

Surrendering to Silence

An Account of Self-censorship among
Pakistani Journalists

A Publication of Media Matters for Democracy



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***This report is dedicated to to all the Pakistani
journalists who bravely bring truth to the public
despite increasing pressures on them to self-censor,
growing threats, and unending impunity in crimes of
violence against media professionals***

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Foreword

Over the course of our engagement with journalists in Pakistan we have witnessed ups and downs that keep the news industry on its toes. From attacks on journalists to the targeting of their families, from the use and abuse of legal instruments to intimidate, threaten and harass them to conveniently timed information leaks and structured hate campaigns against media workers – the obstructions in the way of a free press in Pakistan are many.

However, nothing has been as alarming as the increase in the tendency to self-censor. It is difficult to pinpoint exactly when this trend became noticeable. If one had to identify one pivotal point, it would be the Peshawar Army Public School Attack in December 2014. The narrative in the news media went through a subtle shift immediately after the attack. Since then, various other incidents, combined with the state's policy to keep media at bay and its inability to protect it from other threats, have resulted in an environment that doesn't appear to be conducive for the development of a strong, independent media.

Within this context, the initial hushed conversations about un-submitted stories and details that never made it to the newsroom appeared natural. However, this tendency seems to have grown over time. More and more journalists appear to have become more cautious, even when engaging in off-record, private conversations. There is an increasing trend to talk in hints and innuendoes.

For us at Media Matters for Democracy, having the opportunity to work with journalists across Pakistan, this has been a disturbingly noticeable trend. It was this unease at the growing comfort of journalists with silencing themselves that led us to design and conduct this research. Through this study, we hope to map perceptions about self-censorship in the Pakistani media. It is a survey-based research and our aim is to create a baseline that can help understand the issue of self-censorship in Pakistani media better and form the basis of more comprehensive research on the subject in the future.



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Executive Summary

For some years now, media professionals and news industry insiders in Pakistan have spoken of a growing trend of self-censorship among local journalists. The self-censorship is argued to be a defense mechanism against threats, harassment, and acts of physical violence. However, a lack of tangible data about this phenomenon has often led to the issue being ignored in media policy discourse and efforts to ensure the safety of journalists. This study sets out to test the claims of self-censorship in the Pakistani news media through a survey of journalists working in the country.

The study provides a rare glimpse at the extent and contours of contemporary self-censorship among Pakistani journalists. The results are frightening. Almost 88% of the journalist respondents claimed they had committed self-censorship in their professional news reporting. Around 79% said they had also self-censored their personal expression online. Through these and many related findings, the study tries to offer insight about the factors influencing self-censorship in local journalism.

The research also provides recommendations to tackle the issues that curb free expression in the Pakistani news media. In order to get local journalists to feel safe about their professional and personal expression, the study suggests actionable measures for news media organizations, journalist unions, civil society organizations, political parties, and the government.

If news self-censorship is not addressed in a timely manner, it will undoubtedly jeopardize the future of independent media in the country and damage the media's role as facilitators of public discourse that is essential to an effective democracy.

The following are the five key takeaways from the study:

1. Pakistani journalists work in an environment that makes self-censorship difficult to avoid

A majority of respondents agreed with the perception that the level of self-censorship among Pakistani journalists had increased with time. This claim was given credence by the number of respondents who felt the overall sociopolitical environment in Pakistan did not allow for journalistic duties to be performed without self-censorship.

The respondents who admitted to censoring their own professional work far outnumbered those who did not. Many more respondents said they had also noticed their colleagues performing self-censorship.

Journalists who participated in the survey for the study linked the concept of self-censorship with safety and reaction to threats of violence and physical attacks against journalists.

2. Pakistani journalists exercise self-censorship in personal settings

The self-censorship performed by journalists who participated in the study's

survey is not limited to their news reporting. Respondents also confirmed self-censoring their expression in online and offline settings. The journalists appeared cautious of expressing frank and honest opinions among strangers in online and offline settings. Most claims of self-censored personal expression related to the respondents' activity on social networks such as Facebook and Twitter.

3. Journalists perceive the policies of their own news organizations as major hurdles in the way of free expression

When respondents were asked to identify their reasons for committing self-censorship in journalism, 80% said it was due to the policies of their news organizations. While this reason was tied in first place with self-censorship due to the sensitive nature of information, it is more problematic. It could mean the external controls of news and information in Pakistan are now being internalized by the news organizations themselves. If news organizations are promoting internal cultures of self-censorship, it would become extremely difficult for individual journalists to resist curtailing their news reporting. New journalists might also begin to see self-censorship as an acceptable journalistic norm if self-censorship is prevalent within their newsrooms.

4. Pakistani journalists especially likely to curtail expression about military and religion

Respondents admitted they were most likely to self-censor information and opinions about the military and religion in their professional work and personal conversations. Pakistan's powerful security establishment has historically kept a strong check on the flow of news and information in the country. Religious groups in the country are quick to label dissenting voices un-Islamic and often invoke anti-blasphemy law clauses against any form of expression that goes against their interpretation of religious beliefs. Security-related matters and religion appear to be two main areas where journalists seem unwilling to take many risks.

5. Not all journalists aware of securing digital communication but most interested in knowing more

One-thirds of the total number of respondents did not know how to use encryption. However, nearly 80% of the journalists who participated in the study said they would like to know more about keeping their digital communication safe. The respondents also identified knowledge about secure communication tools and digital risk assessment as major capacity-building interventions.

6. Popular self-censorship mitigation strategy offers encouragement for collaboration and editorial support

Even though only around half of all respondents said they ever used a strategy to circumvent professional self-censorship, the mitigation strategies picked by

the respondents add a ray of hope to the gloomy landscape of self-censorship in the Pakistani media. Most respondents said they share information they are likely to self-censor themselves with other reporters to ensure that the news gets reported in one way or another, if not at their outlet then through another news organization.

This collaboration at the level of working journalists is a far cry from the rivalries between large media groups. If reporters are able to collaborate and support each other to prevent self-censorship, broader collaborations among news media organizations and journalist collectives could be made possible to resist the pressures of self-censorship. This also suggests that the journalist unions, which are battling divisions of their own, could also be united to ensure the rights and safety of journalists in Pakistan.

Introduction

Pakistan has consistently remained on the list of the most dangerous countries¹ for journalists in the world² for several years now.³ Perpetrators of threats and acts of violence against Pakistani journalists mostly go scot-free. Out of 85 journalists who were targeted and killed in the last 16 years, there have been convictions in only 4 cases.⁴ News media professionals are left to fend for themselves against diverse forms of intimidation, with little or no support from their own news organizations or the government.

National and international observers and press freedom advocates admit that the Pakistani media are dynamic⁵ and have had a significant impact on raising political awareness in the country.⁶ The vibrancy has been on show especially since private broadcast media were allowed to operate in the country in 2002.⁷

But these observers also raise alarms about the state of press freedom in Pakistan, owing to the numerous pressures journalists face in the pursuit of their professional duties.^{8,9} These pressures include overt censorship including bans and the so-called “press advisories”, threats of physical harm, vilification campaigns on social media, abductions, psychological stress, and physical violence including murder.^{10,11,12}

Statistically, the number of attacks on journalists in Pakistan has gone down over the past few years, but the general state of media freedoms give credence to the assertion that this decline in attacks might not be because of an improvement of the security situation;

- 1 “Pakistan Rated among Most Dangerous Countries for Journalists,” DAWN online, last modified November 3, 2017, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1368018>.
- 2 AFP, “Pakistan Fourth Most Dangerous Country in the World for Journalists: Report,” The Express Tribune online, last modified February 4, 2016, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1040096/at-least-2297-journalists-killed-since-1990-if/>.
- 3 Reuters, “Pakistan most dangerous country for journalists in 2014: report,” The Express Tribune online, last modified December 31, 2014, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/815075/pakistan-most-dangerous-country-for-journalists-in-2014-report/>.
- 4 “Bilal Shaikh of Dawn News tortured,” Media Matters for Democracy, accessed April 30, 2018, <http://mediamatters.pk/bilal-shaikh-of-dawn-news-tortured-political-violence-against-journalists-in-pakistan-on-a-rise-just-before-the-general-elections-2018-media-matters-for-democracy-calls-for-immediate-arrests-of-perp/>.
- 5 “Pakistan,” Reporters without Borders, accessed April 30, 2014, <https://rsf.org/en/pakistan>.
- 6 Sherry Ricchiardi, “Challenges for Independent News Media in Pakistan,” Centre for International Media Assistance, July 2012, 4.
- 7 Huma Yusuf and Emrys Schoemaker, “The Media of Pakistan: Fostering Inclusion in a Fragile Democracy?,” BBC Media Action, September 2013, 3.
- 8 Marco Mezzera and Safdar Sial, “Media and Governance in Pakistan: A Controversial yet Essential Relationship,” Initiative for Peacebuilding, October 2010, 8.
- 9 “Pakistan,” Reporters without Borders, accessed April 30, 2014, <https://rsf.org/en/pakistan>.
- 10 Zamir Niazi, *The Press in Chains*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2010).
- 11 Ricchiardi, 4-7.
- 12 Huma Yusuf and Emrys Schoemaker, 6-8.

it could be due to a growing trend of self-censorship among Pakistani journalists.

Self-censorship is not entirely new to the Pakistani press.¹³

The Ziaul Haq martial law regime briefly lifted its direct control of the press in 1982 after almost three years of censorship and replaced it with “self-censorship”. In the books *The Press in Chains* and *The Web of Censorship*, journalist Zamir Niazi noted that Haq’s information ministry henchmen believed the press had been taught which information never to publish and could now self-censor accordingly without direct instruction.^{14,15}

Talk of self-censorship also entered local media discourse at the peak of the Tehreek-e Taliban Pakistan militancy in the country’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas, which border Afghanistan. A 2009 International Media Support study on the Pakistani media suggested “the journalists working in the conflicts epicenters have adapted to self-censorship in order to not antagonize the conflicting parties.”¹⁶

The Committee to Protect Journalists spoke in 2011 of an “institutionalized self-censorship” gripping Pakistan, after the murder of journalist Saleem Shahzad forced many other local journalists to take stock of the threats they themselves had been receiving regularly.¹⁷

More recently, Media Matters for Democracy reported in October 2017 that a banned militant outfit had threatened violence against journalists in Balochistan because the journalists were “not covering its version”.¹⁸ The journalists were not reporting on the militants because of a high court decision that will hold them criminally liable if they give coverage to the militants. The judgment in the aforementioned case notes the fact that the court had received statements from media representatives regarding the threats the media receive if they do not air the claims of organizations such as the Lashkar-e Jhangvi. However, the judgment holds that despite the threats and the fear of life, the compliance with section 11W of the Anti-Terrorism Act was mandatory and media should follow it.

