Children as Crowbar? Justifying Censorship on the Grounds of Child Protection

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* Internet usage, practices and engagement
* Content-related issues
* Risks and harms
* Online safety and policy regulation
* Access, inequalities and vulnerabilities

## Sample

The target population was Norwegians aged 15 and above. The sample was drawn from a Gallup panel (TNS Gallup access panel surveys) recruited to answer surveys online. In most respects the panel was representative of ‘Norwegian internet users’ which, in 2013, constituted 97% of the full population. Migrants from Western European countries were under-represented in the panel, so a quota was used to correct this.
The survey was conducted through computer-assisted web interviews (CAWI). Fieldwork took place in autumn-weeks 44 and 45-of 2013. An online invitation to participate in the survey was sent to 4369 individuals, resulting in 2069 completed interviews-a response rate of 47 percent. ... The questionnaire was also distributed to a non-representative sample of elite respondents—journalists, writers, and visual artists—recruited from the Norwegian Union of Journalists (Norsk journalistlag), the Norwegian Authors’ Union (Den norske forfatterforening), and the Association of Norwegian Visual Artists (Norske billedkunstnere). The data was collected by TNS Gallup, using CAWI. We report only on the results from journalists, as this is the most relevant aspect of the findings for this article.

## Implications For Parents About

Parental practices / parental mediation

## Implications For Educators About

Professional development

## Implications For Policy Makers About

* Stepping up awareness and empowerment
* Fighting against child sexual abuse and child exploitation
* Creating a safe environment for children online

## Implications For Stakeholders About

# Abstract

This article studies how possible it is to use the need to protect vulnerable populations, such as children, as a justification to limit freedom of expression in democratic societies. The research was designed and conducted based on the idea that the regulation of speech and access to content is not only a matter of law and legislative interpretations, but also a question of social norms and values. The study is based on two surveys, one implemented with a representative sample of Norwegians aged 15 and older, the other with a sample of journalists. The results show that for the general population sample, 76% of respondents agreed that the protection of weak groups, such as children, is more important than freedom of expression. The data analysis also shows that gender, education, religious affiliation, trust in media and fear of a terrorist attack are all linked to the likelihood of agreeing with this statement. Women are 66% more likely than men to be in favour of limiting freedom of expression to protect weak groups, such as children. While the numbers of those who agree are lower among journalists, up to 50% of journalists still totally or partially agree that protecting weak groups is more important than freedom of expression. We discuss the policy implications of these results for democratic societies.

# Outcome

The results show that for the general population sample, 76% of respondents agreed that the protection of weak groups, such as children, is more important than freedom of expression. The data analysis also shows that gender, education, religious affiliation, trust in media and fear of a terrorist attack are all linked to the likelihood of agreeing with this statement. Women are 66% more likely than men to be in favour of limiting freedom of expression to protect weak groups, such as children. While the numbers of those who agree are lower among journalists, up to 50% of journalists still totally or partially agree that protecting weak groups is more important than freedom of expression. We discuss the policy implications of these results for democratic societies.