The Worlds of Journalism:

Safety, Professional Autonomy, and Resilience among Journalists in Latin America

Edited by Summer Harlow, Sallie Hughes and Celeste González de Bustamante

The Worlds of Journalism: Safety, Professional Autonomy, and Resilience among Journalists in Latin America

First published January 14, 2026, by the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas, University of Texas at Austin, in collaboration with the School of Communication and Department of Journalism and Media Management at the University of Miami and the Center for Global Change and Media at the University of Texas at Austin.

Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas, School of Journalism and Media

1 University Station A1000 University of Texas Austin, TX 78712
www.knightcenter.utexas.edu
knightcenter@austin.utexas.edu

Director: Rosental Calmon Alves

ISBN 979-8-9917552-3-8

Book Editors: Summer Harlow, Sallie Hughes, and Celeste González de Bustamante

Copy Editor: Manasvi Maheshwari

Data Visualizations: Kellen Sharp

Designer, Illustrations, and Cover Art: Raquel Abe

Translations: Desirée Marquez, Teresa Mioli, and Ramon Vitral

The University of Texas at Austin
Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas
Moody College of Communication

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI
SCHOOL of COMMUNICATION

The University of Texas at Austin
Center for Global Change and Media
Moody College of Communication

Acknowledgments

We are deeply grateful to all the journalists who generously shared their time and expertise by participating in this research project. We also thank our universities for recognizing the critical role of journalism and for supporting the creation of original knowledge about journalistic practices, ideologies, and professionals.

We are grateful for the funding from the Worlds of Journalism Center and LMU Munich for the studies in Brazil, Colombia, and Venezuela; and the support from the University of Miami (School of Communication Research Award and Institute for Advanced Study of the Americas), Universidad Iberoamericana Mexico City (14th Call for Projects 2020–2022 and Research Assistant Program 2020–2024), the University of Guadalajara (Program for the Improvement of Production Conditions for members of the National System of Researchers and Artistic Creators), and the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (VIEP Project Program 2021–2022) for the Mexico study. For the study in Peru, we thank the University of Lima.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Part 1 Mexico and Central America

Part 2 South America

Conclusions

Introduction

Knight Center's Foreword

Rosental Calmon Alves, Founder and Director of the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas at the University of Texas at Austin

"Journalism is the best profession in the world." I was in the audience when Gabriel García Márquez said that in Pasadena, California, at the 52nd General Assembly of the Inter American Press Association (IAPA) on October 7, 1996. Gabo's words reverberated among hundreds of journalists and publishers at the assembly, and thousands of reporters and editors throughout Latin America.

The passionate endorsement by the venerable Nobel Prize winner in Literature was a breath of fresh air for his Latin American colleagues, who have long embodied resilience and bravery in the face of persistent adversity.

Gabo also spoke about why he considered himself a journalist first and a novelist second. But in that same auditorium, we had already heard about a litany of abuses and attacks against journalists and press freedom in Latin America. The country reports at IAPA meetings, recounting horrendous cases of persecution of journalists and news organizations, had become a sad ritual repeated since the association was created in Mexico City in 1943.

I have been working since I was 16—more than 50 years ago—and I have never worked in anything other than journalism, as either a journalist or a journalism teacher. So, I agreed with Gabo and felt the same breath of fresh air that I imagine others in the auditorium—and in newsrooms around Latin America—experienced upon realizing that a Nobel laureate shared our passion for what truly is "the best profession in the world."

Yes, you need passion for this profession—for the essential role journalism plays in a democratic society. It has never been easy to be a journalist in Latin America.

As I started reading the chapters in this book focused on the practice of journalism in Latin America, I not only recalled Gabo's passionate statement in Pasadena, but also that a year earlier, in 1995, he had launched the Foundation for a New Ibero-American Journalism, later renamed the Gabo Foundation. In 1997, I became an instructor at the nascent Gabo Foundation, and six years later, I created the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas at the University of Texas at Austin.

Both organizations have much in common and have collaborated in our shared mission: helping journalists—primarily in Latin America—improve the quality of journalism in their countries.

But who is "the Latin American journalist"? What is the profile of those valiant women and men who remain so passionate about "the best profession in the world" that they keep working despite low or no salaries, censorship, and the many hazards that make Latin America one of the most dangerous regions in the world for journalists?

We have always struggled to find data about the population that organizations like IAPA, the Gabo Foundation, and the Knight Center aim to serve. We needed a clear picture of the universe of Latin Ameri-

can journalists. While research on journalism in Latin America has grown, its scope is often limited. To my knowledge, there has never been a comprehensive census of journalists in the region.

In this book, you will find one of the most complete studies ever published about the status of journalism in Latin America. It is based on surveys with more than 4,000 working journalists in 11 countries, conducted as part of the global program *Worlds of Journalism Study*, which adheres to rigorous academic standards for survey research on journalists and journalism.

It is an honor and privilege for us at the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas to publish this study, which provides an extraordinary portrait of Latin American journalists. Since its founding in 2002, the Knight Center has developed a variety of programs that have benefited thousands of journalists in the region—including, I suspect modestly, many (if not most) of the 4,000 journalists interviewed for this study.

Here's why:

- We've helped establish a new generation of independent journalism associations dedicated to improving the quality and standards of journalism in their countries.
- We've offered hundreds of online courses through a unique program that has reached over 350,000 students worldwide in the past decade.
- We've organized numerous journalism conferences in Austin and across Latin America, including the International Symposium on Online Journalism and the Ibero-American Colloquium on Digital Journalism.
- We publish the *LatAm Journalism Review*, a publication of record covering "the best profession in the world" in Latin America.

These activities have had a lasting impact on journalism in the Americas, and we hope to continue to strengthen our work in the years ahead. Thanks to the *Worlds of Journalism Study*, we now have much more insight into the very population the Knight Center seeks to serve. The findings in this book are also highly relevant to the journalists, news organizations, and journalism schools across Latin America.

Among the many findings that impressed me, I highlight the following:

- **Resilient and value-driven journalists**: Despite rising threats and financial instability, Latin American journalists remain committed to democratic and public-service roles.
- **Widespread labor precarity**: Nearly 50% lack full-time contracts, often juggling multiple jobs and platforms to make ends meet.
- **Gender disparities**: Women make up about 40% of journalists, are younger on average, and report higher rates of workplace bullying and concern for safety and well-being.
- **High levels of formal education**: Most journalists have formal training, with especially high rates in Brazil and Venezuela.
- **Shifts in media employment**: While legacy newspapers still dominate in countries like Brazil and Colombia, digital-native outlets are becoming increasingly central, especially in Venezuela, El Salvador, and parts of Mexico.

- **Frequent mistreatment**: More than half of journalists report experiencing demeaning or hateful speech; nearly a third report surveillance or workplace bullying—especially in Brazil.
- **Mental and emotional health at risk**: Over 70% are concerned about emotional strain, particularly in Brazil, Peru, and El Salvador.
- **Self-censorship and peer support**: Half of journalists self-censor to protect themselves; 79% rely on peer support. Few turn to government institutions.
- **Strong democratic commitments**: Journalists overwhelmingly support liberal-democratic roles, including holding power accountable and advocating for marginalized groups.
- **Perceived autonomy vs. reality**: While most say they have editorial freedom, this contrasts sharply with widespread reports of victimization and pressure.
- **Vulnerable populations**: Women, nonbinary, and minority journalists face compounded challenges, including greater precarity and discrimination.
- **Global significance**: These findings highlight journalism's critical role in Latin America—and the urgent need to support independent media in the face of authoritarianism and violence.

Finally, and importantly, I want to recognize the School of Communication and Department of Journalism and Media Management at the University of Miami and the Center for Global Change and Media at the University of Texas at Austin. Their collaboration with the Knight Center to publish this book is testimony to their ongoing support for Latin American journalists who so passionately uphold "the best profession in the world."

Introducing the Worlds of Journalism in Latin America

Sallie Hughes, University of Miami • *Summer Harlow, University of Texas at Austin*

Whether or not citizens remain able –and willing– to demand government accountability and protections for human rights is shaped by the work of journalists, especially as these essential pillars of democracy confront mounting pressure and declines across the globe. In the face of impunity for widespread attacks on journalists and financial uncertainties that challenge the very foundations of an independent press, Latin American journalists committed to more democratic and just societies are demonstrating remarkable creativity and resilience even as they are often compelled to self-censor for their own safety. With this in mind, this book offers a region-wide mapping of Latin American journalists' experiences and professional beliefs post-pandemic, and, based on surveys with more than 4,000 working journalists interviewed between 2021 and 2024, provides 11 country profiles, from Mexico to El Salvador to Argentina. Survey results paint a picture of journalists who believe their work should support democratic and just societies and who seek ways to fulfill those obligations amid multifaceted challenges.

The surveys were conducted under the auspices of the *Worlds of Journalism Study* (WJS), a non-profit association of academics around the world dedicated to rigorous comparative survey research about journalists and journalism. The purpose of WJS, now in its third round of surveys, is to contribute to a global understanding of who journalists are, what they believe are their obligations to society, how their working conditions are changing, and how they attempt to stay occupationally and personally resilient amid threats to their professional identity and personal well-being. More than 40 professors, scholars, and graduate students working across Latin America contributed to this volume. Scholars at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich ensured the rigor of the study design.

This book is written for journalists, students, policymakers, activists, and the public. The book relies on the insights and experiences of the region's working journalists. Their first-hand accounts of what it means to be a journalist in Latin America today provide an insider's perspective on how security, authoritarian pressures, economic vulnerabilities, and digital transformations impact practices and normative responsibilities in one of the world's most dangerous regions for exercising journalism. Surveyed journalists freely gave their time, potentially risking threats, harassment, or worse, because they recognized the urgent need to understand the role of journalism in the future of democracy throughout the region. Without their generous input and dedication to their profession, this book would not be possible.

Journalism Studies research from Latin America has identified how journalists' value-based identities motivate them to adapt their practices to preserve editorial autonomy amid increasingly complicated and sometimes threatening work environments. These trends transcend borders, but are grounded in the institutional and historical conditions of each of the countries included in this volume. The chapters in this book shed light on what has become for some journalists a balancing act between self-preservation

and preservation of a profession that supports the public interest by monitoring government behavior, shedding light on abuses of power, and amplifying disenfranchised voices. More broadly, the WJS research in this book centers journalism outside the so-called Global North, highlighting the importance of studying journalistic practices and values in a regional context that accounts for local specificities.

A note on methods

The comparative advantage of the *Worlds of Journalism Study* is the trustworthiness and generalizability that come from rigorous survey research methods. This means there is a tradeoff. Careful sampling, interviewing, and verification of data input take time. WJS researchers used standardized questionnaires and field procedures collaboratively developed in 2019. Covid-19 lockdowns delayed field work, which in Latin America ranged from October 2021 through October 2024. Each country team surveyed working journalists using national-level probabilistic samples with a 5% or less margin of error and confidence level of 95%. All data were verified by statisticians in the network global office in Munich.

When reviewing these results, it is important to keep in mind that the WJS methodology indirectly emphasizes full-time, formal sector employment, which may reduce the population of journalists for the study in countries with high degrees of labor informality. The population of journalists studied included only those who work at least 50% of the time in journalism or receive at least 50% of their income from journalism. Because many countries have no national list of journalists, researchers in several of those countries sampled news media outlets to identify journalists to survey, further contributing to the focus on formally employed journalists.

The remainder of this introduction offers a regional snapshot of who Latin American journalists are, the conditions under which they work, and the obligations they wish to fulfill in society in the face of challenges to their professional and personal well-being. These broad patterns are developed further in each of the country-specific chapters that follow.

Who are Latin American journalists?

Table 1. Characteristics of Journalists in the Region

		Age (Years)				Gender & Training		Experience			Employer Platform			
	N	Men Ave	Men SD	Woman Ave	Woman SD	Female	Journalism Training	Exp Ave	Exp SP	Legacy	Digital	TV	Radio	Other
Argentina	376	46	11	45	10	40	84	20	10	28	11	18	28	15
Bolivia	401	46	12	39	10	35	91	17	11	8	16	32	38	7
Brazil	602	42	12	39	11	50	97	16	11	25	15	28	9	23
Chile	398	43	12	37	10	32	91	16	11	28	14	24	31	3
Colombia	379	51	13	45	12	39	94	21	12	22	22	14	19	25
Costa Rica	229	39	13	39	11	32	92	15	11	41	18	22	5	15
Ecuador	299	38	11	33	8	38	85	11	9	13	17	21	20	29
El Salvador	208	38	8	36	9	47	95	12	8	26	34	8	10	21
Mexico	443	43	10	37	9	46	86	16	10	27	21	15	19	18
Peru	335	46	11	38	10	27	86	16	8	12	22	9	40	16
Venezuela	398	45	13	44	12	53	97	18	11	20	36	6	13	25
Region	**4,068**	**43**	**12**	**39**	**10**	**40**	**91**	**16**	**10**	**23**	**20**	**18**	**21**	**18**

A male-dominated profession

Journalism in Latin America, on average, still skews toward men who are older than their female colleagues. Four in 10 surveyed journalists identified as female at the regional level, but there are large differences in the gender makeup of the country samples. Women made up half or almost half of participants in Brazil, El Salvador, Mexico, and Venezuela, but only about one-third or less in Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, and Peru. Women journalists on average were four years younger than their male counterparts, suggesting gendered norms that compel earlier departure from the profession or devaluation of the work of women as they age. The biggest age differences between genders were found in Peru (8 years), followed by Bolivia (7 years), Chile (6 years), and Mexico (6 years). In contrast, there was age parity or near parity between genders in Argentina, Costa Rica, and Venezuela. Non-binary journalists self-identified in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Ecuador, and ranged from less than .05% of the population to 1.7%.

The survey questionnaire also asked respondents an open-ended question about whether they identified with a cultural community. In the Latin American context, respondents usually judged this to mean an ethnic or racial community. Only 6% of the sample overall responded that they culturally identified with an Indigenous group or as an Afro-descendant—percentages much lower than regional averages in the population at-large.

An educated workforce in legacy and digital media

A learn-on-the job approach to journalism is no longer prevalent in any country in Latin America. Formal education or specialized training in journalism is a generalized characteristic of the region, ranging from 84% of respondents in Argentina to 97% in Brazil and Venezuela. Work experience ranged from 11 years in Ecuador to 21 years in Colombia.

Legacy newspapers continue to be the main type of employer journalists work for in a small plurality of countries, followed by radio and then television in most countries. Radio especially stands out in the multilingual Andean countries. In Bolivia, where Indigenous and industrial sector radios have a long history, and the more conservative print media are concentrated in La Paz, only 8% of respondents worked in newspapers while 38% worked in radio. Peru also has a strong radio sector, with 40% of journalists reporting to work primarily for radio. Digital-native outlets dominated in Venezuela and El Salvador, and in Colombia, equal percentages of journalists reported working for legacy newspapers as for digital outlets.

Given political pressure on private sector television in Venezuela over the last two decades, only 6% of journalists there reported working for television outlets and radio employment was comparatively low compared to neighboring Ecuador and Bolivia. Many Venezuelan journalists may have moved to the more politically open digital sphere, with 36% of respondents working primarily for digital native enterprises.

In Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, and Costa Rica, where legacy newspapers have a long trajectory, the majority or near majority of journalists worked in that sector. Digital enterprises have grown into large employment sectors in urban El Salvador, Colombia, and Mexico, with interesting experiments in investigative, participatory, and social justice journalism emerging via a platform with lower barriers to entry than legacy media.

Precarious labor conditions

Labor precarity, which encompasses more than just economic insecurity, involves contractual insecurity, work pace acceleration, and the need to work in multiple paid jobs to make a living (Márquez-Ramírez, Amado, & Waisbord, 2021). Survey results suggest almost half of Latin American journalists experience some form of precariousness. On average, nearly five in 10 journalists in the region work without the security of a full-time permanent contract, although differences exist across countries. Chile and Mexico are notable for the high number of journalists working with the security of permanent, full-time contracts, although sampling within formal news organizations likely elevated the number in Mexico. Journalists in the Andean countries had the least secure contractual arrangements.

An accelerated work pace is suggested by the number of platforms—such as radio, television, web, etc.—that journalists produce content for on a regular basis. Regionally, journalists said they contribute content to 3.7 different platforms "often" or "very often." The number of platforms journalists regularly supply is highest in Peru and Ecuador, while in Chile journalists supplied a lower number of platforms regularly, suggesting that contributing to multiple platforms is less about digital access in these countries, and more related to other systemic conditions, such as the degree of labor contract informality: the higher the contractual informality, the more platforms journalists are expected to supply. Finally, nearly half (47%) of journalists throughout the region received some of their income from jobs outside of journalism. Some of the highest levels of need are found in Peru and Venezuela, countries where journalism pays little and economic hardship is great.

Table 2. Indicators of Labor Precarity

Contract Informality, Work Pace, and Plury-Employment

	Percent without fulltime contract			
Country	Men	Women	Number of platforms regularly supplies	Percent who get 100% of their income from journalism
Argentina	58	54	3.6	49
Bolivia	61	54	3.7	53
Brazil	47	52	3.3	66
Chile	29	23	3.0	50
Colombia	56	57	4.1	50
Costa Rica	41	29	3.8	71
Ecuador	58	58	4.3	52
El Salvador	30	41	2.9	63
Mexico	28	27	3.9	59
Peru	59	66	4.4	16
Venezuela	63	51	3.9	52
Region	**49**	**47**	**3.7**	**53**

Safety and well-being

The safety and well-being of journalists in the region are constantly in the spotlight of human rights organizations, which annually track physical aggressions and warn about harassment of women and minority journalists online and off. The *Worlds of Journalism Study* survey measured the safety and well-being of journalists in two ways, including objective reports of experiences of workplace mistreatment in the last five years and a subjective measure of journalists' concern for their physical, emotional-mental, and financial well-being because of their work.

Reports of intimidation, harassment and attacks

Across Latin America, journalists' reports of workplace mistreatment raise questions about their personal well-being and whether they have sufficient freedom to do their jobs in ways that support democracy. When looking at three of the most prevalent aggressions, featured in Table 3, demeaning or hateful speech was the most common, with 19% of journalists saying they experienced it "often" or "very often," and 33% saying they "sometimes" experienced it. In other words, more than half of the region's journalists had been targeted with demeaning or hateful speech at least sometimes. More than a quarter experienced being surveilled, with 11% of journalists experiencing it frequently and 17% sometimes. Workplace bullying at the hands of sources, supervisors, or coworkers reached 15% of respondents who said they had experienced it "sometimes," "often," or "very often."

Reports of hostility vary by country, with some countries standing out for having particularly high or low levels of reported incidents. Brazil consistently ranks highest across all three aggression categories. It has the highest percentage of respondents reporting workplace bullying (23%), demeaning or hateful speech (66%), and surveillance (52%). This suggests a broader pattern of workplace mistreatment and monitoring in Brazil compared to other countries in the region.

On the other end of the spectrum, Peruvian journalists reported some of the lowest levels of workplace bullying (4%), surveillance (12%), and demeaning or hateful speech (31%). This indicates a relatively more positive working climate in terms of interpersonal treatment, which may be the result of a greater social cohesion, but also fewer women in newsrooms or less frequent interaction with audiences and sources through social media. Similarly, Costa Rican journalists also reported low levels of workplace bullying (9%) or surveillance (10%), although not demeaning or hateful speech (47%).

Table 3. Percentage of Respondents Reporting Most Prevalent Attacks

	Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you		Surveillance		Workplace bullying	
Country	Often/Very Often	Sometimes	Often/Very Often	Sometimes	Often/Very Often	Sometimes
Argentina	18	40	7	14	5	14
Bolivia	19	42	10	23	4	13
Brazil	27	39	27	25	8	15
Chile	17	32	4	8	6	8
Colombia	18	28	10	12	7	12
Costa Rica	22	25	3	7	1	8
Ecuador	8	24	6	14	3	9
El Salvador	36	29	18	24	5	11
Mexico	19	36	12	20	8	12
Peru	9	22	3	9	1	3
Venezuela	19	44	17	28	3	12
Region	**19**	**33**	**11**	**17**	**4**	**11**

Women and minorities report more frequent bullying

Across the region, women journalists consistently reported higher levels of workplace bullying than did male respondents. While the magnitude of these differences varied, Argentina, Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico, Costa Rica, Peru, and Venezuela all showed statistically significant gender differences in workplace bullying experiences. Differences are smaller in Argentina, Colombia, and Venezuela and larger in El Salvador, Mexico, Costa Rica, and Peru. El Salvador stands out with the largest gap, indicating a more pronounced difference in reports of workplace bullying. Nonbinary journalists also disproportionately reported experiences of bullying.[1]

Gendered experiences of surveillance and hate speech

Considering all journalists in the study, men reported more frequent experiences of surveillance and hate speech than women.[2] This varied by country, however. Within Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and Venezuela, specifically, differences in reports of surveillance between men and women were statistically significant, with male journalists reporting higher levels of surveillance than their female counterparts. While the gaps

1 An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare experiences of workplace bullying between female and male respondents across the region. The results indicated a statistically significant difference in reported experiences between genders, $t(3983) = 6.96$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.22$, 95% CI [0.16, 0.29]. Female respondents ($M = 1.65$, $SD = 0.998$) reported significantly higher levels of workplace bullying than male respondents ($M = 1.44$, $SD = 0.849$). The effect size, measured by Cohen's d, was small to approaching moderate, suggesting a meaningful difference in practical terms.

2 An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare reports of being surveilled between female and male respondents across the region. The results indicated a statistically significant difference in reported experiences between genders, $t(3941) = -2.81$, $p < .01$, $d = -0.09$, 95% CI [-0.15, -0.03]. Male respondents ($M = 1.98$, $SD = 1.17$) reported significantly higher levels of surveillance experience than female respondents ($M = 1.87$, $SD = 1.14$). The effect size, measured by Cohen's d, was small, suggesting a modest but statistically meaningful difference.

are generally small, the consistency of this pattern across multiple countries suggests a regional trend, particularly in relation to how surveillance may intersect with gendered roles or assignments in journalism.

Experiences of hate speech attacks also were gendered.[3] In most countries, men reported being victimized through speech attacks slightly more than women, on average, but these differences were only statistically significant in Argentina and Venezuela and the differences were small. Considering the entire region, then, male journalists in Latin America are targeted slightly more when it comes to surveillance and hate speech, but this pattern does not hold up in every country.

Perceptions of safety and well-being

Given that most journalists in Latin America reported having experienced some form of aggression for their work, it is important to consider how different dimensions of security might affect journalists' job performance and personal well-being, including financial, physical, and psychological safety. Table 4 reports percentages of survey respondents who agreed or strongly agreed they were concerned about their personal well-being because of work.

When it comes to feelings of safety and well-being, two trends stand out regionally. First, most Latin American journalists said they are worried about their emotional and mental well-being due to work-related strains. Second, more women journalists expressed concern about all forms of safety than did their male counterparts.

Concern about emotional-mental well-being is expressed consistently across countries, by more than 7 in 10 journalists across the region, on average. Concern is especially prevalent among journalists in Brazil, El Salvador, and Peru, while fewer journalists in Chile and Costa Rica expressed concern about their emotional and mental well-being. More women journalists generally reported concern, with exceptions in Chile, Costa Rica, and Ecuador.

About half of journalists in the region expressed concern about their financial stability, in fairly consistent percentages across countries. In contrast, physical strain varied significantly between countries, with more journalists expressing concern in Peru and El Salvador, and comparatively fewer in Argentina and Chile. As with emotional well-being, women also tended to express more concern about economic safety than men in most countries, particularly in Colombia, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela. While concerns about physical safety are more balanced, women journalists in countries such as El Salvador, Peru, and Venezuela reported significantly higher concern than men.

Prior research suggests that emotional strain is driven by physical dangers, harassment, and economic pressures. In regions with weak rule of law, journalists are frequently exposed to indirect trauma through

3 Another independent samples t-test was conducted to compare experiences of demeaning or hateful speech between female and male respondents across the region. The results indicated a statistically significant difference in reported experiences between genders, $t(3989) = -2.19$, $p < .05$, $d = -0.07$, 95% CI [-0.13, -0.01]. Male respondents ($M = 2.59$, $SD = 1.16$) reported significantly higher levels of demeaning or hateful speech than female respondents ($M = 2.51$, $SD = 1.15$). The effect size, measured by Cohen's d, was small, suggesting a modest but statistically meaningful difference.

reporting and also directly subjected to violence and intimidation. The widespread impunity for these aggressions fosters a climate of fear. Alongside these physical threats, economic insecurity adds another layer of stress, particularly for freelance and early-career journalists who often work without contracts, benefits, or job stability. Many must juggle multiple low-paying roles just to make ends meet, which can lead to burnout and compromise their editorial independence. Women journalists are especially vulnerable, facing greater economic insecurity due to systemic discrimination and limited opportunities for advancement. These challenges are further compounded for ethnic minority journalists, who encounter layered threats and fewer protections.

Table 4. Well-Being Concerns Related to Work

Percent who 'agree' or 'strongly agree', by gender

	Emotional-Mental		Physical		Financial	
Country	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Argentina	69	67	20	13	40	39
Bolivia	67	73	56	57	47	49
Brazil	77	90	47	49	47	52
Chile	61	61	23	14	35	38
Colombia	66	77	49	40	50	56
Costa Rica	70	59	31	25	42	44
Ecuador	72	68	62	57	55	55
El Salvador	82	85	67	74	48	53
Mexico	72	79	56	54	44	59
Peru	82	85	75	76	43	57
Venezuela	75	82	62	66	50	58
Region	**71**	**77**	**49**	**48**	**45**	**52**

Routines and support for collective safety

How do journalists respond to these challenges? They turn to their colleagues for social support and collective safety, and self censor when needed, but few seek government protection. WJS asked journalists about steps they took to stay safe in work after an attack, as well as who they went to for support. Responses are reported in Table 5. Taking safety training and self-censoring sensitive information were practiced by five in 10 and four in 10 journalists in the region, respectively. Higher proportions of journalists did so in countries where attacks on the press from government, security forces, and criminal organizations are known to be common. More than five in 10 journalists in those countries also reported using digital safety networks to check in with colleagues: El Salvador (63%), Bolivia (56%), Mexico (56%), Venezuela (56%). Journalists across the region primarily turned to each other for social support after an aggression as well (79%), and also—but less often—to their news organizations (67%). Very few journalists in any country sought support from government entities, demonstrating journalists' lack of faith in institutional protection across the region.

Table 5. Protection Measures Used

Percent who reported using a protection measure

Country	Took safety training (%)	Used communication networks (%)	Self-censored (%)	Sought government protection (%)	Received social support from colleagues (%)	Received support from news organization (%)
Argentina	29	21	42	6	80	63
Bolivia	71	56	33	25	92	83
Brazil	37	19	55	4	80	54
Chile	—	—	32	—	—	—
Colombia	43	27	46	14	71	58
Costa Rica	21	15	31	4	68	66
Ecuador	65	29	33	17	77	68
El Salvador	75	63	59	7	75	69
Mexico	57	56	55	14	80	65
Peru	69	19	10	21	73	73
Venezuela	68	56	64	11	85	76
Region	**53**	**36**	**42**	**12**	**79**	**67**

Note: Based on yes or no responses

Support for democracy

Safety and well-being difficulties for journalists run parallel to challenges for representative democracy in these countries. Given the supportive role journalism can play in democracy, it's useful to understand whether journalists working in harsh environments still believe in a public-service mission. The WJS survey asked journalists how important it was to them to fulfill a number of different roles that are commonly associated with normative models of journalism and democracy. Table 6 lists a number of these roles. The first five are commonly associated with the liberal model of the press, in which journalists support an informed and engaged citizenry through neutral reporting of public affairs, including work that monitors power, highlights problems, provides analysis, and offers opposing viewpoints. The remaining four are roles of a democratic model in which journalists support positive social change through advocacy, offering possible solutions to social problems and prioritizing the needs of marginalized groups. The table reports the percentage of journalists in a country who responded that a role was "very important" or "extremely important" instead of "moderately," "slightly" or "not at all" important.

Table 6. Percentage of Respondents Who Expressed Strong Support for a Role

Liberal Role Conception and Social Change Role Conception

	Liberal Role Conception				Social Change Role Conception				
Country	Being a detached observer	Monitor and scrutinize power	Shine a light on society's problems	Provide analysis of current affairs	Let people express their views	Advocate for social change	Promote peace and tolerance	Point toward possible solutions	Speak on behalf of the marginalized
Argentina	68	71	90	81	86	65	76	65	70
Bolivia	87	73	94	86	87	83	95	84	68
Brazil	73	85	93	85	80	78	83	81	72
Chile	88	91	96	89	95	63	84	72	80
Colombia	86	83	94	90	91	80	91	79	83
Costa Rica	81	87	95	87	91	78	83	82	85
Ecuador	80	69	86	83	84	84	86	82	85
El Salvador	77	86	94	88	88	75	80	80	88
Mexico	91	87	97	90	91	82	87	78	88
Peru	84	80	91	87	84	84	92	89	93
Venezuela	81	78	92	83	87	77	85	83	87
Region	**81**	**81**	**93**	**86**	**87**	**77**	**86**	**79**	**81**

Trends across the region include high levels of support for most of the responsibilities associated with Western conceptions of the democratic roles of the press. Among the highest endorsements were liberal roles such as shining a light on society's problems (93%), providing analysis of current affairs (86%) and letting people express their views (87%). Others that prioritized intervention on behalf of social change, including advocating for peace and tolerance (86%) and speaking on behalf of the marginalized (81%), received endorsement similar to the level of liberal ideals. Support for shining a public spotlight on society's problems and promoting social change by advocating for peace, tolerance, and the needs of marginalized groups is notable given much of the region's history —and current context— of widespread discrimination, corruption, and abuse.

It's important to note that even when journalists express support for roles that strengthen democracy, in practice they might not always be able to live up to it. One explanation for differences between expression and practice is the level of autonomy journalists have in their reporting. The WJS survey asked journalists to rate how much freedom they have to select the stories they work on and to choose which aspects to emphasize. Across the region, most journalists said they believed they had "a great deal of freedom" over their reporting decisions. Only about 30 percent of journalists responded that they had only some to no freedom at all. This stands in contrast with their reports of victimization and worry about well-being, raising questions about how journalists process editorial restrictions on their own work.

Conclusions

Despite widespread attacks on journalists and persistent concerns about their financial, physical, and mental well-being, findings from the WJS surveys conducted across Latin America offer cautious optimism about journalism's potential to help strengthen democracy in the region. The more than 4,000 working journalists surveyed in 11 countries appear acutely aware of the structural and contextual challenges they face. Yet, they exhibit notable occupational resilience—often choosing collaboration over self-censorship and actively seeking support from colleagues and news organizations to navigate threats more safely.

Across national contexts, Latin American journalists consistently embrace liberal democratic roles, including holding power to account, exposing societal problems, and facilitating public discourse. These roles are widely recognized as essential to maintaining the checks and balances necessary for a healthy democracy. Regionally, journalists acknowledge their independent and counterbalancing function within democratic systems. Moreover, in countries marked by persistent violence, inequality, and discrimination, journalists go further by endorsing a democratic model of the press that aspires to foster positive social change. This commitment to transformative journalism may contribute to making democracy more responsive to social deficits—and ultimately, more sustainable.

The chapters that follow provide a more in-depth look at the state of journalism in each respective country. Some countries, such as Costa Rica (see page 37) stand out as an example—and a warning. Overall, survey responses from Costa Rica point to a safe and stable democracy conducive to independent journalism. However, there's no denying that presidential rhetoric aimed at disparaging the press and recent declines in rankings of overall press freedom also suggest cause for concern, especially given the poor democratic and press freedom rankings in Central American neighbors such as Nicaragua and El Salvador.

Countries such as Brazil (see page 46), El Salvador (page 31), Mexico (page 23), Peru (page 72), and Venezuela (page 53) also stand out, as journalists in these countries are more concerned over their emotional-mental well-being or physical security than the regional average. These also are countries with high frequencies of attacks—both online and offline—against journalists. Notably these are countries with histories—in some cases current contexts— of authoritarian populism, where journalists often are targeted by governments and organized crime groups seeking to criminalize and silence —either through rhetoric, law, or violence—independent voices.

Beyond such contextual factors, structural factors also are impacting journalists' work. Women journalists in Colombia (see page 60) and Ecuador (page 67) are among those most concerned about their financial well-being, similar to women journalists from El Salvador, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela. And in Argentina (see page 90), Bolivia (page 77), Peru, and Venezuela, surveyed journalists were most likely to have at least one other job outside journalism. Labor precarity—high rates of contractual insecurity and pluri-employment for men *and* women journalists—potentially as much as violence and declines in press freedom, represents a significant impediment for journalism in Latin America that is not often acknowledged, and like violence or authoritarian attacks on press freedom, not easily addressed.

The *Worlds of Journalism Study* survey results presented in this volume offer more than a snapshot of journalistic practice in Latin America—they lay the groundwork for envisioning a path forward. Journalists in the region operate in a complex environment shaped by technological change, eroding trust in democratic institutions (including journalism), and the spread of mis- and disinformation. These challenges are intensified by democratic backsliding, authoritarian pressures, and ongoing security and economic crises. How journalists respond to the structural and contextual challenges outlined in this book has significant implications for the future of journalism and democracy. The cases examined herein highlight the value of understanding journalists' lived experiences and professional values to identify opportunities for support, collaboration, and reform. Such efforts are essential to protecting journalists' rights and ensuring journalism continues to serve its vital democratic role across Latin America.

