

Project: **The Transformation of Political Mobilisation and Communication in European Public Spheres**

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Interview questionnaire

Interview questionnaire for interviews with journalists – editor/political editor/political lead writer

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Name of interviewer:	
Date of interview:	
Interviewee:	
Newspaper:	

I. News Gathering Infrastructure¹

Infrastructure of journalists

1. How many journalists on your newspaper are assigned to the coverage of (please give numbers rather than percentages or fractions):

a) National political affairs?

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and

b) International and/or foreign, political affairs?

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2. In which European countries and other regions of the world does your newspaper have foreign correspondents?

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¹ These are descriptive questions about the organisational resources available to the newspaper when gathering the information for news reports. Here it is not necessary to collect general basic information on readership size, geographical scope of the distribution of the newspaper, the number of staff at the newspaper, specifically from the interviews. However this information must be collected, and if not available from published sources, telephone calls to the newspaper should be made to collect this information.

3. Does your newspaper co-operate formally with any other newspapers, either national or foreign, for example by pooling resources for gathering information, exchanging articles, or sharing correspondents?

Yes. Please name these

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No

4. Does your newspaper co-operate informally with journalists from other newspapers, either national or foreign, when gathering information, sharing stories?

Yes. Please state which ones

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No.

5. In your newspaper organisation which are seen as the three most prestigious assignments among the positions as foreign correspondents?

1.
2.
3.

NOTE: Question 6 is not relevant to journalists other than EU correspondents. It has therefore been removed from this schedule, however question numbers have been left the same for comparative purposes.

Newsroom Infrastructure

7.

a) Turning now to the daily newsroom practices for reporting on political events in your newspaper, could you briefly explain who is normally involved, and what is their role?

(Open then code)

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b) Is this process different when your newspaper is reporting on issues with a European dimension?

Yes. Please elaborate.

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No.

Links with other Press Agencies

8. Which three news agencies do you consider to be the most important for your newspaper?

1.
2.
3.

Influence of the Internet

9. Has the advent of the Internet changed the way in which your newspaper reports?

Yes. Please briefly elaborate on these changes, and the factors which account for them

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No

NOTE: Due to the different role of editors in comparison to correspondents, sections II & III on selection criteria for sources and source strategies should not be asked to in the interview with Editors. These sections (questions 10-20) have been removed for this schedule, but the question numbering remains the same as the other schedules.

IV. News Reporting: Journalists' Perceptions of (Public) Readership's Demand

Here we want to focus more on how journalists' perceptions of what their readerships want to read is an influence on news reporting

Influence of Readership Demand on level and contents of Reporting

21. How interested do you think your readership is in politics?

- 1. Not at all
- 2. A little
- 3. Moderately
- 4. Very

Please elaborate briefly on your answer.

(Open then code)

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22.

a) Over the past decade, do you think that people in this country have come to view politics and public affairs within a European frame of reference, to any extent?

- Yes (go to part b)
- To a certain extent (go to part b)
- No (go to question 23.)

b) To what extent has media coverage contributed to this?

- 1. Not at all
- 2. A little
- 3. Moderately
- 4. Greatly

Please elaborate briefly.

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23. How interested do you think your readership is in European politics?

- 1. Not at all
- 2. A little
- 3. Moderately
- 4. Greatly

Please elaborate briefly on your answer. (Open then code)

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24. To what extent do you think your readership understands how European politics works?

- 1. Not at all
- 2. A little
- 3. Moderately
- 4. Greatly

Please elaborate briefly on your answer. (Open then code)

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25. Is your readership generally likely to be more or less in favour European integration than the general public?

- 1. More
- 2. No difference
- 3. Less

26. Much is made of the ‘democratic deficit’ of the EU, what role do you see the press having in reducing this deficit by informing and educating the public?

- 1. No role at all
- 2. A small role
- 3. A moderate role
- 4. An important role

Please elaborate briefly on your answer. (Open then code)

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V. News Commentating: Journalists' Attempts to Influence the Political Agenda (directly or indirectly)

Here we look at the way that journalists give interpretation to the political events, which they report. This occurs in its most extreme form in commentaries and editorials, but also to a lesser extent within news reporting. In short, the aim is to get at journalists' attempts to influence the political agenda, either directly, or indirectly, through shaping public opinion.

Journalists' attempts at political agenda-setting when commentating on reported events (especially, editorials and commentaries)

27.

a) When you are writing an article that gives you the scope to express an opinion on behalf of the newspaper, and comment on political events, how often do you try to get your message across to the following actors?

(Interviewer reads out actor types, interviewee responds)

	1. Never	2. From time to time	3. Regularly	4. Always/ Very Often
<i>Governments & political parties</i>				
1. National government	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Regional/local government	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. European Union institutions/Commission	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Supranational or transnational institutions (WTO, World Bank, UNHCR etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Political parties (national)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Interest and campaign groups</i>				
1. National interest groups (e.g. Trade Unions, employers associations)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Regional or local interest groups (e.g. Trade Unions, employers associations)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. European interest groups (e.g. Trade Unions, employers associations)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. International and transnational interest groups (e.g. Trade Unions, employers associations)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. National campaign and protest groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Regional and local campaign and protest groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. European campaign and protest groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. International or transnational campaign and protest groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Public Actors</i>				
1. Scientific experts/policy think tanks working in this field	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Journalists from other newspapers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Your readership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Informed political opinion – 'the chattering classes'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. National public opinion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

b) Please tell me if the actors who you are trying to get your message across to differ in any way when you are writing an article that gives you the scope to express an opinion on behalf of the newspaper, and comment on political events in relation to European issues rather than national affairs?