Upon reception of threats the media refrain from reporting, the court order advises, and simply “report [threats] to the police.” It is important to note that in the last 17 years more than 22 journalists have been killed in the region¹⁹ and in 2012, the year before the

13 Razeshta Sethna, “Situationer: Media under Watch: The New Censorship,” DAWN online, last modified May 3, 2016, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1255899>.

14 Zamir Niazi, *The Press in Chains*.

15 Zamir Niazi, *The Web of Censorship* (Lahore: Royal Book Company, 2004).

16 “Between Radicalisation and Democratisation in an Unfolding Conflict: Media in Pakistan,” International Media Support, July 2009, 6.

17 Bob Dietz, “Under Siege, Pakistani Media Look Inward for Solutions,” Committee to Protect Journalists, accessed April 30, 2018, <https://cpj.org/2012/02/attacks-on-the-press-in-2011-is-the-isi-targeting.php>.

18 “#JournoSafePK Alert: Journalists in Balochistan under Grave Threat Once Again,” Media Matters for Democracy, accessed April 30, 2014, <http://mediamatters.pk/journosafepk-alert-journalists-in-balochistan-under-grave-threat-once-again-high-time-for-government-to-deliver-on-its-promises-of-protecting-journalists-and-ending-impunity/>.

19 Baig, A. (2016). *Safe Nowhere – Plight of Journalists in Pakistan – Part 3 | Case List of Journalists Killed in the Line of Duty*. Media Matters for Pakistan, accessed October 1, 2017, from <http://mediamatterspakistan.org/844/>

judgment was issued, the wave of violence against journalists had extended to the targeting of their family members.²⁰ In recent years, pressure from intelligence officials and militants has made “self-censorship the norm” in Balochistan, according to a 2016 Dawn story, and one journalist quit reporting on security issues altogether.²¹

Self-censorship appears to be a logical act for Pakistani journalists who find themselves in such rock-and-a-hard-place situations.

Since the phenomenon of self-censorship is not limited to the Pakistani press but affects several press systems across the globe, it has caught the attention of international scholars interested in discourses surrounding press freedom and diverse forms of media governance.

Self-censorship’s defining attribute, according to Keele University professor John Horton, is that unlike censorship, in self-censorship there is “only one party that is both censor and censored.”²²

Horton stated that “self-censorship, as we generally understand it, often involves on some level a deliberate, conscious decision on the part of the self-censor: self-censorship is a choice that is made by the self-censor not to express whatever is being self-censored.”²³

Self-censorship has similarly been described by law professor Anne Cheung, (as cited in Yuwei Sun’s graduate thesis on the effects of self-censorship on news credibility), as an act of “the self who volunteers to be silent.”²⁴

City University of Hong Kong professor Chin-Chuan Lee argued that the process of self-censorship in the press is still “subtle, hidden, and insidious to researchers and practitioners alike” due to lack of theoretical and empirical scholarship on the topic.²⁵ In his definition for self-censorship, Lee included editorial actions such as omission, dilution and distortion taken by journalists to curry favour or avoid receiving punishments from the power structure.²⁶

Lee stated that self-censorship could take place individually and organizationally.²⁷ At the organizational level, journalists “continually absorb, internalize, and reinforce the surroundings.”²⁸

20 Second son of Khuzdar Press Club president passes away - The Express Tribune. (2012). The Express Tribune online, accessed October 1, 2017, from <https://tribune.com.pk/story/457243/second-son-of-president-khuzdar-press-club-passes-away/>

21 Sethna.

22 John Horton, “Self-Censorship,” *Res Publica* 17, no. 1 (2011): 96.

23 Horton, 97.

24 Yuwei Sun, “The Effect of Self-censorship on News Credibility: Public’s Perception of Hong Kong Newspapers after the 1997 Handover” (master’s thesis, Iowa State University, 2014), 13.

25 Chin-Chuan Lee, “Press Self-Censorship and Political Transition in Hong Kong,” *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 3, no. 55 (1998): 57.

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid, 59.

28 Ibid.

If the professional norms and values of the journalists are regulated by the news organization's culture, then journalists are likely to naturalize organizational policies related to self-censorship and stay within limits prescribed by the organization without repeated reminders.

Lee connected such internalization of self-censorship in the worst case with German scholar Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann's famous "spiral of silence" theory.²⁹ The theory states that people are less willing to offer their views publicly if they sense these are contrary to a dominant majority position and could lead to their social isolation.³⁰ Lee suggested that journalists might stop objecting to self-censorship if the news organization's overall climate does not support their practices.

If self-censorship is practiced regularly, Horton warned it could possibly turn into a habit or an unreflective disposition.³¹

Self-censorship as a coercive force or negative influence could also transform into conformism in the media. Schimpfoss and Yablokov showed that Russian state TV journalists deliberately chose to not report critically of the power status quo even when they had a choice to do so.³²

News organizations in transitional societies might still defy some forms of news control but they are also likely to think twice before publishing news on particular topics due to risk of repercussions; this may lead to a "politics of self-censorship that involves a strategic contest between media and political actors" in the press of such societies.³³

This tense relationship between the news media and self-censorship is echoed in the four direct causes of self-censorship in the Pakistani print media identified by Ramanujan Nadadur.

He identified these causes on the basis of a review of newspaper coverage and prevalent print media practices during the regime of General Pervez Musharraf between 1999 and 2006.³⁴ The four causes were: unofficial government controls on reporting, the oligopoly of newspaper ownership, the laws related to journalism, and lack of security for journalists.

Nadadur's research claimed the low reach and accessibility and the isolation of Pakistani journalists from the international community of journalism professionals created an

29 Ibid, 57.

30 Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, "The Spiral of Silence A Theory of Public Opinion," *Journal of Communication* 24, no. 2, 1974: 43-51.

31 Horton, 97.

32 Elisabeth Schimpfoss and Ilya Yablokov, "Coercion or Conformism? Censorship and Self-censorship among Russian Media Personalities and Reporters in the 2010s," *Demokratizatsiya*, 22, no. 2:295-312.

33 Francis Lee and Angel Lin, "Newspaper Editorial Discourse and the Politics of Self-censorship in Hong Kong," *Discourse & Society* 17, no. 3 (2006): 331.

34 Ramanujan D. Nadadur, "Self-Censorship in the Pakistani Print Media," *South Asian Survey* 14, no. 1 (2007): 48.

environment conducive to self-censorship.³⁵

In a 2018 Bytes for All study, 84% of 92 respondents said digital surveillance affected their free expression in Pakistan and 64% of the respondents deleted or self-censored online to avoid their expression being monitored.³⁶ However, the study's sample included Pakistani human rights defenders in addition to local professional journalists, who made up 59% of the sample.

A Digital Rights Foundation research linked the online self-censorship of Pakistani journalists with digital insecurity. Around 45% of the research participants reported that online harassment and insecurity forced them to censor their views in the cyberspace.³⁷ But this study only looked at self-censorship as an outcome of digital insecurity rather than focusing directly on self-censorship.

In conversations with journalists about physical safety over the past few years, Media Matters for Democracy also noticed journalists getting more and more reluctant to talk about stories that were under-reported, even when the conversations took place in off-the-record and in-person meetings. The lack of trust among the local journalists seemed likely to extend beyond their journalism work and affect the overall freedom of expression ecosystem in the country.

In the absence of in-depth research and scholarly work specific to self-censorship in the Pakistani media, this study aims to provide some evidence for the anecdotal observations about self-censorship among Pakistani journalists.

The study will look at how local journalists perceive their own and their colleagues' acts of self-censorship. The level of threats and attacks journalists face and the connection of these attacks and threats with the practice of self-censorship will be briefly investigated. Identification of the major reasons for self-censorship is a major line of inquiry in this research. Additionally, the study will look to find out if the self-censorship performed by journalists stays limited to their professional settings or if it blends into their personal interactions and conversations as well.

It is important to investigate the nature and extent of self-censorship among Pakistani journalists because, as the 2018 Freedom Index of Reporters without Borders claims, journalists around the world, including Pakistan, are facing more hostility and hatred from political organizations, powerful groups, and non-state actors than ever before.³⁸

35 Ibid.

36 Haroon Baloch and Amjad Qammar, "Dangers of Digital Surveillance: An Account on Self-censorship of Journalists and Human Rights Defenders in Pakistan," Bytes For All, accessed April 30, 2018, <https://bytesforall.pk/publication/dangers-digital-surveillance>

37 Maham Javaid, "Digital (In)security of Journalists in Pakistan," Digital Rights Foundation, accessed April 30, 2018, <https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Report-Digi-Insecurity-of-Journos.pdf>

38 "RSF Index 2018: Hatred of Journalism Threatens Democracies," Reporters without Borders, accessed April 30, 2018, <https://rsf.org/en/rsf-index-2018-hatred-journalism-threatens-democracies>.

Journalists are instrumental to the production of political and democratic discourses and their reporting often keeps power in check. If more Pakistani journalists begin to self-censor information that is critical to the informed decision-making of the masses, then the public debate will quickly yield to propaganda instead of relying on facts.

Even though Pakistani journalists have operated under strict controls of information for most of the country's history, the Pakistani press also has a rich tradition of resisting these controls and fighting for press freedom. Pakistani journalists have historically stood up to dictators to challenge curbs on the media, organized hunger strikes to protest against draconian press laws, and faced imprisonment for their support for free expression.^{39,40}

Such storied resistance by the local press was built on the principle of the public interest of journalism and it could inspire the local media even now to tackle the problem of self-censorship. But in order to do so, the problem must be understood in all its complexity first. Studies of self-censorship are likely to help journalists, media development professionals, political stakeholders, and policymakers to figure out solutions to the problems facing working journalists in the country. A closer look at the self-censorship phenomenon in Pakistan might also offer insight about the way media are being governed and the risks such media governance poses to the independence of the press.

39 Hussain Naqi, "A Tribute to Nisar Osmani Sahib," The Express Tribune online, last modified September 7, 2012, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/433098/a-tribute-to-nisar-osmani-sahib/>.

40 Farman Ali, "Iconic Fighter for Press Freedom Dies," The Express Tribune online, last modified January 15, 2011, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/103759/mihaj-barna-founding-member-of-pakistans-print-media-dies/>.

