Interview questionnaire WP 6

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Interview questionnaire

Interview questionnaire for interviews with journalists – editor/political editor/political lead writer (transnational or European level newspaper)

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Date: 25 September 2003

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of interviewer:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date of interview:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I. News Gathering Infrastructure

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 domestic political affairs in the European Region?

   .................................................................

   b) International political affairs between countries within the European region?

   .................................................................

   c) International and world affairs between countries extending beyond or external to the European region?

   .................................................................

   d) Political affairs related to the European Union institutions and actions?

   .................................................................

2. Where is your newspaper institutionally based? And in which European countries and other regions of the world does your newspaper have 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, for example by pooling resources for gathering information, exchanging articles, or sharing correspondents?

☐ Yes. Please name these

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☐ No

4. Do you co-operate informally with journalists from other newspapers, when gathering information, sharing stories?

☐ Yes. Please state which ones

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........................................................................................................................................
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☐ No.

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

..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................

☐ 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 across the European region 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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…………………………………………………………………………………………
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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 commenting on reported events (especially, editorials and commentaries)

27. 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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governments &amp; political parties</th>
<th>1. Never</th>
<th>2. From time to time</th>
<th>3. Regularly</th>
<th>4. Always/Very Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 German government</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 French government</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 British government</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Italian government</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Other EU member governments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 EU candidate state governments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.7 Extra-EU national governments</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Member state regional/local governments</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.1 European Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.2 European Court of Justice</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.3 Council of Ministers</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.4 European Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.5 CoR Committee of the Regions</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.6 European Parliament</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Supranational or transnational institutions – Non-EU (WTO, World Bank, UNHCR etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.1 Political parties from EU Member nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.2 PPE-ED (Group of the Eur. People's Party (Christian Democrats) and Eur. Democrats)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5.3 PES (Group of the Party of European Socialists)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Interest and campaign groups

1. Interest groups in Member States (e.g. Trade Unions, employers associations) | | | | |
2. Regional or local interest groups in Member States (e.g. Trade Unions, employers associations) | | | | |
3. European-level interest groups (e.g. Trade Unions, employers associations) | | | | |
4. International and transnational interest groups (e.g. Trade Unions, employers associations) | | | | |

8
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)

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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2. ............................................................................................................................
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3. ............................................................................................................................
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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)

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

32. News reporting is a pressurised and sometimes difficult task. Please mention whether any of the following are a concern for your newspaper when reporting a story on Europe. (Interviewer reads out, interviewee responds yes or no)

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

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 you encounter when reporting a story on ‘Europe’ in contrast to your experiences when reporting on other international or national political 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 other international or national politics affairs, with respect to the following statements?

(Interviewer reads out, interviewee answers)

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

(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 other international or 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 other international or 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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13
36. As far as your newspaper is concerned, do the European institutions…….? Do they…?etc (Answer yes or no to all)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1. Yes</th>
<th>2. No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Have a democratic deficit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Lack transparency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Lack accessibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Lack efficiency/competence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Waste financial resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

37. In the view of your newspaper does the process of European integration contribute to European …………….? Does it contribute to…?etc (Answer yes or no to all)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1. Yes</th>
<th>2. No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Security</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Political stability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Economic growth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Economic competitiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Environmental protection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Social equality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Influence and weight in international relations</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

38. According to our empirical findings, your newspaper tends to express the following position on Europe when reporting about ‘European affairs’. Please comment on these findings are what you would expect, or are in any way surprising. (Open then code)

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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)

i) ........................................................................................................................................
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ii) ........................................................................................................................................
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I would like to conclude this interview with a more general question about the EU: how do you perceive the process of European integration more generally? What direction is it taking?

Do you agree with this development? And how do you see the role and performance of EU institutions in this context?
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