	62.1%	3.67	1.29
The business managers of the news organization	284	38.4%	2.99	1.45
The owners of the news organization	274	25.2%	2.36	1.49
Editorial policy	288	40.3%	3.01	1.43
Advertising considerations	288	17.7%	2.08	1.32
Profit expectations	289	19.4%	2.19	1.37
Audience research and data	300	45.3%	3.17	1.37
Availability of news-gathering resources	297	54.5%	3.41	1.30
Time limits	310	60.3%	3.69	1.21
Journalism ethics	313	80.5%	4.16	1.01
Self-censorship	307	35.2%	2.87	1.34
Personal values and beliefs	311	69.5%	3.94	1.14
Colleagues in other media	310	15.5%	2.35	1.09
Friends, acquaintances and family	312	7.4%	2.09	0.95
Feedback from the audience	314	24.5%	2.73	1.10
Competing news organizations	314	24.8%	2.67	1.15
Media laws and regulation	287	24.4%	2.53	1.26
Access to information	309	53.1%	3.35	1.25
Government censorship	282	12.1%	1.95	1.15
Government officials	287	8.7%	1.68	1.08
Politicians	291	10.0%	1.78	1.11
Business people	288	6.6%	1.67	0.99
Public relations	306	13.1%	2.22	1.10
Relationships with news sources	298	33.9%	2.86	1.23
Police	282	5.3%	1.55	0.95
Issue advocacy groups	292	6.5%	1.71	0.99
Religious groups and institutions	288	5.9%	1.50	0.94
Military	282	9.2%	1.66	1.05

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Italy

Sergio Splendore & Giulia Sbaraini Fontes

INTRODUCTION

Since 2022, Italy has been governed by a center-right Government led by Giorgia Meloni as its Prime Minister. She is the first female Prime Minister in Italian history. Meloni promotes a conservative agenda that privileges, for instance, tough measures against immigration, balanced by a "moderate" attitude linked to European Union issues. With center-right Government the tension between Government and journalism is usually higher.

Historically, the Italian media system has been characterized by its close ties to political power, which implies a low development of journalistic professionalization and a correspondence between news outlets and political divisions within society. Given that context, the coverage is known for being highly opinionated and influenced by politicians' statements. Although television remains popular, it has been losing its centrality with the rise of new digital sources.

During Meloni's Government, diverse controversies involved the public broadcaster RAI. Journalists have been reporting a growing intrusion from officials into the service, including accusations of censorship denied by the Government. Additionally, reports from media freedom institutions and the European Commission demonstrated concerns about press freedom in Italy, especially in relation to media ownership and legal threats to journalists.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

Our sample included 648 Italian journalists, of whom 59.1% were men and 40.9% were women. On average, they were 46.9 years old (SD = 9.6, Median = 48). The majority of them had a bachelor's degree or equivalent (36.0%) or a master's degree or equivalent (36.1%). Other 13.3% completed high school, while 9.9% have some university studies but no degree, and 4.2% have completed a doctorate. 55.7% of the respondents said they had some kind of formal education or professional training in journalism, from which 59.2% went to a university or college, 79.1% did journalism apprenticeships, and 59% did short-term courses.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

Italian journalists interviewed have been working in the field for an average of 19.8 years (SD = 9.74, Median = 19.00). Every week, they spend an average of 45.0 hours at work (SD = 10.7, Median = 40; those in full-time employment) in organizations focused on newspaper publishing (32.3%), magazine companies (26.6%), internet native outlets (16%), TV stations (13.1%), news agencies (5.4%), and radio stations (3.0%). Other 3.5% claimed to have no main employer, and 0.2% said they work in telecommunications.

The companies journalists work for are mostly national (63.6%), followed by regional (16.8%) and local media (19.6%). Regarding ownership, 74.4% work for private or commercial media, 12.6% are employed by public service media, 7.7% by community media, and 5.2% by non-profit media. Most of them perform middle management roles in the newsroom (48.2%), while 35.1% have no management role, and 16.7% occupy top positions. In their working routine, most of them do not have specific beats (59.7%, against 40.3% who cover subject areas).

Additionally, the majority of our sample (59.6%) has some kind of contract with the employee, either full-time permanent (53.9%), full-time fixed term (2.5%), part-time fixed term (1.7%), or part-time permanent (1.5%). Conversely, 40.4% are freelancers or self-employed. Either way, on average, 91.1% of their work-related income comes from journalism (SD = 10.2, Median = 95). More than half of the interviewees are not members of unions (64.6%).

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Italian journalists report rarely or never being victims of most safety issues mapped by our survey. Having their work publicly discredited (14.3%) or demeaning or hateful speech directed at them (12.9%) are the threats with the highest percentages registered in the "often" and "very often" categories. On the other hand, 98.4% of the journalists say they never experienced arrests, detentions, or imprisonment, while 92.9% and 91.3% say they have never experienced sexual assaults or sexual harassment or other physical attacks, respectively. Nevertheless, 79.4% are concerned with the impunity of those who harm journalists, and 56.6% worry about their mental and emotional well-being (Table 2).

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	645	4.5%	8.4%	28.7%	20.0%	38.4%
Public discrediting of your work	644	5.4%	8.9%	28.3%	18.8%	38.7%
Surveillance	600	2.0%	3.5%	11.2%	12.0%	71.3%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	638	0.8%	1.1%	3.8%	7.8%	86.5%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	645	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	1.2%	98.4%
Legal actions against you because of your work	643	1.1%	3.1%	12.6%	12.9%	70.3%
Stalking	645	0.8%	0.9%	5.0%	8.4%	85.0%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	645	1.4%	2.0%	10.5%	24.3%	61.7%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	645	0.5%	0.5%	2.6%	3.6%	92.9%
Other physical attacks	641	0.5%	0.0%	1.2%	7.0%	91.3%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	626	42.9%	3.17	1.27
Concerned about physical well-being	634	42.7%	3.08	1.26
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	634	56.6%	3.40	1.26
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Italy go unpunished	637	79.4%	4.08	0.94

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

The survey demonstrates that Italian journalists are strongly committed to aspects related to the monitorial role, with an emphasis on counteracting disinformation (Mean = 4.48) and being a detached observer (Mean = 4.41). Providing analysis of current affairs (Mean = 4.13) and shining a light on society's problems (Mean = 4.04) also appear as important roles. Conversely, two items of the collaborative role have the lowest means: support government policy (Mean = 1.78) and convey a positive image of political leaders (Mean = 1.42).

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	643	85.9%	4.41	0.87
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	634	60.8%	3.60	1.27
Shine a light on society's problems	644	74.6%	4.04	1.08
Motivate people to participate in politics	631	23.1%	2.62	1.23
Provide analysis of current affairs	641	79.1%	4.13	0.91
Let people express their views	637	59.2%	3.71	1.17
Provide information people need to form political opinion	630	61.9%	3.63	1.32
Advocate for social change	629	53.8%	3.48	1.22
Influence public opinion	628	19.5%	2.49	1.14
Set the political agenda	629	11.9%	2.18	1.08
Promote peace and tolerance	631	54.2%	3.49	1.31
Educate the audience	625	46.4%	3.31	1.25
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	636	50.4%	3.43	1.14
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	629	51.5%	3.38	1.30
Support national development	631	42.8%	3.19	1.20
Support government policy	609	6.6%	1.78	0.96
Convey a positive image of political leaders	616	1.9%	1.42	0.72
Provide entertainment and relaxation	637	23.8%	2.55	1.29
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	642	46.3%	3.35	1.19
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	634	30.9%	2.92	1.17
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	640	46.1%	3.34	1.16
Support efforts to protect public health	629	62.5%	3.69	1.25
Counteract disinformation	638	87.3%	4.48	0.87

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Two statements regarding journalistic epistemology have greater adherence among Italian journalists. On the one hand, 62.7% agree or strongly agree that it is possible to represent objective reality through reporting. Interestingly, 57.8% have the same position regarding the idea that interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts. This second result resonates with the low agreement with the statement that things are either true or false, with no in-between (25.6%).

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	633	57.8%	3.49	0.98
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	634	36.2%	3.06	1.04
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	637	31.2%	2.84	1.06
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	637	25.6%	2.70	1.11
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	636	62.7%	3.60	0.93

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Our interviewees adhere mainly to the idea that what is ethical in their work should always be determined by professional standards (Mean = 3.98), but they also agree to reconsider these standards in extraordinary circumstances (Mean = 3.01). For 67.7%, using hidden recording devices as a reporting method can be justified on occasion. Other 56.1% think the same about using confidential business or government documents without authorization, and 50.5% have this view concerning the use of personal materials of powerful people without their permission.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	619	75.6%	3.98	0.99
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	603	39.2%	3.01	1.12
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	614	17.3%	2.32	1.12
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	625	5.3%	1.70	0.89

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	633	1.4%	46.0%
Using hidden recording devices	635	6.6%	67.7%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	629	13.4%	56.1%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	624	8.2%	50.5%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	632	0.8%	25.5%
Paying people for confidential information	636	1.4%	27.5%
Accepting money from sources	639	0.3%	2.2%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	633	5.7%	31.3%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	634	1.6%	18.0%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	639	0.3%	15.0%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

More than half of the Italian journalists interviewed feel they have a great deal or complete freedom for selecting news stories (52.8%) and deciding which aspects to emphasize in their work (59.3%). Nevertheless, only 25.7% feel that the media has a great deal or complete freedom in Italy.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	645	52.8%	3.53	0.88
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	644	59.3%	3.65	0.87
Media freedom in Italy	641	25.7%	2.88	0.85

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Italian journalists perceive external and internal influences on their work as slightly to moderately strong (see the means in Table 8). According to our interviewees, the stronger ones are internal factors: editorial policy (Mean = 3.77), journalism ethics (Mean = 3.74), business managers of news organizations (Mean = 3.71), and time limits (Mean = 3.65). The only external influence that has a mean above 3.50 is access to information (Mean = 3.69).

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	622	38.1%	3.11	1.13
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	611	51.0%	3.39	1.09
The business managers of the news organization	607	62.6%	3.71	1.14
The owners of the news organization	609	51.5%	3.40	1.32
Editorial policy	622	65.6%	3.77	1.01
Advertising considerations	620	36.3%	2.91	1.40
Profit expectations	601	40.1%	3.02	1.33
Audience research and data	601	37.1%	3.09	1.15
Availability of news-gathering resources	604	49.7%	3.38	1.09
Time limits	623	60.5%	3.65	1.04
Journalism ethics	623	62.2%	3.74	1.11
Self-censorship	576	21.7%	2.61	1.15
Personal values and beliefs	628	50.3%	3.43	1.15
Colleagues in other media	618	10.3%	2.19	1.04
Friends, acquaintances and family	614	3.1%	1.66	0.87
Feedback from the audience	634	31.3%	2.86	1.13
Competing news organizations	622	17.5%	2.38	1.13
Media laws and regulation	624	34.4%	2.91	1.23
Access to information	625	66.6%	3.69	1.05
Government censorship	595	13.8%	1.92	1.18
Government officials	594	8.8%	1.70	1.07
Politicians	600	11.7%	1.85	1.14
Business people	603	13.3%	1.99	1.18
Public relations	626	33.6%	2.87	1.23
Relationships with news sources	626	56.9%	3.47	1.18
Police	595	24.2%	2.34	1.36
Issue advocacy groups	595	15.1%	2.14	1.18
Scientists or health experts	613	37.7%	2.95	1.29

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Kazakhstan[1]

Gulmira Sultanbayeva & Aitolkyn Ashimova

INTRODUCTION

The current political, economic, and social situation in Kazakhstan is marked by contradictory trends. On the one hand, the state continues its course toward institutional modernization and the development of a digital economy; on the other hand, there remains a high level of centralized power, limited political pluralism, and institutional barriers to the development of a full-fledged civil society. Social expectations and demands for justice, transparency, and participation have intensified following the protest events of January 2022, which highlighted a crisis of trust and the urgent need for deep systemic reforms.

Kazakhstani journalism has a rich and complex history that blends elements of the Soviet media tradition – controlled and hierarchical – with modern approaches to digital and market-oriented journalism. Since the early 1990s, the media have gradually transitioned from being ideological tools to functioning as market-based and social institutions. However, political control over key media resources remains significant. The development of journalism in Kazakhstan unfolds amid regulatory uncertainty, pressure from authorities, and the growing influence of social media.

At the time of the study (2021–2022), journalistic activity in Kazakhstan was affected by several destabilizing factors. Chief among them were the January 2022 protests, which were accompanied by the use of force, internet shutdowns, and temporary restrictions on access to information. These events served as a stress test for the professional journalism community, revealing the risks associated with fulfilling their professional duties. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact working conditions, workload levels, and the safety of media workers. In this context, the journalistic profession in Kazakhstan found itself simultaneously at the center of public attention and under increasing pressure – from both external threats and internal professional challenges.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

Our sample of journalists in Kazakhstan is predominantly female: 77.8% of the respondents were women. Data on age was not available in this sample. In terms of education, journalists in Kazakhstan are generally well educated: 62.6% of them held a Bachelor's degree or equivalent, 28.9% a Master's degree or equivalent, and an additional 5.1% have obtained a doctorate. Only 1.1% of the respondents did not complete university, while 1.6% had only completed secondary education.

Moreover, 89.6% of the respondents have acquired formal education or professional training in journalism. This training is primarily obtained at university or in college (95.9%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

More than half of journalists in Kazakhstan (69.9%) reported having additional jobs outside journalism. A large majority (93.6%) were employed rather than self-employed, with 90.6% holding permanent contracts. Most journalists (80.6%) worked full-time, while 19.4% had part-time positions. Only 9.4% were employed on temporary contracts.

On average, journalists in Kazakhstan had 6.5 years of professional experience (SD = 9.1; Median = 3), indicating a relatively young but varied workforce. Most professionals (57.9%) held full-time permanent contracts, while 8.6% identified as freelance or self-employed. The majority had the job title "journalist", though roles such as editor, correspondent, reporter, and editor-in-chief were also common. Just over one third (41.5) were members of professional associations or unions.

Over two thirds of respondents (67.1%) reported feeling stressed at work sometimes, often, or very often, with 10.6% experiencing stress very often, indicating substantial occupational pressure in the field.

[1] Country sample does not fully align with WJS specifications regarding maximum margin of error (see WJS3 Methodology).

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Verbal attacks such as demeaning or hateful speech and public discrediting of journalists' work were among the most common safety threats experienced by journalists in Kazakhstan (see Table 1). Although less frequent, more severe threats such as surveillance, legal actions, and physical harassment remain concerning. These experiences are reflected in journalists' safety concerns: nearly a third expressed worry about their physical (31.1%) or emotional (31.5%) well-being, and over one-fifth feared losing their job (see Table 2). Moreover, nearly half of the surveyed journalists believed that those who harm journalists in Kazakhstan would go unpunished.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	273	8.8%	6.6%	14.6%	18.7%	51.3%
Public discrediting of your work	273	8.1%	6.2%	13.2%	19.4%	53.1%
Surveillance	273	8.0%	4.8%	13.9%	22.0%	51.3%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	273	7.7%	7.7%	13.2%	10.6%	60.8%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	273	7.7%	5.1%	11.7%	11.7%	63.7%
Legal actions against you because of your work	273	5.9%	5.5%	11.1%	12.1%	65.6%
Stalking	273	7.3%	6.2%	8.4%	11.1%	67.0%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	273	5.5%	7.3%	11.1%	11.3%	64.8%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	273	5.5%	7.7%	12.5%	10.6%	63.7%
Other physical attacks	273	5.1%	5.9%	10.3%	8.0%	70.7%
Coercion	271	7.0%	6.6%	11.0%	11.4%	63.8%
Questioning of your personal morality	269	5.6%	7.4%	13.0%	17.5%	56.5%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	267	6.4%	6.0%	15.0%	11.6%	61.0%
Others disseminating your personal information	265	8.7%	6.8%	10.5%	11.7%	62.3%
Workplace bullying	271	7.0%	8.5%	10.0%	10.7%	63.8%
Abductions	267	7.1%	4.5%	10.5%	13.5%	64.4%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	264	6.8%	4.6%	10.6%	9.8%	68.2%
Intimidation that targets family	264	6.8%	2.3%	11.7%	7.6%	71.6%
Work in Covid-19 environment	257	6.6%	1.6%	11.7%	6.2%	73.9%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	273	22.3%	2.43	1.36
Concerned about physical well-being	273	31.1%	2.81	1.44
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	273	31.5%	2.77	1.42
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Kazakhstan go unpunished	267	49.4%	3.38	1.35

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Kazakhstani journalists prioritize roles that inform, educate, and empower the public. The most valued functions include supporting national development (67.8%), counteracting disinformation (68.5%), and educating the audience (64.8%) (see Table 3). Roles like speaking for the marginalized (33.7%) or promoting political leaders (36.3%) were seen as less important.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	273	46.9%	3.31	1.34
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	273	41.0%	3.17	1.33
Shine a light on society's problems	273	64.5%	3.80	1.28
Motivate people to participate in politics	273	49.1%	3.38	1.25
Provide analysis of current affairs	273	62.6%	3.78	1.17
Let people express their views	273	62.6%	3.85	1.21
Provide information people need to form political opinion	273	47.6%	3.40	1.22
Advocate for social change	273	52.0%	3.57	1.15
Influence public opinion	273	57.1%	3.72	1.14
Set the political agenda	273	43.6%	3.28	1.26
Promote peace and tolerance	273	63.0%	3.77	1.16
Educate the audience	273	64.8%	3.91	1.17
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	273	63.7%	3.81	1.19
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	273	33.7%	2.89	1.33
Support national development	273	67.8%	3.91	1.12
Support government policy	273	44.7%	3.31	1.27
Convey a positive image of political leaders	273	36.3%	3.02	1.33
Provide entertainment and relaxation	273	44.3%	3.26	1.31
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	273	61.2%	3.76	1.20
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	273	53.8%	3.59	1.18
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	273	45.4%	3.30	1.25
Support efforts to protect public health	273	52.7%	3.55	1.18
Counteract disinformation	273	68.5%	3.96	1.21
Discuss future implications of current events	266	56.0%	3.62	1.14

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Kazakhstani journalists show varied views on journalistic epistemologies. While nearly 60% agree that journalists should alert audiences to false claims, fewer support the idea that truth is shaped by power (24.5%) or that personal beliefs inevitably influence reporting (31.5%) (see Table 4). Over half believe in transparency of standpoint (52.7%) and trusting instincts in reporting (44.1%).

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	273	35.5%	3.10	1.13
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	273	24.5%	2.80	1.15
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	273	31.5%	3.04	1.17
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	273	36.2%	3.17	1.13
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	270	32.2%	3.04	1.19
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	263	44.1%	3.35	1.15
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	262	46.6%	3.39	1.13
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	264	49.6%	3.45	1.21
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	265	48.7%	3.45	1.22
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	262	52.7%	3.55	1.24
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	244	57.0%	3.67	1.19

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Kazakhstani journalists largely support professional standards in ethical decision-making, with 58.2% agreeing they should always apply, and 59.3% allowing exceptions only in extraordinary cases (see Table 5). Fewer believe ethics should rely solely on personal judgment (41.4%). Some controversial reporting methods are occasionally accepted, such as using hidden devices (49.1%) or promotional content (46.1%) (see Table 6).

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	273	58.2%	3.70	1.16
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	273	59.3%	3.62	1.13
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	273	51.6%	3.42	1.22
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	273	41.4%	3.14	1.33

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	273	15.0%	39.2%
Using hidden recording devices	273	18.3%	49.1%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	273	13.2%	32.2%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	273	15.7%	33.3%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	273	15.4%	27.1%
Paying people for confidential information	273	15.4%	37.7%
Accepting money from sources	273	16.1%	33.7%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	273	15.8%	32.6%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	273	16.5%	46.1%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	273	16.5%	21.2%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Kazakhstani journalists report moderate levels of editorial autonomy, with 36.5% feeling they have significant freedom in selecting news stories and 34.5% in deciding how stories are framed (see Table 7). However, perceptions of overall media freedom in Kazakhstan are notably lower, with only 22.7% reporting a great deal or complete freedom.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	266	36.5%	3.57	1.12
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	252	35.3%	3.52	1.09
Media freedom in Kazakhstan	242	27.0%	3.29	1.18

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Kazakhstani journalists identify availability of resources (53.8%) and journalism ethics (52.0%) as the most influential editorial factors (see Table 8). Audience feedback (49.1%) and competing news organizations (47.7%) also play a key role. While external pressures like government censorship (36.0%) and profit expectations (36.9%) are noted, internal and practical influences dominate.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	198	32.3%	3.03	1.21
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	214	35.5%	3.01	1.26
The business managers of the news organization	198	36.4%	3.12	1.13
The owners of the news organization	199	30.7%	3.06	1.18
Editorial policy	203	28.6%	3.02	1.16
Advertising considerations	205	33.2%	3.03	1.17
Profit expectations	203	36.9%	3.21	1.13
Audience research and data	211	46.0%	3.32	1.29
Availability of news-gathering resources	221	53.8%	3.53	1.24
Time limits	215	40.0%	3.26	1.15
Journalism ethics	221	52.0%	3.50	1.23
Self-censorship	204	31.4%	2.97	1.18
Personal values and beliefs	199	35.7%	3.12	1.29
Colleagues in other media	196	36.7%	3.16	1.14
Friends, acquaintances and family	204	32.8%	2.96	1.23
Feedback from the audience	212	49.1%	3.45	1.26
Competing news organizations	214	47.7%	3.42	1.20
Media laws and regulation	213	46.9%	3.40	1.22
Access to information	217	46.1%	3.34	1.27
Government censorship	211	36.0%	3.12	1.15
Government officials	209	33.5%	3.09	1.18
Politicians	200	32.0%	2.98	1.26
Business people	202	32.7%	2.99	1.21
Public relations	211	45.0%	3.34	1.22
Relationships with news sources	204	40.2%	3.19	1.31
Police	195	28.7%	2.84	1.24
Issue advocacy groups	190	28.4%	2.90	1.18
Scientists or health experts	182	34.9%	2.79	1.29
Religious groups and institutions	183	28.6%	2.70	1.30
Military	174	26.2%	2.69	1.27
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	176	25.9%	2.57	1.37
Organized crime and criminal groups	208	25.0%	2.73	1.27
Terrorist groups	195	24.5%	2.99	1.32

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Kosovo

Kenneth Andresen & Abit Hoxha

INTRODUCTION

Kosovo as one of the youngest countries in Europe has managed to develop a pluralistic media landscape despite economic, political and social challenges that have followed the country ever since the declaration of independence in 2008. Kosovo´s political challenges remain on the international arena, mostly struggling for recognition, and at home with a polarized political landscape and fragile relation with Serb minority. With limited foreign investments and difficult relations with international actors such as the EU, due to lack of progress in the dialogue with Serbia, Kosovo has slowed down in its progress.

Economically, Kosovo has made modest progress, but the challenge of high unemployment remains visibly as one of the main challenges, particularly among youth. Kosovo demographics is also suffering from population decline also due to youth emigration. The Kosovo economy also relies heavily on diaspora remittances.

Socially, Kosovo faces issues with ethnic conflict, polarization, corruption, a weak education system and limited health infrastructure. Socially, the country faces persistent issues such as corruption, a strained education system, and limited healthcare infrastructure. Ethnic divisions, especially between Albanians and Serbs, remain a significant barrier to integration and national unity.

Kosovo's journalistic tradition is relatively young, with independent journalism emerging only in the 1990s. This development was heavily influenced by international media coverage of the Kosovo conflict and the 1999 war. The first independent media outlets appeared in the mid-1990s, and their numbers grew rapidly after the war, including a surge in radio stations, television channels, and newspapers. In recent years, the COVID-19 lockdown and rapid technological advancement have marked the end of traditional print newspapers, prompting a shift toward web-based publications and a media model centered on digital platforms for content distribution.

Kosovo is currently experiencing one of its most significant declines in media freedom. Journalists face increasing pressure and restricted access to information from government institutions. In some cases, senior officials have publicly labeled journalists as "collaborators with the enemy," a rhetoric that fuels online harassment and incites hateful commentary. This hostile environment poses serious threats to journalists' safety and undermines their ability to report freely and effectively.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

In Kosovo, 56.6% of journalists are women and 43.3% are men. A large majority of 91.6% hold a college or university degree, while only 8.4% have no formal higher education.

The journalist workforce in Kosovo is notably young, with an average of just 4.1 years of professional experience. This reflects the country's broader demographic profile, as well as the tendency for journalism to serve as a starting point in young professionals' careers. Many move on to other roles after gaining a few years of experience in the media. Only 24% of surveyed journalists have more than 10 years of experience in the profession.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

In Kosovo, a majority of journalists (94.9%) are formally employed, while only 5.1% operate as freelancers. Despite this high employment rate, job precarity remains a significant issue. Only 16% of journalists report having permanent contracts, whereas an overwhelming 84% are employed on non-permanent contracts. This widespread contractual instability points to broader structural challenges within the media labor market, particularly with respect to job security and long-term career development. This also explains the migration of journalists in short time from journalism to other professions. Furthermore, 91.3% of journalists work full-time, with just 8.7% in part-time roles, suggesting a high level of professional commitment.

A substantial proportion of journalists (73.4%) rely exclusively on journalism as their primary source of income. However, 26.6% report having additional income streams, which may reflect the need to supplement modest earnings in the sector or a diversification of professional activities. Regarding media ownership and affiliation, 64.9% of journalists are employed by private or commercial media outlets. In contrast, 10.8% work for Public Service Media and an additional 4.1% for explicitly state-run media institutions. This distinction is analytically relevant considering the political influence in the public broadcaster, particularly in Kosovo's context where the public broadcaster is state-funded.

In terms of newsroom hierarchies, 63% of journalists do not occupy any managerial position. Middle management roles, such as section editors or department heads are held by 32% of respondents, while only 5% report occupying senior leadership or top management positions.

Professional unionization appears relatively robust, with 62.6% of journalists indicating membership in a union or professional association. However, 37.4% remain unaffiliated, pointing to potential gaps in collective representation or access to labor protections.

The geographic distribution of media work is also notable: 84.5% of respondents are employed by national-level media outlets, while only 11.9% work in local or regional media. This disparity is likely a function of Kosovo's small territorial size and the high concentration of media infrastructure, resources, and audiences in the capital, Prishtina.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Most journalists report various threats, and a notable portion still faces frequent hostility. Over half (52%) have experienced demeaning or hateful speech, with nearly 6.2% facing it often or very often. Public discrediting is also common (32.9%). More severe forms of intimidation in the form of surveillance (26.2%), hacking (25.4%), and other threats (25.9%), are less frequent but still present. Physical and legal threats are rare: arrests (10.1%), legal actions (15%), and physical attacks (11.4%) are occasionally experienced. The most extreme cases, such as abductions (0.4%), stalking (3.5%), or coercion (3.1%), are not at a high rate but are present. Meanwhile, workplace bullying (1.8%), sexual harassment (9.2%), and moral questioning (18%) show considerable occurrence. Overall, the findings suggest that while serious threats are uncommon, many journalists still face verbal abuse, digital harassment, and reputational attacks with some regularity.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	227	1.8%	4.4%	18.1%	23.8%	52.0%
Public discrediting of your work	228	0.0%	0.9%	6.6%	25.4%	67.1%
Surveillance	229	1.3%	4.8%	7.9%	12.2%	73.8%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	228	0.0%	0.9%	5.3%	19.3%	74.6%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	227	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	8.8%	89.9%
Legal actions against you because of your work	227	0.0%	0.4%	1.3%	13.2%	85.0%
Stalking	228	0.0%	0.4%	0.9%	2.2%	96.5%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	228	0.4%	0.4%	9.6%	15.4%	74.1%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	228	0.0%	0.9%	2.2%	6.1%	90.8%
Other physical attacks	228	0.4%	0.0%	2.6%	8.3%	88.6%
Coercion	228	0.4%	0.0%	0.4%	2.2%	96.9%
Questioning of your personal morality	228	0.9%	0.0%	2.6%	14.5%	82.0%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	228	0.0%	0.4%	2.6%	5.7%	91.2%
Others disseminating your personal information	228	0.0%	0.4%	3.1%	8.8%	87.7%
Workplace bullying	228	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	0.9%	98.2%
Abductions	229	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	99.6%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	228	0.4%	0.0%	0.4%	0.9%	98.2%
Intimidation that targets family	229	0.0%	0.4%	0.4%	7.4%	91.7%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	223	16.6%	2.41	1.18
Concerned about physical well-being	223	22.9%	2.54	1.17
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	226	40.7%	3.07	1.22
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Kosovo go unpunished	225	73.8%	4.04	0.97

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Nearly all respondents consider monitoring those in power (87.6%), promoting peace and tolerance (90.3%), shining light on societal problems (85.5%), speaking on behalf of the marginalized (80.6%), and countering disinformation (90.1%) as very or extremely important. These roles also received high mean scores (M = 4.0 – 4.5), reflecting strong normative commitment.

Roles related to public education and civic engagement also scored highly, including educating the audience (78.2%), supporting public health (81.3%), and discussing future implications of events (79.1%). Meanwhile, analytical and expressive functions, such as providing analysis (48.9%), letting people express views (62.8%), and influencing opinion (47.3%), were seen as moderately important (M = 3.0 – 4.0).

By contrast, instrumental or partisan roles, like supporting government policy (6.2%), setting the political agenda (22.4%), and conveying a positive image of leaders (8.5%), were rated lowest, both in importance and mean scores (M = 1.8–2.3). This reflects a professional attitude of journalists being more aligned with critical independence and public service than with loyalty to power or commercial interests.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	224	81.7%	4.26	1.05
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	226	87.6%	4.42	0.94
Shine a light on society's problems	227	85.5%	4.38	0.93
Motivate people to participate in politics	225	22.7%	2.39	1.29
Provide analysis of current affairs	225	48.9%	3.38	1.23
Let people express their views	226	62.8%	3.92	0.89
Provide information people need to form political opinion	227	45.4%	3.22	1.39
Advocate for social change	227	73.1%	4.00	0.97
Influence public opinion	224	47.3%	3.46	1.19
Set the political agenda	223	22.4%	2.39	1.40
Promote peace and tolerance	226	90.3%	4.54	0.77
Educate the audience	225	78.2%	4.24	0.89
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	225	65.7%	3.97	1.11
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	226	80.6%	4.25	1.03
Support national development	224	55.8%	3.60	1.09
Support government policy	225	6.2%	1.93	1.08
Convey a positive image of political leaders	224	8.5%	1.83	1.09
Provide entertainment and relaxation	224	23.7%	2.96	1.10
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	225	36.9%	3.12	1.10
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	224	25.4%	2.96	1.06
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	224	29.5%	2.86	1.13
Support efforts to protect public health	225	81.3%	4.26	0.97
Counteract disinformation	223	90.1%	4.54	0.87
Discuss future implications of current events	210	79.0%	4.13	0.92

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

The data reveal a complex view of epistemologies in Kosovo. A significant share (33.6%) agree that interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts (M = 3.82), suggesting recognition of journalism as an interpretive act rather than a purely neutral one. Still, a notable number support the idea that facts should speak for themselves (28.9%, M = 3.61), reflecting a polarized journalistic landscape as well.

Belief in absolute truths appears limited: only 10.3% agree that things are either true or false, with no in-between (M = 3.00), and just 14.8% believe it's possible to represent objective reality (M = 3.35). Meanwhile, very few endorse subjectivist positions such as trusting one's instincts (3.2%, M = 2.53), relying on intuition (2.5%, M = 2.27), or making one's standpoint transparent (7.4%, M = 2.46).

Strong rejection of the claim that truth is shaped by those in power (0.5%, M = 1.86) and that journalists cannot separate personal beliefs from reporting (0.9%, M = 2.17) suggests a continued belief in journalistic independence and professional reporting. Overall, journalists appear to hold a pragmatic understanding of truth: they value accuracy and facts, yet acknowledge that some interpretation is necessary to construct meaning from facts.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	223	33.6%	3.82	1.06
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	222	0.5%	1.86	0.86
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	223	0.9%	2.17	0.88
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	224	10.3%	3.00	0.14
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	223	14.8%	3.35	1.13
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	190	3.2%	2.53	1.14
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	197	2.5%	2.27	1.00
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	204	28.9%	3.61	1.15
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	204	3.4%	2.30	1.09
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	203	7.4%	2.46	1.17
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	206	6.3%	2.56	1.25

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Respondents in Kosovo advocate a rule-based approach to journalism ethics reflecting also the contemporary calls for more stronger ethical guidelines. Over half (53.5%) agree that professional standards should always guide decisions (M = 4.14). Few support flexibility: 9.7% agree that standards may be set aside in extraordinary cases (M = 3.14), and even fewer favor situational (1.8%, M = 2.48) or personal judgment (M = 1.95). Overall, journalists largely reject relativism in favor of shared professional norms.

The data suggest that journalists are generally cautious about ethically controversial practices. Some methods are seen as occasionally justifiable, particularly when serving the public interest. For example, using hidden recording devices (54.1%) and unauthorized access to powerful individuals' personal materials (42.2%) or government documents (39.4%) are justified on occasion by a significant share of respondents. However, few see these practices as always justified (mostly under 10%).

By contrast, deceptive or commercially compromised practices – such as accepting money from sources (2.3%), disguised promotional content (0.9%), or publishing unverified information (1.8%) – receive minimal justification, indicating strong ethical boundaries. Notably, claiming a false identity is only justified in high rate by 32.9%, with just 6.8% seeing it as always acceptable. Overall, the findings show that while some investigative tactics are tolerated under specific conditions, journalists strongly reject practices that compromise integrity, transparency, or public trust.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	228	72.4%	4.14	1.12
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	226	34.5%	3.14	1.06
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	227	11.9%	2.48	1.00
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	227	2.2%	1.95	0.90

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	222	6.8%	32.9%
Using hidden recording devices	222	12.6%	54.1%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	221	9.0%	39.4%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	223	9.0%	42.2%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	221	2.3%	26.7%
Paying people for confidential information	224	6.7%	27.2%
Accepting money from sources	222	2.3%	3.2%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	221	2.7%	6.3%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	222	0.9%	8.1%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	221	1.8%	10.4%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Journalists in Kosovo have a high individual professional autonomy. An overwhelming majority of respondents report having a great deal or complete freedom when it comes to selecting news stories (90.8%) and deciding which aspects to emphasize (91.7%, M = 4.40 and 4.39). These high ratings suggest that journalists feel empowered to make editorial judgments independently, reinforcing a perception of control over their immediate work.

However, when asked about overall media freedom in their country, the perception is noticeably more restrained. Just 54.1% of respondents report a high level of national media freedom, and the mean score drops to 3.64 (SD = 0.84). This gap between personal editorial freedom and structural media freedom suggests that while journalists may operate with relative independence in their day-to-day tasks, they also recognize broader systemic or institutional constraints including legal, political, or economic challenges which affect media freedom.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	230	90.8%	4.40	0.66
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	230	91.7%	4.39	0.65
Media freedom in Kosovo	222	54.1%	3.64	0.84

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Journalists in Kosovo perceive their daily work as shaped primarily by professional norms and logistical realities, rather than by ideological or external pressure. The data illustrate a complex landscape of influences on journalistic work, with practical constraints and ethical standards playing the most important roles. The most influential factor reported was access to information (73.3% "very/extremely influential", M = 3.86), followed by time limits (61.9%, M = 3.73), and journalism ethics (50.5%, M = 3.53). Institutional and political influences, such as media laws (41.5%), government officials (42.3%), and government censorship (45.8%), are perceived as moderately influential (M = 3.1 – 3.2), pointing to an environment where state actors still exert a notable impact.

In contrast, commercial pressures, such as advertising (11.6%), profit expectations (13.9%), and business managers (11.1%), are generally rated lower (M = 2.3), suggesting that direct financial influence is less acutely felt by journalists – at least from their own perspective. Peer influence appears limited: only 8.9% consider newsroom peers highly influential (M = 2.16), and even editors and editorial policy show only moderate influence (M = 2.9 – 3.0). Similarly, external actors like scientists, religious groups, the military, and extremist groups received extremely low influence, both in perception of influence and mean scores (mostly M < 1.5).

The data portray journalism as a profession guided foremost by ethical commitments, resource availability, and structural constraints, with political and economic actors exerting secondary influence, and ideological or peer pressures playing relatively minor roles.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	213	8.9%	2.16	1.03
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	218	31.2%	2.97	1.10
The business managers of the news organization	216	11.1%	2.28	1.04
The owners of the news organization	214	16.4%	2.48	1.09
Editorial policy	218	28.4%	2.96	1.06
Advertising considerations	208	11.6%	2.28	1.13
Profit expectations	209	13.9%	2.30	1.23
Audience research and data	204	34.8%	3.05	1.21
Availability of news-gathering resources	212	39.6%	3.25	1.09
Time limits	218	61.9%	3.73	1.08
Journalism ethics	218	50.5%	3.53	1.36
Self-censorship	210	11.9%	2.32	1.08
Personal values and beliefs	205	22.0%	2.77	1.18
Colleagues in other media	215	2.3%	1.87	0.91
Friends. acquaintances and family	217	4.6%	2.00	0.94
Feedback from the audience	217	26.3%	2.67	1.17
Competing news organizations	214	13.1%	2.25	1.15
Media laws and regulation	217	41.5%	3.18	1.27
Access to information	217	73.3%	3.86	1.07
Government censorship	212	45.8%	3.14	1.30
Government officials	213	42.3%	3.08	1.41
Politicians	216	39.9%	2.83	1.53
Business people	214	27.1%	2.52	1.40
Public relations	217	32.7%	2.94	1.25
Relationships with news sources	216	35.2%	3.00	1.24
Police	212	9.0%	1.85	1.04
Issue advocacy groups	205	2.0%	1.80	0.91
Scientists or health experts	194	7.2%	1.77	1.01
Religious groups and institutions	170	0.6%	1.28	0.63
Military	162	1.8%	1.15	0.56
Para-military groups. militias and similar groups	162	0.6%	1.07	0.34
Organized crime and criminal groups	161	0.6%	1.16	0.55
Terrorist groups	164	0.6%	1.12	0.45

Question: "Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist." (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Latvia

Anda Rožukalne & Ieva Strode

INTRODUCTION

By the mid-2020s, Latvia's development is shaped by ongoing geopolitical tensions in Europe, a shrinking population (projected at 1.85 million in 2025), and an aging society. Its location on the EU's eastern border, near the frontlines of Russia's war in Ukraine, has intensified the political climate and heightened public focus on national security. Despite inflation easing in 2024, Latvia's economy remained stagnant, with GDP contracting by 0.4% due to adverse external factors.

Latvia's media landscape reflects the country's ethnic diversity: 63% of the population are Latvians, 23% Russians, and 9% Ukrainians, Belarusians, Poles, and Lithuanians – many of whom speak Russian daily, 5% – others. This results in a linguistically divided media system, marked by differing content and journalistic norms. A substantial portion of the Russophone community – mainly descendants of Soviet-era migrants – consumes Russian-language media and is more exposed to Russian propaganda. In political discourse, these media preferences are often portrayed as a security concern.

Three distinct journalistic cultures coexist in Latvia: traditional post-Soviet journalism, instrumental journalism culture is influenced by political and economic power, and a professional model committed to editorial independence.

Media policy has recently advanced. In 2024, the government adopted the Media Policy Guidelines 2024–2027 and began implementing EU Media Freedom Act priorities, particularly journalist safety. The Latvian Journalists' Association was appointed the national contact point for threats against journalists and established a reporting platform.

Journalism remains relatively stable in workforce size. The WJS3 survey, conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, showed that 17% of journalists experienced job disruptions. In the 2025 World Press Freedom Index, Latvia ranked 15th (score: 81.81), falling behind Lithuania (14th) and Estonia (2nd), despite similar post-Soviet trajectories.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The journalism profession in Latvia is traditionally female dominated. In line with findings from the previous study (72% women in WJS2), 67% of respondents in WJS3 identified as women and 32% as men.

The average age of Latvian journalists surveyed is 43.8 years (compared to 40.3 years in WJS2). Journalists aged 18–24 primarily work as reporters, journalists aged 25–34, are reporters or staff journalists. The respondents aged 35–44 occupy a range of roles, most commonly as reporters, or executive editors. Respondents aged 45–54 and 55–63 predominantly work as chief editors, and reporters.

Latvian journalists are generally well-educated. A total of 81% hold higher education degrees: 45% have a bachelor's degree, 35% a master's degree, and 0.6% (3 respondents) hold a doctorate. Additionally, 14% have incomplete higher education, 4% have completed secondary education, and 1% (5 respondents) answered, that they have not completed secondary school. About 78% of respondents studied journalism at university, 61% completed journalism internships in media organizations, and 36% completed journalism training through alternative programs, receiving certificates or diplomas. Overall, 62% have formal education or professional training in journalism, while 38% do not.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

The study respondents represent a range of media sectors: 24.3% indicated their main employer has a newspaper background, 21.9% work for internet-native media outlets, 18.9% for television organization, 13.4% for magazine companies, 11.3% for radio outlets, and 5.9% for news agencies, 4.1% of respondents reported not having a primary employer. A relatively small portion of the 464 Latvian journalists surveyed – 26.9% – are members of professional organizations, while the majority (72.0%) are not affiliated with any such groups.

Latvian journalists are generally experienced, and for many, journalism is a lifelong profession. Almost one-third (31.6%) of respondents have worked in the field for 21 to 30 years. One in four (24.1%) can be considered a young journalist, with less than 10 years of experience (13% have worked in journalism for five years or less). On average, respondents reported 19.12 years of professional experience.

Latvian full-time journalists work an average of 41.3 hours per week. The majority of respondents are employed full-time: 53% reported working 40–50 hours per week in journalism, while 12% work 20–30 hours per week. A smaller group (7%) indicated working long hours (55 and 60 hours per week). One in three respondents (32%) reported working a standard 40-hour week.

Approximately one-third of the surveyed journalists (32.4%) reported working primarily within a specific subject area or journalistic genre, while 67.6% did not specify a particular focus.

Most of respondents (63%) earn their entire income from journalism, including 58% of regional/local media journalists. Another 15% report that journalism constitutes 90–99% of their income, and 4% state it accounts for 50%. Among respondents who earn less than 100% of their income from journalism, 27% list "other sources," 31.4% work in education, 20% in advertising, 17.2 % in public relations or corporate communications, and 7.5% in state or municipal institutions. Over half (52%) of Latvian media professionals earn between €601 and €1,200 after taxes (24% between €601–900, and 28% between €901–1,200). 10% earn from €301 – 600. Approximately 24% earn between €1,201–1,800, a smaller segment (4.7%) earns €1,801–2,100. Higher-income earners are a minority: 3.7% receive €2,101–2,400, 1% earn €2,401–2,700, and 1% (n=4) earn over €2,700.

A majority of journalists (57.9%) report experiencing frequent work-related stress: 27.9% very often, 32.0% often, 29.6% sometimes, 9.3% rarely, and 1.3% never.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Latvian journalists rarely face physical threats and generally describe their work environment as safe. Nonetheless, some report surveillance (23.2%), workplace bullying (13.2%), and sexual harassment (5.2%).

The primary security concerns are online threats: demeaning or hateful speech (79.5%; 16.7% frequently), public discrediting of journalistic work (73.2%; 13.5% frequently), questioning of personal morality (59.7%; 8.3% frequently), dissemination of personal information (22.0%), and use of bylines for fabricated content (24.1%). Legal threats are also notable, with 22.2% reporting work-related legal actions.

Job security is not a major concern: only 16.9% worry about losing their job within 12 months. However, 56.4% are concerned about emotional and mental health, 54.9% about impunity for those who harm journalists, and 43.3% about physical health and wellbeing.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	463	2.4%	14.3%	33.0%	29.8%	20.5%
Public discrediting of your work	462	2.2%	11.3%	29.4%	30.3%	26.8%
Surveillance	461	0.2%	1.5%	6.5%	15.0%	76.8%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	462	0.2%	0.2%	3.5%	7.8%	88.3%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	462	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.2%	99.4%
Legal actions against you because of your work	463	0.0%	1.5%	6.9%	13.8%	77.8%
Stalking	462	0.2%	0.4%	3.9%	9.3%	86.1%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	457	0.4%	1.1%	9.4%	26.3%	62.8%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	458	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	3.9%	94.8%
Other physical attacks	458	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	2.6%	96.9%
Coercion	457	0.2%	0.2%	1.5%	2.8%	95.2%
Questioning of your personal morality	457	1.3%	7.0%	19.9%	31.5%	40.3%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	457	0.7%	1.1%	7.0%	15.3%	75.9%
Others disseminating your personal information	455	0.2%	0.9%	7.3%	13.6%	78.0%
Workplace bullying	456	0.2%	0.7%	4.6%	7.7%	86.8%
Abductions	456	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	99.8%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	455	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	1.8%	98.0%
Intimidation that targets family	455	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	3.1%	94.9%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	461	16.9%	2.44	1.08
Concerned about physical well-being	460	43.3%	3.05	1.25
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	461	56.4%	3.42	2.21
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Latvia go unpunished	459	54.9%	3.51	1.00

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Respondents prioritized normative journalistic roles. Among informational-instructive roles, strong support was shown for "shining a light on society's problems" (88.5%), "being a detached observer" (67.5%), and "monitoring those in power" (67.8%). Analytical-deliberative roles also received strong endorsement: "providing analysis of current affairs" (82.3%) and "allowing people to express their views" (71.1%). Advocacy roles were supported less frequently: "advocating for social change" (53.9%), "providing political information" (56.2%), "influencing public opinion" (47.9%), and "motivating to participate in politics" (35.6%). "Setting the political agenda" was deemed important by only 24.5%. Developmental-educative roles were highly valued: "educating the audience" (87.4%), "pointing toward solutions to societal problems" (76.0%), and "promoting peace and tolerance" (68.1%). Less support was expressed for "speaking on behalf of marginalized groups" (25.2%). The collaborative-facilitative role elicited mixed responses: 44.4% support "national development," while only 6.2% support "government policies" and 2.9% endorse "conveying a positive image of political leaders."

The political life domain included new questions relevant during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting a "watchdog" role: "counteracting disinformation" (86.5%), "discussing future implications of current events" (68.2%), "monitoring and scrutinizing those in power" (67.8%) and "supporting public health efforts" (67.8%). The indicators within the daily life domain received comparatively lower levels of support from respondents. A total of 45.1% rated the duty to "tell stories that emotionally move the audience" as very or extremely important. Meanwhile, 24.6% considered it important to "provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience," 22.3% valued the role of "providing advice, orientation, and direction for daily life," and 20.7% emphasized the importance of "providing entertainment and relaxation."

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	456	67.5%	3.86	1.00
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	459	67.8%	3.88	1.03
Shine a light on society's problems	461	88.5%	4.39	0.74
Motivate people to participate in politics	458	35.6%	3.16	1.03
Provide analysis of current affairs	458	82.3%	4.19	0.86
Let people express their views	461	71.1%	3.98	0.92
Provide information people need to form political opinion	457	56.2%	3.59	1.10
Advocate for social change	456	53.9%	3.61	1.03
Influence public opinion	459	47.9%	3.43	1.05
Set the political agenda	453	24.5%	2.83	1.09
Promote peace and tolerance	454	68.1%	3.94	1.00
Educate the audience	454	87.4%	4.44	0.73
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	458	76.0%	4.03	0.84
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	452	25.2%	2.87	1.08
Support national development	453	44.4%	3.35	1.02
Support government policy	452	6.2%	2.14	0.90
Convey a positive image of political leaders	452	2.9%	1.60	0.79
Provide entertainment and relaxation	450	20.7%	2.62	1.13
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	456	24.6%	2.87	1.06
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	457	22.3%	2.65	1.13
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	459	45.1%	3.37	1.09
Support efforts to protect public health	456	68.2%	3.91	0.86
Counteract disinformation	457	67.8%	3.91	0.95
Discuss future implications of current events	459	86.5%	4.44	0.81

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Respondents largely support journalism's capacity to reflect objective reality (73.3%) and believe that facts can represent it (71.1%). The strongest agreement (86.4%) was for the statement that journalists should flag false claims.

While 48.7% support interpreting facts, 43.6% believe in a clear distinction between truth and falsehood. Many recognize the role of personal perspective: 45.6% believe journalists should intuitively foresee story outcomes, and 38.7% acknowledge that personal beliefs influence content. One in five (21.2%) insists that journalists should trust their instincts when deciding what is true.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	460	48.7%	3.38	0.96
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	463	10.2%	2.29	0.89
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	462	38.7%	3.16	0.93
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	463	43.6%	3.28	1.02
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	464	73.3%	3.82	0.76
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	463	21.2%	2.71	0.91
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	461	45.6%	3.25	0.93
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	464	71.1%	3.78	0.77
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	462	31.4%	3.03	0.95
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	462	14.9%	2.56	0.97
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	464	86.4%	4.18	0.73

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Most respondents (83.1%) support an absolutist view of ethics, grounded in professional standards, although 51.8% allow for exceptions. A third (31.0%) adopt a situational view, and 16.9% rely on personal judgment.

Accepting bribes or creating hidden advertising is overwhelmingly rejected. However, many accept controversial methods to uncover important information. About a third (32.8%) justify paying for confidential information, and 30.8% consider it acceptable to publish unverified stories occasionally. Using personal materials of ordinary people without permission is conditionally supported – 38.2%, 69.4% respondents agree to publish personal information of public figures.

A majority (75.5%) justify using confidential business or government documents without authorization on occasion; 89.8% endorse using hidden recording devices in certain situations. Controversial information gathering methods were considered "always acceptable" by only a small proportion of respondents, for example, 6% agree to publish other people's personal documents without permission, 4% – usage of hidden recording devices.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	462	83.1%	4.17	0.84
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	461	51.8%	3.36	1.02
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	461	31.0%	2.84	1.11
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	461	16.9%	2.38	1.10

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	461	1.5%	75.5%
Using hidden recording devices	461	3.5%	89.8%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	461	5.6%	75.5%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	461	2.2%	69.4%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	461	0.4%	38.2%
Paying people for confidential information	461	1.7%	32.8%
Accepting money from sources	461	0.0%	0.4%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	460	0.2%	18.9%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	461	0.0%	9.8%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	461	0.0%	30.8%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Respondents admit their personal editorial autonomy: 82.9% report full freedom in selecting stories, and 87.9% in emphasizing story aspects. Still, only 39.4% believe that media freedom is fully realized in Latvia.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	461	82.9%	4.15	0.78
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	462	87.9%	4.29	0.74
Media freedom in Latvia	459	39.4%	3.24	0.79

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Key internal influences include journalistic ethics (63.0%), personal values (59.6%), time constraints (54.8%), access to sources (49.7%), editorial policy (46.9%), and senior editors (44.5%). Less significant are self-censorship (31.1%), peer influence (28.2%), business managers (4.1%), profit expectations (17.8%), media owners (16.7%), and advertising considerations (11.7%).

External influences include access to information (65.0%), media regulations (36.2%), source relationships (34.5%), audience feedback (28.7%), and science and health experts (22.8%). Factors such as government censorship, politicians, law enforcement, businesspeople, and religious groups are not considered major influences.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	454	28.2%	2.85	1.05
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	445	44.5%	3.27	1.07
The business managers of the news organization	399	17.8%	2.22	1.21
The owners of the news organization	383	16.7%	2.11	1.25
Editorial policy	439	46.9%	3.22	1.17
Advertising considerations	359	11.7%	2.00	1.13
Profit expectations	371	17.8%	2.20	1.24
Audience research and data	420	27.1%	2.75	1.12
Availability of news-gathering resources	439	49.7%	3.32	1.11
Time limits	451	54.8%	3.46	1.12
Journalism ethics	449	63.0%	3.54	1.14
Self-censorship	427	31.1%	2.70	1.25
Personal values and beliefs	448	59.6%	3.57	1.18
Colleagues in other media	439	5.5%	2.00	0.95
Friends, acquaintances and family	437	6.4%	2.02	0.96
Feedback from the audience	453	28.7%	2.98	0.94
Competing news organizations	442	12.9%	2.43	0.99
Media laws and regulation	437	36.2%	3.03	1.14
Access to information	451	65.0%	3.66	1.02
Government censorship	383	5.0%	1.43	0.88
Government officials	391	4.3%	1.49	0.88
Politicians	390	2.6%	1.39	0.76
Business people	387	4.1%	1.43	0.82
Public relations	426	8.7%	2.09	1.04
Relationships with news sources	440	34.5%	2.91	1.19
Police	364	2.7%	1.42	0.81
Issue advocacy groups	391	2.8%	1.70	0.87
Scientists or health experts	404	22.8%	2.41	1.25
Religious groups and institutions	356	1.1%	1.21	0.59
Military	345	1.4%	1.19	0.56
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	322	1.2%	1.09	0.42
Organized crime and criminal groups	321	1.2%	1.08	0.45
Terrorist groups	311	1.0%	1.05	0.36

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Lithuania

DEIMANTAS JASTRAMSKIS

INTRODUCTION

Lithuania is a stable democracy, where, since 1990 (when the independent state was restored), no government has been re-elected, and the formation of government was always left to the political opposition. Lithuania's gross domestic product grew every year from 2010 to 2024 (Official Statistics Portal, 2025). Since 2022, when Russia's war against Ukraine complicated the geopolitical situation, Lithuania has been increasing its defence budget every year (Ministry of National Defence Republic Lithuania, 2025).

There is a favorable legal situation for media freedom, but economic and political risks occasionally threaten professional autonomy. The strengthening of investigative journalism over the last decade is characteristic: the Public Service Media established the Investigative Unit in 2018, and several private organizations conduct significant journalistic investigations. In 2024, the Media Support Fund launched a fellowship programme for journalists, including freelance journalists conducting investigative journalism (Media Support Fund, 2024).

The survey of journalists took place in late 2022 and early 2023. Changes in the Lithuanian economy, which was recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, led to high inflation (the second highest in the European Union in 2022), and the income level of journalists at that time lagged behind the inflation rate (Balčytienė et al., 2023). Another characteristic circumstance is the context of Russia's war against Ukraine when the agenda of many journalists and editors was permeated with an emphasis on supporting Ukraine and combating Russian disinformation.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The Lithuanian journalist community is dominated by women (62.3%); male journalists make up 37.7%. The average age of journalists is 43.6 years (SD = 13.4; Median = 42). 95.4% of journalists have obtained a university education, 44.7% have a bachelor's degree, and 50.7% have a master's degree. 71.5% of journalists have obtained formal education and/or professional training in journalism. 57% are graduates of university studies in journalism, and 28.8% acquired/improved journalistic skills via apprenticeships/cadetships and short-term courses (17.9%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

The Lithuanian journalist population includes 17.1% of editors-in-chief and other top-level managers, 17.7% are middle managers/editors, and 65.2% of journalists do not hold management positions in organizations. Almost two-thirds of journalists (64.9%) work in the capital, Vilnius. 68.2% work in national media editorial offices, 30.5% – in regional/local media (1.3% – no main medium). Most (79.5%) of journalists work in private commercial media organizations, 13.9% in public service media, and 4.6% in non-profit private media (2.0% – no main medium or affiliate of foreign media).

74.9% of Lithuanian journalists work with employment contracts (3% are fixed-term contracts), and 19.5% are freelancers. 5.6% of journalists have relationships with more than one organization under employment contracts or as freelancers. 44.4% of journalists received an average or lower income than the national average salary at the end of 2022 (up to 1,200 euros), 51% of journalists earned more than 1,200 euros, and 4.6% did not disclose their income. 31.2% of survey participants indicated receiving additional income from activities other than journalism.

The average work experience of Lithuanian journalists is 18.1 years (SD = 11.8; Median = 15). Journalists work in regional/local media for more years than in national media. Full-time journalists work an average of 41.1 hours per week (SD = 9.3; Median = 40). Less than a third (29.2%) of the country's journalists belong to professional organizations uniting journalists.

In terms of the background of their main employers, newspaper editorial offices were indicated as the main workplace by just over a third of journalists (34.1%). Content created by this group of journalists is also published online. The share of journalists working for online news websites was 30.1%. Also, 12.3% of journalists worked for an organization with a television background and 10.6% in radio editorial offices. Journalists working in magazine editorial offices accounted for 7%, and 3% of journalists worked in news agencies. Another 3% of the surveyed journalists indicated working on different media platforms. 34.4% of journalists specialize in one thematic area and the other 65.6% work in various areas.

43.7% of journalists surveyed experienced stress at work very often or often in the last six months.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Although physical attacks against Lithuanian journalists are quite rare, psychological threats related to the profession are relatively frequent, sometimes affecting journalists' family members as well. Almost four-fifths of journalists have experienced safety incidents related to their journalistic work. The most common incidents experienced by journalists were demeaning/ hateful speech, public discrediting of their work, and questioning their morality (Table 1). The survey revealed that male journalists face different threats more often than women, except for sexual assault/harassment.

The perceived insecurity factors reflect journalists' concern about their physical and psychological well-being. Also, almost a third of journalists were convinced (strongly agreed or agreed) that those who harm journalists go unpunished (Table 2).

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	302	2.6%	10.3%	28.1%	29.1%	29.8%
Public discrediting of your work	302	1.7%	7.3%	18.9%	28.5%	43.7%
Surveillance	300	0.0%	0.7%	2.0%	6.7%	90.7%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	302	0.0%	0.7%	2.0%	9.9%	87.4%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	302	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%	99.3%
Legal actions against you because of your work	302	0.7%	3.6%	8.3%	12.9%	74.5%
Stalking	302	0.3%	2.0%	3.3%	7.3%	87.1%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	302	1.0%	3.0%	10.6%	25.5%	59.9%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	302	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	7.0%	92.4%
Other physical attacks	302	0.3%	0.3%	1.0%	3.6%	94.7%
Coercion	302	0.0%	0.0%	2.3%	9.9%	87.7%
Questioning of your personal morality	302	1.7%	5.6%	14.2%	26.8%	51.7%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	301	0.7%	1.0%	5.0%	11.6%	81.7%
Others disseminating your personal information	302	0.3%	1.0%	4.3%	14.6%	79.8%
Workplace bullying	302	0.3%	1.3%	4.0%	8.9%	85.4%
Abductions	302	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%	99.3%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	302	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	99.3%
Intimidation that targets family	302	0.0%	0.7%	2.0%	2.0%	95.4%

Question: “In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?”

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	301	16.9%	2.10	1.23
Concerned about physical well-being	302	25.5%	2.41	1.25
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	302	26.8%	2.52	1.22
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Lithuania go unpunished	301	30.2%	2.68	1.25

Question: “Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.” (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Lithuanian journalists had the strongest perception of the monitorial roles, while the accommodative and interventionist roles were moderately perceived. The perception of collaborative roles was weakest on average (Table 3). However, on average, the understanding of support for government policy and conveying a positive image of the politicians among journalists working in regional/local media was stronger than that of journalists working in national media.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	302	92.4%	4.63	0,77
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	302	74.8%	4.03	1,29
Shine a light on society’s problems	302	91,4%	4.53	0,87
Motivate people to participate in politics	302	24.8%	2.56	1.27
Provide analysis of current affairs	301	78.1%	4.05	1.12
Let people express their views	302	68.5%	3.88	1.11
Provide information people need to form political opinion	302	66.9%	3.68	1.37
Advocate for social change	300	73.3%	3.93	1.10
Influence public opinion	300	39.7%	3.05	1.29
Set the political agenda	302	18.9%	2.17	1.22
Promote peace and tolerance	302	80,8%	4.21	1.00
Educate the audience	302	88,4%	4.49	0.84
Point toward possible solutions to society’s problems	302	71.5%	3.96	1.12
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	302	63.9%	3.67	1.36
Support national development	297	61.9%	3.69	1.13
Support government policy	299	7.1%	1.78	1.03
Convey a positive image of political leaders	301	5.0%	1.40	0.85
Provide entertainment and relaxation	302	27.5%	2.60	1.36
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	302	59.3%	3.63	1.23
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	300	39.6%	2.98	1.38
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	300	48.0%	3.23	1.31
Support efforts to protect public health	300	64.4%	3.71	1.18
Counteract disinformation	302	86.1%	4.41	1.01
Discuss future implications of current events	302	74.8%	3.99	1.10

Question: “Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

More than four-fifths of Lithuanian journalists believe it is possible to represent objective reality in reporting, and the facts should speak for themselves. Only a little more than a quarter agreed that interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts. Also, very few journalists believe that truth is inevitably shaped by those in power (Table 4). It can be asserted that objectivist and truth-seeking professional norms prevail in the journalistic community.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	300	26.3%	2.65	1.19
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	301	5.6%	1.65	0.89
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	301	16.9%	2.40	1.06
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	298	18.8%	2.44	1.19
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	302	81.1%	4.02	0.85
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	302	11.6%	2.17	1.04
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	301	8.9%	2.12	0.97
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	302	83.8%	4.19	0.85
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	297	31.0%	2.90	1.13
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	301	10.0%	1.96	1.07
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	300	88.0%	4.33	0.91

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Although more than four-fifths of Lithuanian journalists support strong professional ethical standards, a significant part of the journalistic community considers that these standards can be ignored in extraordinary circumstances (Table 5). Almost every second journalist sees the need to claim to be somebody else in their work and use hidden recording devices and confidential documents without authorization. Also, more than a third of journalists demonstrated a favorable attitude toward publishing unverified information (Table 6).

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	302	83.1%	4.20	0.85
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	300	61.3%	3.57	1.11
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	301	23.6%	2.52	1.23
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	302	6.0%	1.71	0.94

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	302	1.3%	46,4%
Using hidden recording devices	302	3.6%	54.0%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	299	8.0%	52.0%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	302	3.3%	37.4%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	302	0.3%	13.9%
Paying people for confidential information	300	1.7%	29.5%
Accepting money from sources	301	0.3%	3.0%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	301	1.0%	16.2%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	301	0.7%	15.2%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	302	1.0%	40.1%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Most Lithuanian journalists assess the freedom to select news stories and to decide which aspects of a story should be emphasized positively. Moreover, more journalists were completely free to emphasize the story aspects than those who were completely free to select the story themselves. However, journalists assess media freedom in Lithuania more negatively on average than their personal freedom to select stories and emphasize certain stories' aspects (Table 7).

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	302	94.4%	4.43	0.61
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	302	94.7%	4.53	0.65
Media freedom in Lithuania	298	78.5%	3.85	0.66

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

According to journalists, professional and procedural factors influence their work most: journalistic ethics, information access, news-gathering resources availability, and time limits. Journalists perceive organizational, economic, and political influences as less critical factors. The military, religious groups, and, especially, criminal groups indicate little influence on the work of journalists (Table 8).

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	298	51.3%	3.41	1.22
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	254	67.3%	3.76	1.14
The business managers of the news organization	273	41.4%	3.07	1.30
The owners of the news organization	256	29.7%	2.61	1.36
Editorial policy	292	58.9%	3.53	1.18
Advertising considerations	261	23.0%	2.36	1.32
Profit expectations	253	23.3%	2.53	1.30
Audience research and data	289	46.4%	3.25	1.18
Availability of news-gathering resources	297	73.7%	3.96	1.00
Time limits	299	70.6%	3.81	1.04
Journalism ethics	302	88.1%	4.40	0.86
Self-censorship	283	31.8%	2.76	1.39
Personal values and beliefs	298	60.1%	3.63	1.17
Colleagues in other media	286	12.2%	2.30	1.04
Friends, acquaintances and family	290	10.3%	2.04	1.08
Feedback from the audience	300	51.3%	3.44	1.08
Competing news organizations	285	24.2%	2.66	1.07
Media laws and regulation	296	67.9%	3.83	1.12
Access to information	298	79.9%	4.13	0.85
Government censorship	259	11.2%	1.78	1.14
Government officials	277	8.7%	1.74	1.02
Politicians	282	7.1%	1.67	0.99
Business people	288	7.3%	1.80	0.99
Public relations	294	18.4%	2.48	1.14
Relationships with news sources	294	55.4%	3.49	1.14
Police	258	12.8%	1.88	1.18
Issue advocacy groups	284	9.5%	2.03	1.03
Scientists or health experts	289	27.0%	2.64	1.18
Religious groups and institutions	267	5.6%	1.62	0.96
Military	255	9.8%	1.79	1.09
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	198	2.0%	1.19	0.56
Organized crime and criminal groups	223	0.9%	1.08	0.37
Terrorist groups	202	0.0%	1.03	0.20

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Mexico

Armando Gutiérrez-Ortega, Mireya Márquez Ramírez, Martin Echeverría, Karles Daniel Antonio-Manzo, Julieta Brambila, Josefina, Buxadé Castelán, Celia del Palacio Montiel, Rubén Arnoldo González, José Luis Lemini Camarillo, Frida Viridiana Rodelo Amezcu, Grisel Salazar Rebolledo & Sallie Hughes

INTRODUCTION

Between 2018 and 2022, Mexico underwent political, economic, and social shifts. President López Obrador's populist government broke from past administrations, promoting austerity, nationalism, and open hostility toward institutions, including the media. This deepened anti-press sentiment and public mistrust in journalism.

