

## Brazil

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### INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

### BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

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

### JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

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

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

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

SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

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

TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS

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

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

TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

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

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

JOURNALISTIC ROLES

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

TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES

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

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

## JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIE

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

**TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES**

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

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

## JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

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

**TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS**

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

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

**TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS**

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

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

## EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

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

**TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM**

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

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

## EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

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

**TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES**

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

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