- No (go to next question)
- Yes (go to part c)

c) Please name the three most important actors you try to get your message across to on European issues

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Please elaborate on these differences, and the factors that you think account for them

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28. What level of freedom are you given to express your own individual position when commentating on European issues such as the Convention on the Future of Europe?

- 1. None at all
- 2. A little
- 3. A moderate amount
- 4. A great degree

Please describe the most important factor that limits the autonomy you have when writing news stories on these issues.
(Open then code)

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VI. Opinion Leading: The Newspaper's editorial opinion and commentaries

Editorial writing and positions

29. If the main lead editorial of the day is on European issues such as the Convention on the Future of Europe, who has taken the decision to lead on this topic, and who decides on its contents?

(Open then code)

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30. What are the three most important factors that lead to your newspaper deciding to publish a leader article or editorial on European issues such as the Convention on the Future of Europe? When answering please try to give concrete examples from your own experience.

(Open then code)

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VII. Newspaper Reporting on European Affairs and Its Position on EU

Here we focus more precisely on reporting of Europe and the political positions that the newspaper takes on Europe. We are interested in the newspaper's own political position that is expressed on the topic, and how it comes to take up such a stance.²

31. In your experience how much do you think that the following factors have contributed to the extent and way that your newspaper comments and reports on European issues? (Interviewer reads out statements below, interviewee answers)

	1. Not at all	2. A little	3. Moderately	4. Greatly
1. National politics becoming more closely related to that of other European countries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The increasing role of European Union institutions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. National politicians seeing political events within a European context	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Readerships understanding political events in a European context	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Newspapers seeing political events within a European context	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The level of political conflict over Europe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

32. News reporting is a pressurised and sometimes difficult task. Please mention whether any of the following are a concern for your newspaper reports a story on Europe.

(Interviewer reads out, interviewee responds yes or no)

	1. Yes	2. No
1. Availability of news space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Pressure of deadlines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Availability of resources for research/investigation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Pressure from senior editors/journalists	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Pressure from management/organisational pressure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Access to official documents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Access to important public figures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Necessity to capture audience attention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Lack of expert knowledge on topic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Own lack of understanding of topic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Lack of clear cues and positions from politicians	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

² For the EU correspondent and the editor it will be relatively straight forward to focus them on this topic. For the home affairs (immigration) and agriculture correspondents, the best strategy is to make clear to them that in this final section of the interview we are focussing on the newspaper's stance on European affairs, and we are asking them for an informed opinion as a journalist within the newspaper who has experience of covering stories that sometimes have a European angle.

Please elaborate on the most pressing type of difficulty that your newspaper encounters when reporting a story on Europe in contrast to reporting on national affairs.

(Open then code)

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33. When the newspaper comments on political affairs relating to Europe, such as the Convention on the Future of Europe, is the newspaper's role in any way different than when giving an opinion on national affairs, with respect to the following statements? (Interviewer reads out, interviewee answers)

	1. Yes	2. No
1. The newspaper has more of a duty to improve public knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The newspaper is more likely to follow the line of the political party with which it is most closely associated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The newspaper is more likely to follow the line indicated by national public opinion polls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The newspaper is more likely to try to influence the positions of political elites	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The newspaper is more likely to follow the perceived position of the proprietor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The newspaper is more likely to defend what it sees as the national interest	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. The newspaper is more likely to express its own position, independently from other actors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(If all above are 'No' go to question 34, otherwise continue)

Please elaborate briefly on the most important difference in the way that your newspaper gives opinions on European affairs when compared to national affairs.

(Open then code)

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34. Issues relating to Europe, or with a European angle, are often seen as the concern of elites rather than the general public. Please elaborate briefly on whether this makes the newspaper's role as an opinion-leader any different for European affairs, than it is for national affairs? (Open then code)

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35. In general, do you think your newspaper does a good job in reporting on issues relating to Europe and the European Union?

- Yes
- No

Please elaborate briefly on your answer:

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39. Does your newspaper run its own campaigns on European issues?

- No. Go to Question 40.
- Yes. In what way? Please give two examples.

i).....
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ii).....
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40. Has the newspaper's editorial line on European issues changed over the last decade?

- 1. Not at all
- 2. A little
- 3. Moderately
- 4. Greatly

Please elaborate on the two most important factors in bringing about either a change in editorial position, or that it has remained the same.
(Open then code)

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ii).....
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VIII. Finale

41. We are now at the end of our interview. Is there anything you would like to add to what we have discussed?

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42. Is there anybody you would suggest for us to meet for additional interviews on this subject matter?

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43. Would you like us to send you a summary of the results of this project?

- no
- yes: where should we send them to?

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On behalf of the whole project team, I would like to thank you very much for your cooperation!

END OF INTERVIEW SCHEDULE