The period was also shaped by the COVID-19 pandemic, economic stagnation, and persistent structural violence and inequality. Officials often discredited journalists, worsening risks and weakening their credibility.

Since the democratic opening in 2000, key journalistic actors have played a central role in diversifying the public sphere and adopting democratic norms and professional practices. Yet throughout the country, several media outlets remain embedded in legacy practices from the authoritarian era such as connivance with political elites, clientelistic relations, dependence on official advertising, and partisan allegiances. These dynamics, combined with labor precarity, violence, and risk, have eroded professional standards, weakening newsroom autonomy. Consequently, much of the media landscape remains fragile due to multiple factors limiting press freedom and independence, as well as frequent threats against journalists – leading to their adoption of resilience and resistance strategies to cope with these challenges.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The Mexican journalists surveyed between the summer of 2021 and the spring of 2022 were predominantly female (45.8%) and male (54.2%). The average age was 40.1 years (SD = 10.2; Median = 39). Regarding education, 75.6% held a bachelor's degree, 14.4% reported having postgraduate studies, and only 9.3% had completed high school. While 85.6% had received journalism training at some point in their careers, just 17.7% reported having received recent or updated instruction.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

Mexican journalists work in diverse and often demanding environments. Nearly half (46.8%) are employed in regional media, with 26% in local outlets and 21.5% in national organizations. A strong majority (91.6%) reported having a main employer, while 8.8% identified as freelancers or self-employed, suggesting a relatively stable employment structure within the profession. On average, journalists had 16.3 years of professional experience (SD = 9.8, Median = 14) – showing a mature and experienced workforce. Despite this, only 27.0% reported belonging to a professional association.

Journalists in Mexico work long hours. The average workweek extends to 53.6 hours (SD = 16.1) for those in full-time employment, with a median of 50 hours. Journalistic work in Mexico tends to be generalist: 80.1% of journalists report not covering a specific beat, often addressing a broad range of topics. Financially, journalism remains the primary income source for the majority, but not always the only one. About 39% of journalists reported holding an additional job outside the profession.

When asked about the percentage of their income derived from journalism, 58.7% reported earning 100% of their income from journalistic work, leaving approximately four out of ten journalists under more precarious income arrangements. Others reported lower levels: 8.9% earn 80% from journalism, 8% earn 50%, and smaller percentages reported more precarious combinations. Only 5% or less of journalists earn 30% or less of their total income from the profession, highlighting economic instability for a small minority.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Anti-press attacks have increased and diversified. Mexican journalists frequently face threats that compromise their safety and well-being. Nearly 76% reported receiving demeaning or hateful speech, and 65.6% experienced public discrediting. More than 38% had been hacked or blocked online, and 49.4% believe they were under surveillance (see Table 1). Beyond direct threats, 74.9% expressed concern for their mental health, and more than half (55.1%) for their physical safety or losing their job (50.9%). Despite the prevalence of anti-press violence, impunity perception prevails. These percentages include all who reported experiencing each issue, excluding those who answered "never" (Table 2).

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	443	5.9%	13.1%	36.3%	20.5%	24.2%
Public discrediting of your work	442	6.6%	10.2%	26.0%	22.9%	34.4%
Surveillance	433	5.5%	6.2%	19.6%	18.0%	50.6%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	441	2.9%	4.3%	16.3%	14.5%	61.9%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	443	0.2%	0.5%	1.8%	4.7%	92.8%
Legal actions against you because of your work	443	1.4%	0.5%	5.0%	10.4%	82.8%
Stalking	443	2.0%	2.7%	14.0%	19.9%	61.4%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	442	2.3%	4.3%	19.2%	20.8%	53.4%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	443	0.9%	2.0%	6.8%	7.4%	82.8%
Other physical attacks	442	1.8%	1.8%	8.1%	15.2%	73.1%
Coercion	442	1.4%	2.9%	8.1%	15.4%	72.2%
Questioning of your personal morality	442	5.0%	7.2%	17.9%	22.6%	47.3%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	442	0.5%	2.5%	8.4%	12.4%	76.2%
Others disseminating your personal information	442	1.1%	4.1%	11.3%	16.3%	67.2%
Workplace bullying	443	2.7%	5.0%	11.7%	16.7%	63.9%
Abductions	442	0.0%	0.2%	0.7%	1.6%	97.5%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	443	0.0%	0.9%	6.1%	8.1%	84.9%
Intimidation that targets family	443	1.1%	0.9%	4.3%	3.6%	90.1%

Question: “In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?”

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	442	50.9%	3.29	1.46
Concerned about physical well-being	442	55.1%	3.36	1.39
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	441	74.9%	3.98	1.19
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Mexico go unpunished	442	98.2%	4.83	0.47

Question: “Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.” (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Mexican journalists uphold traditional roles such as providing platforms for diverse ideas and maintaining objective detachment. Approximately 91.4% support allowing individuals to express their views, and 91% emphasize the importance of being a neutral observer. They also place a high value on more active roles, such as countering disinformation and interpreting current events. Over 96% of journalists consider exposing social issues very or extremely important, while 95.7% highlight the necessity of combating disinformation. In stark contrast, traditional roles focused on supporting elites – common in the past – are now rarely endorsed. Only 5.9% of journalists prioritize conveying a positive image of political leaders (see Table 3).

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	443	91.0%	4.41	0.70
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	443	87.1%	4.31	0.80
Shine a light on society’s problems	443	96.6%	4.68	0.55
Motivate people to participate in politics	443	43.9%	3.15	1.23
Provide analysis of current affairs	442	89.6%	4.31	0.72
Let people express their views	441	91.4%	4.41	0.71
Provide information people need to form political opinion	443	87.1%	4.31	0.87
Advocate for social change	443	82.1%	4.21	0.87
Influence public opinion	442	63.3%	3.71	0.98
Set the political agenda	443	42.0%	3.21	1.11
Promote peace and tolerance	441	87.1%	4.37	0.80
Educate the audience	443	71.1%	3.91	1.01
Point toward possible solutions to society’s problems	443	77.9%	4.10	0.90
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	441	87.5%	4.38	0.87
Support national development	443	69.5%	3.88	1.01
Support government policy	442	35.3%	3.01	1.13
Convey a positive image of political leaders	443	5.9%	1.77	0.98
Provide entertainment and relaxation	441	26.2%	2.78	1.17
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	443	67.3%	3.78	1.07
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	440	49.0%	3.35	1.11
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	443	71.4%	3.99	0.96
Support efforts to protect public health	442	83.3%	4.23	0.95
Counteract disinformation	443	95.7%	4.66	0.67
Discuss future implications of current events	442	81.9%	4.12	0.83

Question: “Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Mexican journalists hold mixed epistemological views. Table 4 shows how Mexican journalists endorse both factual and interpretive views of their work. While 80.4% agree on exposing false claims, 79.6% believe facts should speak for themselves, and 72% see interpretation as essential. Views also diverge on objectivity: 62.8% believe it's possible, while 40.5% say personal beliefs can't be excluded from reporting.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	442	71.9%	3.77	1.01
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	442	11.3%	2.08	1.03
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	442	40.5%	3.07	1.18
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	443	38.8%	2.98	1.30
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	441	62.8%	3.58	1.20
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	443	33.6%	2.83	1.18
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	442	33.3%	2.84	1.16
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	440	79.5%	4.04	0.91
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	442	42.1%	3.08	1.21
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	440	63.6%	3.66	1.14
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	444	80.4%	4.03	0.98

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Most Mexican journalists uphold strong ethical standards: 92.6% believe ethics should always guide their work, and only 25.4% think ethics depend on the situation (Table 5). When it comes to controversial practices, just 1.4% support impersonation, and fewer than 3% justify occasionally accepting money from sources. Hidden recordings (62.8%) and using personal materials of powerful people without their permission (51.8%) are more permissible, but mainly when justified on occasion.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	443	92.6%	4.49	0.72
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	440	51.6%	3.29	1.22
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	441	25.4%	2.46	1.28
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	442	27.6%	2.45	1.36

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	442	1.4%	39.6%
Using hidden recording devices	443	2.9%	62.8%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	443	6.8%	50.1%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	440	5.7%	51.8%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	442	0.9%	18.3%
Paying people for confidential information	440	1.1%	24.3%
Accepting money from sources	442	0.5%	3.4%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	441	1.4%	30.8%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	441	2.3%	27.9%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	442	0.9%	6.6%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Around three-quarters of journalists feel they have room to decide: 75.1% report having complete or a great deal of freedom in selecting stories, and 73% in shaping their content. However, only 17% believe that media freedom is broadly guaranteed in the country. This contrast suggests that despite perceptions of autonomy at the individual level, structural restrictions still shape the wider media environment (see Table 7).

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	441	75.1%	4.02	0.95
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	441	73.0%	3.99	0.90
Media freedom in Mexico	441	17.0%	2.83	0.76

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Internal influences such as editorial policy (62.8%), supervisors (61.3%), and owners (51.4%) shape journalistic work. Externally, ethics (82.4%), access to information (63.2%), and audience feedback (55.3%) are seen as highly influential, reflecting the complex environment in which news decisions are made. A source of concern is that almost a quarter of journalists (23.8%) consider organized crime very or extremely influential in their work, just above politicians (22.8%).

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	442	29.2%	2.79	1.12
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	440	61.6%	3.55	1.12
The business managers of the news organization	438	32.9%	2.75	1.35
The owners of the news organization	437	51.7%	3.31	1.43
Editorial policy	442	62.9%	3.58	1.17
Advertising considerations	440	35.9%	2.88	1.35
Profit expectations	437	30.7%	2.58	1.39
Audience research and data	440	50.2%	3.28	1.20
Availability of news-gathering resources	441	50.1%	3.31	1.14
Time limits	443	47.9%	3.27	1.25
Journalism ethics	443	82.4%	4.12	1.01
Self-censorship	441	26.8%	2.62	1.23
Personal values and beliefs	441	39.7%	2.95	1.37
Colleagues in other media	443	11.5%	2.17	1.02
Friends, acquaintances and family	443	7.9%	1.99	0.97
Feedback from the audience	443	55.3%	3.49	1.00
Competing news organizations	443	25.5%	2.78	1.06
Media laws and regulation	441	36.1%	2.98	1.13
Access to information	442	63.3%	3.63	0.99
Government censorship	439	35.3%	2.80	1.33
Government officials	441	25.4%	2.43	1.31
Politicians	443	22.8%	2.37	1.30
Business people	442	17.9%	2.19	1.21
Public relations	441	24.0%	2.57	1.22
Relationships with news sources	442	40.7%	3.08	1.20
Issue advocacy groups	442	15.2%	2.18	1.13
Religious groups and institutions	441	5.4%	1.69	0.94
Military	439	9.1%	1.82	1.06
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	437	4.8%	1.57	0.92
Organized crime and criminal groups	440	23.9%	2.27	1.37
Terrorist groups	435	4.4%	1.31	0.80

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Moldova

Natalia Vasilendiuc & Marin Eladi

INTRODUCTION

By 2025, the Republic of Moldova, which was officially granted EU candidate status on 22 June 2022, is still on the enlargement agenda. Despite robust reform impetus and investment in growth-related sectors, Moldova's economic recovery and convergence towards EU income levels are exposed due to Russia's aggression in Ukraine, energy price shocks, and the persistence of Covid-19 effects. The nation also faced unprecedented refugee flows (the highest per capita in Europe). Though the outlook is reasonably good, risks encompass drawn-out conflict, energy price instability, and the parliamentary elections of 2025.

The pro-European government has changed the media landscape of Moldova since 2021, combating Russia's disinformation and propaganda aimed at derailing the nation's EU path. Parliament amended the Law on audiovisual media services on 2 June 2022 to include "disinformation." *TV6*, *Prime TV*, *NTV Moldova*, and rebroadcasts of Russian programs were suspended, and access to over 70 Russian or pro-Russian websites was closed.

Russia's conflict also harmed Moldova's media economically. Two of the biggest media holdings belonging to a fugitive oligarch collapsed in 2023, yet another Russia-backed oligarch still owns a large network that gets around some of the limitations. Media in Gagauzia and Transnistria continue to be largely pro-Russian.

The internet is Moldovans' main source of information but also a main conduit of Russian propaganda. Watching Romanian TV is common, and most press publications are now only online. There were 2.1 million internet users in Moldova, which was 61% of the population.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The Moldovan journalist sample is dominated by women: 72.8% women, 26.6% men, and 0.7% others. The respondents are on average 33.6 years old (SD = 12.1; Median = 30). The educational level is as follows: 43.9% bachelor's degree or equivalent, 23.9% master's degree, and 2.6% doctorate. Plus, 55.4% report having undergone formal education or professional training in journalism; among them, 75.1% via a university or college, and 86.4% via apprenticeships/cadetships, with short courses being well-liked too (53.8%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

In our Moldovan sample, a majority of journalists (58.7%) hold no management role, whereas 23.9% serve in middle management and 17.4% are top managers. As for the reach of their main medium, nearly two thirds (63.6%) work for media with national audiences, 9.8% for local, 12.8% for regional, and 4.3 % for transnational ones; 9.5% do not report a single main medium. Regarding ownership, private/commercial outlets are most common (40.8%), followed by public service (19.4%) and non-profit (18.8%) media; smaller segments work in state-run (7.6%) or community media (0.7%), with 12.8% again indicating no main medium.

Most respondents (60.3%) have a full-time permanent contract, 10.3% a part-time permanent contract, 9.9 % a full-time fixed-term contract, 6.6 % a part-time fixed-term contract, and 11.6% freelance or are self-employed. On average, they have spent 11.2 years (SD = 9.9; Median = 9) working as journalists. About one third of them (30.2%) are union members. A fifth (19.7%) primarily cover a specific beat or subject area.

While just under a third (32.9%) earn their total income from journalistic work alone, the remaining 67.1% combine journalism with additional income sources, thus indicating that many of these journalists have work outside the newsroom. Internet-native platforms (44.0%) represent the background of the most frequent type of main employer, followed by television (22.8%), radio (9.3%), and newspaper (9.3%) outlets, among others.

On average, full-time journalists work 47.5 hours per week (SD = 12.5; Median = 40). In terms of stress levels, more than half (53.5%) report feeling stressed often or very often in their jobs, while only 19.1% feel stressed rarely or never.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Demeaning or hateful speech directed at journalists was among the most common safety threats experienced by Moldovan journalists (see Table 1). Although not used so often public discrediting has become the second most experienced threat. Despite being experienced less frequently, additional threats, such as surveillance or hacking or blocking of social media accounts are becoming more worrying. Episodes of intimidation and different types of more subtle coercion persist. A broad majority of surveyed journalists are worried about their physical or emotional well-being, while nearly one-third express concern about losing their job (see Table 2). Distressfully, almost 70.0% of the surveyed journalists say that those who harm journalists would go unpunished.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	305	2.0%	11.8%	23.0%	21.6%	41.6%
Public discrediting of your work	305	3.0%	7.5%	17.4%	22.3%	49.8%
Surveillance	305	0.3%	5.9%	20.0%	20.7%	53.1%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	305	0.7%	4.6%	10.2%	13.4%	71.1%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	305	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	2.6%	97.0%
Legal actions against you because of your work	305	0.3%	1.0%	6.9%	6.2%	85.6%
Stalking	305	0.0%	0.7%	6.6%	11.1%	81.6%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	305	0.0%	3.6%	12.8%	20.0%	63.6%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	305	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	4.6%	94.4%
Other physical attacks	305	0.0%	0.3%	2.6%	7.2%	89.8%
Coercion	305	0.7%	1.3%	11.8%	18.7%	67.5%
Questioning of your personal morality	305	0.7%	0.7%	11.1%	18.0%	69.5%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	305	0.7%	0.3%	4.6%	7.9%	86.6%
Others disseminating your personal information	305	0.7%	0.3%	6.6%	8.9%	83.6%
Workplace bullying	305	0.0%	0.7%	5.2%	10.8%	83.3%
Abductions	305	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.7%	98.7%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	305	0.0%	0.0%	2.3%	3.0%	94.8%
Intimidation that targets family	305	0.0%	0.3%	1.3%	7.5%	90.8%

Question: “In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?”

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	303	28.1%	2.66	1.35
Concerned about physical well-being	303	47.2%	3.18	1.38
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	303	61.1%	3.63	1.27
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Moldova go unpunished	303	68.0%	3.96	1.15

Question: “Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.” (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Moldovan journalists reflect a contrasting vision of roles. They show strong support for interventionist roles while remaining attached to more traditional approaches (see Table 3). The most important role is influencing public opinion by counteracting disinformation, while educating the audience remains a very crucial role as well. The role of positive influence in the form of exposing secrets and providing additional understanding by shining light on society’s problems is supported by almost 85% of responders. Promoting peace and tolerance were viewed as a very important role as providing needed information so that people can form a political opinion. The data suggest that these roles were top priority for most of the journalists. Providing analysis of current affairs and supporting public health are very important as at the same time letting people express their views. On the other hand, conveying a positive image of political figures is the least important role.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	305	60.3%	3.77	1.11
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	305	59.0%	3.78	1.07
Shine a light on society’s problems	305	84.9%	4.42	0.76
Motivate people to participate in politics	305	42.3%	3.23	1.19
Provide analysis of current affairs	305	75.1%	4.15	0.88
Let people express their views	305	69.5%	4.03	0.92
Provide information people need to form political opinion	305	71.8%	3.99	1.00
Advocate for social change	305	60.7%	3.73	1.14
Influence public opinion	305	34.4%	3.00	1.19
Set the political agenda	305	24.9%	2.72	1.20
Promote peace and tolerance	305	76.7%	4.28	0.95
Educate the audience	305	81.3%	4.36	0.89
Point toward possible solutions to society’s problems	305	68.9%	3.97	0.95
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	305	56.1%	3.66	1.10
Support national development	305	66.2%	3.94	1.02
Support government policy	305	14.4%	2.33	1.07
Convey a positive image of political leaders	305	2.6%	1.46	0.76
Provide entertainment and relaxation	305	24.9%	2.82	1.16
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	305	39.3%	3.24	1.28
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	305	34.4%	3.09	1.18
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	305	21.0%	2.73	1.08
Support efforts to protect public health	305	63.9%	3.88	0.96
Counteract disinformation	305	85.9%	4.48	0.85
Discuss future implications of current events	305	63.0%	3.85	0.93

Question: “Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Moldovan journalists are strongly agreeing on being fair and alerting audience when a source's claim is untruthful. They also strongly believe that it is possible to represent objective reality in reporting (see Table 4). The standard deviation in this case shows a solid cohesion among the interviewed journalists. Four out of five responders strongly agree that objective reality is attainable in their activity. More than 60.0% consider they should intuitively know what the final story will be. Three quarters of the responders believe their role is to present facts the way they are and that is sufficient for understanding reality. But at the same time almost half of the responders have the opinion that things are either true or false and not somewhere in the middle. The respondents strongly agree that journalists should let the facts speak for themselves and that they should make their opinions transparent in their work.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	305	39.0%	2.87	1.38
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	305	40.7%	2.97	1.27
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	305	33.8%	2.71	1.30
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	305	48.5%	3.34	1.27
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	305	84.9%	4.30	0.94
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	305	39.0%	2.94	1.29
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	305	60.7%	3.57	1.11
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	305	75.7%	4.08	1.06
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	305	36.1%	2.97	1.36
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	305	66.9%	3.86	1.34
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	305	90.5%	4.58	0.82

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Moldovan journalists strongly consider that professional standards are very important and are superior to personal judgment or any situational considerations for ethical reporting (see Table 5). At the same time, controversial reporting methods such as accepting money from sources and publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified are firmly rejected (see Table 6). Concomitantly, a large number of journalists find using hidden recording devices and using confidential business or government documents without authorization justified. The number of journalists that find it acceptable to claim to be somebody else and financially reward people for confidential information remains high.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	305	82.0%	4.24	1.01
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	305	61.3%	3.57	1.25
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	305	41.6%	2.88	1.47
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	305	25.2%	2.28	1.40

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	305	4.9%	53.1%
Using hidden recording devices	305	9.8%	78.4%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	305	4.3%	54.8%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	305	4.9%	54.1%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	305	3.0%	26.6%
Paying people for confidential information	305	5.2%	43.0%
Accepting money from sources	305	2.6%	11.1%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	305	3.6%	26.6%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	305	2.0%	21.0%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	305	3.9%	14.1%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Moldovan journalists have reported a relatively medium amount of media freedom and reasonable high amount in their editorial autonomy (see Table 7). Nearly three quarters of journalists declared to have almost a great deal of freedom in selecting the news and deciding which aspects of the story should be emphasized. At the same time, only 34.4% of the respondents have declared that they enjoy complete media freedom.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	305	71.8%	3.99	0.85
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	305	71.1%	3.93	0.87
Media freedom in Republic of Moldova	305	34.4%	3.14	0.84

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Moldovan journalists are highly influenced by ethics, media law and regulations in addition to the availability of news-gathering resources (see Table 8). The standard deviation in this case shows a strong interrelatedness among the interviewed journalists. Editorial supervisors and higher editors as well as audience research and data and time limits play a very important role. In contrast, personal values and beliefs play a relatively moderate role. Self-censorship is on the same level as the influences from the management and owners of the news organizations. The professional activities and editorial policies of Moldovan journalists were least affected by external political factors, such as politicians, government officials, pressure groups, businesspeople or terrorists.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	284	21.8%	2.70	1.05
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	287	54.7%	3.61	1.16
The business managers of the news organization	265	39.6%	3.26	1.19
The owners of the news organization	252	37.7%	3.03	1.41
Editorial policy	275	59.6%	3.67	1.14
Advertising considerations	265	23.0%	2.45	1.27
Profit expectations	261	39.5%	3.06	1.41
Audience research and data	275	50.5%	3.49	1.23
Availability of news-gathering resources	285	59.6%	3.72	1.12
Time limits	289	53.6%	3.54	1.18
Journalism ethics	280	69.6%	3.98	1.04
Self-censorship	265	32.8%	2.84	1.35
Personal values and beliefs	277	40.4%	3.20	1.25
Colleagues in other media	282	16.7%	2.54	1.04
Friends, acquaintances and family	278	9.0%	2.07	1.02
Feedback from the audience	297	51.9%	3.56	1.05
Competing news organizations	282	26.2%	2.81	1.17
Media laws and regulation	281	61.2%	3.76	1.02
Access to information	296	71.3%	3.98	0.97
Government censorship	264	26.1%	2.56	1.33
Government officials	255	14.1%	2.18	1.17
Politicians	262	11.5%	2.10	1.12
Businesspeople	269	8.6%	1.98	1.03
Public relations	270	20.0%	2.62	1.08
Relationships with news sources	292	43.8%	3.33	1.18
Police	259	15.1%	2.18	1.17
Issue advocacy groups	267	25.1%	2.76	1.17
Scientists or health experts	267	24.0%	2.74	1.15
Religious groups and institutions	248	7.3%	1.82	0.99
Military	243	6.6%	1.73	1.00
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	235	6.4%	1.63	0.93
Organized crime and criminal groups	236	7.2%	1.67	1.02
Terrorist groups	232	7.8%	1.60	1.05

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Nepal

Samiksha Koirala

INTRODUCTION

Nepal has faced ongoing political instability, with frequent leadership changes and persistent deadlock between major parties. Although elections continue to take place, many people are increasingly frustrated, mainly due to widespread corruption and the government's failure to deliver. Over the past 30 years, the country has undergone significant political shifts. After a decade-long Maoist conflict (1996–2006), Nepal transitioned from a monarchy to a federal republic. Nevertheless, it still struggles to build strong institutions and to transform a society deeply rooted in patriarchy and feudal traditions.

The journalistic landscape in Nepal has also seen significant shifts in recent years. Traditionally, Nepal enjoyed a relatively pluralistic media environment, especially following the 2006 democratic movement and the abolition of the monarchy. However, concerns have grown over political interference, media capture, and increasing online harassment of journalists, particularly women and those critical of the government. These challenges have been further compounded by the concentration of media ownership and the growing alignment of news outlets with political interests, which have narrowed editorial independence. At the same time, the rise of digital disinformation and heightened state scrutiny of online content have introduced new threats to press freedom.

The COVID-19 pandemic dealt a lasting blow to Nepal's media industry, with its effects still being felt. Several FM radio stations and television networks shut down operations or downsized their workforce, leading to a significant reduction in editorial content. Major media houses also scaled back by cutting pages, laying off employees, and shutting down regional editions.

The fieldwork of this study was conducted between late 2022 and early 2024, following the contentious local and federal elections in 2022 that saw emerging political alliances and the growing influence of populist rhetoric. During this period, Nepal was also navigating the social and economic aftermath of the pandemic, while public debate intensified around issues such as gender-based violence, caste-based discrimination, and the regulation of digital platforms. Though some positive steps were taken to strengthen democratic institutions, the overall environment for critical journalism remains fraught with political pressure, legal uncertainty, and social polarization.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

In the case of Nepal, the journalism profession is male-dominated: 81.8% of valid respondents identified as men, 17.7% as women, and 0.5% as another gender. This distribution closely mirrors the database by the Federation of Nepali Journalists, which places the proportion of women journalists at approximately 18%, suggesting that the sample is broadly representative of the country's gender dynamics in the field. On average, journalists in the sample were 38.0 years old (SD = 8.7; Median = 36), reflecting a relatively young to mid-career cohort.

They are generally well educated. The sample shows, 45.7% held a Bachelor's degree or equivalent, 28.6% a Master's degree or equivalent, and 21.2% had completed high school. A small portion (3.8%) had some university education without completing a degree, and only 0.8% had not completed high school. A total of 99.5% reported receiving formal education or professional training in journalism. Among those, 31.2% had attended a university or college for journalism training, 79.5% had completed short-term courses, and a substantial portion received training through apprenticeships or cadetships. These figures suggest that many journalists underwent multiple forms of professional preparation.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

Journalists in our sample reported an average of 10.7 years of professional experience (SD = 5.6; Median = 9), indicating a moderately experienced workforce. The average working week for journalists was 53.3 hours (SD = 12.0; Median = 50; for those in full-time employment), based on 387 valid responses. These extended hours suggest a demanding work environment that may contribute to stress or work-life imbalance.

In terms of the background of their main employers, journalists primarily worked for, the largest group worked in radio outlets (27.6%), followed by those employed in newspapers (23.4%), internet-native media (21.1%), and television (17.1%). Smaller segments worked for news agencies (5.0%) or magazines (4.5%). A small minority (1.3%) reported not having a main employer at all, reflecting a degree of independence or freelancing in the profession.

Journalists in the sample had on average 10.7 years of professional experience (SD = 5.6; Median = 9), pointing to a relatively mid-career workforce. They also reported working long hours, with an average of 50.9 hours per week (SD = 13.5; Median = 50). Only 23.4% of journalists said they focused on a specific beat or subject area, while the majority (76.6%) worked across a variety of topics. This reflects a generalist approach to reporting, which may be shaped by the structure and staffing patterns of media organizations.

Employment conditions suggest a sector marked by precarity. Just 14.0% of journalists held full-time permanent contracts, and less than 1% were in part-time permanent positions. In contrast, a large portion were on fixed-term contracts – 62.2% full-time and 18.1% part-time. A small number worked as freelancers or were self-employed (2.6%), and 2.3% reported other types of employment. These patterns highlight the limited job security for most journalists.

Nearly one-third of the journalists (31.2%) reported that they do not earn their full income from journalism, while 68.8% said they rely entirely on journalism for their livelihood. This suggests that for a significant group, journalism alone is not financially sustainable.

The working environment appears to be stressful for many. While 7.3% of journalists said they never felt stressed and 28.0% rarely did, a large number reported regular stress. 44.4% said they sometimes felt stressed, 12.4% reported feeling stressed often, and 7.8% said they were stressed very often over the past six months.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Verbal attacks such as demeaning or hateful speech or public discrediting of journalists' work fared among the most common safety threats experienced by Nepali journalists (see Table 1). However, despite being experienced less frequently, more dangerous threats – such as legal actions, physical attacks, or surveillance – remain deeply concerning. These experiences are also reflected in the concerns expressed by Nepali journalists; nearly one in five were worried about losing their job, and a significant share were concerned about their physical or emotional well-being (see Table 2). Moreover, nearly one in four feared that those who harm journalists in Nepal would go unpunished.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	396	5.6%	3.3%	26.0%	30.1%	35.1%
Public discrediting of your work	395	5.6%	4.6%	17.7%	27.6%	44.6%
Surveillance	396	2.5%	1.5%	14.4%	20.5%	61.1%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	397	3.8%	5.3%	12.6%	16.9%	61.5%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	397	0.0%	0.0%	1.8%	2.8%	95.5%
Legal actions against you because of your work	397	0.0%	0.3%	1.0%	5.3%	93.5%
Stalking	396	2.3%	5.8%	9.8%	15.4%	66.7%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	397	1.5%	2.0%	18.6%	18.6%	59.2%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	397	0.0%	0.5%	1.3%	3.8%	94.5%
Other physical attacks	397	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	4.8%	94.0%
Coercion	398	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	7.3%	92.5%
Questioning of your personal morality	398	0.3%	0.3%	2.0%	5.8%	91.7%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	397	0.8%	1.0%	7.3%	11.3%	79.6%
Others disseminating your personal information	398	1.0%	0.3%	5.0%	17.3%	76.4%
Workplace bullying	398	0.0%	2.3%	3.5%	7.3%	86.9%
Abductions	398	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	1.3%	98.5%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	398	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.3%	97.7%
Intimidation that targets family	398	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	1.5%	98.2%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	397	18.4%	2.35	1.15
Concerned about physical well-being	396	8.6%	1.82	0.96
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	396	28.3%	2.61	1.16
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Nepal go unpunished	398	24.6%	2.64	1.16

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Being a detached observer ranked as the most important journalistic role among Nepali journalists, with *86.4%* considering it very important (see Table 3). This strong endorsement highlights the continued value placed on objectivity and impartiality in the profession. At the same time, interventionist roles – such as advocating for social change, promoting peace and tolerance, and educating the public – also received high levels of support. Politically assertive roles, including supporting government policy or portraying political leaders positively, were among the least valued. Nonetheless, even for these roles, a considerable share of journalists – often around a quarter – still saw them as very or extremely important.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	397	86.4%.	4.37	0.82
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	394	73.4%	3.96	1.09
Shine a light on society's problems	395	81.5%	4.25	1.02
Motivate people to participate in politics	394	53.0%	3.48	1.43
Provide analysis of current affairs	376	77.7%	4.05	1.00
Let people express their views	396	85.6%	4.33	0.94
Provide information people need to form political opinion	395	68.1%	3.94	1.11
Advocate for social change	394	80.7%	4.21	0.98
Influence public opinion	395	63.5%	3.83	1.23
Set the political agenda	393	57.3%	3.60	1.41
Promote peace and tolerance	394	80.5%	4.21	0.91
Educate the audience	396	81.8%	4.21	0.90
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	394	77.4%	4.13	1.01
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	390	76.4%	4.07	1.02
Support national development	395	75.7%	4.08	1,08
Support government policy	389	54.8%	3.57	1.20
Convey a positive image of political leaders	394	38.1%	2.95	1.52
Provide entertainment and relaxation	396	52.3%	3.42	1.24
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	396	53.8%	3.51	1.16
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	394	77.7%	4.16	0.98
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	392	64.0%	3.73	1.15
Support efforts to protect public health	396	77.0%	4.07	0.97
Counteract disinformation	396	78.0%	4.15	1.01
Discuss future implications of current events	381	74.5%	4.03	1.04

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

The results show mixed views on journalistic knowledge. Most journalists agreed that interpretation is key to understanding facts and that facts should speak for themselves (see Table 4). While over half believed objective reality can be represented (57.9%), many also acknowledged that truth is shaped by power (51.9%) and supported transparency of journalists' standpoints (62.0%). Fewer journalists endorsed relying on intuition or instincts in reporting.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	394	69.8%	3.76	1.16
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	395	51.9%	3.36	1.23
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	394	30.2%	2.92	1.04
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	394	54.6%	3.58	0.90
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	394	57.9%	3.55	1.10
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	394	17.0%	2.63	0.99
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	393	25.7%	2.69	1.15
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	371	60.9%	3.58	1.15
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	379	58.0%	3.49	1.19
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	337	62.0%	3.61	1.07
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	339	74.9%	3.93	1.00

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Most journalists favour strict adherence to professional standards (M = 4.29, SD = 0.95), even in challenging situations. Support declines when ethics are tied to specific contexts (M = 2.55, SD = 1.00) or personal judgment (M = 2.53, SD = 1.25). Controversial methods like impersonation or hidden recordings are rarely seen as always justified, but are sometimes accepted. Practices involving unverified information, payments, or use of private materials remain broadly unsupported, reflecting an overall commitment to ethical restraint.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	398	86.9%	4.29	0.95
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	396	66.2%	3.82	1.21
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	397	22.7%	2.55	1.00
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	398	31.4%	2.53	1.25

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	397	4.0%	35.3%
Using hidden recording devices	396	2.3%	47.5%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	397	2.0%	24.7%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	397	3.0%	29.5%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	396	1.0%	16.7%
Paying people for confidential information	394	1.3%	20.8%
Accepting money from sources	396	0.5%	3.0%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	394	0.8%	5.1%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	397	4.3%	24.9%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	397	1.0%	6.5%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Nepali journalists reported a moderate degree of editorial autonomy in their work (see Table 7). About two-thirds said they had complete or a great deal of freedom in selecting stories and deciding which aspects to emphasize. However, perceptions of overall media freedom in Nepal were notably lower.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	396	62.9%	3.79	0.91
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	396	67.9%	3.90	0.87
Media freedom in [country]	397	52.9%	3.52	0.79

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Journalists in Nepal reported a variety of influences on their editorial decisions (see Table 8). Time limits, media laws and regulations, government censorship, and access to information were among the most influential factors. Professional norms, such as journalism ethics and personal values, also ranked high. In contrast, influence from colleagues in other media, friends or family, religious groups, and military or paramilitary actors was reported to be minimal.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	385	37.7%	2.90	1.10
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	385	21.6%	2.75	1.08
The business managers of the news organization	386	23.1%	2.70	1.20
The owners of the news organization	379	32.2%	2.94	1.35
Editorial policy	392	45.7%	3.13	1.09
Advertising considerations	365	37.3%	3.08	1.28
Profit expectations	374	52.7%	3.22	1.24
Audience research and data	369	30.1%	2.79	1.13
Availability of news-gathering resources	382	41.9%	3.12	0.99
Time limits	393	64.4%	3.67	1.15
Journalism ethics	392	53.8%	3.46	1.08
Self-censorship	389	45.0%	3.26	1.10
Personal values and beliefs	388	51.5%	3.43	1.18
Colleagues in other media	382	16.5%	2.36	1.15
Friends, acquaintances and family	387	18.1%	2.24	1.28
Feedback from the audience	390	37.9%	2.97	1.41
Competing news organizations	390	20.0%	2.52	1.16
Media laws and regulation	392	58.9%	3.51	1.13
Access to information	393	62.1%	3.71	1.19
Government censorship	390	60.5%	3.52	1.12
Government officials	387	54.8%	3.55	1.40
Politicians	384	48.4%	3.29	1.32
Business people	385	47.3%	3.26	1.34
Public relations	363	24.2%	2.76	1.17
Relationships with news sources	390	38.2%	3.06	1.24
Police	386	20.5%	2.65	1.15
Issue advocacy groups	376	24.2%	2.56	1.17
Scientists or health experts	375	40.7%	2.17	1.23
Religious groups and institutions	356	18.9%	2.23	1.08
Military	131	9.8%	1.47	0.88
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	232	5.3%	2.16	1.39
Organized crime and criminal groups	94	23.7%	1.60	1.19
Terrorist groups	376	11.7%	3.21	1.14

Question: "Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist." (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Netherlands[1]

Liesbeth Hermans & Tineke Prins

INTRODUCTION

The Netherlands is a constitutional monarchy with a relative stable parliamentary democracy. The political landscape is characterized by a multi-party system, in which coalition governments are the norm. There is a high degree of political pluralism which requires consensus-based governance. Economically, the European country is prosperous and highly developed, with a strong international trading position and relatively low unemployment. Socially, the Netherlands is known for its liberal values, high quality of life, and strong social welfare systems. It also faces some ongoing social challenges, including the integration of migrants, an aging population and political polarization.

The Netherlands has a long-standing tradition of press freedom which is rooted in principles of independence, pluralism, and public accountability. There is a diverse media landscape, funded by both government and commercial parties. It includes a wide range of newspapers, broadcasting channels and online platforms that reflect a broad spectrum of political and social perspectives.

Dutch journalists have strong legal protections that support their freedom of speech, and the country consistently ranks high on international press freedom indexes. During the recent data collection, the general parliament elections in November 2023 took place, which brought heightened media activity and scrutiny. The winner of the election, the right-wing populist Party for Freedom, expressed a critical attitude against (public) media. After the murder of journalist Peter R. de Vries in 2021, the discussion about journalists' safety continued to influence discussions around press protection and security.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

Our sample of Dutch journalists consisted of 33.8% women and 66.2% men. On average, Dutch journalists were 46.2 years old (SD = 13.2; Median = 48). They tend to be well educated: 54.8% of the respondents held a Bachelor's degree or equivalent and 31.6% held a Master's degree or equivalent. Only a few of the journalists had obtained a doctoral degree (0.4%), and 5.7% had completed several years of university education without a degree. 68.6% of the respondents acquired formal education or professional training in journalism. This education or training is usually obtained at university or in college (80.6%) and less via apprenticeships or traineeships (8.4%) and short-term courses (3.2%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

Most journalists interviewed in the Netherlands held a full-time contract (58.9%) of which 47.4% were permanently and 11.5% were temporarily employed. Almost a quarter of the respondents (24.5%) worked as freelancers or were self-employed. Finally, 14.2% had a part-time permanent contract and 2.4% had a part-time temporary contract. The average working week of Dutch full-time journalists was 39.3 hours (SD = 6.3; Median = 40). Most journalists reported to have no additional income outside journalism (78.4%).

Dutch journalists are experienced. On average, they had 20.0 years of professional experience (SD = 12.5; Median = 20). Most of them (66.7%) worked on a variety of beats or subject areas rather than a specific beat or subject area. About a third of Dutch journalists (62.7%) were members of professional associations.

In terms of the main media format of their employers, more than one third of the Dutch journalists (34.9%) worked for an organization with a newspaper background, 26.0% for television, 10.2% for online only media, and 7.9% for radio outlets. 6.5% worked for news agencies and 5.1% for magazines. Finally, 9.3% of the interviewed journalists indicated they did not have a main employer. Regarding area of coverage, 56.6% of the journalists reported they mainly worked for local or regional media, 40.7% primarily worked for (trans)national media, and 2.7% reported to not work for any main medium.

Most Dutch journalists indicated to work for private media (44.6%) or for public media (44.6%). Much less work for non-profit media (5.0%) or did not have a main medium they worked for (5.0%). Half of the respondents indicated their rank was no management role (51.1%), 39.2% had a middle management role, and 9.7% had a top management role.

[1] Country sample does not fully align with WJS specifications regarding maximum margin of error (see WJS3 Methodology).

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Dutch journalists mainly experience threats to their safety through demeaning or hateful speech or via public discrediting of their work (see Table 1). A quarter of Dutch journalists were concerned about their physical or emotional well-being and more than half of the surveyed journalists feared that those who harm journalists would go unpunished (see Table 2).

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	253	4.0%	9.5%	40.3%	32.0%	14.2%
Public discrediting of your work	253	4.0%	11.1%	37.9%	31.6%	15.4%
Surveillance	253	1.6%	3.6%	17.8%	24.5%	52.6%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	252	0.8%	1.2%	7.1%	15.9%	75.0%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	253	0.0%	0.4%	2.4%	2.0%	95.3%
Legal actions against you because of your work	253	0.0%	0.8%	6.7%	16.6%	75.9%
Stalking	252	0.4%	1.2%	3.2%	9.5%	85.7%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	253	2.0%	4.7%	13.8%	28.1%	51.4%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	252	0.0%	0.4%	1.2%	3.6%	94.8%
Other physical attacks	252	0.0%	0.0%	4.0%	10.3%	85.7%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	252	0.4%	0.8%	1.6%	7.5%	89.7%
Others disseminating your personal information	253	0.4%	0.8%	4.7%	15.8%	78.3%
Workplace bullying	253	0.4%	2.0%	4.0%	9.5%	84.2%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	252	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%	6.7%	92.1%
Intimidation that targets family	253	0.0%	0.4%	2.4%	5.5%	91.7%

Question: “In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?”

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	252	7.5%	1.80	1.00
Concerned about physical well-being	253	11.9%	2.12	1.01
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	253	24.9%	2.47	1.18
Concerned that those who harm journalists in the Netherlands go unpunished	253	60.5%	3.50	1.10

Question: “Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.” (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Dutch journalists show strong support for watchdog role (monitor and scrutinize those in power, counteract disinformation) and guiding role (see Table 3). The journalist as a guide shines a light on society’s problems and discusses future implications of current events. The journalist as a guide can also point out possible solutions to society’s problems. Least important according to Dutch journalists is the collaborative role in which the journalist supports government policy or conveys a positive image of political leaders.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	238	58.0%	3.65	0.90
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	239	80.3%	4.13	0.98
Shine a light on society’s problems	239	80.3%	4.10	0.83
Motivate people to participate in politics	239	12.6%	2.39	1.03
Provide analysis of current affairs	239	76.6%	3.97	0.83
Let people express their views	238	46.6%	3.37	0.92
Provide information people need to form political opinion	239	55.6%	3.52	1.00
Advocate for social change	239	8.4%	2.18	1.03
Influence public opinion	239	9.6%	2.26	0.97
Set the political agenda	239	17.6%	2.57	1.03
Promote peace and tolerance	238	31.5%	2.94	1.04
Educate the audience	238	65.1%	3.79	0.89
Point toward possible solutions to society’s problems	238	45.4%	3.33	0.95
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	239	36.8%	3.15	0.96
Support national development	239	2.5%	1.72	0.85
Support government policy	239	0.4%	1.21	0.50
Convey a positive image of political leaders	239	0.0%	1.19	0.41
Provide entertainment and relaxation	239	19.7%	2.72	1.04
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	240	17.9%	2.56	1.00
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	238	32.8%	2.98	1.05
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	239	40.2%	3.17	1.04
Discuss future implications of current events	237	62.9%	3.72	0.87
Support efforts to protect public health	237	12.7%	2.36	0.99
Counteract disinformation	239	68.6%	3.90	1.06

Question: “Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

A clear majority of Dutch journalists indicates that interpretation is necessary to understand the facts: 78.7% agreed with the statement that interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts (see Table 4). At the same time almost half of the journalists agree with the statement that it is possible to represent objective reality in reporting.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	249	78.7%	3.82	0.83
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	249	10.8%	2.16	0.95
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	250	22.0%	2.61	1.01
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	250	12.8%	2.28	1.04
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	250	46.8%	3.18	1.04

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

There was more disagreement among Dutch journalists regarding their perceptions of ethical orientations (see Table 5). Most of the journalists agreed on the importance of professional standards: less than half indicated that these standards should be leading regardless of circumstances, and 69.8% indicated this is the case unless extraordinary circumstances require setting them aside. When it comes to the justification of controversial reporting methods accepting money from sources and hiding promotional content were most strongly rejected (see Table 6). On the other hand, most journalists found it acceptable to use confidential documents without authorization and to use hidden recording devices.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	253	42.7%	3.09	1.13
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	252	69.8%	3.72	0.95
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	252	45.6%	3.12	1.14
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	253	18.6%	2.47	1.03

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	253	0.4%	66.8%
Using hidden recording devices	253	5.5%	82.6%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	253	21.3%	70.8%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	251	3.2%	69.7%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	253	1.2%	43.1%
Paying people for confidential information	253	0.4%	33.6%
Accepting money from sources	253	0.0%	4.7%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	253	2.4%	34.8%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	249	0.8%	7.6%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	251	0.0%	21.1%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Dutch journalists reported a great deal of freedom in their work, both in selecting news stories and in deciding which aspect of a story should be emphasized (see Table 7). Moreover, media freedom was rated very high in the Netherlands.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	250	89.2%	4.15	0.63
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	253	90.5%	4.13	0.61
Media freedom in the Netherlands	251	92.0%	4.16	0.66

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Dutch journalists found journalism ethics and peers on the news staff to fare highest among the internal factors influencing news production (see Table 8). Among the external factors, most journalists considered access to information and their relationship with news sources to be extremely or very influential.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	243	61.3%	3.73	0.89
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	244	55.7%	3.63	0.93
The business managers of the news organization	226	28.3%	2.72	1.21
The owners of the news organization	214	10.7%	1.93	1.10
Editorial policy	238	55.0%	3.54	0.94
Advertising considerations	229	4.8%	1.59	0.93
Profit expectations	222	8.6%	1.69	1.07
Audience research and data	239	33.9%	3.05	1.13
Availability of news-gathering resources	232	50.9%	3.35	1.12
Time limits	245	51.4%	3.55	0.99
Journalism ethics	249	68.3%	3.79	0.97
Self-censorship	240	6.3%	1.98	0.90
Personal values and beliefs	250	43.2%	3.29	1.06
Colleagues in other media	246	10.2%	2.45	0.93
Friends, acquaintances and family	247	8.5%	2.26	0.91
Feedback from the audience	247	19.0%	2.89	0.83
Competing news organizations	244	15.6%	2.70	0.92
Media laws and regulation	233	18.5%	2.65	1.01
Access to information	245	53.5%	3.50	1.03
Government censorship	236	10.6%	1.89	1.15
Government officials	240	16.3%	2.15	1.23
Politicians	240	12.1%	2.06	1.15
Business people	240	3.8%	1.70	0.88
Public relations	238	9.7%	2.03	1.04
Relationships with news sources	240	32.1%	2.92	1.10
Police	242	8.7%	2.02	1.08
Issue advocacy groups	243	4.1%	2.02	0.97
Scientists or health experts	243	16.9%	2.34	1.17
Religious groups and institutions	238	0.8%	1.44	0.68
Organized crime and criminal groups	234	1.7%	1.35	0.70
Terrorist groups	228	0.0%	1.15	0.42

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

New Zealand

JAMES HOLLINGS

INTRODUCTION

New Zealand is a democratic country in the Westminster (British) tradition and still retains a stable democracy and free press. In 2023, a conservative coalition took power, which has sought to promote a more conservative economic and social agenda, though much milder than that in the US, reflecting NZ's generally social-democratic orientation. The government cancelled a proposal to merge state radio and TV broadcasters, has enacted cuts to public broadcasting funding, and resisted calls from media organisations to intervene to force tech giants to pay for news, as Australia and Canada has done. In the past two years there has been a significant shrinkage in news organisations and jobs, with cuts at the state TV broadcaster, TVNZ, the closure of the only private TV broadcaster, TV3, and several rounds of cuts at the two major private news organisations, NZME and Stuff. There have been repeated calls for Government action to support journalism, and in the recent 2025 Government budget allocated $6.4m over four years to support court and council reporting, but also cut $18 million (7% of its budget) from the main state radio broadcaster, RNZ, saying it needed to do more to address declining public trust levels. There is also a proposal to streamline regulation of state broadcasting funding. Journalists are concerned about a developing trend to marginalize them through increasing use of direct communication with audiences through social media, and reduced access to government officials, as well increasing online abuse of journalists. There has also been no progress in reforming New Zealand's conservative approach to press freedom; its high use of court news suppression orders, numerous exemptions to freedom of information laws, strict libel laws, privacy legislation, and court censorship.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

Our sample of NZ journalists was predominantly female (58%) to 41.3% male, reflecting the gradual feminization of the profession here over the past 20 years. The mean age was 45.9 years (SD = 14.8) and the Median age 47 years. Over half (52.6%) have a Bachelor's Degree or equivalent, almost a quarter have a Master's degree (23.9%), and a few (1.9%) have a PhD. Only 8.3% have only high school education or less, while 13.8 percent have done some university study without completing a degree. Most (81.8%) have had formal training in journalism, with most of those (57.2%) getting it at university or college and the rest (40.2%) through apprenticeship or cadetship, while many (70.2%) have also done short-term courses.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

In terms of the background of their main employers, a smallish number of journalists (13.1%) worked for native online media, 40.1% for newspapers, 11.9% for radio outlets, and 16.8% for television, respectively. Very few journalists worked for magazine companies (7.3%) or news agencies (5.5%). Finally, 5.2% of the interviewed journalists claimed not to have a main employer. Regarding area of coverage, 78.4% of the journalists reported they mainly worked for (trans)national media, while 21.6% primarily catered to local or regional media.

On average, New Zealand journalists had 18.7 years of professional experience (SD = 13.8; Median = 15.5). A majority of them (65.3%) worked on a variety of beats or subject areas rather than on a single one. Less than half of New Zealand journalists (43.6%) were members of professional associations.

About three quarters of the interviewed journalists in New Zealand had a full-time contract (75.4% permanently and 4.7% temporarily employed). About a tenth (10.9%) worked as freelancers or were self-employed, and an additional 2.7% had other forms of employment. Finally, 5.3% had a part-time permanent contract, and 0.9% had a part-time temporary contract. While most have steady employment, most (87.3%) rely on other income besides journalism.

The average working week of New Zealand ful-time journalists was 43.3 hours (SD = 8.3; Median = 42). Relatedly, 58.3% of the respondents reported they felt stressed out at work often or very often during the previous six months; only 7.1% had never or rarely felt that way.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Verbal attacks such as demeaning or hateful speech or public discrediting of journalists' work or questioning of journalists' morality were the most common safety threats experienced by New Zealand journalists (see Table 1). A small but disturbing number (5%) had experienced threats or intimidation, and sexual harassment (1.8%). Experiences of more dangerous threats, such as legal actions or physical threats, were rare. These experiences also impact the concerns expressed by New Zealand journalists; almost a quarter (22.8%) were concerned about losing their job, and a broad majority were concerned about their physical or emotional well-being (see Table 2). Moreover, over half of the surveyed journalists feared that those who harm journalists would go unpunished.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	338	13.9%	21.9%	34.0%	21.3%	8.9%
Public discrediting of your work	337	8.9%	18.4%	33.2%	23.1%	16.3%
Surveillance	336	1.2%	3.0%	11.9%	17.0%	67.0%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	338	1.2%	3.3%	7.4%	16.3%	71.9%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	338	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	4.1%	95.6%
Legal actions against you because of your work	338	0.3%	1.2%	9.8%	26.6%	62.1%
Stalking	338	0.3%	0.3%	7.4%	14.8%	77.2%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	338	5.0%	7.4%	23.7%	25.4%	38.5%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	338	1.8%	3.0%	5.3%	10.4%	79.6%
Other physical attacks	338	0.3%	0.6%	1.8%	11.8%	85.5%
Coercion	338	0.3%	0.6%	7.4%	14.8%	76.9%
Questioning of your personal morality	338	12.1%	15.1%	30.5%	22.2%	20.1%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	338	0.3%	1.5%	3.0%	5.9%	89.3%
Others disseminating your personal information	338	1.2%	2.4%	8.0%	17.5%	71.0%
Workplace bullying	338	2.4%	5.9%	14.2%	21.9%	55.6%
Abductions	338	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	99.1%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	338	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	2.4%	97.3%
Intimidation that targets family	338	0.0%	0.6%	3.6%	6.5%	89.3%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	338	22.8%	2.52	1.17
Concerned about physical well-being	338	24.3%	2.46	1.18
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	338	46.7%	3.15	1.22
Concerned that those who harm journalists in New Zealand go unpunished	337	51.9%	3.37	1.04

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

The roles that New Zealand journalists believe most important are to shine a light on social problems, and be a watchdog, and educate the public. Almost three quarters of all journalists rated these three roles extremely important. Most, but not much more than half, believe in the neutral/observer role, while less than half (42.7%) are activists, and less than a fifth believe they should set the political agenda. Commercial or accommodator roles are not much valued, with only a quarter believing their job is to attract the largest audience. Few (13.6%) are collaborators (believing they should support government policy). Overall, New Zealand journalists are clearly altruistic; they believe strongly in the social justice, educational and accountability functions of journalism, but are less concerned with entertaining or supporting agendas.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	337	58.2%	3.53	1.15
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	338	72.8%	3.92	1.26
Shine a light on society's problems	337	73.9%	3.97	1.28
Motivate people to participate in politics	338	26.3%	2.76	1.20
Provide analysis of current affairs	338	54.4%	3.42	1.25
Let people express their views	338	56.8%	3.42	1.25
Provide information people need to form political opinion	338	53.3%	3.38	1.28
Advocate for social change	337	42.7%	3.16	1.32
Influence public opinion	337	24.3%	2.70	1.18
Set the political agenda	337	18.1%	2.28	1.26
Promote peace and tolerance	337	40.7%	3.12	1.30
Educate the audience	337	76.0%	3.99	1.20
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	336	51.5%	3.43	1.23
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	337	58.2%	3.55	1.27
Support national development	335	28.7%	2.80	1.24
Support government policy	337	13.6%	1.88	1.30
Convey a positive image of political leaders	338	13.0%	1.68	1.32
Provide entertainment and relaxation	338	28.4%	2.88	1.21
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	338	26.0%	2.81	1.12
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	337	21.7%	2.45	1.24
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	338	39.9%	3.14	1.19
Support efforts to protect public health	337	47.8%	3.29	1.29
Counteract disinformation	338	74.9%	3.95	1.32

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

New Zealand journalists tend to support the idea that journalists should interpret events, and most still believe it is possible to represent objective reality, and that they can withhold their personal beliefs when reporting, and that they should let the facts speak for themselves. The one thing they nearly all agree on is that they should call out untruths. Thus, while there is reasonable support for the notion that subjectivity plays a role in their journalism, they tend strongly towards objectivist goals in their work.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	337	79.5%	3.91	0.79
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	337	38.0%	3.06	0.99
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	338	32.2%	2.84	1.04
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	338	17.8%	2.46	1.00
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	338	68.6%	3.68	0.90
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	338	35.8%	2.98	1.04
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	338	18.3%	2.53	0.97
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	338	79.6%	3.94	0.76
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	338	41.7%	3.25	1.02
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	336	31.0%	2.95	1.05
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	338	92.9%	4.40	0.67

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

New Zealand journalists generally adhere to Anglo-American/ north European norms in their ethical orientation, with most support for an exceptionist orientation, but still strong support for the absolutist and situationist tendencies. They are certainly less inclined to the subjectivist approach, believing in general, that journalists should try to follow general ethical guidelines, while still preserving a strong internal compass that allows them to go their own way when they feel strongly. They believe that some controversial practices are quite acceptable, particularly those that support the watchdog role (such as using confidential documents), and particularly when used against powerful people or organisations, but they're less convinced they are justified against ordinary people. They have a strong distaste for practices that provide commercial benefit to individual journalists.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	338	47.3%	3.25	1.12
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	338	66.0%	3.65	1.04
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	337	48.1%	3.17	1.19
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	338	20.7%	2.46	1.10

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	328	0.6%	34.8%
Using hidden recording devices	320	2.2%	73.4%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	313	12.1%	74.4%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	317	2.5%	77%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	327	1.2%	52.9%
Paying people for confidential information	325	0.3%	18.8%
Accepting money from sources	330	0.6%	0.6%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	315	0.3%	37.8%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	327	0.3%	5.8%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	326	0.3%	34.4%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

New Zealand journalists believe they enjoy a great deal of freedom in selecting stories and deciding what should be emphasized. A strong majority believe their country enjoys a great deal of media freedom, despite the reasonably strict legal climate in New Zealand and a degree of censorship that would raise concerns in other democratic countries.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	338	74.6%	3.87	0.79
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	338	74.6%	3.95	0.81
Media freedom in New Zealand	334	80.5%	3.85	0.63

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

New Zealand journalists are most influenced by professional organizational factors, such as their journalism ethics, and editorial guidance and policy. They are remarkably free of business influence on their journalism, rating their owners' influence as very low. Nor do they feel influenced by external pressures such as friends, politicians, religion or audience feedback. They do, however, feel resource constraints (such as time limits) keenly. Overall, New Zealand journalists believe strongly in their personal freedom to adhere to their conceptions of journalistic values. A particular concern is increasing difficulty in accessing information, due to increasing corporate and government restrictions on information access.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	312	39.4%	3.21	1.03
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	313	64.5%	3.76	0.94
The business managers of the news organization	284	12.3%	1.98	1.12
The owners of the news organization	279	12.2%	1.96	1.16
Editorial policy	319	49.8%	3.31	1.19
Advertising considerations	267	5.6%	1.65	0.94
Profit expectations	269	10.4%	1.84	1.09
Audience research and data	305	25.2%	2.68	1.16
Availability of news-gathering resources	323	52.0%	3.41	1.08
Time limits	328	60.1%	3.63	1.03
Journalism ethics	329	70.2%	3.84	1.17
Self-censorship	294	25.9%	2.59	1.24
Personal values and beliefs	325	39.7%	3.12	1.19
Colleagues in other media	331	14.2%	2.45	1.05
Friends, acquaintances and family	325	7.4%	2.16	0.94
Feedback from the audience	334	14.1%	2.56	0.94
Competing news organizations	330	13.9%	2.46	1.00
Media laws and regulation	327	56.0%	3.48	1.16
Access to information	327	68.2%	3.84	0.89
Government censorship	277	18.4%	2.00	1.33
Government officials	304	13.8%	2.03	1.21
Politicians	304	10.5%	1.95	1.13
Business people	311	10.3%	1.94	1.07
Public relations	320	13.1%	2.09	1.12
Relationships with news sources	325	40.6%	3.17	1.17
Police	278	11.9%	2.00	1.12
Issue advocacy groups	303	12.5%	2.25	1.04
Scientists or health experts	315	34.6%	3.01	1.14
Religious groups and institutions	273	2.9%	1.48	0.81

Question: "Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist." (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

North Macedonia

IGOR MICEVSKI

INTRODUCTION

The 2024 general elections brought about a stable majority in Parliament, led by the center-right VMRO-DPMNE. The party came to power for the first time since 2016 when it lost power amid popular disapproval of its authoritarian method of governance and the systemic corruption it generated. Media capture and radical clientelisation of journalists across media sectors were defining features of the pre-2016 political arrangement. The last electoral outcome therefore – while crystalizing the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia's failure to achieve lasting political consolidation, brought back uncertainties concerning the future path of the government returnee. This concern is raised especially because the country's disrupted efforts to start EU accession negotiations have traditionally had visible consequences on its political, economic and social stability.

Important in the 1990s, the press sector has rapidly declined in recent years, since it failed to successfully migrate to digital platforms. The landscape has been overtaken by the numerous, fragmented and click-oriented digital media service providers defined by poor-quality output. Traditionally in the past three decades audiovisual media have had the largest audience and market share, and they still have the strongest standing which makes them more prone to politico-corporate influences.

These characteristics of the media system have clear consequences for the journalistic cultures in North Macedonia. The fall of print media has brought about a decline in analytical and investigative journalism; the fragmentation of audiovisual and digital native media has dispersed the well-trained journalists across many different media organizations disabling the construction of newsroom dynamics that would foster higher professional standards; the disorderly media landscape has favored sensationalist, short and poorly written journalistic genres; the overall socio-political concentration in the capital city has devastated local journalism and so on. Within this landscape, the few existing not-for-profit digital native media are an exception as they manage to construct and maintain newsroom environments where higher professional standards and knowledge may thrive.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The survey sample is representative for gender and distribution across media sectors. To determine the size and structure of the population – given the absence of prior estimates – we conducted a census across all media sectors. North Macedonia has 580 individuals working in current affair journalism – a sample size of 232 was derived corresponding to a ± 5% margin of error). The sample reflects the gender structure – 50% of the respondents were women. The average age of the respondents is 44.0 years (Median = 43; SD = 11.1). Majority of the population is well educated: 75.4% hold a bachelor's degree, and 12.1% hold a master's degree. Notably, 9.1% of the population consists of university dropouts. Most of this population had begun working as journalists during their studies and did not complete formal higher education while remaining in the profession. In addition – 81% have completed formal training in journalism and 64.9% have gone through professional apprenticeship.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

An important feature of the journalism landscape is the high concentration of journalists working in the capital city – 81,5% are located in the capital and 18,5% in smaller towns or rural areas. Furthermore, 82.3% of journalists are employed by national level media. The fragmented and financially unsustainable local and regional media sectors employ only 17.2% of the population. These figures indicate viability and quality issues for local journalism and problems related to the resilience of local public spheres.

Public Service Media employ 27.6% of the population while private media a total of 61.2%. The not-for-profit media sector is slowly but steadily rising – though still greatly dependent on foreign donors it employs 6.9% of journalists. For 52.2% of journalists, the main employer is a television organization. Radio stations are primary employers for 14,7% while 22.4% primarily work for digital native media.

The total income of most journalists comes solely from journalism related work – 86.5%. The rest, apart from journalism, earn additional income from education – 20.7%, corporate communication – 17.2%, advertising 13.8%, or work for government agencies – 6.9%. The poor income level is the primary problem for most journalists – 22.3% earn a salary on the level or just above the national average (651-812 euros); an additional 69.9% earn a salary up to the national average (this figure includes the 28.8% earning a salary close to the minimum wage and 2.6% earning a salary up to the minimum wage).

On average Macedonian journalists have 19.1 years of professional experience (Median = 19; SD = 9.9); 75.0% have signed a full-time permanent contract and 15.5% have a fulltime fixed term contract. On average, journalists work 40.2 hours per week (Median = 40; SD = 6.0; for those in full-time employment); 60.8% have reported that they often or very often experience work related stress – feeling of work-related stress is more prevalent in women (69.8%) then in men (60.8%). 72.0% are members of a Union.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

The country's journalists, as seen on Table 1, most often experience demeaning or hateful speech directed at them (15.1%), public discrediting of their professional work (10.3%) and workplace bullying (6.0%). "State sponsored threats" – widely present until 2017 – are at present less pronounced. Still 2.6% of the respondents have reported that they believe to have been subject to surveillance. As suggested in Table 2, journalists' perception that offences against colleagues are not sanctioned is overwhelming (92.2% believe so). The figures suggest that 11.2% of journalists are worried of losing their job. It is however noteworthy that there is a statistically significant relationship between this concern and the type of media these journalists come from – journalists working for the Public Service Media are less likely to fear job loss (4.7%) than journalists working for private media (14.7%).