Part 1

Mexico and Central America

Journalism in Mexico: The Daily Struggle against Silence and Control

Armando Gutiérrez-Ortega, Universidad Autónoma de Baja California • Karles Daniel Antonio-Manzo, Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City • Mireya Márquez Ramírez, Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City • Martín Echeverría, Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla • Julieta Brambila, independent researcher • Josefina Buxadé Castelán, Universidad de las Américas Puebla • Celia del Palacio Montiel, Universidad Anáhuac del Norte • Rubén Arnoldo González, Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla • Luis Lemini, Universidad Anáhuac del Norte • Frida Viridiana Rodelo Amezcu, Universidad de Guadalajara • Grisel Salazar Rebolledo, Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City • Sallie Hughes, University of Miami

Between violence, distrust and a new model of government

Since 2019, Mexico has been the most dangerous country – not formally at war – for journalism. Violence is the norm, impunity is a constant. The press faces threats that compromise its security and freedom of expression on a daily basis. Moreover, an even more complex relationship between the media and authorities emerged as a populist movement rose to power, both at the federal and state levels, in 2018. While the situation was extremely difficult, the rise of the National Regeneration Movement (MORENA) to power changed the relationship between the press and the state in at least three significant ways:

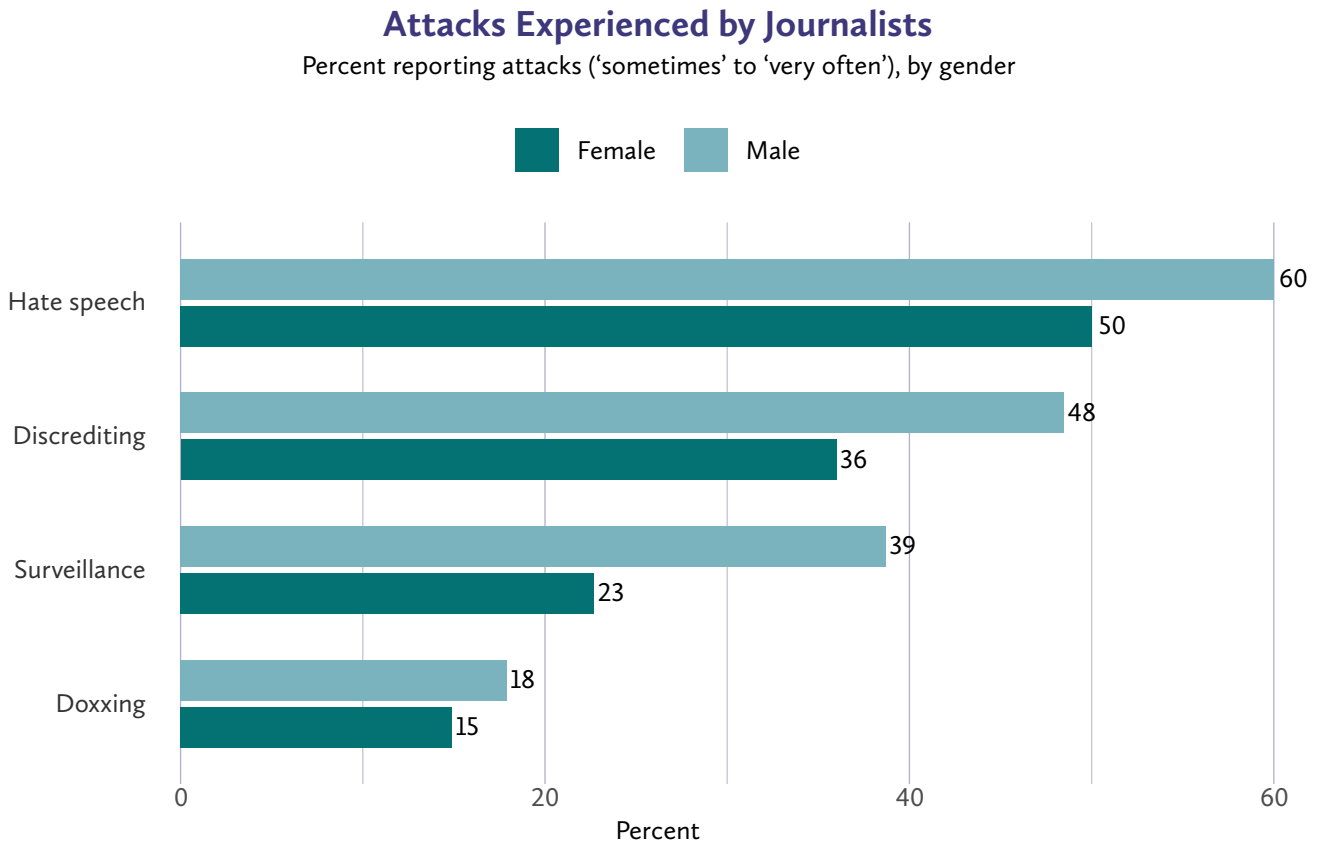
1. The exercise of government spending on advertising drastically reduced the amounts and distribution of this resource through a regulatory change approved by the new majority, eroding the financial solvency of critical news media. This policy of reduction was applied especially to media outlets not aligned with the project of the new public administration (Fundar, 2021), in turn favoring digital platforms and social networks that were unconditionally supportive of the dominant political-ideological line (Esteinou-Madrid, 2022 & 2023; Animal Político, 2022).
2. The weakening of institutions and norms that protect the rights and freedoms of journalists. One of the most serious examples is the operation of the protection mechanism for journalists at risk, which, during the López Obrador administration, had the highest number of proposals rejected since its establishment in 2012, reaching 62% of the total cases. Meanwhile, six of the eight murders of journalists who were under the protection protocol happened between 2019 and 2023 (Amnesty International, 2024).
3. The systematic strategy of disqualification and harassment of media using the resources of the Mexican State is especially focused on companies and journalists with a critical stance regarding the policies of the federal administration (ARTICLE 19, 2023a; Ortiz & de Alba-Robles, 2024).

In a context where impunity and vulnerability are constant, Mexican journalism has had to confront extreme levels of aggression on several fronts, as well as the economic and emotional risks and effects of the pandemic. These conditions forced journalists to create protection protocols within their families and seek support from their colleagues as a more acessible strategy for personal resilience.

Methods

To explore the working conditions and professional profiles of the 36,066 journalists officially estimated to be in Mexico, the territory was divided into six subnational regions that reflect differences in the conditions of professional practice. Data collection took place between December 2021 and November 2022 through video conferences and in-person interviews. In the absence of a national census, the sample was drawn from a carefully compiled directory of the national news media system based on media type, ownership, and importance (González et al., 2023). From the selected media outlets, participants were randomly selected, with attention to the representation of editorial ranks and gender; a greater number of interviews was also sought in media outlets with a larger number of hired staff, weighting them specifically. The sample was calculated with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, yielding a total of 443 journalists. Forty-six percent identified as women and 54 percent as men, with no participants choosing non-binary status; their average ages were 37 and 43, respectively. Two out of three worked in traditional media.

Harassment, accusation and targeting



The attacks could be linked to a state strategy of harassment, accusations and targeting of critical press, backed by the public administration headed by Andrés Manuel López Obrador until 2024. This is evident in four specific actions:

1. The hostility of presidential discourse towards independent journalism. The federal executive's morning press conferences, used as an official communication strategy, were a platform where the press was attacked every 24 hours (ARTICLE 19, 2024). The daily press conferences were a tool to amplify public distrust and hostility toward journalists, as reflected in the frequency of insults or hate speech that 5 out of 10 journalists reported experiencing (19% frequently or very frequently, 36% sometimes) and the questioning of their moral principles that 3 out of 10 journalists reported (12% frequently or very frequently, 18% sometimes).
2. The surveillance and control of digital space by the Mexican state, denounced by civil organizations since the previous presidency, appeared to continue under the López Obrador administration. According to an investigation by the Network in Defense of Digital Rights, ARTICLE 19 Mexico and Central America, SocialTIC and Citizen Lab at the University of Toronto, there is a high probability that the military is behind spyware attacks on journalists, limiting their freedom of action due to the latent risk of being watched. Thus, three out of 10 study participants consider that they have been victimized by surveillance (12% frequently or very frequently, 20% sometimes).
3. The deliberate neglect of protocols for the protection of the integrity of journalists and their personal information became evident between February 2022 and February 2024, a period in which the president deliberately exposed the personal information of three journalists: Carlos Loret de Mola in February 2022, Raymundo Riva Palacio in July 2023 and Natalie Kitroeff in February 2024. In addition to exposing specific cases, in 2024, an online leak of the list of personal data, photographs and identification documents of 263 journalists who covered the federal executive's morning conferences occurred (Osorio, 2024; ARTICLE 19, 2024). The breach occurred after this survey was conducted but sheds light on a context where about two in 10 respondents reported having their personal information disclosed (7% frequently or very frequently, 16% sometimes) or having their accounts hacked or websites blocked (5% frequently or very frequently, 11% sometimes).
4. The erosion of institutions that guarantee the free exercise of journalism under the guise of austerity policies or the direct disqualification of the executive and legislative branches. Entities such as the National Institute for Access to Information and the National Human Rights Commission have seen their capacities diminished by the systematic reduction of their budgets, the failure to appoint their members and the public questioning of their social function. As of 2022, the only recommendation addressed by the National Human Rights Commission related to the protection of the journalistic profession relates to the claim of the head of Notimex, Sanjuana Martínez, who was denied protection due to her status as a public official. The dissolution or militant colonization of autonomous public entities such as the INAI represents a serious reversal of democratic principles. The results of the Special Prosecutor's Office for Crimes against Freedom of Expression (FEADLE) are also insufficient. Since its creation in 2010 and as of December 2022, it has only obtained 32 final convictions out of a total of 1,592 investigations into crimes against journalists.

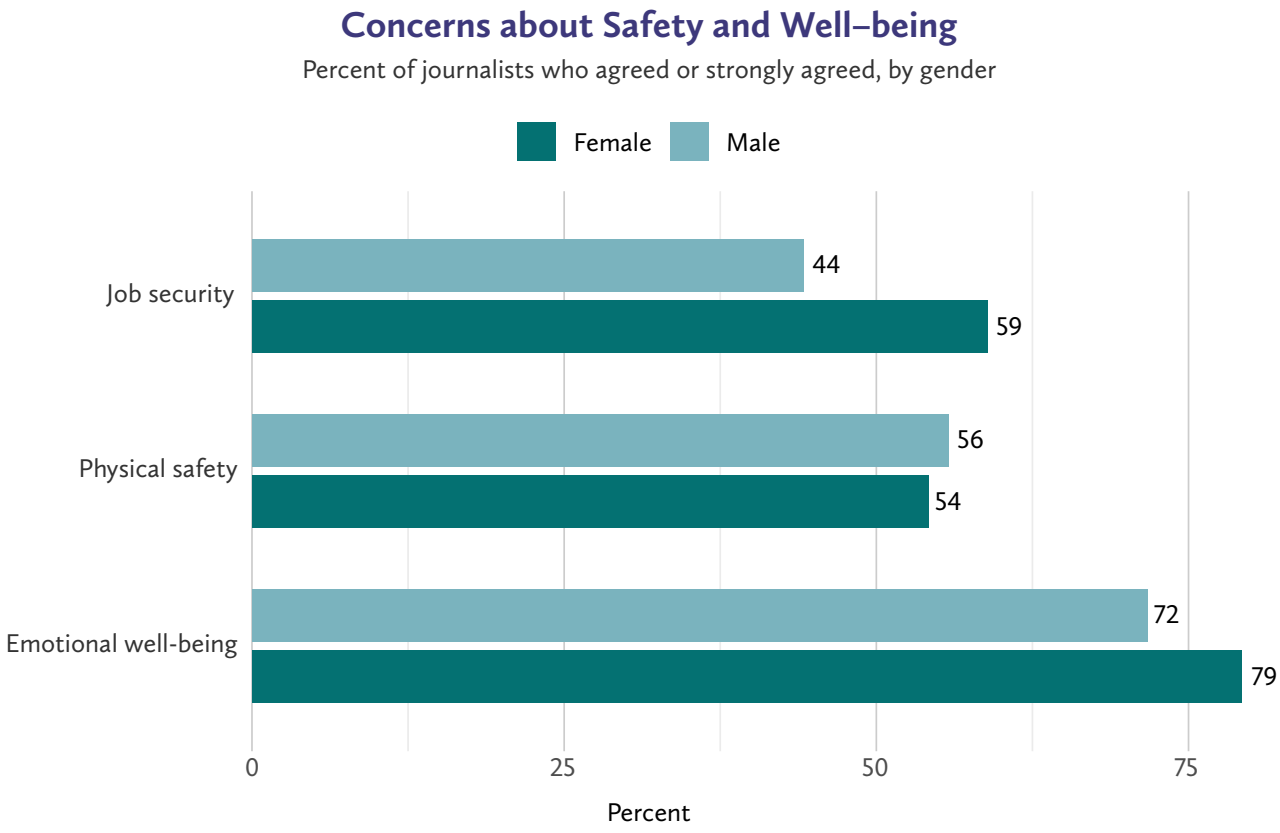
This institutional setback can motivate journalists' distrust of entities that should support their protection. When asked whether they sought support when threatened or attacked, government support was the least sought by journalists participating in this study, with only 9% of men and 4% of women. In contrast, support from colleagues was the most sought-after support mechanism, by 44% of men and 36% of women. This support is slightly more sought after than seeking support from their media outlets (38% of men and 27% of women) and much more sought after than the journalists' associations that have been formed in recent years as a form of collective protection, indicating limits to their reach (18% men, 12% women).

Self-protection and mutual support

In the absence or weakness of formal structures that protect them, journalists resort to self-protection and mutual support strategies against attacks from criminal organizations, politicians, local and federal governments and security forces. Ninety percent of those interviewed place special emphasis on verifying facts, which reduces the risk of legal attacks. As another form of self-protection, more than half (57%) have received security training or developed communication networks with colleagues to provide immediate assistance, 46% have modified their routines to avoid risky situations, 40% hide the identification of the media organization for which they work as a way to avoid being recognized as a journalist, 36% extend this strategy to the newsroom by publishing anonymously and avoiding possible retaliation, and 30% have changed their phone numbers or taken security measures on their devices to reduce the risk of being monitored.

Self-restriction strategies are also common, with more than half (55%) of those interviewed limiting their coverage to avoid retaliation, while nearly 5 in 10 journalists (48%) reduce their time in high-risk areas, and 24% change their topics, avoiding sensitive sections such as organized crime and politics. Thirteen percent pass on their tips or stories to international media outlets, allowing them to return to Mexican users but under a different banner and byline. The lack of capacity of their own media outlets to support them has led 11% of journalists to change organizations and 6% to move to other cities to ensure their safety.

Safety and subjective well-being



Journalists in Mexico work in a high-risk environment, marked by attacks, constant threats, and levels of impunity that limit the exercise of their profession, even when they believe they have some leeway to decide on news stories and angles. This situation forces them to resort to strategies of personal protection and self-restriction, affecting freedom of expression and the quality of information in general. The absence of an effective institutional framework to protect the press, coupled with distrust of authorities, creates a context in which journalists are particularly vulnerable to a wide range of risks, ranging from physical violence to online and workplace harassment.

Given this context, participating journalists reported being concerned about their physical, mental-emotional and financial well-being, although their highest concern was their mental-emotional health (43.9% men and 42.1% women). This suggests the limits of their coping strategies, including changes to their routines and support from colleagues in particular; it also reveals the human cost of working as journalists in a dangerous context.

Conclusions

According to the ARTICLE 19 Freedom of Expression Report (2023b), Mexico is among the most dangerous countries for journalism, with a significant increase in violence over the last decade. This situation is exacerbated by the lack of commitment from prosecutors' offices, law enforcement institutions and entities defending human rights, which perpetuates violence and impunity, limiting Mexicans' right to information (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, 2022).

In the absence of support from employers and institutions, journalists must resort to independent support networks and self-censorship, which are safety tactics that reflect the progressive weakening of the institutional framework, the reduction of spaces for press freedom, and the isolation of journalists in their attempts to protect themselves. The need to avoid covering topics such as organized crime and politics increasingly restricts the reach of information that society receives, affecting its right to be informed.

Mexico must face increasingly complex challenges to build an environment in which the press can exercise its democratic role without fear. The protection strategies used by journalists demonstrate the need for structural change to preserve their rights, as well as the support and solidarity of society at large, without which information, freedom and democracy are also under threat.

References

- Amnistía Internacional. (2024). México: La verdad se protege. https://www.amnesty.org/es/documents/amr41/7666/2024/es/
- Animal Político. (Agosto 16, 2022). El gobierno de AMLO gasta 75% menos en publicidad oficial, pero mantiene malas prácticas. Animal Político. https://www.animalpolitico.com/2022/08/gobierno-amlo-gasta-menos-publicidad-oficial-malas-practicas
- ARTICLE 19. (Marzo 23. 2023a). Informe de libertad de expresión en México. https://ifex.org/es/voces-contra-la-indiferencia-el-informe-anual-de-article-19/
- ARTICLE 19. (Septiembre 19. 2023b). Informe semestral 2023: violencia contra la prensa entre ataques, estigmatización y ausencia del Estado. Artículo 19. https://articulo19.org/informe-semestral-2023-violencia-contra-la-prensa-entre-ataques-estigmatizacion-y-ausencia-del-estado/

- Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (CIDH). (2022). Situación de los derechos humanos en México. https://www.oas.org/es/CIDH/informes/IA.asp?Year=2022
- Esteinou-Madrid, J. (2022). La ley de comunicación del Plan B: inconstitucionalidad normativa. Revista Siempre, 3636, 44 – 47.
- Esteinou-Madrid, J. (2023). La publicidad gubernamental en el régimen de la Cuarta Transformación nacional. Argumentos. Estudios críticos de la sociedad, 99, 139 – 172.
- Fundar. (agosto 16, 2021). *Las tendencias de la Publicidad Oficial en el segundo año de AMLO: disminución del gasto, concentración y "gasto decembrino".* Fundar. Centro de Análisis e Investigación. https://fundar.org.mx/publicidad-oficial-2020/
- González Macías, R. A., García, L., Toxtle, A., Hughes, S., Del Palacio, C., & Buxadé, J. (2023). Panorama de los medios informativos en México: Una mirada a los subsistemas regionales. Global Media Journal México, 20(39), 89–109. https://doi.org/10.29105/gmjmx20.39-508
- Ortiz, L., & de Alba-Robles, M. (2024). El periodismo y la comunicación pública en el gobierno de AMLO. Análisis Plural, (7).

A Journalist's Perspective from Mexico: The Press that the Mexican Government Wants

Javier Garza Ramos, Founder of Horizonte Lagunero *and Co-host of El Noti*

When Andrés Manuel López Obrador won the presidency of Mexico in 2018, he said that his government would be the "fourth transformation" in the country's history, seeking to join the three great moments of the Mexican nation: independence from Spain (1810), the Reform (1857) that established a secular state, and the Revolution (1910) that overthrew a dictatorship and established social rights in work, property and education.

With this historic ambition from the beginning of his administration, López Obrador and his followers also sought to make the press resemble that of those historic moments. Indeed, during the Reform era, there was a press dedicated to actively promoting the cause of the liberals led by Benito Juárez, who managed to separate the State from the Catholic Church. And during the Revolution, there was a press dedicated to supporting Francisco I. Madero in his fight against the reelection of dictator Porfirio Díaz.

López Obrador thought his movement was so important that it was the patriotic duty of journalists and news media to support his project. This delirium has marked Mexican journalism in recent years, worsening already dire situations and opening new fronts of hostility against journalists.

López Obrador remained stuck in a 19th-century vision. It's true that at that time, the press was seen not only as a source of information but also as a means of supporting political causes. News was ideologically biased. The existence of liberal or conservative newspapers in Mexico during the 19th-century Reform War was similar to that, around the same time, in the United States, with newspapers supporting the abolition of slavery or the Confederacy.

But the Mexican president was unaware that Mexican journalism underwent its own transformation to become a news source independent of ideological causes. It is true that for much of the 20th century, it fell under the political control of a single-party system, the PRI, which governed Mexico from 1929 to 2000. Newspaper owners silenced criticism to receive advertising money from the government and avoid legal problems, and radio and television station owners did so to protect their licenses. It is a system that continued even after Mexico changed parties in the Presidency and local governments, as it was a convenient arrangement for everyone.

López Obrador frequently criticized this system, that of a press that provided no counterweight or oversight to the government and closed off spaces to opponents. However, it was not a closed system, as the political liberalization of the late 20th century stimulated the creation of independent media outlets, both nationally and locally. It was journalistic investigations by these media outlets that exposed government corruption and fueled López Obrador's opposition rhetoric, which claimed that the political system was so rotten that change was needed.

López Obrador won in 2018 largely because prior to that year there had been independent and critical press outlets that gave him space for his movement. But when he came to power, he demanded that the press not criticize him because such criticism would undermine his grand historical designs. It's true that many media outlets submitted, fearful of losing government advertising at a time of declining commercial sales, but many who were critical of previous administrations maintained the same line.

When these independent media outlets began publishing investigations into government corruption, López Obrador attacked them as opponents. Media outlets that had previously been among the few to cover his activities, such as the newspaper Reforma and the magazine Proceso, became enemies overnight. López Obrador didn't hesitate to use state resources to expose journalists with their personal data, and just as previous governments used malware to spy on journalists, his administration did the same. At the same time, the government is funding a group of individuals who present themselves as journalists on YouTube channels or websites but who dedicate themselves to flattering the government.

López Obrador's attitude toward the press also fueled disdain for the problems Mexican journalism had been experiencing since before 2018, particularly violence. His campaign promise to end impunity for the murders of journalists was never fulfilled; instead, he cut the budgets of agencies dedicated to preventing or investigating crimes against journalists.

López Obrador's demands on the press also served as an example to others at lower levels of government, such as governors and mayors, who responded to investigative reports with attacks, insults and hostility toward journalists, based on a simple reasoning: if the president can do it, why can't we?

While President Claudia Sheinbaum, López Obrador's designated successor, has not resorted to the insulting and contemptuous tone of her predecessor in her first months in office, she fundamentally follows the same line: critical journalism is adversarial and oppositional, seeks to harm the country, and serves shady interests.

This is how we arrived at the current state of the Mexican press, which is in the line of fire on two accounts: that of violence carried out by criminal or political groups, but also that of hostility promoted by those in power.

Harassment, Self-Censorship, and Scrutiny of Power: Salvadoran Journalists' Responses to the Government's War on the Press

Summer Harlow, Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas, University of Texas at Austin

Since Nayib Bukele–self-described as "the world's coolest dictator"— first was elected president of El Salvador in June 2019, press freedom in that country has significantly deteriorated, with journalists and news outlets facing various threats and forms of harassment, including surveillance with the Pegasus spyware (Farrow, 2022). Bukele has repeatedly used social media and other public statements to attack and discredit independent media, labeling his critics as "fake news" and "mercenaries" and even accusing them of defending and being aligned with gangs (Vílchez, 2024; Vivanco, 2021). The government also has used abusive audits by the Ministry of Finance as well as criminal accusations of money laundering to target news outlets, and new laws, such as one that prohibits reporting on gang activity, also are aimed at silencing independent voices (Vílchez, 2024). In response, at least two dozen journalists have gone into exile or moved (APES, 2024), and even award-winning, independent digital-native news site El Faro moved its business operations out of the country into Costa Rica in 2023. "Since 2019, El Salvador has joined the list of governments who see independent journalism as an enemy and have eliminated any guardrails to act with impunity," El Faro (2023) wrote in a column explaining the move. "The country no longer enjoys the right to legitimate defense and public officials' will is placed above the law. That is why El Faro moved its legal registration out of the country…but our newsroom will continue working in El Salvador…That is to say that our journalism is not going anywhere. We changed to continue working independently, critically, and less exposed to the arbitrariness of the Bukele regime. We leave as a way to stay."

Salvadorans have been living under an "emergency" State of Exception, with constitutional rights and due process protections suspended since March 2022 (HRW, 2024). During this time, the country's historically high murder rate and levels of gang activity dropped to record lows, helping cement Bukele's popularity and in part leading to his landslide re-election in 2024–despite the constitution prohibiting serving two terms in a row. Bukele has expanded his control over the courts and legislature, and Transparency International (2024) ranks El Salvador 130 out of 180 countries on the Corruption Perceptions Index. Unchecked by other governmental branches, Bukele thus plays an outsized role in media freedom and regulation, especially compared with other larger, less authoritarian countries in the region. It is within this context that the Reporters Without Borders' press freedom ranking for El Salvador dropped to 133 of 180 countries in 2024, down from 115 just one year prior and having already plunged from 81 in 2019 (RSF, 2024). International organizations and journalists alike have expressed concern over the increasingly hostile environment. The Salvadoran Journalists Association has noted an increase in attacks on journalists (APES, 2024), fueling self-censorship and an atmosphere of fear and stress. Using a representative survey of 208 Salvadoran journalists, this chapter explores how the anti-press rhetoric and deterioration of press freedom have impacted journalists' practices, perceptions, and physical and mental wellbeing.

Methods

This chapter relied on questions from the global *Worlds of Journalism Study* survey, as well as additional questions specific to the Salvadoran context related to the source and location of threats against journalists, changes in information access, and the relationship between journalists and power. Working journalists in El Salvador were interviewed via video call between 2021 and 2024. Because no comprehensive list of media outlets or journalists exists in the country, a group of researchers and journalists, based in El Salvador and the United States, developed a list of Salvadoran news outlets and then systematically began contacting a representative sample of those outlets to invite journalists to participate in the survey. Email invitations were also sent via the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas' listserve. Only journalists working for news outlets were included. Given the media landscape, many journalists were hesitant to be surveyed. In the end, 245 journalists were surveyed, but because of incomplete responses, only 208 respondents are included in this study.

Demographics

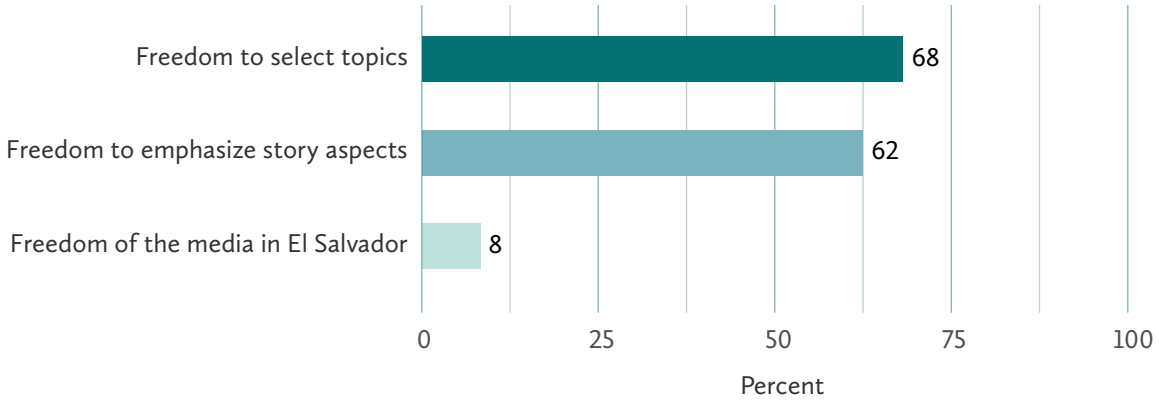
Compared with most other Latin American countries highlighted in this book, the Salvadoran journalists are younger, with an average age of 38 among men and 36 among women. Just less than half (47%) of respondents were women. Most (95%) had formal journalism education or training, and had spent an average of about 12 years working as a journalist. Their political ideology was mostly central (18%) or leaned slightly left of center (37%). Most of the surveyed Salvadoran journalists worked for a digital-native news site (34%) or a newspaper (28%), and most (63%) were based in the capital city of San Salvador. While digital-native sites are potentially over-represented in the sample, especially compared with other countries in the region, this is in line with previous studies conducted in El Salvador where 40-50% of survey respondents reported working for digital-native sites. Further, digital-native sites are known for being more independent than traditional media, so it's likely that journalists from these sites were more willing to complete the survey than journalists from traditional media, which historically have been aligned with business and political interests (see Harlow, 2023).

Press freedom at risk

The state of press freedom, in journalists' perspective, is complex. More than two-thirds of respondents (68%) said they personally had a great deal of freedom or complete freedom to select their own stories and 62% said they had a great deal or complete freedom to decide what to emphasize in their stories, indicating a substantial level of autonomy at the individual level. At the same time, however, only 8% of journalists said there was complete or a great deal of media freedom in El Salvador generally. In fact, nearly half (47%) said there was little to no media freedom at all.

Perceived Journalistic Freedoms in El Salvador

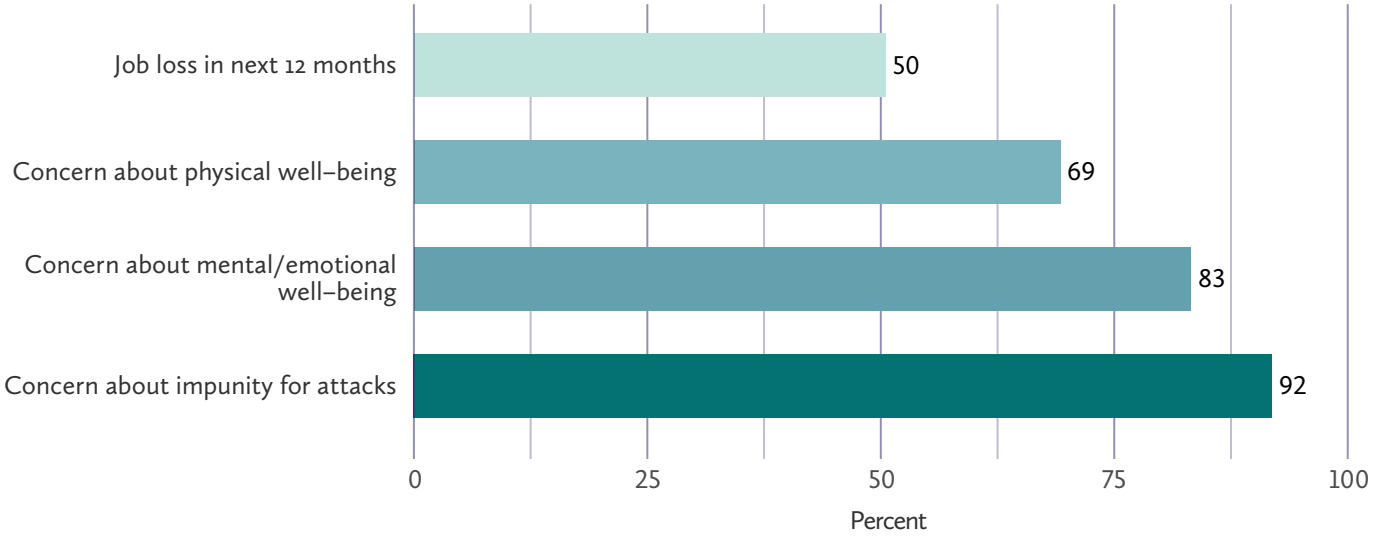
Percent reporting 'a lot' or 'total' freedom



Such a bleak perception of El Salvador's press freedom is unsurprising considering journalists' experience with threats and harassment. Salvadoran journalists expressed more concern about their physical and mental wellbeing than journalists from most other Latin American countries included in the *Worlds of Journalism Study*. Nearly 70% of Salvadoran journalists agreed or strongly agreed that they were worried about their physical wellbeing, and 83% were concerned about their emotional and mental wellbeing. Their concerns are backed up by the harassment they said they had experienced: more than a third of respondents (36%) said they very often or often were targets of demeaning or hateful speech, 34% said they very often or often had been publicly discredited, 18% were surveilled very often or often, 19% had their morality questioned very often or often, 13% said they had been hacked or had their social media accounts blocked very often or often, 6% said they were very often or often sexually assaulted/harassed, and about 3% said their families very often or often were targets of intimidation. Combined, these results point to a troubling pattern of harassment aimed at undermining journalists.

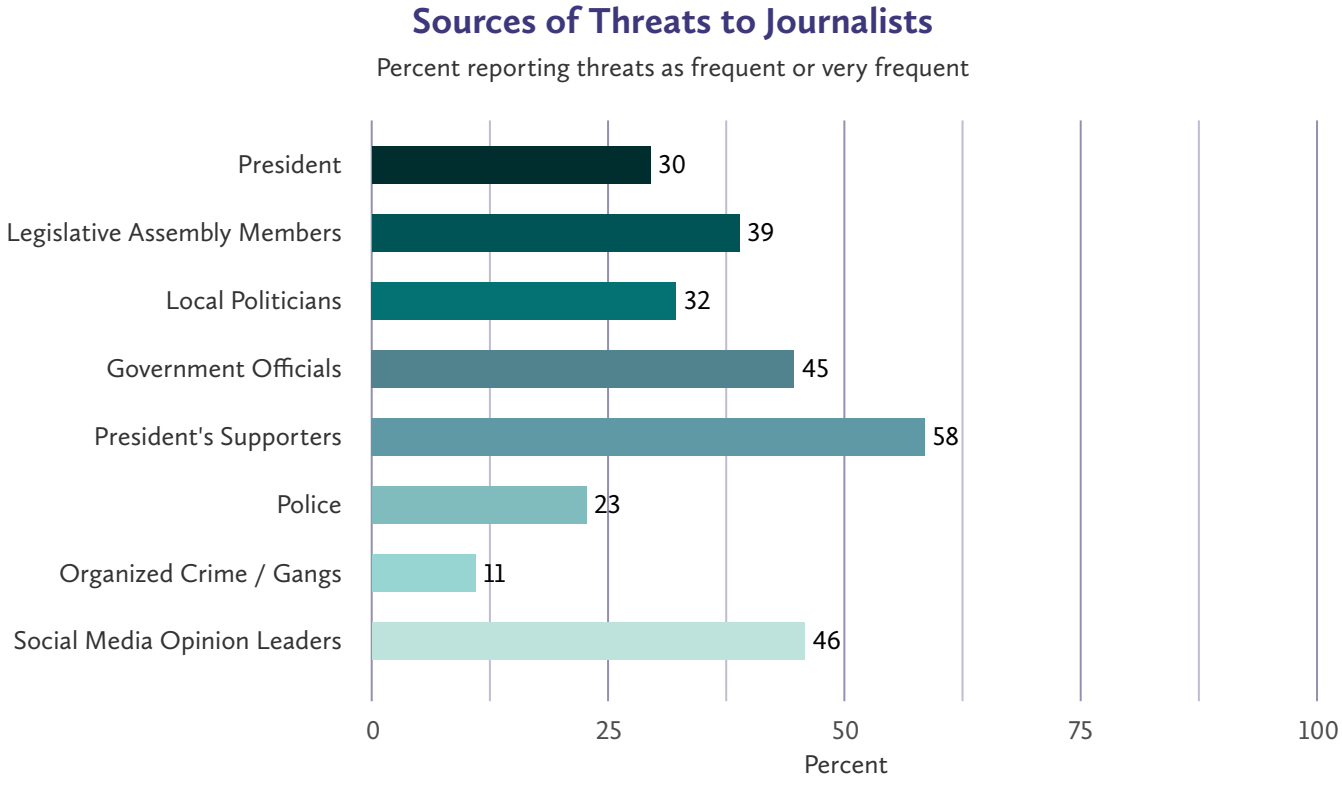
Job–Related Concerns Among Journalists

Percent 'agree' or 'strongly agree'



The threats and harassment, according to the surveyed Salvadoran journalists, frequently or very frequently come from the president (30%), legislative assembly (39%), politicians (32%), and government officials (45%). Notably, just 11% of journalists said threats frequently or very frequently came from gangs or organized crime. These results are unsurprising considering the Bukele administration's hostile stance toward independent journalists and the elimination of much gang violence under the *State of Exception*. Perhaps more of a cause for concern is the fact that nearly half (46%) of surveyed journalists said the threats and harassment frequently or very frequently came from opinion leaders on social media and more than half (59%) said threats and harassment frequently or very frequently came from the president's supporters and allies. These survey questions, while not asked in other countries included in the WJS project, are important to understanding the Salvadoran context and the changing state of press freedom under Bukele as he regularly uses social media to discredit journalists. Bukele's anti-press rhetoric thus seems to have normalized aggression against independent media and reinforced the false narrative of journalists as enemies of the state. Given that online violence has real-world consequences, the partisan harassment of journalists on social media should raise red flags.

