

## Research Manual “MDM edition 2020”: Interview guidelines

**Interviews** for the MDM 2020 are ideally face-to-face, but some information can also be requested by phone calls or other means of communication. Please record your interviews. NB.: There is no need to transcribe your interviews. Interviews should rather inform the research team (no content analysis of the interviews needed!). You might (and should), however, quote from your interviews in the final text. Please list all interviews (person, company, date, interviewer) for reference.

The following table suggests interview questions with reference to indicators. You are free to change the order, change the questions, and adapt the guidelines to the specificities of your country. This way, please consider the guidelines as suggestion.

Please adapt the guidelines to the type of medium: large public service media might need different wordings than private commercial media or generic online media.

**How to select interview partners:** Take the list of your leading news media and select the editor-in-chief as well as one/two members of the newsroom (preferably experienced journalists, who know their newsroom well). Furthermore, select one representative of a journalism union in your country. This person should know the (labor) contract rules in your country well.

### Introduction for all interviews:

Thank you for the opportunity to talk about the international comparative research project “Media for Democracy Monitor”. Some 20 countries world-wide participate in this long standing research project, coordinated by the Euromedia Research Group and the University of Salzburg, Austria. The purpose of the research is to demonstrate the importance and value of news media for contemporary democracies over time. We are members of our county team and would like to talk to you about your newsroom, about internal routines and rules. Your responses should first and foremost inform the research team. We keep responses confidential, and we quote – if at all – in the form of “an editor-in-chief” or “a newsroom journalist” has said ... The findings will be published online as well as in scientific publications. A book publication is envisaged in late 2020.

**Interviews with leading news media: Time required: One hour each. Do NOT interview editor-in-chief and newsroom members together. Do it one after the other!**

	Editor-in-chief	Newsroom member
	Questions on investigative reporting, news sources, news selection, misinformation	
C7	Journalists being watchdogs is of crucial importance to contemporary democracies. How important is investigative journalism to your company? Is investigative reporting addressed in the mission statement? Are there any rules enabling journalists to do investigative reporting?	Journalists being watchdogs is of crucial importance to contemporary democracies. Please describe the procedure (if any) of initiating and exercising investigative reporting (funds, resources, time, money, etc.)
C9	How is your company supporting investigative reporting (e.g. by allocating time and money)?	How is your company supporting investigative reporting (e.g. by allocating time and money)?
C8	Does your company provide any continuous training in particular in investigative reporting and (big) data analysis? If so, what kind of training and how is it used by	On a regular basis, do you have the opportunity to participate in continuous training, in particular in investigative reporting and (big) data analysis? How often

	journalists?	do you make use of such training?
F3	Is there any formal syndication of news from other media (national/international)?	In your daily work, how important are news from agencies and from PR sources compared to own stories? Do you syndicate news from other media, and if so, how often?
E10		Are there any routines to ensure that a variety of voices is present in the news? Are there any rules to make sure not to ignore relevant voices? Is anybody in charge of this? If expert voices are used: How do you select experts? Any rules / procedures?
F7		If you think about your daily routines in selecting news: Please describe the regular process how news are selected, and how decisions about the relevance of news items are taken. Are there any formal rules about news selection? Do specific rules or caution apply to social media sources?
F10	Did your company enact any formal measures to fight misinformation? If so, what measures? Do you employ any automatized / algorithmic instruments? Do you collaborate with external fact-checking organizations?	Misinformation has become a problem. How do you defend yourself against misinformation? Has there been any training lately? Do you have a special unit to fight misinformation? How does it work in practice? Is someone in the newsroom familiar with automatized / algorithmic instruments?
F9		In the newsroom work, are explicit efforts undertaken with regard to the plurality of voices, in particular addressing the equality between man and women in reporting?
Questions regarding internal organization, governance, code of ethics		
F4	In your company, how does the editor-in-chief come into office? Who suggests, and who decides? How did you come into office?	In case of different (political) views within the newsroom: How are decisions taken on the framing of news? Who decides? Is there an open debate about political framing? Can journalists be forced to report against their personal political beliefs/opinions? Do journalists have a say on the appointment of an editor-in-chief?
F4 F8	Are there any internal rules to promote women journalists in their career? Are working conditions of men and women equal, including payment?	Are there any internal rules to promote women journalists in their career? Are working conditions of men and women equal, including payment? Is there any kind