Research Objectives

The main objectives of this study are:

- To determine the extent of acts of professional self-censorship among Pakistani journalists
- To figure out the perception of Pakistani journalists about the trend of self-censorship in the news media
- To ascertain if local journalists are also practicing self-censorship in their personal conversations in online and offline settings
- To identify major reasons why journalists self-censor their expression in professional and personal contexts
- To identify the main sources of control of information which local journalists perceive to be causing self-censorship
- To determine the ways in which local journalists are trying to circumvent self-censoring their expression
- To determine if knowledge and practice of secure digital communication will support Pakistani journalists circumvent the issues that lead to self censorship

Methodology

For the study, self-censorship was defined as “the act of exercising control and restraint over one's speech and expression, in personal or professional settings, to avoid backlash, criticism, persecution and/or other kinds of threats or for some perceived benefit.”

To determine the extent of self-censorship by journalists in professional work and personal conversations, the study used a survey to collect quantitative data.

A bilingual survey questionnaire was created using Google Forms (See Annex). The questionnaire was divided into four sections.

The first section dealt with the personal, demographical details of the respondents including name, gender, work experience, and language of reporting among other information. Questions in each of the other three sections were designed keeping in mind the study's overall objectives.

The second section focused on self-censorship in professional work settings and asked respondents about the respondents' reasons for self-censorship, the threats they had directly received due to their use of free expression, and whether self-censorship made them feel safe or not. The respondents' perception of general sources of threats to free press and self-censorship among their peers was also asked. The operational definition of self-censorship was provided before Section II.

In the third section, the respondents answered questions about self-censorship in their personal lives including offline interactions. Questions in this section included frequency of self-censorship during different situations such as family discussions, the kind of opinions likely to be self-censored, and the social media platforms on which respondents mostly practiced self-censorship.

The fourth and final section was designed to determine strategies the respondents used to mitigate the practice of self-censorship in their professional work. This section connected with the study's objective of identifying recommendations for capacity building interventions for journalists.

A virtual snowball sampling approach was used to get respondents for the survey. Snowball sampling was chosen to help access journalists and news organizations outside the contacts of the Media Matters for Democracy team and explore a hidden population of self-censoring journalists through social networks.

The initial informants consisted of the Media Matters for Democracy team as well as a few journalists and journalist unions that the organization has worked closely with in the past. The survey form was emailed to journalists and news organizations identified by the initial informants and early respondents. Respondents were also requested to share the survey form in turn with their networks and colleagues.

The survey was also shared online on Media Matters for Democracy's social media accounts for wider public dissemination and posted to online groups of Pakistani journalists. A total of 156 respondents filled the survey online and their responses were considered for the quantitative data analysis.

10 Highlights from the Survey Results

- Nearly 88% of 156 respondents said they have practiced self-censorship in their journalism
- Around 72% respondents thought self-censorship among Pakistani journalists has increased over time
- Nine in 10 journalists said they knew a news colleague who self-censored
- Seven in 10 journalists who said they had self-censored also claimed self-censorship makes them feel safer
- Respondents identified their news organizations' policies and the "sensitive nature of information" as the two major reasons for Self-censorship
- Six out of 10 respondents said they were "very likely" to self-censor information related either to the security establishment or religion in their professional interactions
- Around 79% of the journalist respondents said they self-censored their personal views online
- Nine in 10 respondents said they self-censored themselves in personal settings due to religious sensitivities and 49% respondents said they were "very likely" to self-censor information about religion in personal interactions
- Around 79% of all respondents said better knowledge of safer ways to use technology will help them express themselves more freely on social media
- Most respondents said they would share information they are likely to self-censor with other beat reporters or forego their byline in publication to mitigate self-censorship

Data Analysis and Findings

The data analysis largely consisted of enumerating responses and calculating percentages out of total respondents to determine majority perceptions.

The analysis also examined connections between the personal details of the respondents and their perceptions and admission about the practice of self-censorship. Further attention was given to the responses of those journalists who admitted to self-censorship. This was intended to identify any relationship between the acts of self-censorship, the sources that pressurize journalists to commit self-censorship and aspects related to safety through self-censorship, among other links.

This section offers the detailed findings of the study.

Respondent Demographics

A majority of the 156 survey respondents were young, early-career journalists. Around 51% of all respondents were in the 21-30 years age group and nearly 64% had up to 10 years work experience in journalism. Mid-career journalists – or professionals with over 10 years of journalism experience – made around 34% of the sample size.

One in three survey respondents was a woman journalist.

Around 47% of the respondents identified as news reporters. One in five respondents claimed they worked in production while nearly 15% had editing jobs in the media. Around 17% of the respondents said the nature of their job was something “other” than reporting, editing, and production.

The largest segment of the respondents (around 39%) worked for multiple types of media, with the leading combinations being print-TV-online (16 respondents) and print-online (16 respondents). Other than the multiple-media respondents, nearly 35% of the journalists worked entirely for TV news outlets, 14% for digital publications, 9% in the print media, and only 3% in radio broadcasting.

A vast majority of the respondents – 79.5% - said they worked for national news organizations. Around 6% classified their news organizations as foreign while nearly 7% worked exclusively for local/regional news outlets.

Respondents were allowed to pick more than one type of organization. As a result, 10 respondents claimed they were affiliated with multiple news organizations, out of which nine mentioned a national news organization in addition to a regional, foreign or “other” outlet.

In terms of linguistic diversity, around 44% respondents said the language of their journalism work was Urdu alone and 35% said it was English only. Addition-

journalism work was Urdu alone and 35% said it was English only. Additionally, nearly 17% said they worked for bilingual media with Urdu as one of the two languages. Out of these bilingual respondents, the majority said they worked in both Urdu- and English-language media.

Just fewer than 2% of all respondents were multilingual with Urdu as one of the two or more reporting languages. Multilingual media respondents mentioned Pashto, Seraiki and Sindhi. Two respondents worked exclusively for Sindhi media and one for Pashto. None of the respondents were from Punjabi or Balochi-language news media.

The respondents belonged to 16 different cities. However, the majority of the respondents were from the three cities: Islamabad (30%), Lahore (24%), and Karachi (21%).

Findings of Section I - Self-censorship in Journalism

Most Respondents Self-censor:

A vast majority of the respondents admitted to practicing self-censorship in their professional setting. Nearly 88% of the respondents said they had engaged in self-censorship at least once during their reporting. The self-censorship trend remained almost consistent across gender with around 89% of all male respondents and 87% of all women respondents claiming they had self-censored their work.



88%

of survey respondents said they had self-censored during their reporting

Self-censorship Widespread Phenomenon

The numbers went up when the respondents were asked about self-censorship among their peer groups in the news media industry. Around 96% of the respondents were of the opinion that their news colleagues engage in self-censorship. Another 87% thought it was important to self-censor sometimes and around 86% felt the environment in Pakistan was not conducive for journalism without self-censorship.



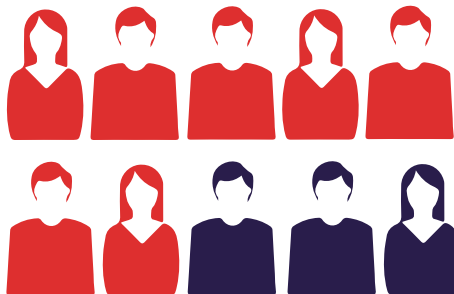
9 out of **10** respondents had noticed their journalist colleagues self-censoring

Attacks, Threats, Self-censorship, and Perception of Safety

Two in every three respondents in the survey claimed to have been attacked, intimidated or threatened for their professional or personal expression in the past. Out of these, 94% also said they self-censored.

Even among those respondents who had never been attacked or threatened for their work or opinions, 79% had self-censored in the past.

Seven in 10 respondents said self-censorship in their news work made them feel safer. Almost 27% of those respondents who self-censored still did not feel safer. Among those who did not feel safer even though they self-censored their work (37), 62% were men and 38% women; around 49% of these worked for multiple media and 22% for TV news.



7 in **10** respondents who self-censored also said self-censorship made them feel safer

Reporters Most Likely to Self-censor

Self-censorship was most prominent among respondents who identified as reporters. Nearly 89% of all reporters in the survey said they had practiced self-censorship previously during their work. Since the overall sample also had more reporters, 47% of all respondents who said they self-censored were reporters.

Self-censorship Trend Consistent across Geographical Media

The practice of Self-censorship remained almost the same across the national, local, and foreign media outlets. Nine in 10 Pakistani journalists who identified with each type of outlet in the survey said they had self-censored in their news practice. For respondents who worked at multiple news organizations, 80% said they had self-censored. This was slightly fewer than the overall 88%.

Most Self-censorship in the National and Official Language

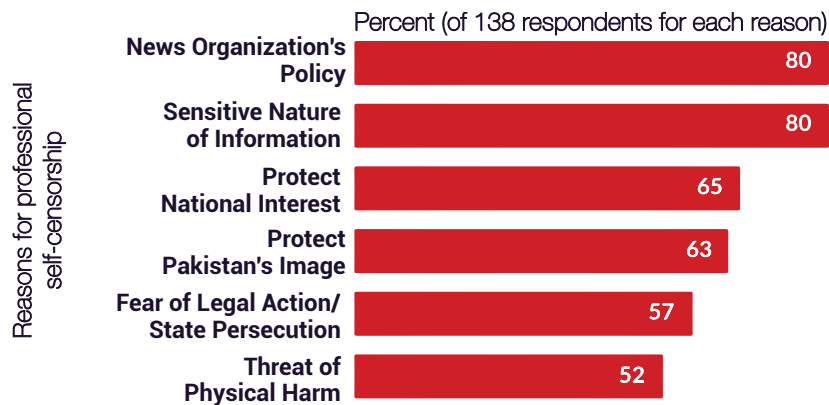
Most of the respondents who said they had self-censored worked in Urdu and English media. Out of 56 English-language journalists in the survey, 51 said they had self-censored. Similarly, out of 69 Urdu-language respondents, 60 had self-censored professionally at least once. Around 89% of the 19 respondents who worked for both Urdu and English media had practiced self-censorship previously.

Self-censorship across Media

All journalists in the survey who worked exclusively either for the print media or radio news said they had self-censored. Nine out of 10 respondents among the largest segment of media practitioners in the survey – journalists working for multiple media – confirmed their practice of self-censorship. Out of 55 TV journalists in the sample, 46 said they had self-censored their work. Nineteen out of 22 online journalists said they self-censored, too.

Big City Journalists Big on Self-censorship

The practice of self-censorship was slightly more prominent among journalists who belonged to Lahore and Karachi. Around 95% of Lahore respondents and 91% of Karachi respondents said they had self-censored compared to 86% and 83% in Peshawar and Islamabad respectively.



Respondents were asked to rate 11 reasons for why they had self-censored. Majority of respondents said yes to the above six reasons.

Why Self-censor?