Beyond harassment, journalists also have to contend with obstacles in the way of doing their jobs. For example, 87% of journalists agreed or completely agreed that it was harder to access public information since Bukele took office. About 70% said they frequently or very frequently were denied access to public information and documents, and 35% said they had been denied access to a presidential press conference. "Every day it becomes more difficult to be a journalist in El Salvador due to the lack of access to information," said a 42-year-old male journalist, who was surveyed. Similarly, another surveyed male journalist, 30, said, "There is no more public information." No wonder, then, that three-fourths of journalists (75%) agreed or completely agreed that the relationship between political power and journalists was one of conflict.



Protection and coping strategies

Nearly all (92%) of surveyed Salvadoran journalists said they strongly agreed or agreed that they were concerned that those who harmed journalists would go unpunished. More than four-fifths (81%) of respondents said they agreed or completely agreed that the conditions for independent journalism were worsening. Most journalists (78%) also expressed concern that the number of media outlets aligned with the president was growing—this data came from another survey question specific to El Salvador to better understand Bukele's influence on the media. Half (50%) strongly agreed or agreed that they were concerned about losing their jobs in journalism, and nearly three-fourths (74%) said they felt stressed out in their jobs. These results underscore the finding noted earlier that the overwhelming majority of journalists were concerned about their physical, emotional and mental wellbeing. "There is a kind of fear in the journalism community that things will get worse," a male 46-year-old surveyed journalist said. "There is no good outlook for the future and things will get worse in terms of physical integrity."

Surveyed journalists said they had adopted various coping mechanisms. More than half (59%) said they had self-censored as a form of self-protection. Other common forms of self-protection included changing their beat or their job (26%), changing their personal or daily routines (57%), removing or hiding their press identification (50%), changing their phone number (51%), and changing or closing social media accounts (36%). Three-fourths (75%) said they had undergone security training. Journalists' networks also proved to provide a valuable support system, as 69% said their own outlets supported them, 75% received support from other colleagues, and 52% got support from journalistic associations or organizations.

Roles

While most journalists ranked traditional journalist roles, like being a neutral observer and informing the public, as important, it's telling that the roles journalists saw as most crucial for them to fulfill were related to checking political power. More than four-fifths (86%) said it was extremely important or very important to monitor and scrutinize power, nearly all (94%) said their role was to counteract disinformation, and 94% said journalists should shine a light on society's problems.

Conclusions

"Currently, it is known that the greatest threat to journalists in El Salvador comes from the government, rather than from criminal organizations. We must start discussing what can be done to stop or regulate this," a 32-year-old female journalist who was surveyed said. Her comment underscores the significant challenges to independent journalism under the Bukele administration, and uncertainty about the future of press freedom and, by extension, democracy. The journalists surveyed for this chapter expressed concern over government hostility and stigmatization, and the normalization of anti-press discourse and attacks, all of which are negatively impacting their physical and mental wellbeing. Addressing these issues will require concerted efforts from civil society, international organizations, and journalists themselves to pressure the government to uphold the principles of press freedom and the right to information.

References

- APES. (2024). Asociación de Periodistas de El Salvador. Available at https://apes.org.sv/
- El Faro. (2023). El Faro se cambia de casa. Available at https://elfaro.net/es/202304/columnas/26804/el-faro-se-cambia-de-casa
- Farrow, R. (2022). "A Hacked Newsroom Brings a Spyware Maker to U.S. Court." *The New Yorker.* Available at https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/a-hacked-newsroom-brings-a-spyware-maker-to-us-court-pegasus
- Harlow, S. (2023). *Digital-native news and the remaking of Latin American mainstream and alternative journalism.* Routledge.
- HRW. (2024). El Salvador. *Human Rights Watch*. Available at https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2025/country-chapters/el-salvador
- RSF. (2024). Press Freedom Index. *Reporters Without Borders*. Available at https://rsf.org/en/index?year=2024
- Sherman, C. (2024). "'Coolest dictator' to 'philosopher king,' Nayib Bukele's path to reelection in El Salvador." *AP*. Available at https://apnews.com/article/nayib-bukele-el-salvador-president-0ab3b1d63d3633c535b2cb9b60c56879
- Transparency International (2024). El Salvador: Corruption Perceptions Index. Available at https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/el-salvador
- Vílchez, D. (2024). "A 'culture of silence' threatens press freedom under El Salvador President Bukele." *Committee to Protect Journalists.* Available at https://cpj.org/2024/10/a-culture-of-silence-threatens-press-freedom-under-el-salvador-president-bukele/
- Vivanco, J.M. (2021). "La victoria de Bukele amenaza la libertad de prensa en El Salvador." *El Nuevo Herald.* Available at https://www.elnuevoherald.com/opinion-es/article249982904.html#storylink=cpy

Emerging Concerns about Press Freedoms and Economic Precarity in Costa Rica

Celeste González de Bustamante, University of Texas at Austin • Jeannine E. Relly, University of Arizona • Vanessa Bravo, Elon University • Silvia DalBen Furtado, University of Texas at Austin

Introduction

Costa Rica had a population of just over 5.1 million inhabitants in 2025. Far from the largest country in the Americas, in terms of population or land mass, it nevertheless stands out on other indicators, such as having one of the most stable, long-standing democracies in the region and as of 2024 the highest minimum wage in Latin America ($687 USD/month). Consequently, Costa Rica, for a good part of the twentieth century and the first two decades of the twenty-first century, has played an important political, social, and economic part in the story of press freedom and journalism safety in Latin America, and in particular has welcomed exiled journalists in the region. 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 even though outside of their own country's borders.

The third round of the *Worlds of Journalism Study* (WJS) examines the levels of risk and uncertainty journalists face, as well as the ways in which they cope with and adapt to risk and uncertainty in different political, socio-economic, and cultural contexts. Findings from the first application of the survey in Costa Rica suggest that the rosy conclusions of other previous analyses of the environment for journalists in the country are fading, with journalists concerned about political and economic pressures, which have implications for both local and exiled journalists from neighboring countries residing in Costa Rica.

Costa Rica press freedom declines in global ranking

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. Given the importance of Costa Rica as a safe haven in the region, exiled journalists from Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Venezuela have relocated and are living and working in Costa Rica. In 2024, hundreds of journalists from Nicaragua and dozens from Guatemala and El Salvador were living in Costa Rica (Pennachio, 2024).

Soon after 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 (InterAmerican Press Association, 2022). He also has called members of the professional press "sicarios políticos" (political hitmen) (Jiménez Alvarado, 2024). 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.

Methods: Community partners and researchers together

The Costa Rica research team followed a community-based approach including in-country partners at multiple phases of the research process. Researchers collaborated closely with the non-governmental organization *Punto y Aparte* and its president Yanancy Noguera, who is also the President of the Journalists Guild of Costa Rica (*Colegio de Periodistas*) and who, for many years, served as the editor-in-chief of the newspaper *La Nación*, one of the most prominent news outlets in Central America.

This chapter is based on data collected from a survey of 229 journalists in Costa Rica from July 2023-September 2023. The sample is derived from the most comprehensive list of media outlets and journalists that exists in Costa Rica, developed by the non-profit journalism organization *Punto y Aparte* and updated for this study in June 2023. *Punto y Aparte*'s list had a total of 196 news outlets, and it estimated the number of journalists in Costa Rica to be, at the time, 470. By reviewing the number of journalists working in each news outlet, it became clear that "large" outlets in Costa Rica are those with 15 or more journalists (five outlets), "medium" size outlets have between six to 14 journalists (20 outlets), and "small" outlets employ between two and five journalists (86 outlets). There were, as well, 86 outlets with just one journalist.

For the purpose of this study, media outlets were clustered into two categories: 1) large and medium outlets and 2) small and one-person outlets. Given that about 25% of journalists work in large outlets and about 40% work in medium-sized ones, 65% of the journalists in the sample came from large and medium outlets, and the other 35% came from small and one-person outlets. The media outlets were selected through stratified proportional random sampling. Within each randomly selected outlet, convenience sampling was used to select the journalists. Punto y Aparte personnel, who underwent research methods training, administered the survey. The survey has a 95% confidence level and a margin of error of 4.58%.

Journalists' characteristics

Between July and September 2023, 229 journalists throughout the country were interviewed. Thirty-two percent identified as women and 67% identified as men, and less than 1% identified as non-binary. The average age of male and female participants was about 39, and the non-binary participant was 24 years old. Ninety-two percent of the participants had formal education or training in journalism and an average of 15 years of professional journalism experience. Most journalists interviewed (40.5%) worked in print-based media. Twenty-one percent worked for television news media, 18% worked at online sites, 5% worked for radio outlets, and 3% in magazines.

Findings

The following sections present the major themes that emerged as most concerning and those that indicate a potential shift in the environment for journalists in Costa Rica.

Intimidation and precarity

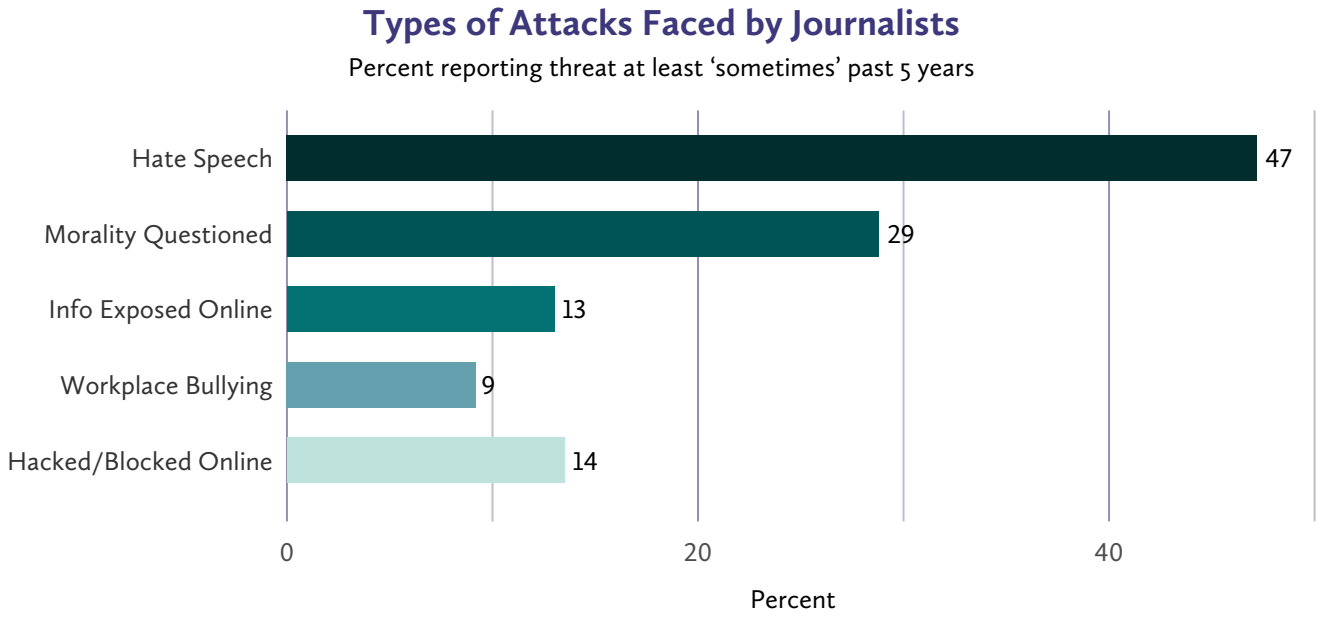
Although journalists in Costa Rica reported fewer experiences of physical or legal attacks than the regional average, they experienced verbal assaults and denigration on par with the average experiences of their counterparts in other parts of Latin America. In line with the aggressive example set by President Chaves's verbal attacks, almost five in 10 (47.2%) Costa Rican journalists surveyed stated they had experienced "demeaning or hateful speech" "often"/"very often" or "sometimes" in the last five years, only five percentage points below the Latin American average. While a journalist's integrity is considered the norm in the country, almost one in three (28.8%) journalists in Costa Rica indicated that their "personal morality" had been questioned, the same as the regional average. Similarly, nearly 13% reported having their personal information divulged online, also in line with the regional average. While below the regional average of 15%, almost one in 10 (9.2%) of Costa Rican journalists reported having experienced workplace bullying. Nearly one in seven (13.5%) journalists reported having their social media accounts and websites hacked or blocked.

At the same time, physical and legal intimidation was rare. Less than 2% of journalists in Costa Rica indicated that they had experienced "arrests, detention or imprisonment" "often"/"very often" or "sometimes." With respect to property damage, "office raids, seizures or damage to equipment" were also reported infrequently (less than 1% reported having experienced those at least sometimes). Legal actions were also relatively uncommon, with 6% of the sample reporting having experienced those at least sometimes.

Though the total workforce of journalists has decreased in Costa Rica since the pandemic, of the total number of those surveyed, 63.52% (n = 136 out of 214 respondents) had full-time contracts. A smaller percentage of men (n = 87, 60.4%) reported full-time permanent or full-time fixed term contracts compared to women, who reported only full-time permanent contracts (n = 49, 71%). The sole nonbinary journalist worked part-time as a journalist. Monthly income from journalism before taxes in Costa Rica was on average $1,187.50 USD, with a lower average for men ($1,150 USD/month) than for women ($1,550 USD/month).

The average income for the nonbinary journalist in the study was $500 USD/month, which is below the minimum wage in the country ($687 USD/month).

Nearly one out of three (36.2%) respondents worked on a specific beat or subject area. Most journalists worked on mixed platforms. There were 68 (29.7%) journalists working predominantly in print, 31(13.5%) working mainly in audio/radio, 48 (21%) working mostly in television/video news, 150 (65.5%) stated they always work on websites, 112 (48.9%) reported they work on social media, 59 (25.8%) constantly work on news apps, 63 (27.5%) concentrate their work on messaging apps, 41 (17.9%) usually work on email newsletters, 17 (7.4%) focus their work on podcasts, and 4 (1.7%) work on other platforms.



Emotional safety, coping strategies, and resilience

While more than half of the journalists surveyed did not report being concerned about their physical or financial well-being, they did report other forms of precarity and worry. In spite of being celebrated as one of the safest countries in the world for journalists, research participants reported having high levels of concern about emotional well-being, similar to others in the region, which includes journalists working in countries such as Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, and Venezuela. The non-binary research participant reported the highest degree of concern about emotional as well as financial well-being, above the regional average. Female journalists in Costa Rica reported slightly higher levels of concerns about well-being related to their financial conditions compared to their male counterparts. In all, though, Costa Rican journalists perceived their financial conditions as less precarious than journalists from other countries in Latin America.

The Costa Rican journalists surveyed indicated that they respond to concern for emotional, physical, and financial well-being in a variety of ways. One in five (20.6%) Costa Rican journalists had taken safety training or used safety equipment and protocols to increase their physical safety and security. Nearly one in four (24.7%) journalists changed their personal daily routines, and one in five (22.9%) removed or hid their press credentials. More than one in 10 (11.2%) reported publishing anonymously with a pseudonym or without a byline

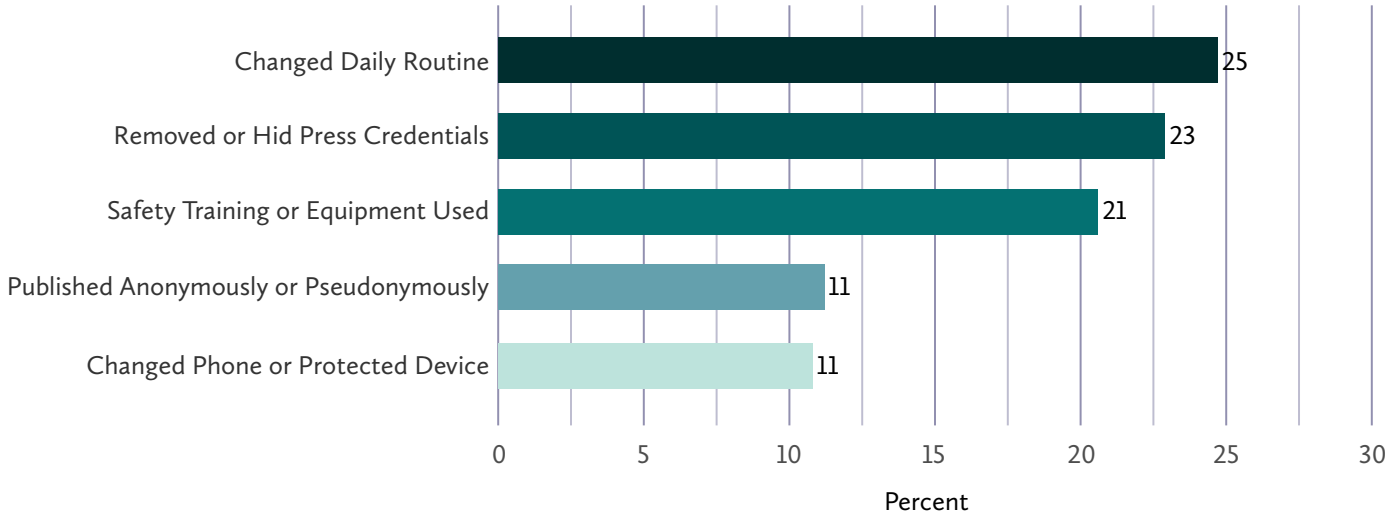
as a way to increase security, and one in ten (10.8%) changed their phone numbers or took extra precautions to safeguard their devices from being tracked. These findings are among the lowest in the region.

Throughout Latin America, media organizations are an important resource for journalists. In Costa Rica, a majority of journalists indicated they were supported by their news organizations (men = 67.9%, women = 64.9%) and colleagues (men = 68.7%, women = 71.9%). One in six (15.2%) Costa Rican journalists used communication networks with their supervisors or peers to increase their security. About one in five (20.2%) said they changed beats or jobs to increase their safety. Compared with other journalists in Latin America, fewer respondents in Costa Rica indicated that they received support from journalism organizations such as press clubs and trade unions (men = 15.3%, women = 26.3%). Similarly, only one in ten (10.2%) Costa Rican journalists indicated they received support from "non-governmental and human rights organizations," and 8.6% received support from government authorities.

Throughout the region, journalists have resorted to self-censorship as a response to increased threats. Despite having higher levels of perceived safety, almost one in three (30.5%) participants in the Costa Rica study reported having engaged in self-censorship as a mechanism to increase safety. Almost one in five (18.8%) said they limited the amount of time they spent in dangerous areas when reporting, which is again below the regional average (31%).

Journalists' Responses to Pressures

Percent reporting safety or self–protection actions



Implications for the future of journalism and democracy in Costa Rica

On the whole, journalists in Costa Rica appear to be faring better than their counterparts in most other countries in the region. There are, however, emerging areas of concern. While this research found that it is not common for journalists to be attacked physically in Costa Rica, nearly half reported that hateful

speech toward journalists appears to be a problem. The level of concern about well-being among journalists amid an environment in which the president of the country feels emboldened to verbally attack journalists and the figures reported by Reporters Without Borders and other monitoring organizations point to a decline in press freedoms. These findings should cause concern, given Costa Rica's history of being a leader in press freedom and other civil rights in the region and the world. Given the role of Costa Rica as a safe haven for exiled journalists in the region, it should be noted that diminishing press freedoms could have negative consequences for local as well as exiled journalists.

Eroding political and economic conditions in Costa Rica could potentially lead to censorship of critical reporting about the region. Further, the Chaves administration has been found liable in numerous cases at the Constitutional Court for denying access to information to journalists and verbally attacking journalists and media outlets. This administration also has used public funding to foment a network of online influencers and social media accounts that exert pressure on journalists who are critical of the government (Freedom House, 2023; Herrera, 2024). For all these reasons, there is a demonstrated need for continued research about the conditions and the environment for all journalists in Costa Rica.

References

- Herrera, Juan José (2024, July 8). *Presidencia politizó pauta estatal para asignar a medios afines al gobierno*. Teletica.com. https://www.teletica.com/politica/presidencia-politizo-pauta-estatal-para-asignarla-a-medios-afines-al-gobierno-concluyen-diputados_362704
- Jiménez Alvarado, Oscar Mario. (2024). Cuarto Informe del Estado de la Libertad de Expresión en Costa Rica. Universidad de Costa Rica, PROLEDI/CICOM, ISBN 978-9930-616-08-6 (PDF).
- Freedom House (2023). *Freedom of the Net 2023, Country Report: Costa Rica*. Freedom House. https://freedomhouse.org/country/costa-rica/freedom-net/2023
- Pennachio, Katherine. (2024, March 18). *Exiled journalists in Costa Rica find new challenges to security and economic stability.* LatAm Journalism Review. https://latamjournalismreview.org/articles/exiled-journalists-in-costa-rica-find-new-challenges-to-security-and-economic-stability/

A Journalist's Perspective from Costa Rica: Reflecting on the Costa Rican WJS Findings

Yanancy Noguera, Founder and Director of Punto y Aparte

Press censorship takes many forms. It's not only a global phenomenon but a historical one, and its use serves the same purpose: to stifle the independent press.

Under modern conditions of autocracy, despotism and absolutism, as well as in all the various forms and levels of violations of democracy, the use of censorship also focuses on creating distrust and doubt about the information produced by independent journalism. It is essential to note that censorship not only comes from sources of political power; it can also come from media organizations themselves, which, for various reasons, seek to control the flow of information inherent to the work of those who practice journalism and comply with the essential principle of disclosing facts and data of public interest.

Self-censorship is fostered in an environment of censorship. Journalists decide, out of fear of retaliation, to withhold information of public interest. They may do so consciously; and self-censorship may even lead to them quitting their jobs. Journalists can also do this unconsciously when they decide to "remove" information, "not attend" a place where valuable content is generated, or "ignore" a topic or specific sources. If there is censorship or self-censorship, independent journalism is at risk. For this reason, this issue cannot be taken lightly. Censorship and self-censorship compromise journalism and the quality of information, and when it appears—although it may always be present—predefined and organized forms of resistance, as well as ethical and professional commitment to the principle of truth that drives independent journalism must be encouraged.

Audiences also censor themselves, and this can happen due to the complex social environments in which they operate. Therefore, they decide to stop following certain content and even completely ignore certain types of news.

Under the subtitle "Intimidation and precarity," the study notes that the censorship manifested in Costa Rica does not primarily involve physical, administrative or legal aggression, as occurs in other countries, but rather primarily verbal attacks. This has been confirmed by rulings of the Constitutional Court. The subtitle, "Emotional safety, coping strategies and resilience," describes one of the most complex realities to address: job insecurity and the dual impact on financial and emotional stability.

All of these are manifestations of censorship and self-censorship in the Costa Rican press and journalism. This is not a minor issue of concern, and it is clearly not an issue that concerns only media outlets and organizations involved in the training, promotion and defense of freedom of expression and press freedom.

I appreciate the study's documentation of this reality. I conclude with a small excerpt from the universal work of nearly five centuries, *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, whose wisdom enlightens us on this subject:

(...) Finally, I want you, Sancho, to tell me what has reached your ears about this; and you must tell me this without adding anything to the good or subtracting anything from the evil; for it is the duty of loyal vassals to tell their lords the truth in its true nature and form, without flattery increasing it or any other vain respect diminishing it; and I want you to know, Sancho, that if the naked truth were to reach the ears of princes, unclothed with flattery, other centuries would flow, other eras would be held more as Iron Ages, more so than ours, which I consider to be the Golden Age. Let this warning serve you, Sancho, so that you may discreetly and well-intentionedly convey to my ears the truth of the things you know (...).

The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha, Chapter 2, Part Two.

Part 2

South America

Brazilian Journalism: Challenges of Insecurity, Self-Censorship and Gender Disparities

Laura Storch, Federal University of Santa Maria • Marcos Paulo da Silva, Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul • Janara Nicoletti, University of Siegen • Kérley Winques, Federal University of Juiz de Fora

Introduction

Brazil, the largest country in Latin America with 212 million inhabitants (IBGE, 2024), is marked by profound geographic, economic and cultural diversities between its regions. In the field of journalism, these differences reflect the diverse realities of the country, which range from large media conglomerates located in metropolitan areas, such as São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Brasília, to small isolated communities, such as those in the Amazon rainforest.

There is no official census of journalists in the country, and there is no agreement around the very definition of who is considered a professional journalist. Between 2000 and 2019, the Ministry of Labor and Employment issued 142,424 registrations of journalists (Lima et al., 2022). This number includes people who work in the traditional press, in independent journalism and in other sectors of communication, such as press officers and journalism professors.

For the international WJS survey, professionals formally hired under the Consolidation of Labor Laws, which governs labor rights in Brazil, were considered. In 2019, 43,273 people worked as journalists, according to the Annual Report of Social Information (RAIS) of the Ministry of Economy. This population served as the basis for defining the research sample in Brazil. In total, 602 journalists participated in the survey, with data collection between January and May 2023.

Context

The third wave of the WJS highlights the consequences of the rise of right-wing conservative populism in Brazil, which culminated in the government of Jair Bolsonaro (2019-2022), in which attacks and discrediting of the media were used as a political strategy. The four-year period preceding the survey was therefore characterized by direct and indirect attacks on journalists by the state apparatus and by the increase in cases of physical and symbolic violence perpetrated by politicians, anonymous individuals and businesspeople, among others.

Data from the National Federation of Journalists (Fenaj, 2023; 2024), for example, showed that political violence had profound effects on the professional class. The number of attacks on professionals and

media outlets in 2022 reached 376, and former president Bolsonaro was the main aggressor, responsible for 104 cases, or roughly 28% of the total (Fenaj, 2023). Despite a slight improvement, the situation remains worrying after Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, from the Workers' Party, took power in 2023. In that year, according to Fenaj (2024), there was a significant drop in attacks on the press, driven by a reduction in cases of discrediting and censorship. On the other hand, other types of violations of press freedom, such as judicial harassment, are a concern (Mafei et al., 2024).

In addition to direct attacks on journalism, the increase in political radicalization promoted by right-wing conservative groups has also compromised the democratic rule of law itself, culminating in the invasion and destruction of the headquarters of the three branches of government in Brasília on Jan. 8, 2023. This action once again targeted journalists. It can be compared to the invasion of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. on Jan. 6, 2021, but with greater destruction and number of arrests, as well as the indictments of 37 people accused of plotting a coup d'état — among them, former President Jair Bolsonaro (Feitosa & Crisóstomo, 2024). Finally, it is important to highlight the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, which in addition to having devastating effects on journalists — with infections, deaths and deterioration of mental health — also culminated in a state policy based on scientific denialism and attacks on the press.

This complex scenario has intensified precariousness, risks and loss of public legitimacy plaguing the profession. Among the perceptions of risk and insecurity of journalists in the period analyzed, the most notable are the increased feelings of being surveilled and the concrete manifestations of insults and hate speech. It is no coincidence that Brazil has one of the highest rates of distrust in the news, with 54% compared to the global average of 38%, according to a report by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism (2023). Thus, the working environment for journalists in the country has become more challenging, impacting both press freedom and the quality of journalism, as will be discussed below.

Methods

Based on the number of 43,273 professionals in newsrooms, according to the database of the Ministry of Economy, base year 2019, the online tool Sample Size Calculator was used to ascertain the sample size. With a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 4%, the minimum sample was defined as 592 journalists, resulting in 602 valid responses in the end.

To ensure the representativeness of the sample, considering Brazil's vast territorial dimensions and its striking economic and cultural differences, a proportional stratification based on the distribution of the Brazilian population was used (IBGE, 2021). It can be seen that the largest communications companies and newsrooms in the country are concentrated in two cosmopolitan regions, which are also the main economic and cultural centers: São Paulo (22% of the Brazilian population) and Rio de Janeiro (8%), in addition to the federal capital, Brasília, which, although representing only 1.4% of the population, is home to around 5% of journalists. This stratification ensured balanced representation among the five Brazilian regions and its 27 states, including small and medium-sized newsrooms.

The survey was distributed nationwide through a variety of email lists, from professional and labor organizations to educational and academic associations. The final data set reflects the Brazilian media landscape based on: 1) regional diversity; 2) ownership configuration of media outlets in the country; 3) hierarchical position of journalists; and 4) the fact that most Brazilian journalists work for regional and national media outlets, which have the largest number of professionals with the profile defined by the survey.

Demographic profile

The sample was distributed as follows: 43.5% of the responding journalists work in regional media, 37% in national media and 10.5% in local media. In addition, about 78% of the interviewees work in private media, 76% work in state capitals, and 51% occupy intermediate or high positions in the hierarchies of companies.

Data collected between January and May 2023 also reveal that the majority of Brazilian journalists are between 31 and 50 years old (56%), with a balanced distribution between women (50%), whose average age is 39 years, and men (50%), at an average of 42 years old. Education levels are high, with nine out of ten professionals having at least completed higher education. On average, participants have 16 years of experience in the profession.

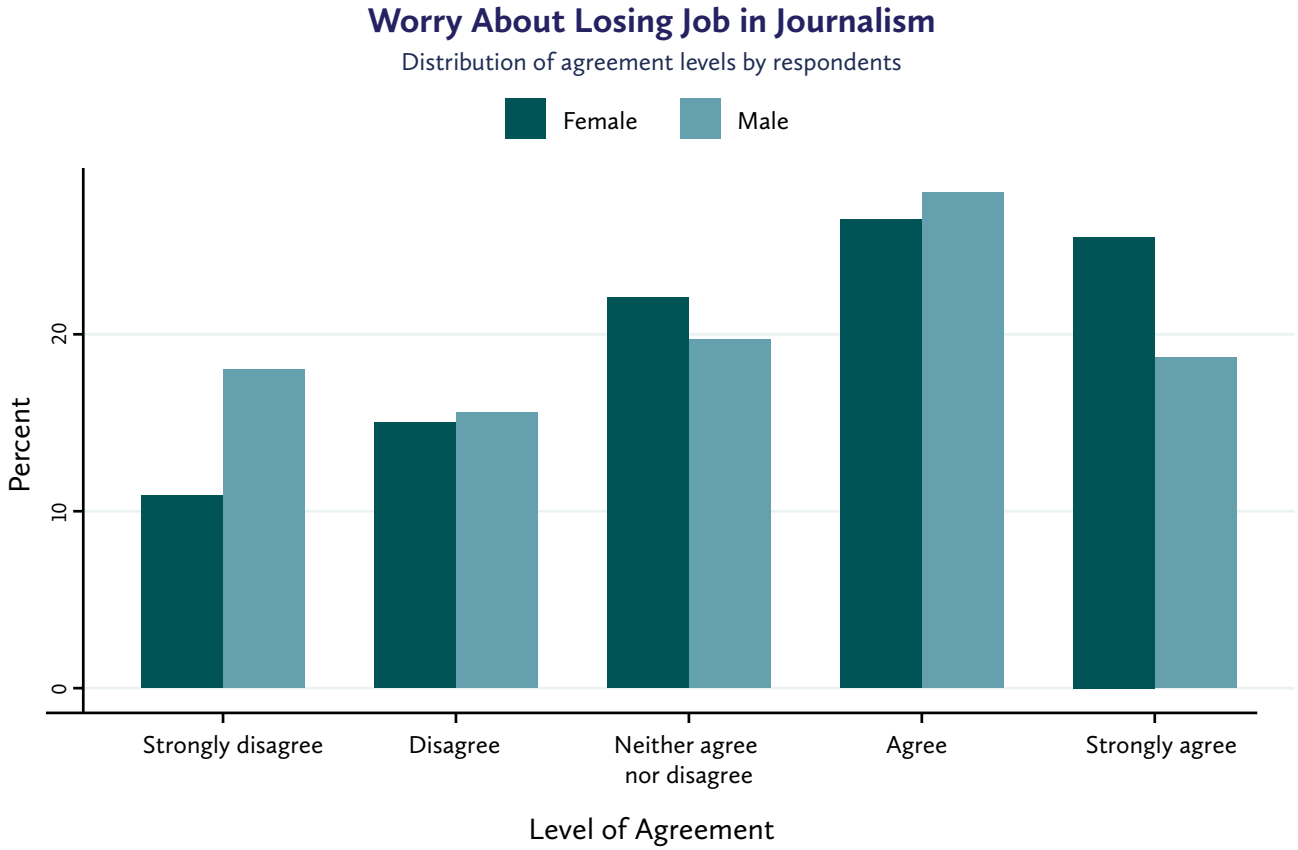
Workplaces and working conditions

Most Brazilian journalists who participated in the WJS survey work for traditional media outlets, with an emphasis on television (28%) and newspapers (24%). Those who work for digital native media outlets still represent 15%. However, it is important to highlight that this data represent the main media outlet where they work. When asked about the number of platforms they work for, Brazilian journalists reported working on average on 3.34 different platforms (always or frequently). In addition, the majority work for more than one type of editorial department (an average of 1.68 different editorial departments).