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	232	5.2%	9.9%	24.1%	16.8%	44.0%
Public discrediting of your work	232	3.0%	7.3%	16.8%	17.7%	55.2%
Surveillance	232	0.4%	2.2%	7.0%	7.0%	83.3%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	232	1.3%	1.3%	3.4%	9.5%	84.5%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	232	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.4%	99.1%
Legal actions against you because of your work	232	0.4%	1.3%	2.6%	3.9%	91.8%
Stalking	232	0.0%	0.4%	4.7%	3.4%	91.4%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	232	0.9%	3.4%	12.5%	9.9%	73.3%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	232	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	1.3%	97.8%
Other physical attacks	232	0.0%	0.0%	2.2%	3.9%	94.0%
Coercion	232	0.0%	0.4%	1.3%	2.6%	95.7%
Questioning of your personal morality	232	1.3%	2.6%	9.1%	11.2%	75.9%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	232	0.4%	0.4%	3.0%	5.2%	90.9%
Others disseminating your personal information	232	0.4%	0.9%	3.0%	3.9%	91.8%
Workplace bullying	232	1.7%	4.3%	6.9%	9.9%	77.2%
Abductions	232	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	99.1%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	232	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	0.9%	97.8%
Intimidation that targets family	232	0.0%	0.4%	3.9%	4.7%	90.9%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	232	11.2%	1.84	1.17
Concerned about physical well-being	232	26.7%	2.42	1.43
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	232	34.6%	2.75	1.46
Concerned that those who harm journalists in N. Macedonia go unpunished	232	92.2%	4.58	0.77

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

The data presented in Table 3 suggests that both the traditionally acclaimed and the interventionist, activism-oriented roles of journalism are seen as preferred professional characteristics. The country's polarized media landscape, as elsewhere in the world, is manifested in junctures of political crises. It is therefore noteworthy that at these junctures there is a more pronounced incongruence between the expressed preferred roles by respondents and the actual media content.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	231	91.8%	4.68	0.65
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	232	93.1%	4.68	0.67
Shine a light on society's problems	232	97.8%	4.86	0.41
Motivate people to participate in politics	215	42.3%	3.15	1.40
Provide analysis of current affairs	232	95.7%	4.75	0.60
Let people express their views	232	90.1%	4.59	0.73
Provide information people need to form political opinion	213	65.7%	3.85	1.38
Advocate for social change	231	91.8%	4.67	0.67
Influence public opinion	232	91.4%	4.57	0.78
Set the political agenda	203	18.7%	2.16	1.35
Promote peace and tolerance	232	97.0%	4.84	0.48
Educate the audience	232	99.6%	4.85	0.42
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	232	92.7%	4.61	0.67
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	232	94.8%	4.70	0.72
Support national development	232	93.1%	4.67	0.64
Support government policy	200	5.5%	1.74	1.01
Convey a positive image of political leaders	206	6.3%	1.47	0.96
Provide entertainment and relaxation	230	51.3%	3.46	1.38
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	231	50.4%	3.43	1.45
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	230	58.7%	3.57	1.38
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	230	53.5%	3.60	1.30
Support efforts to protect public health	232	96.1%	4.69	0.62
Counteract disinformation	232	97.4%	4.88	0.52
Discuss future implications of current events	231	89.2%	4.53	0.77

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

There is an overwhelming consensus among journalists on the importance of abiding by professional standards, regardless of situational circumstances (98.7%). However, a little over two thirds of the respondents (71.1%) also agree that what is ethical is rooted in circumstance-specific weighing professional standards (Table 4). The high level of agreement on both statements has analytical merit as it recognizes that many of the established professional standards incorporate exceptions to the rigidly understood rule – e.g. Articles 4, 5, 7 & 9 of the Code of Ethics of Macedonia contain circumstance-specific exceptions weighed against what is considered to be "the public interest". Balancing against the public interest requires personal judgement on what constitutes that interest. Yet less trust is placed in approaches to ethical reporting that relies on personal judgement or situational assessments. This may indicate difference in the definition of what is personal judgment between respondents – many may attach "subjective arbitrariness" to the concept of judgement. Table 5 indicates that when judging on concrete situations, there is less agreement among journalists on what is the limit of ethical behavior.

TABLE 4. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	232	98.7%	4.85	0.39
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	232	71.1%	3.83	1.39
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	232	55.6%	3.36	1.61
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	232	40.9%	2.84	1.73

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 5 JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	232	0.4%	33.8%
Using hidden recording devices	230	0.9%	50.9%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	227	3.1%	50.2%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	228	2.2%	44.3%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	229	1.3%	18.3%
Paying people for confidential information	227	1.8%	19.8%
Accepting money from sources	226	0%	4.4%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	227	0%	10.6%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	229	3.5%	15.3%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	230	0%	7.4%

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Journalists' general perception concerning the overall media freedom is far grimmer than the reported personal professional freedom. Relatively high percentage of respondents have reported that they have great deal or complete freedom in selecting their own news stories (68,5%) and in choosing the aspects of the stories that should be emphasized (75.4%), while relatively low percentage have claimed that there is a great deal or complete overall media freedom in the country. Men have reported greater freedom in story selection (77.6%) than women (59.5%). Men also have reported more freedom in deciding which aspect of the story to emphasize (81.0%) than women (69.8%).

TABLE 6. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	232	68.5%	4.05	0.93
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	232	75.4%	4.10	0.93
Media freedom in North Macedonia	232	18.1%	2.81	0.89

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

In the hierarchy of factors influencing content production – most respondents indicated journalism ethics (87,4%), level of freedom in accessing information (80.4%) and media laws and regulations (71.2%), followed by the availability of news-gathering resources (69.9%) and personal values (68.1%), to be most influential enabling/constraining factors. Colleagues in other media, the police, religious groups and organized crime groups are at the bottom of the list. North Macedonia's socio-political arrangement is intertwined with a web of complex informalities fostering clientelistic ties, which is why the fact that the influence of self-censorship (15.8%), government officials (12.4%), and the politicians (12.3%) is in the lower area of the list.

TABLE 7. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	231	34.2%	2.94	1.25
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	228	50.9%	3.48	1.17
The business managers of the news organization	230	41.3%	3.01	1.38
The owners of the news organization	227	32.2%	2.68	1.43
Editorial policy	229	51.5%	3.42	1.30
Advertising considerations	224	24.1%	2.37	1.48
Profit expectations	225	24.9%	2.28	1.37
Audience research and data	229	54.1%	3.50	1.42
Availability of news-gathering resources	229	69.9%	3.96	1.12
Time limits	228	58.3%	3.62	1.29
Journalism ethics	222	87.4%	4.47	0.88
Self-censorship	222	15.8%	2.22	1.24
Personal values and beliefs	229	68.1%	3.92	1.26
Colleagues in other media	229	9.6%	2.07	1.07
Friends, acquaintances and family	229	15.3%	2.26	1.25
Feedback from the audience	229	52.0%	3.48	1.33
Competing news organizations	229	31.9%	2.77	1.41
Media laws and regulation	229	71.2%	4.07	1.10
Access to information	224	80.4%	4.26	0.93
Government censorship	210	17.6%	2.17	1.35
Government officials	210	12.4%	1.86	1.23
Politicians	211	12.3%	1.87	1.23
Business people	211	13.3%	1.84	1.24
Public relations	212	13.2%	1.98	1.22
Relationships with news sources	216	28.2%	2.57	1.39
Police	211	9.0%	1.72	1.08
Issue advocacy groups	215	12.1%	2.02	1.19
Scientists or health experts	215	32.1%	2.57	1.46
Religious groups and institutions	212	7.5%	1.68	1.08
Organized crime and criminal groups	209	6.7%	1.50	1.02

Question: "Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist." (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Northern Cyprus

SANEM ŞAHIN & VASVI ÇIFTCIOĞLU

INTRODUCTION

Northern Cyprus, officially the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), is a self-declared state recognised only by Türkiye. While it has a democratic political system, growing interference from Türkiye has raised concerns, particularly regarding press freedom and electoral integrity. Economically, the country is heavily reliant on Türkiye due to international isolation and currency instability. Socially, it grapples with issues like corruption, minority discrimination, and unresolved tensions with the Republic of Cyprus.

The media landscape comprises a mix of state-owned and independent outlets. Despite legal protections for press freedom, journalists often face political and legal pressures from authorities and political figures. Independent media remain active and diverse, but there are growing concerns about censorship and self-censorship.

The journalistic environment in Northern Cyprus is marked by increasing political and economic pressures that undermine media independence. Many media owners are businesspeople with various financial interests, often using their news outlets for their business interests. Diversity and pluralism are threatened by direct interference in editorial work as well as by sanctions, lawsuits and criminal proceedings used against media and journalists who criticise authorities and powerful groups.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The media sample in Northern Cyprus comprised 45% female and 55% male journalists. The average age of the journalists is 44.8 years (SD = 11.3; Median = 43). The survey participants are highly educated: 66.1% hold a Bachelor's degree, 19.8% have a Master's degree or equivalent, and 2.5% possess a Doctorate. Additionally, 79.5% of respondents received formal education or professional training. Of these, 76.1% obtained their education or training at a university or college, 48.4% through apprenticeships or cadetships, and 62% via short-term courses.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

The results show that the majority of participants are affiliated with established media organisations. Most respondents are employed in private or commercial media, while a smaller but still significant segment works in state-run media. Only a very small number reported having no main medium affiliation.

Respondents work across a broad range of media platforms. The largest group is employed by internet-native outlets, followed closely by those working for newspapers, news agencies and television. Radio, magazines, and non-traditional roles are less frequently represented. Employment patterns show that the vast majority are on full-time permanent contracts, indicating a high level of job stability. Full-time fixed-term contracts and part-time roles are less common. A small number of respondents are freelance or self-employed. Financially, most respondents earn their entire income from journalism, reflecting a strong professional commitment to the field. A smaller group supplements their earnings through additional sources.

The data also reflect a typical hierarchical structure within media organisations. Most respondents do not hold any management role, which shows the workforce is largely composed of non-managerial staff. A smaller, yet notable segment occupies middle management positions. The smallest group consists of individuals in top management roles.

On average, journalists have 19.9 years of experience (SD = 10.0; Median = 20), indicating a well-established group. They typically work an average of 45 hours per week, though workloads can differ depending on roles and organisations. There is a strong culture of unionisation as an overwhelming majority of respondents – 96.7% – are members of a union, while only 3.3% are not.

Workplace stress is a common experience. Only a small fraction (5.7%) said they rarely or never feel stressed.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

In Northern Cyprus, the most commonly experienced threat among journalists is demeaning or hateful speech, which many report encountering at least occasionally (see Table 1). Stalking is also a significant issue, with a notable portion of journalists affected. Public discrediting of journalistic work is another frequent concern, often accompanied by other forms of threats and intimidation.

The most widespread concern, however, is the lack of accountability (see Table 2). Most journalists believe that those who harm members of the press in the country often go unpunished. In addition to these external threats, journalists express deep concern for their emotional and mental well-being, with more than half reporting this as a serious issue.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	122	7.4%	11.5%	28.7%	24.6%	27.9%
Public discrediting of your work	122	3.3%	3.3%	20.5%	23.0%	50.0%
Surveillance	122	3.3%	6.6%	12.3%	13.1%	64.8%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	121	2.5%	2.5%	10.7%	14.9%	69.4%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	122	0.8%	0.8%	2.5%	10.7%	85.2%
Legal actions against you because of your work	122	3.3%	5.7%	6.6%	16.4%	68.0%
Stalking	117	6.0%	17.9%	11.1%	17.1%	47.9%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	119	4.2%	9.2%	16.0%	21.0%	49.6%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	121	0.8%	0.8%	1.7%	5.8%	90.9%
Other physical attacks	120	0.8%	0.8%	3.3%	14.2%	80.8%
Coercion	122	1.6%	4.1%	8.2%	25.4%	60.7%
Questioning of your personal morality	121	0.8%	6.6%	9.9%	14.9%	67.8%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	121	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%	8.3%	89.3%
Others disseminating your personal information	121	0.8%	1.7%	2.5%	10.7%	84.3%
Workplace bullying	119	3.4%	0.0%	10.1%	10.9%	75.6%
Abductions	121	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	2.5%	96.7%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	122	0.8%	0.8%	3.3%	9.8%	85.2%
Intimidation that targets family	120	0.8%	0.0%	5.8%	10.8%	82.5%

Question: “In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?”

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	122	23.8%	2.49	1.23
Concerned about physical well-being	122	47.5%	3.22	1.18
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	122	54.9%	3.39	1.22
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Northern Cyprus go unpunished	122	72.1%	3.83	1.10

Question: “Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.” (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

In Northern Cyprus, the most highly valued journalistic roles include shining a light on society’s problems, being a detached observer, and providing a platform for public expression. Monitoring those in power and promoting peace and tolerance were also important functions in the context of this divided island. In contrast, roles like supporting government policy, portraying political leaders positively, and encouraging political participation were considered far less important.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	122	96.7%	4.66	0.60
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	122	95.1%	4.42	0.74
Shine a light on society’s problems	122	99.2%	4.81	0.41
Motivate people to participate in politics	122	30.3%	2.66	1.34
Provide analysis of current affairs	122	95.1%	4.47	0.65
Let people express their views	122	95.9%	4.61	0.57
Provide information people need to form political opinion	121	72.7%	3.82	1.23
Advocate for social change	119	78.2%	4.01	0.97
Influence public opinion	120	80.8%	4.05	1.00
Set the political agenda	120	70.0%	3.85	1.10
Promote peace and tolerance	122	94.3%	4.61	0.69
Educate the audience	121	75.2%	3.86	1.07
Point toward possible solutions to society’s problems	122	91.0%	4.34	0.90
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	117	47.0%	3.19	1.36
Support national development	122	94.3%	4.43	0.83
Support government policy	113	14.2%	1.92	1.29
Convey a positive image of political leaders	116	15.5%	2.04	1.27
Provide entertainment and relaxation	119	46.2%	3.22	1.15
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	116	46.6%	3.10	1.39
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	117	59.8%	3.44	1.16
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	118	34.7%	2.93	1.24
Support efforts to protect public health	122	94.3%	4.44	0.69
Counteract disinformation	121	93.4%	4.52	0.71
Discuss future implications of current events	121	92.6%	4.30	0.69

Question: “Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

The results show complex and sometimes contradictory beliefs among journalists. A strong majority believe that journalists should alert audiences when a source is untruthful and that it is possible to represent objective reality. They also agree that journalists should be part of the communities they report on. The results suggest journalists balance truth and objectivity with interpretation, intuition and ethical responsibility.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	122	50.8%	3.29	0.98
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	121	26.4%	2.69	1.06
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	122	39.3%	3.02	1.01
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	121	46.3%	3.19	1.10
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	122	82.8%	4.13	0.86
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	121	47.9%	3.22	1.04
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	122	58.2%	3.54	1.02
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	122	63.1%	3.58	1.04
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	122	87.7%	4.19	0.79
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	121	63.6%	3.65	1.17
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	122	88.5%	4.28	0.77

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

The results indicate that a significant majority of journalists believe ethical decisions in journalism should always be guided by professional standards, regardless of the situation or personal judgment. A smaller portion supports the idea that there may be extraordinary circumstances that justify deviating from them. Techniques such as claiming to be someone else, using hidden recording devices, or accessing confidential documents without authorisation are more widely accepted as controversial reporting methods, with most methods being considered justifiable only on occasion rather than always.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	121	93.4%	4.36	0.66
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	122	38.5%	2.85	1.19
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	122	30.3%	2.64	1.21
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	119	22.7%	2.45	1.20

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	121	8.3%	53.7%
Using hidden recording devices	122	4.9%	46.7%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	119	6.7%	47.9%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	121	6.6%	35.5%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	120	0.8%	15.0%
Paying people for confidential information	121	2.5%	24.8%
Accepting money from sources	119	1.7%	2.5%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	120	2.5%	11.7%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	119	5.9%	23.5%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	121	1.7%	5.0%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

A majority of journalists report the greatest sense of autonomy in deciding which aspects of a story to emphasise, followed by their freedom to choose which news stories to cover. However, their perceptions of overall media freedom in Northern Cyprus are lower, suggesting they distinguish between individual editorial control and broader media environment.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	122	59.0%	3.61	1.22
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	122	72.1%	3.80	1.17
Media freedom in Northern Cyprus	120	40.0%	2.93	1.28

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

The results show that journalists perceive journalism ethics, editorial policy, and ownership as the most powerful influences. Business-related influences, such as business managers and profits, suggest commercial pressures also play a role. Internal newsroom dynamics, including peers and supervisors, are strong influences. External pressures such as government censorship, politicians and public relations are perceived as less influential.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	121	64.5%	3.79	1.23
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	120	67.5%	3.90	1.05
The business managers of the news organization	113	69.0%	3.88	1.14
The owners of the news organization	114	70.2%	3.94	1.23
Editorial policy	119	75.6%	3.97	1.18
Advertising considerations	104	51.9%	3.40	1.45
Profit expectations	98	55.1%	3.31	1.45
Audience research and data	106	53.8%	3.37	1.36
Availability of news-gathering resources	116	60.3%	3.66	1.14
Time limits	113	60.2%	3.58	1.14
Journalism ethics	116	81.0%	4.12	1.08
Self-censorship	107	60.7%	3.61	1.28
Personal values and beliefs	104	50.0%	3.37	1.37
Colleagues in other media	112	17.0%	2.54	1.09
Friends, acquaintances and family	105	13.3%	2.46	1.06
Feedback from the audience	113	46.9%	3.37	1.15
Competing news organizations	109	24.8%	2.87	1.18
Media laws and regulation	115	57.4%	3.55	1.13
Access to information	118	69.5%	3.86	1.05
Government censorship	114	49.1%	3.25	1.45
Government officials	114	46.5%	3.16	1.44
Politicians	115	42.6%	3.05	1.41
Business people	111	36.9%	2.82	1.35
Public relations	111	32.4%	2.91	1.30
Relationships with news sources	114	54.4%	3.48	1.21
Police	105	31.4%	2.98	1.21
Issue advocacy groups	102	34.3%	2.99	1.14
Scientists or health experts	107	37.4%	3.05	1.14
Religious groups and institutions	81	12.3%	2.17	1.12
Military	88	36.4%	2.93	1.34
Organized crime and criminal groups	79	19.0%	2.16	1.36
Terrorist groups	66	15.2%	1.92	1.33

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Norway

Jan Fredrik Hovden & Steen Steensen

INTRODUCTION

Norway is a stable parliamentary democracy characterized by robust institutions, high levels of political participation, and a strong welfare state. Economically, it is one of the wealthiest countries in the world, largely due to its significant natural resources, especially oil and gas. Socially, Norway maintains high standards of living, emphasizing equality, social welfare, and education, underpinned by an inclusive social model.

Journalistically, Norway has a tradition rooted in the principles of press freedom, independence, and responsibility, sustained by strong ethical guidelines, self-regulatory mechanisms and a relatively generous press subsidy system designed to maintain a diversity of news media outlets in all parts of the country. Currently, journalism in Norway faces transformations driven by digitalization, changing media consumption patterns, and economic challenges to traditional media outlets. While overall trust in journalism remains high, there is increased concern about misinformation, media pluralism, and the influence of global tech platforms. Norwegian editorial media continue to innovate, experimenting with new digital formats and funding models to maintain their relevance and societal role.

The data for this study were collected between April and June 2021, when all members of the national journalists' and editors' associations were asked to participate in the survey.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

Our Norwegian sample shows a near gender balance: 46.7% of journalists identified as female, 52.9% as male, and 0.3% identified as other. The average age of respondents was 48.6 years (SD = 11.3, Median = 50). In terms of education, 65.6% had a Bachelor's degree, 23.0% had a Master's degree, 0.6% had a Doctorate. An additional 2.9% reported some university studies. A majority of Norwegian journalists (59.3%) reported having formal education or professional training in journalism. Among them, 79.1% received their training at a university or college. Additionally, 46.6% reported having professional training through journalism apprenticeships or cadetships, and 50.2% via short-term courses.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

Two-thirds of Norwegian journalists (66.7%) reported no management role, while 17.2% were in middle management and 16.1% in top management. Regarding their workplace reach, 34.7% worked primarily for local or regional media, and 65.3% for national or transnational outlets. The media ownership landscape was dominated by private/commercial media (60.2%), followed by public service media (26.2%), and smaller shares for state-run (1.2%), community (3.7%), and non-profit media (8.6%).

The majority held full-time permanent contracts (81.7%), while others had part-time permanent (4.4%), full-time temporary (4.8%), part-time temporary (0.9%), freelance or self-employment (7.9%), or other employment forms (0.3%). Additional jobs outside journalism were reported by 13.6% of the respondents.

Norwegian journalists had on average 21.4 years of professional experience (SD = 11.1, Median = 22), and worked an average of 38.8 hours per week (SD = 7.7, Median = 38; for those in full-time employment). All respondents were members of a union (100.0%), and 33.8% worked on specific beats or subject areas.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Verbal attacks such as demeaning or hateful speech or public discrediting of journalists' work fared among the most common safety threats experienced by Norwegian journalists (see Table 1). More severe threats like sexual assault/harassment, or physical attacks, are very rarely experienced by Norwegian journalists. However, quite a few Norwegian journalists experience having their morality questioned. Despite being less frequent, experiences of other threats and workplace bullying are worrying, as is the fact that almost one in four Norwegian journalists are concerned about their emotional and mental wellbeing (see Table 2). Quite a few Norwegian journalists are also concerned that those who harm journalists can do so without being punished.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech	982	1.5%	5.1%	25.8%	37.2%	30.4%
Public discrediting of your work	980	1.4%	3.2%	22.4%	35.3%	37.7%
Surveillance	947	0.1%	0.3%	4.2%	12.8%	82.6%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	967	0.2%	0.2%	2.5%	9.9%	87.2%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	977	0.1%	0.0%	0.4%	1.2%	98.3%
Legal actions against you because of your work	978	0.1%	0.0%	1.2%	5.0%	93.7%
Stalking	978	0.1%	0.0%	1.2%	4.0%	94.7%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	980	0.3%	0.5%	5.9%	18.8%	74.5%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	976	0.1%	0.2%	1.3%	7.5%	90.9%
Other physical attacks	976	0.1%	0.0%	0.6%	2.7%	96.6%
Coercion	973	0.2%	0.2%	1.3%	6.4%	91.9%
Questioning of your personal morality	977	1.1%	2.5%	11.4%	27.4%	57.6%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	971	0.1%	0.0%	0.9%	3.4%	95.6%
Others disseminating your personal information	973	0.1%	0.3%	2.4%	9.7%	87.6%
Workplace bullying	974	0.5%	0.6%	5.4%	14.0%	79.5%
Intimidation that targets family	973	0.1%	0.2%	0.6%	2.9%	96.2%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	979	12.5%	1.69	1.18
Concerned about physical well-being	980	15.9%	1.96	1.18
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	979	22.4%	2.20	1.27
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Norway go unpunished	979	27.3%	2.59	1.31

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Norwegian journalists display a diverse set of role orientations, yet informational roles like educating the audience, shining a light on society's problems, and countering disinformation are the most common (see Table 3). Monitorial role orientations are also common, while interventionist and agenda-setting roles are less relevant, even if around one in three Norwegian journalists support such roles. Collaborative roles, like supporting the government and promoting a positive image of politicians are rarely found among Norwegian journalists.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	982	69.0%	3.81	0.91
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	982	53.2%	3.38	1.23
Shine a light on society's problems	982	81.0%	4.19	0.97
Motivate people to participate in politics	982	24.0%	2.71	1.12
Provide analysis of current affairs	982	52.0%	3.42	1.12
Let people express their views	982	72.3%	3.88	1.01
Provide information people need to form political opinion	982	59.6%	3.51	1.24
Advocate for social change	982	30.2%	2.92	1.15
Influence public opinion	982	17.0%	2.45	1.07
Set the political agenda	982	32.1%	2.85	1.19
Promote peace and tolerance	982	37.1%	3.07	1.15
Educate the audience	982	91.9%	4.46	0.75
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	982	55.9%	3.50	1.07
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	982	52.4%	3.45	1.11
Support national development	982	22.8%	2.68	1.06
Support government policy	982	0.6%	1.32	0.58
Convey a positive image of political leaders	982	1.8%	1.51	0.73
Provide entertainment and relaxation	982	27.7%	2.83	1.15
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	982	25.7%	2.83	1.06
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	982	20.7%	2.67	1.05
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	982	67.4%	3.82	0.96
Support efforts to protect public health	982	22.3%	2.64	1.09
Counteract disinformation	982	80.2%	4.17	1.02
Discuss future implications of current events	982	62.9%	3.64	1.07

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

While very few Norwegian journalists believe things are either true or false, a majority believe that objectivity in reporting is possible (see Table 4). Yet, an even stronger majority believe facts cannot be made sense of without interpretation, and almost half of Norwegian journalists strongly agree that personal believes influence their reporting.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	912	76.0%	3.94	0.92
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	911	29.7%	2.73	1.13
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	911	47.5%	3.17	1.05
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	909	11.7%	2.06	1.03
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	913	56.5%	3.37	1.15

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Norwegian journalists strongly agreed on the importance of professional standards rather than subjective and situational considerations for ethical reporting (see Table 5). When it comes to the justification of controversial reporting methods, however, accepting money from sources and producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature was strongly rejected (see Table 7). Almost all Norwegian journalists found it acceptable to use hidden recording devices and use confidential documents without authorization, while three out of four found it acceptable to occasionally claim to be someone else.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	980	84.3%	4.19	0.89
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	976	61.9%	3.56	1.17
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	978	36.6%	2.80	1.26
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	978	28.0%	2.48	1.27

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	980	0.4%	74.6%
Using hidden recording devices	981	1.2%	94.7%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	980	6.2%	85.2%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	980	4.0%	80.5%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	977	0.3%	49.6%
Paying people for confidential information	978	0.5%	24.2%
Accepting money from sources	981	0.1%	0.7%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	981	0.4%	16.0%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	981	0.1%	3.1%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	979	0.0%	23.7%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Journalists in Norway experience relatively high degrees of professional freedom and autonomy when deciding what to report on (see Table 7). They also rate media freedom in Norway highly, as almost 9 out of 10 journalists find a great deal or complete media freedom in the country.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	982	71.1%	3.75	0.77
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	982	76.6%	3.86	0.68
Media freedom in Norway	982	87.1%	3.99	0.56

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Norwegian journalists found that factors associated with the professional field of journalism, like journalism ethics, editorial supervision and policy are the ones that influence their work the most (see Table 8). However, external factors like access to information and media laws and regulations were also highly influential. Despite it not being considered among the most influential factors, it is worrisome that one in four journalists find self-censorship very or extremely influential in how they perform their work.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	982	43.9%	3.36	0.76
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	982	59.9%	3.64	0.71
The business managers of the news organization	982	4.0%	1.72	0.85
The owners of the news organization	982	6.7%	1.75	0.98
Editorial policy	982	56.8%	3.54	0.86
Advertising considerations	982	4.0%	1.51	0.83
Profit expectations	982	17.2%	2.34	1.17
Audience research and data	982	16.5%	2.54	1.04
Availability of news-gathering resources	982	19.7%	2.69	1.00
Time limits	982	51.0%	3.50	0.93
Journalism ethics	982	78.8%	4.00	0.79
Self-censorship	982	24.5%	2.72	1.07
Personal values and beliefs	982	36.2%	3.11	1.00
Colleagues in other media	982	4.1%	2.19	0.82
Friends, acquaintances and family	982	2.8%	2.10	0.80
Feedback from the audience	982	15.8%	2.81	0.77
Competing news organizations	982	13.4%	2.68	0.85
Media laws and regulation	982	78.3%	4.00	0.82
Access to information	982	66.4%	3.74	0.75
Government censorship	982	2.6%	1.56	0.79
Government officials	982	4.7%	1.95	0.90
Politicians	982	3.8%	1.98	0.90
Business people	982	2.3%	1.73	0.80
Public relations	982	2.7%	1.82	0.82
Relationships with news sources	982	28.5%	2.91	1.00
Police	982	4.0%	1.83	0.91
Issue advocacy groups	982	3.9%	2.07	0.85
Scientists or health experts	982	12.4%	2.44	0.97

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Pakistan

Azmat Rasul, Naila Rafique & Shafique Sharif

INTRODUCTION

Since its independence in 1947, Pakistan has been facing several political, economic, and social crises, which have kept the country searching for stability and identity. Through its checkered history, the country has experienced diverse forms of governance, including parliamentary, presidential, military, and hybrid regimes. In 2025, Pakistani government officials take pride in admitting the hybrid nature of the political arrangement, with widespread allegations of electoral rigging in the February 2024 general elections by one of the largest parties in the country. Despite a decade-long political instability and polarization in the country, four different governments have been in agreement on curtailing media freedom in Pakistan since 2013.

For the last few decades, Pakistan has been one of the most dangerous countries for journalists. According to the 2024 World Press Freedom Index, Pakistan is ranked 152 out of 180 countries, highlighting a steady regression of press freedom. Violence against journalists is a trend in ascendance, with eight journalists killed in different parts of the country in 2024. Despite challenges, Pakistani journalists have traditionally resisted government controls and tried to develop a vibrant media landscape. However, government-controlled media regulators and the federal and provincial government ministries introduce vaguely worded laws, such as the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, to suppress dissent and jeopardize journalistic integrity.

Our team launched the fieldwork for this study in the middle of 2023 after the country had survived the COVID pandemic, but it was passing through a turbulent political phase. Former prime minister Imran Khan's popular political party was posing a serious threat to the interim government responsible for reviving a fragile economy amid rising political turmoil, coupled with mounting terrorism in the Western provinces. Consequently, the data collection process for this study slowed down. The country returned to relative economic and political normalcy by the end of 2024, which galvanized our fieldwork in all corners of the country.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The selected sample of Pakistani journalists reflected a relatively representative gender distribution, with 28% female and 72% male journalists. Pakistan claims a youth bulge with 64% of the population between 29 and 35 years old, which is evident in our data showing that the average age of the journalists is 35.7 years (SD = 11.1; Median = 35). The education levels are impressive, as 32% of the sample has a bachelor's degree, 57% a master's degree, and 6.1% hold a doctorate. Additionally, 68% of the sample had received formal education or professional training in journalism from different institutions. Most journalists (81.9%) obtained this training from a university or college, 70% received training through apprenticeship/cadetship, and 73% were trained through short-term courses.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

As print media journalism is declining in Pakistan since the emergence of private TV channels in the early 2000s, our data indicate that 31% journalists worked for organizations in the print media industry, including newspapers (17%), magazines (3%), and news agencies (11%). In our sample, 42% of journalists worked for organizations with a background in TV, and 3% did radio journalism. As the rising trends indicate, 15% of the sampled journalists worked for native online media, 3.2% belonged to the telecommunication sector, and 7% said they had no main employer. Regarding the reach of primary medium, 75% of the journalists reported working for (trans)national media, whereas 25.0% primarily catered to local or regional media.

Private/commercial media employed an overwhelming majority of journalists (86%), while 5% worked for public service media owned by the state. As many as 6% of journalists worked for community media, and 3% found their career in nonprofit media. Regarding the current working situation, 57% of journalists had permanent full-time contracts, and 74% were members of a journalists' union. Most journalists (71%) worked on multiple beats instead of a specific area/beat. With 10.9 years of professional experience (SD = 8.2; Median = 10), 77% sampled journalists were not involved in a managerial role. A minority (3%) worked in top management, while 20% of journalists had middle management roles due to ownership structures in private and public sector media organizations.

Regarding the current working and employment situation, 8% of journalists had part-time permanent contracts, 9% had full-time fixed-term contracts, 3% had part-time fixed-term contracts, and 16% worked as freelancers or self-employed. As stated earlier, most journalists served the profession on full-time permanent contracts. The descriptive results indicate that almost half of the journalistic community lacks job security, and 36% of journalists reported resorting to other earning means, including additional jobs, especially in academia. Pakistani journalists worked for 44.6 hours a week (SD = 14.7; Median = 48; for those in full-time employment), and approximately a quarter of sampled journalists reported feeling stressed often (14%) and very often (8%).

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

We received split answers in response to questions related to safety and work-related concerns. Although a majority of journalists dismissed a widely held notion that journalists are under threat in Pakistan, concerns about journalists' safety and job security are real. The Pakistani journalism landscape is challenging for journalists, with a restrictive environment coinciding with physical violence and threats from various government departments and terrorist groups. Pakistani journalists faced a variety of verbal attacks, including demeaning or hateful speech, public discrediting of journalists' work, surveillance, hacking, or blocking, questioning of personal morality, and workplace bullying. These were among the most prevalent safety threats (see Table 1). A few journalists reported receiving threats very often, but their concerns cannot be ignored. The most worrying threats are physical violence, intimidation that targets family, and abductions by government agencies or criminals/terrorists. This precarious situation raises concerns among journalists regarding their job security as well. Several non-governmental organizations have denounced this threatening environment and urged the government to boost journalists' safety. Nevertheless, the climate for journalists is dangerous despite these measures, which indicates a larger trend of a diminishing media space in the face of continuous political and social unrest.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	363	4.7%	11.8%	37.2%	19.8%	26.4%
Public discrediting of your work	363	5.8%	12.4%	28.9%	26.2%	26.7%
Surveillance	363	5.8%	13.5%	33.3%	24.2%	23.1%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	363	4.4%	11.0%	23.7%	24.5%	36.4%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	363	4.7%	3.9%	13.5%	13.8%	64.2%
Legal actions against you because of your work	363	3.0%	6.6%	16.0%	14.9%	59.5%
Stalking	363	5.5%	7.4%	22.9%	23.1%	41.0%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	363	5.8%	6.9%	25.1%	20.9%	41.3%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	363	3.3%	5.8%	14.9%	10.2%	65.8%
Other physical attacks	363	2.2%	6.6%	17.4%	19.3%	54.5%
Coercion	363	2.8%	6.6%	16.0%	20.9%	53.7%
Questioning of your personal morality	363	6.1%	12.1%	21.2%	23.4%	37.2%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	363	4.7%	10.7%	24.5%	24.0%	36.1%
Others disseminating your personal information	363	4.4%	8.5%	22.0%	29.2%	35.8%
Workplace bullying	363	6.1%	9.9%	25.9%	18.7%	39.4%
Abductions	363	3.0%	6.6%	12.4%	16.0%	62.0%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	363	1.9%	5.5%	13.2%	17.9%	61.4%
Intimidation that targets family	363	2.5%	5.0%	14.6%	16.8%	61.2%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Pakistani journalists seemed inclined to play a responsible role in society by shedding light on societal problems (72%), promoting peace and tolerance (82%), educating the audience (87%), supporting national development (75%), and supporting efforts to protect public health (79%). The focus of Pakistani journalists is on promoting societal development, while political roles are given less consideration. Overall, the sampled journalists preferred working under the social responsibility framework.

TABLE 2. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	362	53.6%	3.33	1.17
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	361	51.2%	3.33	1.18
Shine a light on society's problems	361	71.7%	3.89	1.07
Motivate people to participate in politics	360	33.1%	2.78	1.32
Provide analysis of current affairs	361	63.2%	3.59	1.09
Let people express their views	360	70.6%	3.85	1.09
Provide information people need to form political opinion	363	58.4%	3.46	1.15
Advocate for social change	363	66.4%	3.76	1.13
Influence public opinion	363	57.3%	3.48	1.15
Set the political agenda	363	29.2%	2.61	1.31
Promote peace and tolerance	363	81.8%	4.25	1.01
Educate the audience	363	87.3%	4.34	0.90
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	363	70.8%	3.83	1.05
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	363	59.0%	3.62	1.15
Support national development	362	74.9%	4.01	1.00
Support government policy	363	34.2%	2.89	1.26
Convey a positive image of political leaders	363	27.3%	2.54	1.31
Provide entertainment and relaxation	363	48.5%	3.34	1.15
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	363	66.4%	3.76	1.10
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	363	53.7%	3.47	1.14
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	363	48.8%	3.25	1.17
Support efforts to protect public health	363	78.8%	4.04	1.01
Counteract disinformation	362	71.3%	3.90	1.19
Discuss future implications of current events	363	62.5%	3.69	1.02

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Pakistani journalists agreed that journalists should focus on facts and make their standpoint transparent. Approximately half of the sampled journalists strongly agreed with different items asking them about facts, truth, objectivity, and accuracy (see Table 3).

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	363	52.6%	3.35	1.14
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	363	49.6%	3.33	1.12
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	363	38.6%	3.07	1.10
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	363	44.1%	3.25	1.10
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	363	52.6%	3.42	0.96
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	363	40.2%	3.13	1.08
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	362	49.2%	3.24	1.05
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	362	60.5%	3.58	1.05
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	363	52.9%	3.44	1.11
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	362	64.6%	3.69	1.06
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	363	60.6%	3.63	1.03

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

A significant majority of the journalists strongly agreed with the notion that professional standards should run supreme. Pakistani journalists consider personal judgment less important than professional standards, supporting the idea of objectivity (see Table 4). They, however, strongly agree that specific situations or extraordinary circumstances might allow them to disregard professional standards. Besides, they also believe in certain less ethical practices, such as using hidden recording devices (56%) and paying for confidential information (51%), if warranted by circumstances (see Table 5). According to Pakistani journalists, controversial reporting methods could be justified on occasions.

TABLE 4. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	363	67.8%	3.76	1.19
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	362	54.1%	3.41	1.01
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	363	50.7%	3.27	1.08
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	363	32.5%	2.76	1.17

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 5. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	362	12.2%	45.0%
Using hidden recording devices	363	11.0%	56.2%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	363	14.0%	41.3%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	363	11.3%	38.8%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	363	11.6%	30.6%
Paying people for confidential information	363	11.8%	51.2%
Accepting money from sources	363	9.6%	24.0%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	363	11.0%	33.3%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	363	11.0%	43.3%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	363	11.0%	26.2%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Almost a quarter of Pakistani journalists believed they had complete freedom in selecting and emphasizing an aspect of a story they were working on. Only 16% believed there is press freedom in Pakistan, which is in accordance with the data reported on previous pages. Journalists deal with several internal and external pressures, and they have to navigate a precarious balance while working on their assignments.

TABLE 6. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	361	25.5%	2.86	1.11
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	363	24.8%	2.88	1.08
Media freedom in Pakistan	360	16.1%	2.48	1.12

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Pakistani journalists considered higher editors, news organization owners, editorial policy, journalism ethics, media laws and regulations, access to information, and government censorship as the key factors that determine news production (see Table 8). These internal and external factors/pressures expressively influence the work environment in the newsroom. The military is another institution that exercises significant control/influence over news production and reporting.

TABLE 7. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	352	27.0%	2.69	1.21
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	349	40.1%	3.08	1.22
The business managers of the news organization	348	38.2%	3.02	1.28
The owners of the news organization	344	44.5%	3.22	1.35
Editorial policy	352	41.5%	3.13	1.27
Advertising considerations	348	35.3%	2.98	1.26
Profit expectations	342	32.5%	2.81	1.34
Audience research and data	348	36.2%	3.01	1.21
Availability of news-gathering resources	352	38.4%	3.05	1.24
Time limits	349	40.4%	3.13	1.21
Journalism ethics	359	47.6%	3.31	1.21
Self-censorship	353	39.1%	3.11	1.24
Personal values and beliefs	351	43.3%	3.10	1.35
Colleagues in other media	351	21.9%	2.52	1.17
Friends, acquaintances and family	351	22.5%	2.48	1.19
Feedback from the audience	356	31.7%	2.89	1.21
Competing news organizations	352	27.3%	2.86	1.12
Media laws and regulation	357	41.5%	3.16	1.19
Access to information	354	43.2%	3.19	1.20
Government censorship	349	41.8%	3.20	1.24
Government officials	347	38.0%	3.05	1.23
Politicians	350	36.0%	2.93	1.29
Business people	343	30.0%	2.80	1.23
Public relations	350	29.1%	2.78	1.20
Relationships with news sources	346	30.9%	2.88	1.19
Police	348	22.1%	2.59	1.22
Issue advocacy groups	347	21.6%	2.48	1.18
Scientists or health experts	350	20.3%	2.84	1.20
Religious groups and institutions	347	30.6%	3.23	1.38
Military	338	45.5%	2.94	1.28
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	337	33.7%	2.70	1.25
Organized crime and criminal groups	338	26.4%	2.72	1.35
Terrorist groups	340	29.6%	2.41	1.22

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Paraguay

Mariana De Maio

INTRODUCTION

As of 2025, Paraguay is a relatively stable democracy in South America, politically dominated by the conservative Colorado Party, which has ruled almost uninterrupted for decades. The country's economy has seen modest growth driven by agriculture (especially soybeans and cattle) and hydroelectric power exports, but corruption and stark social inequalities remain persistent problems. Paraguay is a bilingual nation (Spanish and Guaraní) with significant rural communities and a large informal sector, factors that contribute to its unique social fabric and ongoing development challenges.

Paraguayan journalism has historically contended with authoritarian constraints and elite control. During General Alfredo Stroessner's 35-year dictatorship (1954–1989), press freedom was severely curtailed through censorship and intimidation. The return to democracy after 1989 opened up the media landscape, leading to a mix of privately-owned national outlets and smaller community media. However, ownership of major newspapers, TV, and radio networks remains highly concentrated among a few influential families allied with political and business elites. Journalists often face subtle pressures, legal harassment, and occasional censorship attempts. Despite these challenges, Paraguay's journalists have a resilient tradition of investigative reporting and public-interest journalism, contributing to a more pluralistic, if still uneven, media environment.

The fieldwork for this study was conducted between early 2022 and early 2023, as Paraguay was gearing up for general elections in April 2023. The political climate during data collection was relatively calm, with President Mario Abdo Benítez finishing his term and an expected transfer of power (ultimately won by Colorado candidate Santiago Peña). This period also marked Paraguay's gradual recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic's health and economic impacts. However, journalists remained vigilant about press freedom issues. Notably, early 2023 saw the killing of a radio reporter in a border region (who was one of the journalists we surveyed) – an incident that underscored ongoing concerns about violence against the press and the impunity often enjoyed by those who harm journalists.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

Our sample of Paraguayan journalists is markedly male-dominated: only 30.7% of respondents were women. On average, they were 40.8 years old (SD = 12.3; Median = 39). They are generally well educated – about two-thirds (65.6%) held a bachelor's degree or equivalent, 12.1% had a master's degree, and less than 1% a doctorate. Moreover, 84.9% of the journalists reported having received formal education or professional training in journalism. This training was most commonly obtained through short-term courses (89.1%) and journalism apprenticeships or cadetships (80.8%), and to a somewhat lesser extent via university or college programs in journalism (64.6%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

In Paraguay, radio is the most common medium employing journalists: 39.2% of our respondents worked for a radio station. Other sizable segments worked for newspapers (16.8%) or television broadcasters (14.1%), and about one in ten journalists (9.4%) were with native digital-only news outlets. Very few worked for magazines (0.7%) or telecommunications media (1.9%), and a small number were employed by news agencies (3.1%). Notably, 1.8% of journalists in the sample reported having no single main employer (e.g., those fully freelance or working across multiple outlets). Regarding the reach of their work, a slight majority (55.3%) of Paraguayan journalists catered primarily to national or transnational audiences, while 44.7% worked for local or regional media. Transnational media are prevalent in the border cities, which also have the greatest number of media outlets.

On average, Paraguayan journalists had 15.9 years of professional experience in the field (SD = 10.0; Median = 14). The vast majority (about 84%) reported working across various beats or subject areas rather than specializing in a single beat; only 15.9% said they focused on one specific beat. Union membership is relatively moderate: nearly half of the journalists (47.6%) were members of a professional journalists' association or union.

Just over half of the journalists (54.0%) held a full-time position (with 49.0% on a permanent full-time contract and 5.0% on a full-time fixed-term contract). Part-time employment was less common, accounting for 19.0% of journalists (14.0% on part-time permanent and 5.0% on part-time temporary contracts). A significant segment – almost one-quarter (23.2%) – worked as freelancers or were self-employed, and the remaining 3.8% had other forms of employment. These results point to some precarity in employment conditions, a point underscored by the fact that 55.5% of respondents reported having an additional job outside journalism to supplement their income. On the whole, the typical work week for a Paraguayan full-time journalist was 44.1 hours (SD = 12.5; Median = 45), and more than four in ten journalists said they felt stressed at work "often" or "very often" (42.6% in total, compared to 27.4% who "never" or "rarely" felt work stress).

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Verbal attacks are among the most common threats experienced by Paraguayan journalists. In particular, demeaning or hateful speech directed at them and public discrediting of their work were frequently reported forms of harassment (a large majority of journalists have faced these at least occasionally – see Table 1). By contrast, more dangerous forms of threat – while less frequently encountered – are still a cause for concern. Only small minorities of journalists reported direct experiences with legal actions, physical assaults, or other severe threats (such as arrests, property damage, or abductions), but even isolated incidents of these kinds contribute to an atmosphere of intimidation.

These experiences are reflected in journalists' work-related concerns (Table 2). About one in three Paraguayan journalists (31.5%) agreed that they worry about losing their job in the next year, and a similar proportion (35.9%) said they are concerned for their own physical safety while working. A much larger share – nearly two-thirds (64.6%) – expressed concern about their emotional and mental well-being on the job. Most strikingly, an overwhelming 96.9% of respondents agreed that those who harm journalists in Paraguay often go unpunished. In other words, virtually all Paraguayan journalists fear that impunity for attacks on the press is the norm, a perception that speaks to the environment of insecurity and lack of justice surrounding media workers.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	680	5.7%	11.6%	31.9%	24.7%	26.0%
Public discrediting of your work	679	2.5%	9.4%	20.9%	25.6%	41.5%
Surveillance	674	1.0%	4.5%	10.4%	15.4%	68.7%
Hacking or blocking of your accounts or websites	680	1.2%	2.1%	8.2%	15.0%	73.5%
Arrest, detention or imprisonment	680	0.1%	0.1%	1.0%	2.5%	96.2%
Legal actions against you because of your work	680	0.4%	0.6%	6.0%	9.1%	83.8%
Stalking	680	0.4%	2.5%	7.2%	18.7%	71.2%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	680	1.0%	3.7%	15.7%	25.9%	53.7%
Sexual harassment or sexual assault	680	0.4%	1.8%	3.8%	8.1%	85.9%
Other physical attacks	677	0.6%	0.3%	5.0%	12.9%	81.2%
Coercion	680	0.3%	1.8%	4.6%	13.4%	80.0%
Attempts to publicly question your personal morality	680	2.1%	6.0%	18.8%	26.5%	46.6%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	680	1.0%	2.4%	9.1%	15.1%	72.4%
Others disseminating your personal information	675	1.0%	3.6%	9.6%	19.4%	66.4%
Workplace bullying	680	1.2%	2.4%	6.3%	11.3%	78.8%
Abduction/kidnapping	680	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	1.3%	98.4%
Office raids, newsroom searches, or damage to work equipment	680	0.0%	0.4%	1.8%	3.5%	94.3%
Intimidation targeting your family	680	0.0%	0.3%	3.5%	10.4%	85.7%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	677	31.5%	2.73	1.25
Concerned about physical well-being (safety) in doing my job	680	35.9%	2.75	1.28
Concerned about emotional/mental well-being in doing my job	680	64.6%	3.52	1.20
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Paraguay go unpunished	680	96.9%	4.56	0.67

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Paraguayan journalists show very strong support for many of the normative roles of the press (see Table 3). In particular, interventionist and civic-oriented roles – such as shining a light on social problems, educating the public, promoting peace and tolerance, speaking on behalf of the marginalized, and counteracting disinformation – were rated as extremely important by an overwhelming majority of journalists. Traditional watchdog and information-providing roles also remain highly valued: for example, 87.8% said providing analysis of current affairs is very important, 79.7% emphasized the importance of monitoring those in power, and 75.3% considered it very important to act as a detached observer.

By contrast, politically assertive or partisan roles were among the least endorsed. Few journalists placed great importance on "setting the political agenda" (41.5% very/extremely important) or "conveying a positive image of political leaders" (46.8%). Even so, it is notable that even these less popular roles were deemed at least "very important" by sizable minorities of Paraguayan journalists. Meanwhile, roles related to attracting audiences – such as providing entertainment – received mixed support (54.7% rated providing entertainment as very important). Overall, the data suggest that Paraguayan journalists see themselves as active facilitators of social change and public knowledge, without entirely abandoning the classic watchdog stance, and they generally downplay overtly propagandistic functions.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/ Extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	680	75.3%	3.87	0.92
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	680	79.7%	4.13	0.90
Shine a light on society's problems	680	88.8%	4.38	0.76
Motivate people to participate in politics	680	56.6%	3.52	1.11
Provide analysis of current affairs	680	87.8%	4.26	0.75
Let people express their views	680	86.3%	4.24	0.77
Provide information people need to form political opinion	680	83.2%	4.18	0.93
Advocate for social change	680	82.1%	4.16	0.86
Influence public opinion	679	65.8%	3.77	0.94
Set the political agenda	680	41.5%	3.19	1.07
Promote peace and tolerance	680	89.3%	4.37	0.79
Educate the audience	680	89.0%	4.34	0.77
Point to possible solutions for society's problems	679	83.5%	4.16	0.75
Speak on behalf of the marginalized or voiceless	678	88.6%	4.34	0.80
Support national development	680	85.0%	4.21	0.86
Support government policy	680	61.9%	3.64	1.01
Convey a positive image of political leaders	677	46.8%	3.24	1.18
Provide entertainment and relaxation	680	54.7%	3.49	1.07
Provide news that attracts the largest audience	679	78.8%	4.04	0.90
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	679	66.7%	3.79	0.94
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	680	64.1%	3.74	0.92
Support efforts to protect public health	679	86.9%	4.25	0.89
Counteract disinformation	678	91.6%	4.49	0.73
Discuss future implications of current events	680	86.2%	4.19	0.75

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

There is some diversity of opinion among Paraguayan journalists regarding how truth and facts should be handled, but clear points of consensus emerge (see Table 4). An overwhelming majority (91.7%) agree that interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts – indicating that most journalists reject a purely "just the facts" approach in favor of providing context and analysis. At the same time, a similarly large majority believes in classic objectivity norms: for instance, 75.4% agree that it *is* possible to report objective reality, and 77.1% say journalists should let the facts "speak for themselves." There is near-unanimous support for transparency and verification: over 90% of journalists think reporters should make their own standpoint transparent in their work, and 91.4% agree that journalists must alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful.

By contrast, relatively few Paraguayan journalists subscribe to a strongly relativistic or subjectivist view of truth. Only 20.3% agreed that "truth is inevitably shaped by those in power," suggesting most reject the notion that truth is purely a construct of power. Likewise, less than half (46.3%) believe it is impossible for journalists to keep their personal beliefs out of their reporting – meaning a slight majority feel that neutrality or separating personal bias is achievable. There is also broad skepticism of purely intuitive newsgathering: most journalists do not endorse statements like "journalists should trust their instincts to decide what's true" (only 40.1% agree) or "journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be from the start" (33.0% agree). In sum, Paraguayan journalists tend to espouse a pragmatic epistemology that values factual truth and objectivity, while also recognizing the importance of interpretation and transparency in the journalistic process.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	678	91.7%	4.21	0.79
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	680	20.3%	2.50	1.04
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	680	46.3%	3.20	1.07
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	680	59.3%	3.50	1.10
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	679	75.4%	3.75	0.98
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	679	40.1%	3.06	1.11
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	679	33.0%	2.88	1.05
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	678	77.1%	3.88	0.84
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	680	62.4%	3.56	1.02
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	679	90.3%	4.17	0.75
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	678	91.4%	4.24	0.74

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Paraguayan journalists strongly emphasize adherence to professional ethical standards over subjective or situational ethics (see Table 5). An overwhelming 89.4% agree that what is ethical "should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment." Conversely, there is little support for more relativistic ethical stances: only 30.7% say ethics should depend on each specific situation, and 41.3% think that ethical decisions should be left to personal judgment. Even the compromise view – following professional standards *unless* extraordinary circumstances require otherwise – is only endorsed by 43.4%. These figures indicate a clear normative consensus that journalists in Paraguay should follow established professional codes of ethics strictly in all cases.

When it comes to justifying controversial reporting methods, Paraguayan journalists draw sharp lines in the sand (Table 6). Certain unethical practices are almost universally rejected: for example, accepting money from sources is deemed unacceptable under any circumstances by the vast majority (only 4.3% would justify it even occasionally), and only 8.7% would ever approve publishing information that is not yet verified. Similarly, practices like impersonating someone else to gather information or using personal data of private individuals without consent are largely disapproved of by journalists. By contrast, some aggressive reporting methods are considered acceptable by many reporters if used judiciously. A majority (62.8%) say that using hidden recording devices can be justified at least on occasion, and nearly half would justify using confidential documents without authorization (especially when those documents involve powerful institutions or figures). Paying for confidential information and accepting freebies from sources fall in a gray area but lean toward disapproval (only about one-quarter to one-third would condone these under some circumstances). Overall, the ethical stance of Paraguayan journalists is characterized by a strict devotion to professional standards and a cautious approach to ethically problematic newsgathering tactics.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	679	89.4%	4.25	0.81
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	677	43.4%	3.07	1.15
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	680	30.7%	2.64	1.20
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	680	41.3%	2.91	1.25

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	679	2.5%	20.3%
Using hidden recording devices	677	5.9%	56.9%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	679	5.6%	37.0%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	679	6.3%	39.6%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	677	2.4%	18.8%
Paying people for confidential information	680	2.4%	30.9%
Accepting money from sources	679	1.2%	3.1%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	679	4.4%	24.4%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	676	3.4%	22.8%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	680	1.6%	7.1%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Paraguayan journalists generally report having a high degree of editorial autonomy in their own work (see Table 7). Approximately three-quarters of respondents said they have "a great deal" or "complete" freedom in selecting which news stories they work on (78.2%) and in deciding which aspects of a story to emphasize (74.4%). These figures suggest that, at the individual level within newsrooms, journalists feel they can exercise substantial professional judgment over content decisions.

However, their assessment of the broader media freedom in Paraguay is much less favorable. Only 18.4% of Paraguayan journalists believed that the country's media enjoy a great deal or complete freedom. The average perceived media freedom score was only 2.75 on a 5-point scale (where 5 indicates complete freedom), suggesting that most journalists see the press climate as one of "some" to "little" freedom nationally. In other words, despite feeling relatively free in their personal newsroom roles, Paraguayan journalists tend to view the overall media environment as constrained – likely due to political pressures, ownership concentration, legal limitations, or other external factors that affect press freedom in the country.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories you work on	680	78.2%	4.14	0.92
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story to emphasize	679	74.4%	4.03	0.95
Media freedom in Paraguay	673	18.4%	2.75	0.88

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

When asked about various potential influences on their work, Paraguayan journalists identified some key internal factors that shape news decisions, as well as a few significant external pressures (see Table 8). Professional norms and resources within the newsroom emerged as top influences. Notably, more than three-quarters (76.1%) of journalists said that "journalism ethics" – i.e. their professional codes and standards – have a very or extremely strong influence on how they produce news. This was the highest-rated influence overall, highlighting the importance of internalized ethics in guiding journalistic work. Other important internal influences included the availability of news-gathering resources (e.g. time, staff, equipment), which 55.2% rated as highly influential, and personal values and beliefs of the journalist (55.7% extremely/very influential). Traditional hierarchy and organizational factors also play a role: about half felt that editorial supervisors or higher editors (49.0%), the owners of the news organization (47.0%), and editorial policy (46.0%) were very influential on their work. Business pressures like advertising considerations (42.0%) and profit expectations (38.5%) were somewhat less frequently seen as strong influences, but still notable. Interestingly, feedback from the audience was deemed very influential by 42.9% of journalists, suggesting that audience reactions and engagement data do factor into editorial decisions for a significant segment of the press.

By comparison, external influences outside the newsroom were generally viewed as less potent, with a few exceptions. The factor that stood out most was access to information: nearly two-thirds (62.8%) of Paraguayan journalists said that the ease or difficulty of accessing information (e.g. getting official data, documents, or sources to talk) is an extremely or very influential determinant of their reporting. This highlights that transparency and availability of information in society significantly affect journalism. Other external forces – such as direct government censorship, political pressure from officials, or even media laws and regulations – were rated "very influential" by only a minority of journalists (for example, only 19.6% saw government censorship as highly influential, and 31.1% said the same of media laws). Likewise, interference or influence from actors like politicians, businesses, police, or interest groups did not score very high in general. One noteworthy external factor is the relationship with news sources: about 42.6% of journalists said that pressures stemming from sources (e.g. conditions set by sources, access provided or withheld, etc.) were very influential on their reporting. Meanwhile, competition in the media market was not seen as a major driver – only 18.9% rated competing news organizations as a very influential factor. And despite the security issues the country faces, only a small fraction regarded organized crime or criminal groups as a strong direct influence on their day-to-day editorial choices (around 15% perceived it as very influential). Overall, Paraguayan journalists seem to feel that their editorial judgment is shaped more by internal newsroom dynamics and professional principles (and the practical availability of information) than by overt external interferences, although the broader context of limited media freedom certainly looms in the background.

TABLE 8. PERCEIVED INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	632	34.0%	2.94	1.10
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	616	49.0%	3.25	1.24
The business managers of the news organization	636	39.0%	2.96	1.34
The owners of the news organization	634	47.0%	3.16	1.45
Editorial policy	630	46.0%	3.12	1.32
Advertising considerations	662	42.0%	3.01	1.30
Profit expectations	663	38.5%	2.96	1.22
Audience research and data	669	47.8%	3.24	1.19
Availability of news-gathering resources	674	55.2%	3.40	1.09
Time limits	675	40.0%	3.05	1.13
Journalism ethics	678	76.1%	3.94	0.99
Self-censorship	670	21.6%	2.54	1.16
Personal values and beliefs	675	55.7%	3.41	1.27
Colleagues in other media	674	12.8%	2.19	1.06
Friends, acquaintances and family	674	13.4%	2.20	1.09
Feedback from the audience	674	42.9%	3.21	1.05
Competing news organizations	671	18.9%	2.46	1.12
Media laws and regulation	671	31.1%	2.72	1.21
Access to information	674	62.8%	3.56	1.10
Government censorship	670	19.6%	2.30	1.21
Government officials	670	13.0%	2.09	1.11
Politicians	669	20.2%	2.30	1.22
Business people	669	26.6%	2.53	1.29
Public relations	673	26.6%	2.67	1.18
Relationships with news sources	676	42.6%	3.04	1.21
Police	676	16.3%	2.18	1.16
Issue advocacy groups	675	8.7%	1.95	1.02
Scientists or health experts	680	0.0%	1.35	0.48
Religious groups and institutions	675	13.2%	2.07	1.13
Military	675	6.1%	1.65	0.92
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	674	6.8%	1.58	0.93
Organized crime and criminal groups	671	15.2%	1.97	1.24
Terrorist groups	669	9.4%	1.67	1.09

Question: "Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist." (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Peru

Lilian Kanashiro, Jessica Retis & Lourdes Cueva Chacón

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, Peru has faced significant political and social instability. Although only two presidents were expected to serve during this period, the country has seen six different individuals assume the presidency due to a combination of resignations, impeachments, and contested electoral outcomes. According to several recent public opinion polls, the current president, Dina Boluarte, and Congress hold record-low single-digit approval ratings because of the disillusionment with political leadership and a significant increase in homicide rates, largely driven by extortion linked to organized crime.

Peruvian journalism faces a complex and increasingly challenging landscape. Political polarization, coupled with the widespread dissemination of misinformation and fake news, has significantly undermined public trust in the media. At the same time, the ongoing media financial crisis threatens the sustainability of legacy news organizations, leading to staff reductions and increasing labor precarity. The journalistic profession, still recovering from the severe impact of the pandemic, now confronts a dual challenge: navigating an increasingly intricate national agenda while contending with emerging technological challenges.

According to Reporters Without Borders' Press Freedom Index, Peru has dropped 53 places from 2022 to 2025 (77 to 130). Despite these adverse conditions, a resilient and independent digital journalism sector has emerged – one that actively seeks innovative models of financing and distribution while prioritizing investigative reporting and data journalism as means to withstand external pressures and uphold the public's right to information. This report is grounded in fieldwork conducted between early 2023 and early 2024.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The Peruvian journalism guild shows a significant gender imbalance: only 27.3% of the sample are women. The average age of Peruvian journalists is 44.0 years (SD = 11.5, Median = 42). Most have completed higher education, with 73.9% holding a bachelor's degree or its equivalent. A large majority (85.8%) have received formal or professional training in journalism. This training has primarily been obtained through universities or higher education institutes (76.3%), as well as short courses (86.3%) and professional internships (70.5%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

The Peruvian media ecosystem is primarily commercial in nature. Accordingly, the majority of surveyed Peruvian journalists work for private/commercial outlets (74.9%), while 23% are employed by non-profit media organizations. About two-thirds (67.5%) of respondents work in local or regional media, whereas 34.3% are employed by national or transnational outlets. In terms of the background of their main employers, most of them work in radio (40.3%), followed by online media (22.4%), newspapers (11.9%), and television (9.0%). The predominance of radio journalists in local media reflects the national sample's capacity to highlight the contributions and activities of regional journalism in a highly centralized country.

On average, Peruvian journalists have 16.2 years of professional experience (SD = 8.5, Median = 15), and 61.9% are members of a professional organization. Most respondents work across multiple sections or thematic areas (74.8%), and 63.9% reported experiencing stress either occasionally or frequently.

A significant majority of surveyed journalists (83.9%) reported holding more than one job in addition to their work in journalism, while only slightly more than a third of Peruvian journalists (39.5%) have a full-time employment contract. Taken together, these figures reflect precarious labor conditions within the profession – conditions that are further underscored by the fact that part-time and freelance/self-employed journalists constitute over half of the workforce (51.8%). Within this context, journalists in full-time employment responded they work 38.3 hours a week on average (SD = 17.9, Median = 37.5).

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Hate speech, public discreditation, and the hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites were identified as the most common threats faced by Peruvian journalists (see Table 1). Although less frequent, other forms of threats and legal actions against journalists are also cause for concern. Nearly all respondents expressed apprehension regarding the impunity enjoyed by those who harass Peruvian journalists. A large majority reported fears related to their physical, mental, and emotional well-being, while slightly less than half expressed concern about their job security (see Table 2).