When the respondents were asked if they had self-censored professionally for any of 11 reasons provided in the questionnaire, a majority of journalists responded in the affirmative to six self-censorship reasons: due to their news organization's policy (80%), due to the sensitive nature of information (80%), to safeguard national interest (65%), to protect Pakistan's image (61%), due to fear of legal action or state persecution (57%) and threat of physical harm to self and family (52%). The total number of respondents was split even when it came to

self-censorship to job insecurity.

Six out of 10 respondents said they were “very likely” to self-censor information related either to the security establishment or religion in their professional interactions.

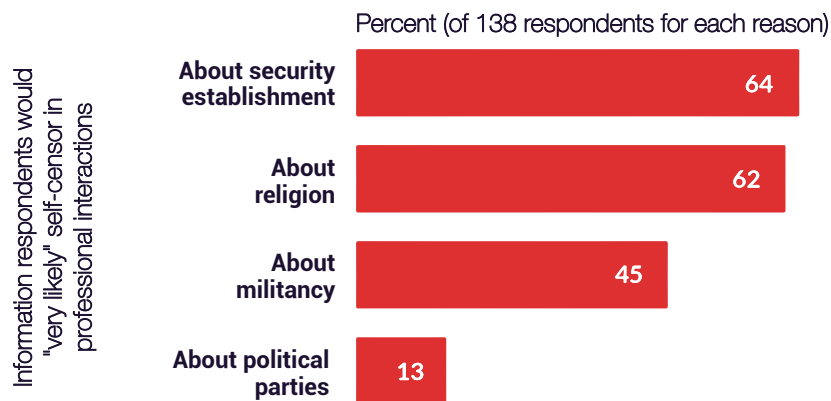
Around 83% respondents said they were likely to self-censor information about militancy and terrorism. On the other hand, 64% of the journalists said they were “unlikely” to censor information about political parties.

Just under half of the respondents (49%) said they were not likely to censor information about the government.

The respondents were also asked to qualitatively identify the threat sources that might force journalists to self-censor in their professional setting.

Most respondents identified their own news organizations and the security establishment as the chief sources that force self-censorship on journalists. Some also mentioned religious groups, political parties, and militant organizations as the sources.

A total of 55 respondents still mentioned a direct or indirect threat to their personal safety and the security of their family as their main perceived source of self-censorship pressure.



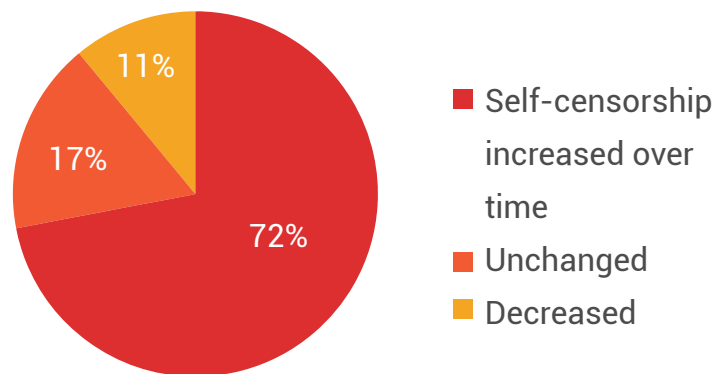
Self-censorship on the Rise

Around 72% of all respondents said they thought self-censorship among Pakistani journalists has increased with time. The number of mid-career journalists who believed self-censorship was increasing was greater than early-career respondents in the survey. Similarly, the percentage of respondents who felt the practice of self-censorship in Pakistan had become more prevalent was higher among female journalists (80%) than male journalists (68%).

A total of 27 respondents felt the state of self-censorship had remained unchanged over time and only 17 journalists thought self-censorship had

decreased. Interestingly, the 17 respondents who felt self-censorship was decreasing in the country practiced Self-censorship themselves.

Most of the respondents who believed the state of self-censorship is unchanged or decreasing in the country worked for national news organizations. On the other hand, respondents who worked for foreign or local/regional outlets mostly agreed that Pakistani journalists were Self-censoring more now than before.



72% respondents thought self-censorship among Pakistani journalists has increased over time

Analysis of Section II - Journalists and Self-censorship in Personal Lives

Self-censoring on Social Networks:

Around 79% respondents – 123 journalists, to be exact – said they self-censored themselves online in a personal setting. Of these, only nine had said they did not professionally self-censor their work.

Among the journalists who had earlier said they had been attacked or threatened for their expression, almost 87% self-censored their personal views online.

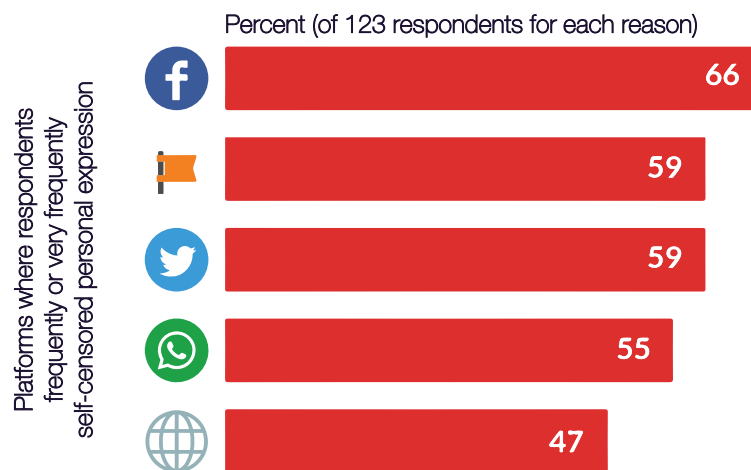


Most survey respondents who self-censored their personal communication online said they “very frequently” or “frequently” did so on their Facebook profiles (66%), Facebook groups and pages (59%), Twitter (59%) and WhatsApp groups (55%). Almost a quarter of respondents said they “occasionally” self-censored their views on each of these platforms.

Some 23% of the respondents said they frequently self-censored personal opinions on blogs and websites. Only around 6% and 5% said they never self-censored themselves on websites and WhatsApp groups respectively.

A majority of all respondents said they frequently self-censored around people they did not know well.

Around 65% of these respondents said they either “very frequently” or “frequently” self-censored when interacting with the public online and 59% said did the same in online discussions with acquaintances.



Journalists More Cautious Around Strangers

Exactly half of the respondents said they self-censor their views and opinions in offline personal interactions and discussions, too.

Almost 91% of the respondents who self-censored during offline discussions had also admitted to self-censoring their opinions online.

In offline interactions, journalists seemed wary of talking freely with strangers. Around 53% of all 156 respondents said they “very frequently” or “frequently” self-censored their speech during interactions with the public in an offline setting. Nearly 49% said they did the same in interactions with acquaintances offline.

Respondents appeared more cautious around journalist colleagues than friends and families. Around 17% of all respondents said they would very frequently self-censor their words when engaged in discussions with colleagues compared

to only 12% who said they would do the same when talking among friends and family.

Just over a quarter of respondents said they would never self-censor when speaking with friends and family compared to only 15% who said they would always talk freely with colleagues.

Why Journalists Self-censor Personal Conversations?

Religious issues appeared as the biggest reason for the respondents to self-censor their expression in personal and social interactions. Around 91% said they self-censored themselves in personal settings due to religious sensitivities.

Nearly half of all respondents said they were likely to self-censor opinions about religion in their personal interactions. Another 34% said they were “somewhat likely” to hold back on their religious views.

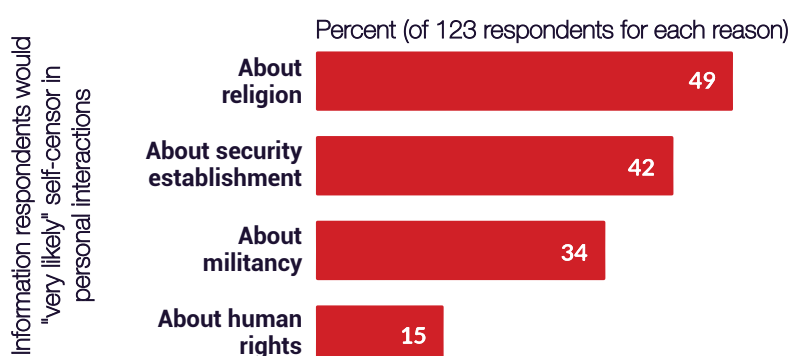


Almost 72% said cultural sensitivities were the reason they self-censored in personal communication and another 71% due to fear of backlash from the public.

Over three quarters of all respondents said they were likely to curtail their views in personal settings when it came to information about either the security establishment or militancy.

Respondents were slightly less concerned about backlash from close quarters, but still a majority – 62% - of respondents said they self-censored to avoid criticism from friends, families and their communities.

Just fewer than 50% of the respondents said they would avoid free and frank expression simply to avoid publicly disagreeing with someone.



Most journalists who took part in the survey said they would not self-censor due to political sensitivities. Almost two-thirds of 156 respondents said they were not likely to self-censor opinions about the government and political parties. More than half said they were not likely to self-censor comments about the state of human rights in the country during personal discussions.

Analysis of Section III - Mitigation Strategies that Journalists use

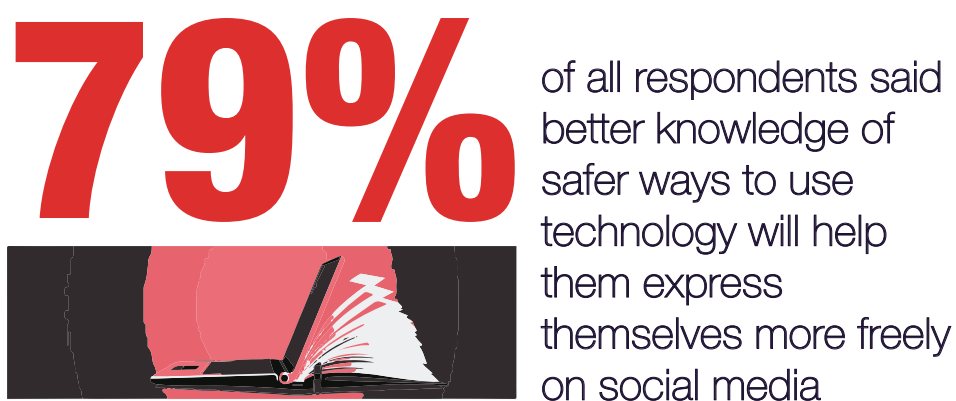
This section explores the use of digital technology by respondents and aims to figure out if safer digital communication skills can contribute towards making strategies that make journalists safer and better able to express freely. All respondents except two said they used a smartphone. Almost all the respondents were on Facebook and WhatsApp; seven in 10 respondents used Twitter regularly; just over half were Instagram users, and only a third had LinkedIn. Less than 10 percent of the respondents used encrypted communications app Signal.

Almost 70% of the respondents said they posted five times or less every day on social media platforms in connection with their professional work or personal expression.