Just over half of journalists have permanent full-time employment contracts (governed by labor laws or under statutory regimes). The distribution of this type of contract, which leads to greater job stability, is not homogeneous, however, and speaks to historical gender inequalities in the country. Men are the majority when it comes to permanent contracts (53% of men versus 48% of women), and they are also the ones who earn more. These data are also directly linked to the country's historical inequalities. According to the IBGE, in 2022, men received, on average, salaries 17% higher than women. This shows that the reality of women in journalism is no different from the conditions faced by workers in other areas of the country. Brazilian women journalists are more qualified, but they receive lower salaries and are in the minority in management positions. Bandeira (2019) notes that, in order to advance professionally, it is essential for women to work long hours and remain available even after work hours. This dynamic highlights an organizational culture that values productivity and continuous availability, ignoring the specificities and challenges associated with gender.

Risks and insecurity

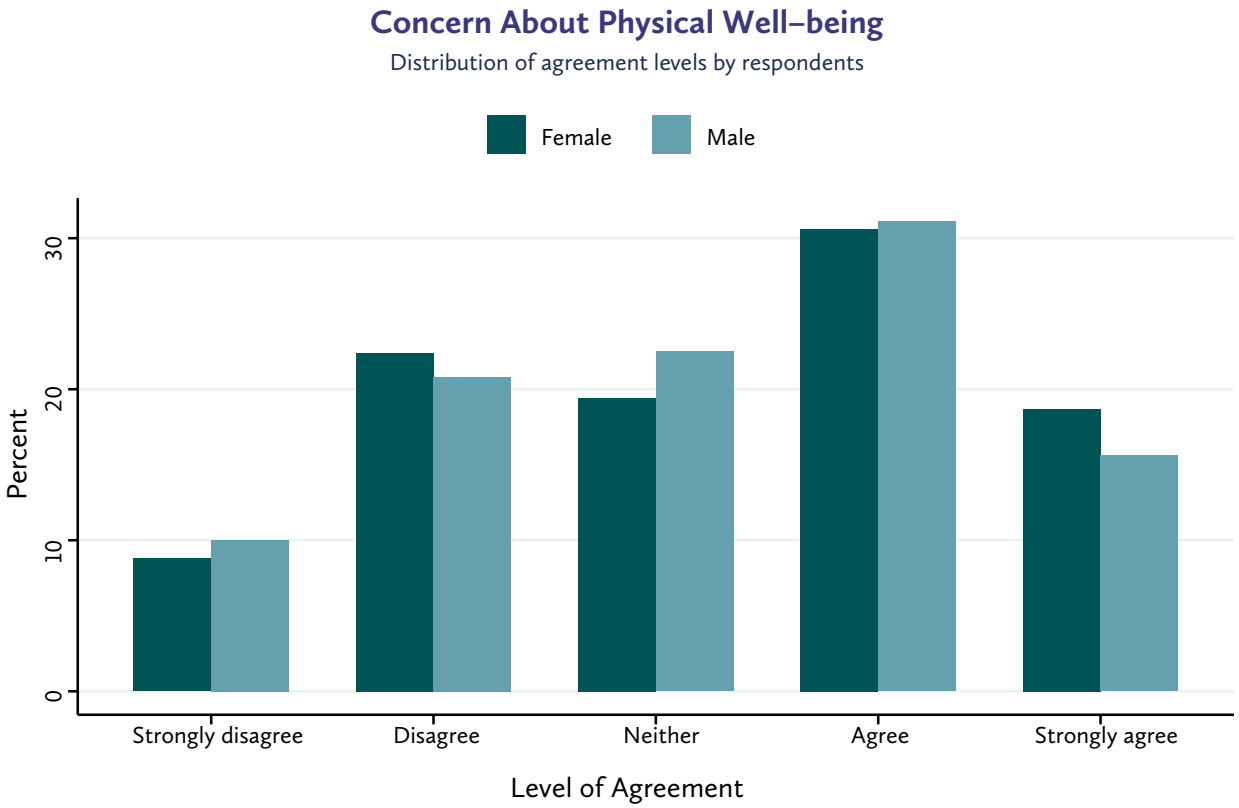
In addition to salary and career progression issues, gender inequalities in Brazilian professional journalism can also be observed through other indicators. One of them is the perception of safety. Journalists were asked to express their level of agreement with statements about physical safety, emotional and psychological well-being, career prospects in 12 months, and punishment for those responsible for crimes against the press. Women are the group with the greatest insecurity in all aspects. About 89% of the women respondents agreed or completely agreed with the statement "I am concerned about my emotional and psychological well-being." Likewise, more than half of the women said they feared losing their jobs in the next 12 months. Meanwhile, physical safety is the aspect that causes the least concern. These data indicate a profession that's under constant anxiety due to career instability and risks.

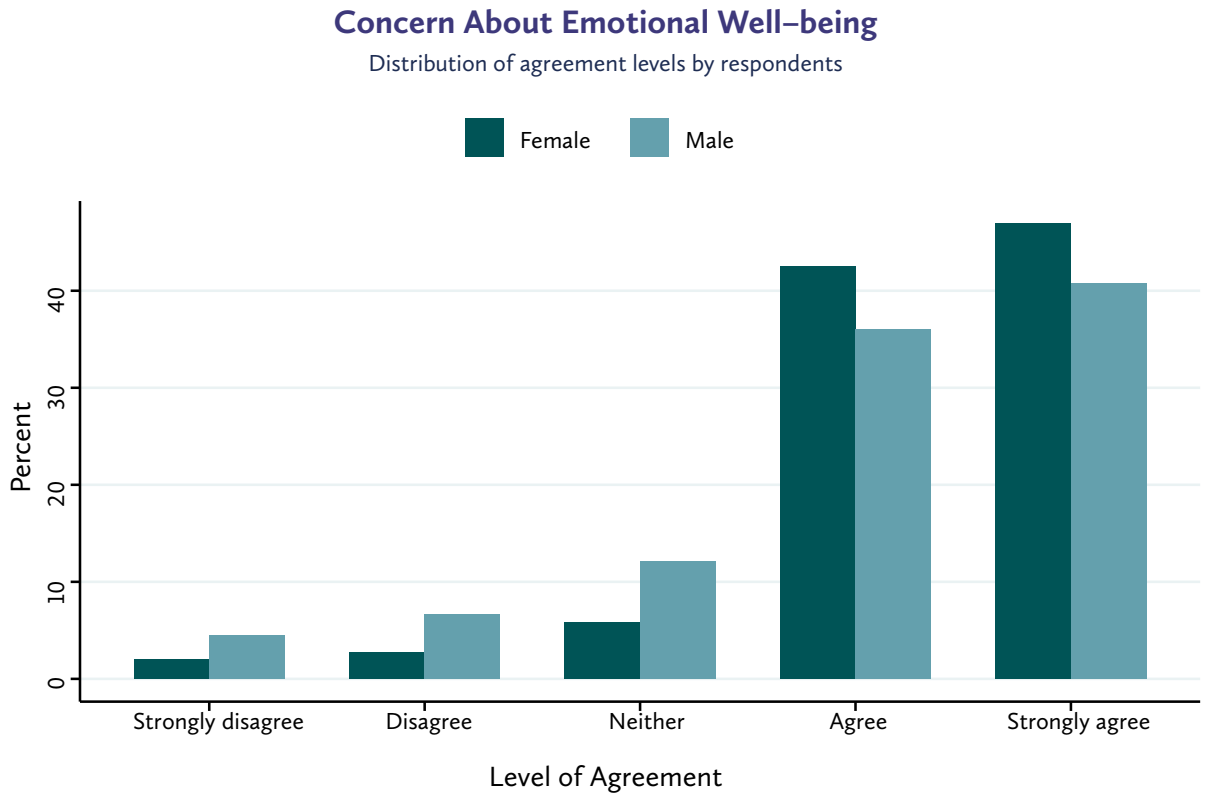


Pontes (2017) argues that there is a structural gender inequality in Brazilian journalism, where women are at a disadvantage in terms of salary, benefits received and career tenure. Brazilian women journalists are more qualified in terms of formal education, but they are a minority in leadership positions and receive less, even when they hold the same positions as their male colleagues. In addition, they are more exposed to online hate attacks and violations in the workplace that are normalized as part of profession (Nicoletti, Kikuti & Mick, 2023). These factors combined may justify the higher rates of financial and emotional insecurity found in this study.

Despite the variations between genders, the concern for safety, especially emotional safety, is justified when analyzing the data on types of violence. When all respondents were asked if they had ever suffered

any type of violence, 66% said they had been the target of hateful or derogatory speech. Those who face this situation frequently or very frequently total 27%, and another 39% reported that this sometimes occurs. Meanwhile, 59% stated that they had experienced public discrediting at least a few times in the previous five years (with 29% stating that it was frequent or very frequent); 45% of the professionals consulted also claimed to have had their personal morality questioned.





To protect themselves from violence, 55% of Brazilian journalists practiced self-censorship in the five years prior to the study. Other protective measures adopted also include some strategy of lowering visibility to avoid risks. Of the total, 37% reported that they removed their press credentials to avoid being identified, while 28% published anonymously, under pseudonyms or did not sign articles to avoid being targeted. In addition, 43% changed their professional or personal routines in search of greater security, and 29% limited the time they spent working in high-risk areas.

The prevalence of self-censorship and the difficulties in acting freely reflect a scenario of fear that directly affects professional performance and, consequently, the quality and diversity of coverage. It is no coincidence that 82% of journalists said that they have intensified the verification of their stories, highlighted as the main strategy for protection against recurring attacks. However, adherence to training, use of safety equipment and adoption of protection protocols is still low, with only 36.9% of professionals seeking these measures.

Conclusion on the future of journalism and democracy in the country

The data highlights the complexity and challenges of journalism in Brazil, with an emphasis on gender inequalities and concerns about the emotional and physical safety of professionals. The scenario reveals a strong disparity between men and women, especially with regard to job stability, pay and the occupation of management positions, where men are at an advantage. The analysis reinforces the findings of Lima et al. (2022), which show women as a more qualified group, but paid less and less present in leadership positions. This inequality reflects a deeply rooted gender structure in the workplace and, consequently, raises challenges around gender equity and parity in the exercise of the profession in the country.

Furthermore, the rates of self-censorship and other strategies of lowering their visibility adopted by professionals suggest that journalistic freedom and autonomy are compromised. This scenario is in line with new forms of violence that promote self-censorship, such as judicial harassment, a practice that, according to Mafei et al. (2024), refers to the abuse of legal instruments to censor and intimidate those who disseminate information of public interest. Cases of judicial harassment against journalists remain high, totaling 155 cases between 2020 and 2023 (Mafei et al., 2024). The lack of effective mechanisms in the Judiciary to curb abusive actions generates insecurity, and responding to lawsuits, often without the support of the media outlet, imposes constraints that compromise press freedom, generating financial, professional, emotional and physical impacts for victims.

Finally, democracy is experiencing swings with the rise of the far right. Although the country currently has a leader from the progressive wing, the 2024 municipal elections show a strengthening of the conservative right. Thus, despite the significant drop in 2023 in cases of discrediting the press and censorship during President Lula's government (Fenaj, 2024), there is concern that the strengthening of conservative movements in different spheres of Brazilian politics will drive a new increase in cases of violence against journalists, possibly causing attacks on freedoms of the press and of expression to intensify in the future.

References

- Bandeira, A. P. (2019). *A mulher no jornalismo brasileiro: o mundo do trabalho delas no mais antigo e no mais vendido jornal do país.* Pauta Geral: Estudos em Jornalismo, 6(2), 140–152.
- Federação Nacional dos Jornalistas (FENAJ). (2023). *Violência Contra Jornalistas e Liberdade de Imprensa no Brasil – Relatório 2022*. Disponível em: https://fenaj.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FENAJ-Relat%C3%B3rio-2022.pdf
- Federação Nacional dos Jornalistas (FENAJ). (2024). *Violência Contra Jornalistas e Liberdade de Imprensa no Brasil – Relatório 2023*. Disponível em: https://fenaj.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Relato%CC%81rio-da-Viole%CC%82ncia-2023.pdf
- Feitosa, C.; Crisóstomo, C. (2024, 21 de novembro). PF indicia Bolsonaro e mais 36 em investigação de trama golpista. Folha de S. Paulo. Disponível em: https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2024/11/pf-indicia-bolsonaro-e-mais-36-em-investigacao-de-trama-golpista.shtml
- Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE). (2024). *Estimativas da População Residente no Brasil e Unidades da Federação.* Disponível em: https://ftp.ibge.gov.br/Estimativas_de_Populacao/Estimativas_2024/estimativa_dou_2024.pdf
- Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE). (2022). *Estatísticas do cadastro central de empresas.* Disponível em: https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/index.php/biblioteca-catalogo?view=detalhes&id=2102093
- Mafei, R.; Kleim L.; Villas Bôas, B.; Drobitsch, R. (2024). *Monitor de Assédio Judicial Contra Jornalistas no Brasil*. São Paulo: Associação Brasileira de Jornalismo Investigativo (ABRAJI).
- Nicoletti, J.; Kikuti, A.; Mick, J. (2023). A precariedade tem gênero? Condições de trabalho, saúde e violências das jornalistas brasileiras. In: J. Visbelli Barros; J. Nicoletti; S. P. Lima. (Eds.). *O trabalho de jornalistas no Brasil: Desigualdades, Identidades e Precariedades*. 1ed. Florianópolis: Insular, pp. 67-88.
- Lima, S. P. et. al. (2022). *Perfil do jornalista brasileiro 2021: características sociodemográficas, políticas, de saúde e do trabalho*. 1. ed. Florianópolis: Quorum Comunicações, 2022.
- Pontes, F. S. (2017). *Desigualdades estruturais de gênero no trabalho jornalístico: o perfil das jornalistas brasileiras.* E-Compós, 20(1). https://doi.org/10.30962/ec.1310.
- Reuters Institute (2023) *Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2022*. University of Oxford. Disponível: https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2022-06/Digital_News-Report_2022.pdf

Under the Heel of the State and the Pressure of the Economy: Gender, Risks, and Challenges in Venezuelan Journalism

Maximiliano Frías-Vázquez, Universidad de Salamanca • *Carlos Arcila-Calderón, Universidad de Salamanca* • *David Blanco-Herrero, University of Amsterdam*

In Venezuela, the media landscape profoundly reflects the political and social tensions that have defined the country in recent decades (Cañizález, 2004; 2013; Kitzberger, 2020). Venezuelan media and journalists have experienced the effects of economic stagnation and political transformations that, since the administration of Nicolás Maduro, have intensified the crisis in the communications sector. This media crisis, aggravated by financial and operational instability, limits media autonomy, generating a notable lack of information that perpetuates ignorance about the reality of the nation (Cañizález, 2020a; Peña & Robles, 2016; RFS, 2022; Marcano, 2018).

In this sense, the situation for journalists in Venezuela is unstable and risky, with constant reports of censorship, restrictions on press freedom and harassment, especially for those critical of the regime (Espacio Público, 2024; Kahn, 2023; Marcano, 2021). This context of government control of state media allows for a monopolization of the official narrative and limits opposition discourse (Cañizález, 2020a; 2020b).

Thus, an analysis of Venezuelan journalism allows us to understand the levels of risk and uncertainty journalists face due to the radical political and economic changes that have characterized the country since the arrival of Chávez, whose legacy continues with Maduro. The complex interdependence between the media, political parties and economic powers gives rise to a system of political parallelism, where media and political interests intertwine, affecting the diversity of information and fostering self-censorship and oppression of the press.

This essay is part of the *Worlds of Journalism Study* (WJS), a global project that examines the working conditions and values of journalists in 110 countries. In its third phase (WJS3), it focuses on assessing the levels of risk and uncertainty faced by journalists and the factors that influence journalistic practice. In Venezuela, given that 2019 was designated one of the most hostile years for journalism due to censorship, attacks, misinformation and abuses of power (IPYS, 2020, p. 1), it seems necessary to further analyze the perceived autonomy, threats and risks experienced by journalists, as well as the support they receive. The data in this chapter were obtained through representative surveys of Venezuelan journalists.

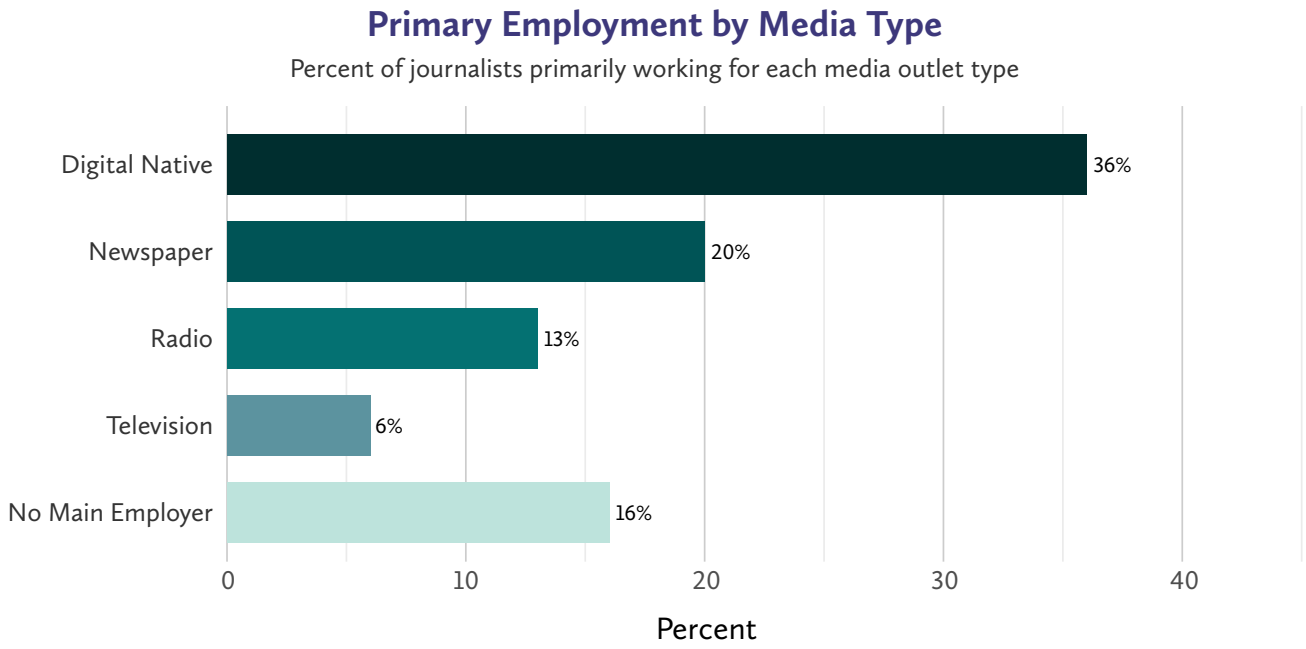
Media context in Venezuela

In recent decades, restrictions on freedom of expression and censorship in Venezuela have resulted in journalism that is limited in depth and transparency, with investigative focus replaced by coverage focused on the immediate. This is part of a government intimidation strategy that rejects criticism and views any dissident narrative as a threat, contradicting Article 6 of the Venezuelan Constitution, which establishes a democratic, plural and accountable state (Marcano, 2018).

Venezuela has high rates of intimidation, harassment and violence against journalists, evidenced by imprisonments, exiles, attacks and threats, among other repressive acts (IPYS, 2023; Garcés & Arroyave, 2017). These attacks have been reinforced since 2009 by the Media Crimes Law, which criminalizes journalistic work under the pretext of "affecting social peace or the stability of the State." Furthermore, threats are intensified by pressure from official sectors, the closure of news outlets, and physical attacks by state security agencies (Guanipa, 2018).

In this context, press freedom, associated with editorial independence and autonomy, is a principle of journalism studies. In Latin America, efforts have emerged to strengthen this autonomy through digital platforms that promote democracy and independent journalism. However, in Venezuela, media ownership concentrated in economic elites with close ties to political power limits criticism of the government, restricting informational plurality (Becerra & Mastrini, 2009). Therefore, this chapter focuses on the analysis of perceived autonomy, perception of security and support received, in order to delve deeper into the situation of Venezuelan journalists.

Method and demographics



Data collection was done between 2020 and 2022 through telephone surveys, videoconferences and in-person interviews, conducted on the Qualtrics platform by a trained team.

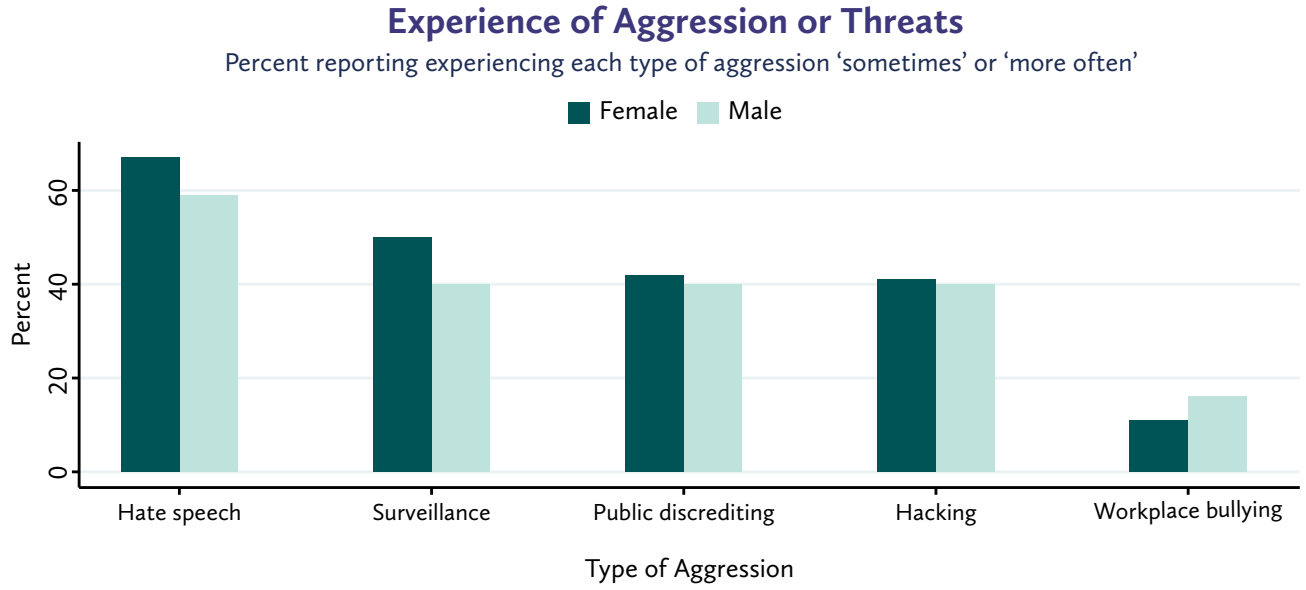
Multi-stage sampling was used for respondent selection, based on clusters and stratification by media type and size, due to the absence of a national census of journalists in Venezuela. The minimum sample size was calculated with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, yielding a representative sample of 398 journalists (52.5% women and 46.5% men; average age = 44). The majority of journalists worked for private or commercial media (74%), while the sample of public, state and community media barely reached 8%. Regarding the main types of media or companies they worked for, they were either digital media (36%), newspapers (20%), or radio (13%). Sixteen percent of the sample did not have a primary media outlet. In this regard, almost 60% of journalists always used websites as their primary means of distributing news, followed by social media (49%) and messaging apps (36%). Traditional media were less frequently used by journalists, with almost 20% always using radio, 12% using television as their primary means of dissemination and 18% using newspapers.

The surveys conducted with journalists included two questions on autonomy (*How much personal freedom do you have to select the news topics and stories you work on?*; and *How much freedom do you have to decide which aspects of the news deserve to be/should be highlighted?*). In addition, 19 items were included that measured threats and/or violence (e.g., public discrediting of one's work; surveillance; arrests; direct threats or intimidation; sexual assault or harassment; workplace harassment, etc.). Finally, another relevant aspect measured in the present study and included in the questionnaire was the support received by journalists in the face of risks and threats (e.g., other colleagues, NGOs, government).

Challenges and dynamics of Venezuelan journalism: Autonomy, risks and support

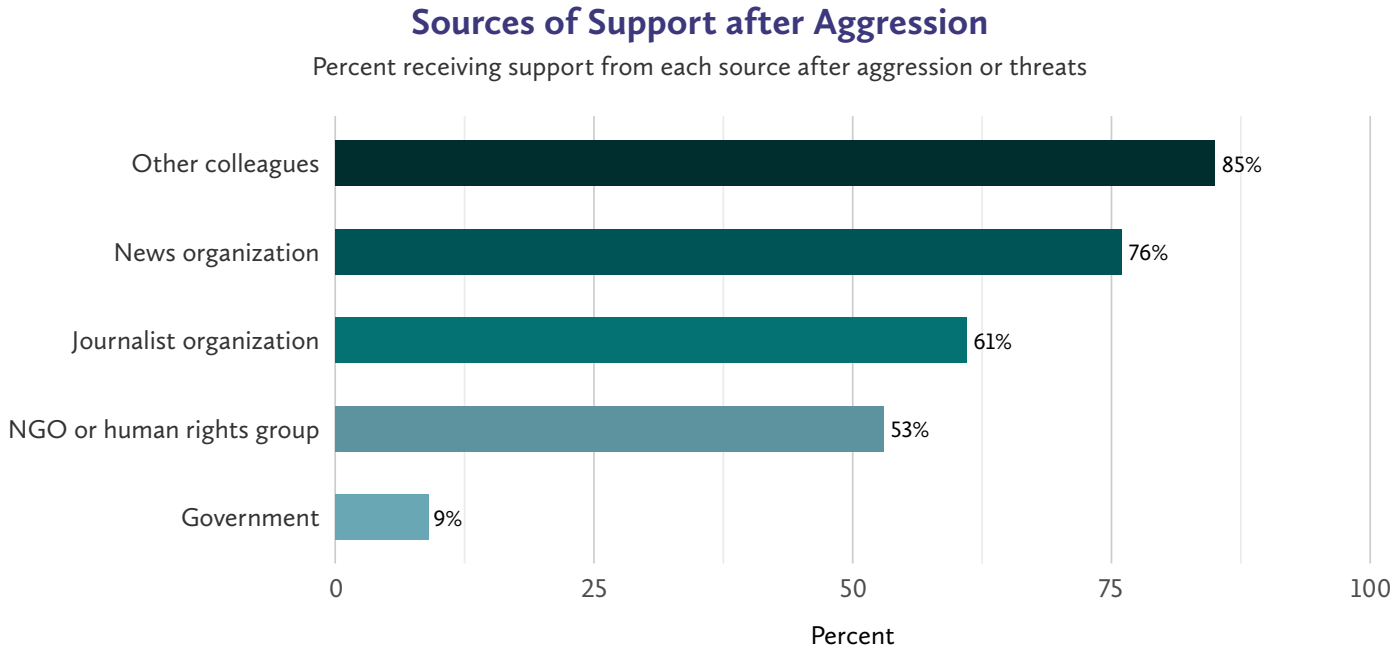
Despite what might be expected given government control in the Venezuelan context, journalists reported high levels of autonomy, both in the selection of topics, with 66% responding that they had a "lot" or "complete freedom" of choice, and in deciding which aspects to emphasize, with 63% considering they had a "lot" or "complete freedom" of choice. In fact, these values are above the theoretical midpoint of the scale; that is, both elements—freedom in selecting topics and aspects to emphasize—were measured on scales of 1 to 5, and journalists reported levels above 3, considered the theoretical midpoint of the scale. It was observed that journalists in the press had less freedom to select stories, while journalists who distributed their news through social media had more freedom both to select stories and to decide which aspects to emphasize. On the other hand, journalists from private media had more freedom to select stories than those from public or state media.

Regarding security, the threats most frequently received by journalists in Venezuela were derogatory words or hate speech (almost 20% of journalists experienced this type of threat "often" or "very often"), public discrediting (16% of journalists experienced this threat "often" or "very often"), surveillance (17% experienced this threat "often" or "very often"), and hacking or blocking (almost 18% of journalists experienced this threat "often" or "very often"). However, contrary to what might be expected, the threats observed were not as high as might be assumed in a context like Venezuela's, since none of the four variables were above the theoretical midpoint of the scale, which again was 3, as the scale was measured from 1 to 5.



It should be noted that gender differences were observed, with men reporting higher rates of the four most common types of threats among Venezuelan journalists: derogatory words or hate speech, public discrediting, surveillance, and hacking or blocking. Importantly, statistically significant differences were observed in most of the threats received (in addition to the four threats mentioned above). Men were found to be more likely to experience arrests, legal action, stalking, threats or intimidation, physical attacks, questioning of personal morality, abductions, raids, or seizures; while women were more likely to experience sexual harassment and workplace bullying.

Finally, regarding the support received, no gender differences were observed. Venezuelan journalists turned primarily to other colleagues (85% women; 85% men) and news organizations (75% women; 76% men). The least frequent support, as expected, was government support (8% women; 9% men).



Implications for the future of journalism and democracy in Venezuela

This study reaffirms that the practice of journalism in Venezuela faces adverse conditions and multiple risks, a situation that influences the media's ability to operate independently and pluralistically.[1] Despite high levels of perceived autonomy reported, this finding appears to contrast with the environment of censorship and control, suggesting that Venezuelan journalists seek to maintain a degree of independence in their work. However, these perceptions of autonomy may be limited in practice, given the context of threats and attacks, which highlights the persistence of significant barriers to press freedom.

The forms of harassment and threats reveal significant gender differences: while male journalists experience arrests, legal harassment and physical threats more frequently, women face sexual harassment and workplace bullying more frequently. These differences underscore an environment of complex vulnerability, in which gender influences the type of risks and challenges each journalist faces.

The support that journalists receive, primarily from colleagues and non-governmental organizations, is crucial to mitigating the consequences of threats. However, the absence of any government support for press freedom, coupled with the state's repressive actions, not only fosters an environment of self-censorship but also consolidates a system of control that actively stifles journalistic work. This context, in which the state acts as an agent of oppression rather than a protector of fundamental rights, reflects the systematic erosion of the structures necessary to guarantee freedom of expression and access to independent information.

Ultimately, this chapter suggests that, in an environment of restrictions and threats, the viability of free and pluralistic journalism in Venezuela is compromised. The political and economic system, as well as the relationship between the media and power, must be transformed to ensure that journalists can operate without fear of reprisals, thus contributing to an informed and participatory society. Without this change, the future of journalism and democracy in Venezuela will remain at risk.

References

- Becerra, M., & Mastrini, G. (2009). *Los dueños de la palabra*. Prometeo libros.
- Cañizález, A. (2004). Apuntes sobre medios y periodistas en una sociedad polarizada. *Estudios venezolanos de Comunicación*, *127*, 14-19.
- Cañizález, A. (2013). Hugo Chávez Y Los Medios. Un Balance Preliminar| Hugo Chávez and the media. A Preliminary. Razón y Palabra, *17*(2_83), 276-285.
- Cañizález, A. (junio, 2020b). El desarrollo mediático en Venezuela. Un siglo de historia [Presentación en Congreso]. Asociación Latinoamericana de Investigadores de la Comunicación.
- Cañizález, A. (2020a). Poder y Medios de comunicación: Entre la democratización y el autoritarismo La sinuosa historia venezolana. Agenda Política. *Revista de Discentes de Ciência Política da Universidade Federal de São Carlos*, *8*(2), 74-106.

1 It is important to consider recent political developments, such as the inauguration of Nicolás Maduro on Jan. 10, 2025, following the most recent elections, held in a context widely questioned for its lack of transparency and democratic guarantees. Venezuela has consolidated its transition to an authoritarian regime, characterized by the concentration of power, the weakening of institutions and the systematic repression of the opposition and the independent press. These events not only reinforce the government's legitimacy among its international allies but also perpetuate a system that restricts fundamental freedoms and hinders any possibility of structural transformation.

- Espacio Público. (2024). Situación general del derecho a la libertad de expresión en Venezuela enero – diciembre 2023. https://espaciopublico.ong/situacion-generaldel- derecho-a-la-libertad-de-expresion-en-venezuela-enero-diciembre-2023/
- Garcés, M. E., & Arroyave, J. (2017). Autonomía profesional y riesgos de seguridad de los periodistas en Colombia. *Perfiles Latinoamericanos*, *25*(49). https://doi.org/10.18504/pl2549-002-2017
- Guanipa, M. (2018). Los periodistas en. Venezuela: entre el acoso y la pauperización (2015-2017). En A. Cañizález & G. Carrasco (Coord.), *El periodismo en Venezuela. Los años duros* (pp. 47-73). Abediciones.
- Instituto Prensa y Sociedad de Venezuela [IPYS]. (2020). *Reporte anual Venezuela: Desconexión y censura*. https://ipysvenezuela.org/2020/05/17/desconexion-ycensura-reporte-anual-derechos-digitales-ipysve-2019/
- Instituto Prensa y Sociedad de Venezuela [IPYS]. (2023). *Reporte Anual 2023 de IPYS Venezuela "En el laberinto de la censura".* https://ipysvenezuela.org/2024/03/03/reporte-anual-2023-de-ipys-venezuela-en-el-laberinto-de-la-censura/
- Kahn, G. (2023). Así desafían la censura en Venezuela los medios digitales independientes. *Reuters Institute*. https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/es/news/asi-desafian-la-censura-envenezuela-los-medios-independientes-en-internet
- Kitzberger, P. (junio, 2020). Polarización, prensa y libertad de expresión en Venezuela. *Nueva Sociedad*. https://nuso.org/articulo/polarizacion-prensa-y-libertad-deexpresion- en-venezuela/
- Marcano, A. (2018). Censura del periodismo en Venezuela. *Impacto científico*, *13*(1), 59-69.
- Marcano, A. (2021). Censura del periodismo en Venezuela. *Impacto Científico*, *13*(1), 59-69. Recuperado a partir de https://produccioncientificaluz.org/index.php/impacto/article/view/35243
- Peña, M. E., & Robles, M. (2016). Venezuela. En R. Salaverría (Coord.), *Cibereperiodismo en Iberoamérica* (pp. 405-423). Editorial Ariel.
- Reporteros Sin Fronteras (RSF). (2022). Venezuela. https://rsf.org/es/pais/venezuela

A Journalist's Perspective from Venezuela: Between Suffocation and Resistance

Luz Mely Reyes, Co-founder and general director, Efecto Cocuyo

How is journalism practiced in an authoritarian context? After 25 years of struggling with a policy aimed at dismantling the media industry and independent journalism spaces in Venezuela, journalism from the country is seeking ways to continue to exist. The third term of Nicolás Maduro, who again assumed office on Jan. 10, 2025, without having been able to prove he won the July 28, 2024, election, brings new challenges in an already complex context.