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	333	2.4%	6.3%	21.6%	26.1%	43.5%
Public discrediting of your work	335	0.9%	1.5%	14.6%	22.7%	60.3%
Surveillance	333	0.0%	2.7%	9.3%	21.9%	66.1%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	335	1.2%	3.0%	17.6%	26.9%	51.3%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	331	0.0%	0.3%	1.5%	3.0%	95.2%
Legal actions against you because of your work	335	0.3%	1.8%	10.4%	22.4%	65.1%
Stalking	331	0.0%	2.1%	7.6%	17.5%	72.8%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	332	0.6%	1.8%	10.8%	18.7%	68.1%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	330	0.6%	0.3%	0.3%	4.5%	94.2%
Other physical attacks	331	0.0%	0.9%	2.1%	11.5%	85.5%
Coercion	331	0.3%	0.3%	1.5%	9.1%	88.8%
Questioning of your personal morality	333	0.0%	2.1%	6.9%	14.1%	76.9%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	334	0.0%	0.9%	5.7%	7.5%	85.9%
Others disseminating your personal information	333	0.0%	1.8%	3.9%	14.4%	79.9%
Workplace bullying	330	0.3%	0.6%	3.3%	8.8%	87.0%
Abductions	332	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	0.3%	99.1%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	332	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	2.7%	96.7%
Intimidation that targets family	331	0.0%	0.6%	1.5%	6.6%	91.2%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	335	46.3%	3.2	1.09
Concerned about physical well-being	330	75.2%	3.8	1.02
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	329	83.3%	4.0	0.89
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Perú go unpunished	330	96.7%	4.5	0.68

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Journalistic roles were highly valued by Peruvian journalists (see Table 3). There was broad support for roles tied to journalism's social mission – such as highlighting social issues, promoting peace and tolerance, and giving voice to marginalized groups. In contrast, roles associated with journalism's political agency – such as encouraging political participation or portraying political leadership in a specific or accurate way – received comparatively limited support.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	334	84.1%	4.03	0.61
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	334	79.6%	4.01	0.75
Shine a light on society's problems	333	91.3%	4.29	0.65
Motivate people to participate in politics	331	39.0%	2.92	1.21
Provide analysis of current affairs	332	87.0%	4.13	0.65
Let people express their views	333	84.4%	4.13	0.67
Provide information people need to form political opinion	332	70.5%	3.83	0.91
Advocate for social change	333	83.8%	4.14	0.70
Influence public opinion	331	59.5%	3.65	0.94
Set the political agenda	331	50.8%	3.36	1.08
Promote peace and tolerance	333	92.2%	4.32	0.63
Educate the audience	335	82.1%	4.10	0.83
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	334	88.9%	4.22	0.66
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	335	93.4%	4.39	0.65
Support national development	333	85.6%	4.13	0.66
Support government policy	329	54.7%	3.51	0.96
Convey a positive image of political leaders	332	32.2%	2.89	1.09
Provide entertainment and relaxation	332	43.1%	3.17	1.08
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	331	72.2%	3.83	0.85
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	332	64.2%	3.66	0.90
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	330	69.4%	3.80	0.87
Support efforts to protect public health	330	87.0%	4.14	0.66
Counteract disinformation	326	88.3%	4.19	0.68
Discuss future implications of current events	331	84.0%	4.05	0.74

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Perceptions of journalistic epistemology among Peruvian journalists are highly diverse (see Table 4). Participants widely agreed on the importance of alerting audiences to false claims, being transparent about their viewpoints in their work, using interpretation to make sense of events, and the possibility of objectively representing reality.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	328	83.2%	3.95	0.89
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	329	10.6%	2.14	0.94
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	329	30.4%	2.88	1.01
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	332	75.9%	3.90	0.87
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	329	81.5%	3.98	0.80
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	332	39.5%	3.07	1.08
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	331	41.7%	3.09	1.02
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	330	77.0%	3.83	0.77
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	328	28.0%	2.72	1.06
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	329	86.3%	4.04	0.75
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	330	87.9%	4.14	0.77

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Journalists in Peru showed substantial agreement on the importance of professional standards over subjective or situational considerations in journalistic ethics (see Table 5). However, when it comes to controversial reporting methods, just over a third of respondents considered the use of hidden recording devices to be always justified. Similarly, the use of confidential or private documents without authorization was viewed as justified in certain circumstances (see Table 6).

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	334	71.3%	3.69	1.13
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	329	26.4%	2.70	1.04
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	328	2.4%	2.17	0.68
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	328	29.9%	2.63	1.11

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	335	0.0%	10.4%
Using hidden recording devices	333	38.4%	7.8%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	335	1.2%	33.1%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	332	1.2%	29.8%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	332	0.3%	22.3%
Paying people for confidential information	335	0.3%	16.7%
Accepting money from sources	328	0.0%	2.4%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	334	0.3%	5.4%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	332	0.6%	4.2%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	329	0.0%	2.7%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Peruvian journalists hold a generally positive perception of freedom and autonomy in their professional work (see Table 7). A large majority report having considerable or complete freedom to select news topics and determine which aspects to emphasize in their reporting. Paradoxically, their assessment of media freedom of expression in the country is notably more critical, with a majority of 62.5% of journalists characterizing it as limited.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	334	78.1%	4.07	0.81
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	335	74.3%	4.00	0.81
Media freedom in Perú	331	37.5%	3.06	1.07

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

A majority of Peruvian journalists identified journalism ethics as a very or extremely influential editorial factor (63.3%), followed by feedback from the audience (47.8%) and audience research and data (47.1%). Personal values and beliefs (45.4%) as well as access to information (45.1%) and availability of news-gathering resources (4.3%) are considered also relevant editorial influences (see Table 8).

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	302	17.9%	2.36	1.08
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	299	27.1%	2.60	1.23
The business managers of the news organization	292	24.7%	2.45	1.28
The owners of the news organization	296	25.0%	2.44	1.32
Editorial policy	315	38.4%	3.01	1.23
Advertising considerations	306	28.1%	2.60	1.24
Profit expectations	305	32.1%	2.72	1.24
Audience research and data	310	47.1%	3.16	1.16
Availability of news-gathering resources	310	40.3%	3.07	1.19
Time limits	299	23.7%	2.55	1.16
Journalism ethics	313	63.3%	3.62	1.15
Self-censorship	301	18.6%	1.99	1.27
Personal values and beliefs	306	45.4%	3.08	1.28
Colleagues in other media	305	15.4%	2.10	1.12
Friends, acquaintances and family	309	6.8%	1.91	0.92
Feedback from the audience	318	47.8%	3.20	1.10
Competing news organizations	315	24.8%	2.63	1.23
Media laws and regulation	316	29.7%	2.70	1.27
Access to information	315	45.1%	3.21	1.16
Government censorship	302	19.2%	2.15	1.24
Government officials	299	17.4%	1.98	1.20
Politicians	298	15.8%	1.95	1.20
Business people	302	16.2%	1.99	1.23
Public relations	309	29.8%	2.65	1.31
Relationships with news sources	301	35.9%	2.79	1.32
Police	301	19.3%	2.15	1.22
Issue advocacy groups	306	15.4%	1.87	1.23
Scientists or health experts	310	33.5%	2.65	1.35
Religious groups and institutions	307	15.3%	1.93	1.23
Military	303	12.5%	1.71	1.17
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	296	12.5%	1.56	1.15
Organized crime and criminal groups	300	11.7%	1.55	1.12
Terrorist groups	288	10.4%	1.46	1.08

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Philippines

Sofia Contreras Tan & Edson Tandoc Jr.

INTRODUCTION

Survey data was collected between April and October 2023, about a year into the presidency of Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr., son of former dictator Ferdinand Marcos Sr. This period followed the turbulent 2016–2022 administration of Rodrigo Duterte, which significantly undermined press freedom in the Philippines. Duterte's government employed disinformation tactics during his campaign and throughout his term, using threats and propaganda to suppress criticism and bolster support for controversial policies, such as his deadly "War on Drugs." This led to widespread media self-censorship and a decline in public trust in journalism. One of the most symbolic blows to press freedom during this time was the non-renewal of the broadcast license of ABS-CBN, then the country's largest television network, resulting in its shutdown and the closure of its regional bureaus, rendering thousands of media workers jobless.

The Philippine press used to be among the freest in Asia, until Ferdinand Marcos Sr. declared martial law in 1972. His regime saw journalists imprisoned, media outlets seized, and press freedom crushed. While the post-Marcos era brought periods of recovery, the media landscape has remained fragile, marked by persistent threats to journalists' safety, credibility, and job security. Journalists in the Philippines have long faced harassment, intimidation, and physical violence due to their work. In the most tragic example, the 2009 Ampatuan massacre in Maguindanao claimed the lives of 58 people, including 32 journalists and media workers. More recently, journalists have also been red-tagged – falsely accused of being communist sympathizers or insurgents – placing them at heightened risk of surveillance, harassment, and even violence. While the Marcos Jr. administration has been perceived as more moderate than Duterte's, findings from this survey suggest that challenges to press freedom remain. Journalists identified media violence as a top concern and emphasized that combating disinformation is now their most critical professional responsibility.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The respondents have an average age of 39.5 years (SD = 12.5; Median = 38) and 51.1% are female. Filipino journalists tend to be well-educated, with 94.1% having at least a bachelor's degree. Most Filipino journalists have received journalism-specific training or education (82.3%) – of these, 82.9% received that through university, 75.0% through cadetship/apprenticeship, and 72.9% through a short-term course.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

In terms of the background of their main employers, newspapers are the main employers of journalists in the Philippines with a third of journalists (31.4%) working for them, followed by 18.9% for television organizations, 18.0% for online native media, 9.0% for radio outlets, and 7.5% for news agencies. Only a few Filipino journalists worked for magazine companies (1.5%) and organizations with a telecommunications background (0.3%). The remaining 7.3% claimed that they did not have a main employer. More than two thirds of Filipino journalists (71.6%) were members of professional associations.

In terms of media reach, 75.1% of the journalists mainly worked for (trans)national media, while 18.8% primarily catered to local or regional media. Rather than focusing on a single beat, the majority of Filipino journalists (60.8%) worked on a variety of beats or subject areas. The average working week of Filipino full-time journalists was 37.0 hours (SD = 19.1; Median = 40). The majority of the respondents (65.0%) reported they felt stressed out at work often or very often.

On average, Filipino journalists had 15.0 years of professional experience (SD = 11.2; Median = 12), with more than half of the interviewed journalists having a full-time contract (62.7% permanently and 7.1% temporarily employed). Less than a quarter (16.3%) worked as freelancers or were self-employed, and an additional 5.0% had other forms of employment. A few had part-time employment: 4.7% had permanent contracts and 4.1% had temporary contracts. The prevalence of temporary or fixed contracts and freelance employment, and with 53.3% of journalists reporting additional income sources outside of journalism, suggest that Filipino journalists suffer under intense economic pressures and are plagued by job insecurity.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

When asked about the common safety threats they encounter, many Filipino journalists report they experience verbal attacks, such as demeaning or hateful speech, and public discrediting of their work (see Table 1). These, along with job insecurity, contribute to widespread concerns about their emotional and mental well-being (see Table 2). The threat of impunity also exacerbates these problems: Almost all Filipino journalists (93.2%) are strongly concerned that those who harm journalists in the Philippines go unpunished.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	341	4.4%	12.9%	42.5%	22.6%	17.6%
Public discrediting of your work	341	4.1%	11.7%	31.4%	28.7%	24.0%
Surveillance	340	3.2%	7.9%	20.0%	27.9%	40.9%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	341	2.6%	6.5%	16.7%	20.5%	53.7%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	341	0.3%	0.9%	2.1%	4.7%	92.1%
Legal actions against you because of your work	341	1.2%	1.8%	10.0%	13.2%	73.9%
Stalking	341	2.1%	6.5%	15.0%	21.1%	55.4%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	341	3.5%	8.2%	18.2%	23.5%	46.6%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	340	1.2%	1.5%	7.1%	10.6%	79.7%
Other physical attacks	339	0.3%	0.6%	4.7%	7.4%	87.0%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	339	1.2%	2.7%	12.4%	20.6%	63.1%
Others disseminating your personal information	341	2.3%	4.7%	14.4%	24.9%	53.7%
Workplace bullying	340	1.5%	3.8%	15.9%	17.9%	60.9%
Intimidation that targets family	339	1.2%	0.6%	7.1%	12.7%	78.5%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	336	30.7%	2.68	1.30
Concerned about physical well-being	336	65.5%	3.65	1.19
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	335	74.0%	3.83	1.14
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Philippines go unpunished	336	93.2%	4.61	0.70

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Filipino journalists identify countering disinformation and educating the public as their most important professional roles. Not only do they rate these responsibilities as highly important, but the low standard deviations in their responses also indicate a strong consensus across the profession (see Table 3). In contrast, Filipino journalists strongly disagreed on the importance of motivating people to participate in politics, and they similarly disagreed on the roles that were ranked the least important – conveying a positive image of political leaders and supporting government policy.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	339	52.8%	3.48	1.20
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	339	85.8%	4.35	0.96
Shine a light on society's problems	339	89.4%	4.51	0.82
Motivate people to participate in politics	339	61.9%	3.62	1.31
Provide analysis of current affairs	339	85.0%	4.32	.880
Let people express their views	339	86.1%	4.35	0.85
Provide information people need to form political opinion	339	82.6%	4.23	1.05
Advocate for social change	339	81.7%	4.27	0.97
Influence public opinion	339	67.3%	3.79	1.12
Set the political agenda	339	43.7%	3.14	1.30
Promote peace and tolerance	339	80.5%	4.21	0.97
Educate the audience	339	97.1%	4.75	0.57
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	341	88.0%	4.35	0.78
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	341	83.0%	4.27	0.92
Support national development	341	76.2%	4.08	1.01
Support government policy	341	32.8%	3.01	1.18
Convey a positive image of political leaders	341	12.9%	2.00	1.22
Provide entertainment and relaxation	341	34.3%	3.04	1.19
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	341	62.5%	3.79	1.07
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	341	59.2%	3.67	1.10
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	341	62.8%	3.80	1.03
Support efforts to protect public health	341	88.3%	4.43	0.90
Counteract disinformation	341	97.1%	4.83	0.45
Discuss future implications of current events	341	89.4%	4.45	0.74

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

The divergent beliefs of interpretation being a necessity to make sense of facts and being able to represent objective reality in reporting prompted the strongest agreement among Filipino journalists. They were, however, in disagreement over truth being inevitably shaped by those in power and being black and white with no in-between.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	328	86.6%	4.11	0.83
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	327	50.5%	3.28	1.21
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	328	40.5%	3.10	1.08
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	328	51.8%	3.41	1.14
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	327	75.2%	3.90	0.98

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

More journalists in the Philippines agreed on ethical absolutism than relativism (see Table 5), specifically ethics guided by professional standards instead of situational and personal considerations, though 70.9% are willing to disregard professional standards if extraordinary circumstances require it. These conflicting beliefs can be seen in the acceptance of controversial reporting methods (see Table 6), like the use of hidden recording devices and confidential documents without authorization, while some practices, like the publication of stories with unverified information and acceptance of money from sources, are almost universally condemned.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	340	80.6%	4.07	0.96
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	340	70.9%	3.77	0.95
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	339	48.1%	3.25	1.21
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	339	26.3%	2.64	1.22

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	"Justified on occasion"
Claiming to be somebody else	341	0.9%	17.3%
Using hidden recording devices	341	2.3%	56.3%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	341	2.9%	48.4%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	341	3.2%	47.2%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	341	0.9%	22.0%
Paying people for confidential information	341	1.2%	24.6%
Accepting money from sources	341	0.9%	6.7%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	341	1.2%	41.9%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	341	2.1%	22.9%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	341	0.3%	7.3%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

The majority of Filipino journalists reported they have a great deal of freedom when it comes to selecting news stories and deciding where to put emphasis in the story, though they rated the overall media freedom in the Philippines to be low (see Table 7).

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	336	66.1%	3.81	0.83
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	335	73.1%	3.95	0.82
Media freedom in Philippines	336	39.0%	3.32	0.81

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Filipino journalists found journalism ethics and the availability of news-gathering resources to be the most influential internal factors in news production (see Table 8). Among the external factors, most journalists considered access to information and media laws and regulation as extremely or very influential on editorial decisions.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	318	34.0%	3.00	1.13
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	327	69.1%	3.83	1.02
The business managers of the news organization	316	50.0%	3.32	1.23
The owners of the news organization	313	62.6%	3.69	1.22
Editorial policy	332	76.2%	4.04	0.92
Advertising considerations	292	32.5%	2.88	1.26
Profit expectations	296	33.1%	2.80	1.30
Audience research and data	323	50.5%	3.44	1.15
Availability of news-gathering resources	331	81.6%	4.08	0.88
Time limits	328	64.6%	3.77	0.98
Journalism ethics	334	90.1%	4.44	0.79
Self-censorship	314	32.5%	2.92	1.25
Personal values and beliefs	326	65.0%	3.75	1.22
Colleagues in other media	324	28.4%	2.80	1.24
Friends, acquaintances and family	295	23.7%	2.52	1.28
Feedback from the audience	326	46.3%	3.37	1.17
Competing news organizations	322	36.0%	3.02	1.20
Media laws and regulation	330	67.0%	3.80	1.07
Access to information	330	78.8%	4.16	0.93
Government censorship	305	31.5%	2.68	1.35
Government officials	316	29.1%	2.80	1.28
Politicians	303	24.1%	2.55	1.31
Business people	307	30.3%	2.80	1.29
Public relations	314	28.7%	2.77	1.23
Relationships with news sources	325	46.8%	3.33	1.20
Police	287	22.0%	2.47	1.28
Issue advocacy groups	324	37.7%	3.07	1.26
Scientists or health experts	313	59.4%	3.58	1.16
Religious groups and institutions	291	23.7%	2.51	1.29
Military	273	20.1%	2.38	1.29
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	253	15.0%	2.08	1.25
Organized crime and criminal groups	233	18.0%	2.17	1.35
Terrorist groups	223	15.7%	2.00	1.24

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Poland

Agnieszka Węglińska & Katarzyna Konarska

INTRODUCTION

Poland has been experiencing a wave of refugees from Russia-attacked Ukraine since early 2022. Moreover, after the elections in October 2023, there was a change from a right-wing cabinet to a more centrist one. Economically, the country is rather stable, although it has struggled with inflation after the pandemic. The biggest identified danger is hybrid attacks from Belarus and Russia.

Following the political, economic, and social transformations after 1989, the Polish media market experienced significant changes. The collapse of the communist regime opened the door to media pluralism and media freedom. Privatization processes and the growing influence of private investors facilitated the restructuring of the media market. In subsequent decades, the rise of the internet and digital media further influenced the industry's evolution, presenting challenges such as readers migrating to online platforms, declining print circulation, and the need to adapt offerings to meet the changing demands of the audience. After 1989, the Polish media market witnessed the emergence of new daily newspapers. A similar process is applied to the radio and television market. The Broadcasting Act of 1992 introduced a dual media system. The National Broadcasting Council, the KRRiT was established under this Act. It regulates broadcasting in Poland. Public and private media entities coexist in the market.

The data collection period covered the 2023 Parliamentary elections lost by the right-wing populist party, Law and Justice. However, the survey was carried out when the Law and Justice party was in power. They exercised their state power between 2015 and 2023 through the control of media, the manipulation of information, and the restriction of freedom of expression.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

Our sample of Polish journalists is balanced in terms of gender: 55.3% in the sample were women. On average, they were 31.8 years old (SD = 9.9; Median = 29). They are generally well educated: 31.3% completed a Bachelor's degree, 37.4% Master's degree, 5.6% have obtained a doctorate. Moreover, 53.4 % of the respondents have acquired formal education or professional training in journalism. This education or training is obtained at university or in college for the group of 70.6% but also via apprenticeships or cadetships (40.5%) and short-term courses (20.7%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

In terms of the background of their main employers, more than one third of journalists in Poland (33.8%) worked for native online media,10.8% for newspapers, 8.5% for Magazines, 8.5% for radio, and 6.7% for television and 8.5% for news agencies, respectively. Very few journalists worked for telecommunications (2.5%, respectively). Finally, 20.7 % of the interviewed journalists claimed not to have a main employer. Regarding area of coverage, 60.9% of the journalists reported they mainly worked for (trans)national media, while 39.1% primarily catered to local or regional media.

On average, Polish journalists had 7.3 years of professional experience (SD = 6.9; Median = 5). A majority of them (76.3%) worked on a variety of beats or subject areas rather than on a single one. Only 29.8% of Polish journalists were members of professional associations.

27.5% of journalists in had a full-time permanent contract, 14% had a full-time fixed-term contract. More than a third (35.9%) worked as freelancers or were self-employed, and an additional 2,7% had other forms of employment. Finally,11.7% had a part-time permanent contract, and 8.2 % had a part-time fixed contract. These results suggest a precarious employment situation, as does the fact that 49.7% of the respondents reported that they had additional jobs outside journalism.

The average working week of Polish full-time journalists was 40.7 hours (SD = 13.7; Median = 40). Relatedly, 30.9% of the respondents reported they felt stressed out at work often or very often during the previous six months; 39.6% felt stressed sometimes at work, and 29.5% had never or rarely felt that way.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Demeaning or hateful speech and public discrediting of journalists' work are the most common kind of abuses against respondents in the safety area (see Table 1). These experiences also impact the concerns expressed by Polish journalists; more than a quarter were concerned about their physical or emotional well-being (see Table 2). Moreover, almost half of the respondents feared that those who harm journalists would go unpunished.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	449	3.8%	12.9%	26.9%	22.7%	33.6%
Public discrediting of your work	445	4.3%	9.0%	22.9%	22.0%	41.8%
Surveillance	449	2.0%	6.5%	12.0%	19.4%	60.1%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	448	2.2%	7.8%	14.1%	21.2%	54.7%
Arrests. detentions or imprisonment	449	2.2%	2.7%	3.3%	4.2%	87.5%
Legal actions against you because of your work	449	2.2%	6.2%	6.5%	12.5%	72.6%
Stalking	447	2.0%	5.8%	9.2%	15.2%	67.8%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	449	2.7%	4.5%	10.9%	19.8%	62.1%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	448	0.7%	3.1%	2.5%	3.3%	90.4%
Other physical attacks	448	1.3%	2.5%	4.0%	10.0%	82.1%
Coercion	449	1.1%	4.0%	7.6%	16.7%	70.6%
Questioning of your personal morality	448	3.6%	8.0%	16.3%	20.8%	51.3%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	448	3.8%	4.5%	7.8%	16.3%	67.6%
Others disseminating your personal information	448	3.1%	7.4%	10.9%	17.0%	61.6%
Workplace bullying	448	1.6%	3.3%	4.9%	10.5%	79.7%
Abductions	446	1.1%	2.5%	1.6%	3.6%	91.3%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	448	1.3%	2.9%	4.2%	4.7%	86.8%
Intimidation that targets family	448	1.1%	3.1%	7.6%	6.0%	82.1%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	446	13.5%	2.19	1.13
Concerned about physical well-being	445	25.2%	2.53	1.25
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	446	36.5%	2.94	1.26
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Poland go unpunished	446	48.9%	3.27	1.29

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Journalists in Poland strongly identify with all roles that involve educating their audience (see Table 3). However. the majority of respondents would not like to be associated with the government. political leaders or politics in general. The distance from the political class may be related to the strong polarization of the political scene in Poland during the research period and the restrictions imposed on journalists by the government at the time.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	449	73.7%	3.99	1.03
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	448	54.9%	3.46	1.28
Shine a light on society's problems	449	77.1%	4.10	1.13
Motivate people to participate in politics	446	41.9%	3.20	1.27
Provide analysis of current affairs	448	80.1%	4.16	0.97
Let people express their views	448	72.1%	3.99	1.08
Provide information people need to form political opinion	445	61.8%	3.69	1.22
Advocate for social change	447	64.4%	3.79	1.06
Influence public opinion	448	55.8%	3.55	1.12
Set the political agenda	448	23.4%	2.62	1.19
Promote peace and tolerance	449	73.3%	4.07	1.06
Educate the audience	449	74.8%	4.10	1.05
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	446	62.8%	3.76	1.17
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	448	50.7%	3.45	1.27
Support national development	448	62.1%	3.71	1.14
Support government policy	449	15.6%	2.28	1.19
Convey a positive image of political leaders	448	12.7%	2.11	1.18
Provide entertainment and relaxation	449	55.9%	3.61	1.17
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	449	63.7%	3.80	1.06
Provide advice. orientation and direction for daily life	448	45.5%	3.31	1.13
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	449	50.3%	3.49	1.23
Support efforts to protect public health	449	54.3%	3.42	1.23
Counteract disinformation	447	74.5%	4.10	1.11
Discuss future implications of current events	449	60.1%	3.65	1.11

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Journalists in Poland place strong emphasis on two aspects of epistemology. Firstly. facts are important to them. Secondly. they mostly agree that interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts (see Table 4). It is also essential for respondents to alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	431	58.9%	3.53	1.09
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	417	34.3%	2.96	1.22
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	425	29.4%	2.83	1.13
Things are either true or false. there is no in-between	428	37.9%	3.01	1.34
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	426	56.1%	3.58	1.05
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	421	38.2%	3.09	1.19
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	423	31.9%	2.85	1.19
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	423	63.4%	3.74	1.01
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	425	55.3%	3.49	1.14
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	420	66.2%	3.73	1.01
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	422	78.0%	4.09	1.04

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Journalists in Poland point to the need for professional standards. However. most of them agree that the ethical issues of actions depend on the situation. This may explain the acceptance by some of the surveyed population of certain controversial actions. such as paying people for confidential information or using the personal materials of ordinary people. such as documents and photos. without their permission.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	447	46.1%	3.31	1.23
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	447	44.7%	3.30	1.07
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	447	52.8%	3.45	1.16
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	446	39.0%	3.06	1.21

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	448	5.6%	34.4%
Using hidden recording devices	449	10.0%	46.3%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	448	5.6%	34.4%
Using the personal materials of powerful people. such as documents and photos. without their permission	449	5.8%	30.3%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people. such as documents and photos. without their permission	448	4.7%	20.8%
Paying people for confidential information	449	9.1%	37.2%
Accepting money from sources	448	7.1%	25.7%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	448	14.3%	32.1%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	445	5.8%	26.7%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	447	5.4%	22.8%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Table 7 indicates that journalists tend to rate their degree of freedom in selecting topics quite highly. A number of the respondents implied a certain degree of professional autonomy, albeit with constraints. The inquiry concerning media freedom in Poland yielded the most intriguing findings (see Table 7). The majority of journalists did not feel there was a great deal or complete media freedom in Poland.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	445	56.4%	3.66	0.97
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	447	55.7%	3.60	0.93
Media freedom in Poland	434	26.5%	2.94	0.95

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

For journalists in Poland. the most important factors influencing their work are access to sources. ethical issues. audience. colleagues. profit expectations. editorial policy. and legal aspects. Personal values and beliefs are also crucial.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	406	21.9%	2.67	1.14
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	402	43.3%	3.12	1.32
The business managers of the news organization	390	30.8%	2.82	1.26
The owners of the news organization	384	37.5%	2.96	1.35
Editorial policy	403	41.7%	3.01	1.34
Advertising considerations	398	37.2%	3.01	1.25
Profit expectations	398	50.5%	3.27	1.27
Audience research and data	409	41.1%	3.06	1.28
Availability of news-gathering resources	407	48.2%	3.22	1.25
Time limits	411	50.4%	3.41	1.17
Journalism ethics	397	52.1%	3.40	1.32
Self-censorship	400	31.3%	2.80	1.27
Personal values and beliefs	404	53.0%	3.40	1.27
Colleagues in other media	383	19.8%	2.49	1.22
Friends. acquaintances and family	385	28.6%	2.70	1.29
Feedback from the audience	383	53.5%	3.51	1.15
Competing news organizations	389	30.8%	2.82	1.29
Media laws and regulation	395	46.8%	3.26	1.23
Access to information	393	63.4%	3.64	1.20
Government censorship	364	22.3%	2.41	1.30
Government officials	367	17.4%	2.19	1.27
Politicians	365	16.7%	2.06	1.29
Business people	369	24.9%	2.33	1.36
Public relations	375	36.0%	2.86	1.34
Relationships with news sources	376	37.5%	2.89	1.35
Police	356	12.1%	1.90	1.19
Issue advocacy groups	369	17.6%	2.19	1.29
Scientists or health experts	353	21.0%	1.84	1.20
Religious groups and institutions	347	11.9%	1.66	1.11
Military	349	8.9%	1.68	1.15
Para-military groups. militias and similar groups	348	10.0%	1.61	1.09
Organized crime and criminal groups	345	8.9%	1.60	1.14
Terrorist groups	352	10.4%	2.32	1.33

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Portugal

Rui Alexandre Novais

INTRODUCTION

Portugal entered 2025 with a moderately favorable economic outlook – projected GDP growth of 2% and a budget surplus – to continue the positive cycle that began in 2022. However, domestic political volatility persists, highlighted by the government's collapse in March 2025 after a failed parliamentary confidence vote, leading to Portugal's third general election in three years.

Despite ranking higher in RSF's 2024 World Press Freedom Index and benefiting from strong constitutional protections and high public trust, journalists in Portugal face significant pressures. Ongoing economic instability is a major concern, reflected in poor financial security scores and studies revealing widespread issues such as low pay and stagnant salaries, job insecurity, chronic fatigue, and occupational stress.

The 2023 fieldwork was conducted amid strong economic momentum: GDP grew 2.5% (following 2022's 7.0% surge), achieving a historic budget surplus (1.2%) and reducing public debt below 100% while boosting household income. Concurrently, two crises unfolded: PM António Costa resigned after being named a suspect in a corruption probe involving lithium/hydrogen projects, deeming the allegations "incompatible" with his office; Global Media Group (*DN/JN/TSF/Açoriano Oriental*) faced a severe crisis after its September sale to a Bahamas-based, Paradise Papers-linked fund. By December, management imposed 150+ layoffs (halving JN's newsroom), canceled 200 contracts, and withheld wages – triggering strikes that halted JN's print run for the first time in 35 years.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

Although journalism in Portugal was still predominantly male in 2023, with women holding 41% of professional cards, our sample featured a higher proportion of women (57.7%), which corresponds better to the gender distribution in Portugal's younger cohorts. Portuguese journalists exhibit significant educational qualifications: 59.6% have a Bachelor's degree or equivalent, 36.3% a Master's or equivalent, and 1.1% a Doctorate. Additionally, formal journalism education or training is nearly universal (99.2%), typically acquired at university (77.7%) or through apprenticeships/cadetships (58.7%), with short-term courses being less prevalent (7.4%). The average age of Portuguese journalists is 38.1 years (Median = 37; SD = 9.6).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

Distribution across media types in Portugal showed newspapers employing 23.2% of journalists, television 21.3%, magazines 18.6%, and native online media 17.2%. Radio represented 9.3% and news agencies 2.7%, with 7.7% lacking a primary employer. In terms of reach, 76.5% targeted (trans)national audiences, while 15.8% catered primarily to local or regional audiences.

The average journalist had 15.5 years of professional experience (Median = 14; SD = 9.3), with 79.5% working across multiple beats. A slight majority (53.3%) were unaffiliated with the trade union.

Employment status revealed 66.1% permanently and 23.8% temporarily employed full-time, contrasting with 10.1% freelance/self-employed roles. Few (1.6%) supplemented income with non-journalism work.

With a mean workweek of 43.2 hours (Median = 42; SD = 5.1; for those in full-time employment), 69.4% frequently experienced work-related stress in the past six months, while 30.6% did so rarely or never.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Portuguese journalists identified verbal abuse – including demeaning or hateful speech and public discrediting campaigns – as their most prevalent safety threat (Table 1). While rarer, severe risks like hacking, legal harassment, and coercion also raised concerns. Reflecting these realities, most journalists reported concerns for their physical/emotional safety, but less than half worried about unemployment (Table 2). Critically, almost all feared impunity for those targeting journalists.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	366	0.0%	0.5%	17.2%	35.5%	46.7%
Public discrediting of your work	366	0.0%	2.2%	13.4%	36.6%	47.8%
Surveillance	366	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	3.6%	95.6%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	366	0.0%	0.5%	0.5%	7.1%	91.8%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	366	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	99.5%
Legal actions against you because of your work	366	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	1.1%	98.6%
Stalking	366	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	1.4%	98.1%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	366	0.5%	0.0%	1.9%	28.1%	69.4%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	366	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.0%	97.0%
Other physical attacks	366	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%	97.5%
Coercion	366	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	5.9%	93.4%
Questioning of your personal morality	366	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	4.3%	94.9%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	366	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100 %
Others disseminating your personal information	366	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%	98.8%
Workplace bullying	366	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	0.8%	98.4%
Abductions	366	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100 %
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	366	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100 %
Intimidation that targets family	366	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	99.2%

Question: “In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?”

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	366	43.4%	3.01	1.21
Concerned about physical well-being	366	1.9%	1.33	0.67
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	366	67.8%	3.70	0.57
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Portugal go unpunished	366	97.8%	4.13	0.47

Question: “Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.” (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Portuguese journalists strongly endorsed classic watchdog and informer roles, while interventionist and audience-focused approaches were less valued though still relevant (Table 3). Loyal-facilitator and educator roles were least favored, despite being rated highly important by roughly a quarter or fewer.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	366	100.0%	4.88	0.32
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	366	98.6%	4.71	0.50
Shine a light on society’s problems	366	90.7%	4.11	0.56
Motivate people to participate in politics	366	35.5%	3.29	0.64
Provide analysis of current affairs	366	97.3%	4.30	0.51
Let people express their views	366	87.2%	4.01	0.52
Provide information people need to form political opinion	366	50.5%	3.61	0.71
Advocate for social change	366	39.6%	3.40	0.57
Influence public opinion	366	66.4%	3.63	0.67
Set the political agenda	366	43.3%	3.30	0.74
Promote peace and tolerance	366	32.8%	3.22	0.71
Educate the audience	366	22.4%	3.13	0.63
Point toward possible solutions to society’s problems	366	22.4%	3.07	0.65
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	366	12.0%	2.94	0.60
Support national development	366	13.7%	2.79	0.72
Support government policy	366	18.9%	2.98	0.69
Convey a positive image of political leaders	366	12.3%	2.73	0.82
Provide entertainment and relaxation	366	33.9%	3.19	0.81
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	366	41.8%	3.39	0.62
Provide advice. orientation and direction for daily life	366	35.8%	3.27	0.63
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	366	38.5%	3.25	0.74
Support efforts to protect public health	366	53.8%	3.56	0.66
Counteract disinformation	366	90.2%	4.11	0.56
Discuss future implications of current events	366	79.0%	3.87	0.53

Question: “Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

While perceptions of journalistic epistemology varied significantly (Table 4), Portuguese respondents converged on valuing interpretive analysis, objective reporting, and alerting audiences to false claims. Conversely, sharp divisions emerged regarding the absolutist view that "truth is binary" and journalists' ability to intuitively predict a story's final form.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	364	97.8%	4.63	0.62
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	366	45.4%	2.69	1.30
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	366	22.4%	2.53	0.88
Things are either true or false. there is no in-between	366	2.2%	2.35	0.57
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	366	89.1%	3.90	0.42
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	261	31.0%	2.91	0.86
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	258	19.0%	2.69	0.79
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	258	47.7%	3.31	0.90
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	258	21.3%	2.55	0.87
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	258	68.2%	3.37	1.06
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	258	84.5%	3.93	1.13

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Portuguese journalists placed a strong emphasis on professional standards rather than subjective or situational ethics in their reporting (see Table 5). While they most firmly rejected controversial practices, such as accepting payments from sources, publishing disguised promotional content (known as "native advertising"), and spreading unverified information (as noted in Table 6), they generally found it acceptable to use unauthorized confidential documents, including those belonging to influential individuals, as well as hidden recording devices.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	366	92.3%	4.09	0.74
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	366	93.4%	4.60	0.79
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	366	15.6%	2.16	1.05
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	366	0.3%	1.54	0.57

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	366	0.0%	65.6%
Using hidden recording devices	366	0.0%	83.3%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	366	0.5%	91.3%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	366	0.0%	92.6%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people. such as documents and photos, without their permission	366	0.0%	35.5%
Paying people for confidential information	366	0.5%	65.3%
Accepting money from sources	366	0.3%	4.9%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	366	0.3%	41.8%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	366	0.0%	1.6%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	366	0.5%	1.9%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Journalists in Portugal indicated substantial editorial freedom – both in story selection and emphasis – in their daily work (Table 7), yet paradoxically assessed broader systemic media freedom as comparatively limited.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	366	94.8%	4.13	0.48
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	366	99.5%	4.59	0.50
Media freedom in Portugal	366	38.6%	3.33	0.61

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Portuguese journalists identified professional ethics, time constraints, and editorial policy as the most influential internal factors in news production (Table 8). Among external factors, access to information and source relationships were rated extremely or very impactful.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	363	3.0%	2.22	0.60
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	336	52.7%	3.48	0.64
The business managers of the news organization	361	5.8%	2.23	0.76
The owners of the news organization	362	6.4%	1.53	0.93
Editorial policy	366	87.2%	4.02	0.71
Advertising considerations	356	12.1%	2.52	0.82
Profit expectations	358	11.7%	2.44	0.83
Audience research and data	364	32.7%	3.03	0.83
Availability of news-gathering resources	366	65.0%	3.77	0.68
Time limits	366	91.8%	4.10	0.53
Journalism ethics	366	97.3%	4.29	0.61
Self-censorship	364	6.6%	1.61	0.87
Personal values and beliefs	365	1.6%	1.35	0.69
Colleagues in other media	364	0.8%	2.13	0.64
Friends. acquaintances and family	364	0.5%	1.22	0.53
Feedback from the audience	365	4.7%	2.43	0.69
Competing news organizations	365	23.3%	3.01	0.74
Media laws and regulation	364	13.2%	1.70	1.11
Access to information	365	84.1%	3.86	0.96
Government censorship	360	3.1%	1.17	0.59
Government officials	358	2.2%	1.45	0.74
Politicians	362	23.8%	2.61	1.03
Business people	365	13.7%	2.58	0.83
Public relations	365	24.9%	2.89	0.94
Relationships with news sources	365	81.9%	3.98	1.02
Police	361	1.1%	1.39	0.64
Issue advocacy groups	362	0.3%	1.53	0.69
Scientists or health experts	123	2.5%	1.60	0.71
Religious groups and institutions	115	1.6%	1.29	0.51
Military	36	0.9%	1.22	0.42
Para-military groups. militias and similar groups	35	0.0%	1.23	0.49
Organized crime and criminal groups	38	0.0%	1.47	1.18
Terrorist groups	356	10.5%	2.19	0.70

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Romania

Natalia Vasilendiuc, Gherghe Anghel, Alexandra Bardan, Andrada Fiscutean, Carmen Ionescu, Antonia Matei, Bogdan Oprea & Rodica Melinda Șuțu

INTRODUCTION

Romania is governed by a coalition struggling to preserve stability, Western direction, and reforms, but the political situation is witnessing mounting populist pressure and institutional mistrust. The war in Ukraine led Romanian powers to implement Western sanctions and revise national defence policy, while accelerating inflation due to rising energy prices placed additional economic pressure on household budgets. Cities improved in terms of information technology and service provision, but the rural areas remained behind in terms of employment opportunities and infrastructural development.

Media in Romania underwent a radical transformation after the fall of communism, and one of the noticeable trends was the proliferation of independent media throughout the 1990s. This initial promise was later compromised by arrangements characterized by restricted ownership, decreased capacity for self-regulation, and dependence on political or commercial sponsorship. The mass media often displayed preference for established business elites or political power centres, while public service broadcasters were charged with editorial interference. Regardless of these obstacles, there is still a tradition of investigative journalism, fed by a community of professional media and civil society actors, trying to uncover corruption and induce accountability of those in power.

During 2022-2023, the Romanian media landscape was struck by a few high-impact disruptive events. Most notorious cases of high plagiarism have caused public criticism, which has been further fuelled by the imminent prospect of Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPP) against investigative reporters. Despite continued attempts to produce credible reporting on corruption and social injustices, the Romanian media are economically weak, vulnerable to editorial pressure, and exercise self-censorship.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

Of the 367 journalists surveyed, 65.4% were women and 34.6% men. The average age was 36.9 years (SD = 12.1), with a median age of 35. In terms of education, 41.1% held a bachelor's degree, 40.6% a master's, 3.5% a doctorate, and 9.0% had completed only high school. A majority (69.8%) reported having formal education or professional training in journalism. Among those with training, 75.4% studied at a university or college. In other forms of training, 93.8% completed a journalism apprenticeship or cadetship, and 31.6% attended a short-term course. These figures reflect a relatively young, highly educated, and professionally trained journalistic workforce.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

Most Romanian journalists, 66.5%, do not occupy any management positions; in comparison, 25.3% engage in middle-management and 8.2% in top-management roles. Regarding audience reach, an overwhelming majority of 73.6% cover national channels, while minority percentages cover local (6.8%), regional (6.8%), or transnational audiences (7.6%); another 5.2% do not specify a primary platform. About primary ownership, 52.9% work for private/commercial media, 32.4% for public service media, 4.4% for state-run, 0.5% for community, and 7.6% for non-profit organizations.

The Romanian journalists have an average of 14.4 years of experience (SD = 9.8; Median = 12). More than half of the journalists (52.3%) indicate that they work on a particular beat or topic, and the remaining journalists cover a broader range of journalistic subjects. The rate of union membership is measured at 24.5%, indicating that the vast majority (75.5%) are not members of any professional labour union.

In terms of employment, the landscape is dominated by relatively high percentages of full-time permanent contracts (76.6%), with lower percentages working part-time permanent (3.0%), full-time fixed-term (8.5%), or part-time fixed-term contracts (0.8%). Self-employment or freelancing is 8.2%, with 2.5% on other arrangements. Furthermore, income data indicate that only 52.9% derive all their work-related income from journalism, meaning the other 47.1% will need to supplement their incomes elsewhere.

The average weekly workload is 44.4 hours (SD = 8.5; Median = 40) for journalists in full-time employment. Stress levels are significant: 20.5% report being stressed "often," and 24.9% "very often," while just 8.3% never feel work-related stress. About their background of the workplace, most participants organizations have a background in television (30.6%), internet-native platforms (28.4%), radio (18.6%), and news agencies (13.7%), while relatively smaller percentages work in outlets publishing newspapers (3.6%) and magazine companies (1.6%).

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Journalists face a range of threats, with the most prominent being demeaning or hateful speech, surveillance, and public discrediting. These pressures are particularly pronounced among journalists who lack managerial responsibilities and those working in private media organizations, as opposed to individuals in leadership positions or those employed by public service media. While other forms of threats – hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites, legal actions, stalking, coercion, other threats or intimidations – are reported less frequently, nonetheless, they represent significant concerns (see Table 1). This environment contributes to professional anxiety among journalists: over 40% report concerns regarding their physical safety, while nearly half express apprehension about their emotional well-being. More than half believe that aggressors usually go unpunished (see Table 2).

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	367	3.0%	7.6%	18.8%	24.0%	46.6%
Public discrediting of your work	367	2.2%	6.8%	16.6%	20.2%	54.2%
Surveillance	367	4.1%	6.3%	15.5%	18.3%	55.9%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	367	1.6%	2.5%	8.4%	13.9%	73.6%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	367	0.3%	0.3%	0.5%	1.9%	97.0%
Legal actions against you because of your work	367	1.4%	2.2%	3.3%	6.5%	86.6%
Stalking	367	1.4%	3.0%	5.4%	11.7%	78.5%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	367	1.6%	4.6%	7.1%	17.4%	69.2%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	367	0.5%	0.3%	1.4%	5.2%	92.6%
Other physical attacks	367	0.3%	0.5%	1.6%	4.4%	93.2%
Coercion	367	0.5%	1.6%	9.0%	21.5%	67.3%
Questioning of your personal morality	367	1.1%	4.6%	7.9%	19.6%	66.8%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	367	0.5%	0.8%	6.3%	8.2%	84.2%
Others disseminating your personal information	367	0.0%	1.6%	4.6%	11.2%	82.6%
Workplace bullying	367	0.8%	1.1%	6.0%	10.4%	81.7%
Abductions	367	0.5%	0.0%	0.3%	1.1%	98.1%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	367	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	1.9%	97.5%
Intimidation that targets family	367	0.3%	0.5%	2.7%	4.9%	91.6%

Question: “In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?”

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	367	9.8%	2.00	1.10
Concerned about physical well-being	367	42.2%	2.91	1.39
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	367	47.1%	3.06	1.48
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Romania go unpunished	367	61.3%	3.71	1.35

Question: “Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.” (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

The Romanian journalists have undergone a major redefinition of their professional identity. Traditional journalistic roles have taken a backseat as media professionals embrace more socially and community-driven roles. The focus is now on new key proactive functions, like counteracting disinformation (85.5% of the journalists) and shining a light on society’s problems (81.5% of the journalists), but also on other roles that involve engagement, such as educating the public, promoting peace and tolerance or supporting efforts to protect public health (see Table 3). On the other hand, journalists also assume some traditional, objective and rather neutral roles, such as allowing people to express their problems, and providing analyses.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	367	72.2%	4.06	1.00
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	367	55.6%	3.66	1.13
Shine a light on society’s problems	367	81.5%	4.36	0.89
Motivate people to participate in politics	367	37.6%	3.15	1.24
Provide analysis of current affairs	367	72.5%	4.08	0.95
Let people express their views	367	73.6%	4.08	0.96
Provide information people need to form political opinion	367	70.3%	3.99	1.11
Advocate for social change	367	51.5%	3.58	1.17
Influence public opinion	367	22.6%	2.74	1.14
Set the political agenda	367	15.3%	2.40	1.12
Promote peace and tolerance	367	73.3%	4.16	1.06
Educate the audience	367	77.7%	4.29	1.01
Point toward possible solutions to society’s problems	367	60.2%	3.81	1.07
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	367	58.6%	3.74	1.10
Support national development	367	64.3%	3.92	1.08
Support government policy	367	14.2%	2.43	1.03
Convey a positive image of political leaders	367	3.3%	1.54	0.81
Provide entertainment and relaxation	367	22.9%	2.74	1.13
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	367	40.1%	3.29	1.21
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	367	31.9%	3.03	1.22
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	367	22.3%	2.71	1.11
Support efforts to protect public health	367	66.8%	3.99	1.08
Counteract disinformation	367	85.0%	4.49	0.94
Discuss future implications of current events	367	70.6%	3.99	1.05

Question: “Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

There was considerable agreement among Romanian journalists regarding epistemological values (see Table 4). Respondents strongly supported alerting audiences when claims are untruthful and agreed that objective reality can be represented in reporting, alongside letting facts speak for themselves. Interpretation was moderately valued.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	367	48.2%	3.20	1.27
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	367	39.0%	2.97	1.30
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	367	28.3%	2.71	1.20
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	367	40.6%	3.13	1.33
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	367	77.9%	4.13	1.04
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	366	40.2%	2.87	1.33
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	366	57.4%	3.46	1.20
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	366	69.1%	3.91	1.07
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	366	24.9%	2.56	1.24
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	366	62.3%	3.75	1.31
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	366	86.1%	4.42	1.00

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Most of the Romanian journalists strongly agree that ethical orientation should always be determined by professional standards, regardless of situation and personal judgment (see Table 5). The same applies to controversial reporting methods such as paying for confidential information, accepting money and products from sources or broadcasting stories not yet verified. However, almost 50% of the Romanian journalists consider using hidden recording devices and over 75% claiming to be someone else justified (see Table 6).

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	367	78.7%	4.20	1.03
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	367	47.7%	3.13	1.34
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	367	28.3%	2.45	1.36
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	367	14.7%	1.97	1.26

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	367	1.6%	47.1%
Using hidden recording devices	367	4.6%	71.4%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	367	3.5%	41.7%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	367	3.5%	31.9%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	367	1.1%	15.3%
Paying people for confidential information	367	2.2%	33.5%
Accepting money from sources	367	0.8%	6.3%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	367	1.1%	16.1%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	367	1.6%	12.5%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	367	0.5%	7.1%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Romanian journalists reported a great degree of freedom in deciding what to cover and how to emphasize the aspects of a story (see Table 7). Overall attitudes towards the general state of media freedom in Romania were considerably more negative, uncovering deeper concerns about media in Romania, even though there was a strong perception of individual editorial independence in their own work as journalists.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	364	73.1%	4.03	0.89
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	361	70.9%	3.94	0.89
Media freedom in Romania	366	25.7%	3.05	0.79

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

When reflecting on the internal factors shaping their work, media professionals in Romania highlighted journalistic ethics, editorial policy, and the availability of news-gathering resources as the most influential (see Table 8). As for external factors, respondents pointed to access to information, media legislation, and regulatory frameworks as having the strongest impact on news production.

In the absence of accessible and affordable media liability insurance, journalists remain exposed to SLAPP and other forms of intimidation, a vulnerability especially pronounced among freelancers, who often operate without the institutional protection available to staff reporters.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	327	13.5%	2.39	1.03
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	331	37.2%	3.13	1.20
The business managers of the news organization	318	33.0%	2.84	1.35
The owners of the news organization	297	29.6%	2.66	1.43
Editorial policy	340	44.1%	3.25	1.25
Advertising considerations	299	14.4%	2.08	1.23
Profit expectations	295	23.1%	2.31	1.43
Audience research and data	329	33.4%	2.99	1.27
Availability of news-gathering resources	343	46.1%	3.39	1.19
Time limits	338	37.3%	3.16	1.21
Journalism ethics	349	67.0%	3.89	1.15
Self-censorship	321	14.3%	2.23	1.18
Personal values and beliefs	342	38.6%	3.10	1.38
Colleagues in other media	337	10.1%	2.15	1.06
Friends, acquaintances and family	337	3.3%	1.76	0.85
Feedback from the audience	346	36.1%	3.20	1.11
Competing news organizations	331	16.0%	2.37	1.18
Media laws and regulation	344	47.4%	3.40	1.23
Access to information	348	56.6%	3.63	1.11
Government censorship	306	10.8%	1.87	1.17
Government officials	306	7.5%	1.67	1.07
Politicians	307	8.8%	1.68	1.12
Businesspeople	305	5.6%	1.54	0.94
Public relations	331	22.1%	2.55	1.27
Relationships with news sources	333	33.3%	2.98	1.22
Police	302	10.6%	1.88	1.11
Issue advocacy groups	306	11.4%	1.96	1.12
Scientists or health experts	320	25.0%	2.62	1.29
Religious groups and institutions	304	11.5%	1.87	1.17
Military	297	7.1%	1.74	1.02
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	294	5.1%	1.45	0.91
Organized crime and criminal groups	292	4.8%	1.40	0.87
Terrorist groups	289	3.5%	1.32	0.76

Question: "Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist." (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Serbia[1]

SONJA SEIZOVA

INTRODUCTION

A successor state of Yugoslavia, Serbia, initiated a delayed democratization process in 2000. The EU accession process, initiated in 2012, has stagnated since 2021. The country has experienced significant state capture since 2014 under the dominance of the populist Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), with the political system frequently characterized as an electoral autocracy or a hybrid regime. Due to extensive governmental reliance on media control, political opponents also describe it as a 'spin dictatorship.'

Over the past decade, Serbia's position in the Reporters Without Borders World Press Freedom Index declined by approximately 30 places to a historic low of 96th globally. In the context of asymmetric political polarization, escalating social tensions, and a highly concentrated media market, journalists face increasing threats, including physical assaults, legal harassment, and surveillance through spyware. Impunity for attacks against media professionals remains pervasive: between 2016 and 2024, only 16% of documented cases of violence or threats against journalists resulted in convictions.

The fieldwork for this study was conducted between late 2022 and mid-2023, characterized by heightened political tensions and prolonged demonstrations. The protests addressed a range of issues, including environmental opposition to lithium mining projects, public outrage following mass school shootings, and armed incidents within Kosovo.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

An average journalist in our sample in Serbia was 41.5 years old (SD = 11.7; Median = 40), and was slightly more likely to be a woman (56.7%). Journalists are generally well educated: 51.5% of them held a Bachelor's degree or equivalent, 21.3% a Master's degree or equivalent, and an additional 1.5% have obtained a doctorate. Moreover, 77.2% of the respondents have acquired formal education or professional training in journalism. This education or training is usually obtained at university or in college (58.9%) as well as through apprenticeships or cadetships (90.3%) and short-term courses (53.6%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

More than one third of journalists in Serbia (36.0%) worked for a native online media organization, nearly as much for a TV organization (33.3%), 20.1% for an outlet that traditionally focused on newspapers publishing, 4.2% for magazines, 3% for a news agency, and 2.7% in a radio outlet. Very few journalists worked for telecommunications companies (0.4%) or claimed not to have a main employer (0.4%). Regarding area of coverage, 70.5% of the journalists reported they mainly worked for trans/national media, while 27.2% primarily catered to local or regional media and 2.2% had no main medium.

On average, journalists in Serbia had 16.3 years of professional experience (SD = 11.2; Median = 15), with an average working week of 43.1 hours (SD = 12.7; Median = 40; for those in full-time employment). A majority of them (71.6%) worked on a variety of beats or subject areas rather than on a single one. Less than one-third of journalists (29.6%) were members of professional associations.

Almost all interviewed journalists had a full-time contract, either permanent (74.3%) or fixed term (15.3%). There were 8.6% free-lancers or self-employed journalists, and very few with part-time permanent (0.7%) or fixed-term (1.1%) contract. High dependency on one employer, lack of effective union organization, as well as no real market for free-lancers, indicate journalists' vulnerability to internal and external influences, highlighted by the fact that 23.4% sought an additional source of income. Nearly two-thirds reported that they were stressed very often (35.1%) or often (26.2%). Only 14.9% had never or rarely felt that way, while 23.1% felt stressed sometimes.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Of note, surveillance is the most reported threat (16.4% often and very often, 22.4% sometimes) experienced by journalists in Serbia followed by demeaning or hateful speech (12% often and very often, 22% sometimes), public discrediting of their work, and questioning their morale (see Table 1). The number of journalists who have experienced legal actions taken against them is indicative of the rising number of Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPP) recorded in the country. Workplace bullying and threats that target family also feature as safety threats that take place sometimes.

Journalists were most concerned about impunity for attacks against journalists, rather than their personal physical, emotional or mental, and financial wellbeing (see Table 2), indicating the impact of decades-long unsolved murders of journalists and a low level of indictments for other attacks, which often do not see resolution in court.

[1] Country sample does not fully align with WJS specifications regarding maximum margin of error (see WJS3 Methodology).

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	268	4.5%	7.5%	22.0%	24.3%	41.8%
Public discrediting of your work	268	3.4%	8.2%	14.6%	15.7%	58.2%
Surveillance	268	3.7%	12.7%	22.4%	15.3%	45.9%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	268	0.7%	1.9%	6.0%	10.4%	81.0%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	268	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	98.9%
Legal actions against you because of your work	268	0.4%	2.6%	10.4%	10.4%	76.1%
Stalking	267	0.0%	0.7%	5.6%	6.7%	86.9%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	268	1.1%	5.6%	13.8%	20.1%	59.3%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	268	0.0%	0.0%	2.6%	6.3%	91.0%
Other physical attacks	268	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	5.6%	92.5%
Coercion	268	0.0%	0.0%	2.2%	7.8%	89.9%
Questioning of your personal morality	267	1.1%	7.9%	17.2%	14.6%	59.2%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	268	0.0%	0.4%	4.9%	6.7%	88.1%
Others disseminating your personal information	268	0.4%	3.7%	7.5%	12.3%	76.1%
Workplace bullying	268	0.7%	1.9%	9.3%	15.3%	72.8%
Abductions	268	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	268	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	3.0%	95.1%
Intimidation that targets family	268	0.4%	1.1%	8.2%	5.2%	85.1%

Question: “In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?”

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ Strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	268	24.6%	2.60	1.33
Concerned about physical well-being	268	36.6%	2.94	1.30
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	268	47.0%	3.18	1.30
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Serbia go unpunished	268	85.4%	4.37	0.86

Question: “Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.” (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Journalists in post-Covid Serbia prioritized their role in supporting efforts to protect public health, following a period of wide-spread misinformation and mass protests against government’s measures. The journalists valued being detached observers and analysts who promote peace and tolerance, point towards possible solutions to society’s problems and speak on behalf of the marginalized. Catering to the needs of the audience was more important than scrutinizing those in power, while providing entertainment was valued similarly to motivating people to participate in politics. The least important roles were setting the political agenda, supporting government policy, and conveying a positive image of political leaders.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	268	89.6%	4.51	0.76
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	268	72.4%	3.99	1.23
Shine a light on society’s problems	268	88.1%	4.44	0.80
Motivate people to participate in politics	268	37.7%	3.09	1.27
Provide analysis of current affairs	268	84.7%	4.30	0.82
Let people express their views	268	78.7%	4.16	0.90
Provide information people need to form political opinion	268	70.9%	3.90	1.16
Advocate for social change	267	58.4%	3.69	1.13
Influence public opinion	268	70.1%	3.91	0.95
Set the political agenda	266	15.4%	2.29	1.18
Promote peace and tolerance	268	86.2%	4.43	0.82
Educate the audience	268	81.0%	4.25	0.89
Point toward possible solutions to society’s problems	268	86.6%	4.31	0.86
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	268	80.6%	4.24	0.91
Support national development	266	54.5%	3.50	1.21
Support government policy	268	10.1%	1.87	1.13
Convey a positive image of political leaders	268	5.6%	1.76	1.02
Provide entertainment and relaxation	268	31.7%	2.93	1.20
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	268	44.4%	3.30	1.25
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	268	45.5%	3.41	1.09
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	268	49.6%	3.49	1.09
Support efforts to protect public health	268	92.2%	4.58	0.73
Counteract disinformation	268	77.2%	4.05	0.92
Discuss future implications of current events	268	89.6%	4.51	0.76

Question: “Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Journalists in Serbia believed in facts and objective reality, as well as in their duty to alert about untruthful claims (see Table 4). While they value interpretation to make sense of facts, they rather do not think that journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work, nor that the truth is shaped by those in power.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	268	54.5%	3.51	0.98
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	268	19.8%	2.54	1.03
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	268	28.0%	2.81	1.00
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	268	42.9%	3.22	1.08
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	268	78.0%	3.96	0.87
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	268	23.9%	2.81	1.01
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	268	42.9%	3.21	0.92
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	268	74.3%	3.90	0.80
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	268	39.6%	3.17	0.95
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	268	13.1%	2.48	0.97
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	268	86.2%	4.21	0.74

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Journalists in Serbia strongly agreed on the importance of professional standards rather than subjective and situational considerations for ethical reporting (see Table 5). When it comes to the justification of controversial reporting methods, most journalists found it acceptable to use hidden recording devices and use confidential documents without authorization from those in power, but not from ordinary people (see Table 6). Accepting money from sources is not justified.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	267	77.5%	4.16	0.94
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	267	43.8%	3.19	1.16
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	268	23.5%	2.59	1.17
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	268	14.2%	2.27	1.06

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	268	0.4%	33.2%
Using hidden recording devices	267	1.5%	48.3%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	267	7.5%	55.4%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	267	4.9%	47.2%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	268	0.4%	13.8%
Paying people for confidential information	268	3.0%	27.6%
Accepting money from sources	268	1.1%	1.5%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	268	1.1%	22.4%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	268	0.4%	23.5%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	268	0.0%	22.4%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Journalists in Serbia reported a limited but fair amount of freedom in their work (see Table 7). More than two thirds claimed to have complete or a great deal of freedom in selecting their stories and in deciding which aspects to emphasize in a story. Media freedom in the country was rated much lower.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	268	68.3%	3.90	0.84
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	268	71.6%	3.97	0.81
Media freedom in Serbia	263	6.1%	2.38	0.79

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Journalists in Serbia found journalism ethics and personal values and beliefs to fare highest among the internal factors influencing news production (see Table 8). They are followed by the availability of news-gathering resources and editorial policy. Among the external factors, most journalists considered access to information and media laws and regulation as being extremely or very influential.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	258	21.3%	2.77	1.04
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	251	40.6%	3.18	1.12
The business managers of the news organization	238	23.9%	2.55	1.25
The owners of the news organization	237	28.7%	2.78	1.28
Editorial policy	260	56.9%	3.62	1.03
Advertising considerations	221	13.1%	1.98	1.15
Profit expectations	225	20.9%	2.23	1.27
Audience research and data	248	31.9%	2.88	1.20
Availability of news-gathering resources	260	58.5%	3.64	0.92
Time limits	262	51.5%	3.45	1.09
Journalism ethics	264	84.5%	4.28	0.88
Self-censorship	245	12.7%	2.05	1.14
Personal values and beliefs	254	65.4%	3.83	1.04
Colleagues in other media	257	4.7%	1.81	0.93
Friends, acquaintances and family	255	5.1%	1.80	0.97
Feedback from the audience	258	31.8%	3.06	1.03
Competing news organizations	252	7.9%	1.95	1.01
Media laws and regulation	257	58.4%	3.53	1.10
Access to information	249	47.4%	3.27	1.17
Government censorship	240	18.8%	2.10	1.29
Government officials	235	5.5%	1.63	0.96
Politicians	239	11.3%	1.89	1.15
Business people	232	6.0%	1.59	0.92
Public relations	238	9.7%	2.11	1.06
Relationships with news sources	249	21.3%	2.65	1.15
Police	223	3.1%	1.40	0.78
Issue advocacy groups	235	0.9%	1.63	0.81
Scientists or health experts	243	0.0%	2.35	1.16
Religious groups and institutions	227	16.9%	1.39	0.72
Military	213	1.3%	1.25	0.63
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	199	1.4%	1.11	0.38
Organized crime and criminal groups	205	0.0%	1.22	0.60
Terrorist groups	193	1.5%	1.08	0.33

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Seychelles

Timothy Klein, Tessa Henderson & Olga Klymenko

INTRODUCTION

The Seychelles is an archipelagic state in the Indian Ocean, consisting of 115 islands, with 80% of the 103,000 people living on the island of Mahe, and the remaining 20% living on Praslin and La Digue. Seychellois are ethnically diverse; over 80% of the population are Seychellois Creole – a mixture of African, European, and Asian backgrounds. Since Seychelles gained independence in 1976 its GDP has grown steadily to $17,879 per capita in 2023. Seychelles' first president, Sir James Mancham, was overthrown in 1977 by France-Albert René, who introduced a single-party socialist state which lasted until 1993 when the first multi-party elections were held. René was elected 3 times and his party, the Seychelles People`s United Party, remained in power till 2020, when opposition leader Wavel Ramkalawa was elected.

The first newspaper was published in 1926 and radio started in the 1940s. A television station was started in 1983, by a state-funded independent broadcaster, which was eventually transformed into the *Seychelles Broadcast Corporation* (*SBC*). At the time of WJS data collection, *SBC* radio and TV stations were the largest employer of journalists in the Seychelles. Following the reduction of TV and radio licensing fees in 2012, the first private radio station (*Pure 90.7*) was started, and the first private TV channel (*TéléSesel*) was launched in 2017. Journalism is reported in both English, Creole and French, depending on the news program.

There are two daily newspapers – the publicly owned *Seychelles Nation* and the privately owned *Today in Seychelles*. There are also two weekly partisan papers – *The People* and *The Independent*, which are available in e-copy. There was also the *Seychelles News Agency*, a news website, which was closed in December, 2024.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The average age of Seychellois journalists was 38 years (SD = 12.3, Median = 34.5). When it comes to the education level of Seychellois journalists, 36.5% have completed at least their undergraduate college degrees (27.9% have a bachelor's and 9.8% have a master's degree) and 60.3% have not completed a college degree (21.3% have some university, but no degree, 38.1% completed high school, and 1.6% have not completed school). Additionally, 61.9% of Seychellois journalists have completed some form of formal journalism training, with 25.6% studying journalism in university or college, 33.3% receiving training via apprenticeships or cadetships, and 55.6% completing a short-term journalism training. Among Seychellois journalists 68.3% were female.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

In terms of the background of their main employers, television (*SBC* and *TéléSesel*) employs the most journalists in the Seychelles (45.0%) followed by organizations focused on newspaper publishing and radio outlets (21.7% each); others reported no main medium for their employer.

On average, Seychellois journalists had 11.4 years of professional experience (SD = 15.6; Median = 7). Most journalists (79.0%) worked on a variety of beats or subject areas rather than on one and 40.0% reported belonging to a journalism union or professional association.

Among the journalists surveyed, 82.6% had a full-time contract (66.7% reported having a full-time permanent contract and 15.9% had a full-time fixed term contract). Only 9.5% worked as freelancers or were self-employed. About a quarter (25.4%) of journalists reported getting some income from outside of journalism, while 74.6% reported getting all their income from journalism. The average number of hours worked each week by full-time journalists in the Seychelles was reported at 48.1 hours (SD = 14.3; Median = 48).