Making Digital Communication Safer

Around 79% of all respondents said better knowledge of safer ways to use technology will help them express themselves more freely on social media.

Around 63% of all respondents said they made efforts to make their digital communication safer. However, fewer than half of these 63% used encryption for their online communication.



Overall, the number of respondents who said they used encryption (56) was almost the same as the number of journalists who said they didn't know how to use encryption (54). A total 50 out of the 54 respondents who didn't know how to use encryption had Self-censored their expression professionally.

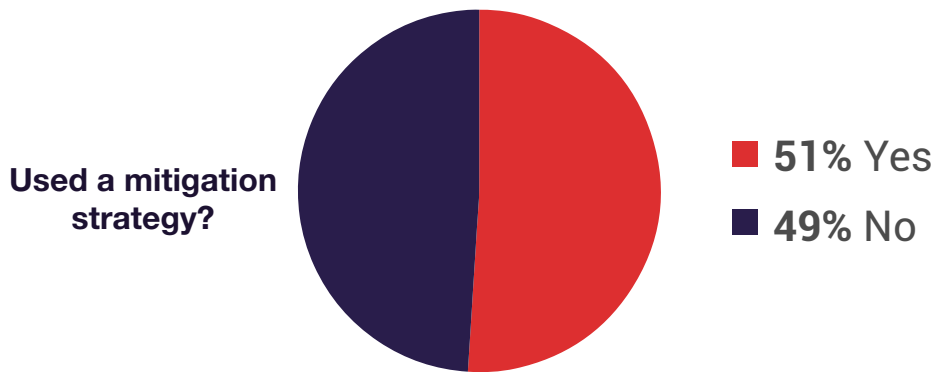
Nearly one-thirds of the number of journalists who had been attacked or threatened for expressing themselves had no knowledge of encryption but another one-thirds did use encryption.

A majority of the respondents who used encryption were associated with online news media either exclusively or in addition to other media they worked with. When those who said better knowledge would help them express freely online were asked about which skills would be most helpful, three in four respondents said knowledge of secure communication would be “very helpful.”

A majority of these respondents also said knowledge about encryption, maintaining anonymity online, and digital risk assessment would be helpful.

Avoiding Self-censorship

Only a slim majority (51%) of all respondents had ever used any strategy to challenges the factors that led to self-censorship in their personal and professional expression. Most of these respondents said they share news and information they are likely to self-censor with other beat reporters. Just over 70% of these respondents also said they would publish the news either without their byline or under a pseudonym to avoid self-censoring the information.



Just more than half of the respondents in the sample had used a strategy to mitigate self-censorship at one time or the other

Only three of the 80 respondents who had used a mitigation strategy at least once said they would use social media directly or indirectly to share news and information they are likely to self-censor themselves.

A total 78 out of 156 respondents said they had never used any strategy to mitigate their practice of self-censorship.

Discussion

The study's findings largely support the anecdotal assertions about growing self-censorship in the Pakistani news media. In doing so, the study provides some supporting evidence for claims that the controlling influences on the Pakistani press are gradually shifting from the use of coercive methods to non-coercive techniques.

This does not mean that the attacks and physical violence against journalists have completely been eliminated in the country. It only suggests that journalists might be trying to prevent physical and psychological harm by censoring their news work to avoid confrontation with pressure groups. The finding is consistent with literature on self-censorship, especially Lee's assertion that self-censorship is a "preventive defense" against external real or imagined pressures on the news media.⁴¹

Not only did most journalists confirmed self-censorship had increased with time, a vast majority of the respondents claimed they had practiced self-censorship in their journalism at least once themselves and had witnessed self-censorship among their news colleagues.



86%

respondents felt the environment in Pakistan is not conducive to journalism without self-censorship

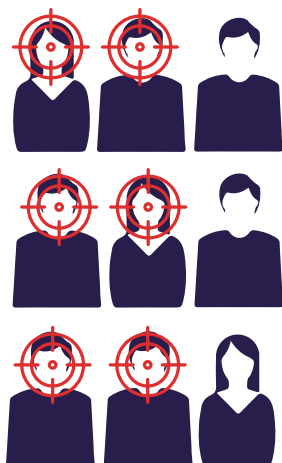
The survey's findings give an overwhelming impression of the dangers and risks that accompany journalism in the country. Nearly 64% of the respondents claimed they had been attacked, threatened or intimidated for their work or personal expression in the past. Only one in three respondents appeared never to have been threatened as a result of their work, which is a dismally low number but not unsurprising given Pakistan's history of impunity in incidents of violence against journalists. Over 90% of targeted killings of Pakistani journalists resulted in no convictions.

The 2016 Global Impunity Index prepared by the Committee to Protect Journalists indicated that globally around 40% of the journalists killed in the line of duty had reported

41 Lee, 59.

receiving threats before they were murdered.⁴² There is a strong connection then between threats and the likelihood of physical violence against journalists worldwide.

The extent of threats and attacks might help explain why seven in every 10 respondents suggested self-censorship makes them feel safer at work. By restraining their speech in news broadcasts and holding back in their stories, these journalists might be trying to not give any reason to anyone to target them. This might also partly explain why a vast majority of respondents said it was “important” to self-censor sometimes.



2 in **3** respondents said they had been attacked, threatened or intimidated for their professional and personal expression

However, based on the findings, physical safety remains a partial justification for self-censorship’s necessity because over 60% of respondents each also picked protecting Pakistan’s image and safeguarding the national interest as reasons for self-censorship. It can be argued that at least some respondents did not think self-censorship was important because they viewed it as a negative force but because they might think of it as a service to the nation.

The finding connects with Hussein Amin’s research on the attitude towards freedom as a value in the Arab media. Hussein mentioned in his study that the “preservation of the state” is the core of most arguments to limit freedom of expression in the Middle East.⁴³ He suggested that when journalists commit self-censorship with the national interest in mind they are “no different from the authoritarians who take on the role of protectors of the state.”⁴⁴ This might be the case in Pakistan, as well.

Additionally, the competitiveness of rival news networks, which leads to a disjointed and weakened front against external threats to journalist safety, and the emergence of self-proclaimed patriotic news channels such as the Bol network, which often lead vitriolic information campaigns against news organizations and human rights defenders it perceives to be un-Islamic or anti-nationalist, might also have tilted the scales in favour of

42 Elisabeth Witchel, “Getting Away with Murder,” Committee to Protect Journalists, last modified October 27, 2016, <https://cpj.org/reports/2016/10/impunity-index-getting-away-with-murder-killed-justice.php>.

43 Hussein Amin, “Freedom as a Value in the Arab Media: Perceptions and Attitudes among Journalists,” *Political Communication*, 19, no.2, 2010: 128.

44 Ibid.

self-censorship among mainstream Pakistani journalists over truth-telling.

Even then, in the qualitative responses to the question about sources of self-censorship pressure, the most commonly identified source was: threats to physical safety. Several respondents mentioned “life threats” and “safety issues” in their responses. One respondent wrote the main source of threat due to which she self-censored was “(the) fear to lose family and loved ones or your own life. All other reasons are secondary.”

Many also mentioned the fear of disappearance, an allusion to enforced disappearances of dissidents and activists in Pakistan often blamed on the country’s security and intelligence apparatus. Numerous respondents directly mentioned the military, intelligence agencies, and religious groups as their perceived source of threats that cause journalists to perform self-censorship. Most respondents also said they would likely self-censor information about militant and terrorist groups in professional and personal interactions.

The 2018 Press Freedom Index by Reporters without Borders (RSF), which classified the situation of press freedom in Pakistan as “bad”, stated that the Pakistani media constantly face attacks and threats from “extremist groups, Islamist organizations and the feared intelligence agencies, all of which are on RSF’s list of predators for press freedom.”⁴⁵ The RSF contended that the “natural consequence” of these threats is “an increase in news-room self-censorship.”

Given Pakistan’s political history and its sociopolitical landscape, it was expected that most respondents might identify the security establishment and religious groups as sources for self-censorship pressure. The military has been responsible for direct press control in the country during four martial law regimes and the country’s religious groups have always been vocal and aggressive towards anything they perceive to be offensive towards religion or religious norms.

However, it is interesting to note the difference in the kind of information the respondents felt they were likely to self-censor in their professional environments and their personal spaces. While journalists said they were equally likely to avoid talking about security and religious establishments in their professional settings, they were far more cautious about religious expression in personal settings.

This restraint due to “religious sensitivities” is most probably because of the liberal use of Pakistan’s anti-blasphemy laws to level blasphemy allegations against anyone perceived to be dissenting with orthodox Islamic beliefs.⁴⁶

Such blasphemy allegations could quickly escalate to physical violence and extra-judicial killings. The 2011 murders of Punjab governor Salmaan Taseer and federal religious minorities minister Shahbaz Bhatti – both were assassinated in connection with their critical views on the misuse of the anti-blasphemy laws – had already cautioned most

45 “Pakistan,” Reporters without Borders, accessed April 30, 2014, <https://rsf.org/en/pakistan>.

46 Asad Ahmed, “A Brief History of the Anti-blasphemy Laws,” Herald online, last modified March 16, 2018, <https://herald.dawn.com/news/1154036>.

Pakistanis about the limits of their religious expression.^{47,48} But the 2017 campaign of blasphemy allegations against four missing “bloggers” through social and mainstream media, the mob lynching of journalism student Mashal Khan on blasphemy accusations, and the rise of new groups such as the Tehreek-e Labaik Ya Rasool-Allah (TLYR) might have added to the understanding that the repercussions of non-conformist religious expression could be damaging, swift, and, in some cases, even lethal.^{49,50,51}

The TLYR, for example, conducted a successful sit-in the federal capital in 2017 for two weeks to protest against a now-reverted change in the way legislators professed the finality of prophethood of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him).⁵² The finality of prophethood is an unquestionable tenet of Islamic faith and a domestic religious flash-point because the State of Pakistan and its majority Muslim sects treat the Ahmaddiya community, which claims to be Muslim, as non-Muslim on this very basis. TLYR also secured the resignation of the federal law minister, after serious allegations of blasphemy were launched against the minister.⁵³ If a sitting minister of the federal cabinet is vulnerable to blasphemy allegations, it is no wonder journalists want to be careful about inflaming religious sentiment.

Most respondents confirmed that they were not comfortable expressing their opinions without restraint on social networks and among strangers. This indicates that journalists perceive the public to be less sympathetic of their expression than their families, friends and colleagues. It could also be linked with the direct feedback they receive on Facebook and Twitter which might include hateful comments and threats. Several Pakistani journalists, such as the TV anchor Talat Hussain, have been subjected to targeted hate campaigns on social networks in the recent past.⁵⁴ These structured hate campaigns often cause immense reputational harm and the current legal mechanisms to punish online hate speech seem unable to offer journalists any redressal.