The current situation can be described as a complex media emergency. I would like to draw a parallel with the humanitarian emergency the country is experiencing, which was described by human rights organizations in Venezuela, especially because the situation of the media and journalists is a crisis caused by the state.

Some elements of this picture include: the precariousness of the profession due to economic instability; the intensification of authoritarianism with arrests and persecution of journalists; the fruitless search for a sustainable business model; the presence of news deserts; the forced migration of hundreds of journalists abroad; and restrictions on international cooperation.

However, in this context, Venezuelan journalists are trying to practice resilience. In 2024, significant partnerships were established between human rights organizations and journalistic organizations to cover the elections and monitor post-election repression. These initiatives included protecting journalists' integrity, providing support for their mental health, and producing content together.

An example of this collaboration was "La Hora de Venezuela," which produced 528 pieces between July 17 and Jan. 19, 2025. The alliance managed to increase the reach of participating media outlets sixfold. Two other examples were "Venezuela Vota Bien" and "Venezuela Vota", which demonstrated the power of collaboration to combat disinformation and offer continuous coverage through YouTube and other social media. A fourth example of the power of collaboration was the creation of the "Venezuela sin filtro" app, which provides access to all content from media blocked in the country.

Over the last decade, an ecosystem of independent media outlets has emerged in Venezuela, specializing in different news niches. Despite the difficulties, they have produced high-quality work. Most of it has been developed in alliances with journalists from these small media outlets.The challenge at this stage is to maintain simple but solid structures. To achieve this, it seems prudent to combine quality reporting with a close relationship with users and the trust necessary to build an informed and resilient community. Venezuelan journalism, I have no doubt, has entered a period of resistance and requires significant support to guarantee citizens' right to be informed.

Press Freedom and Challenges in Colombia: Navigating Adversity in a Fragmented Media System

Jesús Arroyave, Universidad del Norte, Barranquilla • *Miguel Garcés, Technological University of Bolívar*

Introduction

Journalism in Colombia has long operated in an environment marked by uncertainty, shaped by decades of armed conflict, political polarization, and economic inequality (Arroyave & Barrios, 2012). These factors have created a media landscape where progress in press freedom exists alongside persistent challenges, such as violence against journalists, economic instability, and pressures on editorial autonomy (Arroyave & Garcés, 2023; Barrios-Rubio & Gutiérrez-García, 2022). This chapter examines the state of journalism in Colombia, drawing on data from the *Worlds of Journalism Study* (WJS), with a particular focus on the risk journalists face, their professional values, and the autonomy they strive to maintain.

Context

Colombian journalism has evolved under the persistent shadow of political instability, internal armed conflict, and systemic violence. For much of the late twentieth century and into the early 2000s, Colombia was considered one of the most perilous countries in the world for journalists. The convergence of guerrilla insurgencies, paramilitary forces, state actors, and powerful drug cartels created a hostile environment in which the press was frequently targeted. Journalists often became collateral victims or direct targets of violence, facing kidnappings, assassinations, threats, and censorship as part of broader strategies to control information flows (Bonilla, 2015; García Perdomo et al. 2022). The historical record of violence against journalists is particularly alarming: according to the Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa (FLIP), between 1938 and 2021, 163 journalists were murdered due to their professional activities. Of these cases, 78.8% remain in complete impunity, and only one— that of Orlando Sierra—has achieved full judicial resolution (FLIP, 2021). This enduring climate of impunity has had a chilling effect on press freedom, particularly in regions where state presence is weak and armed actors exert territorial control.

While the 2016 the "Acuerdo Final para la Terminación del Conflicto y la Construcción de una Paz Estable y Duradera" (Final Agreement for the Termination of the Conflict and the Construction of a Stable and Lasting Peace) between the government and the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia) brought hope for improved safety, ongoing conflicts involving groups like the ELN (Ejército de Liberación Nacional) and criminal organizations such as the *Clan de Golfo*, which operates as a cartel, continue to put

journalists at risk, particularly in rural areas (Arroyave & Romero, 2022). In these regions, self-censorship has become a survival tactic.

The media landscape also faces challenges related to economic concentration. Major outlets like *El Tiempo*, *El Espectador*, Caracol, Blu Radio, *Revista Semana*, and RCN are controlled by members of the powerful economic elite, who can influence editorial policies and limit critical journalism. This concentration has led to new forms of political parallelism, where media outlets often serve both political and corporate interests (Romero & Arroyave, 2022). Journalists must balance the pressures from advertisers, political figures, and media owners while striving to maintain editorial independence. Economic instability further complicates matters, with many journalists facing job insecurity and limited resources for investigative work.

Digital transformation has added complexity to the media environment. While social media and digital platforms offer greater opportunities for news dissemination, they also expose journalists to new forms of online harassment and disinformation (Arroyave & Garcés, 2023). Traditional print media have struggled with declining circulation and competition from free online content, prompting some outlets to adopt sensationalist formats to maintain their audiences (Barrios-Rubio, 2021).

Despite these challenges, Colombian journalists continue to uphold the core values of their profession. Their resilience—both personal, in coping with threats and stress, and occupational, in maintaining professional standards under adverse conditions—plays a vital role in promoting transparency, accountability, and democratic governance in Colombia. This chapter, through the analysis of *Worlds of Journalism Study* survey data, provides a comprehensive understanding of the current state of journalism in Colombia and highlights the key risks, challenges, and professional values that shape the work of journalists in this context.

Methods

This study is part of the third round of the international *Worlds of Journalism Study* (WJS), an initiative that gathers comparable data on the practice of journalism in more than 70 countries. Its aim is to understand how journalists work, what values guide their profession, and what challenges they face in different contexts around the world.

In the case of Colombia, data collection took place between March 2022 and February 2023. To build the sample, media outlets of various sizes and with different levels of coverage (local, regional, and national) were first selected. Then, within those outlets, journalists holding different positions such as reporters, editors, and directors were chosen.

The information was gathered through online surveys and personal or telephone interviews, using a standardized questionnaire designed by the international study team. In total, 379 journalists participated. Although not all professionals in the country were interviewed, the sample is broad and balanced enough to provide a reliable overview of their profiles, working conditions, democratic values, security concerns, support networks, and perceptions of professional freedom.

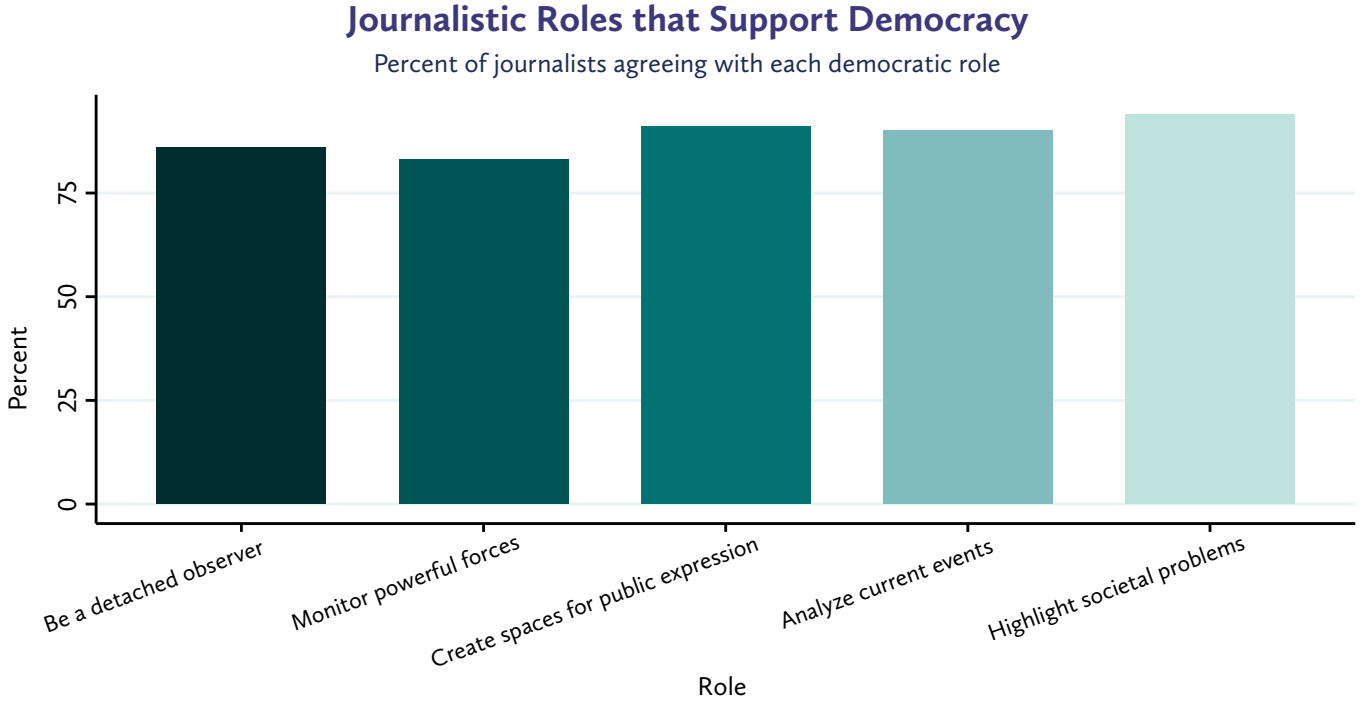
Gender and labor disparities

Colombian journalists have an average age of 51 years for men and 44 years for women, making them one of the older journalist populations compared to regional counterparts. Women represent 39% of the workforce, reflecting a notable gender disparity, particularly in leadership roles, which are predominantly occupied by men (60%). Educational attainment is relatively high, with 94% of journalists having received formal education or training in journalism, which is significantly above the regional average. The majority of journalists operate in urban centers, focusing on platforms such as legacy newspapers (22%) and digital-native outlets (22%), with rural representation remaining limited.

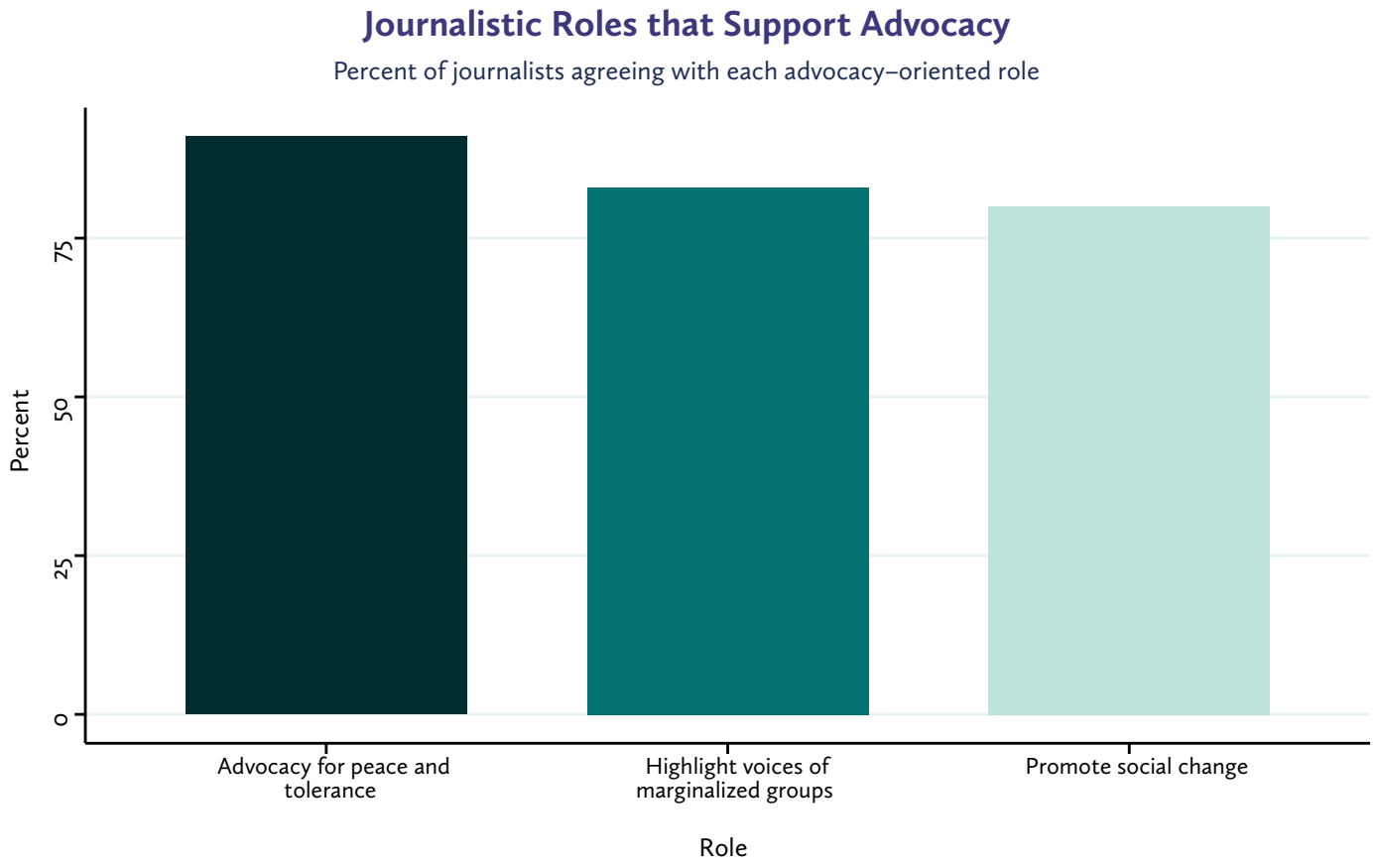
The WJS data on Colombia show that 43% of both male and female journalists in the country hold full-time permanent contracts, with no significant gender disparity. However, precarious working conditions persist, especially among freelancers, who lack benefits such as health insurance and pensions. Freelance journalists make up 38% of all journalists in Colombia, the highest of the countries included in this book. In terms of earnings, only half of Colombia journalists (50%) reported that journalism was their only source of income, suggesting journalism alone is not lucrative enough. Colombian journalists work across an average of four platforms on a regular basis, slightly above the regional average, and oversee coverage in two beats each, on average, indicating the multiple demands of the profession.

Support for liberal democracy with social justice

Large majorities of Colombian journalists strongly support practices that facilitate liberal democracy with social justice. Of principles from the liberal model of the press in democracy, they value being detached observers (86%), monitoring powerful forces (83%), and, especially, highlighting societal problems (94%). They also prioritize analyzing current events (90%) and creating spaces for public expression (91%).



Support for advocacy roles in journalism is also notable, with 91% of respondents saying that advocacy for peace and tolerance is an important aspect of their work. This is likely due to the country's long-standing conflicts. Additionally, significant majorities of Colombian journalists consider it important for their work to promote social change (80%) and highlight the voices of marginalized groups (83%). These findings highlight the complex nature of journalism in Colombia, where professionals balance the demands of traditional liberal reporting styles with advocacy to address broader societal challenges.



These findings highlight the complexity of how journalists perceive the role of their work in Colombia. Similar to other regions in Latin America, they adopt a view of professionalism that balances liberal reporting principles with advocacy efforts to address broader societal issues.

Colombian journalists demonstrate strong support for democratic values in other ways, too. Specifically, 46.5% regard media laws and regulations as highly influential, and a significant 71% consider access to information very influential in their journalistic work (ratings of 4 or 5 on a 1–5 scale, with 5 being extremely influential). Nonetheless, substantial challenges persist, as 27% perceive government censorship as significantly influential, indicating concerns over state interference in media activities. Additionally, only 22% and 21% respectively, report they perceive great influence from relationships with government officials and politicians, illustrating cautious evaluation of their professional interactions. Despite these difficulties, Colombian journalists remain committed to transparency and accountability, with a notable emphasis (59%) on the influence of audience feedback in shaping their journalistic practice. Yet, public trust remains problematic, as reflected in the Digital News Report (Reuters Institute, 2022), confirming that skepticism towards media credibility is prevalent among audiences.

Safety

Threats to safety

The data reveal that Colombian journalists continue to operate in a highly insecure environment marked by persistent threats. About 18% of journalists report being subjected to demeaning or hateful speech "often" or "very often," while an additional 28% experience it "sometimes." Surveillance is a notable concern, with 10% reporting frequent monitoring and 12% occasional incidents. Cyber threats, such as hacking or blocking of social media accounts, affect 7% of journalists "frequently" and 15% "occasionally". Although instances of arrests or detentions remain low (2% frequently), the broader fear of legal constraints and retaliation persists. The dissemination of personal information represents a significant risk, with 13.5% of journalists reporting having experienced it at least "sometimes". Similarly, 24% of journalists report that their personal morality has been questioned at least "occasionally", underscoring the emotional toll and reputational threats faced by journalists working in deeply polarized environments. Workplace bullying remains a widespread issue, with 7% of journalists experiencing it "often" and 12% "sometimes". While less common, intimidation targeting journalists' families is still a concern, with 1% reporting it "often" and 5% "sometimes". These findings illustrate the multidimensional risks Colombian journalists face in their efforts to inform the public under hostile conditions.

Concerns about safety and well-being

In addition to experiences of attacks, journalists were asked about perceptions of their own safety for reasons related to their work. This was assessed by questions asking whether they "agreed" or "disagreed" with an expression of concern about their physical, emotional and financial well-being. Large percentages of journalists responded they "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with each of the statements, although emotional well-being troubled them the most and more women expressed concern than men. More than six in 10 men (66%) and seven in 10 women (77%) express concern about their emotional well-being, which is the largest gap among the countries in this book with the exception of Brazil. Expressions of concern about physical well-being were less prevalent, but still widespread. Almost five in 10 men (49%) and exactly four in 10 women (40%) express concern for their physical well-being. This is the only dimension in which men report higher levels of concern than women. Finally, more women again express concern when asked about their financial safety, with 56% of women and 50% of men expressing concern.[1]

Support systems

Survey data from the *Worlds of Journalism Study* reveal important insights into the support networks available to Colombian journalists. While 61% of male and 54% of female journalists report receiving institutional support from their own news organizations, this suggests a moderate but unequal level of internal

1 A Chi-Square test for differences between the frequency of concern expressed by women and men revealed the gap in concern about emotional well-being was statistically significant, meaning it was not due to chance. $\chi^2(1, N = 378) = 5.472$, $p = .019$. Other differences were not statistically significant.

backing. Peer networks appear stronger, with 77% of men and 62% of women indicating support from colleagues within or outside their newsroom. In contrast, only 39% of male and 31% of female journalists reported receiving support from professional associations, reflecting limited reach and impact of organized advocacy. Support from civil society, such as NGOs and human rights organizations, was noted by 28% of men and 23% of women, indicating moderate engagement from external actors. Nearly one in four male journalists (24%) and roughly one in six women (17%) identified government authorities as a source of support—figures that, while notable, still trail behind support from peer and institutional networks.

Professional autonomy amid multiple challenges

Journalists in Colombia report they perceive high levels of autonomy in their professional practice. According to the survey, 75% say they enjoy a great deal or "complete freedom" in selecting news stories, and 73% report the same for deciding which aspects of a story to emphasize. However, this individual autonomy contrasts with a broader perception of structural constraint: only 18% believe there is a "great deal" of media freedom in the country.

Colombian journalism operates within a complex and fragmented media ecosystem shaped by geographic, economic, and political inequalities. Journalists based in urban centers such as Bogotá and Medellín report higher levels of professional autonomy, better institutional support, and improved safety conditions. In contrast, those working in rural and peripheral regions face disproportionate risks related to violence, corrupt local politicians, and limited access to support networks—conditions that often result in self-censorship as a survival strategy. The expansion of digital platforms has diversified voices and broadened access, particularly for independent and regional media. Yet, this digital shift also exposes journalists to intensified stress, online harassment, and the spread of disinformation; more than half report social media as a significant source of professional distress.

Structural challenges further constrain the profession. Economic concentration in media ownership enables powerful conglomerates to shape editorial lines, limiting pluralism and weakening public interest journalism. Moreover, financial precarity is widespread—only 43.3% of journalists hold full-time permanent contracts, and over half rely on non-journalistic income sources to sustain their work. These dynamics reveal a journalism field under pressure from both structural and everyday threats, yet still marked by professional commitment to democratic values. Colombian journalists navigate these challenges with resilience, but the sustainability of the profession remains uncertain without stronger institutional protections, economic safeguards, and inclusive reforms that reduce inequality across gender, geography, and media type.

The future of journalism and democracy in Colombia

Journalism in Colombia persists on uncertain ground, where perceptions of individual autonomy collide with structural constraint. Reporters retain meaningful discretion over angles, sources, and frames, yet they work inside a media system shaped by concentrated ownership, economic precarity, and persistent threats to personal safety. This tension creates a paradox: journalists possess the agency to hold power to

account, but the environment offers only fragile assurances that such work can endure.

The profession is anything but homogeneous. Working conditions vary markedly by region, contractual status, and gender. Rural correspondents face heightened physical danger; freelancers shoulder disproportionate financial and emotional strain; and women encounter distinct forms of vulnerability, often with less institutional support. These fragmentations mirror the broader inequities that define Colombian society, reminding us that newsrooms are both sites of democratic possibility and arenas where social asymmetries are reproduced.

Even amid insecurity, public distrust, and market volatility, Colombian journalists uphold a dual orientation: they defend liberal watchdog ideals while advocating for peace and social inclusion. Such commitments reveal a field animated less by institutional reinforcement than by an ethic of public service resistance. Persistence, however, should not be mistaken for resilience. The emotional, ethical, and material toll of current conditions is steep, and the profession's democratic contribution will hinge on translating that normative compass into concrete structural reforms.

Safeguarding journalism's role in Colombia therefore requires more than celebrating individual courage. Legal protections must be strengthened, ownership diversified, and comprehensive support—financial, psychosocial, and safety-related—expanded. By confronting these systemic vulnerabilities, Colombia can move journalism from a daily exercise in resistance to a stable pillar of democratic life.

References

- Arroyave, J. & Garcés-Prettel, M. (2023) Cambios en el periodismo y su impacto en la autonomía profesional: evidencia del estudio The Worlds of Journalism en siete Países de América Latina. *Cuadernos.info,* (54), 318-340. https://doi.org/10.7764/cdi.54.54055
- Arroyave, J. & Romero-Moreno, J. (2022). Peace, public opinion and disinformation in Colombia: Social media and its role in the 2016 plebiscite. In J. McDougall & K. Fowler-Watt (Eds). *Palgrave Handbook of Media Misinformation (pp.63-77).* Palgrave Macmillan – England.
- Arroyave, J. & Barrios, M. (2012). Journalists in Colombia. In David Weaver & Lars Willnat (Eds.), *Global Journalist in the 21st Century.* New York: Routledge. **ISBN:** 978-0-415-88576-8. pp. 400-412.
- Barrios-Rubio, A. The Colombian Media Industry on the Digital Social Consumption Agenda in Times of COVID-19. Information 2022, 13, 11. https://doi.org/ 10.3390/info13010011
- Barrios-Rubio, A., & Gutiérrez-García, M. (2022). Comunicación mediática y social en el entorno de crisis, polarización e inconformismo colombiano. *Profesional De La información*, *31*(3). https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2022.may.20
- Bonilla, J. I. (2015). Algo más que malas noticias: Una revisión crítica a los estudios sobre medios-guerra. *Signo y Pensamiento Journal,* 34(66), 62-78
- Garcés, M. & Arroyave, J. (2017). Riesgos de seguridad y autonomía profesional de los periodistas en Colombia [Security risks and professional autonomy of Colombian journalists]. *Revista Perfiles Latinoamericanos*, V49 Enero-junio 1-19. DOI:/10.18504/pl2549-002-2017.
- García-Perdomo, V., Harlow, S. & Brown, D.K. (2022) Framing the Colombian Peace Process: Between Peace and War Journalism, *Journalism* Practice, https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2022.2062428
- Romero-Moreno, M. & Arroyave, J. (2022). Polarización entre el conflicto y la reconciliación: análisis de sentimiento de la conversación digital entorno a la construcción de Paz en Colombia. *AEID&A – Revista Eletrônica de Estudos Integrados em Discurso e Argumentação. V22. http://doi.org/10.47369/eidea-22-esp.-3546*

Press Freedom and Safety Challenges in Ecuadorian Journalistic Culture: An Analysis of Journalists' Autonomy and Protection Measures

Martín Oller Alonso, Universidad de Salamanca (Spain)

State of the art: *Worlds of Journalism Study* (WJS) and the Ecuadoran media landscape

This analysis focuses on two critical dimensions of journalistic work: autonomy and protection. By examining the variables that influence journalists' freedom in selecting and shaping news stories, and the protective measures they adopt, this research highlights the most pressing challenges faced by Ecuadorian journalists today. The findings provide a comprehensive understanding of the constraints on journalistic freedom and the safety risks media professionals face in Ecuador, contributing significantly to the global analysis of the *Worlds of Journalism Study*.

Journalism in Ecuador operates within a complex and dynamic environment shaped by political, economic, and social factors (Oller Alonso & Chavero Ramírez, 2015). Ecuador has experienced significant changes in its media landscape over the last years, influenced by shifting political regimes (Rafael Correa's presidency between 2007 and 2017 and his proposal for a "Citizen Revolution," Lenín Moreno's political betrayal of his party, and the turbulent rule of Guillermo Lasso and his abrupt exit), financial instability (the "feriado bancario" in 1999 and the economic crisis of 2008), ongoing social conflicts (mobilization against fuel price increases during the Lenín Moreno administration, 2017-2020), and criminal control challenges (Ecuadorian prison massacre of February 23, 2021). The country's media system has often been caught between state control (especially during Rafael Correa's administration); the reprivatization and concentration of media during the last three governments of Lenín Moreno, Guillermo Lasso and Daniel Noboa; and the desire for journalistic safety and freedom.

Ecuador's media sector remains economically vulnerable, with financial sustainability a persistent challenge, particularly for independent outlets that depend on a limited advertising market. Resource concentration among a few large conglomerates further exacerbates this issue, compromising editorial independence as journalists are often pressured to align their reporting with the interests of sponsors or shareholders (Oller Alonso, 2023). This fragility has intensified over the years due to the country's recurring economic crises, starting with the 1999 "feriado bancario," which led to a financial collapse, freezing of citizens' deposits, widespread inflation, and subsequent mass emigration. The dollarization of the economy

in 2000 provided short-term stability but limited monetary policy flexibility. Ecuador's heavy reliance on oil exports has exposed it to price fluctuations, resulting in fiscal deficits and a growing external debt burden.

The global financial crisis in 2008 and the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 further strained the economy, leading to rising unemployment, reduced GDP, and increased healthcare costs and national debt. Persistent fiscal challenges have driven austerity measures, cuts to social programs, and public protests. Political instability, compounded by perceived betrayals and shifting agendas of recent administrations, has discouraged foreign investment and stunted economic growth.

Amid these economic challenges, Ecuadorian journalism has suffered significantly. News organizations' financial instability has led to the closure of numerous independent outlets, concentrating media ownership in fewer hands and diminishing editorial independence. Economic vulnerability and political pressures have created a precarious environment for journalists, who struggle to maintain autonomy and ensure their safety while covering critical issues. As Ecuador confronts these multifaceted challenges, comprehensive and inclusive solutions are urgently required to promote long-term stability, economic recovery, and a resilient media landscape.

Methods

Ecuador's *Worlds of Journalism Study* (WJS) data and sample overview estimated the study population to be between 12,000 and 15,000 journalists (2022/2023). The final sample included 299 "professional journalists" (upon which these results are based) and 96 "peripheral journalists," resulting in a total sample of 395 journalists with a response rate of less than 10%. Data collection occurred between 2022 and 2023. This method allowed for efficient outreach across Ecuador's diverse media landscape.

The analysis presented in this report is based on the WJS questionnaire for Ecuador. It emphasises the variables of safety and protective measures for journalists, reflecting the precarious environment many journalists face in their profession. Questions explored the types and frequencies of threats, such as physical attacks, digital harassment, and intimidation tactics. Journalists reported on protective actions, including self-censorship, altering routines, and relocating to mitigate these threats. The journalists' autonomy was also analyzed, capturing the degree of freedom journalists experience in selecting and emphasizing news stories.

Gender disparities

The analysis of autonomy among Ecuadorian journalists reveals gender disparities, reflecting the challenges within the country's media landscape. Around 75-80% of male journalists, compared with 70-75% of female journalists, "mostly agreed" or "totally agreed" that they have autonomy in story selection. This suggests that men generally perceive having more control over the topics they cover, and how they present them. In contrast, around 65-70% of female journalists "mostly agreed" or "totally agreed" that they have autonomy in story selection, compared to 60-65% for narrative emphasis, indicating a potential disparity in editorial influence and decision-making power. A smaller group of journalists with significantly lower autonomy scores suggests additional diversity in experiences, potentially representing freelance or part-time journalists who work in highly precarious environments.

These findings align with the Ecuadorian context, where media concentration and economic instability have shaped a precarious media landscape. Ownership interests often impact editorial choices, compelling journalists, especially those in economically vulnerable positions—to conform to organisational priorities. This is particularly relevant for female journalists and those outside the traditional media, who may face more challenges exercising editorial independence. The constrained autonomy reflects the pressures of working under a media system heavily influenced by political interests and market forces. As Ecuador's journalism adapts to the rise of digital and community media, the varied experiences of autonomy reveal the need for supportive policies and protections to foster a more equitable and independent media landscape where all journalists, regardless of gender or role, can pursue their work freely.

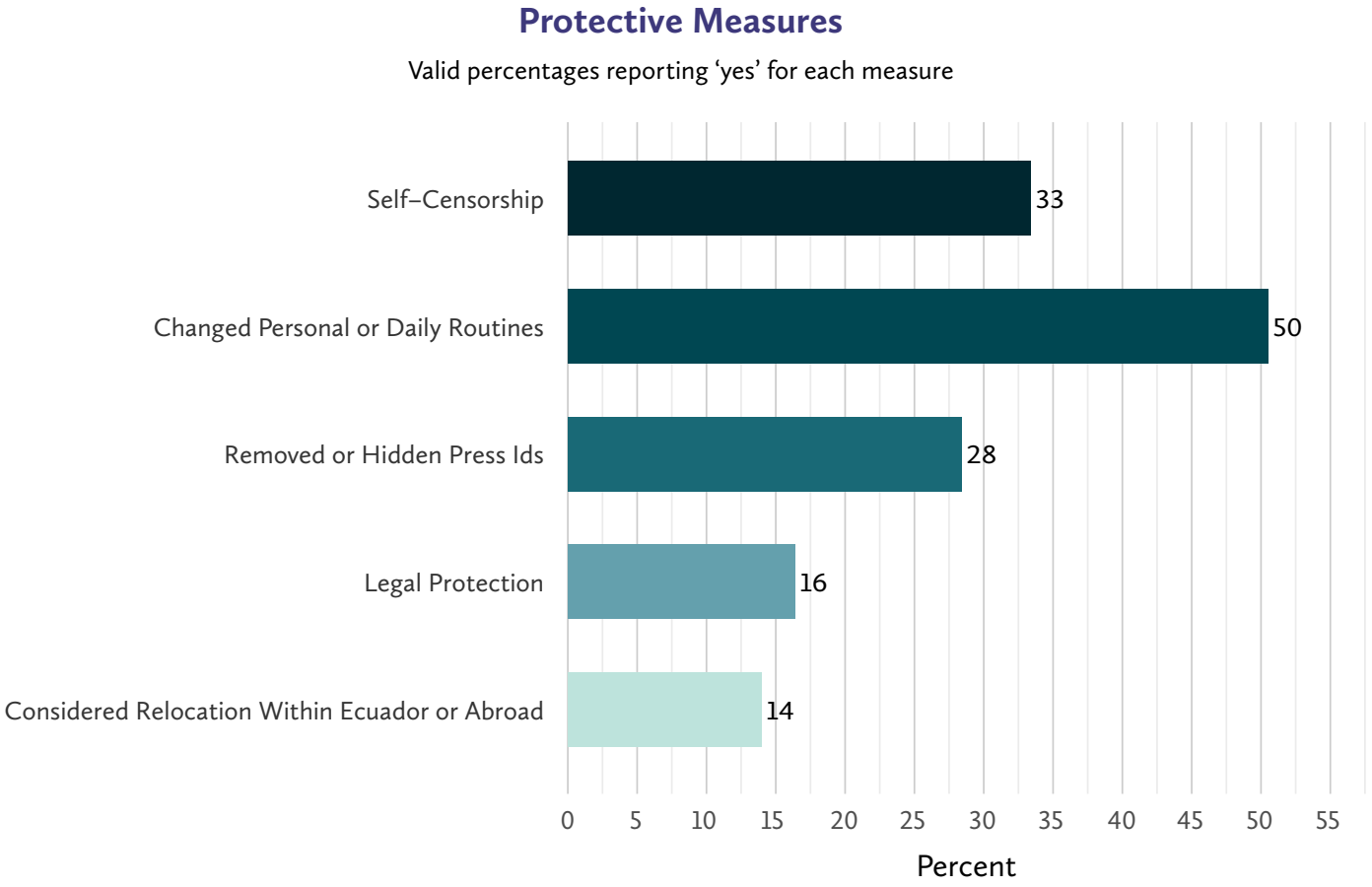
Protective measures

The data on protective measures highlight the precarious and often dangerous conditions under which Ecuadorian journalists operate. Self-censorship is the most widespread protective strategy, with many journalists frequently limiting their reporting, avoiding potential retaliation from powerful entities—whether political, corporate, or criminal. About 67% of Ecuadorian journalists reported self-censorship as a protective measure, making it the most widespread strategy to avoid retaliation from powerful entities. It underscores how much journalists feel compelled to avoid controversial topics altogether. These findings illustrate how fear of retribution shapes journalistic work in Ecuador, forcing media professionals to navigate a delicate balance between their duty to inform, and the risks associated with their profession.