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Demeaning or hateful speech was the most common threat experienced by Seychellois journalists (see Table 1). The next most common threats were the public discrediting of their work and surveillance. Arrest, detention, abductions, and other physical attacks are uncommon (96.8% reported never experiencing any of those threats). Around 11.1%, reported having at least 1 instance of sexual assault or sexual harassment. More than half of Seychellois journalists were concerned about their emotional well-being, and 30.6% were concerned about their physical wellbeing (see Table 2). Over 37% of Seychellois journalists strongly agree that they are "concerned that those who harm journalists in the Seychelles go unpunished." Job security among Seychelles journalists appears relatively strong, as only 3.2% strongly agree that they are worried about losing their job in the next year.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	63	6.3%	15.9%	27.0%	22.2%	28.6%
Public discrediting of your work	63	1.6%	9.5%	22.2%	23.8%	42.9%
Surveillance	63	1.6%	7.9%	17.5%	17.5%	55.6%
Questioning of your personal morality	63	0.0%	4.8%	14.3%	15.9%	65.1%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	63	1.6%	1.6%	11.1%	14.3%	71.4%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	63	1.6%	3.2%	7.9%	14.3%	73.0%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	63	0.0%	3.2%	11.1%	7.9%	77.8%
Others disseminating your personal information	63	0.0%	1.6%	6.3%	11.1%	81.0%
Workplace bullying	63	0.0%	4.8%	6.3%	6.3%	82.5%
Stalking	63	1.6%	0.0%	3.2%	11.1%	84.1%
Coercion	63	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%	11.1%	87.3%
Legal actions against you because of your work	63	0.0%	0.0%	7.9%	4.8%	87.3%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	63	1.6%	0.0%	6.3%	3.2%	88.9%
Intimidation that targets family	63	0.0%	0.0%	4.8%	6.3%	88.9%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	63	0.0%	0.0%	3.2%	1.6%	95.2%
Abductions	63	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%	96.8%
Other physical attacks	63	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%	1.6%	96.8%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	63	0.0%	1.6%	0.0%	1.6%	96.8%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	62	53.2%	3.19	1.41
Concerned that those who harm journalists in [country] go unpunished	62	37.1%	2.94	1.30
Concerned about physical well-being	62	30.6%	2.50	1.24
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	62	3.2%	1.87	0.90

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Seychellois journalists reported their most important roles were to educate the audience, to let people express their views, and to shine a light on society's problems. Journalists' political role was the least valued, as the lowest four journalistic roles were all related to the role of journalism in politics (see Table 3).

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Educate the audience	63	98.4%	4.78	0.61
Let people express their views	63	92.1%	4.44	0.80
Shine a light on society's problems	63	87.3%	4.40	0.98
Promote peace and tolerance	63	85.7%	4.38	0.87
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	63	87.3%	4.29	0.92
Counteract disinformation	63	82.5%	4.16	1.05
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	63	76.2%	4.08	1.11
Advocate for social change	63	74.6%	4.02	0.99
Provide analysis of current affairs	63	79.4%	4.00	1.02
Support national development	63	73.0%	4.00	0.95
Be a detached observer	63	76.2%	3.89	1.09
Support efforts to protect public health	63	71.4%	3.87	1.17
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	63	66.7%	3.84	1.19
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	63	69.8%	3.83	1.19
Discuss future implications of current events	63	61.9%	3.75	1.06
Provide information people need to form political opinion	63	61.9%	3.73	1.11
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	63	57.1%	3.62	1.16
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	63	58.7%	3.59	1.12
Influence public opinion	63	50.8%	3.40	1.31
Provide entertainment and relaxation	63	50.8%	3.33	1.30
Motivate people to participate in politics	63	31.7%	2.97	1.27
Support government policy	63	23.8%	2.78	1.08
Set the political agenda	63	11.1%	2.11	1.17
Convey a positive image of political leaders	63	7.9%	1.76	1.01

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

There was disagreement among Seychellois journalists about the nature of truth and objectivity in reporting (see Table 4). While the highest agreement among journalists was regarding the need for interpreting facts (67.2%), which is aligned with the subjective view of truth, the second highest agreement was that objective reporting was possible (59.0%).

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	61	67.2%	3.69	1.13
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	61	59.0%	3.61	0.95
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	61	34.4%	3.18	1.04
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	61	27.9%	2.92	1.05
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	61	18.0%	2.57	1.09

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Journalists in Seychelles tended to agree that what is ethical should be decided by professional standards rather than personal judgment (see Table 5). When it comes to controversial reporting methods, using a hidden recording device and using confidential documents without authorization was justified on occasion by just over half of journalists (see Table 6). The two least acceptable practices were publishing unverified information (19.0% found it justified on occasion) and accepting money from a source (11.1% said it was justified on occasion or always).

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	63	58.7%	3.76	1.15
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	63	46.0%	3.24	1.07
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	63	31.7%	2.87	1.16
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	63	11.1%	2.38	0.99

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Using hidden recording devices	63	0.0%	52.4%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	63	0.0%	50.8%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	63	3.2%	33.3%
Claiming to be somebody else	63	0.0%	33.3%
Paying people for confidential information	63	0.0%	33.3%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	63	1.6%	27.0%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	63	0.0%	23.8%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	63	3.2%	17.5%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	63	0.0%	19.0%
Accepting money from sources	63	1.6%	9.5%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

A little less than half of Seychellois journalists reported having a great deal/complete freedom to select which news stories they cover and a little more than half reported they had a great deal/complete freedom to decide which aspects of a story to focus on (see Table 7). About a quarter of Seychellois journalists agreed that journalism in the Seychelles had a great deal/complete freedom.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	60	45.0%	3.45	1.05
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	61	54.1%	3.66	1.00
Media freedom in Seychelles	59	25.4%	3.12	0.83

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Five of the top six influences for Seychellois journalists were internal to the newsroom (journalism ethics, time limits for reporting, editorial supervisors, resources for news gathering, and editorial policy). The most influential external factor was access to information (see Table 8).

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Journalism ethics	56	75.0%	3.91	1.00
Time limits	55	63.6%	3.67	1.12
Access to information	55	61.8%	3.58	1.05
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	53	60.4%	3.49	1.19
Availability of news-gathering resources	56	46.4%	3.39	1.22
Editorial policy	56	48.2%	3.30	1.26
Media laws and regulation	58	48.3%	3.28	1.17
Feedback from the audience	59	47.5%	3.14	1.21
Personal values and beliefs	57	38.6%	3.02	1.40
The owners of the news organization	52	36.5%	3.02	1.39
The business managers of the news organization	52	38.5%	2.94	1.43
Audience research and data	52	36.5%	2.94	1.38
Relationships with news sources	55	29.1%	2.80	1.18
Peers on the news staff	54	25.9%	2.74	1.19
Competing news organizations	55	30.9%	2.67	1.35
Government censorship	53	30.2%	2.62	1.36
Self-censorship	58	24.1%	2.52	1.31
Government officials	54	25.9%	2.44	1.33
Advertising considerations	53	22.6%	2.42	1.35
Terrorist groups	55	0.0%	2.42	1.30
Profit expectations	51	17.6%	2.31	1.33
Public relations	54	14.8%	2.31	1.11
Colleagues in other media	57	12.3%	2.30	1.09
Business people	54	11.1%	2.22	1.21
Politicians	54	18.5%	2.19	1.29
Issue advocacy groups	52	11.5%	2.19	1.10
Police	53	13.2%	2.13	1.24
Friends, acquaintances and family	55	7.3%	1.89	1.01
Scientists or health experts	51	23.6%	1.75	0.91
Religious groups and institutions	49	5.9%	1.67	0.94
Military	46	6.1%	1.35	0.71
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	46	2.2%	1.33	0.73
Organized crime and criminal groups	45	2.2%	1.22	0.56

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Sierra Leone

Sarah Bomkapre Koroma

INTRODUCTION

Sierra Leone is navigating a transformative period in the face of major political, economic, and social challenges. In 2025, the country is still recovering from the aftermath of a failed coup attempt in November 2023, when armed assailants attacked military barracks and a central prison in Freetown, resulting in over 20 deaths and the escape of more than 2,000 inmates. Although many suspects were later apprehended, the incident heightened political tensions and insecurity. Inflation dropped significantly due to tighter monetary policies; but Sierra Leone still grapples with developmental needs. Socially, the country is battling a public health crisis related to the synthetic drug "kush," which has devastated its youth.

Sierra Leone has a proud journalistic legacy dating back to 1801, when it launched one of sub-Saharan Africa's first newspapers, and it later pioneered radio broadcasting in West Africa. Despite progress, the media sector has experienced setbacks including limited resources and political pressure. Radio remains the most accessible and trusted medium.

During field work of this study, 2023-2024, the attempted coup disrupted media operations and highlighted risks to journalists' safety. They often work under precarious conditions, lack access to limited resources, face occasional arbitrary arrests and threats to their safety. Despite occasional risks and resource constraints, journalists in Sierra Leone play an essential role in strengthening democracy, thereby informing the public, elevating community voices, and holding institutions accountable. Their perseverance in the face of adversity underscores the enduring vitality of the country's media landscape.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

Our sample showed an overrepresentation of male journalists, who comprised 78.2% of respondents, females made up 21.8%**.** No respondents identified as another gender or declined to disclose. The average age of journalists was 33.4 years (SD = 7.8), with a Median age of 33 and a range from 20 to 68 years, indicating a relatively young yet seemingly experienced workforce.

This gender imbalance may reflect both sampling conditions and structural dynamics in the media sector. Female journalists were more accessible to researchers, more willing to participate in the study and are more concentrated in sectors such as radio which had the highest representation in the sample. Additionally, organizations that facilitated access to respondents had higher female participation, unintentionally shaping the final composition.

In terms of education, while detailed degree data were limited, 81.2% of respondents reported having completed formal journalism training, suggesting a well-prepared professional base. The remaining 18.8% had not received such training. These findings reflect a skilled and relatively youthful journalistic community in Sierra Leone, while also underscoring ongoing gendered patterns of visibility and engagement in research.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

In terms of the background of their main employers, the majority of journalists in Sierra Leone (82.2%) reported working primarily in radio outlets, followed by 7.4% in organizations focused on newspaper publishing and 5.8% in television. Online and news agency roles were minimal. Most were affiliated with local media (54.7%), while 22.1% worked with transnational, 14.3% with regional, and only 1.2% with national media. Nearly 61.3% held non-management roles, 17.6% were in middle management, and 21.1% in top management. About 58.5% held full-time, permanent positions, while 20.4% worked freelance or on fixed terms. A significant 92.9% did not earn their entire income from journalism, indicating reliance on additional employment.

Regarding specialization, 67.4% focused on a specific beat, while 32.6% covered multiple subjects. Union membership was reported by 71.1%. Journalists had a Median of 7 years of experience (Mean = 8.3; SD = 5.7), indicating a large variance, potentially due to data outliers. Weekly working hours for journalists in full-time employment had a Median of 40 (Mean = 34.2; SD = 22.2), again suggesting substantial workload differences. Stress levels were notable, with 51.8% experiencing it "sometimes," 19.0% "often," and 12.6% "very often." These figures reflect economic instability, role diversity, and psychological strain that affect journalistic sustainability in Sierra Leone.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Verbal attacks such as demeaning or hateful speech and public discrediting of journalists' work were among the most frequently reported threats by journalists in Sierra Leone (see Table 1). Digital threats like surveillance and hacking were also prevalent. Although less common, severe incidents such as physical attacks and coercion continue to pose risks. These experiences align with widespread concerns: over 60% of journalists reported being strongly concerned about their physical well-being and nearly as many about emotional and mental health. In contrast, only 19.4% expressed strong concern about job insecurity. Most notably, 62.4% strongly agreed that those who harm journalists in Sierra Leone would go unpunished (see Table 2).

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	252	5.2%	17.1%	29.0%	12.7%	36.1%
Public discrediting of your work	252	3.2%	8.7%	16.7%	12.3%	59.1%
Surveillance	252	4.4%	12.7%	21.8%	18.7%	42.5%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	250	3.6%	5.2%	15.6%	8.8%	66.8%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	249	1.2%	4.0%	4.0%	6.0%	84.7%
Legal actions against you because of your work	246	1.6%	1.6%	6.1%	6.5%	84.1%
Stalking	247	2.4%	3.2%	8.9%	13.4%	72.1%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	248	5.6%	4.0%	27.8%	10.5%	52.0%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	248	0.8%	2.8%	3.6%	4.0%	88.7%
Other physical attacks	245	2.4%	4.9%	17.1%	11.0%	64.5%
Coercion	249	3.2%	4.4%	10.0%	10.0%	72.3%
Questioning of your personal morality	248	2.0%	5.2%	17.7%	7.7%	67.3%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	249	4.0%	4.8%	14.9%	13.3%	63.1%
Others disseminating your personal information	249	1.6%	6.8%	19.3%	12.9%	59.4%
Workplace bullying	246	2.8%	2.8%	17.1%	12.6%	64.6%
Abductions	250	0.8%	3.2%	4.4%	11.2%	80.4%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	251	1.2%	3.6%	9.2%	8.0%	78.1%
Intimidation that targets family	244	0.0%	2.5%	10.7%	6.1%	80.7%

Question: “In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?”

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	252	19.4%	3.34	1.27
Concerned about physical well-being	250	60.4%	3.52	1.26
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	250	56.0%	3.39	1.37
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Sierra Leone go unpunished	250	62.4%	3.66	1.35

Question: “Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.” (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Sierra Leonean journalists showed strong consensus on several core roles, especially those emphasizing civic responsibility and public information (see Table 3). A majority rated as very or extremely important the roles of monitoring those in power (73.3%), shining a light on societal problems (83.1%), and providing information for political opinion (80.1%). High importance was also placed on educating the audience (91.5%), supporting public health (79.3%), and countering disinformation (73.3%). In contrast, roles focused on emotional impact or audience appeal – such as telling emotionally moving stories (72.2%) and providing entertainment (64.5%) – received comparatively lower importance ratings, suggesting a strong normative commitment to journalism’s watchdog and educational functions.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	250	54.4%	3.30	1.31
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	251	73.3%	3.98	1.26
Shine a light on society’s problems	249	83.1%	4.26	1.07
Motivate people to participate in politics	250	56.4%	3.37	1.47
Provide analysis of current affairs	249	82.7%	4.23	1.00
Let people express their views	251	84.5%	4.33	0.93
Provide information people need to form political opinion	246	80.1%	4.10	1.10
Advocate for social change	251	82.5%	4.27	1.03
Influence public opinion	246	73.6%	3.91	1.14
Set the political agenda	249	59.8%	3.53	1.39
Promote peace and tolerance	245	86.1%	4.44	1.01
Educate the audience	246	91.5%	4.55	0.85
Point toward possible solutions to society’s problems	249	88.0%	4.35	0.90
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	247	80.6%	4.26	1.08
Support national development	247	84.2%	4.31	1.05
Support government policy	247	71.7%	3.98	1.09
Convey a positive image of political leaders	250	50.8%	3.32	1.32
Provide entertainment and relaxation	248	64.5%	3.73	1.21
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	246	78.5%	4.19	1.08
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	250	76.0%	3.98	1.02
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	248	72.2%	3.91	1.14
Support efforts to protect public health	246	79.3%	4.15	1.01
Counteract disinformation	247	73.3%	3.97	1.15
Discuss future implications of current events	252	77.0%	4.02	1.01

Question: “Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Sierra Leonean journalists widely support core epistemic roles. About 75% see interpretation as key to understanding facts, and 79% believe journalists should let facts speak for themselves. Most also value transparency and correcting false claims. However, views diverge on the impact of power and personal beliefs in shaping truth (see Table 4).

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	236	75.4%	3.93	1.14
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	233	50.2%	3.28	1.25
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	236	50.0%	3.29	1.33
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	236	58.9%	3.67	1.22
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	235	71.9%	3.95	1.15
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	239	49.4%	3.26	1.35
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	227	57.0%	3.44	1.31
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	238	79.0%	4.14	1.22
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	235	76.2%	4.00	1.15
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	237	78.1%	4.16	1.17
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	240	76.3%	4.04	1.04

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Journalists in Sierra Leone strongly supported professional standards over situational or personal judgment in ethical reporting (see Table 5). However, when it comes to controversial reporting methods, most rejected accepting money from sources or using personal materials without consent, while many found using hidden recordings and confidential documents acceptable (see Table 7).

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	254	85.0%	4.38	0.95
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	254	59.4%	3.65	1.13
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	254	44.9%	3.29	1.22
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	253	35.2%	2.82	1.37

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	250	22.8%	21.6%
Using hidden recording devices	249	28.9%	53.4%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	250	18.4%	32.8%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	251	18.3%	31.9%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	253	18.2%	30.8%
Paying people for confidential information	243	25.5%	36.6%
Accepting money from sources	250	18.8%	28.4%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	247	23.9%	35.2%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	252	24.2%	34.9%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	252	14.7%	19.8%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Journalists in Sierra Leone reported moderate levels of editorial autonomy (see Table 7). About 61.8% indicated they had complete or a great deal of freedom in selecting the news stories they work on, while 58.2% felt similarly about deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized. In contrast, perceptions of overall media freedom in the country were lower, with only 48.9% expressing a high degree of freedom. These figures reflect a constrained but not entirely restricted media environment, where individual autonomy exists within broader systemic limitations.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	244	44.7%	3.45	1.08
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	244	16.8%	2.55	1.06
Media freedom in Sierra Leone	244	28.3%	2.92	1.00

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

In Sierra Leone, journalists identified editorial supervisors, editorial policy, and profit expectations as key internal influences on their work (see Table 8). Externally, government censorship, media laws, and access to information were most often rated as extremely or very influential, highlighting strong organizational and regulatory pressures.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	226	51.8%	3.31	1.10
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	231	66.2%	3.79	1.15
The business managers of the news organization	223	50.2%	3.33	1.23
The owners of the news organization	219	57.1%	3.58	1.24
Editorial policy	219	65.3%	3.72	1.20
Advertising considerations	218	44.0%	3.24	1.27
Profit expectations	210	43.3%	3.13	1.36
Audience research and data	211	52.6%	3.33	1.26
Availability of news-gathering resources	222	61.3%	3.60	1.24
Time limits	224	60.7%	3.54	1.28
Journalism ethics	224	77.2%	4.07	1.09
Self-censorship	218	60.1%	3.52	1.30
Personal values and beliefs	220	62.7%	3.65	1.29
Colleagues in other media	214	47.7%	3.19	1.24
Friends, acquaintances and family	201	29.9%	2.66	1.26
Feedback from the audience	215	59.1%	3.53	1.30
Competing news organizations	211	54.0%	3.41	1.31
Media laws and regulation	217	74.2%	4.02	1.20
Access to information	213	70.4%	3.85	1.27
Government censorship	195	39.0%	3.00	1.34
Government officials	196	32.1%	2.79	1.35
Politicians	194	27.8%	2.57	1.33
Business people	205	37.1%	2.89	1.32
Public relations	204	46.6%	3.17	1.33
Relationships with news sources	211	58.8%	3.43	1.37
Police	196	38.8%	2.87	1.36
Issue advocacy groups	196	44.9%	3.09	1.35
Scientists or health experts	194	41.8%	3.06	1.34
Religious groups and institutions	194	42.8%	2.98	1.39
Military	173	24.9%	2.47	1.42
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	161	26.1%	2.37	1.41
Organized crime and criminal groups	144	20.1%	2.17	1.35
Terrorist groups	133	23.3%	2.16	1.40

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Singapore[1]

Matthew Chew & Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

INTRODUCTION

The news media in Singapore are closely regulated by the state through a complex system of legal frameworks that govern both traditional and online platforms. This regulatory environment has resulted in a culture of self-regulation among journalists, who have been socialized to understand the boundaries that cannot be crossed: Sensitive topics such as politics, race, and religion are approached with caution.

In recent years, the government has passed legislation against fake news, implementing the Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act (POFMA) and the Foreign Interference (Countermeasures) Act (FICA), which empower authorities to issue correction orders or block accounts disseminating content deemed false or manipulative. During the data collection period in Singapore – from September 2023 to March 2024 – the government issued POFMA correction orders against several individuals, including members of opposition parties, over claims made on social media platforms such as TikTok. These claims concerned public housing and questions related to two ministers' rentals of state-owned bungalows. A correction order requires whoever published the falsehood to publish a correction notice alongside the original content.

While its anti-fake news laws have raised concerns about their impact on freedom of speech, and the city-state has consistently ranked low in international press freedom indices, Singapore has continued to attract international media and tech companies, many of which have established their regional headquarters in the small island-nation due to its political stability and low levels of corruption.

The main news media players form a duopoly, with SPH Media Trust (SMT), primarily funded by the state, publishing print newspapers of different languages, and the government-owned Mediacorp operating mainstream TV and radio stations. But with Singapore's digital infrastructure and high internet and smartphone penetration rates, social media use is high, and many get their news primarily from online sources, including from organizations outside Singapore. While news audiences trust traditional news media platforms more, alternative news brands are gaining traction, particularly among younger audiences who prefer video and bite-sized news content.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The sample of Singaporean journalists consists mostly of women (68.3%). The average age is 37.4 years (SD = 10.2; Median = 35) and most of them hold a bachelor's degree (75.6%), while 20.6% hold a master's degree and 0.6% have a doctorate. A small minority completed only high school (1.1%) or left university without completing a degree (2.2%). Most are trained in journalism through formal education or professional training (55.3%). Of these journalists that have had journalism training, 76.0% got it from their university and college education, 56.8% also honed their skills through journalism apprenticeships or cadetships, and 40.7% from short-term courses.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

Journalists in Singapore are mostly experienced in their roles, with the average journalist staying on for 11.7 years in the field (SD = 9.2; Median = 9.0 years). Most of the respondents (56.1%) hold no management role, suggesting that a large segment focused on reportage rather than supervisory duties. The majority (72.3%) also work within a specific beat.

The average work week for a full-time journalist was 45.4 hours (SD = 7.7; Median = 45 hours). While their hours are slightly above the global average, they have employment stability, with an overwhelming 91.8% in full-time permanent contracts. While the majority derive their income exclusively from journalism, 13.6% have additional jobs outside of journalism. Furthermore, 44.0% of the respondents are members of a union. However, the demanding news landscape seems to contribute to high stress levels: A combined 55.4% of journalists report feeling stressed often (31.5%) or very often (23.9%) at work. When including those who were "sometimes" (29.9%) stressed, 85.3% experienced work-related stress.

Most respondents work for national or transnational organizations (88.5%) and for state-run media (70.5%). In terms of the background of their main employers, the most common are television-based newsrooms (29.3%), newspapers (26.1%), and news agencies (25.0%). Only 10.3% work for Internet-based employers and only 1.1% work for radio.

[1] Country sample does not fully align with WJS specifications regarding maximum margin of error (see WJS3 Methodology).

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Singapore journalists encounter digital and reputational threats when producing the news but report not facing any physical risks. A large majority of journalists have never experienced arrests, detentions, physical attacks, sexual assault, stalking, or intimidation targeting their family. This indicates a relatively high level of physical safety for journalists in Singapore.

However, the profession takes a significant emotional and mental toll. "Concerned about emotional and mental well-being" emerged as the most pressing work-related issue, with nearly 60% of journalists agreeing with this statement. Facing demeaning or hateful comments, as well as having their work publicly discredited, has become increasingly common: Over 40% of respondents reported experiencing these at least sometimes.

Additionally, 22.8% of journalists reported experiencing surveillance sometimes, often or very often, raising concerns about being monitored in the course of their work. There is also notable concern about impunity: 35% of respondents strongly agreed that individuals who harm journalists in Singapore often go unpunished, indicating a desire for greater accountability and protection.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	184	3.3%	6.0%	34.8%	31.0%	25.0%
Public discrediting of your work	184	4.9%	7.6%	29.3%	28.8%	29.3%
Surveillance	184	3.3%	5.4%	14.1%	23.4%	53.8%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	183	0.5%	1.6%	6.0%	10.4%	81.4%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	184	0.0%	0.5%	0.5%	1.6%	97.3%
Legal actions against you because of your work	184	0.0%	1.6%	6.0%	8.7%	83.7%
Stalking	184	0.5%	1.1%	3.3%	6.5%	88.6%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	184	1.6%	2.7%	9.8%	16.8%	69.0%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	184	0.0%	1.6%	4.3%	8.2%	85.9%
Other physical attacks	184	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	2.2%	96.7%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	184	1.1%	2.2%	6.0%	10.3%	80.4%
Others disseminating your personal information	184	2.2%	1.1%	9.2%	16.8%	70.7%
Workplace bullying	184	1.1%	5.4%	12.0%	10.9%	70.7%
Intimidation that targets family	183	0.0%	1.1%	1.6%	4.4%	92.9%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	183	15.3%	2.24	1.08
Concerned about physical well-being	183	37.2%	2.77	1.26
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	183	59.0%	3.40	1.26
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Singapore go unpunished	183	35.0%	2.90	1.22

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Singaporean journalists identify with the roles of an educator and a public watchdog, producing pieces to combat disinformation. They tend to provide insights into current affairs and highlight societal issues. They view their function as an independent public service, aiming to inform the public through analysis and truthful reporting. Notably, Singaporean journalists do not see it as their responsibility to set the political agenda or spur on political participation.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	184	66.3%	3.76	1.05
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	184	49.5%	3.38	1.25
Shine a light on society's problems	184	83.7%	4.20	0.87
Motivate people to participate in politics	184	9.8%	2.11	1.12
Provide analysis of current affairs	184	78.8%	4.10	0.91
Let people express their views	184	59.2%	3.60	1.02
Provide information people need to form political opinion	184	53.3%	3.40	1.32
Advocate for social change	184	42.9%	3.14	1.23
Influence public opinion	184	26.6%	2.85	1.12
Set the political agenda	184	10.3%	1.93	1.09
Promote peace and tolerance	184	51.6%	3.38	1.21
Educate the audience	184	89.7%	4.39	0.70
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	184	65.8%	3.67	1.09
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	184	56.5%	3.58	1.16
Support national development	184	38.6%	2.99	1.18
Support government policy	184	15.8%	2.40	1.12
Convey a positive image of political leaders	184	10.3%	1.82	1.11
Provide entertainment and relaxation	184	27.7%	2.82	1.16
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	184	46.7%	3.28	1.15
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	184	34.2%	2.89	1.24
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	184	50.0%	3.47	1.13
Support efforts to protect public health	184	58.7%	3.53	1.17
Counteract disinformation	184	83.2%	4.30	0.86
Discuss future implications of current events	184	77.7%	4.04	0.93

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

A large majority reported that interpretation is essential to make sense of facts, suggesting that they see providing context and meaning as part of their role, rather than simply reporting raw information. They largely rejected the notion of absolute truth, indicating a preference for nuance in news stories and are aware that the truth can be shaped by those in power.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	181	81.8%	4.01	0.76
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	181	60.2%	3.57	1.03
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	181	30.9%	2.93	0.97
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	181	12.2%	2.35	0.98
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	181	63.0%	3.59	0.91

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Journalists in Singapore have a principled approach toward reporting the news and largely abide by professional norms. They shun sensationalism and deceptive practices, but some indicated that exceptional methods can be acceptable in select cases.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	184	58.7%	3.55	1.07
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	184	69.0%	3.70	0.97
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	184	43.5%	3.05	1.09
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	184	11.4%	2.22	0.99

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	184	0.0%	34.8%
Using hidden recording devices	184	1.1%	73.9%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	184	1.6%	52.2%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	184	4.9%	57.1%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	184	1.6%	44.0%
Paying people for confidential information	184	2.2%	37.0%
Accepting money from sources	184	0.0%	6.5%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	184	1.1%	38.6%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	184	1.1%	20.7%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	184	0.0%	21.2%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

The majority (50.3%) report having a great deal or complete freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized, although a relatively smaller percentage (44.8%) say so about selecting news stories. Still, there is strong acknowledgment of the restrictions to the country's media freedom, echoing international perceptions about low levels of media freedom in Singapore.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	183	44.8%	3.29	0.80
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	183	50.3%	3.46	0.69
Media freedom in Singapore	183	12.6%	2.71	0.71

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Singaporean journalists operate within a top-down editorial structure, where supervisors, senior editors, and editorial policies exert the strongest influence on news production (see Table 8). While economic pressures on newsrooms are increasing, journalists appear insulated from commercial considerations such as advertising and profit expectations, allowing them to maintain a commitment to journalistic ethics. Their reliance on institutional infrastructure for access to information and resources may explain the subtle influence of external forces like government censorship and officials, even if they are not overt or direct.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	178	23.0%	2.69	1.06
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	183	74.3%	4.04	0.92
The business managers of the news organization	160	28.1%	2.68	1.24
The owners of the news organization	168	36.9%	2.93	1.28
Editorial policy	182	69.8%	3.86	0.93
Advertising considerations	147	12.2%	1.99	1.10
Profit expectations	153	12.4%	2.10	1.14
Audience research and data	179	43.0%	3.24	1.13
Availability of news-gathering resources	179	62.0%	3.69	0.92
Time limits	182	57.1%	3.64	1.00
Journalism ethics	183	66.7%	3.84	0.93
Self-censorship	177	19.8%	2.63	1.07
Personal values and beliefs	176	40.9%	3.21	1.07
Colleagues in other media	168	11.9%	2.19	1.08
Friends, acquaintances and family	154	6.5%	1.89	0.94
Feedback from the audience	174	32.2%	3.02	0.99
Competing news organizations	176	33.0%	3.02	1.13
Media laws and regulation	179	46.9%	3.40	1.09
Access to information	179	65.9%	3.75	0.97
Government censorship	170	31.2%	2.88	1.23
Government officials	168	28.0%	2.79	1.14
Politicians	160	20.6%	2.61	1.18
Business people	165	13.3%	2.24	1.06
Public relations	172	11.0%	2.24	0.97
Relationships with news sources	173	34.1%	3.03	1.09
Police	130	15.4%	2.25	1.22
Issue advocacy groups	157	7.0%	2.11	0.91
Scientists or health experts	129	29.3%	1.88	1.01
Religious groups and institutions	97	7.8%	1.80	1.16
Military	81	12.4%	1.46	0.92
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	81	6.2%	1.40	0.83
Organized crime and criminal groups	81	4.9%	1.32	0.86
Terrorist groups	140	6.2%	2.79	1.17

Question: "Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist." (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Slovakia

Slavomír Gálik, Ján Višňovský, Branislav Oprala & Bianka Francistyová

INTRODUCTION

Slovak society is currently highly polarized, and the reasons for this can be seen in the radical communication by key figures on the Slovak political scene on such significant topics as the murder of investigative journalist Ján Kuciak and his fiancée in 2018, the government's actions during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the war in Ukraine. The culmination of this polarization was the attempted assassination of Prime Minister Robert Fico on 15 May 2024, which was an extreme manifestation of social disintegration and political radicalism.

Economically, Slovakia faces several systemic challenges. To reduce public debt, the government has adopted consolidation measures that have increased the tax burden in many areas. The Slovak economy is threatened by high energy prices as well as tariffs imposed by US President Donald Trump. The automotive industry is a driving force economically and contributes significantly to the country's GDP.

In 2018, both Slovakia and the world were shaken by the murder of investigative journalist J. Kuciak and his fiancée M. Kušnírová, sparking a wave of protests and discussions about the safety of journalists. It also led to a change in top political positions. Even though the perpetrator of the murder has been convicted, the trials of those who ordered the murder are still ongoing. Hate attacks against journalists have increased during the pandemic and the Russian Ukrainian conflict are present mainly in the online space and on social media.

Data collection for this study took place from September 2021 to April 2022. Declining trust in media institutions and the constant undermining of the objectivity of reporting and the balance of political debate have led to further political and social instability. During the data collection, there was an increase in hate speech against media workers, including from politicians.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The sample of Slovak journalists has a slightly higher percentage of females in terms of gender (54%). On average, the journalists were 42.7 years old (SD = 11.3; Median = 41). They are generally well educated: 70.8% have a master's degree, 8.8% have a bachelor's degree, 7.6% have a doctorate, and 8.0% have completed high school. 64.3% have completed either formal education or professional training in journalism, of which 93.1% have earned a college degree in the field. When asked to indicate the type of formal professional training or education, most of the respondents had obtained a degree from a university (81.1%), but some had also professional experience (25.9%) or had taken a short-term course at a university (22.3%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

Most journalists in Slovakia do not have managerial positions at work (58.2%). 20.8% of journalists have a middle management role and top managers represent 12.9% of all journalists. Up to 63.7% of journalists work in national media, 21.3% in regional media, 9.9% in local media and 5.0% in multinational media. Over half of all journalists in Slovakia work in private/commercial media (57.9%), while 32.2% work in public service media. Work in community media is at 4.4%, non-profit media 0.3% and others 3.5%, (of which 66.6% mentioned city-run media). Less than a third of journalists in Slovakia work in television (26.9%), followed by newspapers (26.0%), radio (17.8%), internet native (13.2%), news agency (7.9%), while work in a magazine was less represented (2.0%).

A close majority of journalists surveyed in Slovakia work under full-time permanent contracts – 51.5%, as freelancers or self-employed work 32.5%, in full-time fixed-term contracts it is 8.0%, and 3.8% mention other (with student temporary work agreements, contracting, or self-employment mentioned), part-time permanent contracts 2.6%, and part-time fixed-term contracts 1.8%. More than half (57.3%) of the journalists surveyed receive 100% of their income from journalism and 33.6% also have other sources of income. If journalists also have other means of employment, on average 74.7% of their salary comes from journalism, while 25.3% comes from other income.

On average, Slovak journalists had 13.6 years of professional experience (SD = 9.3; Median = 11). Most of them (87.4%) worked on a variety of beats or subject areas and 12.6% worked on a single one. Only a small proportion of journalists in Slovakia are members of trade unions or professional associations. According to the data, 12.2% of respondents reported membership of such organizations, 87.2% stated they were not members, and 1% did not know. This low unionization rate may reflect the traditionally weak role of collective representation in Slovak journalism.

The average working week of Slovak full-time journalists was 43.5 hours (SD = 14.5; Median = 40). Related to this, 63.7% of respondents reported feeling stressed at work often or very often in the previous six months, and 24.9% of respondents reported feeling sometimes stressed at work in the previous six months. Only 11.4% of respondents never or rarely felt this way.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Verbal attacks, such as hate speech or public discrediting of journalists' work, were among the occasional or rare security threats that Slovak journalists faced during the time of data collection (see Table 1). However, despite being encountered less frequently, experiences with more dangerous threats, such as legal action or physical threats, are worrying. These experiences also have an impact on the fears expressed by Slovak journalists; as many as two-thirds of journalists feared that those who harm journalists will go unpunished (see Table 2).

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	342	0.0%	0.0%	32.7%	40.1%	27.2%
Public discrediting of your work	342	0.0%	0.0%	22.8%	34.2%	43.0%
Surveillance	342	0.0%	0.0%	4.7%	11.7%	83.6%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	342	0.0%	0.0%	4.4%	9.1%	86.5%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	342	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	1.2%	98.0%
Legal actions against you because of your work	342	0.0%	0.0%	4.7%	12.3%	83.0%
Stalking	342	0.0%	0.0%	3.2%	12.6%	84.2%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	342	0.0%	0.0%	12.9%	24.0%	63.2%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	342	0.0%	0.0%	1.8%	5.6%	92.7%
Other physical attacks	342	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	3.5%	94.4%
Coercion	342	0.0%	0.0%	12.3%	26.6%	61.1%
Questioning of your personal morality	342	0.0%	0.0%	17.5%	32.7%	49.7%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	342	0.0%	0.0%	2.6%	5.3%	92.1%
Others disseminating your personal information	342	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%	11.7%	84.5%
Workplace bullying	342	0.0%	0.0%	6.4%	11.1%	82.5%
Abductions	342	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%	99.4%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	342	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	99.4%
Intimidation that targets family	342	0.0%	0.0%	3.5%	6.4%	90.1%

Question: “In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?”

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ stronglyagree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	342	14.0%	2.3	1.11
Concerned about physical well-being	342	12.3%	2.1	1.08
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	342	13.7%	2.7	1.22
Concerned that those who harm journalists in [country] go unpunished	342	66.7%	3.7	1.13

Question: “Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.” (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Slovak journalists expressed strong support for the traditional roles of journalism such as objective reporting, clarification of social issues, education of the audience, etc. This is proven by high statements on the importance of education of the audiences, shining a light on and pointing toward possible solutions to society’s problems, as well as counteracting disinformation. On the other hand, they expressed less support for politically assertive roles and political agendas (see Table 3).

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	342	89.2%	4.38	0.82
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	342	55.6%	3.46	1.28
Shine a light on society’s problems	342	75.7%	4.06	1.02
Motivate people to participate in politics	342	29.2%	2.75	1.20
Provide analysis of current affairs	342	60.8%	3.66	1.12
Let people express their views	342	45.3%	3.27	1.20
Provide information people need to form political opinion	342	51.5%	3.38	1.23
Advocate for social change	342	21.3%	2.54	1.16
Influence public opinion	342	26.0%	2.71	1.19
Set the political agenda	342	6.7%	1.95	1.00
Promote peace and tolerance	342	68.1%	3.83	1.15
Educate the audience	342	76.6%	4.06	0.96
Point toward possible solutions to society’s problems	342	71.1%	3.90	1.03
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	342	48.0%	3.34	1.23
Support national development	342	46.8%	3.34	1.21
Support government policy	342	17.8%	2.38	1.19
Convey a positive image of political leaders	342	2.6%	1.33	0.74
Provide entertainment and relaxation	342	22.8%	2.48	1.29
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	342	44.7%	3.25	1.27
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	342	52.0%	3.42	1.21
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	342	27.2%	2.62	1.31
Support efforts to protect public health	342	65.8%	3.77	1.07
Counteract disinformation	342	71.3%	3.96	1.08
Discuss future implications of current events	342	59.9%	3.64	1.11

Question: “Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Most Slovak journalists think that facts are key and essential for objective reporting (they should be allowed to speak for themselves), but they also realize that interpreting them is just as important. It is equally important for Slovak journalists to point out false information (see Table 4).

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	342	83.9%	4.20	0.83
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	342	14.3%	2.18	1.12
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	342	21.3%	2.44	1.13
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	342	54.7%	3.43	1.22
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	342	74.6%	3.87	0.93
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	342	27.2%	2.78	1.10
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	342	53.2%	3.33	1.03
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	342	95.3%	4.49	0.62
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	342	38.6%	3.24	0.91
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	342	84.2%	4.27	0.97
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	342	93.6%	4.59	0.66

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Slovak journalists unanimously agreed that professional norms are more important for ethical reporting than subjective and situational considerations (see Table 5). However, when it came to the justification of controversial reporting methods, they admitted to these only in very rare cases (see Table 6).

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	342	84.8%	4.29	0.81
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	342	45.6%	3.16	1.14
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	342	20.2%	2.30	1.19
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	342	11.4%	1.90	1.09

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	342	1.2%	48.0%
Using hidden recording devices	342	0.9%	60.8%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	342	3.8%	48.5%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	342	0.3%	49.7%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	342	0.0%	21.3%
Paying people for confidential information	342	1.5%	26.6%
Accepting money from sources	342	2.6%	14.9%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	342	2.3%	21.1%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	342	0.9%	14.9%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	342	0.9%	21.9%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Slovak journalists said that they have a relatively high degree of freedom in their work. More than two-thirds claimed to have complete or great freedom in choosing their stories and deciding which aspects to emphasize in each story. Overall though, media freedom was rated lower by respondents (58.2%) (see Table 7).

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	342	86.3%	4.12	0.70
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	342	85.7%	4.14	0.75
Media freedom in Slovakia	342	58.2%	3.61	0.81

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Slovak journalists considered journalistic ethics to be the most important in news production (78.6%). Similarly important were media laws, regulations, and editorial policy. However, journalists also cited time constraints as a relatively important factor in news production (61.2%) (see Table 8).

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	327	38.2%	3.14	1.05
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	328	58.5%	3.55	0.92
The business managers of the news organization	243	8.5%	2.07	1.13
The owners of the news organization	240	14.6%	2.09	1.24
Editorial policy	324	60.0%	3.58	1.05
Advertising considerations	227	9.3%	1.90	1.14
Profit expectations	243	12.8%	2.28	1.15
Audience research and data	281	23.8%	2.67	1.14
Availability of news-gathering resources	316	55.1%	3.41	1.15
Time limits	325	61.2%	3.66	0.99
Journalism ethics	332	78.6%	4.16	0.94
Self-censorship	266	16.5%	2.32	1.17
Personal values and beliefs	295	27.8%	2.66	1.24
Colleagues in other media	319	12.9%	2.22	1.12
Friends, acquaintances and family	311	6.1%	1.95	0.97
Feedback from the audience	332	26.5%	2.83	1.10
Competing news organizations	315	12.7%	2.37	1.03
Media laws and regulation	311	35.0%	2.95	1.26
Access to information	327	60.9%	3.65	1.13
Government censorship	249	18.9%	1.94	1.46
Government officials	251	8.4%	1.75	1.08
Politicians	255	9.0%	1.79	1.08
Business people	243	4.9%	1.54	0.89
Public relations	280	20.7%	2.24	1.22
Relationships with news sources	295	34.2%	2.75	1.24
Police	242	5.4%	1.59	0.96
Issue advocacy groups	254	11.4%	2.00	1.10
Scientists or health experts	286	23.4%	2.49	1.29
Religious groups and institutions	218	6.0%	1.64	1.01
Military	195	3.6%	1.32	0.79
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	183	0.5%	1.13	0.47
Organized crime and criminal groups	174	0.6%	1.09	0.42
Terrorist groups	174	0.6%	1.07	0.37

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential)

Slovenia

Igor Vobič & Boris Mance

INTRODUCTION

With a population of approximately two million, Slovenia – a former republic of socialist Yugoslavia and a member of the European Union since 2004 – hosts more than 2,000 media outlets, among them around 140 news media outlets. While this abundance suggests a pluralistic media landscape, the reality is more complex.

Slovenian journalism has undergone continuous transformation since the end of socialist self-management and the breakup of Yugoslavia in 1991, a period marked by the country's transition to capitalism and Western-style representative democracy. Prevailing libertarian principles of media freedom, along with the notion that journalists serve as representatives of the public, have been articulated in ways that reflect not only the influence of Western models – their traditions, ideas, and institutions – but also elements of Slovenia's own historical experience. These processes have resulted in a landscape characterized by the concentration of media ownership and recurrent political attempts to influence journalism. Consequently, debates surrounding media pluralism and professional autonomy remain prominent and frequent topics of public debate.

The country retains a legacy of a strong welfare state, originating from its former socialist system and, to an extent, still upheld today. Although the system has experienced a degree of erosion over time, it continues to provide citizens with comprehensive social and health security, accessible public services, and a range of social safety nets. These mechanisms serve to mitigate the adverse effects of precarious employment, including within journalism.

At the time of data collection, a prolonged strike was underway at the public broadcaster RTV Slovenia, driven by concerns over political interference and threats to professional autonomy. This coincided with efforts by the newly elected government – following the 2022 parliamentary elections – to dismantle entrenched legal mechanisms of political control. These reforms sought to establish conditions of institutional autonomy and restore public confidence in public media.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

Among Slovenian journalists surveyed, 57.2% identified as female, 40.7% as male, and 0.3% as other. The average age was 44.0 years (SD = 10.4), with a Median of 45 years. In terms of education, two thirds had a Bologna master's degree or equivalent, 17.9% held a Bologna bachelor's degree or equivalent, and 2.1% a doctorate. Around 60.6% had formal education or professional training in journalism. Of those trained, 80.9% attended a university or college, 89.9% had undergone an apprenticeship, and 21.1% completed a short-term course.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

In terms of the background of their main employers, nearly a quarter of surveyed journalists worked for companies publishing newspapers (24.9%) or television (24.6%), while 23.7% were employed in radio outlets, reflecting the continued dominance of traditional media. Digital-native outlets accounted for a smaller but notable share (15.1%), followed by news agencies (8.0%). Employment in magazines (3.0%), telecommunications (0.3%), and other sectors (0.6%) was far less common. The data also included one non-response (0.3%), suggesting nearly complete survey participation.

The Slovenian journalistic workforce demonstrates a relatively balanced employment structure. The vast majority of surveyed journalists (84.4%) held full-time permanent contracts, indicating relatively stable employment conditions. A small proportion worked under part-time permanent (1.5%) or full-time fixed-term arrangements (2.4%). Freelance or self-employment accounted for 8.3% of respondents, while 3.5% reported other employment types. These results suggest a workforce predominantly characterized by secure, long-term positions, with limited precarious employment.

Most journalists in the sample (84,4%) are employed full-time in news organizations, with a mean of 20.4 years of work experience (SD = 9.9, Median = 20) and an average of 44,3 hours worked per week (SD = 8.5, Median = 40; for those in full-time employment). About a fifth of journalists (21.8%) maintain secondary employment outside their primary media work. This supplementary work is distributed across: education (5.6%), PR/corporate communications (3.2%), advertising (2.9%), government agencies (1.8%), and other sectors (5.3%). The workforce demonstrates strong professional organization, with nearly two-thirds (64.3%) holding union membership.

While journalists are frequently assigned to specific coverage areas, only 26.2% specialize in particular beats or subject matters. Work-related stress appears prevalent, affecting more than a quarter of respondents (27.7%), indicating potential challenges in workplace conditions despite the overall stability of employment in the sector.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Journalists in Slovenia have encountered a range of safety threats. Most frequently reported are demeaning or hateful speech (60.4% at least sometimes), public discrediting (52.6%), and surveillance (38.4%) (see Table 1). More severe incidents such as arrests, stalking, or physical attacks were rarely reported. Concerns about safety are prominent: 29.6% are worried about job loss, 58.2% about physical well-being, 64.4% about mental health, and 81.8% about impunity for those who harm journalists (see Table 2).

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	338	19.8%	17.2%	23.4%	28.4%	11.2%
Public discrediting of your work	336	19.0%	11.0%	22.6%	23.8%	23.5%
Surveillance	329	5.8%	11.9%	20.7%	27.7%	34.0%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	336	0.6%	1.5%	6.0%	10.4%	81.5%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	337	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	99.4%
Legal actions against you because of your work	337	1.8%	1.5%	4.2%	10.4%	82.2%
Stalking	338	0.0%	2.4%	1.8%	7.1%	88.8%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	336	2.7%	6.0%	11.0%	28.6%	51.8%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	336	0.0%	1.2%	0.9%	5.1%	92.9%
Other physical attacks	334	0.0%	0.9%	1.2%	3.0%	94.9%
Coercion	335	0.6%	1.2%	3.0%	13.7%	81.5%
Questioning of your personal morality	336	6.0%	7.7%	17.6%	31.5%	37.2%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	338	0.6%	0.3%	0.9%	5.9%	92.3%
Others disseminating your personal information	338	1.5%	2.7%	6.8%	17.8%	71.3%
Workplace bullying	337	5.0%	3.0%	6.5%	15.4%	70.0%
Abductions	336	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	99.7%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	338	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	0.3%	99.1%
Intimidation that targets family	337	0.6%	0.3%	1.2%	6.5%	91.4%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	338	29.6%	2.58	1.36
Concerned about physical well-being	337	58.2%	3.39	1.35
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	337	64.4%	3.55	1.31
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Slovenia go unpunished	335	81.8%	4.26	0.97

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Journalists in Slovenia assign high importance to several roles. The most valued are shining light on social problems (Mean = 4.6) (see Table 3), counteracting disinformation (Mean = 4.6), providing political information (Mean = 4.4), and being a detached observer (Mean = 4.4). Less importance is placed on advocacy roles or audience maximization strategies.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	332	53.3%	4.37	0.77
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	338	52.1%	4.26	0.94
Shine a light on society's problems	335	70.4%	4.64	0.62
Motivate people to participate in politics	336	10.7%	2.36	1.08
Provide analysis of current affairs	337	48.7%	4.32	0.75
Let people express their views	335	28.1%	3.81	0.94
Provide information people need to form political opinion	339	58.1%	4.38	0.88
Advocate for social change	339	26.0%	3.55	1.15
Influence public opinion	336	8.9%	2.97	1.08
Set the political agenda	334	12.6%	3.08	1.13
Promote peace and tolerance	336	54.5%	4.28	0.91
Educate the audience	337	55.5%	4.32	0.88
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	335	40.6%	4.03	0.97
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	338	41.7%	4.05	1.01
Support national development	337	18.4%	3.35	1.10
Provide entertainment and relaxation	339	4.1%	2.08	0.99
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	338	12.1%	3.08	1.09
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	339	8.6%	2.65	1.15
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	339	8.3%	2.46	1.03
Support efforts to protect public health	338	27.2%	3.78	1.00
Counteract disinformation	338	73.7%	4.64	0.65
Discuss future implications of current events	339	40.4%	4.16	0.84

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

A substantial portion of Slovenian journalists believe in the importance of objective reporting and letting the facts speak (see Table 4). Approximately 93.1% agree that journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful. However, only 6.3% agree that truth is inevitably shaped by those in power, indicating low relativistic leanings.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	336	40.8%	3.16	1.05
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	335	6.3%	1.86	0.90
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	336	15.5%	2.50	1.00
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	336	38.1%	3.06	1.11
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	337	41.2%	3.12	1.06
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	334	27.2%	2.88	0.99
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	335	6.3%	2.27	0.83
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	335	48.7%	3.36	0.88
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	334	24.3%	2.74	1.00
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	335	7.2%	2.08	0.93
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	334	93.1%	4.435	0.65

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Ethical standards are highly valued among Slovenian journalists as 89.0% believe that ethical behavior should always be guided by professional standards (see Table 5). Justification for controversial methods is low: for instance, only 0.9% approve of pretending to be someone else, and 0.3% support publishing unverified information (see Table 7). The majority reject such practices.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	337	89.0%	4.44	0.75
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	331	48.3%	3.16	1.29
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	331	12.7%	2.03	1.11
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	330	3.9%	1.57	0.86

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	338	0.9%	60.1%
Using hidden recording devices	338	0.3%	79.6%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	337	5.3%	77.7%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	336	3.0%	67.3%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	338	0.3%	20.4%
Paying people for confidential information	338	0.0%	25.1%
Accepting money from sources	338	0.0%	1.2%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	337	0.0%	4.7%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	338	0.3%	12.4%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	338	0.3%	34.6%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

There is moderate to strong editorial freedom in Slovenia (see Table 7). Around 61.5% report having considerable freedom to select stories, and about two thirds in deciding what to emphasize. Media freedom is perceived as somewhat lower (59.5%), suggesting external influences may still be present.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	338	61.5%	3.70	0.90
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	336	67.3%	3.87	0.85
Media freedom in Slovenia	333	59.5%	3.31	1.02

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Internal editorial factors, such as supervision and policy, are more influential than external ones (see Table 8). Editorial supervisors (75.8%) and ethics (73.9%) are seen as highly influential. External actors like politicians, business people, and organized crime are not considered as very/extremely influential. This points to perceptions of a relatively autonomous media environment.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	331	47.4%	3.51	1.02
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	327	75.8%	4.13	0.90
The business managers of the news organization	299	48.8%	3.45	1.42
The owners of the news organization	285	41.1%	3.07	1.48
Editorial policy	333	69.7%	3.94	1.00
Advertising considerations	301	20.6%	2.44	1.23
Profit expectations	305	38.0%	3.06	1.36
Audience research and data	318	33.6%	3.03	1.26
Availability of news-gathering resources	318	50.3%	3.50	1.02
Time limits	328	63.7%	3.80	1.04
Journalism ethics	330	73.9%	4.00	1.01
Self-censorship	318	15.4%	2.46	1.06
Personal values and beliefs	324	44.8%	3.38	1.14
Colleagues in other media	332	8.7%	2.38	0.93
Friends, acquaintances and family	332	6.3%	2.09	0.92
Feedback from the audience	333	21.3%	2.88	0.91
Competing news organizations	332	16.0%	2.52	1.02
Media laws and regulation	324	38.9%	3.23	1.05
Access to information	332	63.6%	3.77	0.91
Government censorship	310	8.1%	1.72	1.00
Government officials	317	3.8%	1.63	0.86
Politicians	324	6.8%	1.77	0.96
Business people	323	5.0%	1.69	0.91
Public relations	328	9.8%	2.18	0.96
Relationships with news sources	328	32.9%	3.06	1.02
Police	317	1.6%	1.51	0.76
Issue advocacy groups	324	7.4%	2.08	0.98
Scientists or health experts	322	24.8%	2.70	1.15
Religious groups and institutions	327	2.1%	1.38	0.72
Military	324	0.3%	1.28	0.60
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	316	0.0%	1.10	0.35
Organized crime and criminal groups	319	0.3%	1.12	0.40
Terrorist groups	319	0.0%	1.04	0.23

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

South Africa

MARENET JORDAAN

INTRODUCTION

Since democratization, South Africa has enjoyed relative political stability, supported by a progressive Constitution. Yet it remains plagued by corruption and so-called state capture. In addition, despite strong public institutions and civil society organizations, South Africa is the most unequal country in the world. There are concerning levels of unemployment and poverty – especially amongst the youth. Inequality is also evident in a lack of diversity and access to media products in the country.

State control and clampdowns on journalists during apartheid made place for Constitutionally guaranteed freedom of expression, allowing journalists to do their work without fear of retribution. A strong tradition of investigative journalism has played a decisive role in exposing political and corporate malfeasance.

South African media outlets have not been immune to economic threats facing the media worldwide. Furthermore, ethical breaches and editorial interference from some media owners are steadily eroding trust in the media. Notwithstanding such challenges, most local journalists still play a key role in upholding democracy.

The fieldwork for this study was conducted towards the end of 2023 after the Covid-19 pandemic had decimated the media. With many journalists leaving the industry, and some media outlets closing without much fanfare, establishing a stable population of journalists from which to draw a representative sample was challenging.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The sample consisted of more female (58.6%) than male (40.0%) journalists, with some respondents (1.4%) indicating their gender as "other". On average, journalists were 44.1 years old (Median = 43; SD = 11.9). South African journalists were well-educated with 64.7% having completed at least a bachelor's degree, 16.6% with master's degrees and 1.4% who had doctorates. Most journalists (80.7%) had some formal education or professional training in journalism specifically. Journalists might have undergone more than one form of training, with the most prevalent being university courses (81.7%), short-term courses (67.9%) and journalism internships (cadetships) at 53.2%.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

Most respondents (63.2%) worked for private or commercial media, 22.2% for public service media, 6.6% for non-profit media and 4.2% for community media.

In terms of the background of their main employer, newspapers were more prevalent (35.3%) than internet native outlets (21.5%), followed by radio (13.5%) and television (11.8%). Altogether 7.6% of respondents did not have one main employer. Few journalists worked for news agencies (5.9%) or magazines (4.2%). Most respondents worked for media outlets that reach a national or transnational audience (76.9%) and 22.1% reached a local or regional audience.

South African journalists predominantly worked on full-time permanent contracts (81.2%) when the fieldwork was conducted. A further 10.2% indicated that they are self-employed or working as freelancers. Other working situations included full-time fixed-term contracts (5.0%), part-time fixed-term contracts (2.0%) or part-time permanent contracts (1.7%). Just under a third of journalists (30.3%) also earned an income outside of journalism. The average weekly working hours was 46.0 hours (Median = 45; SD = 12.2; for those in full-time employment).

Respondents had an average of 18.6 years of experience in journalism (Median = 17; SD = 10.4). More than half of the sampled journalists (57.0%) did not have a management role, with 28.9% working in middle management, and 14.1% fulfilling top management roles.

Almost three-quarters of respondents (73.0%) did not work on a specific beat. Less than half of journalists (44.6%) indicated that they are members of a union specifically aimed at people in the communications field.

Concerningly, respondents in this sample said they very often (42.6%) or often (23.9%) felt stressed out at work over the preceding six months. Another 25.9% sometimes felt this way, with very few journalists rarely (5.6%) or never (2.0%) having felt this way.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

The South African respondents' perceptions on safety pointed to distressing mental health conditions. Instances of demeaning or hateful speech, public discrediting of their work and questioning of their personal morality were some of the most prevalent safety threats (see Table 1). These findings are underscored by the fact that almost two-thirds of respondents were worried about their emotional and mental well-being (see Table 2). A noteworthy percentage of journalists indicated that they were concerned about losing their job in journalism in the next 12 months. Despite the freedom they enjoy, a broad majority of journalists were worried that those who harm journalists in South Africa go unpunished.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	304	12.2%	16.8%	35.5%	23.0%	12.5%
Public discrediting of your work	305	5.9%	12.8%	30.2%	28.2%	23.0%
Surveillance	303	1.7%	5.3%	17.8%	24.4%	50.8%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	305	1.6%	2.6%	13.4%	24.9%	57.4%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	303	0.3%	0.3%	0.7%	3.6%	95.0%
Legal actions against you because of your work	304	1.6%	4.3%	13.2%	18.4%	62.5%
Stalking	300	0.7%	1.0%	7.7%	15.3%	75.3%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	304	2.3%	6.6%	23.7%	24.3%	43.1%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	304	0.3%	2.3%	5.9%	7.6%	83.9%
Other physical attacks	303	0.3%	1.0%	5.6%	9.9%	83.2%
Coercion	303	0.7%	2.6%	9.6%	13.5%	73.6%
Questioning of your personal morality	303	5.3%	10.2%	26.7%	23.1%	34.7%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	304	0.7%	2.3%	4.9%	10.5%	81.6%
Others disseminating your personal information	304	2.6%	4.6%	13.8%	17.4%	61.5%
Workplace bullying	305	4.9%	3.9%	18.0%	18.4%	54.8%
Abductions	303	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	1.7%	98.0%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	303	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	2.6%	96.7%
Intimidation that targets family	302	0.3%	1.0%	4.6%	6.3%	87.7%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	305	40.3%	3.10	1.31
Concerned about physical well-being	304	34.5%	2.88	1.28
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	303	63.7%	3.58	1.29
Concerned that those who harm journalists in South Africa go unpunished	305	78.4%	4.05	1.03

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

South African journalists considered educating the audience, shining a light on society's problems and counteracting disinformation as paramount (see Table 3). Taking a traditional critical-watchdog stance was considered important, yet it appears to be somewhat on par with more developmental roles, such as speaking on behalf of the marginalized. Politically assertive roles were amongst the least valued.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	303	67.7%	3.88	1.10
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	303	84.2%	4.34	0.95
Shine a light on society's problems	305	91.5%	4.58	0.76
Motivate people to participate in politics	304	32.9%	2.90	1.31
Provide analysis of current affairs	304	76.6%	4.04	1.13
Let people express their views	302	76.5%	4.14	1.01
Provide information people need to form political opinion	305	67.5%	3.85	1.28
Advocate for social change	304	59.9%	3.73	1.21
Influence public opinion	302	42.4%	3.14	1.31
Set the political agenda	300	22.3%	2.42	1.32
Promote peace and tolerance	301	64.8%	3.85	1.16
Educate the audience	304	92.8%	4.60	0.71
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	304	72.7%	4.00	1.06
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	305	73.8%	4.09	1.10
Support national development	303	54.1%	3.49	1.29
Support government policy	303	11.2%	2.09	1.14
Convey a positive image of political leaders	303	1.3%	1.34	0.72
Provide entertainment and relaxation	304	35.2%	2.90	1.38
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	302	50.0%	3.45	1.30
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	302	41.7%	3.08	1.33
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	305	66.6%	3.80	1.03
Support efforts to protect public health	304	58.6%	3.59	1.27
Counteract disinformation	303	91.4%	4.56	0.77
Discuss future implications of current events	303	80.5%	4.14	1.00

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

South African respondents mostly agreed on perceptions of journalistic epistemology (see Table 4). The majority believed journalists should let the facts speak for themselves, with a similar percentage saying interpretation is necessary to make sense of these facts. Alerting audiences when a source's claim is untruthful were also viewed as important. There were more polarized views on whether journalists should be part of the communities they portray to ensure accurate reporting.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	295	89.8%	4.29	0.72
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	293	36.5%	3.00	1.12
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	291	35.7%	2.99	1.03
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	294	29.9%	2.90	1.14
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	293	68.6%	3.71	1.01
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	294	35.0%	2.91	1.11
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	293	26.6%	2.74	1.07
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	292	90.8%	4,30	0.74
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	291	40.5%	3.23	1.16
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	291	33.0%	2.86	1.20
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	294	87.8%	4.30	0.87

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

South African journalists' perceptions of ethics were strongly aligned with professional standards, rather than personal judgment (see Table 5). Some respondents (30.8%), however, (strongly) agreed that ethics could depend on specific situations. Controversial reporting practices, such as accepting money or paying for confidential information, were strongly rejected (see Table 6). Using government documents, or confidential information of powerful people, without permission were perceived as more justifiable.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	303	79.5%	4.12	1.05
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	304	63.2%	3.56	1.17
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	305	30.8%	2.66	1.25
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	305	8.4%	1.94	1.00

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	305	0.7%	32.5%
Using hidden recording devices	302	2.3%	68.9%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	302	6.0%	70.9%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	304	3.3%	69.1%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	304	0.3%	46.7%
Paying people for confidential information	305	0.0%	18.7%
Accepting money from sources	302	0.0%	0.7%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	305	0.3%	25.6%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	302	0.3%	13.2%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	305	0.3%	12.1%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

South African journalists predominantly experienced editorial autonomy (see Table 7), with around three-quarters of respondents who indicated that they have freedom in both selecting stories and deciding which aspects of such stories to emphasize. A similar percentage of journalists experienced a great deal or complete media freedom in South Africa.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	302	75.2%	3.95	0.85
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	305	77.4%	3.97	0.85
Media freedom in South Africa	300	74.7%	3.80	0.63

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Journalism ethics and media laws and regulation were highly influential for South African journalists (see Table 8). Influences directly related to internal newswork practices were also very or extremely influential for a noteworthy percentage of journalists, including access to information, time limits and editorial policy. Less than 10% of respondents considered public relations, friends, acquaintances and family as very/extremely influential.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	280	40.7%	3.18	1.11
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	284	61.6%	3.73	0.99
The business managers of the news organization	248	24.6%	2.48	1.34
The owners of the news organization	243	30.9%	2.49	1.48
Editorial policy	295	67.1%	3.80	1.17
Advertising considerations	228	17.1%	2.16	1.27
Profit expectations	237	23.2%	2.41	1.32
Audience research and data	283	44.5%	3.19	1.27
Availability of news-gathering resources	297	61.3%	3.61	1.17
Time limits	292	68.8%	3.81	1.10
Journalism ethics	302	84.8%	4.30	0.96
Self-censorship	270	28.5%	2.64	1.38
Personal values and beliefs	289	46.7%	3.30	1.36
Colleagues in other media	289	21.5%	2.60	1.13
Friends, acquaintances and family	269	8.6%	2.13	1.05
Feedback from the audience	294	40.5%	3.22	1.08
Competing news organizations	288	30.6%	2.95	1.13
Media laws and regulation	295	74.2%	4.01	1.05
Access to information	296	81.4%	4.17	0.92
Government censorship	246	17.5%	2.17	1.33
Government officials	254	16.1%	2.04	1.28
Politicians	254	10.6%	1.93	1.15
Business people	265	12.8%	2.06	1.18
Public relations	282	8.9%	2.06	1.09
Relationships with news sources	286	47.2%	3.36	1.25
Police	245	25.3%	2.47	1.38
Issue advocacy groups	272	30.1%	2.79	1.28
Scientists or health experts	272	42.6%	3.20	1.29

Question: "Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist." (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

South Korea

Seungahn Nah

INTRODUCTION

Data for South Korea were collected between September 2022 and February 2023. During this period, the country experienced political turbulence involving the ruling party, the opposition, and civil society, following the inauguration of President Yoon Suk-yeol in May 2022. The government was criticized for its handling of economic issues, such as rising housing costs, inflation, and declining exports. Social challenges included widening generational divides, labor disputes, and a falling birthrate. In October 2022, a tragic crowd crush in Seoul's Itaewon district killed over 150 people, prompting national mourning and public outrage over the government's failure to manage public safety.

South Korea has a dynamic media landscape shaped by its democratic transition in 1987. While press freedom is protected by law, political and corporate pressures persist. The media ecosystem comprises powerful legacy outlets, major broadcasters, and a growing number of digital platforms, contributing to a vibrant but often polarized information environment.