The journalists in the sample confessed they were most likely to curtail their speech on Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp, the most common social networking and messaging

47 Rob Crilly, “salman Taseer murder sparks fear and loathing in Pakistan,” The Telegraph online, last modified January 8, 2011, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/pakistan/8247920/Salman-Taseer-murder-sparks-fear-and-loathing-in-Pakistan.html>.

48 “Pakistan Christians bury murdered leader Shahbaz Bhatti,” BBC online, last modified March 4, 2011, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-12644082>.

49 Saad Sayeed, “Missing Pakistani Activists’ Families Decry Blasphemy Allegations,” Reuters online, last modified January 18, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-12644082>.

50 Zein Basravi, “Pakistan: Blasphemy and the Mashal Khan Verdict,” Al Jazeera online, last modified February 9, 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/blogs/asia/2018/02/pakistan-blasphemy-mashal-khan-verdict-180209123046713.html>.

51 “Tehreek-e-Labbaik Ya Rasool Allah Sets Sights on 2018 Elections,” The Express Tribune online, last modified January 5, 2018, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1600967/1-tehreek-e-labbaik-ya-rasool-allah-sets-sights-2018-elections/>.

52 “List of Demands Put Forward by the TLY and Accepted by Govt for Ending the Faizabad Protest,” Dawn online, last modified November 28, 2017, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1373197>.

53 Ibid.

54 “RIUJ Condemns Social Media Campaign against Journalist Talat Hussain,” The News International online, last modified October 24, 2017, <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/239272-RIUJ-condemns-social-media-campaign-against-journalist>.

platforms used by Pakistani citizens for personal communication.

In recent years, many local journalists have started to use their personal Facebook profiles and Twitter accounts to push news to the public, often to build personal followership and sometimes to avoid organizational editorial controls. Many journalists have set up pages to reflect their professional affiliations and some have successfully experimented with live video features to build a personal news audience separate from their organization's.

If, as the respondents indicated, journalists are wary of expressing themselves freely on prominent social networks in front of acquaintances and the public, it means alternative ways for the Pakistani public to gain news and information are also being subjected to control.

After accounting for national interest and "sensitive information", a major finding of the study is that a vast majority of survey respondents perceived their own news organizational policies to be a source of self-censorship pressure.

In other words, the respondents could be self-censoring their professional work because their news organizational policy or environment is directly or indirectly forcing them to do so. If they do not fall in line with their organizational agenda, they might lose their jobs. This finding provides an interesting insight into the mechanics of controlling information in contemporary Pakistani news media. It is also consistent with scholarly research findings of Lee, who suggested that an organization's policies and culture could convert self-censorship into a journalistic norm for the organization's reporters.

While the survey did not require the respondents to explain how their organizational policies were encouraging self-censorship in news reporting, the qualitative responses provided by some respondents offer some explanation. One respondent wrote that there was an "unspoken understanding" within her newsroom and her response gave the impression that the news publisher was following a certain political agenda that the organization's journalists could not defy. Other directly referred to job security issues, hinting that not self-censoring could get them fired.

One copy-editor claimed that the perceived lack of support from editor and publisher could force a journalist to self-censor. It makes sense for journalists not to stick their necks out when they know their bosses are not going to have their backs.

Not much local scholarship has been devoted to the way controls of information trickle down from the pressure groups to the publishers or editorial sections of a news organization in the Pakistani press in recent years. However, there are some instances to contextualize the survey finding of news organization's policy forcing self-censorship.

A 2014 Foreign Policy article by a former copy editor of a Pakistani English-language newspaper claimed the newspaper changed its editorial policy to support certain

political segments on instructions from the military establishment allegedly.⁵⁵ The copy editor stated that the senior editorial staff “reluctantly agreed to the orders, which came from the CEO (Chief Executive Officer of the newspaper), because our jobs were on the line.” Despite resistance from some of the paper’s editors, stories critical of the same political segments were not published. Such behaviour could eventually lead journalists from even not bothering to file stories they know are going to be axed.

Similarly, journalists and columnists have claimed that the mainstream media have been forced by the security establishment to boycott coverage of a recent rights movement for Pakistan’s Pashtun ethnicity.⁵⁶

The self-censorship in Pakistani media might not be limited to tacit or direct diktats from the military. In the 1988 book *Manufacturing Consent*, scholars Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman had noted that advertisers could influence the editorial choice of the news media because of the media’s reliance on advertising for revenue. In Pakistan too, the news industry is dependent on advertisers for its revenues. The advertisers might influence the mainstream media’s policy push to keep their editorial sections from reporting on issues critical of the advertisers.

When around 100 to 150 people were injured in April 2017 after a stage of a TV entertainment show collapsed in a residential housing scheme owned by the influential Bahria Town developers, which doles out of millions of rupees in advertisements to broadcasters, most mainstream broadcast news organizations did not report the incident.⁵⁷

Many of the injuries aggravated because ambulances were allegedly not allowed inside the residential compound, which lies on the eastern suburbs of the federal capital. Even though it was a newsworthy case of public importance, the incident only managed crime briefs in a few newspapers.⁵⁸ Blogs and social media posts generated awareness about the incident in the days to follow leading to more coverage of the issue.

These incidents show that the policies of the news organizations as sources of self-censorship pressure cannot be taken at face value as independent of other external pressures.

When respondents mentioned their organizational pressure to self-censor, they might have been referring to an indirect suppression directed through their news publishers. The pressure from the security establishment, religious and political groups, and commercial interests might directly apply only on the news publishers, who might then comply and relay the curbs down to the reporters and editors.

55 Neha Ansari, “Not Fit to Print: An Insider Account of Pakistani Censorship,” *Foreign Policy* online, last modified November 20, 2014, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/11/20/not-fit-to-print-an-insider-account-of-pakistani-censorship/>.

56 “Journalists Sign Petition against Curbs on Media,” *Dawn* online, last modified April 19, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1402420>

57 Awwad Shahid, “I’m the Human You Left Behind in the Wreckage of the Bahria Enclave,” *The Nation* online, last modified May 2, 2017, <https://nation.com.pk/02-May-2017/i-m-the-human-you-left-behind-in-the-wreckage-at-bahria-enclave>.

58 “Over 100 Injured as TV Show Stage Collapses,” *Dawn* online, last modified April 29, 2017, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1329969>.

If 80% of respondents felt their news organizations had some part to play in their professional self-censorship, this indicates a major impediment to independent journalism in Pakistan. Journalists will not be able to circumvent self-censorship if their organizations become party to the groups that do not want the truth to surface in the public discourse.

Pakistan's largest news media groups have their own business interests as well, which might keep them from fulfilling journalistic duties in the public interest with independence and neutrality.⁵⁹

While military, religious, and commercial pressures seem to influence what can and cannot be said in the news, the survey results indicate Pakistani journalists feel comfortable expressing political opinions. Neither in the professional nor the personal sphere did a majority of respondents said they kept quiet because of government or political pressure. This indicates that the Pakistani journalist community feels fairly free to critique politics and government policy. It might also suggest a positive contribution by the news media in raising political awareness within the country.

Self-censorship in news was most prevalent among those respondents who identified as reporters. While this could be attributed to the fact that the majority of respondents were reporters, it also makes sense since reporters are critical to the newsgathering function of the media. Reporters might therefore be most likely to curb their expression, either after experiencing editorial reprimand and public scrutiny or by anticipating either of these.

The practice of self-censorship was more common in the big cities of Karachi and Lahore among the survey respondents. The Pakistani mainstream media is mostly urban-centric and national in its outlook. The broadcast news industry is mostly headquartered in Karachi but Lahore is home to several newspapers and some TV channels. These two cities had the most self-censoring journalists in the sample.

The federal capital is a major reporting hub because of the presence of the national parliament, the Supreme Court, the federal bureaucracy and the foreign diplomatic corps as well as the Army's General Headquarters in neighboring Rawalpindi. It trailed Lahore and Karachi in its extent of self-censoring journalists by only a few.

The survey results indicated that the mainstream media is vulnerable to self-censorship even where it is concentrated. Traditionally, only journalists in Pakistan's conflict-ridden areas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan took to self-censorship prominently because of pressure from the military or militants. But the study shows self-censorship has spread to the urban centres.

The pervasiveness of acts of self-censorship in Pakistani journalism is evident from the survey finding that majority of respondents for all types of media (print, radio, broadcast

59 Azmat Rasul and Stephen McDowell, "Consolidation in the Name of Regulation: The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) and the Concentration of Media Ownership in Pakistan," *Global Media Journal*, accessed online April 30, 2018, <http://www.globalmediajournal.com/open-access/-consolidation-in-the-name-of-regwnership-in-pakistan.php?aid=35318>.

and online) and all geographical media (national, local, foreign) claimed they had performed self-censorship once.

Mostly Urdu and English-language journalist respondents claimed they committed self-censorship. Urdu is the main language of the national print and broadcast media and its widespread reach to diverse audiences could have been a factor in deterring journalists from talking freely about all topics.

The English-language media has a much limited scope and range in Pakistan so it is surprising that English-language journalists also self-reported restraining their expression. Recent incidents, such as the Dawn Leaks issue and the attack on France24 correspondent Taha Siddiqui, could have reduced the English-language journalists' confidence in reporting without fear.

The Dawn Leaks controversy found Pakistan's newspaper of record, Dawn, in the middle of a civil-military tussle over security issues and a subsequent national inquiry after official allegations of publishing a "fabricated news report".⁶⁰ Journalist Taha Siddiqui was forced into exile after he barely escaped a kidnapping attempt during which his assailants also threatened to kill him.⁶²

Safer digital communication could go a long way in protecting journalists from harm. A 2015 UNESCO study indicated that the use of digital tools in their daily work might have exposed many of the online journalists who were killed worldwide between 2011 and 2013.⁶³ The growing presence of multimedia and digital journalists in Pakistan was also evident from the survey sample. Nearly 46% of the respondents worked for at least one online news outlet. These Pakistani digital journalists might be exposed to the same risks that the UNESCO report highlighted. Most of the survey respondents regularly posted to social networks in professional and personal capacities, which shows their reliance on digital media for communication.

In terms of protecting their digital communication, nearly two-thirds of the total respondents said they made conscious efforts to protect their communication. This indicates a healthy trend but it is not generalizable. Since the respondents mostly belonged to major urban cities and included many who worked for English-language media, it can be assumed that they might be far more tech savvy than the Pakistani journalist reporting from districts or remote areas.