Beyond self-censorship, other precautionary behaviors are also common. About 51% of journalists reported altering their personal routines, while 28% said they remove press identification in public as strategies to minimize their visibility and mitigate physical and digital threats. These actions reveal a deep-seated concern for personal safety, particularly among those covering contentious issues or working in public spaces. The widespread nature of these precautions reflects Ecuador's broader socio-political climate, where harassment and intimidation of journalists are routine occurrences.

Legal action is also a frequent recourse for journalists facing threats, with 16% seeking legal protection. However, relying on legal measures suggests that Ecuador's legal framework is insufficient in guaranteeing media safety, as many journalists feel compelled to take formal steps to defend themselves. Another striking reality is that 14% of journalists reported they have considered relocation within Ecuador and abroad, highlighting the gravity of the risks they encounter. The willingness to improve their lives for personal security speaks to the extreme measures media professionals must take to continue their work.

These findings underscore the urgent need for stronger protections and policy reforms to ensure a safer environment for Ecuadorian journalists. The prevalence of self-censorship, identity concealment, legal recourse, and displacement reveals a profession under siege, where journalists must continuously assess the dangers of their work and take preemptive action to protect themselves. Ecuador's economic challenges have profoundly impacted the media sector, creating an environment of heightened precarity.



Conclusion

This examination of press freedom and the security challenges facing Ecuadorian journalists, drawn from data in the third wave of the *Worlds of Journalism Study* (*WJS*) (2020–2023), reveals a media environment shaped by economic instability, political pressures, unstable working conditions, and rising criminal threats. These factors have contributed to an increasing reliance on protective measures, underscoring the growing risks associated with journalism in the country. Ecuadorian journalists navigate a complex environment where autonomy is often limited, particularly those working under ownership structures prioritizing economic and political interests. This limited autonomy is compounded by financial vulnerabilities, as media organizations face challenges related to sustainability, leading to increased media concentration and compromised editorial independence.

The findings indicate notable gender disparities in journalistic autonomy, with male journalists reporting slightly more freedom in story selection and narrative emphasis. However, male and female journalists experience substantial constraints, often resorting to self-censorship, modifying routines, and relocating to protect themselves from physical, legal, and digital threats. These protective measures highlight journalists' precarious conditions, reflecting the broader socio-political landscape of frequent social conflicts, economic crises, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

References

- Oller Alonso, M. (Ed.) (2017). *Cultura(s) Periodística(s) Iberoamericana(s). La diversidad de un periodismo propio*. La Laguna (Tenerife): Sociedad Latina de Comunicación Social.
- Oller Alonso, M. (2023). Desde ¡el infinito y más allá! hasta ¡me voy a volver! Las claves contextuales que definen las políticas comunicacionales y el binomio medios/poder en Ecuador. In Márquez, M. & Guerrero, M.A. (Eds.). Los sistemas de medios en América Latina: Políticas de comunicación, regulación y captura. Volumen I. Mexico: Editorial Iberoamericana.
- Moreira, S. V. & Oller Alonso, M. (2018). Journalists in newsrooms: Professional roles, influences, and changes to journalism. *Brazilian Journalism Research* (BJR), 14(2): 304-317.
- Oller Alonso, M. (2019). *Análisis Orgánico Multinivel de la Cultura Periodística de Ecuador* (Vol. II). Saarbrücken: Editorial Académica Española (EAE).
- Oller Alonso, M. & Chavero, P. (2015). La percepción de los factores de influencia de los periodistas dentro de la cultura periodística de Ecuador. *Disertaciones,* 8(1), 78-101.

Journalism in Peru: Between Social Inequality and Institutional Erosion

Lilian Kanashiro, University of Lima • *Lourdes Cueva Chacón, San Diego State University* • *Karles Daniel Antonio-Manzo, Universidad Iberoamericana* • *Jessica Retis, University of Arizona*

Introduction

In Peru, structural precariousness is manifested in the economy and politics. In 2024, 45% of the economically active population was underemployed, and informal employment reached 71% (National Institute of Statistics and Informatics, 2024). This means that workers do not have access to the benefits of formal employment. In the political context, since 2016, Peru has been governed by six presidents, half of whom did not complete their terms. Eighty-nine percent of Peruvians are dissatisfied with the functioning of democracy in the country (Latinobarómetro Corporation, 2024). These data are a reflection of the precariousness affecting the media ecosystem.

Instability of the media system

The return to democracy in 2001 marked a turning point for the media in Peru. The purchase of television editorial lines and smear campaigns by tabloid newspapers (Fowks, 2015; CONVOCA, 2017) forced the media to regain audience trust. This period was short-lived, as mercantilist practices continued. Since then, media concentration (Ojo Público & Reporters Without Borders, 2016; Duchiade, 2023) has accentuated the homogenization of news reporting and support for conservative parties. This alliance was clearly evident in the electoral processes, with media support for the Peruvian right, the resignation of renowned journalists, and reports from European Union observers highlighting unbalanced news coverage (European Union, 2021; Cueva Chacón, 2022).

The pandemic had a significant impact: the country recorded the highest number of journalists who died from COVID-19 (Nalvarte, 2020), the precariousness and vulnerability of local journalists deepened (Arévalo Delgado, 2020), there were massive and sustained layoffs in relevant media outlets (National Association of Journalists of Peru, 2020; Cueva Chacón, 2024), news programs and media outlets closed, and journalists migrated to exclusively digital platforms (Cueva Chacón, 2021).

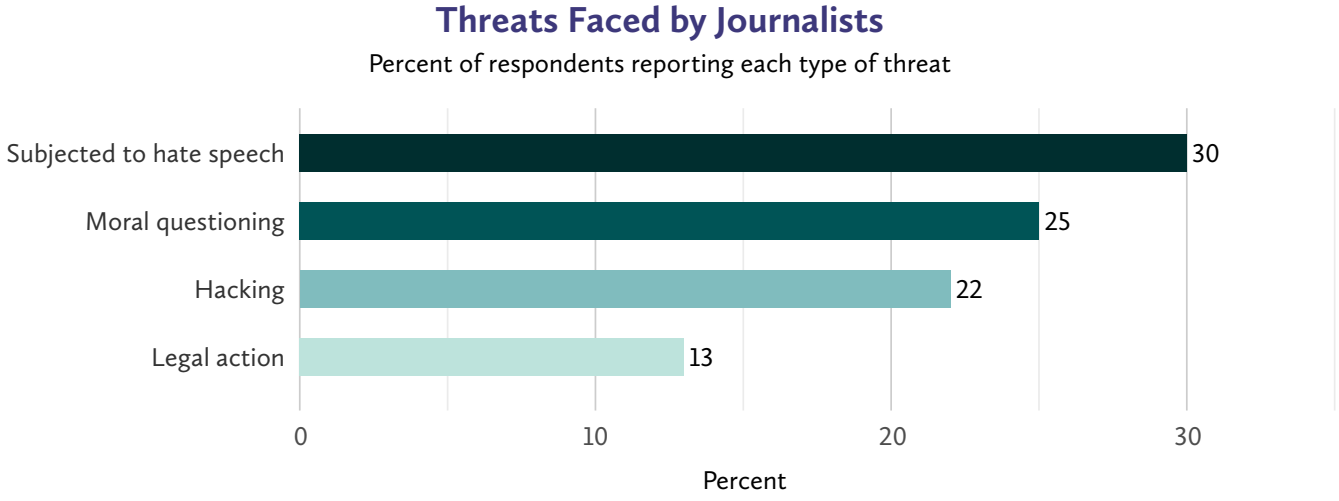
Until then, the development of digital journalism had been marked by the coexistence of the digital and traditional media (Yezers'ka & Zeta de Pozo, 2016). However, in this new era, there is an increase in digital native journalism, often initiated by journalists from traditional media outlets who have fully migrated to the digital world, as well as new generations of journalists and communicators who embrace influencer culture. This could explain why Peru appears among the five countries with the largest audiences on TikTok for news consumption (Cueva Chacón, 2024).

Methods

The study of journalists' working conditions in Peru is unprecedented in academic research, given that there is no census of journalists or consolidated media directory. For this study, media mapping based on a triangulation of public and private data was used, identifying 613 media outlets producing news (Retis et al., 2021). During the course of research, new media outlets were identified, especially digital natives, resulting in a total of 796 news outlets from which the sample was conducted. Likewise, the geographical division of macro zones from the Institute of Peruvian Studies was followed to approximate national representativeness. A total of 335 surveys were administered. The sample size was calculated with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. The sample was distributed by geographic location (north, center, south, east and the capital), by reach (local, regional, national and international), and by media type (newspapers, weeklies, magazines, television, radio, online and news agencies). The instrument was validated by the *Worlds of Journalism Study*. The surveys were conducted by telephone between 2023 and 2024. Participating journalists were randomly selected from registered media outlets and followed the profile agreed upon by the *Worlds of Journalism Study*: 50% or more of their income came from journalism or 50% or more of their time was dedicated to journalism. Under these parameters, the following occupational demographic composition was obtained: 27% women with an average age of 38 years, and 73% men with an average age of 46 years. Journalists had an average of 16 years of experience.

A profession dominated by men

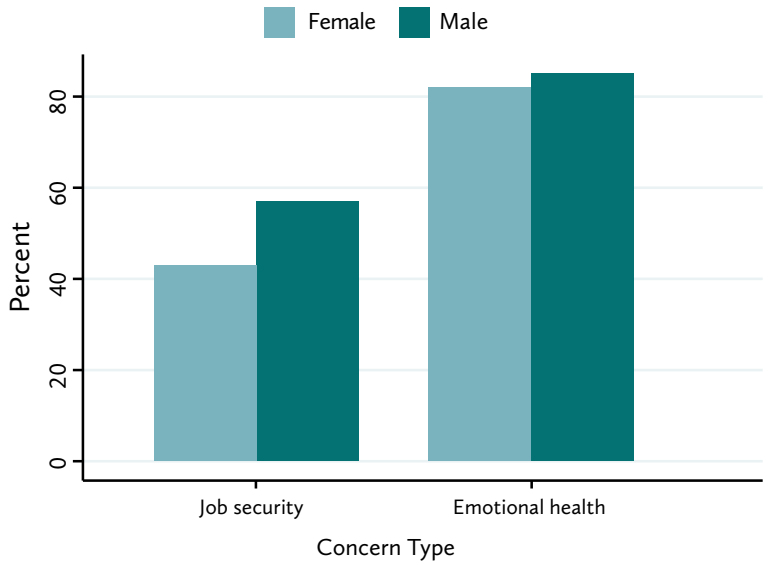
A demographic characteristic of Peruvian journalism is the underrepresentation of women in the profession (27%), the lowest proportion compared to other Latin American countries. While job insecurity affects both men and women, only 34% of female journalists work under a stable contract, compared to 42% of male journalists. In this context, it is worrying that three in 10 journalists have acknowledged having been subjected to hate speech (30%), moral questioning (25%), hacking (22%) and legal action (12.5%). To address this situation, 69% indicated greater attention to fact-checking and 67% to security training.



In the face of these threats, journalists reported receiving greater support from media outlets, colleagues and journalist organizations. However, female journalists reported less support in all categories. The gender gap is most pronounced in the case of journalist organizations, with men reporting more support (56.5%) than women (39%). The same is true with media management, with men reporting more support (77%) than women (62%).

Perceptions of Emotional Safety and Financial Security

Percent reporting concern about emotional health or job loss



A significant majority of women (76%) and men (75%) expressed concern for their physical well-being, and even more were concerned with their emotional health, with women (85.5%) reporting a higher rate of concern than men (82%). It is worth noting that female journalists are more fearful of losing their jobs (57%) than males (42.5%), a statistically significant difference.[1]

Centralism and inequality in the profession

Another significant feature of the Peruvian context is institutional centralism. The likelihood of having a stable full-time contract is significantly higher in Lima (51%) than in the rest of the country (33%).[2] Centralism is also reflected in salary conditions; statistically significant differences were found[3] between salary and the geographical location of the journalist's work. A journalist in the Peruvian capital earns between $800 and $1,000 per month, while in the rest of Peru, remuneration varies between $600 and $800.

This situation brings us to the concept of having multiple jobs. Eight out of 10 journalists surveyed have more than one source of income other than journalism. Only 16% reported that their entire income comes from journalism. In Lima, 34% reported having more than one job, while in the regions outside the capital 66% said so.

1 F=3.847, Sig.= .051, eta2=.012

2 v=9.547, gl=1, p=.002**, eta2=.172

3 F=44.719, sig.000***, eta2=.146

More social journalism, less political journalism

Regarding the role of journalists, relatively few journalists assigned much importance to encouraging political participation (39%) and shaping political opinion (58%). Journalists do not perceive their role as relevant in relation to political stability and strengthening democracy. On the other hand, advocating for the marginalized (93.5%) and promoting peace and tolerance (92%) received high ratings. The perception of the role of Peruvian journalists leans more toward a social vocation than a political one.

Journalists highlighted "access to information" as a significant influence (44%). The low influence of "media legislation and regulation" (29%) is striking, being the lowest rating in the region. In a context of institutional precariousness and informality, regulation is not viewed favorably by the profession.

Conclusion: Without journalism, there is no democracy

This study has allowed us to understand how contextual and structural conditions in Peru are expressed in the journalistic profession. When faced with threats or attacks, female journalists received less support and expressed greater concern about their emotional health and job security. In this regard, we suggest developing differentiated support protocols for women journalists exposed to risky situations, as well as strengthening union mechanisms that guarantee equitable conditions for job security.

Structural centralism has permeated journalistic institutions. Journalists working in the country's regions face more adverse working conditions than those in the capital. Having multiple jobs is presented as a survival strategy in the face of economic adversity. This reflects the economic fragility of the profession and the limited institutional and social recognition of journalistic work. Labor policies should be developed that guarantee equitable wages, strengthening collective bargaining and encouraging the revaluation of journalism as an essential pillar of democracy.

The profile of the Peruvian journalist leans more toward highlighting economic and social inequality, rather than a more institutional and political perspective. The need to integrate institutional, political, and social perspectives will allow complex contexts to be addressed and for the role of journalism as a key player in understanding and transforming social dynamics in Peru to be strengthened.

Finally, in times characterized by democratic erosion and widespread corruption, it is essential to strengthen journalism as a strategic player. It is urgent to implement public policies that guarantee press freedom and provide protection to journalists, recognizing their key role in restoring public trust, reducing inequalities and strengthening democracy.

References

- Arévalo Delgado, J. M. (2020) *Situación de las radios y televisoras locales y regionales en el contexto de crisis por el COVID-19*. Consejo Consultivo de Radio y Televisión del Perú.
- Asociación Nacional de Periodistas del Perú. (2020, Marzo 16). *Un año de periodismo en emergencia*. Facebook.

- Corporación Latinobarómetro. (2024). *Informe 2024: La democracia resiliente*.
- CONVOCA. (2017). *Una galería de casos, documentos y personajes investigados por corrupción en el Congreso de la República*.
- Cueva Chacón, L. M. (June 2021). Peru. En N. Newman, R. Fletcher, A. Schulz, S. Andı, C. T. Robertson, & R. K. Nielsen (Eds.), *Digital News Report 2021*. Reuters Institute.
- Cueva Chacón, L. M. (June 2022). Peru. En N. Newman, R. Fletcher, C. T. Robertson, K. Eddy, & R. K. Nielsen (Eds.), *Digital News Report 2022*. Reuters Institute.
- Cueva Chacón, L. M. (June 2024). Peru. En N. Newman, R. Fletcher, C. T. Robertson, K. A. R. Arguedas, & R. K. Nielsen (Eds.), *Digital News Report 2024*. Reuters Institute.
- Duchiade, A. (2023, 27 septiembre). Tras 10 años, juez dictamina que El Comercio tiene monopolio de prensa escrita en Perú; lo despiden poco después. *Latam Journalism Review*.
- Fowks, J. (2015). *Chichapolitik. La prensa con Fujimori en las elecciones generales 2000 en el Perú*. Lima: Fundación Friedrich Ebert.
- Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática. (2024). *Perú: Comportamiento de los Indicadores del Mercado Laboral a nivel nacional y 26 ciudades - Tercer trimestre 2024*.
- Mendoza Michilot, M. (2013). 100 Años de periodismo en el Perú: 1949-2000. Tomo II. Lima, Peru: Fondo Editorial de la Universidad de Lima.
- Nalvarte, P. (2020, Septiembre 28). 171 Latin American journalists have died from COVID-19, the majority in Peru. *Latam Journalism Review*.
- Ojo Público & Reporters Without Borders. (2016). *Who runs the media in Peru*.
- Retis, J., Kanashiro, L, & Domenack, W. (2021). Retos metodológicos en el estudio del sistema de medios informativos en el Perú. *Cuadernos Info*, *50*, 1-21.
- Unión Europea Unión Europea (2021) Misión de expertos electorales - Perú Elecciones generales 11 de abril de 2021; Segunda vuelta presidencial 6 de junio de 2021 - *Informe Final*.

Journalists in Bolivia: Neutrality, Caution, and Protection from Polarization

Mireya Márquez Ramírez, Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City • *Víctor Quintanilla-Sangüeza, journalist and independent researcher* • *Miguel Ángel Flores-Olmos, journalist and independent researcher*

Overview of the media system and journalism in Bolivia

The development of the media system in Bolivia followed, in the last decades of the 20th century, the regional trend of growth and consolidation of large media organizations supported by neoliberal market reforms and the development of close ties between a traditional media class and the right-wing political groups that came to power with democratization (Schuliaquer, 2021). The media system was characterized by its private ownership structure and commercial orientation, closely tied to economic elites and the traditional political system, although with certain nuances: a small but significant media sector linked to the Catholic Church and the strong presence and tradition of community radio stations. Although a significant portion of the Bolivian population self-identifies as Indigenous (at least 40%), Indigenous peoples have historically been excluded from media ownership, its workforce and its dominant discourses. Given this reality, community radio stations, whose social and cultural function is guaranteed by the Constitution, play a fundamental role in preserving the culture and identity of these communities. However, they are susceptible to political exploitation due to their dependence on government advertising (García, 2022).

Another distinguishing aspect is that Bolivia never developed high levels of media ownership concentration or powerful conglomerates, as in other Latin American countries (Torrico & Villegas, 2016). Even so, media companies have historically played a decisive political role. Already in the 21st century, the government of Evo Morales—whose administration began in January 2006 and abruptly ended in November 2019—showed various facets in its relationship with private media and media elites, characterized by constant "friction and abuse of power" on both sides (Figueroa et al., 2011, p. 126). On one side, his government found an acceptable way to engage with commercial media (Schuliaquer, 2021, p. 54), and on the other, it was antagonistic and critical of the media elites it considered oppositional, racist, conservative and "instruments of powerful and minority interests." To curb them, Morales undertook state communications intervention aimed at establishing a "counter-hegemonic communications bloc" (Rocha, 2014, p. 109) that tended to adopt a pro-government and propagandist line.

The social, economic and political polarization in Bolivia had been reflected in the media before and after Morales's inauguration, when the confrontation between private media and the government intensified. With its intervention in the communications arena as a political strategy and the creation of communi-

cation policies aimed at undermining the so-called hegemonic discourse of the private media, the Morales government seemed to have won the media battle with "the moderation of belligerent and intolerant tones" and "the relative rearrangement of editorial positions and even variations in the ownership composition of some 'large' private media that ended up close to the official line" (Torrico, 2014, p. 256). Their hegemony was also justified by the "self-censorship of journalists," since the media in which they work "cannot do without state propaganda or information that is public in nature" (Molina, 2014, p. 57). This low profitability in most companies or the dependence on state subsidies (Hertzer, 2016) made the media more vulnerable to political exploitation, while the journalistic culture tending toward simple coverage of statements from official sources (Schuliaquer, 2020) allowed journalists relative autonomy to separate themselves from the partisan politics of their media and adopt neutrality as a form of distancing.

Polarization didn't end with Morales' departure from power; it continued during the highly turbulent political transition and continues under the current government of Luis Arce, who is from Morales's same party and in political conflict with him. Therefore, the acute political polarization in the country exacerbates the already historic economic and social polarization, as well as the prevailing structural inequalities.

The heated debate over the legitimacy and alleged fraud in Morales's reelection, as well as the debate over whether his removal constituted a coup d'état, not only sparked enormous social bitterness that intensified the ensuing political crisis, but also raised profound questions about the role of the press in a democracy. From various sectors, the dilemma arose as to whether the media should support the government, limit themselves to reporting the facts and opposing statements, or openly and committedly take on the defense of the democratic order. Amid the acts of violence perpetrated by supporters and opponents—who entrenched themselves in the binary narrative of "fraud" versus "coup" (Kennemore & Postero, 2022)—, coverage based on misinformation, rumors, and inflammatory language also prevailed, generating hate speech and exacerbating the already deep economic and social polarization.

Notes on the sample

Bolivia is participating in the *Worlds of Journalism Study* for the first time. Since the country lacks a unified census or media directory, the team had to create its own directory based on existing ones, with inclusion criteria for media outlets based on reach, regionalization, frequency, influence, size, and ownership type. The resulting directory consisted of 760 outlets.

To calculate the sample of journalists to be surveyed, the proportions of media outlets to be randomly selected were established, so that the sample corresponds proportionally to the existing media outlets in Bolivia by department, type of media, and type of ownership. The two co-researchers who conducted the surveys are Bolivian citizens with experience in journalism and media in the country, which guaranteed access to potential participants from randomly selected media outlets. The search and contact process was done using the snowball technique, taking care when it came to diversity based on gender, rank and position. The final sample consisted of 401 journalists.

The sample was geographically distributed as follows: La Paz and Santa Cruz (23% and 22%, respec-

tively); Tarija (14%), Cochabamba (11%), Potosí (7%), Chuquisaca (7%), Beni (8%), Oruro (6%), and Pando (3%). Regarding media types, the sample included television (32%); radio (38%), newspapers and magazines combined (13%); digital native media (16%), social media (0.5%), and news agencies (0.7%). Seventy-nine percent worked for private media, 9% for community or non-profit media, and the remainder were distributed among public and state media.

Bolivian journalism: Between polarization, neutrality and low risk

The results of the survey of 401 Bolivian journalists reveal a diverse and heterogeneous profession in terms of demographics and occupations. With almost 17 years of experience in journalism and an age of 45 on average, Bolivian journalists are among the most veteran of the participating Latin American countries. Furthermore, the most structurally marginalized groups appear to have a lower presence in newsrooms: a third of respondents (35%) are women, and only 10% belong to an ethnic group.

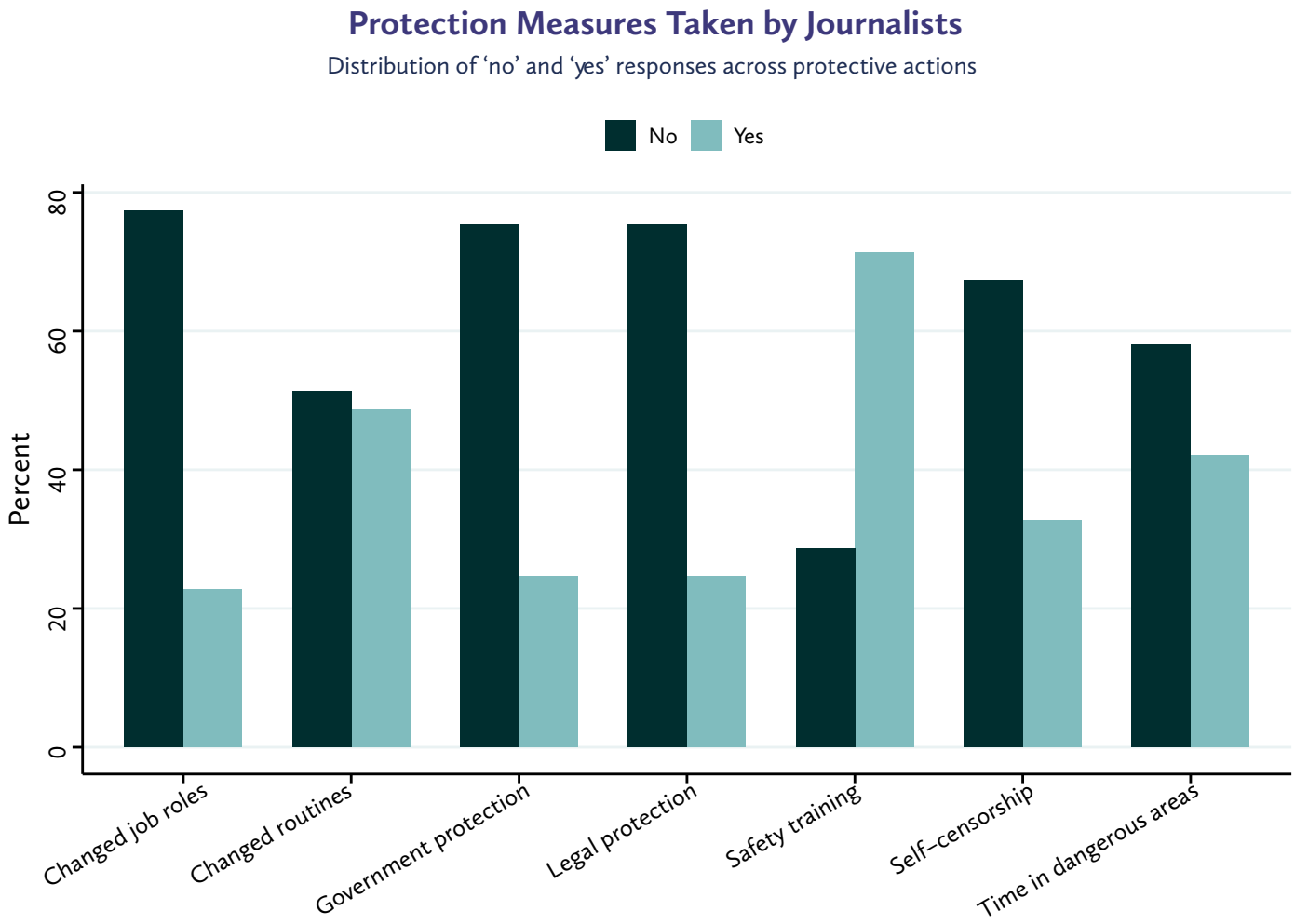
On the other hand, the panorama of press freedom is mixed. Nearly three-quarters of those surveyed perceive a "great deal" or "complete freedom" to select the information they cover and to choose which aspects of the news to highlight (74% and 73%, respectively), but the perception of press freedom in the country is low: less than a fifth of journalists (17%) consider there to be a "great deal" or "complete freedom", while four in ten (42%) consider it to be nonexistent or limited. Although in Bolivia violence against the press is relatively rare with respect to the 19 types of attacks measured in our study, there are five types of attacks that do recurrently affect between one and two out of every ten journalists: hate insults (19%), public stigmatization of their media outlet or person by authorities (18%)[1], surveillance or spying (11%) and public discrediting of their journalistic work. The percentages increase considerably if we add those who have experienced these attacks at some point.

However, these are not phenomena that affect the entire profession, but rather specific enclaves. For example, hateful insults "most frequently" affect journalists from newspapers, news agencies, and television stations, as well as those located in Cochabamba and Pando. Public discrediting of journalistic work "most frequently" affects journalists from newspapers and those based in La Paz and Santa Cruz. Public stigmatization by authorities disproportionately affects journalists from newspapers and digital-native media outlets, as well as journalists from La Paz and Santa Cruz. These results suggest that a segment of journalists predominantly affiliated with the national press is more vulnerable to the risk of politically or socially motivated violence.

To resist such attacks, Bolivian journalists adopt three strategies more prominently than other countries in the region: training and security protocols (71%), seeking government or legal protection (both 25%), or limiting coverage in risky areas (42%). Furthermore, nearly a third of respondents (33%) resort to self-censorship, especially in La Paz and Santa Cruz. These data support the argument that journalists have adopted self-censorship to navigate polarization and distance themselves from partisan positions, including those of

[1] This item was optional and only applied in Bolivia..

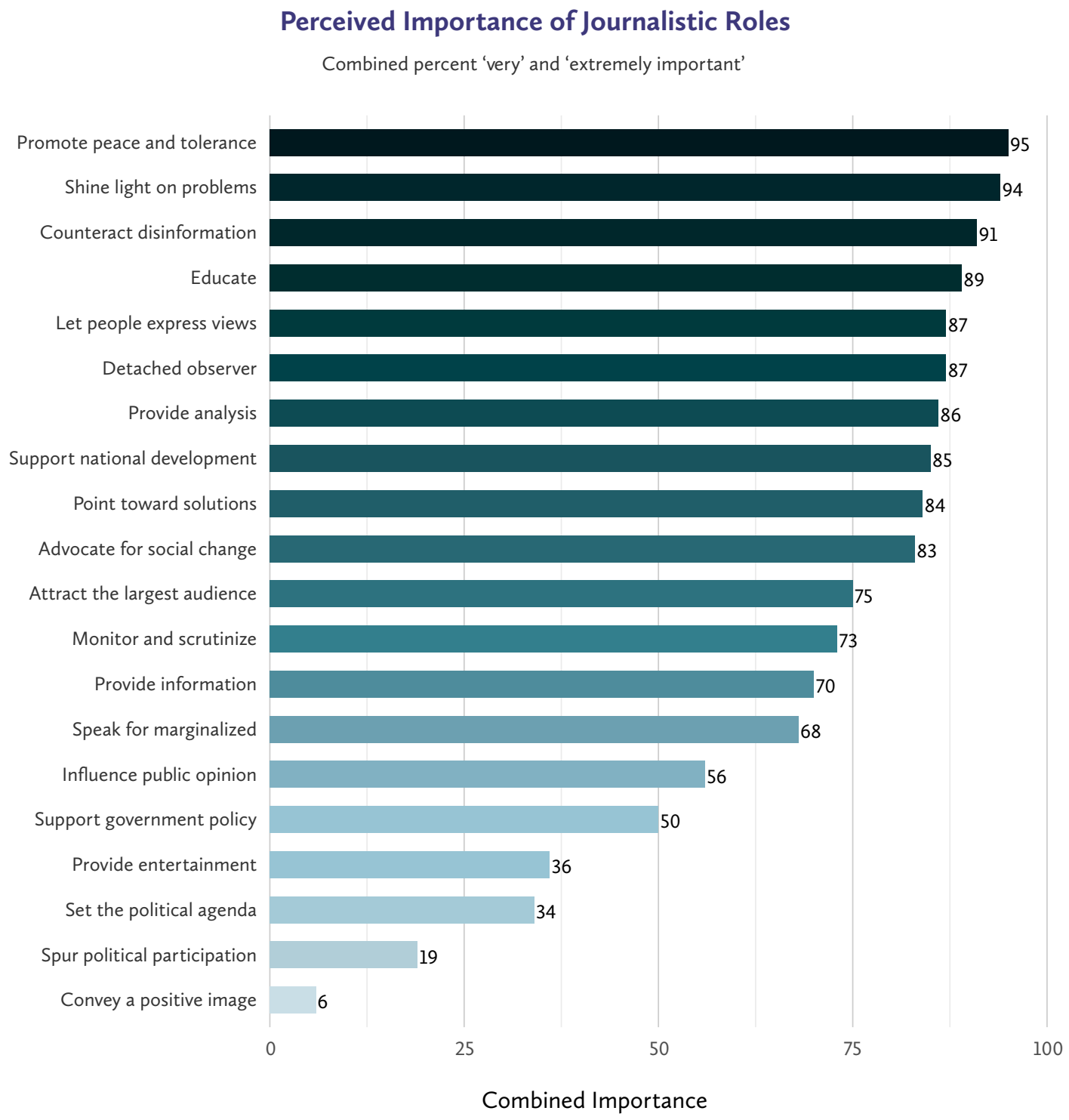
their own media outlets (Schuliaquer, 2020).



It is also confirmed that most journalists tend to approach their social and political reality from a position of journalistic neutrality, as reflected in the high importance placed on the roles of being a neutral observer (87%), facilitating the expression of multiple points of view (87%), or maintaining a politically neutral stance and providing analysis of current events (both 86%). The low standard deviation recorded in support for neutrality compared to other Latin American countries suggests that this is a journalistic value widely endorsed by the profession.

However, in some ways, journalists also want to intervene more in their environment because the three most supported roles are countering disinformation (96.5%), promoting peace and tolerance (95%), and highlighting social problems (93.4%). On the contrary, it is the Latin American country with the second lowest average support for the so-called watchdog role (73%). In fact, being an active critic of the ruling party or the ruler with whom I "disagree" was a role supported by only a third of respondents (36%)[2], suggesting that, in general, Bolivian journalists avoid confrontation.

2 This item was applied only in Bolivia to more accurately record political partisanship



Conclusions

The *Worlds of Journalism Study*, conducted for the first time in Bolivia with 401 journalists, shows that the Andean country's journalistic profession is relatively experienced, but with a lower representation of women and a low level of Indigenous minorities, despite the population profile. The landscape of freedom of expression is mixed: although journalists enjoy relative autonomy and violence against journalists is more uncommon than common in the country regarding various types of attacks, they tend to adopt protective measures or seek them

from the government and through laws. The attacks they are most likely to suffer are associated with hate speech and public stigmatization of their work by authorities, perhaps reflecting the antagonistic and accusatory relationships the government has maintained with a segment of the national press it considers opposition. Perhaps this is why journalists engage in self-censorship, dismiss political activism and the watchdog role of the press, and prioritize journalistic neutrality, from which they promote the visibility of problems and the promotion of tolerance and peace. We seem to witness a relatively cautious profession that rushes to protect itself but prefers to remain attentive to the constant sociopolitical ups and downs from a place of political neutrality.