During the reporting period, the Itaewon tragedy tested media ethics, with some outlets criticized for sensationalism. Journalists encountered restricted access and delays in official communication. Political tensions with major broadcasters escalated, yet investigative journalism continued despite growing concerns about press freedom and increasing polarization

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The majority of South Korean journalists surveyed were male (76.2%), with females making up 23.5% of respondents. The average age was 42.4 (SD = 9.5; Median = 41). In terms of education, 70.5% held a Bachelor's degree, 25.7% a Master's degree, and 1.9% had a doctorate. Over half (58.4%) had received formal education or professional training in journalism. This training was most commonly acquired at universities or colleges (60.6%), through apprenticeships or cadetships (57.4%), and via short-term courses (31.5%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

South Korean journalists work across diverse roles and media contexts. Most (58.5%) are not in management, while 36.3% hold middle-management roles and 5.1% are in top management. A majority (64.9%) work for national or transnational outlets, 26.2% for local or regional media, and 8.9% have no primary medium. Private or commercial ownership dominates, employing 78.9% of journalists. Public service media accounts for 14.3%, with smaller shares in community (3.8%) and nonprofit (0.5%) media. A few (1.1%) selected "other," and 1.4% have no main employer.

Employment appears stable: 95.9% hold full-time permanent contracts. Only 1.1% work part-time, 1.3% on fixed-term contracts, and 1.6% are freelance. However, 44.9% earn income outside journalism, raising concerns about financial security. Journalists reported an average of 14.2 years of experience (SD = 8.9; Median = 12) and work 42.0 hours per week on average (SD = 16.7; Median = 45; for those in full-time employment). Over half (54.9%) cover a specific beat.

Most work for organizations focused on publishing newspapers (49.2%), followed by internet-native outlets (24.1%) and TV organizations (17%). Union membership is high at 70.2%. Stress is common: 42.2% "often" feel stressed, and 24.3% "very often," reflecting the job's emotional demands.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

South Korean journalists report frequent exposure to verbal and reputational threats. Nearly 73% have faced demeaning or hateful speech, and 65% have experienced public discrediting. Surveillance (40%), hacking (44%), and coercion (33.3%) were also reported. Less common but notable were legal actions (22.2%) and stalking (19.8%). Physical threats, including harassment or assault, were reported by a smaller portion. Over half expressed concern about their physical (52.7%) or mental well-being (50.8%), and 46.2% worried that those who harm journalists go unpunished.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	370	7.8%	28.6%	36.8%	21.6%	5.1%
Public discrediting of your work	370	5.9%	24.6%	34.3%	28.6%	6.5%
Surveillance	370	1.6%	11.4%	26.8%	39.7%	20.5%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	370	1.1%	3.0%	9.7%	31.9%	54.3%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	370	0.3%	0.8%	1.9%	9.7%	87.3%
Legal actions against you because of your work	370	0.8%	4.6%	16.8%	18.4%	59.5%
Stalking	370	0.0%	1.4%	4.1%	14.3%	80.3%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	370	1.4%	5.7%	15.4%	27.0%	50.5%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	370	1.1%	3.5%	7.8%	13.5%	74.1%
Other physical attacks	370	0.3%	1.4%	4.6%	19.5%	74.3%
Coercion	370	1.6%	10.3%	21.4%	36.8%	30.0%
Questioning of your personal morality	370	2.7%	12.7%	24.6%	33.8%	26.2%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	370	1.1%	4.6%	14.9%	30.0%	49.5%
Others disseminating your personal information	370	1.6%	6.8%	17.0%	33.2%	41.4%
Workplace bullying	370	1.1%	2.7%	7.3%	23.8%	65.1%
Abductions	370	0.5%	0.8%	1.4%	6.2%	91.1%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	370	0.5%	1.1%	3.0%	8.9%	86.5%
Intimidation that targets family	370	0.0%	1.9%	2.4%	13.2%	82.4%

Question: “In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?”

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	370	11.1%	2.04	1.01
Concerned about physical well-being	370	52.7%	3.39	1.15
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	370	50.8%	3.35	1.17
Concerned that those who harm journalists in South Korea go unpunished	370	46.2%	3.25	1.10

Question: “Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.” (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

South Korean journalists view their roles as watchdogs and problem-solvers. The most valued roles were shining a light on social issues (87.6%), monitoring power (83.8%), and countering disinformation (77.6%). Less emphasis was placed on promoting government policy (13.5%) or projecting a positive image of leaders (9.2%).

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	370	78.1%	3.99	0.69
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	370	83.8%	4.26	0.78
Shine a light on society’s problems	370	87.6%	4.28	0.71
Motivate people to participate in politics	370	43.5%	3.37	0.90
Provide analysis of current affairs	370	66.5%	3.78	0.76
Let people express their views	370	50.3%	3.48	0.91
Provide information people need to form political opinion	370	69.5%	3.80	0.86
Advocate for social change	370	59.2%	3.65	0.88
Influence public opinion	370	59.7%	3.65	0.83
Set the political agenda	370	48.4%	3.45	0.87
Promote peace and tolerance	370	40.3%	3.36	0.92
Educate the audience	370	32.2%	3.12	0.97
Point toward possible solutions to society’s problems	370	69.2%	3.78	0.81
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	370	75.9%	4.01	0.83
Support national development	370	46.5%	3.36	0.94
Support government policy	370	13.5%	2.52	0.94
Convey a positive image of political leaders	370	9.2%	2.02	0.99
Provide entertainment and relaxation	370	21.9%	2.79	0.95
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	370	40.8%	3.27	0.95
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	370	33.8%	3.13	0.90
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	370	35.9%	3.26	0.85
Support efforts to protect public health	370	54.3%	3.55	0.90
Counteract disinformation	370	77.6%	4.09	0.79
Discuss future implications of current events	370	71.4%	3.88	0.76

Question: “Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Most journalists agreed that interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts (76.2%) and that facts should speak for themselves (77.6%). A majority (68.9%) supported transparency about their standpoint, while fewer believed truth is shaped by power (17.0%) or that objectivity is impossible (13.8%).

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	370	76.2%	3.84	0.68
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	370	17.0%	2.56	0.98
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	370	13.8%	2.54	0.89
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	370	20.0%	2.59	1.02
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	370	33.5%	3.19	0.77
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	370	25.1%	2.83	0.96
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	370	47.0%	3.28	0.96
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	370	77.6%	3.94	0.80
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	370	15.4%	2.55	0.92
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	370	68.9%	3.79	0.85
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	370	64.1%	3.74	0.89

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Most journalists (63.5%) agreed that journalism ethics should always follow professional standards, though 69.5% accepted exceptions in extraordinary cases. Only 17.0% supported relying on personal judgment. Controversial methods, such as using hidden recordings (84.0%) or unauthorized documents (73.0%), were broadly justified, but actions like accepting money (9.5%) or publishing unverified info (17.1%) were largely rejected.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	370	63.5%	3.69	0.94
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	370	69.5%	3.76	0.84
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	370	40.3%	3.12	1.08
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	370	17.0%	2.43	1.06

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	370	2.2%	33.0%
Using hidden recording devices	370	8.1%	75.9%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	370	6.5%	66.5%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	370	9.2%	66.5%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	370	1.6%	28.1%
Paying people for confidential information	370	9.2%	58.6%
Accepting money from sources	370	1.1%	8.4%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	370	1.6%	17.8%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	370	3.0%	38.6%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	370	1.4%	15.7%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Only about one-third of journalists reported having a great deal or complete freedom in selecting stories (35.1%) or deciding which aspects to emphasize (35.4%). Similarly, just 36.3% felt that media freedom in South Korea is high, reflecting moderate perceptions of editorial autonomy and press freedom overall.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	370	35.1%	3.19	0.86
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	370	35.4%	3.14	0.88
Media freedom in South Korea	369	36.3%	3.16	0.98

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Editorial supervisors and higher editors were rated most influential (85.8%), followed by personal values and beliefs (72.0%) and editorial policy (69.9%). Journalism ethics (69.6%), self-censorship (68.9%), and business managers (67.1%) also ranked high. External pressures, such as government censorship (19.8%) and military groups (7.4%), were seen as much less influential.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	361	61.8%	3.61	1.01
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	367	85.8%	4.27	0.88
The business managers of the news organization	359	67.1%	3.82	1.12
The owners of the news organization	350	62.3%	3.63	1.30
Editorial policy	365	69.9%	3.85	0.93
Advertising considerations	359	53.2%	3.46	1.20
Profit expectations	355	47.9%	3.34	1.20
Audience research and data	364	44.5%	3.26	1.09
Availability of news-gathering resources	364	56.9%	3.57	0.96
Time limits	361	54.6%	3.53	1.01
Journalism ethics	368	69.6%	3.86	0.90
Self-censorship	367	68.9%	3.78	0.83
Personal values and beliefs	368	72.0%	3.83	0.85
Colleagues in other media	362	61.9%	3.56	1.03
Friends, acquaintances and family	359	37.9%	3.06	1.14
Feedback from the audience	364	61.0%	3.55	0.90
Competing news organizations	363	63.4%	3.59	0.98
Media laws and regulation	362	37.0%	3.16	0.96
Access to information	368	53.3%	3.47	0.95
Government censorship	353	19.8%	2.56	1.14
Government officials	359	19.8%	2.59	1.09
Politicians	356	22.2%	2.60	1.14
Business people	359	38.4%	3.01	1.18
Public relations	365	50.4%	3.31	1.02
Relationships with news sources	367	68.4%	3.69	0.88
Police	348	14.4%	2.43	1.09
Issue advocacy groups	354	21.8%	2.67	1.05
Scientists or health experts	356	26.7%	2.77	1.13
Religious groups and institutions	344	12.2%	2.26	1.05
Military	337	7.4%	1.91	1.03
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	330	5.5%	1.71	0.97
Organized crime and criminal groups	332	4.8%	1.63	0.95
Terrorist groups	331	5.1%	1.57	0.91

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Spain

Rosa Berganza, Beatriz Herrero-Jiménez & Azahara Ortiz-González

INTRODUCTION

Spain became a democracy in the late 1970s and joined the European Union in 1986. From the early 1980s to the mid-2010s, its political system was marked by bipartisanship, which has weakened over the past decade. In 2019, a coalition government was formed for the first time. However, political and social polarization has continued to intensify throughout the 21st century. Economically, Spain has a lower GDP per capita than other Western European countries and consistently high structural unemployment, rarely falling below 10% in the last 30 years.

Spain has a polarised pluralist media system according to Hallin & Mancini (2004). In line with this, the country features a politically oriented press with small circulations – a trend that has intensified with the rise of digital journalism – commentary-driven content, high levels of parallelism, media instrumentalisation, and external pluralism. Additionally, precarious working conditions and low salaries have become defining traits of journalism in Spain.

The fieldwork for this study was conducted between March and July 2023, a period during which two elections took place. The first, the regional and local elections held on May 28th, limited journalists' availability for interviews during the campaign period. Following his party's poor results, the prime minister called a general election for July 23rd. This second election was less disruptive to the research, as fewer local and regional journalists were involved in the national campaign.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The sample of Spanish journalists is slightly male-dominated, as 55.8% of the people interviewed were men. On average, they were 42.1 years old (SD = 11.9; Median = 43). Most Spanish journalists have obtained a grant at the university: 95.7%. Of them, 61.9% held a bachelor's degree or equivalent, 30.2% had a master's degree or equivalent, and 3.6% obtained a doctorate. More than 90% of the interviewed journalists had received professional training in the field (91.6%), with most of them acquiring this knowledge at university (96.1%). Only 1.4% received this qualification via apprenticeships or cadetships, and another 2.5% via short-term courses.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

Spanish journalists are quite experienced, with an average of 17.4 years in the profession (SD = 11.6; Median = 17). In terms of the background of their main employers, about a third of those who participated in the survey work for newspapers (33.5%), followed by Internet-native outlets (28.4%) and TV broadcasters (22.4%). Fewer are employed by radio stations (9.0%), magazine companies (3.8%), or news agencies (2.8%).

Most of the journalists serve local or regional media (73.1%), while 28.9% work for national or transnational companies. Regarding ownership, 81.3% are employed by private or commercial media, 15.1% by public service media, and 3.6% by state-owned companies. Over half (54.0%) hold no management role, 27.9% are in middle management, and 18.1% in top management. Only 30.4% cover a specific thematic area.

In terms of working conditions, 75.4% have full-time permanent contracts, 10.7% are freelancers or self-employed, and 5.4% have full-time fixed-term contracts. Just 7.9% work part-time: 5.9% with fixed-term and 2.0% with permanent contracts. Most dedicate all their working time to journalism, with only 15.9% reporting additional income from outside the profession. On average, they work 44.4 hours per week (SD = 8.4; Median = 40; for those in full-time employment), exceeding the legal maximum of 40 hours. Despite this, only 34.5% are union members.

In Spain, journalists report considerable workplace stress: 26.9% feel stressed often and 32.2% very often. In contrast, 4.3% never feel stressed, 11.3% rarely, and 25.3% sometimes.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Spanish journalists generally do not experience the threats listed in the survey (see Table 1). None of the items is reported as occurring often or very often by more than 10% of respondents. Moreover, incidents such as arrests, sexual assault, or other physical attacks are virtually nonexistent among professionals. Nevertheless, over half of Spanish journalists are concerned that those who harm journalists in Spain go unpunished (53.2% agree or strongly agree with this statement). Additionally, they express greater concern for their mental well-being (35.8%) than for their physical safety (4.3%) (see Table 2).

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	391	3.6%	4.1%	16.6%	25.1%	50.6%
Public discrediting of your work	391	2.6%	4.6%	17.8%	27.4%	47.6%
Surveillance	388	2.3%	5.2%	11.1%	15.4%	66%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	391	1%	1%	4.2%	7.4%	86.4%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	391	0%	0%	0%	0.8%	99.2%
Legal actions against you because of your work	391	1.8%	1.3%	5.6%	10.2%	81.1%
Stalking	388	0.5%	2.6%	5.9%	12.1%	78.9%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	390	1.8%	3.1%	11%	21%	63.1%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	391	0.3%	0%	1%	3.6%	96.1%
Other physical attacks	391	0.3%	0.3%	0.8%	2.3%	96.3%
Coercion	391	1.5%	3.1%	12.5%	21.5%	61.4%
Workplace bullying	391	1%	1.3%	8.7%	12.8%	76.2%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	391	20.8%	2.21	1.40
Concerned about physical well-being	391	4.3%	1.34	0.87
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	391	35.8%	2.99	1.30
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Spain go unpunished	391	53.2%	3.85	1.14

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Journalists tend to avoid viewing themselves as political actors and largely disagree with the notion that their role includes supporting government policies, offering a positive image of politicians, or setting the political agenda. Conversely, they see themselves as observers whose responsibility is to inform and interpret reality for the audience and to scrutinize those in power (see Table 3).

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	391	92.6%	4.59	0.70
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	391	83.4%	4.33	0.89
Shine a light on society's problems	391	98.5%	4.85	0.44
Motivate people to participate in politics	391	22.5%	2.66	1.13
Provide analysis of current affairs	391	87.5%	4.38	0.74
Let people express their views	391	85.4%	4.39	0.79
Provide information people need to form political opinion	390	81%	4.29	1.00
Advocate for social change	391	61.4%	3.77	1.11
Influence public opinion	391	39.9%	3.15	1.16
Set the political agenda	391	24%	2.60	1.18
Promote peace and tolerance	391	77.7%	4.23	1.07
Educate the audience	390	61.3%	3.69	1.18
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	391	65%	3.75	1.11
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	390	69.2%	4.01	1.08
Support national development	390	51.8%	3.59	1.10
Support government policy	390	2%	1.63	0.85
Convey a positive image of political leaders	390	1.5%	1.58	0.80
Provide entertainment and relaxation	391	32%	2.88	1.20
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	390	41.3%	3.15	1.29
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	390	35.1%	3.05	1.13
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	391	52.7%	3.48	1.13
Support efforts to protect public health	391	76.2%	4.11	1.04
Counteract disinformation	391	94.1%	4.70	0.61
Discuss future implications of current events	391	72.4%	3.94	0.92

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

There is little consensus among professionals regarding journalistic epistemologies (see Table 4). While a majority agree that interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts (67.8%), opinions are divided on whether it is possible to represent objective reality in reporting (52.4%) and whether truth is inevitably shaped by those in power (46.3%). Conversely, journalists largely reject the notion that things can only be true or false, with only 14.8% expressing agreement.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	391	67.8%	3.89	1.10
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	391	46.3%	3.30	1.22
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	391	22.8%	2.55	1.19
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	391	14.8%	2.15	1.25
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	391	52.4%	3.46	1.19

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Spanish journalists largely agree that the profession should be governed by professional standards that must be upheld under all circumstances (see Table 5). Conversely, they reject the idea that journalistic ethics is merely a personal matter. Additionally, they generally disapprove of controversial reporting methods (see Table 6). Among the practices listed, only the use of confidential business or government documents without authorization was considered always justified by more than 10% of respondents.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	391	66.5%	3.87	1.12
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	389	43.2%	3.19	1.19
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	391	30.7%	2.71	1.36
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	391	14.1%	2.09	1.25

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	391	1%	28.4%
Using hidden recording devices	391	3.6%	46%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	390	13.8%	48.9%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	391	9.7%	46.5%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	391	2%	19.4%
Paying people for confidential information	391	2%	28.1%
Accepting money from sources	391	0.3%	3.3%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	391	2%	22%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	391	1.8%	20.7%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	391	0.3%	12%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

The results for these variables appear contradictory. On one hand, most Spanish journalists report having a great deal or complete freedom in selecting the news they cover (71.6%) and in deciding which aspects to emphasize (76.7%). On the other hand, they perceive media freedom in Spain as limited (see Table 7). In fact, only 16.4% of respondents believe there is a great deal or complete media freedom, while 34.3% state that there is little or no media freedom at all – despite feeling quite free in their individual journalistic choices.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	391	71.6%	3.93	1.00
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	391	76.7%	4.08	0.85
Media freedom in Spain	391	16.4%	2.80	0.78

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Journalists report being primarily influenced by factors directly related to journalistic routines (see Table 8): journalistic ethics (4.25 on a 1–5 scale), access to information (3.76), time constraints (3.64), and relationships with sources (3.45). Regarding interpersonal influences, they acknowledge being somewhat influenced by their supervisors (3.69) and peers (3.41). In contrast, they report limited influence from power or pressure groups. None of these groups scored above 2.5: politicians (2.36), businesspeople (2.32), public relations professionals (2.29), police (2.18), issue advocacy groups (2.25), or government officials (1.87).

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	377	49.6%	3.41	1.13
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	354	61.3%	3.69	1.09
The business managers of the news organization	355	37.2%	2.94	1.34
The owners of the news organization	351	37.9%	2.98	1.40
Editorial policy	360	46.7%	3.28	1.27
Advertising considerations	361	32.7%	2.83	1.28
Profit expectations	369	34.1%	2.89	1.30
Audience research and data	376	38%	3.10	1.21
Availability of news-gathering resources	388	45.1%	3.38	1.16
Time limits	388	58.8%	3.64	1.13
Journalism ethics	389	82%	4.25	0.93
Self-censorship	385	25.7%	2.73	1.21
Personal values and beliefs	385	40.8%	3.08	1.34
Colleagues in other media	370	8.9%	2.05	1.02
Friends, acquaintances and family	371	12.9%	2.12	1.13
Feedback from the audience	382	21.5%	2.65	1.09
Competing news organizations	381	17.6%	2.51	1.10
Media laws and regulation	376	27.4%	2.77	1.24
Access to information	389	61.2%	3.76	0.98
Government censorship	360	19.7%	2.28	1.35
Government officials	370	10.3%	1.87	1.10
Politicians	377	20.2%	2.36	1.25
Business people	380	17.9%	2.32	1.19
Public relations	381	16.3%	2.29	1.10
Relationships with news sources	388	46.7%	3.45	1.08
Police	373	16.9%	2.18	1.21
Issue advocacy groups	379	13.2%	2.25	1.09
Scientists or health experts	380	27.9%	2.62	1.26

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Sweden

NINA SPRINGER & GUNNAR NYGREN

INTRODUCTION

Sweden has a long tradition of low levels of conflict in politics and society. However, this has changed in the last decade due to the rise of a right-wing populist party, the Sweden Democrats (SD), which is supported by approximately 18 to 20 percent of the voters. Since 2022, the moderate right government is dependent on the support of SD and has an organized cooperation with the party.

Journalism has long been based on strong daily newspapers and a deep-seated public service broadcasting tradition. Digitalization of the media landscape has not changed this in any major way, and the newspapers have a large share of digital subscribers. There has also been a strong concentration in media ownership, and local and regional media especially face economic problems. Traditional journalism is now challenged by social media and different "alternative media" on the internet.

Labor market trends for journalists are the same as in all Western countries with decreasing newsrooms, a growing share of temporary employees, and a strong pressure on those journalists still working in newsrooms. In line with other labor markets in the Global North, the number of journalists in Sweden has shrunk. Based on data from Statistics Sweden and the Swedish Union of Journalists (SJF), the number of people working as professional journalists in Sweden fell from approximately 15,000 in 2014 to 11,000 in 2022. According to this survey, the profession has gradually become older and the share of women in journalism has grown to become the majority. This development is not new; it has been visible for 15-20 years in other research.

This report's data were collected in the fourth quarter of 2021 and thus attest to the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The average Swedish journalist is 49.1 years old (SD = 11.4, Median = 50 years), has either a bachelor's (48.6%, n = 210) or master's degree (16.7%, n = 72), or studied without graduating (21.3%, n = 92). Three participants obtained a doctorate (0.7%), while three others did not complete high school (0.7%) and another 12.0% graduated from high school (n = 52). A total of 52.9% (n = 229) of journalists identify as women, 46.2% as men (n = 200), and 0.9% (n = 4) as nonbinary or other. The majority of respondents completed professional training/formal education in journalism (72.7%, n = 298), usually at a university or college (78.3%). Of the participants, 14.5% (n = 20) stated that they had completed an apprenticeship/cadetship and 53.7% (n = 88) indicated that they had attended a short-term course in journalism.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

The average Swedish journalist at the time of the study had a full-time permanent contract (69.5%, n = 328). The second-largest group included journalists who worked as freelancers or were self-employed (18.6%, n = 88). Since part-time permanent (5.7%, n = 27) or part-time fixed-term contracts (1.1%, n = 5) as well as full-time fixed-term contracts (3.8%, n = 18) are rare, additional earnings from activities outside journalism are seldom necessary (87.0% stated to have no additional income, n = 416).

Swedish journalists, on average, are experienced generalists. The majority have been active in journalism for more than two decades (Mean = 22.5 years, SD = 11.6, Median = 22 years) and do not have a specific "beat" (68.2%, n = 298). On average, Swedish journalists in full-time employment work 40.2 hours a week (SD = 4.5, Median = 40 hours). Even if the average working hours are moderate, they are only a rough indicator of the individual workload. Of the respondents, 48.5% (n = 225) reported feeling stressed at work in the past six months (i.e., before data collection) either often or very often. Another 37.9% responded that this was sometimes the case (n = 176). Accordingly, only slightly more than one-tenth of respondents reported never or rarely feeling stressed (13.6%, n = 63).

Organizational hierarchies in Swedish newsrooms are low. Most respondents in our sample were "regular" journalists without any managerial responsibilities (85.8%, n = 406). Only 7.0% belonged to middle management (n = 33), while another 7.2% belonged to top management (n = 34).

Outlets with (trans-)national reach played the largest role as employers (52.3%, n = 225). Local and regional (39.1%, n = 168) outlets played a lesser, but by no means marginal role. A further 37 respondents were not able to classify their employers using this categorization ("no main medium": 8.6%, n = 37). Despite financial challenges, the private/commercial media sector has remained highly relevant for the journalistic labor market. Journalists in Sweden primarily work for commercial media outlets (54.9%, n = 236), followed by public service broadcasting companies (27.2%, n = 117). Nonprofit (10%, n = 43) or community media (0.9%, n = 4), by comparison, play a lesser role. Seven percent of respondents (n = 30) could not specify any one primary medium outlet for which they worked. A closer look at the background of their main employers showed that the largest group (39.3%, n = 168) of journalists in our sample worked for companies publishing newspapers, and an additional 15.2% (n = 65) for magazine companies. Radio (16.6%, n = 71) and television (14.5%, n = 62) played major roles as well. Furthermore, 2.6% (n = 11) reported working for a news agency and 0.9% (n = 4) for a native internet outlet. Another 8% reported no primary employer (n = 34), and 2.8% (n = 12) reported working for other outlets.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

In our survey, the majority of our respondents indicated that they had never, or at least very rarely, encountered any threats (see Table 1). Nevertheless, it remains worrisome that more than one-third of journalists have occasionally had their work publicly discredited or were subject to hate speech. Furthermore, one in 10 journalists has occasionally been affected by doxing and other threats or intimidation attempts.

Hate speech is often considered to be the perfect crime. Freedom of expression is interpreted very broadly in many countries, including Sweden, and even when legal rights are affected, prosecution is difficult, for example, in the case of anonymous online posts. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that a large proportion of journalists in Sweden fear impunity (see Table 2). Nearly one-third are also concerned about their emotional and mental well-being, while one-fifth are worried about their physical security. By contrast, only slightly more than one in 10 is concerned about losing their job.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	483	3.5%	5.2%	30.0%	39.5%	21.7%
Public discrediting of your work	482	2.7%	8.1%	29.0%	35.3%	24.9%
Surveillance	461	0.2%	1.5%	5.0%	13.9%	79.4%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	482	0.0%	1.0%	3.9%	12.2%	82.8%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	483	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.4%	99.4%
Legal actions against you because of your work	483	0.0%	0.4%	0.4%	1.9%	97.3%
Stalking	478	0.0%	0.4%	2.9%	12.1%	84.5%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	481	0.6%	2.7%	6.9%	23.5%	66.3%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	482	0.0%	0.6%	1.5%	7.7%	90.2%
Other physical attacks	483	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	5.0%	94.0%
Others disseminating your personal information	482	0.6%	1.7%	8.3%	21.6%	67.8%
Workplace bullying	482	0.4%	1.0%	5.6%	14.1%	78.8%
Intimidation that targets family	483	0.0%	0.2%	0.8%	4.1%	94.8%

Question: “In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?”

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	479	13.6%	2.04	1.17
Concerned about physical well-being	480	21.0%	2.36	1.22
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	479	29.4%	2.60	1.31
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Sweden go unpunished	480	59.0%	3.48	1.18

Question: “Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.” (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Most journalists devote themselves to the role of detached observers (see Table 3); more than 80% found that role to be very or extremely important and saw it as their job to counteract disinformation and shed light on social problems. It was also very important to them to allow people to express their views. On the other hand, journalists are dismissive of statements that suggest financial or political interest; they are rarely interested in providing news that attracts the largest possible audience, and do not consider themselves to play a role in supporting national development, supporting government policy, or conveying a positive image of political leaders. Consequently, only some expressed wanting to set the political agenda.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	480	85%	4.23	0.84
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	482	79.3%	4.21	1.02
Shine a light on society’s problems	479	83.1%	4.31	0.90
Motivate people to participate in politics	480	14.6%	2.34	1.09
Provide analysis of current affairs	477	70.2%	3.88	0.97
Let people express their views	480	82.3%	4.26	0.87
Provide information people need to form political opinion	478	54.8%	3.52	1.25
Advocate for social change	480	22.1%	2.68	1.15
Influence public opinion	482	17.4%	2.28	1.17
Set the political agenda	481	7.7%	2.00	1.01
Promote peace and tolerance	481	32.6%	3.01	1.22
Educate the audience	481	66.5%	3.84	1.02
Point toward possible solutions to society’s problems	480	34.4%	3.04	1.10
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	481	28.9%	2.75	1.22
Support national development	482	9.1%	1.96	1.05
Support government policy	480	0.6%	1.12	0.44
Convey a positive image of political leaders	481	2.1%	1.33	0.70
Provide entertainment and relaxation	478	25.5%	2.68	1.17
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	478	9.2%	2.11	1.01
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	480	27.1%	2.80	1.13
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	480	61.0%	3.65	1.04
Support efforts to protect public health	481	19.8%	2.43	1.20
Counteract disinformation	483	84.7%	4.39	0.92

Question: “Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Discussing journalists' role perceptions inevitably involves discussing whether the ideal of the objective reporter can be realized at all. The majority, albeit a narrow majority, of the journalists surveyed expressed that it was possible to depict objective reality in reporting. However, there was slightly more agreement that interpretation was necessary to give meaning to facts. Accordingly, Swedish journalists indicated being rather averse to black-and-white thinking. Most were also convinced that it was possible for them to prevent their personal convictions from influencing their work (see Table 4).

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	443	60.5%	3.57	0.83
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	444	18.9%	2.49	1.08
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	443	16.5%	2.42	1.02
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	446	13.7%	2.33	1.08
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	444	52.0%	3.40	1.00

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Journalists in Sweden attach great importance to professional ethics. For the vast majority of respondents in our sample, ethical standards should always be set by professional standards regardless of the situation and one's personal judgment (see Table 5). However, they allowed for extraordinary exceptions and distanced themselves from the idea that ethical judgments should be made on a situation-specific basis or be a matter of personal judgment.

Swedish journalists also seemed to have a clear understanding of which ethically problematic professional practices they would accept and those they would not (see Table 6). They strongly rejected financial dependence, for example, in the form of native advertising. They would also not accept money, products, or services from sources, and were very hesitant to pay for confidential information. Furthermore, the unauthorized use of ordinary citizens' documents or photos was also viewed with caution. However, journalists were less squeamish about using such materials on occasion if the people were in power and more open about using confidential corporate or government documents without authorization. The vast majority also indicated that pretending to be someone else and using hidden recording devices could occasionally be accepted. Journalists were divided on only one statement; almost half of them stated that under no circumstances would they agree to publish stories containing unverified information, whereas slightly more than half believed that doing so could occasionally be justified.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	478	93.7%	4.50	0.71
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	480	85.6%	4.23	0.82
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	478	25.5%	2.69	1.17
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	480	20.2%	2.42	1.17

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	482	1.0%	80.1%
Using hidden recording devices	482	1.7%	93.6%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	482	7.5%	82.8%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	479	5.8%	79.1%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	481	0.4%	35.8%
Paying people for confidential information	479	1.3%	33.2%
Accepting money from sources	480	0.4%	1.3%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	480	0.2%	7.9%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	481	0.2%	1.5%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	481	1.2%	52.0%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

The majority of respondents felt that they had considerable freedom in choosing and presenting topics (see Table 7); around three-quarters experience a great deal or even complete freedom in the selection of the stories that they wanted to work on and in deciding which aspects they wanted to emphasize in their reporting. In general, the media in Sweden were considered to be quite "free" by a vast majority of the journalists we surveyed.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	470	75.3%	3.85	0.81
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	470	76.6%	3.90	0.82
Media freedom in Sweden	451	90.2%	4.19	0.64

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Internal journalistic factors were perceived as being more important than external ones. Supervisors were perceived as being very or extremely influential by a majority, which also applied to colleagues. By contrast, not only media owners and managers but also the police, politicians, the government, organized crime groups, public relations personnel, and people from the business world were rated as being less influential (see Table 8).

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	409	58.9%	3.57	0.88
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	427	76.8%	3.95	0.88
The business managers of the news organization	380	7.6%	1.82	1.02
The owners of the news organization	380	7.1%	1.73	1.00
Editorial policy	413	53.0%	3.52	1.00
Advertising considerations	355	1.1%	1.30	0.66
Profit expectations	364	13.5%	2.02	1.16
Audience research and data	416	37.7%	3.06	1.14
Availability of news-gathering resources	384	45.1%	3.19	1.15
Time limits	426	55.2%	3.50	0.98
Journalism ethics	435	61.1%	3.60	1.17
Self-censorship	419	3.6%	1.75	0.84
Personal values and beliefs	443	35.9%	3.00	1.13
Colleagues in other media	420	7.4%	2.31	0.90
Friends, acquaintances and family	425	3.1%	2.02	0.84
Feedback from the audience	431	18.3%	2.80	0.86
Competing news organizations	420	18.3%	2.69	0.95
Media laws and regulation	405	19.3%	2.39	1.17
Access to information	424	56.6%	3.49	1.02
Government censorship	384	1.0%	1.15	0.51
Government officials	405	1.7%	1.32	0.70
Politicians	410	3.7%	1.49	0.84
Business people	409	1.2%	1.40	0.68
Public relations	408	2.5%	1.54	0.79
Relationships with news sources	415	19.3%	2.53	1.06
Police	402	7.2%	1.72	0.99
Issue advocacy groups	414	3.1%	1.66	0.82
Scientists or health experts	418	10.5%	2.16	1.02
Religious groups and institutions	410	1.0%	1.24	0.58
Organized crime and criminal groups	401	0.2%	1.13	0.41

Question: "Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist." (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Switzerland

Vinzenz Wyss, Filip Dingerkus, Louis Schäfer, Guido Keel, Annik Dubied, Nathalie Pignard-Cheynel, Julien Perrot & Colin Porlezza

INTRODUCTION

In 2025, Switzerland remains one of the world's most politically stable nations. Rule-of-law institutions and direct democracy enjoy high public trust and civic participation. The economy is highly developed and diversified, with key sectors such as financial services, pharmaceuticals, and technology. Switzerland's economy shows notable resilience, even amid global crises. The country maintains a high quality of life, supported by strong education and healthcare systems. Public debates focus on affordable housing, digitalization, demographic change, and migration.

Switzerland's journalistic landscape is diverse, with a high density of journalists and a mix of public and private media. Press freedom remains strong. However, media concentration is increasing, and financial pressures have led to significant staff reductions. Several studies point to rising anti-media sentiments and declining trust in media. At the same time, legal pressures in corporate and financial reporting are increasing, with Article 47 of the Swiss Banking Act remaining a key concern for investigative journalists.

The fieldwork for this study took place in 2023, in a media environment still shaped by the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as by broader challenges such as digital transformation, economic instability, political polarization, and declining professionalism.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

43.6% of Swiss journalists are women, a further increase compared to previous studies. On average, they are 42.9 years old (SD = 11.46, Median = 42.0). 80.0% have an academic degree (bachelor's degree or equivalent: 27.6%, master's degree or diploma: 48.6%, doctorate: 3.8%), reflecting the profession's growing academization. 48.5% hold a university or college degree with a focus on journalism and media; 93.5% have formal education or professional training in journalism, 65.6% have an apprenticeship/cadetship, and 30.5% have taken short-term courses.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

More than one third of journalists in Switzerland worked for an employer that has its roots in radio (39.0%) or newspapers (36.9%). 8.4% worked for magazine companies, 7.0% native internet, 6.4% television, 3.1% news agencies. Very few journalists worked for an organization with a telecommunications background (0.5%, respectively). In terms of ownership 57.5% work in private/commercial media, 33.0% in public service media, 3.2% in non-profit media, and 2.2% in community/citizen media. Most journalists (68.9%) do not hold a leadership role in their organization, 17.8% hold a partial, and 13.3% a full leadership role. Lastly, regarding coverage area, 60.8% work for national or international media, 35.3% for regional or local. 3.9% report no main medium.

On average, Swiss journalists have 16.4 years of professional experience (SD = 10.51, Median = 15.0). 48.0% are assigned to a specific beat or topic area, while 52.0% write about a variety of topics. 50.9% are members of a professional association representing journalistic interests.

Nearly half of the sample had full-time contracts (36.8% permanently and 12.0% temporarily employed). 36.2% had a permanent part-time and 10.0% a temporarily part-time employment. 4.5% are freelance journalists or self-employed, and 0.5% reported another employment status. The proportion of temporary contracts increased by roughly 17% compared to 2015, which can be seen as a consequence of the negative economic developments. 228 journalists (19.3%) also stated that they have a part-time job in addition to journalism.

The average working time is 37.6 hours per week (SD = 9.18, Median = 40.0). 50.7% report having experienced frequent or very frequent stress in the past six months, while 12.4% report little or no stress.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Swiss journalists are most affected by occupational threats, such as demeaning or hateful speech directed at them or public discrediting of their work (Table 1). While threats from authorities or state institutions are less frequent, 18.5% have experienced surveillance by authorities at least rarely, and 17.8% have faced legal actions because of their work. Personal threats are also relatively uncommon; however, 22.2% report workplace bullying, and 16.2% have experienced the dissemination of personal information. Mental well-being is the top concern for 38.7% of journalists (Table 2). Additionally, 33.8% are concerned that attacks against journalists in Switzerland go unpunished.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	1177	1.6%	6.7%	28.9%	35.3%	27.5%
Public discrediting of your work	1177	1.4%	6.9%	26.2%	32.3%	33.2%
Surveillance	1168	0.1%	1.5%	5.1%	11.8%	81.5%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	1178	0.0%	0.6%	1.9%	7.8%	89.7%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	1178	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.8%	98.9%
Legal actions against you because of your work	1179	0.3%	1.0%	4.8%	11.7%	82.2%
Stalking	1174	0.1%	0.7%	2.6%	9.6%	87.0%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	1176	0.3%	2.2%	9.7%	24.6%	63.3%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	1179	0.0%	0.6%	2.7%	6.5%	90.2%
Other physical attacks	1176	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	3.7%	95.5%
Others disseminating your personal information	1177	0.0%	0.6%	2.7%	13.5%	83.2%
Workplace bullying	1178	0.6%	1.9%	7.3%	12.4%	77.8%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	1179	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	4.9%	94.3%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	1178	12.1%	1.97	1.07
Concerned about physical well-being	1176	22.4%	2.27	1.21
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	1177	38.7%	2.76	1.30
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Switzerland go unpunished	1177	33.8%	2.70	1.27

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Swiss journalists primarily identify with critical-monitoring roles, such as "provide information people need to form political opinion" (85.5%) and "be a detached observer" (79.6%). Collaborative roles (e.g. "support national development" 13.0%, "support government policy" 1.7%) and interventionist roles ("influence public opinion" 11.6%) are less important.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	1173	79.6%	4.17	0.95
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	1172	55.1%	3.44	1.24
Shine a light on society's problems	1175	70.3%	3.88	0.98
Motivate people to participate in politics	1173	41.0%	3.14	1.14
Provide analysis of current affairs	1173	77.6%	4.10	0.92
Let people express their views	1171	50.6%	3.43	1.02
Provide information people need to form political opinion	1173	85.6%	4.32	0.86
Advocate for social change	1171	20.8%	2.58	1.11
Influence public opinion	1164	11.6%	2.28	1.03
Set the political agenda	1168	11.4%	2.24	1.03
Promote peace and tolerance	1168	32.6%	3.02	1.10
Educate the audience	1165	53.4%	3.49	1.01
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	1170	53.8%	3.49	0.98
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	1171	40.3%	3.23	1.05
Support national development	1156	13.0%	2.31	1.03
Support government policy	1168	1.6%	1.47	0.72
Convey a positive image of political leaders	1169	1.2%	1.36	0.67
Provide entertainment and relaxation	1171	31.8%	2.89	1.16
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	1170	49.5%	3.41	1.06
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	1169	43.5%	3.25	1.09
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	1174	57.3%	3.57	1.04
Support efforts to protect public health	1167	21.3%	2.58	1.09
Counteract disinformation	1172	77.7%	4.12	0.96
Discuss future implications of current events	1170	65.2%	3.72	0.94

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Swiss journalists hold varying views regarding journalistic epistemology (Table 4). The strongest consensus appears on the statement "things are either true or false, there is no in-between", with 5.3% agreeing versus 83.9% disagreeing, and 10.9% unsure. The most contested view is "interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts", with 58.0% agreeing versus 26.7% disagreeing, and 15.4% unsure.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	1114	58.0%	3.35	1.13
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	1113	25.6%	2.59	1.08
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	1118	31.6%	2.70	1.16
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	1119	5.3%	1.71	0.90
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	1118	64.5%	3.52	1.00

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Swiss journalists strongly prioritize professional standards over subjective considerations in ethical reporting (Table 5). They widely reject practices such as accepting money from sources or disguising promotional content as news (Table 6). However, most find it acceptable to use hidden recording devices, confidential business or government documents without authorization, and personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission, though typically only when deemed justified.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	1167	70.7%	3.79	1.06
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	1162	49.5%	3.17	1.18
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	1165	34.4%	2.72	1.20
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	1165	8.3%	1.81	0.98

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	1174	0.3%	52.4%
Using hidden recording devices	1174	1.6%	69.7%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	1173	9.3%	75.3%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	1174	2.9%	71.5%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	1169	0.3%	18.4%
Paying people for confidential information	1177	0.3%	25.5%
Accepting money from sources	1175	0.0%	1.4%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	1171	0.9%	25.7%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	1172	0.0%	6.1%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	1174	0.3%	38.2%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

The vast majority of Swiss journalists feel free in their work, regarding topic selection and the framing of their stories (Table 7). About two-thirds (66.2%) of respondents believe that Swiss media enjoy a great deal or complete freedom.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	1177	71.8%	3.80	0.74
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	1176	79.3%	3.97	0.70
Media freedom in Switzerland	1159	66.2%	3.68	0.66

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Swiss journalists consider journalistic ethics by far the most important internal factor influencing their work, cited by 78.8%, followed by time limits at 62.0% and the availability of news-gathering resources at 59.2% (Table 8). Among external factors, access to information (45.6%), media laws and regulation (27.6%), and relationships with news sources (27.1%) are most frequently considered extremely or very influential.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	1123	34.1%	3.07	0.95
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	1116	39.8%	3.18	1.02
The business managers of the news organization	1077	13.0%	2.19	1.07
The owners of the news organization	1022	8.9%	1.92	1.05
Editorial policy	1111	41.0%	3.16	1.11
Advertising considerations	1032	9.5%	1.84	1.03
Profit expectations	1046	13.2%	2.06	1.13
Audience research and data	1099	24.4%	2.66	1.14
Availability of news-gathering resources	1106	59.2%	3.61	1.01
Time limits	1132	61.9%	3.71	0.94
Journalism ethics	1124	78.8%	4.03	0.89
Self-censorship	1052	7.9%	2.10	0.95
Personal values and beliefs	1112	46.9%	3.31	1.04
Colleagues in other media	1107	5.2%	2.07	0.90
Friends, acquaintances and family	1120	9.0%	2.18	0.94
Feedback from the audience	1124	21.8%	2.79	0.95
Competing news organizations	1109	16.1%	2.54	0.99
Media laws and regulation	1079	27.5%	2.72	1.15
Access to information	1095	45.6%	3.21	1.10
Government censorship	1067	2.2%	1.31	0.66
Government officials	1094	5.0%	1.74	0.89
Politicians	1099	8.2%	1.99	0.99
Business people	1090	5.2%	1.82	0.92
Public relations	1091	8.7%	2.14	0.97
Relationships with news sources	1107	27.1%	2.77	1.09
Police	1078	4.2%	1.56	0.85
Issue advocacy groups	1100	6.3%	2.03	0.93

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Taiwan

Huei-Ling Liu, Shih-Chien Chang, Chiung-wen Hsu & Hsiou Feng Chen

INTRODUCTION

Taiwan is a liberal democracy and the world's 21st largest economy known for its stable political transitions and a high degree of freedom of speech for its citizens. According to the 2025 World Press Freedom Index by Reporters Without Borders, Taiwan ranks fifth out of 180 countries in security, 23rd in political stability, and 26th in quality of life. In the 2025 Freedom in the World report by Freedom House, Taiwan scores 94 out of 100, ranking second in the Asia region and seventh worldwide.

In this free and diverse society, the media industry thrives. Television is the dominant medium, featuring five terrestrial TV stations and twelve satellite news channels. In addition, Taiwan has one national news agency and five major newspapers with nationwide circulation.

In recent years, online media outlets and social media have rapidly developed, becoming significant sources of information for the public. However, as digital convergence progresses, print media are generally facing declining revenues and staff reductions. Similarly, while radio has also declined, public radio stations continue to provide local news services. As a result, many organizations are actively pursuing digital transformation strategies. For journalists, multitasking and real-time news production have become integral parts of their daily routines.

The survey for this study took place between September 1 and October 31, 2023; a total of 448 journalists participated in it. After excluding invalid responses, a total of 439 journalists were included in the final sample.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

Our sample of Taiwanese journalists comprises 43.2% women and 56.6% men. The average age of the journalists is 41.4 years (SD = 10.9; Median = 41). They are generally well-educated, with 65.2% holding a Bachelor's degree or equivalent, 32.7% possessing a Master's degree or equivalent, and 0.2% having obtained a doctorate. Additionally, 81.0% of the respondents have received formal education or professional training in journalism. This education is primarily acquired at universities or colleges (71.9%), while others gain experience through apprenticeships or cadetships (25.9%) and short-term courses (4.8%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

In Taiwan, survey results indicate that 58.5% of journalists are employed in an organization with a television background, while companies with a newspaper background employ 19.6%. An increasing number of journalists, accounting for 12.8%, are working in digital native media. Other types of media represent smaller percentages, with magazines at 2.3%, radio at 3.4%, and news agencies at 2.8%. Additionally, 0.5% of respondents reported that they do not have a primary employer.

The average professional experience among journalists in Taiwan is 15.3 years (SD = 10.2, Median = 14.5). Most journalists (77.2%) cover a single news beat, while only 22.8% engage in multi-beat reporting. Notably, membership in professional associations is relatively low among Taiwanese journalists; only 30.2% of respondents reported being members, while 69.8% do not participate.

In terms of employment status, over 90% (94.5%) of Taiwanese journalists are full-time employees. Only 4.3% are on full-time fixed-term contracts, 0.9% are part-time with formal contracts, and freelancers make up just 0.2%. This suggests that, despite the industry's declining revenues, media organizations in Taiwan continue to prioritize hiring full-time editorial staff.

On average, journalists in Taiwan work 47.9 hours per week (SD = 18.3, Median = 50), which exceeds the national legal standard of 40 working hours per week. Although the media environment in Taiwan is highly competitive, only 37.4% of respondents reported feeling "frequent" or "very frequent" work-related stress in the past six months. In contrast, 62.6% indicated that they experience stress "sometimes," while 31.2% reported that they "never" or "rarely" feel stressed at work.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

The most commonly reported threats include public discrediting, with 68.9% of respondents affected, and hateful speech, which has impacted 74.3%. Other common threats that journalists have encountered include surveillance (32.6%), legal actions taken against them because of their work (31.6%), and various other threats or intimidation tactics (34.3%), based on responses indicating these experiences occurred "very often," "often," or "sometimes.".

In response to these threats, more than half of the respondents expressed strong agreement with two concerns: their physical well-being (59.4%) and their emotional and mental well-being (51.4%). However, only 18.2% of journalists strongly agreed with the statement about fearing job loss (Table 2).

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	438	6.8%	9.8%	18.0%	39.6%	25.5%
Public discrediting of your work	437	10.8%	14.4%	16.0%	27.7%	31.1%
Surveillance	436	1.6%	2.5%	9.2%	19.3%	67.4%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	436	0.2%	0.7%	4.1%	11.9%	83.0%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	438	0.2%	0.0%	0.9%	1.1%	97.7%
Legal actions against you because of your work	437	0.2%	0.9%	6.0%	24.5%	68.4%
Stalking	437	0.0%	0.5%	1.6%	5.7%	92.2%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	437	0.9%	2.1%	7.1%	24.3%	65.7%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	438	0.2%	0.5%	3.0%	10.7%	85.6%
Other physical attacks	437	0.2%	0.2%	3.2%	10.1%	86.3%
Coercion	437	0.7%	0.9%	4.1%	20.8%	73.5%
Questioning of your personal morality	436	1.2%	2.3%	6.2%	15.6%	74.8%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	438	0.7%	0.7%	3.4%	9.1%	86.1%
Others disseminating your personal information	437	0.2%	0.9%	3.9%	10.5%	84.4%
Workplace bullying	437	1.8%	2.1%	5.3%	15.3%	75.5%
Abductions	437	0.2%	0.0%	0.5%	0.2%	99.1%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	438	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	1.8%	97.5%
Intimidation that targets family	438	0.2%	0.0%	0.7%	0.5%	98.6%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	438	18.2%	2.38	1.12
Concerned about physical well-being	438	59.4%	3.48	1.14
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	438	51.4%	3.28	1.22
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Taiwan go unpunished	438	47.7%	3.27	1.16

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Among the different roles in journalism, Taiwanese journalists prioritize traditional watchdog functions as the most important. Specifically, 85.7% of them value being a detached observer, while 83.6% believe it is crucial to illuminate societal problems. In contrast, the least valued roles are conveying a positive image of political leaders, which only 13.7% consider important, and supporting government policy, seen as important by just 29.2% (Table 3).

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	439	85.7%	4.22	0.82
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	438	77.4%	4.01	1.00
Shine a light on society's problems	438	83.6%	4.24	0.83
Motivate people to participate in politics	438	34.7%	3.20	1.00
Provide analysis of current affairs	439	76.8%	4.05	0.87
Let people express their views	438	73.1%	3.98	0.93
Provide information people need to form political opinion	438	63.5%	3.75	1.00
Advocate for social change	437	63.6%	3.77	0.98
Influence public opinion	439	52.2%	3.50	1.03
Set the political agenda	438	39.7%	3.23	1.08
Promote peace and tolerance	438	75.3%	3.68	1.05
Educate the audience	438	58.7%	4.03	0.95
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	439	74.9%	3.97	0.95
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	438	81.5%	4.22	0.94
Support national development	438	57.3%	3.65	1.03
Support government policy	438	29.2%	3.04	1.04
Convey a positive image of political leaders	439	13.7%	2.39	1.07
Provide entertainment and relaxation	438	34.7%	3.11	1.00
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	438	60.3%	3.72	1.04
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	437	63.4%	3.71	0.95
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	439	68.8%	3.86	0.95
Support efforts to protect public health	438	71.0%	3.90	0.96
Counteract disinformation	438	83.8%	4.24	0.90
Discuss future implications of current events	437	75.5%	4.01	0.95

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Taiwanese journalists hold strong epistemological views rooted in the principles of traditional journalism, highlighting the importance of basing news on factual information (93.4%). They believe that when a source's claim is questionable, journalists have a responsibility to inform the audience (87.2%). The idea that journalists can intuitively determine the direction of a story in advance is the least accepted among them, with only 1.4% strongly agreeing with this perspective (Table 4).

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	438	88.4%	4.13	0.72
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	438	22.6%	2.41	1.17
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	438	68.7%	3.64	0.89
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	438	9.4%	2.17	0.89
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	437	57.4%	3.43	1.05
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	438	20.1%	2.56	0.93
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	438	1.4%	2.63	0.99
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	438	93.4%	4.28	0.67
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	436	11.2%	2.37	0.89
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	436	18.6%	2.54	1.01
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	437	87.2%	4.18	0.78

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

As indicated in Tables 5 and 6, Taiwanese journalists generally adopt a situational approach to ethical considerations in their journalistic practices, with 86.1% expressing this viewpoint. Most journalists believe that the use of controversial methods to obtain information should be determined by the circumstances and may not always be considered unjustified. This includes practices such as using hidden recording devices (80.1%), utilizing personal materials from influential individuals – such as documents and photos – without their permission (54.0%), and accessing confidential business or government documents without authorization (52.6%).

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	439	40.3%	3.01	1.06
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	439	57.6%	3.37	0.95
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	438	86.1%	3.95	0.72
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	438	12.6%	2.21	0.95

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	439	0.5%	18.9%
Using hidden recording devices	438	2.1%	80.1%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	437	1.4%	52.6%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	437	2.5%	54.0%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	439	0.5%	36.5%
Paying people for confidential information	438	1.1%	41.3%
Accepting money from sources	438	0.7%	14.4%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	437	2.8%	38.9%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	438	6.9%	46.4%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	437	0.9%	17.2%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Only about 40% of Taiwanese journalists believe they have a significant amount of editorial autonomy. The responses across the three indicators shown in Table 7 reveal minimal variation. This may indicate that political and commercial influences have increasingly impacted Taiwan's media in recent years, exerting pressure on press freedom.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	438	43.4%	3.18	0.99
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	437	41.2%	3.16	0.97
Media freedom in Taiwan	437	40.5%	3.15	0.91

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Taiwanese journalists identify several key factors that influence news production, with time constraints being the most significant, cited by 52.6% of respondents (Table 8). This trend reflects the pressures of the digital age, where speed is prioritized, often leading to a compromise in the quality of reporting due to the rush to publish news instantly.

The second most influential factor, mentioned by 49.0% of journalists, is the role of business managers within news organizations. This finding aligns with concerns about editorial autonomy. In recent years, intensified market competition and the loss of advertising revenue to online platforms have led to a shift in media content toward market-driven priorities. As a result, business departments sometimes intervene in editorial decisions.

Additionally, audience data, including metrics like clicks and views, play a significant role in shaping news content. In fact, 46.4% of journalists report that these metrics influence their reporting, which highlights the impact of market competition. It's also important to note that Taiwan is a stable society governed by the rule of law, where the influence of gangs or organized crime on editorial policy is very minimal.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	438	8.0%	1.97	1.01
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	438	43.2%	3.13	1.23
The business managers of the news organization	437	49.0%	3.26	1.29
The owners of the news organization	437	39.1%	2.92	1.47
Editorial policy	438	37.0%	3.00	1.21
Advertising considerations	437	31.1%	2.72	1.37
Profit expectations	437	30.7%	2.68	1.34
Audience research and data	427	46.4%	3.27	1.30
Availability of news-gathering resources	438	23.7%	2.75	1.09
Time limits	437	52.6%	3.43	1.11
Journalism ethics	437	34.3%	3.04	1.09
Self-censorship	437	24.9%	2.81	1.11
Personal values and beliefs	438	34.3%	3.03	1.08
Colleagues in other media	438	16.0%	2.37	1.11
Friends, acquaintances and family	437	4.8%	1.65	0.96
Feedback from the audience	438	20.6%	2.60	1.07
Competing news organizations	437	30.9%	2.81	1.19
Media laws and regulation	438	32.2%	2.89	1.23
Access to information	438	34.5%	3.07	1.03
Government censorship	438	21.9%	2.47	1.21
Government officials	438	16.0%	2.27	1.17
Politicians	438	17.6%	2.28	1.20
Business people	438	13.5%	2.16	1.18
Public relations	438	18.3%	2.44	1.14
Relationships with news sources	437	23.8%	2.70	1.10
Police	438	9.8%	2.01	1.10
Issue advocacy groups	438	8.9%	2.00	1.04
Scientists or health experts	438	10.7%	1.75	1.00
Religious groups and institutions	438	5.7%	1.56	0.90
Military	438	3.9%	1.33	0.71
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	438	11.4%	1.30	0.70
Organized crime and criminal groups	438	1.6%	1.20	0.61
Terrorist groups	438	1.4%	2.06	1.08

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Tanzania

AMMINA KOTHARI

INTRODUCTION

Tanzania has made significant economic and social progress over the last few decades; however, this growth has not been enough to reduce the high poverty rate observed in 2025. Economic growth is primarily concentrated in urban areas and driven by the private sector, while the country remains predominantly agricultural. On the social front, the government has invested in education to improve access to primary schooling and has worked to enhance access to basic health services. Nevertheless, significant disparities in social services persist, and these, combined with economic barriers, hinder the country's development opportunities. Politically, Tanzania has held multiparty elections since the 1990s, but the Chama cha Mapinduzi party (CCM) has retained power throughout this period. The opposition has been fragmented, and during the tenure of the late John Magufuli, there was a ban on political assemblies. This ban was lifted in 2023 by Tanzania's first female president, Samia Suluhu Hassan.

Tanzania has historically had a vibrant media environment, with both state-owned and private media companies that produce content in Swahili and English. Radio serves as the primary source of news for nearly half of the population, and there is a strong presence of newspapers, online news sites, and television stations. However, laws and regulations established between 2016 and 2020 have significantly limited press freedom and diminished the watchdog role of journalists. Additionally, journalists have limited job security and are often paid very little for their work.

The data were collected in late 2023, following the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the presidency of Samia Suluhu Hassan, Tanzania has begun to experience an economic revival, and press freedom has seen some improvement. However, the news media continues to face economic challenges, and journalists and newsrooms often still practice self-censorship as they navigate the new socio-political environment.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The sample of Tanzanian journalists was gender-balanced, with 46.5% identifying as female and 53.5% as male. The average age of the journalists was 31.8 years (SD = 6.9; Median = 31). They were generally well-educated; 44.3% held a bachelor's degree or equivalent, 3.5% had a master's degree or equivalent, and 1.0% had obtained a doctorate. Additionally, 86.7% of respondents had received formal education or professional training in journalism. This education or training is typically acquired at universities or colleges (46.1%), through apprenticeships or cadetships (65.8%), and via short-term courses (67.6%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

Over one-third of Tanzanian journalists (32.7%) were employed in outlets with a radio background, while 23.0% worked in television outlets. Additionally, 16.0% were employed by organizations focusing on newspaper publishing, 7.8% by native online media, and 7.1% by news agencies. A small number of journalists worked for magazine companies (2.0%) and outlets with a telecommunications background (1.1%). Notably, 10.2% of the surveyed journalists indicated that they do not have a main employer. Regarding their employer status, 52.3% of journalists reported that they primarily worked for private or commercial media, while 27.5% worked for state-run media, and 10.8% were involved with community media. In terms of area coverage, 53.4% of the journalists reported they mainly worked for (trans)national media, while 42.1% primarily catered to local or regional media.

Tanzanian journalists, on average, had 6.4 years of professional experience (SD = 4.9; Median = 5). The majority of these journalists (75.1%) reported on a variety of beats or subject areas rather than focusing on just one. Additionally, more than two-thirds (57.8%) were members of a union.

About one-third of the surveyed journalists in Tanzania had a full-time contract, with 37.9% being permanently employed and 1.7% temporarily employed. In addition, 38.6% held a part-time permanent contract, while 3.2% had a part-time temporary contract. Moreover, 15.2% worked as freelancers or were self-employed, and another 3.2% were engaged in other forms of employment. These results indicate a precarious employment situation, as 86.8% of respondents reported having additional jobs outside of journalism.

The average working week for Tanzanian journalists was 45.4 hours (SD = 18.8; Median = 45; for those in full-time employment). However, only 3.6% of the respondents reported feeling stressed at work often or very often during the previous six months, while 79.8% indicated they had never or rarely felt this way.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Verbal attacks, including demeaning or hateful speech, public discrediting of journalists' work, and surveillance, were among the most common safety threats experienced by journalists in Tanzania (see Table 1). However, more dangerous threats, such as stalking, sexual or physical assault, and sexual harassment, although less frequent, are still alarming. While journalists did not express strong concerns about job loss or their physical and emotional well-being (see Table 2), some were particularly worried that those who harm journalists would go unpunished.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	865	0.9%	2.1%	9.4%	21.6%	66.0%
Public discrediting of your work	865	0.2%	3.1%	9.5%	25.2%	62.0%
Surveillance	865	1.6%	4.5%	9.6%	19.4%	64.9%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	865	1.3%	2.7%	5.8%	15.6%	74.7%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	865	0.9%	2.8%	4.5%	6.0%	85.8%
Legal actions against you because of your work	865	1.0%	2.1%	4.2%	9.5%	83.2%
Stalking	865	0.5%	3.0%	6.9%	18.7%	70.9%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	865	1.2%	2.9%	8.0%	16.6%	71.3%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	865	0.8%	4.3%	7.6%	14.1%	73.2%
Other physical attacks	865	0.2%	3.7%	5.8%	12.7%	77.6%

Question: “In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?”

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	865	10.2%	2.11	1.00
Concerned about physical well-being	865	8.0%	2.04	0.94
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	865	12.2%	2.13	1.03
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Tanzania go unpunished	865	37.2%	2.92	1.23

Question: “Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.” (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Tanzanian journalists expressed strong support for both accommodative and interventionist roles in their profession. While more traditional approaches are still relevant, they were not as highly valued. Collaborative roles, on the other hand, were among the least appreciated. However, it's worth noting that an approximately a quarter or more of the surveyed journalists considered these collaborative roles to be extremely or very important.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	865	16.3%	2.14	1.21
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	865	31.4%	2.78	1.22
Shine a light on society’s problems	865	68.9%	3.85	1.09
Motivate people to participate in politics	865	33.6%	2.93	1.19
Provide analysis of current affairs	865	60.8%	3.67	1.07
Let people express their views	865	71.4%	3.90	0.98
Provide information people need to form political opinion	865	54.9%	3.53	1.07
Advocate for social change	865	69.0%	3.85	0.96
Influence public opinion	865	59.3%	3.61	1.02
Set the political agenda	865	35.8%	2.93	1.20
Promote peace and tolerance	865	73.1%	3.96	0.98
Educate the audience	865	72.0%	3.97	0.96
Point toward possible solutions to society’s problems	865	71.9%	3.94	0.99
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	865	71.6%	3.92	1.00
Support national development	865	72.6%	3.90	0.97
Support government policy	865	49.5%	3.32	1.11
Convey a positive image of political leaders	865	36.8%	3.05	1.16
Provide entertainment and relaxation	865	52.9%	3.47	1.02
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	865	58.7%	3.63	1.02
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	865	58.8%	3.63	0.99
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	865	65.1%	3.74	1.00
Support efforts to protect public health	865	70.9%	3.91	0.99
Counteract disinformation	865	71.4%	3.93	0.96
Discuss future implications of current events	865	63.1%	3.69	0.92

Question: “Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

There was notable variance among Tanzanian journalists in their views on journalistic epistemology (see Table 4). However, respondents agreed on the critical role of interpretation in understanding facts. They also acknowledged the vital connection between journalists and the communities they serve, highlighting the necessity for reporters to engage deeply with the contexts they cover. This recognition underscores the importance of a nuanced approach to journalism that goes beyond mere reporting.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	865	70.1%	3.74	1.02
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	865	21.8%	2.64	1.08
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	865	45.9%	3.15	1.15
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	865	50.2%	3.34	1.05
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	865	55.5%	3.42	0.99
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	865	35.3%	2.83	1.16
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	865	60.7%	3.47	1.03
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	865	61.3%	3.51	1.10
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	865	73.5%	3.90	0.95
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	865	59.1%	3.48	1.07
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	865	56.5%	3.40	1.09

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Journalists in Tanzania strongly agreed on the importance of upholding professional standards in ethical reporting, prioritizing these standards over personal biases or situational influences (see Table 5). While they largely reject controversial practices such as accepting money or gifts from sources and publishing unverified information (see Table 7), a significant number found certain ethically ambiguous methods acceptable. Over half were willing to employ hidden recording devices, impersonate individuals for the sake of a story, pay for confidential information, and use confidential documents without authorization.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	865	66.4%	3.61	1.09
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	865	57.1%	3.39	1.05
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	865	55.2%	3.41	1.03
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	865	21.4%	2.47	1.14

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	865	12.0%	47.9%
Using hidden recording devices	865	13.4%	56.3%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	865	13.2%	47.1%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	865	12.4%	42.5%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	865	12.5%	41.2%
Paying people for confidential information	865	12.0%	45.0%
Accepting money from sources	865	11.6%	33.6%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	865	10.6%	36.3%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	865	13.1%	48.9%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	865	10.9%	30.6%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Tanzanian journalists reported a limited amount of freedom in their work (see Table 7). About two thirds claimed to have some freedom in selecting their stories and in deciding which aspects to emphasize in a story. While the overall perception of media freedom remains low among respondents, more than half recognized the existence of some press freedom.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	865	21.6%	2.93	0.92
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	865	20.7%	2.87	0.93
Media freedom in Tanzania	852	24.3%	3.01	0.94

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Tanzanian journalists identified journalism ethics and the availability of news-gathering resources as the most significant internal factors influencing news production (see Table 8). In terms of external factors, many journalists noted that audience feedback, access to information, public relations, and relationships with news sources were extremely or very influential in their work.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	837	31.5%	2.99	1.03
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	836	48.6%	3.34	1.04
The business managers of the news organization	820	39.9%	3.20	1.04
The owners of the news organization	806	49.9%	3.43	1.06
Editorial policy	824	49.3%	3.45	1.04
Advertising considerations	803	47.8%	3.38	1.08
Profit expectations	792	44.3%	3.27	1.10
Audience research and data	838	53.2%	3.49	1.05
Availability of news-gathering resources	843	55.0%	3.56	0.98
Time limits	818	41.0%	3.27	1.04
Journalism ethics	838	59.8%	3.65	0.98
Self-censorship	791	46.3%	3.30	1.06
Personal values and beliefs	781	50.8%	3.42	1.10
Colleagues in other media	845	36.1%	3.10	1.05
Friends, acquaintances and family	800	40.4%	3.13	1.12
Feedback from the audience	840	64.5%	3.80	0.99
Competing news organizations	841	53.4%	3.54	1.02
Media laws and regulation	832	53.1%	3.53	1.03
Access to information	844	56.6%	3.58	0.93
Government censorship	815	45.8%	3.33	1.10
Government officials	818	37.4%	3.15	1.10
Politicians	829	36.1%	3.12	1.10
Business people	841	40.5%	3.24	1.07
Public relations	839	55.4%	3.56	1.06
Relationships with news sources	837	54.4%	3.56	1.03
Police	813	34.8%	3.02	1.14
Issue advocacy groups	838	44.0%	3.27	1.08
Scientists or health experts	828	43.6%	3.32	1.06

Question: "Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist." (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Thailand

Chanapa Noonark, Kultida Sayprom & Warat Karuchit

INTRODUCTION

In 2025, Thailand struggles with political, economic, and social challenges. The government led by the Pheu Thai party has been struggling with a crisis of faith among voters. Thailand remains in economic stagnation caused by the government's instability and underwhelming growth of its tourism industry. In addition to this, Thailand's aging population is growing rapidly, which leads to a potential labor shortage. This issue also possibly causes a rise in healthcare expenditures.