Nearly all the respondents used WhatsApp, which provides end-to-end encryption, so it is unclear whether the 89 respondents who said they either did not use encryption or didn't

60 "The Timeline of the Dawn Leaks issue," *Dunya News* online, last modified May 13, 2017, <http://dunya-news.tv/en/Pakistan/387809-The-timeline-of-Dawn-Leaks-issue>.

62 "MMfD Strongly Condemns Attack on Journalist Taha Siddiqui," *Media Matters for Democracy*, accessed April 30, 2018, <http://mediamatters.pk/mmfd-strongly-condemns-attack-on-journalist-taha-siddiqui-calls-upon-the-government-to-urgently-investigate-and-bring-perpetrators-to-justice/>.

63 Jennifer Henrichsen, Michelle Betz, and Joanne Lisosky, "Building Digital Safety for Journalism," UNESCO, 2015.

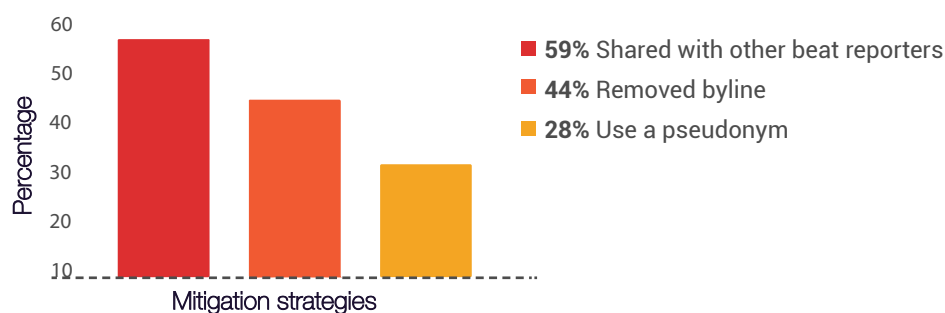
know how to use it were thinking exclusively of encrypted email or not.

An encouraging finding from this study is that a majority of respondents wanted to learn ways to secure their digital communication, including building knowledge of encryption and anonymity and conducting digital risk assessments. But it should be noted that there might be no organization-level backing of this desire for capacity building. Most Pakistani journalists, in recent years, have started to actively look for local opportunities for professional development training but they often face hindrances from their news organizations to attend such training events. Employers often do not allow their news staff a holiday from work to attend capacity building training workshops.

Just over half of the respondents said they tried to circumvent self-censorship in their professional work. While this is not ideal, it is a good number nonetheless.

Most Pakistani news organizations routinely cut their reporters' bylines as a means of editorial control, sometimes to tease journalists into filing better news reports or punishing them for filing poor copy. However, as based on the survey findings, the journalists seem to have found this chance of not putting one's name to an article as a way out of self-censorship.

It might be less conducive for broadcast news reporters, but the TV reporters might go with the other option most prevalent in the survey: sharing information with other beat reporters. By sharing the news that respondents felt they could not report themselves with other journalists, it seems the respondents were trying to maintain the sanctity of their profession and ensure that the news items do not get killed entirely.



Recommendations

Based on the study's major findings, the following recommendations are proposed for three key stakeholder groups: the news media and journalist unions, the civil society organizations, and the government.

For the News Media and Journalist Unions

1. Put up a united front against self-censorship

Divisions within the news industry and the various unions of journalists will only make working journalists more vulnerable to the pressures leading to self-censorship. Instead the unions of journalists at provincial and federal levels should overcome petty rivalries and jointly deliberate on strengthening the free and independent press in Pakistan to address the challenge of self-censorship.

Similarly, news media organizations might never completely resist the self-censorship pressures alone and separately. Rather these organizations should take a page out of the respondents' book who said they would share information with other beat reporters to circumvent self-censorship. Around the world, journalists and news organizations are collaborating to produce meaningful investigative projects that show truth to power and expose corruption. Organizational collaborations minimize the risk for each publishing partner but at the same time maximize the impact of the reporting.

The fierce competitiveness and partisan policies of leading Pakistani news media groups have done a tremendous disservice to independent journalism in the country and also made the news media less credible in the eyes of the public. It is in the best professional interest of these media groups to assert their freedom and deliver quality public-interest reportage untainted by self-censored thought and speech.

2. Safety training for media professionals

Pakistani journalists are in need of more training on physical and digital safety. Safer ways to communicate with sources and safeguards against digital surveillance will afford media professionals in the country a chance to mitigate self-censorship and be more confident in their work. News organizations and press unions should help journalists learn best practices to react and respond in case they receive threats or face attacks due to their professional work.

3. Transparency and independence in news publishing

Since a majority of the respondents in this research blamed their own organization's policies as the reason for self-censorship, it follows that they might not trust their publications with important news items. Similarly, perceptions of

political bias in the news media seem to have solidified in the public consciousness. News organizations must work to make their work flows more transparent to their own editorial staff and their audiences. Only by being more transparent and open about how news is gathered, produced and distributed will they be able to re-negotiate their trust and credibility with their own employees and the public.

Journalist unions should push for news publishers and media group owners to distance themselves from the editorial sections of their news organizations and empower journalists to take full charge of the decision-making regarding news publishing. Publishers and owners either willfully or forcibly succumb to pressure to self-censor from powerful elites. Journalists feel more strongly about the public interest duty of their profession compared to the media proprietors. They are likely to be far more creative in resisting external pressure and ensuring news reaches through to the public if they are the ones making all the news decisions.

For Civil Society Organizations

1. Continue to research self-censorship trends

Pakistani media's self-censorship problem needs to be examined more deeply and comprehensively to develop practical and durable solutions for it. Civil social organisations, especially those interested in media development, should focus on reviewing self-censorship trends over the past several years and connect these studies with effects on the democratic values in the country.

2. Advocacy and lobbying for press freedom

Civil society organizations must continue to advocate for media independent and free of self-censorship. The news organizations and journalist unions will not unite easily and might not even show the seriousness to ensure freedom of the press beyond superficial measures. Therefore, organizations working to improve the safety and security of journalists must keep raising voice about self-censorship pressures and the detriment they cause to the overall ecosystem of free expression in Pakistan.

The civil society must also lobby the government to ensure the free flow of news and information to the public and prevent political and non-political pressure on journalists to curtail their news reporting.

3. Create training opportunities for journalists

Many local journalists look toward media development non-profits and rights-based civil society organizations for professional development training opportunities. Civil society organizations should continue to work with journalists to help them better cope with physical, psychological and digital risks.

For the Government and Political Parties

1. Take steps to end impunity in crimes against journalists and support the freedom-of-expression ecosystem in the country

Pakistan's miserable record of punishing perpetrators of violence against journalists is a major challenge to the freedom of the press in the country. When journalists know their harassers and attackers will never be brought to justice, it naturally forces them to check their speech and writing at every step in the news process.

The government must work with journalist unions and media organizations to prosecute cases of violence and intimidation against journalists, especially the unresolved murders of media professionals. Deterrence against attacks on journalists can be built through access to quick and effective justice.

The government must also take necessary steps to ensure that the constitutional right to the freedom of expression is guaranteed for all citizens including journalists.

2. Ensure media regulation is not hijacked by pressure groups

In the presence of media regulators, the government should ensure that no other pressure groups threaten news organizations to hold back on their constitutionally guaranteed right to press freedom. The government should take cognizance of formal and informal ways in which the security establishment, religious groups and non-state actors could selectively intimidate news media outlets into self-censorship. Any covert attempts to threaten media professionals should be brought to light through government investigations.

3. Raise political awareness about the role of a free press in a democracy

Pakistan's political leadership should realize the importance of a free and independent media in a fully-functioning democracy and ensure that their workers and supporters also share this realization.

The media provide a vehicle for meaningful public discourse and make the governance system accountable to the citizens, which should be key democratic values for all political parties to uphold too. Often in the past, however, political parties and their supporters have jumped to denounce and criticize news media organizations that are not sympathetic to their views and opinions. Instead of making efforts to minimize polarization in the society, political leaders have boycotted certain news organizations and attacked them verbally with rude characterizations in public gatherings.

The leadership of all Pakistani political parties should understand that their criticism of the media could quickly be turned into hate campaigns and attacks on the press by their supporters. All Pakistani political parties must work to

develop a democratic respect for free speech and civilized political debate among their ranks.

Research Limitations and Other Areas of Exploration

The sample size of survey respondents was small and did not offer a nationally representative cross-section of local journalists. Future studies could look to replicate the findings of this research with a bigger sample size for generalizability of results and statistical testing of hypotheses regarding the relationship of the gender, work experience, type of media, and type of journalism role of a journalist with the self-censorship the journalist exercises.

Typical issues associated with the virtual snowballing sampling technique, such as lack of certainty about accurate representation of the population and community bias, can be avoided in future research by using more robust and representative sampling techniques.

The survey questionnaire did not include any mention of the country's judiciary as a potential influence on self-censorship practices in the news media. However, in the recent past, the superior judiciary has taken notice of Pakistan's media including calling to account press coverage of court proceedings, inquiring about the financial exploitation of journalists and issuing judgments related to the enforcement of media regulations. The Supreme Court disposed of contempt proceedings against a news publisher and a reporter in February after they apologized for publishing an inaccurate story. One TV talk show host was sent a contempt-of-court notice by a high court judge in February for discussing allegations against the court.

Due to the Supreme Court's decision to hold politicians critical of court rulings in contempt of court, the news media might also get cautious about publishing material that could upset the judges. The study's survey questionnaire did not explicitly ask respondents if they had ever self-censored personal or professional opinions about the judiciary or if judicial activism was a reason why they had self-censored. Future studies could also look at this dimension of Pakistan's freedom of expression landscape.

The study generally limited itself to quantifying at a small scale the self-censorship often associated anecdotally with current news practices in Pakistan. Some of the controls of information that lead to self-censorship identified in the study could provide a basis for a detailed qualitative research, which can attempt to provide descriptive answers to how these sources of self-censorship pressure operate and how journalists react to them. Qualitative studies could also elaborate on the links of the political economy of the local media with contemporary sources of self-censorship pressure.

While the questionnaire asked respondents if they had self-censored in professional and personal online and offline interactions, it did not ask them how frequently the respondents self-censored. A further study could look into the regularity with which Pakistani journalist perform self-censorship in their work.

Annex

5/1/2018

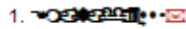
Self censorship in Pakistan

Self censorship in Pakistan

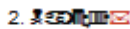
This survey is being conducted by Media Matters for Democracy, MMD, a media and digital rights advocacy organisation (mediamatters.pk). The purpose of this survey is to understand journalistic attitudes towards self censorship and map the trends in the industry. The identity of all respondents of the survey will be kept confidential.