In Bolivia, as in other parts of Latin America, the polarization of the press fuels sociopolitical tension. Some media outlets act as open opponents of the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS), while others have uncritically aligned themselves with the government for political, economic and ideological convenience.

The effects of the 2019-2020 crisis, which included widely contested elections, protests against Morales's reelection, accusations of a coup d'état, and violent clashes between supporters and opponents, are still present. These events not only deepened the partisan divide among the population but also exacerbated the country's historic socioeconomic polarization, which has become entrenched and replicated in the information ecosystem and the public sphere.

While much of the media's ownership structure continues to represent Bolivia's political and economic elites, the journalistic profession is fighting for its freedom, its autonomy, and the defense of professional standards in service to the community.

References

- Figueroa Burga, M., Rebaza Fernández, S., Sosa Villagarcía, P., Mercado Córdova, L., García Velando, B., Vega Baella, O., & López, N. (2011). Medios de comunicación y poder político: Bolivia, Ecuador, Perú y Venezuela. *Politai: Revista de Ciencia Política*, *2*(3), 123–135.
- García, J. (2022). *Entorno regulatorio y políticas públicas para la sostenibilidad de los medios comunitarios en Bolivia*. Observatorio Latinoamericano de Regulación, Medios y Convergencia -OBSERVACOM. www.observacom.org/proyectopidc/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Bolivia-Medio-comunitarios-Final.pdf
- Hetzer, A. (2016). La continuidad del régimen mediático híbrido en Bolivia. *Punto Cero. Universidad Católica Boliviana*, *21*(33), 8–22.
- Kennemore, A., & Postero, N. (2022). Cómo entender la crisis electoral de 2019 en Bolivia: Lecciones de los movimientos sociales indígenas. *Foro Internacional*, 877-900. https://doi.org/10.24201/fi.v62i4.2951
- Molina, F. (2014). Las relaciones entre los medios y el gobierno de Evo Morales. De la polarización a la hegemonía. *Journal de Comunicación Social*, 2(2), 45-76.
- Rocha, V. (2014). Bolivia: Entre la polarización y la contrahegemonía comunicacional. En A. Bizberge y A. Goldstein (Coord.), *Medios y gobiernos latinoamericanos en el s. XXI: Las tensiones de una compleja relación* (92-110). Instituto de Estudios de América Latina y el Caribe de la Universidad de Buenos Aires.
- Schuliaquer, I. (2020). No tan polarizados. Los gobiernos de Evo Morales y los medios de comunicación en Bolivia. *Revista SAAP*, *14*(2), 367–396. https://doi.org/10.46468/rsaap.14.2.a5
- Schuliaquer, I. (2021). Gobiernos y medios en América del Sur. Argentina, Bolivia, Brasil, Ecuador y Uruguay en el siglo XXI. *Revista Mexicana de Opinión Pública*, *30*, Article 30. https://doi.org/10.22201/fcpys.24484911e.2021.30.75696
- Torrico, E. (2014). Notas para una agenda de la información y la comunicación. En Onadem (Ed.), *Medios a la vista 3. Análisis sobre el derecho a la información y la comunicación y el periodismo en Bolivia 2012-2013* (255-257). Fundación UNIR.
- Torrico, E. R. & Villegas, (2016). *Análisis del desarrollo mediático en Bolivia: Basado en los Indicadores de Desarrollo Mediático de la UNESCO*. UNESCO.

Journalism in Chile: Resilience to Crises

William Porath • *Daniela Grassau* • *Constanza Ortega-Gunckel*
Pontifical Catholic University of Chile

Three factors are shaping Chile's media landscape. First, the exhaustion of the business model, given that advertising investment in traditional media is declining, while the share of digital advertising is increasing—from 12% in 2014 to 51% in 2023 (AMM, 2024). This situation has triggered media closures, changes in formats, and mass layoffs, while also increasing the dissemination of multiplatform content, overloading the workload of journalists who remain.

The so-called "social outburst" of late 2019 completely disrupted Chile's journalistic routines and triggered changes that persist to this day. Beginning as student protests against rising transportation fares, the movement quickly escalated to encompass a wide range of demands, including sweeping reforms in education, healthcare and pensions. These demands were expressed in peaceful, massive demonstrations, but also in violent clashes with police and looting. Continued discontent led the political system to discuss a new constitution (Heiss, 2021). This movement disrupted media routines in three ways: it imposed the need to constantly cover the movement as breaking news; it made it difficult to cover the events on the ground given their violence; and it increased explicit complaints against the media for their role in society (basically accused of serving large economic and political interests), which even led to attacks against media outlets and journalists (Grassau et al., 2023).

The COVID-19 pandemic ultimately intensified the need for continuous coverage, but it also brought fear of contagion, limited physical contact, and reduced mobility, forcing journalists to adapt to remote work. This transformed their routines, impacted their physical and mental well-being, and accelerated the implementation of new technologies (Grassau et al., 2023). These crises exacerbated existing economic difficulties, forcing media outlets to innovate in an increasingly digitalized and competitive market.

Context

The Chilean media system is characterized as a commercial model, founded on private ownership, financed primarily by advertising sales, centralized in the country's capital (Núñez-Mussa, 2021) with a high degree of concentration and in which there is an ideological-value overlap between the main media owners and the largest advertisers (Mönckeberg, 2009).

Print media are dominated by the duopoly of the Copesa and El Mercurio groups, linked to the economic right. The latter owns a vast network of regional newspapers, covering almost the entire country (Gronemeyer & Porath, 2015). As for television, in addition to the state-owned channel, which must be financed through advertising sales and suffers from high losses (Julio et al., 2021), there are three national channels that dominate the market, two of them owned by major economic groups. There are also sev-

eral small regional channels that survive thanks to cable operators (CNTV, 2018). Radio is probably the most diversified market, with a wide variety of stations and programming orientations and editorial lines throughout the country. However, Spanish group Prisa has a strong presence in this market with 11 stations (Mancinas-Chávez et al., 2024). In the last decade, an ecosystem of digital native media has flourished, but they have yet to stabilize their editorial and business models and sustainability (Faure et al., 2025).

Methods

The sample framework was a media mapping, conducted between January 2020 and May 2021,[1] which determined the existence of 1,906 news media outlets in the country, of which 51% were traditional media and 43% were online-only. A survey was subsequently distributed (response rate 42%), which allowed for an estimate of a population of 6,000 people working as journalists in news media, of whom 58% work in the metropolitan region where the capital, Santiago, is located.

Stratified proportional sampling was conducted: first, by administrative region (according to the number of journalists working there) and then, within each region, proportional to the size of the newsroom. Surveys were conducted in person, by telephone, and online, with a response rate of 69%. The final sample consisted of 398 active journalists (margin of error: 4.75 points). Fieldwork took place from December 2021 to December 2023.

The same questionnaire was used for all countries, but in the case of Chile, given its impact on the media, questions were added about the effects of the social unrest on journalists.

Main results

The results are organized first by showing some sociodemographic characteristics of newsrooms in Chile; then by describing the main journalistic roles reported by those interviewed; the recognition and level of influence of external factors on journalistic work; the frequency of intimidation directed at professionals; protective measures taken by them and concerns expressed; the editorial freedom of those interviewed; and finally, the impact of the social unrest on them.

Characteristics of newsrooms

Chilean newsrooms are predominantly made of men (68%) around 43 years old, with 17 years of professional experience, and extensive professional training (95%). Women are younger (average age 37), with less experience (13 years), and a slightly lower level of training (90%), but their employment status is better: 77% have full-time contracts versus 71.5% of men. The main source of employment is radio (31%). However, job insecurity is reflected in the fact that 45% of those interviewed have one or more jobs outside journalism. In

1 See mapademedios.cl

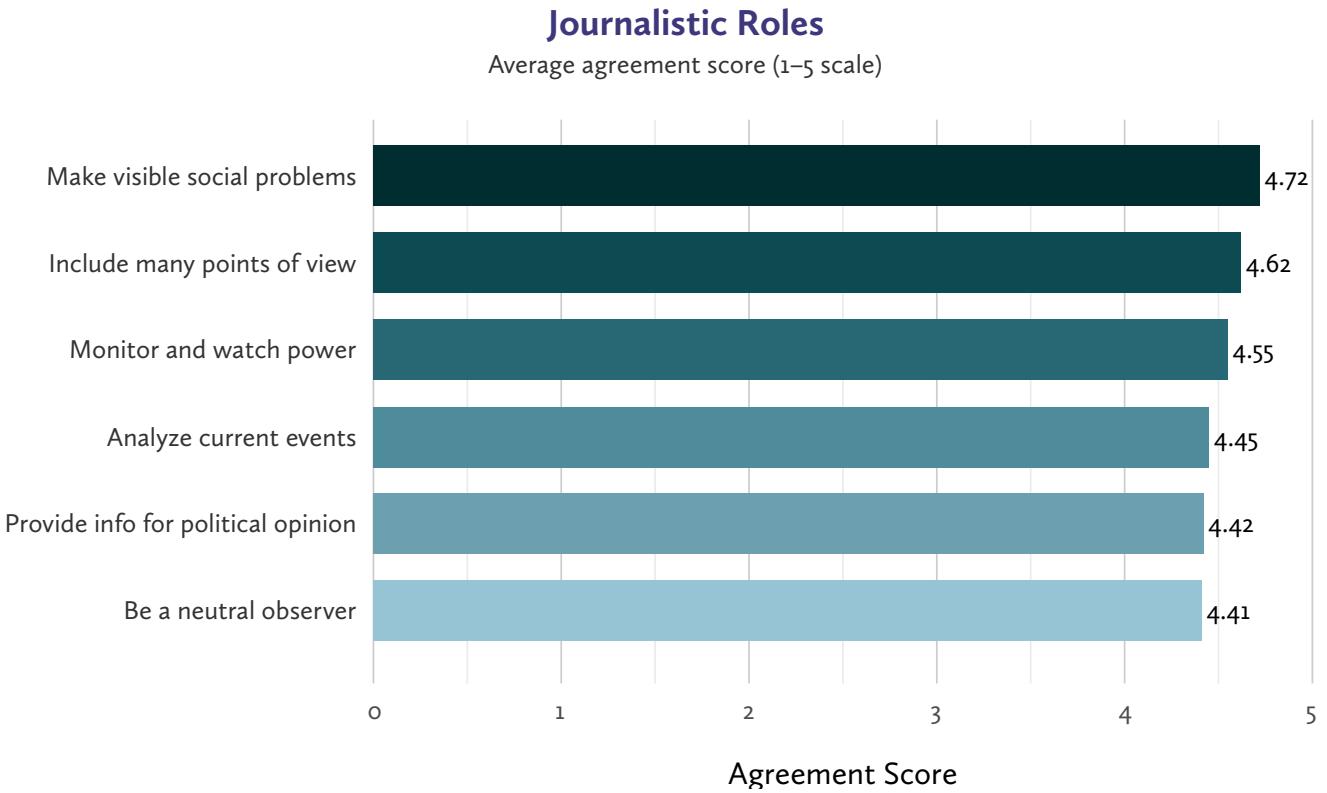
other words, for almost half of them, working in the media is not enough to support themselves financially.

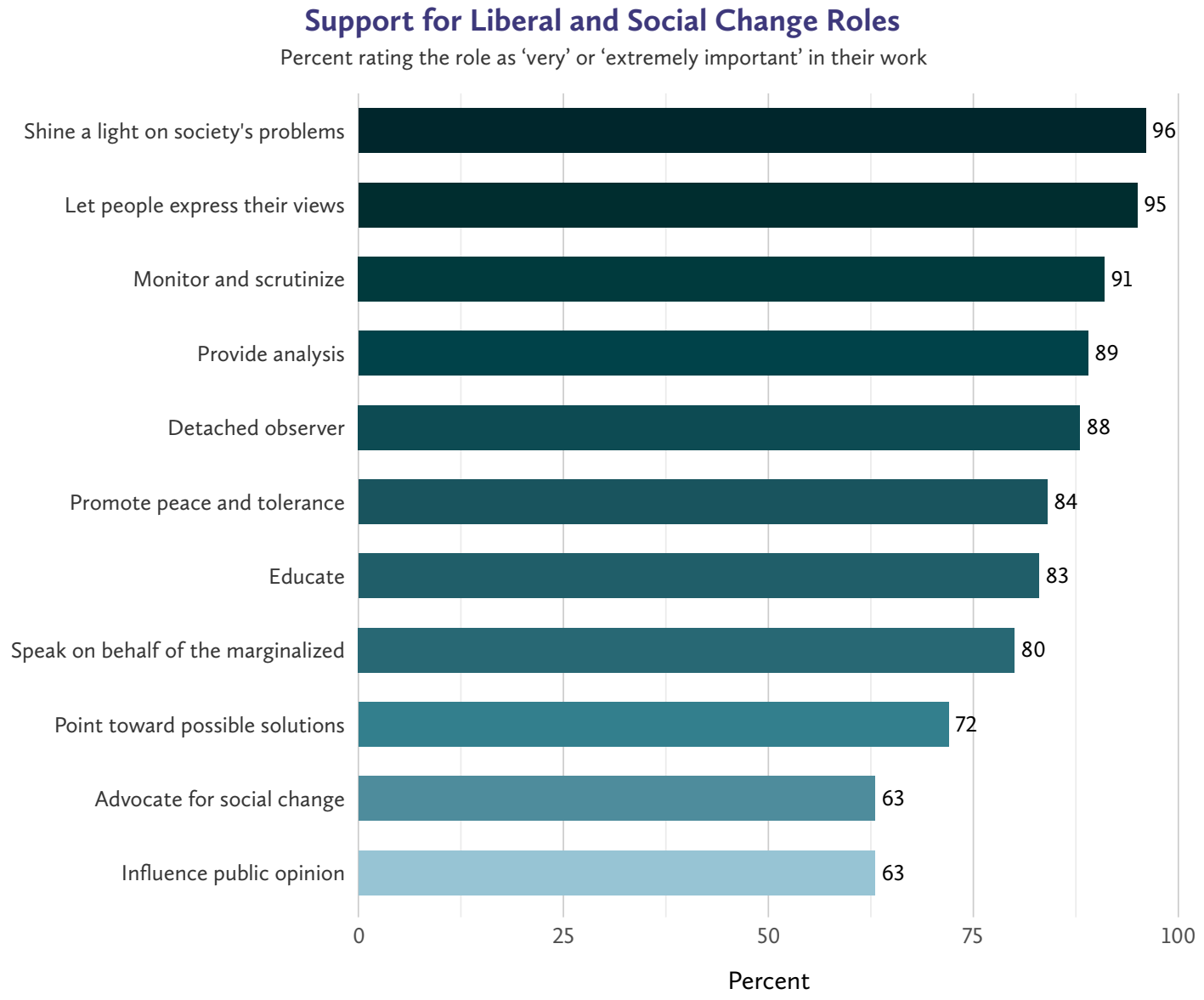
Chilean journalists have a low level of specialization in their work: they produce material for three platforms on average, and 76% do not have a specific sector or area to cover.

Journalistic roles

Regarding the roles of journalism, Chilean professionals strongly support a liberal conception. Thus, 96% consider the statement "Making social problems visible" extremely or very important. This is followed by "Facilitating the expression of multiple points of view" with 96% support; "Monitoring and overseeing those in power" with 91%; "Providing the information necessary for forming political opinions" with 89%; "Providing analysis of current events" with 89%; and "Being a neutral observer" with 88%.

Below are statements associated with the role of journalism as a promoter of social change: "Promoting peace and tolerance" (84% consider it extremely or very important), "Educating audiences" (83%), "Speaking up for the marginalized" (80%), "Pointing out possible solutions to social problems" (72%), and "Promoting social change" (63%). However, their support is also high and marks a tendency among Chilean journalists to agree with a wide variety of roles.





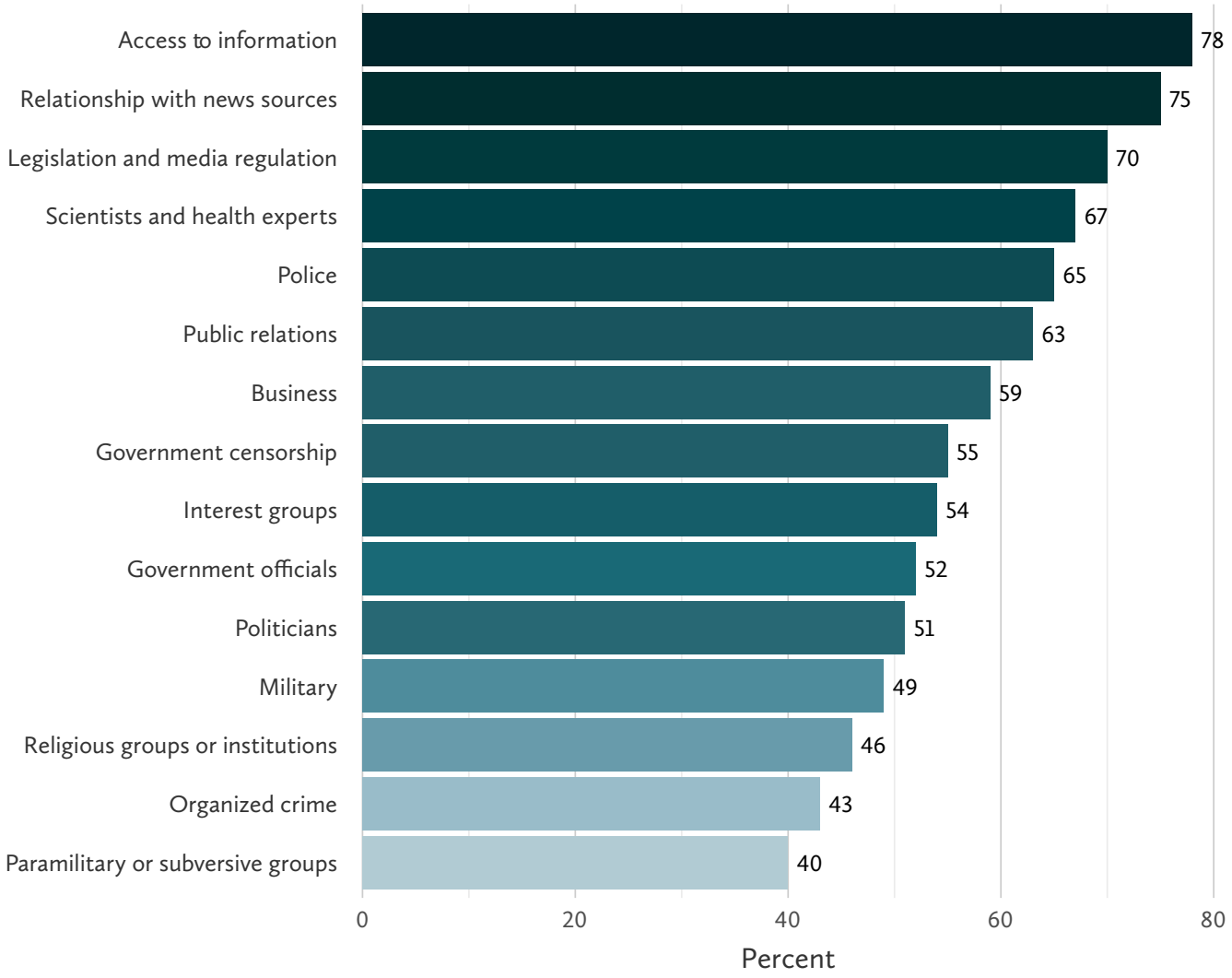
External influences and intimidation regarding professional work

They were also asked about external factors of influence and how much impact they had on their work as journalists. In this case, Chilean journalists only recognized one main important factor: "Access to information," which 81% considered "very" or "extremely influential". Other factors that emerged as important, both related to the practice of the profession, were "Relationships with news sources" (54% considered it "very" or "extremely influential") and "Media legislation and regulation" (46%). "Audience feedback" also had significant influence (50.5%). Other somewhat influential sources included "Scientists and health experts" (43%) and the police (22%).

Among the most common sources of undue pressure was "government censorship" (17%). Since it does not legally exist in Chile, we understand that it refers to pressure from authorities for journalists to avoid issues that might be harmful to the government or officials. Other sources have even less influence on the work of Chilean journalists: public relations (15% of those interviewed consider it "very" or "extremely influential"), businesspeople (14%), politicians (11%), government officials (10%), and pressure groups (10%).

External Influences on Journalism

Percent of journalists identifying each factor as influential



There is also a low incidence of acts of intimidation against journalists. For example, 17% report experiencing "insults or hate speech directed at them" "frequently" or "very frequently" in the last five years, and 11% have experienced "questioning of their moral principles" with the same frequency. The rest are significantly less common, although no less serious:

- Workplace harassment (5%)
- Hacking or blocking of websites or social networks (4%)
- Disclosure of your personal information (4%)
- Surveillance or espionage (4%)
- Sexual assault or sexual harassment (2%)
- Legal action as a result of journalistic work (1.5%)
- Arrests, detentions or imprisonment (0.3%)

Despite the low incidence of these acts of intimidation, a significant percentage of respondents report having taken measures to protect themselves in the last five years. For example, 45% have changed their personal routines (although the influence of COVID-19 is noticeable here), 32% have opted to self-censor, 28% have had to hide their journalist ID, and 28% have changed the topic or issue they were working on. Five other actions are less frequent but still serious: changing phone numbers or taking additional precautions to prevent their equipment from being tapped or tracked (14%), publishing anonymously or under a pseudonym (15%), requesting legal protection (9%), changing media outlets (13%), and leaking ideas or information to foreign media or publishing articles abroad (7%).

Consistent with the low levels of physical intimidation, respondents also reported low levels of concern for their "physical integrity." Only 23% of men and 14% of women "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with this concern. But the media crisis affects journalists in another way: their job security. Thirty-six percent are concerned about losing their jobs in the next 12 months. However, what most affects them is their emotional stability: 61% "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with the statement "I am concerned about my mental and emotional well-being."

Editorial autonomy

Chilean journalists report considerable editorial freedom in their work. Regarding personal freedom journalists have to select the news topics and stories they work on, 83% of men and 78% of women reported having a "great deal" or "some freedom" to do so. Similar values are observed when asked about the freedom to decide which aspects of the news should be highlighted: 85% of men and 84% of women reported having a "great deal" or "some freedom" to do so. The fact that more men report freedom to select topics is in part related to the fact that they tend to hold a higher position in the editorial hierarchy: 48% of women have no operational or strategic decision-making power in their newsrooms, compared to 30% among men interviewed, while 37% of men have strategic decision-making power in newsroom management, compared to only 13% of women.

Chilean journalists and social unrest

As we have noted, the 2019 social unrest represented a major challenge for Chilean journalists. Only 29% of them did not experience any intimidation during this period. The most common actions were insults or hate speech (56%), public discrediting of journalistic work (45%), and questioning of their moral principles (43%). Despite this, the majority of those surveyed said that the unrest did not fundamentally change their views on the role of journalism in society (68% said they had changed none, very little, or somewhat; 24% said they had changed significantly, and only 6% said they had changed radically).

Conclusion: The future of journalism and democracy in the country

Democracy and journalism are currently under threat in the Western world, while in Latin America the situation has always been fragile, and Chile is no exception. Although, compared to other countries in the region, the Chilean reality is seen as relatively safe for the practice of journalism, the truth is that journalists here face a combination of structural challenges and situations that have, to some extent, limited the exercise of their work. The journalists surveyed in this study are those who present the greatest job stability within their professional field, as they are able to dedicate the majority of their workday to their profession. However, they do so in a context of high uncertainty and fear of losing their job, and under high pressure and an increasing number of daily tasks. They also do so in an environment where they know that many of their peers must resort to multiple jobs, informal employment, or work in other fields.

Despite everything, they express agreement with fundamental roles for the practice of journalism, such as monitoring power, representing diverse voices, and critically analyzing reality. However, the data also reveal significant emotional insecurity. Although Chilean journalists do not report high levels of aggression or direct censorship, many take measures to protect their integrity, from modifying their routines to avoiding certain sensitive topics. These actions, which increased after the social unrest and the pandemic, also drove journalists away from the streets and entrenched a series of remote reporting practices. Chilean citizens are experiencing a crisis of trust in institutions, including journalism, which presents an enormous challenge in a profoundly changing environment. Professionals' fears appear to be increasing, and although the risks are still lower compared to other countries, Chilean journalists already foresee the possibility that they will increase, especially if phenomena such as organized crime increase in the country.

References

- Asociación de Agencias de Medios (AAM). (2024). *Inversión publicitaria en medios: Chile*. Recuperado de https://anda.cl/estudios/50297
- Consejo Nacional de Televisión (CNTV). (2018). SISTEMA TELEVISIVO CHILENO. Recuperado de https://www.cntv.cl/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/sistema_televisivo_en_chile.pdf
- Faure, A., Jofré, D., Jara-Reyes, R., & Lagos Lira, C. (2025). A Territorialized Business Model? Exploring the Objective and Subjective Conceptualizations of the Local Digital News Media in Chile. *International Journal of Communication*, 19, 617–638.
- Grassau, D., Ortega-Gunckel, C., & Puente, S. (2023). Periodismo en duelo: adaptación al entorno digital en Chile a partir de la crisis social y la pandemia de COVID-19. *Estudios sobre el Mensaje Periodístico*, *29*(2). https://dx.doi.org/10.5209/esmp.87262
- Gronemeyer, M. E., & Porath, W. (2017). Tendencias de la posición editorial en diarios de referencia en Chile: El arte de dosificar la crítica frente a la actuación de los actores políticos. *Revista de Ciencia Política (Santiago)*, *37*(1), 177-202. http://dx.doi.org/10.4067/S0718-090X2017000100008
- Julio, P., Mujica, C., Fernández Medina, F. J., & Bruna, A. (2021). Chile: El año en que nos quedamos en casa. En M. Alvarado Miquilena (Ed.), *Ficción televisiva iberoamericana en tiempos de pandemia* (pp. 143-175). Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. https://doi.org/10.7764/obitel.21.S.5
- Heiss, C. (2021). Revuelta social y proceso constituyente en Chile. Revista de Ciencias Sociales Ambos Mundos, (2), 69-78. https://doi.org/10.14198/ambos.20981
- Mancinas-Chávez, R., Acosta, M. J. R., & Benítez, J. C. F. (2024). Prisa Radio, desde los orígenes de la radio en España hasta la expansión en el ámbito hispanoamericano. *Signo y Pensamiento*, *43*. https://doi.org/10.11144/Javeriana.syp43.prdo
- Mönckeberg, M. O. (2009). *Los magnates de la prensa: concentración de los medios de comunicación en Chile*. Debate.
- Núñez-Mussa, E. (2021). Chile: Crisis of trust and a precarious industry. In J. Trappel, & T. Tomaz (Eds.), *The Media for Democracy Monitor 2021: How leading news media survive digital transformation* (Vol. 2) (pp. 85–146). Nordicom, University of Gothenburg. https://doi.org/10.48335/9789188855428-3.

Argentina: Journalism without a Safety Net

Adriana Amado, Camilo José Cela University

Reinventing journalism in precarious contexts

Throughout the century, media development has been a policy that has received special state support, placing Argentina as the country with the most media outlets in the region. A survey of academic publications reporting on media outlets in 19 Latin American countries found that Argentina accounts for 26.5% of the 2,904 identified media outlets and 42% of the Latin American radio spectrum (Rodríguez-Urra et al., 2023). This study concludes that Argentina is the country with the largest number of media outlets per population, which is reinforced by the fact that it is the eighth largest country in the world in terms of land area, despite a low population density. Furthermore, only about 10% of the country offers reasonable conditions for the practice of professional journalism, according to a survey by a local journalists' organization, the Argentine Journalism Forum (FOPEA, 2021), which mapped 13,527 journalists across the country.

There is no census of journalists in Argentina, nor is there any economic data on the profession because there isn't even a dedicated tax bracket for journalism that would allow us to gauge the number of practicing professionals. Therefore, to identify the sample for this survey of Argentine journalists for the Worlds of Journalism Study, we used the estimate made by the Argentine Journalism Forum.

Our sample included 376 journalists, with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, in accordance with the guidelines of the third wave of the Worlds of Journalism project (WJS3).[1] Of surveyed journalists, 42% were women and 58% men, with a mean age of 45.62 years. The median indicates that half of the journalists are over 45 years old, with an average of 20 years of journalism experience. This suggests that the traditional definition of journalism proposed by the global project refers in Argentina to veterans of the profession who work in traditional media, especially newspapers (26%) and radio (27%).

These demographic characteristics reflect the profile of the country's professional journalists, that is, those whose primary source of income is journalism. During fieldwork, numerous cases of young people and women in the profession were found working in alternative forms of practice, closer to what the WJS3 defines as peripheral journalism (Oller Alonso et al., 2019). This practice of journalism in digital media, apps and content production for organizations and businesses has become essential for those who find it difficult to fit into a long-shrinking media system. Journalists from digital media who fit the definition of professional journalism represent only one

1 Data collection was carried out between 2022 and 2023 through self-administered questionnaires and, in specific cases, telephone interviews managed on the Qualtrics platform by a trained team from the Argentine Business University.. The study was carried out within the framework of the project P23S01 Journalists and communicators in public communication: processes and influences of the Universidad Argentina de la Empresa, with the team led by Adriana Amado and made up of José Crettaz, Maximiliano Bongiovanni, Nicolás Rotelli and Facundo Luque.

in ten of those interviewed (11%), a modest proportion given the numerous small digital ventures in the country. However, most of these journalists work precariously—with journalism as their side jobs—so they could not be included in this study, which focused on professionals working 50% or more of their time as journalists.

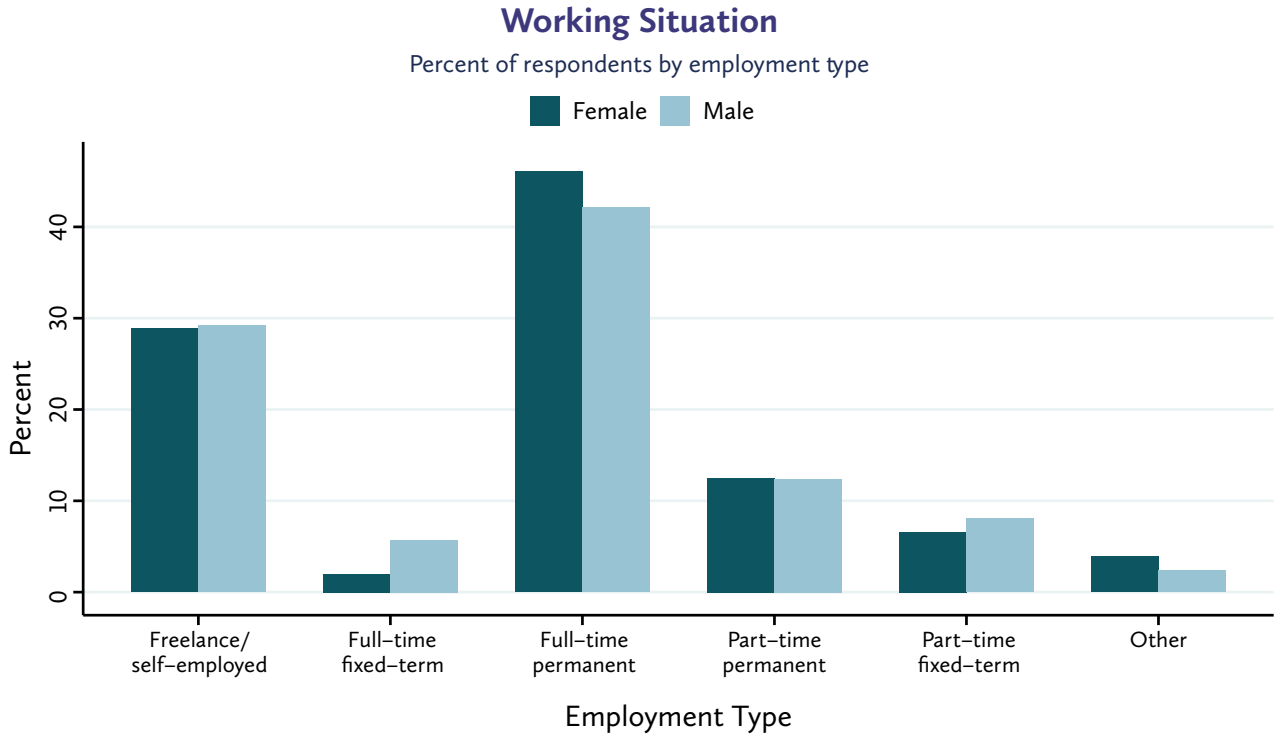
Journalism in peripheral conditions

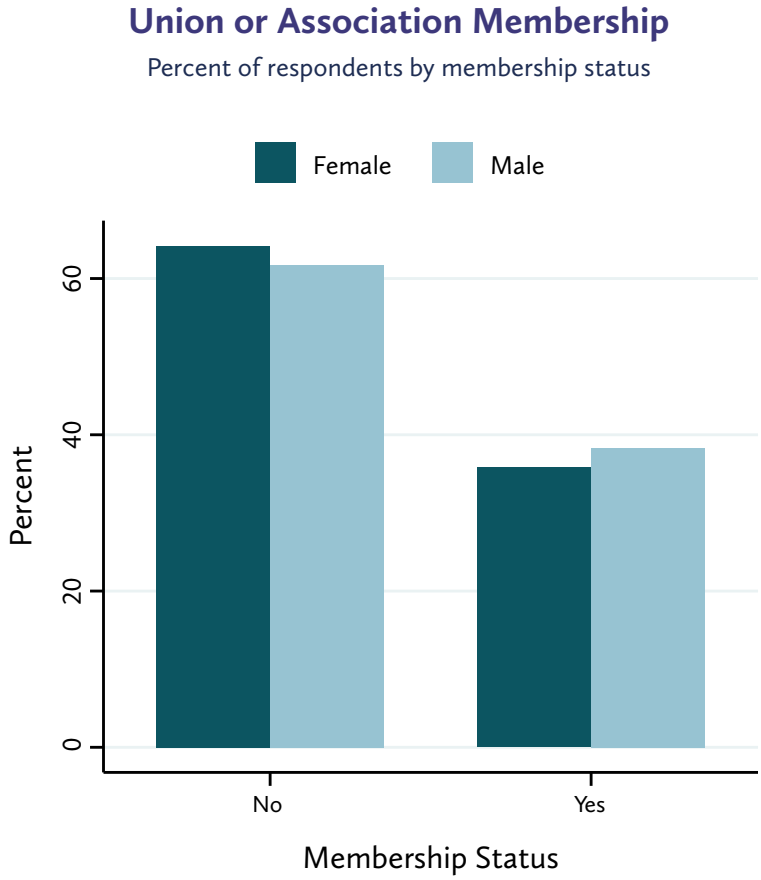
The results of the study in Argentina offer interesting insights into the conditions of journalism practiced under precarious working conditions. The lack of resources, even in the most established media outlets, means that the main influences are resource limitations rather than direct threats.