The journalistic situation in Thailand faces challenges due to shifts in the media landscape caused by technology disruptions and changes in consumer behavior. Many traditional news outlets have shut down, while others have adapted and shifted towards transformations in digital media. There are now more online news agencies and citizen journalists due to the efforts of some journalists working together, while some journalists, either volunteered or laid off, turned to become freelancers. However, others are facing the risk of working in the borderland. To attract more readers and to compete with online content creators, news content of Thai journalism is increasingly associated with sensational stories, such as superstitious beliefs, lottery numbers, and personal relationships.

This study collected data between 2021 and 2023 during the general elections. In 2023, a general election was held with much drama once a parliamentary vote was made for the next prime minister of Thailand. The Pheu Thai party was able to cobble together a controversial coalition to form a new government. The COVID-19 pandemic was another big challenge regarding the collection of data.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

According to our sample of Thai journalists, these are the demographic characteristics of the survey participants: Most participants are women (60.5%). The average age was 37.6 (SD = 8.7; Median = 36). Approximately 76.0 % of respondents completed a bachelor's degree, followed by 12.0% who completed a master's degree, and finally, 9.6% that completed high school. Moreover, more than half of the respondents (53.6%) completed formal education or professional training in journalism. About 81.5% of them completed a journalism apprenticeship/cadetship, 79.6% completed education or training from a university or college, and lastly, 56.1% completed short-term courses.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

On average, the respondents reported that they worked as a journalist for 9.0 years (SD = 7.2; Median = 7). Most Thai journalists (44.5%) worked for television, followed by Internet native (26.8%) and radio (16.3%), respectively. Very few journalists worked for newspapers and magazines (2.6%, 1.1% respectively). Finally, 2.9% of participants reported having no main employer. About 48.8% of Thai respondents illustrated that they have no management role in editorial hierarchy, followed by a middle management role (43.9%), and a top management role (7.3%). Most respondents (54.7%) worked for local or regional media, followed by national or transnational media (37.5%). Only 7.8% reported that they worked for no main media. Moreover, a majority of participants (36.0%) reported that they worked for private or commercial media, followed by state-run media (29.6%), community media (18.5%), and public service media (12.4%), while 0.3% of participants reported that they worked for no main media.

In terms of current working situation of Thai journalists, most had a full-time permanent contract (72.7%) while 16.1%were freelancers or self-employed. Journalists in full-time employment worked 41.6 hours in an average week (SD = 17.7; Median = 40). A majority of participants (71.6%) worked on a variety of beats or subject areas rather than on a specific one. Moreover, about 7.3% of the respondents reported they felt stressed out at work as a journalist frequently or very frequently during the previous six months. Some of them (35.9%) are stressed out at work sometimes, while only 7.6% felt they felt no stress. The study also showed that Thai respondents (15.1%) received additional income by working in various sectors. Also, only 28.3% of participants were members of professional associations.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Table 1 shows the respondents' overall rating of safety in the previous five years. The findings showed that no one experienced abductions, but some were arrested, detained or imprisoned, and some were physically assaulted. Furthermore, several Thai journalists faced threats such as demeaning comments or hate speech. These safety issues reflect concerns related to work (see Table 2). More than half of participants were concerned about their physical well-being. Almost half of the participants were concerned that those who harm journalists would go unpunished. Many were concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing. Lastly, worrying about losing their job in journalism within the next 12 months was the journalists' least concerning issue.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	384	3.9%	10.9%	27.6%	20.1%	37.5%
Public discrediting of your work	384	1.8%	7.3%	19.3%	21.4%	50.3%
Surveillance	383	1.8%	6.3%	13.1%	17.8%	61.1%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	384	2.6%	5.7%	11.7%	21.1%	58.9%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	384	0.8%	1.8%	2.3%	8.3%	86.7%
Legal actions against you because of your work	384	0.8%	2.1%	2.9%	12.0%	82.3%
Stalking	384	0.3%	2.6%	4.7%	12.0%	80.5%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	384	1.3%	3.4%	7.3%	17.7%	70.3%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	384	0.8%	3.4%	3.1%	7.8%	84.9%
Other physical attacks	384	1.0%	2.1%	2.6%	10.4%	83.9%
Coercion	384	1.0%	3.4%	7.0%	15.1%	73.4%
Questioning of your personal morality	384	0.3%	3.4%	2.6%	12.2%	81.5%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	383	0.3%	2.6%	4.2%	15.1%	77.8%
Others disseminating your personal information	384	0.0%	4.2%	6.8%	15.1%	74.0%
Workplace bullying	384	1.8%	3.6%	9.4%	15.4%	69.8%
Abductions	384	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	384	0.8%	1.8%	2.9%	10.4%	84.1%
Intimidation that targets family	384	0.5%	2.3%	2.3%	8.9%	85.9%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	384	29.7%	3.03	1.04
Concerned about physical well-being	384	52.6%	3.42	1.06
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	384	45.8%	3.28	1.12
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Thailand go unpunished	384	47.7%	3.47	1.09

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

According to Table 3, most Thai participants strongly support journalistic roles, such as educating the audience, debunking disinformation, and exposing problems in society. On the other hand, conveying a positive image of political leaders was thought to be the least extremely or very important role in journalism.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	384	82.0%	4.20	0.78
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	384	80.7%	4.10	0.80
Shine a light on society's problems	384	90.6%	4.42	0.69
Motivate people to participate in politics	384	69.8%	3.92	0.87
Provide analysis of current affairs	384	83.6%	4.20	0.75
Let people express their views	384	88.3%	4.34	0.72
Provide information people need to form political opinion	384	79.9%	4.20	0.82
Advocate for social change	384	76.3%	4.13	0.83
Influence public opinion	383	64.8%	3.82	0.81
Set the political agenda	384	60.9%	3.69	0.90
Promote peace and tolerance	384	79.2%	4.12	0.79
Educate the audience	384	92.4%	4.53	0.67
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	384	85.4%	4.31	0.74
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	384	83.9%	4.30	0.77
Support national development	384	83.1%	4.27	0.77
Support government policy	382	67.0%	3.81	0.90
Convey a positive image of political leaders	384	52.1%	3.51	1.05
Provide entertainment and relaxation	383	69.2%	3.88	0.86
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	384	78.6%	4.05	0.77
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	383	77.3%	4.04	0.75
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	384	68.2%	3.90	0.89
Support efforts to protect public health	384	87.2%	4.36	0.71
Counteract disinformation	384	90.9%	4.41	0.68
Discuss future implications of current events	384	72.7%	3.99	0.80

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

According to Journalistic epistemologies (See Table 4), most respondents strongly believed that journalists should maintain transparency in their work, and present information accurately to the community they are connected to. However, few participants agreed that it is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	384	87.5%	4.30	0.81
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	384	65.4%	3.76	0.93
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	384	11.7%	2.36	0.92
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	384	45.6%	3.38	0.98
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	384	81.0%	4.16	0.83
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	384	56.3%	3.27	1.26
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	384	51.6%	3.14	1.21
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	384	84.9%	4.12	0.94
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	384	94.3%	4.53	0.74
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	384	96.4%	4.60	0.68
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	384	91.7%	4.42	0.85

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Thai journalists strongly agreed that ethical behavior should be determined by professional standards, and personal belief and specific situations should not affect what is ethical journalism (see Table 5). However, Thai participants had differing views on when it is justified to use unauthorized confidential business, government documents, and personal items. Also, Thai participants agreed that using hidden recording devices is acceptable on occasion (see Table 6).

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	384	96.9%	4.67	0.53
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	384	70.6%	3.85	1.00
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	384	57.0%	3.50	1.19
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	383	49.6%	3.35	1.21

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	384	1.3%	20.6%
Using hidden recording devices	384	1.0%	48.4%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	384	0.5%	19.0%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	384	0.8%	19.3%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	384	0.5%	18.2%
Paying people for confidential information	384	1.0%	24.5%
Accepting money from sources	384	2.6%	15.1%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	384	3.1%	41.9%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	384	6.5%	39.8%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	384	3.1%	18.0%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Overall, participants perceived media freedom in Thailand at a moderate level (see Table7). Slightly more than one-third of participants reported that they had a great deal of or complete freedom in deciding on which aspects of a story to highlight and more generally in selecting news stories.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	384	34.6%	3.09	1.11
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	384	39.6%	3.10	1.07
Media freedom in Thailand	384	40.4%	3.21	1.05

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

According to Table 8, the results showed that organisational influences such as editorial supervisors and higher editors carry much more weight among journalists working in Thailand than procedural influences such as journalism ethics.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	380	44.7%	3.24	1.11
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	379	71.8%	3.93	0.95
The business managers of the news organization	383	68.1%	3.89	0.98
The owners of the news organization	382	68.6%	3.81	1.11
Editorial policy	382	67.3%	3.84	1.00
Advertising considerations	368	44.6%	3.25	1.23
Profit expectations	364	54.7%	3.48	1.20
Audience research and data	374	62.3%	3.64	1.12
Availability of news-gathering resources	381	70.1%	3.82	0.97
Time limits	380	67.1%	3.80	0.95
Journalism ethics	382	75.9%	4.00	0.99
Self-censorship	370	52.2%	3.51	0.98
Personal values and beliefs	370	45.4%	3.41	0.99
Colleagues in other media	379	30.1%	2.95	1.14
Friends, acquaintances and family	373	24.9%	2.79	1.11
Feedback from the audience	382	50.5%	3.35	1.17
Competing news organizations	375	43.2%	3.18	1.15
Media laws and regulation	380	67.1%	3.72	1.04
Access to information	378	67.5%	3.74	1.07
Government censorship	376	48.9%	3.36	1.09
Government officials	371	36.7%	3.15	1.14
Politicians	368	36.4%	3.05	1.22
Business people	367	30.2%	2.90	1.17
Public relations	374	37.7%	3.05	1.14
Relationships with news sources	374	55.1%	3.46	1.13
Police	368	28.3%	2.90	1.17
Issue advocacy groups	360	28.9%	2.83	1.19
Scientists or health experts	364	28.3%	3.10	1.18
Religious groups and institutions	353	40.4%	2.82	1.34
Military	333	34.6%	2.63	1.37
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	333	30.3%	2.60	1.35
Organized crime and criminal groups	326	28.8%	2.55	1.35
Terrorist groups	361	28.2%	2.85	1.12

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Turkey

İNCILAY CANGÖZ & TEMMUZ GÖNÇ ŞAVRAN

INTRODUCTION

Turkey's media environment in 2025 is defined by intensified government control, the suppression of dissenting voices, and an increasingly hostile setting for independent journalism. While digital platforms provide alternative channels for information, they too face escalating censorship and regulatory pressure. The convergence of legal constraints, economic hardship, and eroding public trust presents significant obstacles to media freedom, editorial independence, and the democratic flow of information.

Culturally, media pluralism is under severe threat. The concentration of media ownership in the hands of a few conglomerates closely aligned with the government has resulted in content homogenization and a decline in the representation of diverse perspectives. As a result, Turkey's media in 2025 must navigate a complex intersection of economic fragility, political repression, and cultural constraints.

The fieldwork for this study was conducted between late 2022 and early 2024, a period shaped by the long-term effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, the aftermath of the 2023 general elections, and an ongoing cost-of-living crisis. Although parts of Turkish society have shown resilience and civic engagement – particularly through grassroots solidarity networks – the broader climate remains dominated by political polarization, economic insecurity, and a shrinking civic space.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

Of our sample of Turkish journalists, 43.9% were women, 56.1% were men. On average, they were 39.9 years old (SD =9.9; Median = 39). The respondents are generally well educated: 71.2% of them held a Bachelor's degree or equivalent, 19.2% a Master's degree or equivalent, and 2.7% have obtained a doctorate. Of the journalists in the sample, 73.4% have acquired formal education or professional training in journalism. This education or training is predominantly acquired at university or college (82.7%), with smaller proportions receiving it through apprenticeships or cadetships (12.5%) or short-term courses (4.8%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

The majority of the journalists in Turkey (93.0%) worked for private/commercial media. More than one third of the sample (35.0%) worked for organizations focused on newspaper publishing, 23.6% for television organization, 13.6% for internet native and 9.2% for news agencies. Very few worked for radios outlets (0.8%) and 6.5% claimed not to have a main employer. Of the respondents, 86.4% worked for national/transnational media and 13.6% for local/regional media.

On average, Turkish journalists had 14.6 years of professional experience (SD = 9.9; Median = 12). More than half of them (61.2%) worked on a variety of beats or subject areas rather than on a single one. More than half of Turkish journalists (52.6%) were members of professional associations. Since journalists were contacted through the union, union membership appears to be higher. However, these data do not indicate that journalists in Turkey are highly organized.

About four-fifths (81.8%) of the journalists in Turkey had a full-time contract (65.0% permanently and 16.8% temporarily employed). Of them, 12.7% had a part-time contract (5.4% permanently and 7.3% temporarily) and only 5.4% worked as freelancers or were self-employed. Almost three quarters of them (74.3%) stated that all their income came from journalism, while one-quarter (25.7%) had income-generating jobs outside of journalism.

The average working week of Turkish journalists had 45.7 hours (SD = 9.2; Median = 45). Of all Turkish journalists, 40.7% had no management role, 37.1% had middle and 22.2% had top management roles. Two-thirds of journalists (66.6%) reported they felt stressed out at work often (34.4%) or very often (32.2%) during the previous six months; only 5.7% had never (0.8%) or rarely (4.9%) felt that way.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Among Turkish journalists surveyed, demeaning or hateful speech and stalking emerged as the most frequently experienced threats within the past five years (see Table 1). While more overt forms of repression such as arrests, legal actions, or office raids were relatively rare, nearly half of the respondents reported being subjected to coercion, public discrediting, or surveillance at least occasionally. Notably, incidents such as the hacking of digital platforms or dissemination of personal information, though less common, highlight ongoing concerns around digital safety and personal privacy. These findings suggest that Turkish journalists operate in an environment where psychological and reputational threats are more pervasive than physical violence, reinforcing a broader pattern of intimidation that aims to suppress independent reporting through indirect means.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	369	6.0%	10.8%	29.3%	19.5%	34.4%
Public discrediting of your work	369	2.7%	6.5%	17.1%	17.6%	56.1%
Surveillance	369	5.4%	9.8%	17.9%	13.6%	53.4%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	369	1.4%	3.0%	6.2%	9.5%	79.9%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	369	1.6%	1.6%	6.0%	4.9%	85.9%
Legal actions against you because of your work	369	2.4%	4.3%	7.0%	9.5%	76.7%
Stalking	369	9.2%	12.2%	15.2%	15.2%	48.2%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	369	4.1%	8.1%	16.0%	17.1%	54.7%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	369	0.5%	1.6%	5.4%	7.6%	84.8%
Other physical attacks	369	1.4%	4.3%	8.1%	15.2%	71.0%
Coercion	369	4.6%	9.5%	17.9%	18.4%	49.6%
Questioning of your personal morality	369	5.4%	8.9%	14.4%	16.8%	54.5%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	369	5.1%	8.1%	18.2%	19.5%	49.1%
Others disseminating your personal information	369	2.4%	4.6%	8.7%	11.9%	72.4%
Workplace bullying	369	3.3%	3.0%	10.6%	9.8%	73.4%
Abductions	369	0.3%	0.5%	3.3%	1.6%	94.3%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	369	0.5%	1.9%	4.6%	8.1%	84.8%
Intimidation that targets family	369	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Question: “In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?”

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	369	64.0%	3.67	1.30
Concerned about physical well-being	369	61.8%	3.60	1.27
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	369	69.1%	3.78	1.25
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Turkey go unpunished	369	84.3%	4.29	1.06

Question: “Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.” (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Turkish journalists identified providing accurate political information and maintaining journalistic detachment as their most essential professional responsibilities, with over 90% rating these roles as very or extremely important (see Table 3). Functions such as letting people express their views, highlighting societal problems, and promoting peace and tolerance also received high levels of endorsement. Conversely, more partisan or state-aligned roles – such as supporting government policy or promoting political leaders – were rated lowest in importance, suggesting a strong professional preference for autonomy and critical distance. Interestingly, roles related to civic engagement and advocacy, including motivating political participation or speaking on behalf of marginalized groups, received more mixed support, indicating ongoing tensions between traditional norms of objectivity and a more activist orientation in Turkish journalism.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	369	93.5%	4.57	0.68
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	369	78.0%	4.01	0.95
Shine a light on society’s problems	369	85.4%	4.38	0.84
Motivate people to participate in politics	369	43.6%	3.28	1.20
Provide analysis of current affairs	369	76.7%	4.10	0.98
Let people express their views	369	85.9%	4.32	0.82
Provide information people need to form political opinion	369	95.9%	4.63	0.62
Advocate for social change	369	75.9%	4.06	1.05
Influence public opinion	369	81.0%	4.12	0.95
Set the political agenda	369	45.3%	3.24	1.27
Promote peace and tolerance	369	82.1%	4.22	1.00
Educate the audience	369	62.6%	3.85	1.11
Point toward possible solutions to society’s problems	369	79.9%	4.16	0.89
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	369	40.4%	3.09	1.32
Support national development	369	66.9%	3.82	1.13
Support government policy	369	11.1%	1.92	1.16
Convey a positive image of political leaders	369	15.4%	1.96	1.26
Provide entertainment and relaxation	369	33.9%	2.96	1.24
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	369	61.8%	3.67	1.19
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	369	45.8%	3.29	1.14
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	369	30.6%	2.87	1.21
Discuss future implications of current events	369	77.5%	4.15	1.01
Support efforts to protect public health	369	83.7%	4.29	0.88
Counteract disinformation	369	75.6%	4.05	0.99

Question: “Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Turkish journalists largely uphold objectivity and truth-telling, with strong support for alerting audiences to false claims and the possibility of representing objective reality (see Table 4). At the same time, many recognize the role of interpretation and personal perspective in reporting. While relativistic or intuition-based approaches received limited support, there is clear awareness that journalistic knowledge is both constructed and context-dependent.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	369	64.5%	3.57	1.12
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	369	25.2%	2.50	1.30
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	369	50.4%	3.14	1.20
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	369	54.2%	3.44	1.16
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	369	75.3%	3.97	0.95
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	369	26.0%	2.71	1.12
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	369	19.8%	2.50	1.10
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	369	31.0%	2.82	1.16
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	369	65.6%	3.73	1.01
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	369	55.0%	3.60	1.11
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	369	91.1%	4.41	0.84

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Most Turkish journalists express a clear preference for universal professional standards in resolving ethical dilemmas, with 76.4% agreeing that ethics should always be guided by such norms regardless of personal judgment or context (see Table 5). While nearly half also recognized that certain situations might justify deviating from these standards, and that context can matter, these views were less dominant. Only a small minority supported the idea that ethical decisions should rely primarily on personal judgment. Overall, the findings suggest that Turkish journalists tend to favor a rule-based ethical framework, though some openness to situational flexibility remains.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	369	76.4%	4.14	1.07
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	369	45.3%	3.14	1.20
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	369	49.1%	3.18	1.30
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	369	22.0%	2.40	1.25

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	369	4.6%	72.9%
Using hidden recording devices	369	1.4%	61.0%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	369	13.0%	55.6%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	369	2.7%	55.3%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	369	2.4%	39.8%
Paying people for confidential information	369	1.1%	28.7%
Accepting money from sources	369	1.1%	5.4%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	369	1.1%	12.7%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	369	2.4%	14.9%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	369	1.9%	10.0%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Turkish journalists report moderate levels of autonomy in their individual editorial choices, with around half feeling they have considerable freedom in selecting and shaping news stories (see Table 7). However, perceptions of broader media freedom in the country are strikingly low – only 7.9% believe there is substantial or complete media freedom.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	368	48.9%	3.34	1.07
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	368	51.9%	3.39	1.10
Media freedom in Turkey	369	7.9%	1.88	0.95

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Turkish journalists perceive external political and institutional actors – such as government censorship (72.6%), media laws (72.4%), and government officials (69.4%) – as the most influential forces shaping their work (see Table 8). In contrast, internal professional elements like peers, journalism ethics, or personal values appear to exert less impact. Time constraints and editorial policy also emerge as notable internal pressures. The data suggest that journalism in Turkey is heavily shaped by political and structural power dynamics rather than journalistic autonomy or internal newsroom culture.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	369	17.3%	2.37	1.16
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	369	33.1%	2.73	1.24
The business managers of the news organization	369	41.7%	2.98	1.29
The owners of the news organization	369	47.4%	3.11	1.34
Editorial policy	369	53.4%	3.31	1.28
Advertising considerations	369	43.4%	3.08	1.24
Profit expectations	369	50.7%	3.20	1.31
Audience research and data	369	23.6%	2.51	1.18
Availability of news-gathering resources	369	23.6%	2.50	1.20
Time limits	369	59.3%	3.59	1.29
Journalism ethics	369	30.4%	2.71	1.29
Self-censorship	369	33.1%	2.82	1.25
Personal values and beliefs	369	19.2%	2.29	1.26
Colleagues in other media	369	13.0%	2.28	1.06
Friends, acquaintances and family	369	17.6%	2.34	1.12
Feedback from the audience	369	22.8%	2.51	1.13
Competing news organizations	369	19.5%	2.57	1.09
Media laws and regulation	369	72.4%	3.87	1.14
Access to information	369	69.6%	3.83	1.16
Government censorship	369	72.6%	3.94	1.17
Government officials	369	69.4%	3.87	1.19
Politicians	369	65.9%	3.79	1.20
Business people	369	47.4%	3.38	1.15
Public relations	369	20.6%	2.70	1.08
Relationships with news sources	369	22.0%	2.62	1.10
Police	369	42.0%	3.15	1.18
Issue advocacy groups	369	16.8%	2.53	1.10
Religious groups and institutions	369	33.3%	2.88	1.23
Military	369	29.5%	2.86	1.23
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	369	35.9%	2.89	1.28
Organized crime and criminal groups	369	38.8%	2.94	1.29
Terrorist groups	369	35.8%	2.86	1.31
Scientists or health experts	369	9.8%	2.14	1.05

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

United Arab Emirates

ELSAYED DARWISH & AHMED ALMANSOORI

INTRODUCTION

The United Arab Emirates is a federation of seven emirates governed under a federal elective constitutional monarchy. Politically stable and strategically aligned with regional partners, the UAE has transitioned from an oil-dependent economy to one driven by tourism, finance, and high technology. Its society is a cosmopolitan mosaic, where rapid urban development and cutting-edge innovation coexist alongside deep-rooted cultural and religious traditions.

Historically, journalism in the UAE has operated within a state-influenced framework: national outlets and free-zone media organizations have long tailored their editorial policies to support government development agendas and bolster the country's international reputation. Press freedoms are guided by comprehensive media regulations – including the Federal Decree-Law on Publications and Publishing (2016) and updates issued by the National Media Council – which emphasize social cohesion, cultural respect, and national security.

This study's data were collected between November 2021 and March 2023, encompassing the UAE's post-pandemic economic rebound and the landmark Expo 2020 Dubai (rescheduled to October 2021–March 2022). Expo 2020 attracted unprecedented global media attention, prompting government and private outlets to experiment with immersive reporting formats (AR/VR pavilions, 24-hour livestreams) and to expand digital engagement. No major elections or natural disasters occurred during this period, offering a relatively steady backdrop against which to assess journalistic practices.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

Among the 311 respondents (n = 306 valid gender cases), 61.8% identified as male, 37.6% as female, and 0.7% as other. The mean age was 43.8 years (SD = 10.1; Median = 43; n = 261). Regarding highest education (n = 300), 3.0% completed high school, 65.0% hold a bachelor's degree, 25.7% a master's, 5.7% a doctorate, and 0.7 % attended university without a degree. Formal journalism training was reported by 15.8% (n = 298), of whom 80.0 % studied at universities or colleges, 53.8 % via cadetship/apprenticeship, and 76.7% through short-term courses.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

Most UAE journalists occupy non-management positions, with 62.7% reporting no management responsibilities, 29.9% in middle management, and just 6.8% in top management (n = 309). Their primary outlets are overwhelmingly national or transnational platforms (90.7%; n = 305), while only 2.3% serve local or regional media. Ownership patterns reflect a strong state presence: 67.2% work for state-run media, 24.4% for private/commercial organizations, 3.2% for public service outlets, and 1.0% in community media (n = 308).

Employment stability is high: 80.7% hold full-time permanent contracts, with smaller shares on part-time permanent (2.9%), fixed-term (6.7%), freelance (6.1%), or other arrangements (2.6%; n = 308). Nevertheless, 27.7% supplement journalism with other income sources (n = 303). Journalists in the UAE had on average 18.2 years of professional experience. Full-time journalsts worked on average 46.9 hours per week (SD = 13.2; Median = 48).

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Verbal and reputational attacks are the most common threats: journalists report public discrediting of their work often or sometimes (7.2%/37.9%), hacking or blocking of their social accounts (14.2%/35.6%), legal actions (10.5%/36.3%), and questioning of personal morality (8.8%/33.9%). Less frequent are byline misuse (2.3%/19.0%) and personal-info exposure (2.9%/30.8%). While these figures highlight online and legal pressures, they should be read in light of the UAE's robust economic stability and legal frameworks that generally protect journalistic work.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Somtimes	Rarely	Never
Public discrediting of your work	306	2.6%	7.2%	37.9%	29.1%	23.2%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	309	6.8%	14.2%	35.6%	20.7%	22.7%
Legal actions against you because of your work	306	6.2%	10.5%	36.3%	24.8%	22.2%
Questioning of your personal morality	307	5.5%	8.8%	33.9%	25.4%	26.4%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	310	2.6%	2.3%	19.0%	15.5%	60.6%
Others disseminating your personal information	273	2.6%	2.9%	30.8%	21.6%	42.1%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	309	29.1%	2.73	1.30
Concerned about physical well-being	309	32.0%	2.83	1.25
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	307	28.3%	2.62	1.30
Concerned that those who harm journalists in the UAE go unpunished	308	38.6%	2.98	1.31

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

UAE journalists prioritize informative and constructive roles: "detached observer" (94.1% ext/very important), "educate the audience" (90.2%), and "point toward possible solutions" (87.4%) top the list. High support is also seen for "support government policy" (86.1%) and "convey a positive image of political leaders" (85.8%). In contrast, watchdog and mobilizing functions – "monitor and scrutinize those in power" (18.2%) and "motivate people to participate in politics" (15.6%) – are deemed far less essential.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	306	94.1%	4.67	0.66
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	292	18.2%	2.32	1.24
Shine a light on society's problems	307	34.2%	2.64	1.38
Motivate people to participate in politics	307	15.6%	2.32	1.26
Provide analysis of current affairs	309	33.7%	2.59	1.33
Let people express their views	308	37.3%	2.86	1.41
Provide information people need to form political opinion	308	56.2%	3.40	1.32
Advocate for social change	306	42.2%	2.96	1.46
Influence public opinion	306	45.1%	3.01	1.43
Set the political agenda	308	50.0%	3.11	1.47
Promote peace and tolerance	302	32.1%	2.60	1.53
Educate the audience	307	90.2%	4.50	0.90
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	309	87.4%	4.40	0.89
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	302	77.5%	4.09	1.12
Support national development	306	53.9%	3.29	1.49
Support government policy	303	86.1%	4.35	0.96
Convey a positive image of political leaders	302	85.8%	4.35	1.06
Provide entertainment and relaxation	307	79.2%	4.14	1.16
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	309	69.9%	3.86	1.18
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	308	78.9%	4.16	1.03
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	311	73.3%	4.04	1.05
Support efforts to protect public health	306	52.0%	3.25	1.47
Counteract disinformation	308	78.2%	4.13	1.02
Discuss future implications of current events	308	54.9%	3.51	1.28

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

UAE journalists display nuanced beliefs about how they "know" what they know. They overwhelmingly agree that interpretation is necessary (85.2%, M = 4.27, SD = 0.77) and that they should make their standpoint transparent (87.9%, M = 4.31, SD = 0.79). High consensus also exists for letting facts speak (72.9%, M = 3.92, SD = 0.91) and for representing objective reality (69.3%, M = 3.83, SD = 0.82). In contrast, fewer endorse the inevitability of power shaping truth (46.0%, M = 3.41, SD = 0.99) or the impossibility of withholding personal beliefs (35.3%, M = 3.09, SD = 1.01).

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	304	85.2%	4.27	0.77
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	300	46.0%	3.41	0.99
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	300	35.3%	3.09	1.01
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	302	42.7%	3.37	1.06
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	303	69.3%	3.83	0.82
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	303	56.4%	3.53	1.04
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	302	57.0%	3.57	1.03
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	303	72.9%	3.92	0.91
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	304	81.3%	4.13	0.84
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	298	87.9%	4.31	0.79
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	300	78.3%	4.12	0.82

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

UAE journalists strongly endorse formal ethical standards: 72.9% agree ethics should always follow professional norms (N = 306; M = 4.02, SD = 0.97), 66.3% say they apply unless extraordinary circumstances (N = 309; M = 3.79, SD = 1.05), 52.6% believe ethics depend on each situation (N = 310; M = 3.46, SD = 1.12), and 34.5% view ethics as personal judgment (N = 307; M = 2.96, SD = 1.14) .

Controversial methods are rarely justified: only 2.6% say claiming another identity is always justified (N = 311; 25.7% on occasion), 1.9% for hidden recordings (N = 309; 24.3% on occasion), and just 0.6 % accept money from sources (N = 309; 7.4 % on occasion). Even promotional mimicry (1.6%/38.4%) and unverified reporting (1.3%/6.1%) are seldom approved.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	306	72.9%	4.02	0.97
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	309	66.3%	3.79	1.05
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	310	52.6%	3.46	1.12
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	307	34.5%	2.96	1.14

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	311	2.6%	25.7%
Using hidden recording devices	309	1.9%	24.3%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	309	1.6%	12.9%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	307	1.6%	14.0%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	309	1.0%	9.1%
Paying people for confidential information	311	1.3%	20.9%
Accepting money from sources	309	0.6%	7.4%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	310	2.3%	33.9%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	310	1.6%	38.4%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	309	1.3%	6.1%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Journalists report moderate day-to-day (the question about media freedom was omitted). Overall, 51.2% say they have a great deal or complete freedom to select which stories to cover (N = 291; M = 3.47, SD = 0.93), and 50.2% feel similarly about deciding which aspects of a story to emphasize (N = 301; M = 3.40, SD = 1.01).

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	291	51.2%	3.47	0.93
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	301	50.2%	3.40	1.01

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

UAE journalists report that decision-making is shaped first by internal norms – especially self-censorship (77.0%), journalistic ethics (75.7%), and formal editorial policy (74.2%) – and by senior editors (73.7%). Close ties to sources (70.5%), robust news-gathering resources (67.1%), and ownership (67.3%) also matter. Externally, access to information (76.8 %), media laws (72.8%), and government officials (72.3%) are highly influential, whereas friends (26.7%), issue advocacy groups (24.5%), and advertising (36.9%) have much less sway.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	295	50.5 %	3.33	1.21
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	297	73.7 %	3.91	1.12
The business managers of the news organization	292	63.7 %	3.69	1.24
The owners of the news organization	284	67.3 %	3.72	1.33
Editorial policy	291	74.2 %	3.92	1.20
Advertising considerations	282	36.9 %	2.87	1.48
Profit expectations	269	36.8 %	2.85	1.46
Audience research and data	280	41.8 %	3.14	1.31
Availability of news-gathering resources	289	67.1 %	3.82	1.11
Time limits	290	65.2 %	3.66	1.23
Journalism ethics	288	75.7 %	3.95	1.13
Self-censorship	287	77.0 %	4.01	1.09
Personal values and beliefs	284	68.7 %	3.78	1.20
Colleagues in other media	291	35.1 %	3.02	1.24
Friends, acquaintances and family	285	26.7 %	2.63	1.27
Feedback from the audience	299	59.2 %	3.55	1.10
Competing news organizations	300	64.0 %	3.64	1.16
Media laws and regulation	298	72.8 %	3.91	1.08
Access to information	298	76.8 %	3.98	1.04
Government officials	285	72.3 %	3.86	1.08
Business people	265	27.5 %	2.78	1.24
Public relations	290	53.8 %	3.40	1.23
Relationships with news sources	292	70.5 %	3.83	1.13
Issue advocacy groups	229	24.5 %	2.65	1.21
Religious groups and institutions	217	26.3 %	2.59	1.29

Question: "Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist." (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

United Kingdom

Neil Thurman, Sina Thäsler-Kordonouri & Imke Henkel

INTRODUCTION

The UK is a constitutional monarchy and a parliamentary democracy, traditionally dominated by two parties: the Conservatives and Labour. At the time of the survey (September–November 2023), the UK was governed by the Conservative Party but heading towards a general election the following year. After 13 years in power, the government was in crisis due to the polarizing exit from the European Union ("Brexit"; voted for in a referendum in June 2016, concluded in January 2020) and the subsequent frequent changes of prime minister (four in seven years). Economically the UK was in recession at the time of the survey, with unemployment at 4.3% and inflation (CPI) at 6.7% in September 2023. Inequality in the UK is relatively high. In 2022 it was the 9th most unequal of 38 OECD countries in terms of income.

The UK has a long journalistic tradition stretching back to the 17th century. Some present-day newspapers date back over 170 years, with one originating in the 18th century (*The Times* 1785), and several others in the 19th century (*The Guardian* 1821; *The Economist* 1843; *The Daily Telegraph* 1855).

The press comprises so-called 'broadsheet' (quality) newspapers, mid-market titles, and the 'tabloid' press (that focus on entertainment and scandals). The majority are politically to the right. In contrast, public service broadcasters are required to be impartial. The BBC, established in 1922, dominates public service broadcasting and employed over 5,500 journalists in 2023.

The UK's local and regional media are in decline, with two out of three jobs lost between 2007 and 2022. There is a high concentration of ownership in UK journalism. Just three companies dominate 90% of the national newspaper market, and six companies 71% of the local. Several new outlets were launched in the years leading up to the survey. Most notably, perhaps, the right leaning television news channel, GB News (launched 2021).

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The proportions of male (49.4%) and female (50%) journalists in the UK sample were almost equal. Just 0.6% of respondents reported being an 'other' gender. Their average (mean) age was 45.1 (SD = 13.1; Median = 45). Over 90% of UK respondents had a degree from a higher education institution, with 47% having a bachelor's degree, 41.1% a master's and 2.6% a doctorate. Another 3.6% had studied at university but received no degree. Of the 5.6% who had not attended higher education, only 0.2% had not completed high school. Two-thirds (66.1%) of UK journalists had some formal education in journalism. Of those, 48% had received a university or college degree in journalism, 22.7% via an apprenticeship, and 55.2% had attended a short course in journalism.

Much more detailed descriptions and analyses of our data about UK journalists' backgrounds, about the other themes summarised in this short report, and about topics this report omits due to space limitations can be found in our 76-page publication, *UK Journalists in the 2020s: Who they are, How they work, and What they Think*.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

About two-thirds (65%) of UK respondents had a permanent contract, 3% a fixed-term contract, and 28% were freelance. Another 3.5% reported having an 'other' type of employment contract. A quarter (24.7%) reported receiving additional work-related income from outside journalism, however the survey excluded journalists who earned less than 50% of their income from journalism or worked less than 18.2 hours a week working as a journalist. The average (mean) number of years spent working as a journalist was 19.9 (SD = 12.4; Median = 19).

57% of journalists in the UK sample said that they worked on or supervised a specific beat or subject area. In terms of working hours, the average (mean) number of hours worked per week was 43.1 (SD = 7.7) with Median of 40 for journalists in full-time employment.

Around two thirds (63%) of journalists did not have a management role, around a quarter (24%) had a top management role, with the remaining 13% having a middle management role.

Just over half (52.6%) reported being union members. Over half (54%) reported feeling stressed out 'often' or 'very often' in their work as a journalist during the previous six months.

For 13.2% of UK respondents, the main outlet they worked for had a local or regional reach and for three-quarters (75.4%) it had a national or transnational reach. The remainder (11.5%) did not work for a single main outlet. In terms of those outlets' ownership, for most UK journalists their main outlet was private/commercially-owned (71.5%), as opposed to being publicly-owned (13.8%), community-owned (0.2%), state-owned (0.2%), a non-profit (1.7%), or having another type of ownership structure (1.2%). Again, the remainder (11.5%) did not work for a single main outlet.

Journalists were asked about the media cultural background – from newspaper to news agency – of their main employer or the main outlet where they worked. Excluding the 18% who either did not know or did not have one main employer, for 30.3% their main employer had a magazine background; for 29%, newspaper; for 15.8%, internet-native; for 10.6%, TV; for 7.3%, news agency; and for 6.9%, radio. Just 0.1% of journalists had a main employer with a telecommunications background.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

The overwhelming majority (82.4%) of UK respondents had experienced some kind of safety threat related to their work in the five years prior to the survey (fielded in autumn 2023). Journalists working for local and regional media were significantly more likely to agree they had concerns about their physical, mental, and emotional well-being than those working for outlets with a national or transnational reach. Gender also played a significant role in UK journalists' experience of safety threats. For exampe, 59.4% of women reported that they had felt stressed out at work at least 'often' in the previous six months, compared to 48.5% of men. Close to a third of journalists were worried about losing their job within the next 12 months, with those who were aware of the use of two types of automation in their newsrooms being more worried about losing their job than those who were not aware of any such use. Furthermore, journalists felt stressed out at work more often the more distribution platforms they were producing for.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	1126	4.4%	10.4%	30.7%	26.2%	28.2%
Public discrediting of your work	1126	4.4%	7.4%	27.7%	26.4%	34.1%
Surveillance	1103	0.3%	1.4%	5.9%	13.3%	79.1%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	1118	0.4%	1.8%	9.4%	13.8%	74.6%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	1117	0.1%	0.1%	0.6%	1.6%	97.6%
Legal actions against you because of your work	1117	0.1%	0.7%	4.8%	11.2%	83.2%
Stalking	1111	0.2%	0.4%	2.9%	5.3%	91.3%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	1120	1.0%	2.3%	12.7%	19.3%	64.7%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	1108	0.6%	1.4%	4.4%	6.4%	87.1%
Other physical attacks	1104	0.0%	0.1%	0.5%	4.1%	95.3%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly Agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	1123	31.2%	2.76	1.21
Concerned about physical well-being	1128	22.7%	2.44	1.20
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	1126	45.7%	3.11	1.24
Concerned that those who harm journalists in the UK go unpunished	1121	53.7%	3.52	0.95

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

UK journalists consider the detached observer role to be one of their most important. However, in 2015, when the last UK WJS survey was conducted, they ascribed greater importance to this role. 'Providing the kind of news that attracts the largest audience' was also seen as less important than in 2015 (34.1% in 2023 vs. 46.6% in 2015). By contrast, UK journalists have become more interested in some other roles, such as 'monitoring and scrutinizing the powerful' and 'promoting peace and tolerance'.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	1130	68.7%	3.93	1.07
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	1130	64.6%	3.78	1.30
Shine a light on society's problems	1130	65.4%	3.78	1.30
Motivate people to participate in politics	1130	15.3%	2.20	1.21
Provide analysis of current affairs	1130	56.0%	3.45	1.39
Let people express their views	1130	59.3%	3.58	1.19
Provide information people need to form political opinion	1130	41.4%	2.95	1.50
Advocate for social change	1130	30.1%	2.72	1.37
Influence public opinion	1130	27.8%	2.65	1.31
Set the political agenda	1130	15.8%	2.13	1.25
Promote peace and tolerance	1130	32.2%	2.77	1.39
Educate the audience	1130	88.1%	4.41	0.80
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	1130	44.6%	3.16	1.34
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	1130	44.2%	3.14	1.39
Support national development	1130	19.6%	2.32	1.27
Support government policy	1130	2.7%	1.34	0.76
Convey a positive image of political leaders	1130	0.9%	1.18	0.53
Provide entertainment and relaxation	1130	40.9%	3.07	1.40
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	1130	34.1%	2.93	1.27
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	1130	21.9%	2.37	1.32
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	1130	47.5%	3.25	1.31
Support efforts to protect public health	1130	31.4%	2.66	1.41
Counteract disinformation	1130	71.1%	3.94	1.25
Discuss future implications of current events	1130	60.3%	3.60	1.23

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

A large majority (82.3%) of UK journalists agreed that interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts. 69% of UK journalists agreed it is possible to represent objective reality in reporting. 22.7% of UK journalists agreed that it is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from their reporting. 47.6% of UK journalists agreed that truth is inevitably shaped by those in power. Only 17.3% of UK journalists agreed that things are either true or false with no in-between, reflecting a rejection of dogmatic thinking.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly Agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	1063	82.3%	4.01	0.75
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	1063	47.6%	3.27	1.03
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	1063	22.7%	2.69	0.97
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	1063	17.3%	2.49	1.01
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	1063	69.0%	3.68	0.87

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

UK journalists' ethical orientations have seen some change since the last WJS UK survey. In 2015, 94.1% of UK journalists agreed that 'what is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards, regardless of situation and personal judgement'. In 2023, just 58.8% of UK journalists agreed with a similar statement. In 2015, 23.8% of UK journalists thought it justified on occasion to publish stories with unverified content. By 2023, this proportion had increased to 30.7%. Female journalists were more disapproving of some ethical practices, for example paying for confidential practices, than their male colleagues.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly Agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	1130	58.8%	3.59	1.08
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	1130	66.5%	3.71	0.98
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	1130	40.4%	3.01	1.18
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	1130	18.1%	2.37	1.10

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	1130	0.1%	54.9%
Using hidden recording devices	1130	0.9%	78.7%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	1130	6.5%	78.2%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	1130	2.8%	77.0%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	1130	0.7%	46.5%
Paying people for confidential information	1130	0.6%	45.2%
Accepting money from sources	1130	0.1%	6.0%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	1130	1.1%	42.9%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	1130	0.3%	8.8%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	1130	0.1%	30.7%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

UK journalists' views on the UK news media's level of freedom were polarised, with some perceiving good levels of media freedom and others seeing it as insufficient. It is worrying that, in total, 42.8% of respondents considered the UK news media to have only 'some', 'little', or 'no media freedom' at all. Similarly polarised opinions can be found in relation to editorial autonomy, with around a third of journalists perceiving they had only 'some', 'little' or 'no' freedom to select and shape stories.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	1127	62.8%	3.67	0.88
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	1127	67.1%	3.78	0.80
Media freedom in the UK	1110	57.2%	3.54	0.66

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

UK journalists perceived that their work was influenced – for better or for worse – by various factors, especially editors and supervisors, access to information, journalistic ethics, and editorial policies. Government censorship, government officials, the police, and politicians were perceived as 'not influential' by many respondents. Scientists or health experts were viewed as more influential than PR, advocacy groups, or religious institutions.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	980	43.2%	3.29	0.98
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	997	66.3%	3.75	0.96
The business managers of the news organization	893	19.9%	2.36	1.23
The owners of the news organization	837	20.9%	2.28	1.30
Editorial policy	1063	59.8%	3.60	1.04
Advertising considerations	849	16.4%	2.20	1.22
Profit expectations	829	22.7%	2.38	1.29
Audience research and data	1019	40.2%	3.11	1.21
Availability of news-gathering resources	1021	47.5%	3.35	1.08
Time limits	1070	58.4%	3.61	1.04
Journalism ethics	1047	64.6%	3.74	1.06
Self-censorship	922	20.5%	2.43	1.20
Personal values and beliefs	1032	37.5%	3.01	1.22
Colleagues in other media	1056	16.1%	2.59	0.99
Friends, acquaintances and family	1026	6.2%	2.00	0.95
Feedback from the audience	1074	28.6%	2.91	1.00
Competing news organizations	1044	23.0%	2.80	1.01
Media laws and regulation	1034	52.8%	3.44	1.21
Access to information	1055	65.0%	3.75	0.97
Government censorship	765	8.0%	1.68	1.04
Government officials	814	7.6%	1.75	1.02
Politicians	817	8.8%	1.82	1.04
Business people	926	14.0%	2.11	1.18
Public relations	1031	15.3%	2.33	1.11
Relationships with news sources	1011	35.7%	3.02	1.17
Police	688	6.4%	1.66	1.00
Issue advocacy groups	860	12.4%	2.20	1.07
Scientists or health experts	868	28.1%	2.70	1.26
Religious groups and institutions	677	2.5%	1.48	0.78

Question: "Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist." (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Ukraine[1]

Dariya Orlova & Vera Slavtcheva-Petkova

INTRODUCTION

As of 2025, Ukraine is in the fourth year of war following Russia's full-scale invasion launched in February 2022. The ongoing war, with an active frontline of several hundred kilometers and daily air attacks on towns and communities across the entire country, has been shaping nearly all aspects of political, economic, and social life. With the loss of roughly a third of GDP, destruction of critical infrastructure, and the need to fund the army to fight back the aggression, Ukraine is struggling economically. The humanitarian and demographic toll of the war is also grave. Despite such pivotal challenges, the country continues its efforts to stand up to the aggression and protect its sovereignty.

The war has also shaken Ukraine's media landscape. After Ukraine declared independence in 1991, journalists experienced a major post-communist transition as new private media owners defined the agenda and approach to journalism. An oligarch-dominated media environment contributed to the instrumentalization of journalism, though a handful of independent media, by and large, ensured the pluralism of information. Despite attempts of pressure and censorship, both from private owners and the state, Ukraine's media landscape remained partly free. Recent years have seen the strengthening of media, independent from the political influence of their owners, mostly due to foreign donor support, which increased after the Euromaidan Revolution and subsequent democratization reforms.

After the beginning of the full-scale invasion, Ukrainian oligarchs essentially lost control of their media along with other lost assets in a broken economy. The government, however, reinforced its influence, particularly through the United National TV Marathon, a coalition of broadcasters providing a unified coverage of the news during the war. The TV Marathon has drawn criticism from observers and journalists for information management. Martial law has also posed restrictions for journalism. Safety concerns, financial difficulties, and a deficit of human resources are crucial issues for Ukrainian journalists.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

Our sample of Ukrainian journalists includes more women than men (68.1% vs. 31.9%, respectively). On average, journalists were 39.1 years old (SD = 11.2; Median = 38). They are generally very well educated: 23.2% of them held a Bachelor's degree or equivalent, 67.6% a Master's degree or equivalent, and an additional 5.9% have obtained a doctorate. Moreover, 68.1% of the respondents have acquired formal education or professional training in journalism. This education or training is usually obtained at university or in college (78.6%) but also via apprenticeships or cadetships (54.8%) and short-term courses (36.5%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

The Ukrainian journalists in our sample were evenly spread in terms of management roles – 39.2% did not have a management role, 27.1% were in a middle management role and 33.7% in a top management role.

More than three quarters of the interviewed journalists in Ukraine had a full-time contract (69.7% permanently and 7.6% temporarily employed). 11.4% worked as freelancers or were self-employed, and an additional 5.4% had other forms of employment. Finally, 4.3% had a part-time permanent contract, and 1.6% had a part-time temporary contract. While these results do not suggest a precarious employment situation, the fact that 47.6% of the respondents reported that they had additional jobs outside journalism shows that this might be the case.

On average, Ukrainian journalists had 15.3 years of professional experience (SD = 9.3; Median = 14.5). A majority of them (77.8%) worked on a variety of beats or subject areas rather than on a single one. Less than half (44.9%) were members of professional associations.

The average working week of Ukrainian full-time journalists was 43.0 hours (SD = 17.5; Median = 40). In terms of the background of their main employers, more than half of journalists in Ukraine (54.6%) worked for native online media, 15.7% for a TV organization, 13.5% for news agencies, 9.2% for newspapers, and 2.7% for radio, respectively. Very few journalists worked for magazine companies and organizations with a telecommunications background (0.5%, respectively). Finally, 15.5% of the interviewed journalists claimed not to have a main employer. Regarding area of coverage, 64.2% of the journalists reported they mainly worked for (trans)national media, while 35.0% primarily catered to local or regional media.

Remarkably, more than two thirds of the respondents (70.3%) reported they felt stressed out at work often or very often during the previous six months; only 8.1% had rarely felt that way and no one said they had never felt stressed out at work.

[1] Country sample does not fully align with WJS specifications regarding maximum margin of error (see WJS3 Methodology).

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Attacks such as demeaning or hateful speech or public discrediting of journalists' work as well as questioning of their personal morality fared among the most common safety threats experienced by Ukrainian journalists (see Table 1). Digital threats such as hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites were also evident as well as stalking and legal actions against them. The vast majority of Ukrainian journalists were concerned that those who harm journalists would go unpunished. More than two thirds were worried about their emotional and mental well-being, and over half about their physical well-being (see Table 2). About a third of the surveyed journalists were concerned about losing their job in journalism in the next 12 months.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	185	6.5%	7.6%	39.5%	29.2%	17.3%
Public discrediting of your work	185	3.8%	9.2%	30.8%	27.6%	28.6%
Surveillance	185	1.1%	1.1%	8.6%	14.6%	74.6%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	185	2.2%	3.8%	16.8%	27.0%	50.3%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	185	0.5%	0.0%	1.1%	3.8%	94.6%
Legal actions against you because of your work	185	0.5%	2.2%	5.4%	15.7%	76.2%
Stalking	185	1.1%	0.5%	6.5%	9.2%	82.7%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	185	1.1%	2.7%	16.8%	29.7%	49.7%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	185	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	6.5%	93.0%
Other physical attacks	185	0.0%	1.1%	1.6%	10.3%	87.0%
Coercion	185	1.1%	1.6%	4.9%	16.8%	75.7%
Questioning of your personal morality	185	4.9%	5.4%	25.0%	35.1%	34.1%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	185	3.2%	1.1%	8.6%	13.5%	73.5%
Others disseminating your personal information	185	1.1%	2.2%	12.4%	23.2%	61.1%
Workplace bullying	185	1.6%	1.6%	5.9%	15.7%	75.1%
Abductions	185	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	99.5%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	185	1.1%	0.5%	0.5%	6.5%	91.4%
Intimidation that targets family	185	1.1%	0.5%	2.2%	10.8%	85.4%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	185	34.1%	2.95	1.22
Concerned about physical well-being	185	54.1%	3.45	1.10
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	185	69.2%	3.88	0.99
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Ukraine go unpunished	185	83.2%	4.16	0.78

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Ukrainian journalists showed the strongest support for the countering disinformation role, which is understandable in the context of the current war with Russia (see Table 3). Similarly, shine a light on society's problems, support national development and discuss future implications of current events are the next three most important roles. The results also reveal an inclination towards the interventionist role and the monitorial role to a lesser degree. The collaborative role, instead, found very weak support despite the major challenges of external threats.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	185	31.4%	2.96	1.15
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	185	77.3%	4.18	1.07
Shine a light on society's problems	185	88.6%	4.54	0.77
Motivate people to participate in politics	185	50.8%	3.45	1.20
Provide analysis of current affairs	185	76.8%	4.18	0.94
Let people express their views	185	65.9%	3.94	1.19
Provide information people need to form political opinion	185	61.1%	3.74	1.17
Advocate for social change	185	74.1%	4.05	1.01
Influence public opinion	185	57.8%	3.68	1.13
Set the political agenda	185	21.1%	2.65	1.13
Promote peace and tolerance	185	62.2%	3.78	1.17
Educate the audience	185	80.0%	4.26	0.94
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	185	76.2%	4.09	0.99
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	185	21.1%	2.56	1.27
Support national development	185	78.4%	4.21	1.00
Support government policy	185	7.6%	2.09	0.92
Convey a positive image of political leaders	185	2.2%	1.48	0.75
Provide entertainment and relaxation	185	5.9%	1.98	0.97
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	185	20.5%	2.59	1.20
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	185	26.5%	2.82	1.21
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	185	47.0%	3.43	1.10
Support efforts to protect public health	185	61.6%	3.77	1.07
Counteract disinformation	185	94.6%	4.78	0.57
Discuss future implications of current events	185	78.4%	4.19	0.88

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Ukrainian journalists' responses to the epistemological questions seem to be again affected by the ongoing war as for almost all journalists it was most important to alert their audiences about untruthful claims, followed by letting the facts speak for themselves (Table 4). The majority of journalists also believed that truth is inevitably shaped by those in power. Only 5.4% felt it was possible to represent objective reality in reporting. (see Table 4).

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	185	18.9%	2.71	0.96
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	185	76.8%	4.03	0.82
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	185	57.3%	3.58	0.95
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	185	17.8%	2.54	1.07
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	185	5.4%	2.15	0.82
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	185	15.1%	2.63	0.91
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	182	18.1%	2.77	0.87
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	184	78.8%	3.92	0.74
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	185	34.6%	3.06	1.02
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	182	56.0%	3.46	1.05
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	182	89.0%	4.29	0.74

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Journalists in Ukraine strongly agreed on the importance of professional standards rather than subjective and situational considerations for ethical reporting (see Table 5) although over half said that extraordinary circumstances might require disregarding those professional standards. When it comes to the justification of controversial reporting methods, however, producing promotional stories and publishing unverified stories were most strongly rejected (see Table 6). Most journalists found it acceptable to use hidden recording devices and use confidential documents without authorization.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	185	67.0%	3.83	1.01
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	185	52.4%	3.43	1.00
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	185	24.9%	2.56	1.14
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	185	18.4%	2.37	1.15

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	185	0.0%	54.6%
Using hidden recording devices	185	1.1%	77.3%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	185	1.6%	57.3%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	185	5.9%	60.0%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	185	1.6%	29.7%
Paying people for confidential information	185	3.2%	48.6%
Accepting money from sources	185	0.0%	14.1%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	185	5.9%	36.8%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	185	0.0%	17.8%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	185	1.1%	22.2%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Ukrainian journalists reported a high degree of internal autonomy, with the vast majority claiming to have a great deal or complete freedom in selecting their stories and in deciding which aspects to emphasize in a story. However, they reported a much lower external autonomy in terms of media freedom in Ukraine (see Table 7). This trend applies across the region.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	185	81.6%	4.06	0.76
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	185	83.8%	4.18	0.72
Media freedom in Ukraine	179	52.0%	3.47	0.78

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Ukrainian journalists found journalism ethics, availability of news-gathering resources, personal values and beliefs, and editorial policy to fare highest among the internal factors influencing news production (see Table 8). Among the external factors, most journalists considered access to information, media laws and regulation as being extremely or very influential. The military was also very or extremely influential for nearly half of the respondents, which can be explained by the war context.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	177	26.6%	2.92	1.05
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	166	53.0%	3.49	1.10
The business managers of the news organization	159	32.1%	2.85	1.25
The owners of the news organization	147	23.8%	2.55	1.31
Editorial policy	181	68.0%	3.81	1.12
Advertising considerations	149	10.7%	2.00	1.07
Profit expectations	156	29.5%	2.60	1.24
Audience research and data	172	48.3%	3.35	1.18
Availability of news-gathering resources	177	68.4%	3.82	1.03
Time limits	178	53.4%	3.54	1.07
Journalism ethics	182	86.3%	4.26	0.87
Self-censorship	180	37.8%	2.98	1.28
Personal values and beliefs	182	68.1%	3.90	1.15
Colleagues in other media	181	11.6%	2.49	0.95
Friends, acquaintances and family	177	10.2%	2.16	1.05
Feedback from the audience	184	42.4%	3.23	0.96
Competing news organizations	184	23.4%	2.79	1.03
Media laws and regulation	178	62.4%	3.74	0.99
Access to information	183	78.7%	4.10	0.83
Government censorship	171	24.0%	2.46	1.32
Government officials	175	11.4%	2.09	1.11
Politicians	173	6.4%	1.85	1.00
Business people	170	7.1%	1.76	0.99
Public relations	172	5.2%	1.74	0.92
Relationships with news sources	175	29.1%	2.79	1.21
Police	172	7.0%	1.92	1.00
Issue advocacy groups	176	17.0%	2.36	1.11
Scientists or health experts	166	21.8%	1.62	0.84
Religious groups and institutions	179	4.2%	3.28	1.19
Military	168	46.4%	2.49	1.22
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	160	22.6%	1.24	0.65
Organized crime and criminal groups	154	1.9%	1.29	0.82
Terrorist groups	170	3.2%	2.51	1.17

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

United States

Tim Vos, Rachel Mourão & Esther Thorson

INTRODUCTION

When U.S. journalists were surveyed in the second half of 2023, the country was a year away from a divisive national election but had for years been exhibiting signs of political polarization. Long a global superpower, with stable political, economic, and social institutions, the U.S. was facing a crossroads between a post-pandemic path to democratic and neoliberal normalcy or an embrace of greater unilateralism, nativism, and individualism. These competing views of the country's identity inflected national, state, and local political and social life.

The U.S. has been characterized as a quintessential liberal news media system, with an entrenched commercial orientation; an ingrained professional ethos, centered on 'objectivity' and strong legal autonomy, with the First Amendment as its foundation. The U.S. has had a diverse media environment, with a mix of national and local; print, broadcast, and online; legacy, partisan, and entrepreneurial journalism. However, the digital revolution – in combination with other economic forces – has destabilized journalism, with jobs numbers in a sustained period of decline.

Journalists were surveyed during the Joseph Biden presidential administration – a time of relative "normalcy," "quiet and calm". These characterizations drew a contrast to the previous disruptive years of the Donald Trump presidency, when journalism was verbally attacked as "fake news" and "enemy of the people", and to the coming second Trump term, starting in 2025, when again the Trump administration and likeminded politicians were actively hostile to legacy news media.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The major of U.S. journalists (N = 1,326) identified as male (57.2% of the surveyed). The average age of journalists was 48.1 years (SD = 14.3, Median = 50). The majority completed higher education, with 71.6% holding a Bachelor's degree, 21.0% a Master's degree, and 0.7% a Doctorate. Approximately 5.2% had received some university training, and 1.5% had completed at least some high school education. Overall, 80.7% had formal journalism training, most frequently through university or college (84.9%), apprenticeships (46.3%), or short-term courses (35.9%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

Journalists in the US worked primarily for commercial news organizations (88.6%), with 8.0% working for non-profit and 3.2% for public media. The majority (94.6%) worked for local and regional media, with 5.4% working for national and international outlets. Regarding the background of their primary employer, 46.7% worked for an outlet focused on publishing newspapers, followed by television (27.9%), radio (10.0%), internet-native (7.0%), news agencies (3.9%), and magazines (3.0%). When it comes to beats, 32.7% had a specific beat assignment. They reported working on average 44.0 hours a week (SD= 4.9, Median = 44; for those in full-time employment), and have on average 20.8 years of professional experience (SD = 13.2, Median = 20). About 44.1% had no management role in the newsroom, 35.8% were middle managers, and 20.1% held top management roles.

For employment status, 75.4% of respondents held full-time and permanent contracts, 13.8% had full-time and fixed-term contracts, 1.9% had part-time contracts, and 2.4% worked as freelancers or were self-employed. Additionally, 20.5% reported having additional jobs outside of journalism. Over half of the journalists in the sample were members of a union or professional association (55.2%). A significant portion (59.5%) of journalists reported feeling stressed at work often or very often during the past six months, and 30.6% were sometimes stressed. Fewer than 10.0% of journalists rarely or never felt stressed at work.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

U.S. journalists have long faced skepticism from socially marginalized groups, but populist hostility toward journalism has changed the landscape that journalists negotiate. Journalists reported attacks on their work and their reputations, with nearly half of journalists (46.4%) facing demeaning or hateful speech at least some of the time. Similarly, some journalists reported having their morality questioned, had threats and intimidation directed at them, and faced the public discrediting of their work at least sometimes (Table 1). Direct violence, detention, and raids remained rare in the U.S.

Nevertheless, 61.5% of journalists were concerned that those who harm journalists go unpunished. Threats and work-related concerns have taken a toll on many journalists, with nearly half reporting concerns about their emotional and mental wellbeing (Table 2).

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	1325	4.3%	9.4%	32.7%	29.5%	24.2%
Public discrediting of your work	1324	3.6%	6.6%	25.2%	30.3%	34.2%
Surveillance	1323	1.1%	1.0%	5.4%	11.2%	81.3%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	1323	1.1%	2.3%	8.4%	16.6%	71.5%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	1324	0.1%	0.2%	0.6%	1.5%	97.7%
Legal actions against you because of your work	1325	0.2%	0.5%	6.1%	16.0%	77.2%
Stalking	1321	0.4%	1.3%	5.2%	11.2%	81.9%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	1325	1.6%	3.8%	20.4%	29.5%	44.7%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	1325	0.6%	1.0%	5.0%	8.7%	84.8%
Other physical attacks	1320	0.2%	0.2%	2.5%	6.0%	91.1%
Coercion	1322	0.3%	0.9%	4.8%	14.1%	79.8%
Questioning of your personal morality	1324	2.9%	7.3%	29.1%	26.6%	34.1%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	1325	0.3%	1.0%	4.1%	11.7%	82.9%
Others disseminating your personal information	1325	1.0%	1.2%	10.2%	19.8%	67.8%
Workplace bullying	1325	1.7%	2.9%	11.0%	17.5%	66.9%
Abductions	1323	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.7%	99.2%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	1323	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	1.4%	98.0%
Intimidation that targets family	1323	0.2%	0.4%	4.3%	10.6%	84.5%

Question: “In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?”

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	1319	24.2%	2.51	1.23
Concerned about physical well-being	1319	19.6%	2.30	1.18
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	1318	48.0%	3.13	1.33
Concerned that those who harm journalists in the United States go unpunished	1321	61.5%	3.63	1.10

Question: “Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.” (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

U.S. journalists embraced the value of their work to society, expressing an obligation to educate the audience (92.8 % claimed it as very or extremely important). For many journalists, this obligation extends to counteracting disinformation (80.3 % saw it as very or extremely important). Indeed, journalists largely saw their role as surveilling society for wrongdoing by monitoring and scrutinizing those in power and shining a light on social problems. Journalists took distance, however, from more activist roles, with low support for setting the public agenda and even less support for collaborative roles, such as supporting government policy (Table 3).