		of monitoring of this?
F5	<p>Are the owners of your company involved in editorial decision at any point in time? Is there any formal collaboration between the advertising sales department and the newsroom? Is there informal collaboration?</p>	<p>How often, if at all, do you have the opportunity or obligation to discuss editorial matters with the owner of the company? Do you remember any intervention by the owners on news content? Is there any exchange between the staff of the advertising sales department and journalists? If so, how often?</p>
C2	<p><i>(only in case that power holders are present in the company's board, e.g. church, political party):</i> [church, political party] is present in the Board of your company. According to your experience: To what extent do they have a say in editorial matters? Do you remember any intervention?</p>	
F6	<p>With regard to advertisers: In general, is your company sensitive to the influence of advertisers on the newsroom? Have there been any recent incidents of advertisers boycotting your company because of your reporting? Could you please estimate how much revenue is generated by the first, second and third largest advertiser? Are there any permanent sponsoring agreements? <i>Public service only (and only if this information is not publicly available otherwise):</i> Does the annual budget depend on political decisions? And if so, can your company rely on pluri-annual budgeting?</p>	<p>Do you remember any case where advertisers intervened in the newsroom? Have there been any recent incidents of advertisers boycotting your company because of your reporting?</p>
E7	<p><i>(only if there is a national code of ethics):</i> Is the national code of ethics of any relevance to the work in your newsroom?</p>	<p><i>(only if there is a national code of ethics):</i> Do you ever refer to the national code of ethics in your daily work? Can you remember when you used it the last time?</p>
E8	<p>In your company, is there any formal code of best journalistic practice / code of conduct? If so, how is it used and implemented? What are sanctions when the code is not respected?</p>	<p>Is there any code of journalistic conduct implemented in your company? If so, how often are you using it? When did you consult the code last? Are there any sanctions if journalists disrespect the code? Which sanctions?</p>
F11	<p>How do you support your journalists, in particular women, in the event of a shitstorm, cyberstalking or other forms of harassment because of their reporting?</p>	<p>How does your employer support you (in particular women) in the event of a shitstorm, cyberstalking or other forms of harassment caused by your reporting?</p>

Citizen participation and public information		
E9	In some countries, citizens can take part in newsroom debates (“open newsrooms”). Is there any culture of citizen participation in your company? What internal rules apply to publishing user generated content (UGC) and comments by users on news?	Is there any opportunity of citizens to take part in the newsroom, at least some times? What process applies to publishing user generated content (UGC) and user comments on news? Who is moderating user comments, and how?
C6		When it comes to public information: How accessible is information from public sources in practice to you? <i>[in case there is legal access obligation]</i> How well does access work? Are there any complaints / restrictions? <i>[in case public information is not accessible]</i> Do journalists normally find ways to access public information? Do you think that important and relevant information is permanently inaccessible for you?
End	Do you have anything to add?	Do you have anything to add?

**Journalists’ Union: time required: 30 minutes**

C4	Journalistic professionalism is considered essential for performing its role in contemporary democracies. How would you describe the state of journalistic professionalism in [country]? Please comment on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the availability of resources (time, staff, financial means),</li> <li>• the self-organization of journalists (meetings, solidarity in case of conflict).</li> <li>• Are cases of intervention by vested interests made public?</li> <li>• Is training in “journalistic professionalism” available in any way?</li> <li>• Are gender inequalities explicitly considered in professional development?</li> </ul>	
C5	Job security is essential for journalistic independence. According to your observation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are journalists normally employed by news media for a long time (life-time)?</li> <li>• Are experienced journalists often substituted by younger (cheaper) colleagues? How often does this happen? What are differences between news media companies?</li> <li>• How common are temporary / short term journalistic contracts?</li> <li>• How significant is free-lancing in the news business?</li> <li>• Are there any rules protecting journalists from being dismissed because of their reporting / beliefs?</li> <li>• Are women supported in case of part-time or non-permanent contracts?</li> <li>• Did all this change over time (last decade)?</li> </ul>	
E7	<i>(only if there is a national code of ethics):</i> Across the board and according to your observation: Is the national code of ethics ever used in newsroom decisions? Does it have any significance? Do all relevant media respect the code?	
C2	<i>(only in case that power holders are present in the board of leading news media, e.g. church, political party):</i> [church, political parties] are present in the Board of leading news media. According to your	

	experience: To what extent do they have a say in editorial matters? Do you remember any intervention?
C6	How accessible is information from public sources to news journalists? <i>[in case there is legal access obligation]</i> How well does access work for journalists? Are there any complaints / restrictions? <i>[in case public information is not accessible]</i> Do journalists normally find ways to access public information? Is important and relevant information permanently inaccessible for journalist?
C8	Contemporary journalism requires skills and knowledge update. In general: Do news companies provide any continuous training in particular in investigative reporting and (big) data analysis? If so, what kind of training and how is it used by journalists? Is special attention paid to train women?