Working conditions

The absence of legal and professional frameworks facilitated the growth of precarious employment. The 36-hour work week (Article 34, Law 12908) comes from a 1946 regulation that is unlikely to be met in a recessionary economy, with annual inflation of more than 200 percent by 2023. Even among journalists who have permanent contracts (44% of the sample), this maximum is difficult to meet, given that multiple jobs and extended workdays are common practice. Among the journalists in the sample, 69% have some type of stable contract, and 50% are full-time. The fact that a minority (37%) participate in professional or trade associations shows why it is difficult to enforce wages or schedules stipulated in collective bargaining agreements.

Multiple employment, expressed in the category of part-time and self-employment, accounts for one-third of the sample. In Argentina, it has been very common since the end of the last century for a journalist to work for several media outlets, in some cases producing their own media outlet or a subcontracted space. The gender distribution shows a slight majority of men in full-time jobs (53%), permanent part-time contracts (57%), and freelance or self-employment (54%).

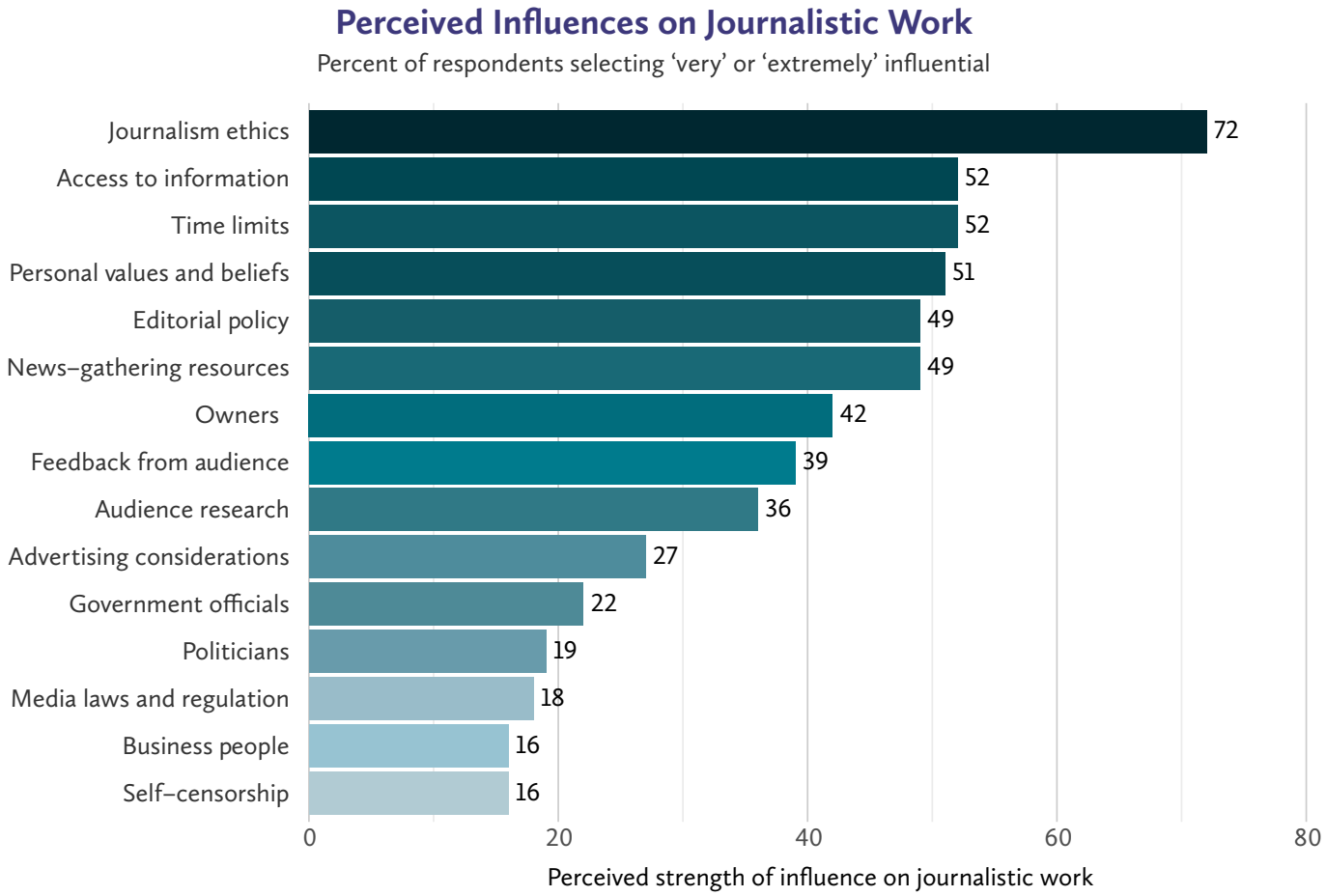




Influences on journalism

If Argentine journalism offers a case of interest, it is because it has been established without a legal framework or a tax framework. This weak institutionalization is a consequence of the limited presence of professional and trade associations, and the lack of ethical frameworks that western journalism relies on to provide support and guidance to professionals (Carlson & Lewis, 2015). Paradoxically, when respondents were asked about influencing factors, the most frequently mentioned factor was journalistic ethics (71% considered it to be very or extremely influential). Given the lack of style manuals or a national ethical framework, this response speaks to the need for agreed-upon ethical principles. Procedural influencing factors are next, such as access to information (62%), time constraints (55%), and information gathering (53%).

Media regulation is mentioned by half (46%). The last reform, in 2009, involved only audiovisual media, and the law on access to public information is even more recent (2017), so it cannot yet be said that years of a culture of secrecy and lack of public statistics have been reversed. Since 2019, Argentina has dropped 32 places in the Transparency International ranking, obtaining 37 points out of 100 assigned to the most transparent country, according to the organization's annual index (Transparency International, 2023). Restrictions on information are greater in the provinces, where journalistic investigation and opinion are frequently discredited and persecuted as disinformation and speech hostile toward the government.



Press freedom

The self-perception of editorial autonomy to report is high, both in the selection of stories (61% declare having a lot or total freedom) and in the decision of which aspects to emphasize in their stories (65% declare a lot or total freedom), although they perceive less freedom of the media outlet (41%).

In these contexts, it is clear that the main security concerns relate to financial and work-related issues, which impact mental and emotional stability. Historically, Argentina has not had serious cases of physical threats, so it is the least mentioned aspect. The main threat reported is discrediting and personal insults (58% frequently and sometimes) and questioning of moral principles (39%).

The lack of an institutional and ethical framework explains why, when faced with threats, people seek support from colleagues (78%) and the media outlet (61%), rather than from journalistic organizations (36%) or NGOs (19%), confirming the weak institutionalization of these organizations. In a shrinking labor market, changing media outlets does not appear to be an option, as only 13% did so. Only 15% sought legal protection, and only 6% requested assistance from the government, which is often the main source of threats, as systematically reported by the monitoring of attacks carried out by FOPEA.[2]

2 Freedom of Expression Monitoring, at https://monitoreo.fopea.org/

Although these personal reactions confirm the weak institutional framework and lack of ethical frameworks, the positive side is that the main measure is greater care in verifying data (58%). The other most frequently mentioned measures are self-censorship (42%), followed by changing topic or section (36%), security training (29%), and changing personal routines (24%).

Conclusion: Journalism in unstable contexts

Journalism in Argentina faces particular conditions, such as restrictions on access to public information, a lack of public data, and a strong dependence of the media on state funding, common to other countries in the region (Márquez-Ramírez et al., 2021).

Since the administration of the first wave of the WJS survey (Amado & Waisbord, 2018), solutions have focused on media concentration, with reforms to facilitate entry into the audiovisual sector and consolidate state-dependent media outlets. The resulting landscape is a system that imposes personal survival strategies on journalists and weakens guarantees of access to information.

Institutional government advertising became a subsidy for numerous journalistic ventures that were left at the mercy of government funds. The use of official advertising makes the national government among the main advertisers in the first two decades of the 21st century (Crettaz, 2019). All this lacked counterweights that guarantee transparent mechanisms for distributing public funds to media outlets, nor the mechanisms of self-financial autonomy that public media are supposed to have throughout the entire system dependent on the executive branch. This includes the state-run Argentine Radio and Television system and the media systems dependent on local governments and universities that receive state funds.

The need for alternative funding is evident in the participation of Argentine media outlets in the Google News Initiative program. Of the 1,050 organizations in Latin America, 230 were from Argentina (Google News Initiative, n.d.). Nearly all (90%) of the organizations eligible to receive funding were small newsrooms with fewer than 26 journalists from local media outlets struggling to continue serving their communities.

The fact that the greatest threat reported by journalists is related to procedures highlights the impact that the lack of resources and access to information has on journalistic work. There are indicators that the majority accept the resources distributed by press offices and institutional channels from sources, which function as information subsidies to compensate for resources journalists lack. In questions about ethical practices, an overwhelming majority rejected ethically accepting money from sources (90% of respondents versus 9% who answered that it could be justified in certain cases). However, the percentage is reversed when the question refers to gifts or assistance from sources, where 75% admitted that it was justifiable. This gray area includes travel, material provided by the source, or personal attention.

The case of Argentine journalism is telling of a system that, in the name of media plurality competing with commercial media, has created a system of self-employed journalism with serious sustainability challenges. Adding to this situation is the low level of trust in news and mainstream media (Newman et al., 2023), which prevents the development of paid models.

This financially weak position, which journalists recognize as their weakest point, has facilitated the high politicization of information (Amado, 2022) and the resulting polarization of the press with governments of different political persuasions. This second wave confirms that the processes of precarization observed in 2012 have accelerated and poses scenarios for professional practices in what is called the Global South (Waisbord, 2015; Waisbord & Amado, 2023) that are very different from those in countries with a robust press. This is a kind of moonlighting journalism, which makes practices that in the West are considered peripheral into a regular occurrence.

References

- Amado, A. (2012). Periodismo argentino: en busca de datos sobre la profesión. *Revista Austral Comunicación*, *1*(2), 113–135. http://www.austral.edu.ar/ojs/index.php/australcomunicacion/issue/view/3/showToc
- Amado, A. (2022). Politización de la desinformación en contextos de información devaluada. El caso Latinoamérica. *Revista Internacional de Comunicación y Desarrollo RICD*, *4*(17). https://revistas.usc.gal/index.php/ricd/article/view/8793/12532#citationscontainer
- Amado, A., & Waisbord, S. (2018). Journalists and Media Ownership: Practices and Professional Conditions of Argentine Journalism. *Brazilian Journalism Research*, *14*(2), 364–383. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.25200/BJR.v14n2.2018.1090
- Carlson, M., & Lewis, S. (2015). *Boundaries of Journalism: Professionalism, Practices and Participation*. Routledge.
- Crettaz, J. (2019). La publicidad gubernamental en Argentina entre 2000-2017: crecimiento exponencial, usufructo electoral y crisis de los medios. *Cuadernos.Info*, *44*, 99–115. https://doi.org/10.7764/cdi.44.1630
- FOPEA. (2021, June). *Desiertos informativos*. Google News Initiative. https://desiertosinformativos.fopea.org/dashboard/index.html
- Google News Initiative. (n.d.). *Cómo apoya Google al periodismo y a la industria de noticias en Argentina*. Retrieved January 5, 2025, from https://blog.google/supportingnews-argentina/#resena
- Márquez-Ramírez, M., Amado, A., & Waisbord, S. (2021). Labor Precarity and Gig Journalism in Latin America. In *Newswork and Precarity*. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003057376-13
- Mellado, C. (2020). *Beyond Journalistic Norms Role Performance and News in Comparative Perspective*. Routledge.
- Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Eddy, K., Robertson, C. T., & Nielsen, R. K. (2023). *Digital News Report 2023*. https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2023-06/Digital_News_Report_2023.pdf
- Oller Alonso, M., Shapiro, I., Andresen, K., Anikina, M., De Maio, M., Hamada, B., Hanusch, F., Hollings, J., Hildur Kolbeins, G., Hughes, S., Zeleza Manda, L., Mbozi, P., & Spyridou, L.-P. (2019). *Defining the Worlds of Journalism Study Sample*. https://worldsofjournalism.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/WJS3_Definitions_working_paper.pdf.
- Rodríguez-Urra, C., Trillo-Domínguez, M., & Herrero-Solana, V. (2023). Mapa mediático hispanoamericano: una aproximación desde la academia. *Revista de Comunicación*, *22*. https://doi.org/10.26441/RC22.1-2023-3105
- Sociedad Interamericana de Prensa. (2021, April 23). *Conclusiones de la Reunión de Medio Año de la SIP*. https://www.sipiapa.org/notas/1214533-conclusiones-la-reunion-medio-ano-la-sip
- Tejkalová, A., de Beer, A. S., Berganza, R., Kalyango, Y., Amado, A., Ozolina, L., Láb, F., Akhter, R., Moreira, S. V., & Masduki. (2017). In Media We Trust. *Journalism Studies*, *9699*(February), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2017.1279026
- Transparency International. (2023). *Corruption Perception Index*. https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/argentina
- V-Dem Institute. (2023). *Democracy Report 2023. Defiance in Defense or Autocratization*. https://v-dem.net/publications/democracy-reports/
- Waisbord, S. (2015). De-Westernization and cosmopolitan media studies. *International Communication*, 178–200.
- Waisbord, S., & Amado, A. (2023). What Defines Journalism in/from the Global South? In *The Routledge Companion to Journalism in the Global South* (pp. 13–23). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003298144-3

A Journalist's Perspective from Argentina: The Problem of Sustainability

José Crettaz, Journalist, general editor of Convercom.info. Professor and researcher at Argentine Business University (UADE)

For some time, journalism has ceased to be the sole producer, verifier and distributor of news. It coexists in these roles with those who were its sources just two decades ago, who no longer need intermediaries because they now participate directly in the public conversation through social media. They also compete with content creators, disseminators and explainers of information who, without ties to journalistic tradition, are increasingly more professional in their fields.

Competition for the audience is fierce, the public is fragmented, and the need to concentrate views to monetize them encourages practices that in the past would have been questioned as sensationalist. It's a kind of "journalism of indignation" based almost exclusively on editorial columns consumed by audience segments hoping to be confirmed in their own opinions.

This situation arises in a context like Argentina's, where business models based on advertising, sales of copies or subscriptions have been replaced by subsidies—that is, resources that do not arise from the value that information adds to audiences but rather from activities outside the profession.

These may be subsidies from platforms like Google and Meta for digital transition or the development of new media, which failed to foster viable organizations because when the grant runs out, the media outlet does, too. Or subsidies from journalists themselves, who sustain their work with multiple jobs or by transferring resources from other jobs to sustain a microbusiness of subsistence. But none of them is more harmful and dangerous than the majority political subsidy.

Much of Argentine journalism has been subsidized for decades by politicians through government advertising, either through direct contracts or through tax exemptions exchanged for advertising space. This source of state revenue has its private counterpart: corporations or business owners who advertise to ensure media coverage that, when necessary, serves as a counternarrative. In public opinion jargon, this system is referred to as "sobres" or "blindaje mediático," referring to the malpractice and corruption that were not characteristic of the profession in Argentina at current levels.

These and other subsidies fueled a media bubble whose number grows without any corresponding audience or community following. Every time the volume of subsidies decreases, that bubble crackles, and the backlash of accusations on social media increases. Ultimately, the price of that money is paid dearly in reputation and credibility.

Perhaps it's possible to break this vicious cycle with a drastic decision: explicitly and publicly renouncing political subsidies. This will force innovation in the search for models that can be genuinely sustainable and will help regain lost credibility.

Conclusions

Final Reflections

Summer Harlow, Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas, University of Texas at Austin

The collection of chapters in this volume represents one of the most comprehensive portraits to date of journalists in Latin America. Based on findings from 11 Latin American countries included in the third round of the global Worlds of Journalism Study, this book offers journalists, educators and policy-makers a unique glimpse into what it means to be a journalist in Latin America today.

Notably, the contributions from scholars, graduate students, and journalists working throughout the region highlight the resilience and commitment to press freedoms and democracy among journalists, despite widespread precarity and threats. The journalists surveyed in these 11 countries are confronting a myriad of common challenges across the region, including mistreatment and violence, self-censorship, and emotional strains that come from workplace, physical, and mental insecurities. While the toll of physical and mental risks associated with doing journalism in one of the most hostile regions for journalists is well documented, workplace precarity associated with a lack of full-time contracts, low pay, and juggling the production of content across multiple platforms is emerging as a major risk threatening the sustainability of quality journalism in Latin America. Equity in newsrooms also is something journalists must contend with. Gender disparities can be seen in multiple countries, whether in terms of workplace conditions such as pay and leadership positions, or the threats and harassment journalists endure. Further, the growth of disinformation, digital threats, and new forms of censorship amid a rise in populist authoritarianism complicate an already insecure environment for journalists, potentially exacerbating the challenges journalists must confront.

While much of the findings presented in this volume point to the hazards of being a journalist, there also are signs pointing to ways in which the profession is evolving and even strengthening. Patterns of media employment indicate continued relevance of print and radio journalism, but the rise of digital-native outlets and their importance to the news landscape is becoming clearer. Considering that many of these digital outlets are independent with a focus on watchdog journalism, holding power to account, and defending human rights and democracy, the growing centrality of such sites employing increasingly more journalists is a promising sign for the future of a financially and editorially independent journalism. These sites also potentially offer opportunities for innovation, increased collaboration, and advocacy for safer, more equitable working conditions.

Whether they worked for legacy or digital media, journalists surveyed also were generally confident in the individual autonomy they had to choose what stories they covered and how they reported them. Of course, there's no denying that their perceptions of autonomy often conflict with real-world constraints, as evidenced by so many journalists' beliefs that the media in their country were not fully free. Still, journalists' claims about autonomy, even in the face of limited or declining press freedoms, underscore the importance that Latin American journalists place on fulfilling their roles and responsibilities related to support for normative models of democracy.

Another positive indicator of the strength of the profession is the level of education among journalists in these 11 countries. The high levels of professional training indicate a desire for career development as well as keeping their skills and knowledge up-to-date.

It's also important to highlight that while there are shared realities across the region, specific challenges, opportunities, and experiences vary from country to country. The *Worlds of Journalism Study* data in this volume thus is valuable for identifying not just cross-border and region-specific trends, but also differences between and within countries.

Ultimately, these chapters signal a call to action. Surveyed journalists' responses point to the need for news organizations to invest more in safety, overall well-being, diversity, and training. This book also emphasizes the need for support for all the freelancers and others in the precarious position of working without a full-time contract and therefore potentially without the resources and support that news outlets might provide. Universities and educators should ensure that they are both updating curricula and supporting research that reflects journalists' lived experiences. Besides news organizations and educators, governments also have a responsibility: they must do more to protect press freedom and uphold democratic values. Finally, these chapters stress the importance of regional cooperation and international solidarity.

As this volume has shown, journalists in Latin America are playing an ever-more important democratic and public service role. Working in the face of adversity, these journalists must be trained, supported, and their voices amplified, as their journalism underpins informed societies and stronger democracies.

As Knight Center Director Rosental Calmon Alves noted in his foreword to this volume, journalism is the "best profession in the world." Together, the Worlds of Journalism Study researchers, the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas, the School of Communication and Department of Journalism and Media Management at the University of Miami, the Center for Global Change and Media at the University of Texas at Austin, and all of those involved in the publication of this book, recognize the enduring importance of journalists and their work, and our sincere hope is that these chapters offer a path for progress driven by data, solidarity, and a shared commitment to Latin American journalism.

Author Bios

1. **Rosental C. Alves** *holds the UNESCO Chair in Communication and the Knight Chair in Journalism at the Moody College of Communication's School of Journalism at the University of Texas at Austin, and is the founder and director of the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas at UT-Austin. Alves, a veteran Brazilian journalist, is a former president of Orbicom, the global network of UNESCO Chairs in Communication, and is currently the chair of the board of the Maria Moors Cabot Awards at Columbia University. He also was a Nieman Fellow at Harvard University.*

2. **Adriana Amado** *is a full professor at Camilo José Cela University, where she coordinates the Audiovisual Communication and New Media degree program. She holds a PhD in Social Sciences from FLACSO. She is a journalist and promoter of technology and media issues, and serves on the Board of Poder Ciudadano (the Argentine chapter of Transparency International) and BAcademics.*

3. **Carlos Arcila Calderón** *is a full professor in the College of Sociology and Communication at the University of Salamanca. A specialist in digital communication and data analysis, he is a member of international projects on social media and hate speech. He holds a PhD from Complutense University and edits the journal Disertaciones.*

4. **Jesús Arroyave** *is a full professor and director of the Doctoral Programme in the School of Social Communication-Journalism at the Universidad del Norte in Barranquilla, Colombia. His research interests include media and journalism studies, health and development communication, and communication theory and knowledge production in Latin America.*

5. **David Blanco-Herrero** *holds a PhD from the University of Salamanca and is currently a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Amsterdam. His work addresses disinformation, anti-immigrant hate speech and journalistic ethics. He is also editor of the Anuario Electrónico de Estudios en Comunicación Social 'Disertaciones', and participates in projects on health information and media trust.*

6. **Julieta Brambila** *is a specialist in political communication, journalism and gender. She is committed to the rights of LGBTQ+ people. Since 2022, she has served as the general director of Communication, Public Information Service, and Institutional Relations at Mexico's National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI). In academia, she teaches at the Latin American College of Social Sciences. She holds a PhD in Communication from the University of Leeds in the United Kingdom.*

7. **Vanessa Bravo** *is a professor of Strategic Communications at Elon University in North Carolina, where she is also assistant dean of its School of Communications. She has a B.A. from the Universidad de Costa Rica, and M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Florida (where she attended as a Fulbright Scholar). Her research resides at the intersection of the fields of international public relations and journalism, public diplomacy and immigration studies.*

8. **Josefina Buxadé Castelán** *has a Master's degree in Communication from the Autonomous University of Barcelona. Sshe combines her career in public service (commissioner, deputy) with her academic work at the Universidad de las Américas in Puebla. Her areas of interest focus on the study and teaching of journalism and communication, with a special emphasis on gender perspectives.*

9. **José Crettaz** *is a journalist specializing in telecommunications, media and technology, and is also a university professor. As a journalist, he was a writer, editor and columnist for the newspaper La Nación between 1997 and 2017 and collaborated with other media outlets in Ibero-America. He is a professor and director of the Communications Department at the College of Communication at the Argentine Business University (UADE). His latest book is "Media Convergence: From Natural Language to Artificial Intelligence" (Convercom, 2025).*

10. **Lourdes Cueva Chacón** *is an assistant professor for the School of Journalism and Media Studies at San Diego State University. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin in 2020. She earned her Master of Arts in Communication from the University of Texas at El Paso in 2010 and her Master of Science in Information Science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2005.*

11. **Marcos Paulo da Silva** *is an associate professor at the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil. He holds a PhD in Social Communication from the Methodist University of São Paulo, Brazil, with a doctorate internship at Syracuse University, U.S., and a MA in Communication from the São Paulo State University, Brazil.*

12. **Celia del Palacio Montiel** *is a renowned Mexican researcher, PhD in History, and member of the National System of Researchers Level 3. She is also coordinator of the University of Guadalajara's Freedom of Expression Observatory. She has dedicated her career to the study of the press and journalism in Mexico, with a special emphasis on violence against journalists.*

13. **Martín Echeverría** *is with the Meritorious Autonomous University of Puebla (BUAP) in Mexico. He is co-Chair of the Political Communication Section of the International Association for Media and Communication Research. His work has been published in the International Journal of Press/Politics, International Journal of Communication and other leading Ibero American journals. His latest book is "State-sponsored disinformation around the globe" (Routledge, 2025).*

14. **Miguel Ángel Flores Olmos** *is a Bolivian journalist and strategic communicator. He holds an undergraduate degree in Social Communication from the Bolivian Catholic University and a Master's degree in Communication Management from the University of San Andrés. He has been an editor and writer for national news outlets and director of various corporate and institutional accounts at Extend, a corporate communications agency. He is part of the Worlds of Journalism study team for Bolivia.*

15. **Maximiliano Frías-Vázquez** *holds a PhD from the University of Salamanca. His research interests include journalistic roles, anti-immigrant hate speech and social network analysis, with applications in big data. He collaborates on international projects such as the Worlds of Journalism Study and Journalistic Role Performance, and is a member of the Audiovisual Content Observatory.*

16. **Silvia DalBen Furtado** *is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Texas at Austin, where she investigates the use of artificial intelligence in Latin American journalism. Her current research is focused on computational journalism, AI ethics, global media, streaming television, platform studies and computational methods.*

17. **Miguel Garcés Prettel** *holds a PhD in Communication from the University of the North and is an associate professor at Technological University of Bolívar in Colombia. He is a senior researcher accredited by Colombia's Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation. His research focuses on journalism and health communication, and his work has been published in prestigious international journals, including Journalism Studies, Digital Journalism, Comunicar, International Journal of Communication and Cadernos de Saúde Pública.*

18. **Javier Garza Ramos** *is a journalist based in Torreón (northern Mexico) where he founded and heads Horizonte Lagunero, a local news platform on radio and social media. He also co-hosts El Noti, one of the most popular news podcasts in México. He also was a Knight Fellow at the International Center for Journalists working on digital security and has led training programs for editors and reporters at the World Association of News Publishers and the Interamerican Press Association. In 2022, he received the Maria Moors Cabot Prize for journalism in the Americas given by Columbia University. He is a graduate of the Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City and the University of Texas at Austin.*

19. **Celeste González de Bustamante** *is the founding director of the Center for Global Change and Media in the Moody College of Communication at the University of Texas at Austin, where she holds the Mary Gibbs Jones Centennial Chair in Communication. She is a full professor in the School of Journalism and Media at UT Austin and she serves as chair of the Mexico Center in the Teresa Lozano Long Institute for Latin American Studies in the College of Liberal Arts.*

20. **Rubén Arnoldo González** *is a researcher at the National Council of Public Administrations (CONAHCYT), a PhD in Communication Studies and a professor at BUAP. With a background in journalism, his research focuses on journalistic professionalization, violence against the press and media systems in emerging democratic contexts.*

21. **Daniela Grassau** *has a doctorate in Sociology and a master 's degree in social communication. She is a journalist and an associate professor in the School of Communications at the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate classes in the areas of communication theories and methodology. She researches communication and disasters, journalism studies, public opinion, and visual studies.*

22. **Armando Gutiérrez Ortega** *is a full-time professor at the Autonomous University of Baja California with experience in journalism in complex environments, the professional development of communicators and innovation ecosystems. He is head of the Digital Teaching Resources Laboratory and a member of the international research consortium Worlds of Journalism Study.*

23. **Summer Harlow** *is associate director of the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas at the University of Texas at Austin. She earned a PhD in Journalism and an MA in Latin American Studies. Her research examines the intersections of journalism, activism and technology in Latin America. Currently she is an associate editor for the academic journal* Journalism Studies.

24. **Sallie Hughes** *holds a PhD and is full professor at the University of Miami. She was co-coordinator of the Latin American region of WJS from 2019-2024. Her work on change, safety and resilience in journalism has been widely published. With colleagues, she received the 2024 Wolfgang Donsbach Outstanding Journal Article of the Year Award from the International Communication Association, for "Conceptualizing Journalists' Safety around the Globe."*

25. **Lilian Kanashiro** *earned a B.A. in Communications (U. Lima), and an M.A. in Political Sciences (Pontifical Catholic University of Peru). Professionally, she held positions in the Ombudsman's Office (1999-2003) and developed consultancies in the public and private sectors. She currently works as a professor of Semiotics, Discourse Analysis, and Research Methodology at the University of Lima.*

26. **José Luis Lemini Camarillo** *is a journalist and academic researcher specializing in communication and journalism routines, theories, and models. He has participated in international research projects on journalistic practices, such as the Worlds of Journalism Study and Journalistic Role Performance, as well as in the Press and Democracy Program (PRENDE) at the Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City,, which specializes in the training and professionalization of journalists in Mexico. He currently teaches undergraduate and graduate programs at Anáhuac University in Mexico City.*

27. **Karles Daniel Antonio Manzo** *is a PhD candidate in Communication from Ibero American University, with experience in research on health and environmental communication. He has participated in international projects such as WJS and JRP. His interests include media cycle analysis, audience research and the evaluation of public policies related to these topics.*

28. **Mireya Márquez Ramírez** *is a professor of Journalism Studies and Media Theory at the Department of Communications, Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City, and visiting professor at Bournemouth University. She received her doctoral degree (Ph.D.) in Media and Communications from Goldsmiths, University of London, U.K. (2012). Her research interests include media capture, media systems in Latin America, comparative journalism cultures, journalistic roles, journalistic professionalism and labor, news-making processes, journalists' safety, and beat journalism, especially health and sports journalism.*

29. **Luz Mely Reyes** *is co-founder and general director of Efecto Cocuyo, a digital native media outlet specializing in human rights, politics and sensitive topics. With a strong background as a reporter and editor, she has contributed her insightful perspectives to renowned publications such as The Washington Post in Spanish and collaborated with prestigious media outlets like El País of Spain. She is a 2024 ICFJ Knight Fellow for Journalism in Exile and a 2025 Mellon Fellow.*

30. **Janara Nicoletti** *is a researcher and lecturer at the Digital Methods Department at the University of Siegen and a freelance lecturer at Deutsche Welle Akademie. She is co-leader of the Latin America and Caribbean region of the Journalism Safety Research Network (JSRN) and a researcher associated with the Erich Brost Institute for International Journalism (TU Dortmund, Germany) and the Observatory of Journalistic Ethics (objETHOS/UFSC, Brazil). Her research focuses on journalists' work precarity and safety, journalism quality, and ethics.*

31. **Yanancy Noguera** *is a journalist and a social entrepreneur. She is the founder and director of Punto y Aparte, a collaborative program of good journalism between students and experienced journalists. She previously was the Editor-in-Chief of the Costa Rican newspapers La Nación (2010-2014) and El Financiero (1999-2010). She is also a university professor in the School of Collective Communication at the Universidad de Costa Rica and in the Journalism School at the Universidad Latina de Costa Rica.*

32. **Martín Oller Alonso** *is a scholar with a PhD in Journalism from Rey Juan Carlos University of Madrid (2012) who holds a master's in advanced studies in Communication (2009). His research spans several international projects, including MEDIADELCOM, PHARM, Journalistic Role Performance Study (JRP), Worlds of Journalism Study (WJS), and studies in Pre-professional and Journalistic Cultures (Switzerland, Spain, Ecuador, Cuba, Venezuela, Honduras), focusing on a comparative analysis across several countries and world regions.*

33. **Constanza Ortega-Gunckel** *is a doctoral candidate in Communication Sciences at the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile. Her principal areas of investigation are risk communication, crisis journalism, and political communication.*

34. **William Porath** *holds a PhD in Political Science from the Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz, Germany. He graduated as a journalist from the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile. He is currently a full professor at the College of Communications of said university. His lines of research are political communication and journalism studies.*

35. **Víctor Quintanilla-Sangüeza**, *from Bolivia, is a journalism scholar, particularly in relation to its connection to technology. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Social Communication from the San Andrés University in Bolivia. He holds a Master's and PhD in Communication from Ibero American University in Mexico City. He has worked in Bolivian national media outlets as well as in public sector entities. He is currently a co-researcher for Bolivia in the Worlds of Journalism study.*

36. **Jeannine E. Relly** *is a professor in the School of Journalism with a courtesy appointment in the School of Government and Public Policy at The University of Arizona. She is affiliated with the Humanitarian Assistance and Technical Support Faculty and the university's Center for Latin American Studies.*

37. **Jessica Retis** *is director of the School of Journalism at the University of Arizona. She has a B.A. in Communications (University of Lima), M.A. in Latin American Studies (National Autonomous University of Mexico) and Ph.D. in Contemporary Latin America (Complutense University of Madrid). She worked as a journalist in Peru, Mexico and Spain and has three decades of academic experience in the Americas and Europe.*

38. **Frida Viridiana Rodelo Amezcua** *holds a PhD in Social Sciences from the Universidad de Guadalajara and is a member of the SNI (National System of Researchers). She specializes in the mediatization of politics and the precariousness of journalism in Mexico, journalistic practices and framings and the representation of women. She is a winner of the AEJMC-Knudson Award. She has published in international journals and coordinated studies on media coverage of elections.*

39. **Grisel Salazar Rebolledo** *holds a PhD in Public Policy from Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE), and specializes in violence against the press, disinformation and gender. She has received the Rousset Banda Prize and SNII Level I. She has published extensively in academic journals and is a member of the international research consortium Worlds of Journalism. She is a professor at Ibero American University in Mexico City.*

40. **Laura Storch** *holds a PhD in Communication and Information from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil). She is an assistant professor in the Graduate Program in Communication at the Federal University of Santa Maria (Brazil) and leads a Journalism Studies research group (CNPq/UFSM).*

41. **Kérley Winques** *holds a Ph.D. and an M.A. in Journalism from the Federal University of Santa Catarina (Brazil). She is an adjunct professor in the Graduate Program in Communication at the Federal University of Juiz de Fora (Brazil). She leads the Studies on the Symbolic and Material Mediations of Digital Technologies research group (Assimetrias/CNPq/UFJF).*