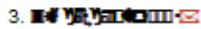
یہ سروے میڈیامٹرز فار ڈیموکریسی (ایم ایم ڈی) کی جانب سے کیا جا رہا ہے۔ جو کہ میڈیا اور ڈیجیٹل رائٹس کے متعلق لگائی ہوئی کام کرنے والی غیر سرکاری تنظیم ہے۔ اس سروے کا مقصد سہف سانسر شپ کے تقاضوں میں صحافیوں کے رویے اور میڈیا انڈسٹری کا رجحان سمجھنا ہے۔ اس سروے میں حصہ لیتے والے کسی بھی فرد کی شناخت ظاہر نہیں کی جائے گی۔

* Required

1. 

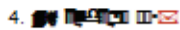
Section I - Respondent Details

2. 

3. 

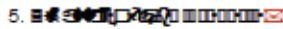
Mark only one oval.

- 21 – 30
 31 – 40
 41 – 50
 51 – 60
 Above 60

4. 

Mark only one oval.

- Male
 Female
 Other

5. 

Mark only one oval.

- Reporting
 Copy editing
 Production
 Other

6. 6-How would you classify your affiliate organisation/s کی اس سے وابستہ ہیں ذیل میں سے اس کی نویت کیا ہے

Check all that apply.

- National
 Local / Regional
 Foreign
 Other

7. 7-What is the primary language of your reporting? آپ بنیادی طور پر کس زبان میں رپورٹنگ کرتے ہیں؟

Check all that apply.

- Urdu
 English
 Pushto
 Sindhi
 Balochi
 Seraki
 Punjabi
 Other

8. 8-What medium do you work for? Tick all that apply آپ مندرجہ ذیل میں سے کس میڈیم میں رپورٹنگ کرتے ہیں؟

Check all that apply.

- Print
 Television
 Radio
 Online

9. 9-Journalistic experience صحافتی تجربہ

Mark only one oval.

- Less than 2 years
 6 to 10 years
 More than 10 years
 2 to 5 years

10. 10-In which city are you currently based? آج

* تل آپ کس شہر میں رہائش پزیر ہیں؟

Operational Definition of Self Censorship

For this survey, self censorship is being seen as the act of exercising control and restraint over one's speech and expression, in personal or professional settings, to avoid backlash, criticism, persecution and/or other kinds of threats or for some perceived benefit. اس سروے کے مطابق سلف سنسر شپ سے مراد کسی بھی رد عمل، تنقید، ظلم و ستم، خطرے یا متوقع فوائد کی وجہ سے ہنسنہ وارانہ یا انفرادی زندگی میں آزادی اظہار اور رائے پر کسی بھی قسم کی قہر لگانا ہے۔

SECTION II - SELF CENSORSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL SETTINGS

This section includes questions regarding the practice of self censorship within newsrooms and in other professional settings.

11. 11- Have you ever engaged in self censorship during your reporting? کیا آپ کو کبھی رپورٹنگ کے دوران سلف سنسر شپ کرنا پڑی ہے؟
* دوران سلف سنسر شپ کرنا پڑی ہے

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No

12. 12- Have you ever been attacked, threatened or intimidated in any way for professional or personal expression? کیا آپ کو پیشہ ورانہ ذمہ داریوں یا ذاتی اظہار کے باعث حملے، دھمکیوں یا دہکوکا سامنا کرنا پڑا ہے؟
*

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No

13. 13- Have you self censored due to any of the following reasons? مندرجہ ذیل میں سے کسی وجہ سے آپ نے سلف سنسر شپ کرنا پڑی ہے؟
*

Mark only one oval per row.

	Yes	No
To protect Pakistan's image	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To safeguard national interest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Due to threats of physical harm to self or family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Due to threats of physical harm to colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Due to threats of physical harm to sources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Due to fear of losing job / job insecurity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Due to psychological stress	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Due to news organisation's policy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Due to sensitive nature of information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Due to fear of online backlash	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Due to fear of legal action or state persecution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. 14- In your opinion, which are the main sources of threats to journalists due to which self censorship is practiced? آپ کے خیال میں کن بنیادی خطرات کے باعث صحافیوں کو سلف سنسر شپ کرنا پڑتی ہے؟
*

15. 15- In your opinion, are your journalist colleagues engaging in self censorship? آپ کے خیال میں آپ کے ساتھیوں کو بھی سلف سنسر شپ کرنا پڑتی ہے؟
*

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No

16. 16-Does self censorship make you feel safer? کیا سلف سنسر شپ کے باعث آپ اپنے آپ کو زیادہ محفوظ تصور کرتے ہیں

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No

17. 17-Do you think there is a conducive environment in the country to practice journalism without engaging in self censorship? کیا آپ کے خیال میں سلف سنسر شپ کے بغیر صحافت کے لیے ملک کے حالات سازگار ہیں

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No

18. 18-In your opinion, how has self censorship among journalists changed over time? آپ کے رائے میں وقت کے ساتھ صحافیوں کے اپنے سلف سنسر شپ کے حوالے سے کیا تبدیلی آئی ہے

Mark only one oval.

- Increased
 Decreased
 Not Changed

19. 19-Do you think it is important to self censor sometimes? کیا آپ کی رائے میں کبھی کبھی سلف سنسر شپ کرنا ضروری ہے

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No

20. 20-In your professional interactions, what kind of information are you likely to self censor? پیشہ ورانہ امور کے متعلق بات چیت کے دوران آپ کا مندرجہ ذیل میں سے کس قسم کی معلومات کو سلف سنسر کرنے کا امکان ہے

Mark only one oval per row.

	Not likely	Somewhat likely	Very likely
Information about government	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information about political parties	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information about security establishment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information about militancy and terrorism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information about religion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information about human rights	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

SECTION III - SELF CENSORSHIP IN PERSONAL SETTINGS

This section includes questions about the attitudes towards self censorship during personal engagements outside of professional settings

21. 21-Do you engage in self censorship online? کیا آپ اس وقت اپنے آپ کو سنسر کرتے ہیں جب آپ آن لائن ہوں

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No

26. 26-In your personal interactions, what kind of opinions are you likely to self censor اپنی ذاتی بات چیت میں آپ کا اپنی کس قسم کی آراء کو سنسر کرنے کا امکان ہے *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Not likely	Somewhat likely	Very likely
Opinions about government	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opinions about political parties	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opinions about security establishment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opinions about militancy and terrorism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opinions about religion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opinions about human rights	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

SECTION IV - AVENUES OF EXPRESSION AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES

This section includes questions about journalist's own approach towards self censorship and the mitigation strategies they employ to avoid having to self censor.

27. 27-Do you use a smartphone? کیا آپ سمارٹ فون کا استعمال کرتے ہیں *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No

28. 28-Which social media platforms do you use regularly? کون سے سوشل میڈیا پلیٹ فارمز کو باقاعدگی سے استعمال کرتے ہیں *

Check all that apply.

- Twitter
 Facebook
 LinkedIn
 Instagram
 Other: _____

29. 29-Which communication applications do you use regularly? کون سے آپ کن موصلاتی ایپلیکیشنز کا استعمال زیادہ کرتے ہیں *

Check all that apply.

- WhatsApp
 Signal
 Telegraph
 Other: _____

30. 30-On average, how many posts do you make across platforms daily in connection with your professional work and/or to express your political opinions? آپ عوامی طور پر روزانہ اپنی پیشہ ورانہ سرگرمیوں یا اپنے سیاسی خیالات کے اظہار کے لیے مختلف سماجی رابطوں کے پبلٹ فارمز پر کتنی پوسٹس کرتے ہیں؟
* Mark only one oval.

- 5 or less
 6 - 10
 11 - 15
 16 - 20
 More than 20

31. 31-Are you using encryption to keep your digital communications safe? کیا آپ اپنی ڈیجیٹل مواصلات کو محفوظ رکھنے کے لیے انکریپشن کا استعمال کرتے ہیں؟
* Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No
 Don't know how to use encryption
 Don't think encryption would be helpful

32. 32-Do you make any effort to make your digital communications safe? کیا آپ اپنی ڈیجیٹل مواصلات کو محفوظ رکھنے کے لیے کوئی کوشش کرتے ہیں؟
* Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No

33. 33-Do you think better knowledge about safer ways to use technology can help you express yourself more freely on social media? کیا آپ کے خیال میں ٹیکنالوجی کا استعمال کرنے کے محفوظ طریقوں کے بارے میں بہتر معلومات سے آپ سوشل میڈیا پر زیادہ آزادانہ طور پر اپنے خیالات کا اظہار کر سکتے ہیں؟
* Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No

34. 34-If yes, how helpful do you think knowledge about the following skills would be to you? اگر ہاں تو، آپ کے خیال میں مندرجہ ذیل مہارتوں کے بارے میں علم کتنا مددگار ہو گا؟
* Mark only one oval per row.

	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Not helpful
Secure communication tools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Encryption	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Anonymity & circumvention	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Digital risk assessment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

35. 35-Have you ever used any mitigation strategies to challenge factors that have led to self censorship in personal and professional expression? کیا آپ نے ذاتی اور پیشہ وارانہ اظہار میں سانسز کو چیلنج کرنے کے لیے کوئی حکمت عملی اختیار کی ہے؟
* Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No

36. 36-If yes, then what are the strategies that can be used to convey news, information and opinion that you'd otherwise have to self censor? **قر ہی نو کس حکمت عملی کا استعمال کرنے ہونے سبقتا**
سنسورشپ کیے بغور خبر، معلومات یا رائے کا اظہار کیا جا سکتا ہے


Check all that apply.

- Sharing information with other beat reporters
- Foregoing your byline
- Publishing under a pen name
- Other: _____

We value your input! Thank you for taking time out to fill this survey.

If you have any feedback, questions or recommendations about this initiative please do not hesitate to contact us at annam.lodhi@mediamatters.pk

MediaMatters
for Democracy
 Policy Research & Advocacy Initiative

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About Media Matters for Democracy

Media Matters for Democracy works to defend the freedom of expression, media, Internet, and communications in Pakistan. The main premise of our work is to push for a truly independent and inclusive media and cyberspace where the citizens in general, and journalists in specific, can exercise their fundamental rights and professional duties safely and without the fear of persecution or physical harm.

We undertake various initiatives including but not limited to training, policy research, advocacy, movement building and strategic litigation to further our organizational goals. We also work on acceptance and integration of digital media and journalism technologies and towards creating sustainable 'media-tech' initiatives in the country.

MMfD recognises diversity and inclusion as a core value of democracy and thus all our programs have a strong focus on fostering values and skills that enable and empower women, minority communities, and other marginalized groups.

Our Digital Rights Monitor initiative provides an alternative source of news reporting on Pakistan's state of digital rights. You can visit mediamatters.pk and digitalrightsmonitor.pk for more details.