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	1318	64.4%	3.80	1.24
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	1322	74.7%	4.05	1.24
Shine a light on society’s problems	1317	72.5%	3.97	1.14
Motivate people to participate in politics	1319	27.8%	2.64	1.33
Provide analysis of current affairs	1321	59.0%	3.58	1.28
Let people express their views	1322	60.7%	3.66	1.15
Provide information people need to form political opinion	1319	58.8%	3.54	1.38
Advocate for social change	1318	18.9%	2.40	1.25
Influence public opinion	1317	14.4%	2.20	1.20
Set the political agenda	1317	5.1%	1.56	0.93
Promote peace and tolerance	1313	32.2%	2.89	1.30
Educate the audience	1322	92.8%	4.58	0.70
Point toward possible solutions to society’s problems	1318	54.2%	3.45	1.24
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	1319	58.9%	3.55	1.24
Support national development	1311	10.3%	1.94	1.12
Support government policy	1312	2.8%	1.44	0.83
Convey a positive image of political leaders	1322	1.2%	1.19	0.58
Provide entertainment and relaxation	1318	29.4%	2.79	1.24
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	1322	42.1%	3.21	1.20
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	1321	23.8%	2.57	1.25
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	1323	65.0%	3.80	1.07
Support efforts to protect public health	1323	54.0%	3.42	1.29
Counteract disinformation	1319	80.3%	4.24	1.08
Discuss future implications of current events	1320	67.3%	3.78	1.12

Question: “Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

U.S. journalists embraced traditional notions that facts should speak for themselves (81.2%) and that it is possible to produce an objective account of reality; but at the same time, they expressed their strongest belief in calling out untruthful claims (93% agree or strongly agree) while also saying interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts (74.9%). Journalists were generally distrustful of their instincts (Table 4).

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	1321	74.9%	3.86	0.88
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	1324	32.8%	2.92	1.09
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	1324	25.4%	2.63	1.07
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	1322	19.6%	2.55	1.07
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	1316	74.2%	3.82	0.93
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	1323	26.5%	2.74	1.05
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	1314	11.5%	2.35	0.91
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	1318	81.2%	4.05	0.81
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	1323	58.3%	3.55	1.07
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	1317	26.5%	2.75	1.16
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	1321	93.0%	4.39	0.69

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Journalists in the U.S. were supportive of professional ethical standards as a guide to decision making (65.8% agree or strongly agree) and skeptical that ethics are a matter of personal judgment (Table 5). They also expressed little support for controversial reporting methods, with behaviors that compromised journalistic autonomy particularly disdained and practices that deceived the public or sources also disliked. The highest support was for using documents of the powerful without permission (Table 6).

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	1323	44.7%	3.23	1.22
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	1323	65.8%	3.66	1.01
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	1321	38.9%	2.94	1.23
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	1324	13.8%	2.23	1.04

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	1321	0.1%	13.3%
Using hidden recording devices	1322	1.2%	56.6%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	1317	8.9%	60.5%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	1320	5.8%	64.2%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	1318	0.1%	37.7%
Paying people for confidential information	1320	0.3%	13.1%
Accepting money from sources	1324	0.1%	0.6%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	1323	0.4%	25.0%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	1323	0.2%	5.7%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	1321	0.1%	17.7%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

U.S. journalists reported substantial professional and editorial autonomy. Journalists mostly chose their own news stories, with even more freedom to decide on what aspects of a story to emphasize (81.1% report complete or a great deal of freedom). Freedom outside the news organization was not as strong as freedom within, with 68.7% of journalists reporting a great deal or complete media freedom in the United States (Table 7).

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	1322	77.8%	3.96	0.74
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	1321	81.1%	4.05	0.72
Media freedom in the United States	1310	68.7%	3.71	0.64

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

When journalists in the U.S. set out to make news decisions, they identified journalism ethics (81.2%) and editors (61.5%) as most influential on their work. The circumstances of news production were also perceived to play a role in news making, including time constraints, accessibility of information, and newsgathering resources. Outside pressures were reported to carry little weight, although some journalists seemed mindful of sources and audiences (Table 8).

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	1275	43.8%	3.28	1.05
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	1209	61.5%	3.67	1.00
The business managers of the news organization	1200	18.7%	2.20	1.26
The owners of the news organization	1193	21.9%	2.34	1.33
Editorial policy	1204	46.2%	3.20	1.25
Advertising considerations	1194	6.9%	1.68	1.00
Profit expectations	1164	12.2%	1.95	1.15
Audience research and data	1238	33.4%	2.88	1.25
Availability of news-gathering resources	1267	47.6%	3.34	1.16
Time limits	1268	56.2%	3.57	1.12
Journalism ethics	1300	81.2%	4.16	1.00
Self-censorship	1138	17.7%	2.18	1.27
Personal values and beliefs	1259	33.5%	2.90	1.30
Colleagues in other media	1265	12.6%	2.32	1.02
Friends, acquaintances and family	1234	7.9%	2.03	0.96
Feedback from the audience	1302	30.5%	2.98	1.05
Competing news organizations	1280	17.0%	2.52	1.06
Media laws and regulation	1226	37.4%	3.00	1.28
Access to information	1280	58.1%	3.60	1.10
Government censorship	1005	2.9%	1.31	0.74
Government officials	1199	10.3%	2.03	1.06
Politicians	1185	8.4%	1.89	1.03
Business people	1221	8.8%	1.95	1.01
Public relations	1245	9.7%	2.09	0.99
Relationships with news sources	1273	35.2%	2.99	1.18
Police	1146	9.9%	1.95	1.09
Issue advocacy groups	1142	5.5%	1.84	0.92
Science and health organizations	1203	30.5%	2.80	1.18
Religious groups and institutions	1140	3.5%	1.56	0.84
Military	991	3.0%	1.39	0.77
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	893	1.1%	1.10	0.46
Organized crime and criminal groups	914	1.4%	1.17	0.58
Terrorist groups	849	0.5%	1.07	0.37

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Uzbekistan

Beate Josephi & Berdak Bayimbetov

INTRODUCTION

Uzbekistan, previously a republic of the Soviet Union, declared independence in 1991. Classified as a consolidated autocratic country, it has not held free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections since gaining independence. A transition in presidential leadership was brought about by the passing of the first president, Islam Karimov. His prime minister, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, assumed the presidency in 2016. Since then, Mirziyoyev has begun to implement reforms, and improved prospects for private sector development, with emphasis on technocratic and economic goals, and opened the country to greater international cooperation.

Having been part of the Soviet Union for almost 70 years, Uzbekistan's journalistic tradition is shaped by this experience. The press was seen as an integral part of the state's propaganda efforts. Unlike Russia, Uzbekistan never went through a period of *glasnost* but continued with strict controls of journalistic output. Under President Mirziyoyev foreign media, other than Russian media which were always available, were again permitted into the country and private media was allowed to form. While it is an improvement that private media can discuss political issues to a greater extent, state media remain under government control regarding what they publish and broadcast.

The current Uzbek media landscape consists of about 75% state media and 25% private media, which this survey, carried out in June – September 2023, attempts to reflect. Deep-seated caution in expressing opinions of their own has shaped the survey responses of the Uzbek journalists.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The journalists in Uzbekistan have a larger male (68.3%) than female (31.5%) cohort. The average age is 36.3 years old (SD = 9.3; Median = 36). Uzbek journalists are well educated. 45.5% hold a Bachelor's degree and 46.6% a Master's degree. 80.4% received formal journalistic education, of these 59.0% at university, but also via apprenticeships or cadetships (52.7%). 37.9% attended short courses.

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

State media are the main employers in Uzbekistan. The survey allocates 82.8% working for state media and 13.0% for private media. However, there are variations within state media, some of which work at greater arm's length from the government than others. Most of the state-owned print media are disseminated on the internet (mostly on Telegram), leading to 63% describing themselves as internet natives, and only 9.6% working for organizations that traditionally focus on newspaper publishing and 7.3% for magazine companies.11.5% worked in a TV organization, almost 5% in radio outlets and 2% for the state news agency. Almost 70% worked in national media and 30% in regional and local media.

Working conditions are safe, with almost 80% on full-time contracts, 8% on a permanent part-time and 6.9% on a fixed term full-time contract. Only 3.3% were freelancers. For 76%, journalism was their only income and for a further 12.2% journalism provided 80% of their income.

On average, Uzbek journalists had 11.4 years' experience (SD = 7.8; Median = 10). Average working hours per week were 34.9 (SD = 7.4; Median = 35; for those in full-time employment). While 37.2% say they feel sometimes and 2.5% often stressed, 50% are rarely stressed. Of the journalists surveyed, 78.4% had no operational or strategic authority, 12% were in middle management and 9.7% in a top management role. 83.7% worked on a specific beat, while 16.3% worked across various areas. 34.9% of journalists belong to a union, 65.1% don't.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

With more than 80% of respondents working in state media, the journalists were cautious when committing to answers. Despite low pay, most journalists work fulltime and don't fear for their jobs. However, half of the journalists report having experienced surveillance and stalking (understood as a form of surveillance), and a third hateful or demeaning speech. Their strongest concern is that the state offers no protection, with those who harm journalists going unpunished.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	479	4.2%	6.3%	23.6%	20.0%	45.9%
Public discrediting of your work	479	2.7%	5.0%	13.6%	52.8%	25.9%
Surveillance	479	2.7%	8.6%	36.1%	21.3%	31.3%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	479	0.8%	9.2%	15.7%	43.6%	30.7%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	479	4.8%	6.3%	25.7%	20.3%	43.0%
Legal actions against you because of your work	479	0.8%	9.0%	17.1%	35.7%	37.4%
Stalking	479	1.9%	7.5%	29.0%	27.8%	33.8%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	479	1.7%	6.5%	17.5%	40.9%	33.4%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	479	1.0%	5.6%	20.7%	23.8%	48.9%
Other physical attacks	479	0.8%	5.2%	20.9%	37.4%	35.7%
Coercion	479	1.7%	5.2%	29.9%	27.1%	36.1%
Questioning of your personal morality	479	1.7%	8.4%	21.1%	33.0%	35.9%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	479	4.0%	6.5%	18.2%	24.8%	46.6%
Others disseminating your personal information	479	1.3%	7.7%	20.0%	34.2%	36.7%
Workplace bullying	479	0.6%	5.6%	29.0%	29.2%	35.5%
Abductions	479	1.3%	4.4%	19.8%	37.2%	37.4%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	479	1.0%	5.8%	19.2%	25.5%	48.4%
Intimidation that targets family	479	1.3%	5.2%	21.3%	36.1%	36.1%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	479	15.0%	2.30	1.28
Concerned about physical well-being	479	11.5%	2.24	1.08
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	479	8.4%	2.16	1.06
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Uzbekistan go unpunished	479	28.0%	2.82	1.24

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Uzbekistan's journalists prefer to stay behind the shield of being a detached observer (39%). However, they wish to educate the audience (36.1%). The Russian war against a former Soviet republic, Ukraine, and the impact of social media are likely influences on their next choices, to promote peace (33.8%) and tolerance and let people express their views (33.6%), followed by advocating for social change (33.2%) and pointing towards possible solutions to society's problems (32.6%). Least favored is setting the political agenda (18.8%), with monitoring and scrutinizing those in power also considered fairly unimportant (23.8%).

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	479	39.0%	3.20	1.43
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	479	23.8%	2.72	1.22
Shine a light on society's problems	479	28.6%	2.89	1.25
Motivate people to participate in politics	479	28.2%	2.74	1.20
Provide analysis of current affairs	479	31.7%	2.96	1.28
Let people express their views	479	33.6%	2.98	1.18
Provide information people need to form political opinion	479	27.6%	2.88	1.19
Advocate for social change	479	33.2%	2.94	1.20
Influence public opinion	479	30.7%	2.85	1.28
Set the political agenda	479	18.8%	2.57	1.11
Promote peace and tolerance	479	33.8%	3.12	1.19
Educate the audience	479	36.1%	3.05	1.20
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	479	32.6%	2.91	1.29
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	479	23.0%	2.65	1.14
Support national development	479	29.6%	3.02	1.13
Support government policy	479	28.4%	2.88	1.14
Convey a positive image of political leaders	479	19.2%	2.53	1.22
Provide entertainment and relaxation	479	23.8%	2.73	1.12
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	479	29.0%	2.95	1.11
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	479	26.3%	2.83	1.10
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	479	30.7%	2.85	1.26
Support efforts to protect public health	479	25.5%	2.75	1.14
Counteract disinformation	479	30.1%	2.98	1.14
Discuss future implications of current events	479	24.4%	2.84	1.09

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Journalists ranked being part of the community highest (29.2%), with misinformation being their next biggest concern. Alert audiences when a claim is untruthful and things are either true or false are both at 25.3%. Their belief in representing objective reality (23.2%) is in line with Uzbek journalists seeing their main role as detached observers. Few claim to know intuitively (13.4%) or trust their instincts (13.2%).

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	479	22.8%	2.71	1.27
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	479	19.8%	2.67	1.07
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	479	20.0%	2.71	1.12
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	479	25.3%	2.82	1.10
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	479	23.2%	2.83	1.16
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	479	13.2%	2.30	1.19
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	479	13.4%	2.34	1.03
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	479	17.5%	2.47	1.14
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	479	29.2%	2.79	1.18
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	479	23.2%	2.66	1.21
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	479	25.3%	2.74	1.11

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

While the highest percentage (29.2%) was given to the importance of professional standards, an almost equal number (28.2%) allowed for the influence of extraordinary circumstances, 25.3% for specific situations and 23.6% for personal judgement. When taking all percentages into account, the figures point towards exceptionism and situationism.

Claiming to be someone else is rejected by almost half the journalists. However, the acceptance of controversial reporting methods is high. Using personal materials of powerful people was seen by 72.2% as always justified or justified on occasion, whereas using personal materials of ordinary people was only approved by 50.4%. Hidden recordings were seen by 76.2% as always justified or justified on occasions, as was paying for confidential information (68.4%). Almost two-thirds (62.8%) thought that using confidential business or government documents without authorization was always justified or justified on occasions.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	479	29.2%	2.82	1.36
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	479	28.2%	2.94	1.17
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	479	25.3%	2.87	1.17
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	479	23.6%	2.84	1.09

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	479	21.5%	29.4%
Using hidden recording devices	479	13.6%	62.6%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	479	28.4%	34.4%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	479	14.4%	57.8%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	479	23.0%	30.1%
Paying people for confidential information	479	15.4%	53.0%
Accepting money from sources	479	21.9%	38.6%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	479	12.7%	47.0%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	479	22.3%	39.9%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	479	17.5%	46.6%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

The figures are an apposite reflection of being journalists in a country classified as 'consolidated autocratic'. Only a fifth (20.5%) claim to have complete or a great deal of freedom in deciding which story elements to emphasize and 18.4% in which stories to select. Media freedom is rated a low 15.7%.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	479	18.4%	3.13	0.65
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	479	20.5%	3.16	0.69
Media freedom in Uzbekistan	478	15.7%	2.91	0.72

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

External influences were rated higher than internal ones. Media laws and regulation ranked highest (35.3%), followed by access to information (33.8%) and relationships with news sources (32%). Of the internal influences, journalism ethics (31.8%) ranked just above newsgathering resources (29.8%). Equal third were editorial policy and self-censorship (both 28.3%).

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	465	20.4%	2.62	1.25
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	472	27.3%	2.83	1.11
The business managers of the news organization	470	20.0%	2.53	1.22
The owners of the news organization	472	21.8%	2.63	1.13
Editorial policy	470	28.3%	2.85	1.21
Advertising considerations	464	19.2%	2.49	1.10
Profit expectations	460	18.0%	2.46	1.13
Audience research and data	464	18.5%	2.47	1.11
Availability of news-gathering resources	470	29.8%	2.81	1.21
Time limits	469	21.3%	2.68	1.09
Journalism ethics	471	31.8%	2.93	1.19
Self-censorship	473	28.3%	2.85	1.14
Personal values and beliefs	474	23.8%	2.78	1.20
Colleagues in other media	464	15.5%	2.41	1.16
Friends, acquaintances and family	470	20.4%	2.63	0.98
Feedback from the audience	474	22.6%	2.73	1.17
Competing news organizations	475	22.7%	2.69	1.04
Media laws and regulation	476	35.3%	3.05	1.20
Access to information	468	33.8%	2.98	1.09
Government censorship	470	17.7%	2.72	1.05
Government officials	472	16.9%	2.61	1.02
Politicians	475	20.8%	2.69	1.12
Business people	470	16.6%	2.48	1.02
Public relations	476	30.7%	2.95	1.14
Relationships with news sources	472	32.0%	2.85	1.14
Police	447	10.3%	2.26	1.06
Issue advocacy groups	448	11.6%	2.31	1.01
Scientists or health experts	445	10.1%	2.18	1.03
Religious groups and institutions	447	11.9%	2.18	1.12
Military	441	11.2%	2.21	1.05
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	438	10.9%	2.21	1.06
Organized crime and criminal groups	440	10.0%	2.21	1.06
Terrorist groups	447	11.4%	2.36	1.06

Question: "Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist." (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Venezuela

David Blanco-Herrero, Maximiliano Frías-Vázquez & Carlos Arcila Calderón

INTRODUCTION

As of 2025, Venezuela remains trapped in a profound socio-political and economic crisis. President Nicolás Maduro started his third term despite a widely disputed election due to allegations of electoral fraud. Economically, the nation continued its catastrophic downturn, which further aggravated the humanitarian situation with large portions of the population facing food and medicine shortages.

The current journalistic landscape has undergone significant transformations, too. Historically, Venezuelan journalism offered a vibrant press environment, but political shifts initiated during Hugo Chávez's presidency and intensified under Nicolás Maduro have altered this scenario. Since the 2010s, numerous outlets have shut down due to censorship, repression or financial troubles. Press freedom continuously deteriorated, with abundant reports of press freedom violations in the country.

The fieldwork of this study took place between late 2021 and early 2023 in the aftermath of the 2020 standoff between Juan Guaidó, who was acknowledged as interim president by several Western countries, and Nicolás Maduro, who remained de-facto president. At the time of data collection, Venezuela was still battling the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, during the last months of this period, Venezuela experienced a light economic and socio-political recovery.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

Our sample of Venezuelan journalists is balanced in terms of gender: 53.0% in the sample were women. On average, they were 44.4 years old (SD = 12.9; Median = 43). They are generally well educated: 63.7% of them held a Bachelor's degree or equivalent, 32.5% a Master's degree or equivalent, and an additional 2.0% have obtained a doctorate. Moreover, 97.2% of the respondents have acquired formal education or professional training in journalism. This education or training is usually obtained at university or in college (96.4%) but also via apprenticeships or cadetships (94.3%) and short-term courses (84.2%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

More than one third of journalists in Venezuela (35.8%) worked for native online media, 20.4% for organizations traditionally focused on newspaper publishing, 12.9% for radio outlets, and 6.4% for television news agencies, respectively. Very few journalists worked for magazine companies and in the telecommunications sector (0.5%, respectively). Finally, 15.5% of the interviewed journalists claimed not to have a main employer. Regarding area of coverage, 64.2% of the journalists reported they mainly worked for (trans)national media, while 35.0% primarily catered to local or regional media.

On average, Venezuelan journalists had 17.6 years of professional experience (SD = 11.2; Median = 15). A majority of them (79.1%) worked on a variety of beats or subject areas rather than on a single one. More than two thirds of Venezuelan journalists (68.8%) were members of professional associations.

About half of the interviewed journalists in Venezuela had a full-time contract (43.7% permanently and 6.3% temporarily employed). Almost a third (30.6%) worked as freelancers or were self-employed, and an additional 8.6% had other forms of employment. Finally, 6.6% had a part-time permanent contract, and 4.3% had a part-time temporary contract. These results suggest a precarious employment situation, as does the fact that 48.5% of the respondents reported that they had additional jobs outside journalism.

The average working week of Venezuelan full-time journalists was 44.7 hours (SD = 20.9; Median = 45). Relatedly, 55.2% of the respondents reported they felt stressed out at work often or very often during the previous six months; only 18.1% had never or rarely felt that way.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Verbal attacks such as demeaning or hateful speech or public discrediting of journalists' work fared among the most common safety threats experienced by Venezuelan journalists (see Table 1). However, despite experienced less frequently, experiences of more dangerous threats, such as legal actions or physical threats, are worrying. These experiences also impact the concerns expressed by Venezuelan journalists; more than half were concerned about losing their job, and a broad majority were concerned about their physical or emotional well-being (see Table 2). Moreover, almost the all of the surveyed journalists feared that those who harm journalists would go unpunished.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	398	5.0%	14.3%	43.5%	18.6%	18.6%
Public discrediting of your work	398	4.0%	11.6%	30.7%	19.6%	34.2%
Surveillance	398	4.5%	12.3%	27.9%	15.3%	39.9%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	398	7.0%	10.8%	22.4%	15.8%	44.0%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	398	1.0%	0.3%	7.5%	4.3%	86.9%
Legal actions against you because of your work	398	1.0%	2.3%	8.8%	8.0%	79.9%
Stalking	398	3.8%	4.0%	22.6%	16.6%	53.0%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	398	3.8%	6.8%	27.9%	19.3%	42.2%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	398	0.3%	0.5%	3.3%	6.8%	89.2%
Other physical attacks	398	0.3%	2.0%	12.8%	13.1%	71.9%
Coercion	398	1.8%	3.3%	13.6%	22.6%	58.8%
Questioning of your personal morality	398	2.5%	7.3%	20.1%	19.8%	50.3%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	398	1.0%	2.0%	7.8%	11.1%	78.1%
Others disseminating your personal information	398	1.5%	3.0%	10.8%	11.1%	73.6%
Workplace bullying	398	0.8%	1.8%	11.6%	11.8%	74.1%
Abductions	398	0.3%	0.0%	1.5%	1.3%	97.0%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	398	0.3%	0.8%	8.0%	9.5%	81.4%
Intimidation that targets family	398	0.5%	1.3%	5.3%	6.0%	86.9%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	398	54.3%	3.36	1.40
Concerned about physical well-being	398	64.3%	3.54	1.24
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	398	79.1%	3.97	1.13
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Venezuela go unpunished	398	95.2%	4.61	0.76

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Venezuelan journalists showed strong support for interventionist roles, while more traditional approaches remain relevant but less appreciated (see Table 3). Politically assertive roles were among the least valued ones. Even in those cases, significant portions (around a quarter or more) of the interviewed journalists considered these roles extremely or very important.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	398	80.9%	4.11	0.93
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	398	78.1%	4.08	1.02
Shine a light on society's problems	398	92.0%	4.53	0.72
Motivate people to participate in politics	398	31.4%	2.91	1.19
Provide analysis of current affairs	398	83.4%	4.24	0.87
Let people express their views	398	87.4%	4.31	0.82
Provide information people need to form political opinion	398	76.4%	4.08	1.02
Advocate for social change	398	77.4%	4.08	0.93
Influence public opinion	398	65.3%	3.71	1.04
Set the political agenda	398	23.1%	2.64	1.16
Promote peace and tolerance	398	85.4%	4.32	0.93
Educate the audience	398	92.7%	4.53	0.72
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	398	83.4%	4.21	0.88
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	398	87.2%	4.38	0.89
Support national development	398	81.4%	4.18	0.90
Support government policy	398	34.2%	3.10	1.08
Convey a positive image of political leaders	398	32.4%	2.81	1.30
Provide entertainment and relaxation	398	40.7%	3.18	1.18
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	398	74.6%	3.99	0.95
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	398	61.8%	3.68	1.05
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	398	75.4%	4.06	0.92
Discuss future implications of current events	398	72.9%	3.94	0.97
Support efforts to protect public health	398	79.4%	4.14	0.96
Counteract disinformation	398	93.2%	4.61	0.74
Discuss future implications of current events	398	72.9%	3.94	0.97

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

There was greater disagreement among Venezuelan journalists regarding their perceptions of journalistic epistemology (see Table 4). Respondents agreed on the importance of letting the facts speak for themselves, alerting audiences about untrue claims, and valuing interpretation to make sense of facts.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	398	74.9%	3.81	1.04
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	398	13.1%	2.17	1.04
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	398	39.2%	3.04	1.13
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	398	47.0%	3.15	1.36
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	398	64.6%	3.62	1.04
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	398	28.6%	2.71	1.12
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	398	25.9%	2.73	1.09
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	398	76.6%	3.89	0.93
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	398	26.4%	2.69	1.15
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	398	58.0%	3.46	1.20
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	398	72.6%	3.84	0.99

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Journalists in Venezuela strongly agreed on the importance of professional standards rather than subjective and situational considerations for ethical reporting (see Table 5). When it comes to the justification of controversial reporting methods, however, accepting money from sources and publishing unverified information was most strongly rejected (see Table 7). Most journalists found it acceptable to use hidden recording devices and use confidential documents without authorization.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	398	81.9%	4.15	1.01
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	398	31.7%	2.70	1.24
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	398	17.6%	2.24	1.18
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	398	20.4%	2.28	1.20

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	398	2.5%	29.4%
Using hidden recording devices	398	5.0%	64.3%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	398	6.8%	56.0%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	398	3.5%	47.2%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	398	1.5%	22.1%
Paying people for confidential information	398	1.0%	26.1%
Accepting money from sources	398	0.3%	3.5%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	398	4.8%	29.6%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	398	1.8%	15.6%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	398	1.0%	4.8%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Venezuelan journalists reported a limited but fair amount of freedom in their work (see Table 7). About two thirds claimed to have complete or a great deal of freedom in selecting their stories and in deciding which aspects to emphasize in a story. Media freedom was rated extremely low by the respondents.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	398	66.1%	3.81	0.90
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	398	62.8%	3.73	0.93
Media freedom in Venezuela	398	2.5%	2.23	0.66

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Venezuelan journalists found journalism ethics and editorial policy to fare highest among the internal factors influencing news production (see Table 8). Among the external factors, most journalists considered access to information, government censorship, and media laws and regulation as being extremely or very influential.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	371	24.5%	2.73	1.07
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	383	54.3%	3.45	1.04
The business managers of the news organization	382	38.0%	3.02	1.24
The owners of the news organization	373	48.3%	3.26	1.31
Editorial policy	379	62.0%	3.62	1.11
Advertising considerations	373	22.0%	2.40	1.20
Profit expectations	376	27.1%	2.70	1.22
Audience research and data	377	39.3%	3.07	1.16
Availability of news-gathering resources	390	42.6%	3.52	1.10
Time limits	390	44.4%	3.26	1.15
Journalism ethics	393	86.3%	4.21	0.84
Self-censorship	387	36.4%	3.00	1.23
Personal values and beliefs	384	54.2%	3.49	1.21
Colleagues in other media	379	7.4%	2.18	0.93
Friends, acquaintances and family	379	11.6%	2.26	1.01
Feedback from the audience	390	54.6%	3.46	0.97
Competing news organizations	380	19.5%	2.56	1.06
Media laws and regulation	387	53.5%	3.53	1.08
Access to information	387	73.6%	3.98	0.98
Government censorship	387	65.6%	3.76	1.14
Government officials	382	47.4%	3.31	1.20
Politicians	386	32.9%	2.89	1.23
Business people	379	16.1%	2.39	1.06
Public relations	383	24.5%	2.66	1.14
Relationships with news sources	390	49.5%	3.38	1.08
Police	374	23.8%	2.55	1.23
Issue advocacy groups	382	22.3%	2.61	1.13
Religious groups and institutions	376	12.2%	2.26	1.04
Military	379	26.1%	2.59	1.31
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	361	21.6%	2.39	1.29
Organized crime and criminal groups	363	24.8%	2.45	1.34
Terrorist groups	334	16.2%	2.02	1.30

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Yemen[1]

Abdulrahman M Al-Shami & Abdu Hussein Alakoaa

INTRODUCTION

As of 2025, Yemen remains mired in a complex political, economic, and social crisis, stemming from a war that has persisted for over a decade. The country is divided between two rival authorities in Sana'a and Aden, resulting in institutional fragmentation and the absence of a unified state apparatus. On the economic front, the Yemeni riyal has experienced continued depreciation, while poverty, unemployment, and hunger have worsened. Most households suffer from food insecurity, deepening the population's suffering, contributing to the erosion of social cohesion, the rise in displacement, and a marked decline in the quality of education and public services.

Nevertheless, Yemen has a longstanding journalistic tradition that dates back to the early 20th century, during which newspapers played a pivotal role in the national liberation movement and in resisting colonialism. The country witnessed a period of relative media freedom following the reunification of North and South Yemen on 22 May 1990. However, this phase did not last long, as press freedom deteriorated. The majority of print newspapers and websites ceased operations due to financial constraints, state dominance, the lack of constitutional and legal protections, and the looting of media offices by armed groups. Presently, active digital outlets (online news websites) and newspapers face mounting political, security, and financial restrictions. The current media landscape in Yemen is both complex and perilous, where journalists face threats and targeting from multiple parties to the conflict.

The field study was conducted between late 2021 and early 2023, coinciding with a ruling by the State Security Court in Sana'a that sentenced four journalists detained by Ansar Allah to death – an incident that provoked widespread international condemnation. These journalists were later released as part of a prisoner exchange in early 2023, an event that underscored the fragility of press freedom in Yemen.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The sample of Yemeni journalists surveyed was unbalanced in terms of gender, with 81.3% male and only 18.7% female respondents. The average age of participants was approximately 38.3 years (SD = 7.5; Median = 38). In terms of educational attainment, the vast majority held higher education degrees: 79.9% possessed a bachelor's degree or equivalent, 11.0% held a master's degree or equivalent, and 0.7% had earned a doctoral degree. Furthermore, 88.0% of respondents reported having received formal education or professional training in journalism. This training was typically acquired through university or college (87.1%), field-based professional training or apprenticeships (78.7%), and short-term courses (43.0%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

The study revealed that more than one-third of journalists in Yemen (34.9%) are employed by emerging local media initiatives. In terms of the background of their main employers, 28.8% work for television channels, 13.5% for newspapers, 9.6% for radio stations, and 9.3% for news agencies. Very few are employed in magazines and telecommunications, representing only 0.7% and 0.4% respectively. Additionally, 2.8% of respondents indicated that they do not have a primary employer. Regarding the scope of media coverage, 62.0% reported working primarily for national or transnational media outlets, while 38.0% were engaged predominantly in local or regional media.

On average, Yemeni journalists possess 12.6 years of professional experience (SD = 6.6; Median = 12). Only 13.1% work in a single field of journalistic coverage. Approximately 46.4% of the journalists are union members.

Roughly one-fifth of journalists interviewed reported having full-time employment contracts (12.1% with permanent contracts and 7.3% with temporary contracts). Around half (48.0%) work part-time under temporary contracts, 19.8% are freelancers or self-employed, 12.1% are part-time permanent employees, and 0.7% reported other forms of employment. These findings point to a largely precarious employment situation. Notably, 66.7% of participants indicated they earn additional income from work outside journalism.

The average weekly working hours for Yemeni full-time journalists is 39.6 (SD = 17.3; Median = 36). Relatedly, 29.9% of respondents reported experiencing occasional stress at work during the past six months, while 26.4% reported experiencing severe stress, and 6.3% did not report any stress.

[1] Country sample does not fully align with WJS specifications regarding maximum margin of error (see WJS3 Methodology).

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Verbal attacks – such as insults, hate speech, public defamation, and surveillance – are among the most common security threats faced by journalists in Yemen (see Table 1). While more severe threats, such as legal actions, physical assaults, stalking, and hacking or banning of social media accounts and websites, occur less frequently, they nonetheless remain a major source of concern. These experiences are reflected in journalists' expressed anxieties. A significant majority voiced concern about the impunity enjoyed by perpetrators of violence against them. Most were also worried about losing their jobs (see Table 2). Furthermore, more than half of the journalists surveyed expressed concern for their physical safety and mental well-being.

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	283	23.0%	26.9%	29.3%	12.4%	8.5%
Public discrediting of your work	283	14.5%	18.0%	27.2%	22.3%	18.0%
Surveillance	283	23.7%	30.0%	24.0%	13.4%	8.8%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	283	7.1%	7.4%	24.0%	24.4%	37.1%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	283	2.1%	7.8%	18.7%	26.9%	44.5%
Legal actions against you because of your work	283	4.6%	6.7%	13.8%	28.6%	46.3%
Stalking	283	3.5%	6.7%	18.0%	27.6%	44.2%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	283	5.3%	8.5%	15.5%	28.3%	42.4%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	283	1.4%	4.9%	13.8%	24.4%	55.5%
Other physical attacks	283	2.1%	4.9%	13.1%	32.2%	47.7%
Coercion	283	2.1%	5.7%	16.3%	29.0%	47.0%
Questioning of your personal morality	283	2.1%	7.8%	15.9%	24.0%	50.2%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	283	0.7%	5.3%	15.9%	27.2%	50.9%
Others disseminating your personal information	283	2.8%	4.2%	14.1%	29.0%	49.8%
Workplace bullying	283	0.7%	7.1%	16.6%	34.6%	41.0%
Abductions	283	1.8%	4.6%	13.4%	26.5%	53.7%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	283	1.4%	4.2%	13.1%	25.1%	56.2%
Intimidation that targets family	283	2.5%	4.2%	12,7%	28,3%	52,3%

Question: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	283	84,8%	4.23	0.90
Concerned about physical well-being	283	77,0%	4.09	0.98
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	283	79,2%	4.10	0.92
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Yemen go unpunished	283	86,6%%	4.39	0.81

Question: "Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Yemeni journalists showed strong support for watchdog roles, while traditional reporting practices remain relevant, though less valued (see Table 3). The role of promoting a positive image of political leaders ranked among the least valued. Nonetheless, a significant number (more than half) considered these roles either very important or extremely important.

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Be a detached observer	283	94.3%	4.45	0.60
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	283	87.3%	4.35	0.77
Shine a light on society's problems	283	83.0%	4.23	0.73
Motivate people to participate in politics	283	71.7%	3.98	1.00
Provide analysis of current affairs	283	74.2%	4.02	0.92
Let people express their views	283	70.0%	4.00	0.89
Provide information people need to form political opinion	283	72.4%	3.98	0.95
Advocate for social change	283	76.3%	4.10	0.91
Influence public opinion	283	73.1%	4.01	0.90
Set the political agenda	283	61.5%	3.76	0.98
Promote peace and tolerance	283	74.6%	4.06	0.85
Educate the audience	283	76.7%	4.15	0.87
Point toward possible solutions to society's problems	283	70.7%	4.03	0.89
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	283	68.9%	3.95	0.99
Support national development	283	74.9%	4.04	0.85
Support government policy	283	52.3%	3.53	1.09
Convey a positive image of political leaders	283	47.0%	3.33	1.21
Provide entertainment and relaxation	283	62.9%	3.73	1.03
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	283	60.4%	3.77	1.00
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	283	74.6%	3.99	0.88
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	283	65.0%	3.85	0.92
Support efforts to protect public health	283	73.1%	3.98	0.91
Counteract disinformation	283	70.3%	3.93	0.87
Discuss future implications of current events	283	66.1%	3.84	0.95

Question: "Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work." (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

There is a considerable degree of variation among Yemeni journalists concerning their perceptions of journalistic knowledge (see Table 4). However, respondents largely agreed on the importance of interpretation in understanding facts. They also shared the view that truth is inherently shaped by those in power, and that things are either right or wrong, with no middle ground. Objectively representing reality in journalistic coverage was also deemed essential.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	283	97.2%	4.47	0.55
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	283	79.2%	4.12	0.86
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	283	71.0%	3.87	0.90
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	283	79.2%	4.00	0.85
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	283	79.2%	4.07	0.75
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	283	14.8%	3.13	0.67
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	282	20.9%	3.26	0.59
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	281	22.4%	3.32	0.70
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	280	24.3%	3.36	0.71
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	280	20.0%	3.26	0.66
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	280	23.2%	3.32	0.66

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Most journalists in Yemen emphasized the importance of personal and situational considerations over professional standards in ethical coverage. However, more than half supported the prioritization of professional standards over personal considerations (see Table 5). When it comes to justifying controversial methods in reporting, accepting money from sources and producing content that mimics news stories while concealing their promotional nature were strongly rejected (see Table 6). In contrast, most journalists found it acceptable to use hidden recording devices and confidential documents without permission.

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	283	69.6%	3.98	0.77
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	283	25.4%	3.04	1.00
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	282	44.0%	3.01	1.42
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	283	77.7%	4.01	0.96

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Claiming to be somebody else	283	0.4%	10.6%
Using hidden recording devices	283	2.5%	59.4%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	283	2.5%	48.1%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	283	1.1%	27.9%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	283	0.7%	13.4%
Paying people for confidential information	283	4.2%	20.1%
Accepting money from sources	283		
Accepting a free product or service from sources	283	0.4%	15.2%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	283	3.2%	20.8%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	283	2.8%	24.4%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Yemeni journalists reported having limited freedom in their work (see Table 7). Around two-thirds stated they had considerable freedom in determining which aspects of a story to focus on and in selecting the stories they cover. Nonetheless, respondents rated overall media freedom very poorly.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	283	14.1%	2.25	1.12
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	283	16.3%	2.68	1.13
Media freedom in Yemen	273	2.6%	1.64	0.80

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Respondents identified editorial supervisors, senior editors, and colleagues in the newsroom as the most influential internal factors in news production (see Table 8). Externally, friends, acquaintances, family members, audience reactions, and peers in other media outlets were deemed the most influential.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Peers on the news staff	280	83.6%	4.16	0.86
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	280	85.4%	4.24	0.78
The business managers of the news organization	279	70.3%	3.92	0.85
The owners of the news organization	279	80.6%	4.19	0.84
Editorial policy	281	76.5%	4.05	0.80
Advertising considerations	271	57.9%	3.64	0.91
Profit expectations	271	54.6%	3.57	0.97
Audience research and data	272	66.2%	3.80	0.94
Availability of news-gathering resources	282	66.0%	3.86	0.93
Time limits	280	68.9%	3.84	0.89
Journalism ethics	280	61.4%	3.79	0.93
Self-censorship	282	63.5%	3.82	0.94
Personal values and beliefs	282	63.1%	3.85	1.01
Colleagues in other media	282	79.4%	4.16	0.98
Friends. acquaintances and family	282	83.0%	4.10	0.98
Feedback from the audience	282	79.8%	4.00	0.79
Competing news organizations	280	65.7%	3.74	0.88
Media laws and regulation	283	62.9%	3.85	0.86
Access to information	283	70.3%	3.99	0.82
Government censorship	281	70.1%	3.95	0.84
Government officials	283	67.1%	3.81	0.93
Politicians	283	56.9%	3.65	0.99
Business people	280	55.4%	3.60	0.93
Public relations	282	57.4%	3.68	0.98
Relationships with news sources	282	67.3%	3.81	0.82
Police	279	63.4%	3.75	1.01
Issue advocacy groups	277	62.8%	3.75	0.94
Religious groups and institutions	280	62.5%	3.73	0.94
Military	279	58.4%	3.72	0.96
Para-military groups. militias and similar groups	278	61.2%	3.74	1.02
Organized crime and criminal groups	274	58.8%	3.69	0.93
Terrorist groups	273	54.9%	3.61	0.95
Scientists or health experts	282	67.0%	3.84	0.91

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

Zambia

TERJE SKJERDAL

INTRODUCTION

Zambia has had shifting governments since the arrival of multiparty democracy in 1991 and is viewed as a stabilizing country in Southern Africa. The country's economy is largely built on export of minerals, in particular copper which stands for 70% of the foreign trade. Around 60% of the 20-million population live below the poverty line, earning less than USD 2.15 per day.

Zambia has a diverse media landscape with many private broadcasters and print outlets besides the state-owned media company. The press freedom situation has improved since 2021 when the current government came to power. As of 2025, Zambia is listed as number 82 of 180 countries on Reporters Without Borders' Press Freedom Index, which is the best score for the country since 2013.

The Worlds of Journalism Study data collection for Zambia was undertaken in 2022, when there were various positive prospects for the media. Lack of access to government officials has been a challenge for Zambian news reporters, but in 2023, the country got its first Access to Information Act. The common perception is that press freedom rights and human rights have gained ground in the country in the past few years.

BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

Zambian journalists are young, with an average age of 32.7 years in the sample (SD = 7.7; Median = 32). The profession is male-dominated which is reflected in the sample by the finding that 57.8% of the total 294 respondents were men. In terms of education, about one-third (31.8%) said that they had completed high school and another third (37.7%) had a bachelor's degree. A fairly high proportion, 26.7%, had some university studies, but no degree. Only 2.7% possessed a master's degree. As many as 89.5% had professional training in journalism, which could have been obtained through short-term training (81.3%), apprenticeship (76.0%), and/or in a university programme (36.6%).

JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

In terms of media ownership, 61.2% of the respondents worked for the private media, 15.0% for the state-owned media, and 21.8% for community media. Around half, 47.6%, worked for media channels with local reach, while 10.5% worked for regional media and 38.8% for national media outlets.

In terms of the background of their main employers, most of the respondents came from radio (62.6%), which is generally regarded as still the most important media platform in Zambia. The remaining proportion worked primarily for television (23.5%), newspaper (11.2%) or magazine/internet/news agency (2.7%).

The average experience was 7.2 years (SD = 4.8; Median = 6). Around half (47.3%) were members of a professional association. In terms of work arrangements, 79.8% had a full-time position (61.0% on a permanent contract, 18.8% fixed term). Only 1.0% of the sample (three respondents) were freelancers. Every fifth journalist (21.1%) had income from other sources than journalism. The typical working week for full-time journalists was 44.8 hours (SD = 19.1; Median = 45).

Many Zambian journalists reported that they were stressed out as a result of their work. As many as 38.6% had experienced stress very often in the last six months, 15.7% often, and 29.4% sometimes.

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Zambian journalists experience a range of threats in their work. Most commonly reported is hate speech, which more than 60% had experienced at least sometimes in the past five years (Table 1). The feeling of being surveilled (44.0%) and hacked (20.4%) was quite common too. Sexual assult is something 14.0% of the journalists said they had experienced, but it was reported 13 times more often by female than by male journalists. Furthermore, Zambian journalists seemed to doubt that their profession is well protected, as nearly 90% feared that crimes against journalists in the country would not be persecuted (Table 2).

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	293	15.4 %	14.0 %	31.4 %	14.0 %	25.3 %
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	294	14.3 %	12.9 %	20.7 %	10.2 %	41.8 %
Public discrediting of your work	293	12.3 %	9.6 %	24.9 %	13.3 %	39.9 %
Surveillance	293	9.9 %	14.3 %	19.8 %	13.3 %	42.7 %
Stalking	291	6.9 %	6.2 %	17.9 %	10.0 %	59.1 %
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	294	6.8 %	3.7 %	9.9 %	11.2 %	68.4 %
Questioning of your personal morality	294	4.4 %	5.4 %	18.4 %	13.9 %	57.8 %
Workplace bullying	294	4.1 %	2.7 %	13.3 %	9.9 %	70.1 %
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	293	3.8 %	3.4 %	14.7 %	11.3 %	66.9 %
Others disseminating your personal information	293	3.8 %	5.5 %	16.0 %	10.2 %	64.5 %
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	294	3.4 %	2.7 %	5.1 %	7.1 %	81.6 %
Legal actions against you because of your work	294	3.4 %	1.7 %	7.5 %	6.1 %	81.3 %
Coercion	289	2.8 %	2.4 %	17.6 %	8.3 %	68.9 %
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	294	2.4 %	1.7 %	14.3 %	9.2 %	72.4 %
Other physical attacks	293	2.0 %	3.1 %	11.6 %	13.3 %	70.0 %
Intimidation that targets family	293	2.0 %	1.7 %	7.5 %	7.5 %	81.2 %
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	291	1.7 %	3.4 %	8.9 %	5.2 %	80.8 %
Abductions	292	0.3 %	0.3 %	1.0 %	2.4 %	95.9 %

Question: “In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?”

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Concerned that those who harm journalists in Zambia go unpunished	294	86.7%	4.29	1.14
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	294	60.5%	3.41	1.47
Concerned about physical well-being	293	54.6%	3.25	1.48
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	293	26.6%	2.48	1.40

Question: “Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.” (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Zambian journalists express strong role commitments in different directions. The interventionist role comes out as solid (including indicators such as advocating for social change), but so do the monitorial (e.g. monitoring those in power) and the accommodative roles (audience-oriented journalism). The collaborative role, i.e. being loyal to the political leadership, comes out as relatively less pronounced (Table 3).

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Let people express their views	294	95.9%	4.57	0.65
Educate the audience	294	95.9%	4.57	0.61
Provide analysis of current affairs	292	94.5%	4.42	0.73
Advocate for social change	294	94.2%	4.40	0.66
Promote peace and tolerance	294	93.9%	4.49	0.73
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	293	92.8%	4.44	0.74
Shine a light on society’s problems	294	91.8%	4.41	0.74
Support national development	293	91.5%	4.40	0.71
Point toward possible solutions to society’s problems	294	91.2%	4.35	0.81
Support efforts to protect public health	292	90.8%	4.32	0.81
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	293	89.4%	4.31	0.84
Discuss future implications of current events	293	89.4%	4.31	0.84
Provide information people need to form political opinion	291	86.9%	4.25	0.95
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	293	84.0%	4.18	0.96
Influence public opinion	293	77.1%	3.92	1.15
Provide advice. orientation and direction for daily life	294	74.8%	3.95	0.93
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	294	73.8%	3.98	1.00
Provide entertainment and relaxation	293	73.0%	3.86	1.04
Motivate people to participate in politics	292	71.9%	3.75	1.25
Support government policy	293	69.3%	3.82	1.07
Be a detached observer	294	59.9%	3.49	1.34
Counteract disinformation	294	59.9%	3.49	1.34
Set the political agenda	290	57.6%	3.38	1.41
Convey a positive image of political leaders	291	37.8%	2.76	1.45

Question: “Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

Zambian journalists' responses to various epistemological claims could appear as somewhat inconsistent. For example, most of them believe that it is possible to report objectively, but at the same time they emphasize that interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts (Table 4). The overall tendency, nevertheless, is leaning towards an objective view of reality.

TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	290	96.6%	4.45	0.65
Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves	290	95.9%	4.50	0.73
Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work	289	91.3%	4.22	0.91
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	287	90.2%	4.22	0.77
Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately	289	81.0%	4.08	1.04
Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful	288	77.8%	3.94	1.18
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	290	72.8%	3.83	1.15
Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be	291	69.8%	3.57	1.28
Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not	291	58.4%	3.28	1.39
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	290	44.8%	2.97	1.38
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	290	38.3%	2.87	1.28

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Zambian journalists strongly support absolutist ethics, which is the standpoint that ethical rules should prevail over personal preferences and situational considerations. Very few believe that it should be up to individual journalists to decide what is right and wrong (Table 5). When asked about specific ethical cases, many journalists were open to using hidden recording devices on occasion. A significant proportion, around 40%, justified that they can receive free products and money from sources (Table 6).

TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	293	90.1%	4.31	0.91
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	294	78.6%	3.84	1.09
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	292	45.5%	2.99	1.32
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	292	25.7%	2.42	1.22

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Using hidden recording devices	292	3.8%	62.0%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	290	5.5%	44.8%
Accepting money from sources	291	2.7%	36.1%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	292	2.1%	31.5%
Claiming to be somebody else	292	2.1%	29.5%
Paying people for confidential information	292	2.4%	29.1%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	292	4.1%	26.4%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	290	1.0%	25.5%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	291	1.4%	18.9%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	285	0.4%	12.6%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Journalists reported rather high internal freedom in the newsroom, with two-thirds saying that they were free to select their own stories and to decide which aspects to focus on. Media freedom in the country was rated lower, but still, around 20% claimed that there is complete or a great deal of press freedom in Zambia.

TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	294	62.2%	3.88	1.11
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	294	65.0%	3.87	1.12
Media freedom in Zambia	292	19.5%	2.94	0.94

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Journalists asserted that formal guidelines such as media laws, regulation, editorial policy and professional ethics have the highest influence on their practice (Table 8). As many as 70.1% said that self-censorship is extremely or very influential. External players such as government officials, politicians and business people were rated as having far less influence. It is worth noting that journalists saw criminal networks, terrorists and the like as having little impact on newsroom decisions.

TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Media laws and regulation	269	82.2 %	4.12	1.01
Journalism ethics	289	81.3 %	4.18	1.02
Editorial policy	291	78.4 %	4.00	1.13
Feedback from the audience	270	75.9 %	3.96	1.12
Time limits	282	73.0 %	3.93	1.12
Self-censorship	288	70.1 %	3.84	1.17
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	289	68.5 %	3.74	1.26
Availability of news-gathering resources	282	68.4 %	3.73	1.26
Access to information	265	68.3 %	3.78	1.29
Personal values and beliefs	289	66.4 %	3.68	1.32
Competing news organizations	266	65.0 %	3.59	1.35
Audience research and data	273	63.7 %	3.62	1.28
Relationships with news sources	264	62.1 %	3.57	1.31
Issue advocacy groups	261	57.5 %	3.43	1.36
The owners of the news organization	287	56.1 %	3.39	1.48
Public relations	264	55.3 %	3.42	1.28
Profit expectations	278	54.7 %	3.33	1.41
Advertising considerations	284	53.5 %	3.30	1.40
Government censorship	264	53.4 %	3.44	1.30
Religious groups and institutions	264	53.0 %	3.32	1.38
Scientists or health experts	259	52.9 %	3.31	1.33
The business managers of the news organization	282	52.8 %	3.23	1.42
Government officials	264	47.0 %	3.27	1.38
Peers on the news staff	291	46.4 %	3.16	1.25
Business people	257	45.5 %	3.18	1.41
Politicians	262	41.2 %	3.06	1.42
Police	250	40.8 %	2.93	1.46
Colleagues in other media	268	40.7 %	2.99	1.32
Friends, acquaintances and family	268	37.7 %	2.72	1.44
Military	191	19.4 %	2.15	1.39
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	180	19.4 %	1.98	1.39
Organized crime and criminal groups	173	17.8 %	1.87	1.28
Terrorist groups	124	3.2 %	1.23	0.76

Question: “Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)

WJS3 Master Questionnaire

VERSION 1.8.4 CONSOLIDATED – VERSION FOR INTERVIEW (PHONE & FACE-TO-FACE)
(All questionnaire versions can be downloaded here, in the Methodological Documentation section.)

Notes:
- This is the questionnaire version to be used for the interview (telephone, video call or face-to-face). There is another version that should be used for self-administered questionnaires (online and paper-pencil).
- The questionnaire contains mandatory questions (in black ink) as well as optional questions and optional statements (marked in blue).
- Parts printed in *green italics* are instructions. They should not be presented to the respondent.
- Please refer to the field manual for explanations (→FM).

job_ttle What is your current job title or position?
→FM Please specify: .....
999 Refused

empl Which of the following categories best describes your current working situation as a journalist? Please choose from the following options:
1 Full-time permanent contract
2 Part-time permanent contract
3 Full-time fixed-term contract
4 Part-time fixed-term contract
5 Freelance or self-employed
6 Other, please specify: .....
777 Don't know
999 Refused

empl_c1 Has your work contract or self-employed status changed because of COVID-19?
1 Yes
2 No
777 Don't know
999 Refused

empl_c2 *Ask only if empl_c1 = 1, otherwise filter out*
Which of the following categories best describes your working situation before it changed? Please choose from the following options:
1 Full-time permanent contract
2 Part-time permanent contract
3 Full-time fixed-term contract
4 Part-time fixed-term contract
5 Freelance or self-employed
6 Other, please specify: .....
777 Don't know
999 Refused

incm_j Approximately what percentage of your overall work-related income comes from your work as a journalist?
Please specify: .....
777 Don't know
999 Refused

incm_o *Ask only if incm_j < 100, otherwise filter out*
Do you also receive income by working in any of the following sectors? Please choose all that apply.
1 Yes
2 No
999 Refused
A Advertising
B Public relations or corporate communication
C Education (for example, teaching or training)
D Local or national government agencies

E Other, please specify: .....

work_exp For how many years have you worked as a journalist?
→FM Please specify: .....
999 Refused

union Do you belong to any organizations or associations that are primarily for people in journalism or the communications field?
1 Yes
2 No
777 Don't know
999 Refused

role Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work. Please choose from the following options:
5 Extremely important
4 Very important
3 Moderately important
2 Slightly important
1 Not at all important
999 Refused
A Be a detached observer
B Monitor and scrutinize those in power
C Shine a light on society's problems
D Motivate people to participate in politics
E Provide analysis of current affairs
F Let people express their views
G Provide information people need to form political opinion
H Advocate for social change
I Influence public opinion
J Set the political agenda
K Promote peace and tolerance
L Educate the audience
M Point toward possible solutions to society's problems
N Speak on behalf of the marginalized
O Support national development
P Support government policy
Q Convey a positive image of political leaders
R Provide entertainment and relaxation
S Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience
T Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life
U Tell stories that emotionally move the audience
X Support efforts to protect public health
Y Counteract disinformation
V Discuss future implications of current events

ethic1 The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree, using the following options:
5 Strongly agree
4 Agree
3 Neither agree nor disagree
2 Disagree
1 Strongly disagree
999 Refused
A What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment
B What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them
C What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation
D What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment

ethic2 Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?
3 Always justified

2 Justified on occasion
1 Not approve under any circumstances
999 Refused
A Claiming to be somebody else
B Using hidden recording devices
C Using confidential business or government documents without authorization
D Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission
E Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission
F Paying people for confidential information
G Accepting money from sources
H Accepting a free product or service from sources
I Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature
J Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified

safe1 →FM In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist? Please choose from the following options:
5 Very often
4 Often
3 Sometimes
2 Rarely
1 Never
999 Refused
A Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you
B Public discrediting of your work
C Surveillance
D Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites
E Arrests, detentions or imprisonment
F Legal actions against you because of your work
G Stalking
H Other threats or intimidation directed at you
I Sexual assault or sexual harassment
J Other physical attacks
K Coercion
L Questioning of your personal morality
M Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories
N Others disseminating your personal information
O Workplace bullying
P Abductions
Q Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment
R Intimidation that targets your family
Z Been required to work in an environment where Covid-19 had easily spread
S Other, please specify: .....

safe2 *Ask only if any statement in safe1 > 1, otherwise filter out*
When you experienced, to any extent, these actions, did you receive support (for example, legal or emotional support, time off work) from any of the following sources?
1 Yes, received support
2 No, received no support
999 Refused
A Your news organization (owners, top editors)
B Other colleagues in your news outlet or other outlets
C A journalists' organization such as an association, press club, trade union
D Non-governmental or human rights organizations that support journalists
E Government authorities
F Other, please specify .....

safe3 Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements, using the following answer options:
5 Strongly agree
4 Agree
3 Neither agree nor disagree
2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree
999 *Refused*
A I am worried about losing my job in journalism within the next 12 months
B I am concerned about my physical well-being
C I am concerned about my emotional and mental wellbeing
D I am concerned that those who harm journalists in [COUNTRY] go unpunished

protct In the last five years, have you engaged in any of the following measures to protect yourself? Please choose all that apply:
1 Yes
2 No
999 *Refused*
A Taken safety training and/or used safety equipment and protocols
B Sought government protection
C Sought legal protection
D Engaged in self-censorship
E Changed news beats or jobs at news organization
F Changed your news organization
G Changed your personal or daily routines
H Moved to another place (e.g., state, province, city) within your country or to another country
I Limited time spent in dangerous reporting areas
J Removed or hidden your press IDs
K Published anonymously, with a pseudonym or without a byline
L Changed your phone number or taken extra precautions to safeguard your devices from intervention or tracking
M Established communication networks with peers or supervisors for security
N Filtered ideas/information to international media or published stories abroad
O Paid much greater attention to verification of facts
X Modified work routines to reduce the risk of exposure to Covid-19
Y Refused to cover an assignment due to potential for exposure to Covid-19

stress In the last six months, how often have you felt stressed out in your work as a journalist? Please choose from the following options:
5 Very often
4 Often
3 Sometimes
2 Rarely
1 Never
999 *Refused*

auto1 Thinking of your work overall, how much freedom do you personally have in selecting the news stories you work on? Please choose from the following options:
5 Complete freedom
4 A great deal of freedom
3 Some freedom
2 Little freedom
1 No freedom at all
999 *Refused*

auto2 And how much freedom do you personally have in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized? Please choose from the following options:
5 Complete freedom
4 A great deal of freedom
3 Some freedom
2 Little freedom
1 No freedom at all
999 *Refused*

freedom In your view, how much freedom do the news media have in [country]? Again, please choose from the following options:
5 Complete freedom
4 A great deal of freedom
3 Some freedom
2 Little freedom

1 No freedom at all
777 Don't know
999 Refused

influ1 Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist. Please choose from the following options:
5 Extremely influential
4 Very influential
3 Moderately influential
2 Slightly influential
1 Not influential
8 Not relevant to respondent's/my work
777 Don't know
999 Refused
A Your peers on the news staff where you work
B Your editorial supervisors and higher editors
C The business managers of your news organization
D The owners of your news organization
E Editorial policy
F Advertising considerations
G Profit expectations
H Audience research and data, for example, ratings, circulation, and web metrics
I Availability of news-gathering resources
J Time limits
K Journalism ethics
L Self-Censorship
M Your personal values and beliefs

influ2 Here is another list. Again, please tell me on a scale of 5 to 1 how influential each of the following is in your work. Please choose from the following options:
5 Extremely influential
4 Very influential
3 Moderately influential
2 Slightly influential
1 Not influential
8 Not relevant to respondent's/my work
777 Don't know
999 Refused
A Colleagues in other media
B Your friends, acquaintances and family
C Feedback from the audience
D Competing news organizations
E Media laws and regulation
F Access to information
G Government censorship
H Government officials
I Politicians
J Business people
K Public relations
L Relationships with news sources
M Police
O Issue advocacy groups (such as NGOs, Labor unions…)
Z Scientists or health experts
P Religious groups and institutions
Q Military
R Para-military groups, militias and similar groups
S Organized crime and criminal groups
T Terrorist groups

epist1 The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree, using the following options:
5 Strongly agree
4 Agree
3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree
1 Strongly disagree
999 Refused
A Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts
B Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power
C It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting
D Things are either true or false, there is no in-between
E It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting

epist2 Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs.
5 Strongly agree
4 Agree
3 Neither agree nor disagree
2 Disagree
1 Strongly disagree
999 Refused
A Journalists should trust their instincts in deciding what's true and what's not
B Journalists should intuitively know what the final story will be
C Journalists should let the facts speak for themselves
D Journalists should be part of a community to portray it accurately
E Journalists should make their standpoint transparent in their work
F Journalists should alert audiences when a source's claim is untruthful

beat1 Do you usually work on or supervise a specific beat or subject area (such as politics, economy or sports), or do you usually work on or supervise various beats or subject areas?
1 Work on a specific beat or subject area
2 Work on various beats or subject areas
999 Refused

beat2 *Ask only if beat1 = 1, otherwise filter out*
→FM Which beat or subject area do you primarily work on or supervise?
Please specify: .....
999 Refused

hours1 How many hours a week on average do you work as a journalist?
Please specify: .....
999 Refused

hours2 How many of these hours on average do you work from home?
Please specify: .....
999 Refused

platf1 Journalists can produce content for a variety of platforms, such as print, TV, radio, websites, and so on. When you produce or edit journalism content, or when you supervise its production, do you usually know in advance on which platforms it will be delivered to the audience?
1 Yes, I usually know in advance
2 No, I usually don't know in advance
999 Refused

platf2 *Ask only if plat1 = 1, otherwise filter out*
How often do you produce or edit content, or supervise its production, specifically for these platforms?
Please choose from the following options:
5 Always
4 Often
3 Sometimes
2 Rarely
1 Never
777 Don't know
999 Refused
A Print
B Radio
C Television
D Websites
E News apps

F Podcasts
G Social media, such as [insert country-specific examples]
H Messaging apps, such as [insert country-specific examples]
I E-Mail newsletters
J Other, please specify: .....

mbackg How would you describe the background of your main employer, or the main outlet where you work?
→FM Which of the following categories makes the best fit?
1 Newspaper
2 Magazine
3 TV
4 Radio
5 News agency
6 Internet native, such as [country specific examples]
7 Telecommunications, such as [country specific examples]
9 I don't have one main employer or one outlet I work for more than others
777 Don't know
999 Refused

format How often do you produce, edit or supervise the production of journalism content in any of these formats? Please choose from the following options:
5 Always
4 Often
3 Sometimes
2 Rarely
1 Never
999 Refused
A Text
B Photographs
C Audio
D Video
E Graphics, cartoons, illustrations, or animation
F Other, please specify, ...
G Multimedia stories that use a combination of the above

tech1 Please tell me how frequently you use the following technologies for journalistic purposes. Please choose from the following options:
5 Always
4 Often
3 Sometimes
2 Rarely
1 Never
777 Don't know
999 Refused
A Technology that tracks and analyses information about the characteristics and behavior of online audiences (such as which stories they read and for how long). Examples of tools that do this include Chart-beat, Parse.ly, and Google Analytics
B Social media for purposes such as to discover potentially newsworthy events, and/or to find sources, information and opinions for stories
C Social media to promote journalism produced for other platforms

tech2 Please tell us whether these technologies are used in any of the newsrooms you work in.
1 Yes
2 No
777 Don't know
999 Refused
A "Automated" or "robot" journalism in which computer software automatically converts data into news texts
B "News personalization" where computer software automatically selects which stories are shown to audience members and how prominently

gen_edu What is the highest level of education you have completed? Please choose from the following options:
1 Not completed high school
2 Completed high school

3 Bachelor's degree or equivalent
4 Master's degree or equivalent
5 Doctorate
6 Undertook some university studies, but no degree
999 Refused

train1 Have you completed any formal education or professional training in journalism?
1 Yes
2 No
999 Refused

train2 *Ask only if train1 = 1, otherwise filter out*
Please indicate whether or not you received this formal professional training or education in any of the following types of institution.
1 Yes
2 No
999 Refused
A University or college (where you received a degree in journalism)
B Journalism apprenticeship/cadetship
C University, college, institute, or some other means through which you received a certificate or diploma for a short-term course

gender What is your gender?
1 Female
2 Male
3 Other
999 Refused

age In what year were you born?
Please specify: .....
777 Don't know
999 Refused

pol_view In political matters, people talk of "the left", "the right", and the "center". On a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is left, 10 is right, and 5 is center, where would you place yourself?
0 ... 10
999 Refused

cult_grp To which [cultural community] do you belong?
→FM Please specify: .....
777 Don't know
999 Refused

religio Do you consider yourself as affiliated with any particular religion or religious denomination? If yes, which one?
→FM
1 No affiliation with a religion or religious denomination
2 Yes, affiliated with the following religion/denomination: .....
999 Refused

income In which of the following categories does your [monthly, annual etc.] salary as a journalist fall [, after taxes]?
→FM
1 ... 10
777 Don't know
999 Refused

TECHNICAL QUESTIONS
To be filled by the researcher! →FM

T1 Interview code
.....

T2 Interview date
..... (ddmmyy)

T3 Interviewer code
.....

T4 Interview mode
1 Telephone
2 Face to face
3 Paper-pencil
4 Mail or E-mail
5 Online
6 Video call

T5 Rank of respondent (position in editorial hierarchy)
→FM
1 No management role (no operational or strategic authority)
2 Middle management role (operational authority)
3 Top management role (strategic authority)
777 No information

T6 Location of medium the respondent mainly works for
→FM
..... (city, municipality etc.)

T7 Reach of medium the respondent mainly works for
1 Local
2 Regional
3 National
4 Transnational
9 No main medium
777 No information

T8 Primary ownership of medium the respondent mainly works for
1 Private/commercial media
2 Public Service Media
3 State-run media
4 Community media
5 Non-profit Media
6 Other, specify .....
9 No main medium
777 No information

T9 Notes
.....

WJS Center
Department of Media and Communication
LMU Munich
Oettingenstr. 67
80538 Munich
Germany

Web
www.worldsofjournalism.org

LinkedIn
www.linkedin.com/company/worlds-of-journalism

Bluesky
bsky.app/profile/worldsofjournalism.bsky.social

Facebook
www.facebook.com/WorldsofJournalismStudy/