POPBACK Interview Guide

# Consent

1. Read the information leaflet and consent form and understood them
2. Consent to the interview
3. Understand that can withdraw from the study at any point
4. Consent to the recording
5. Anonymity or chose to be identifiable?

# Personal Career/ Biography

*We’re interested in professional biographies of our interviewees, i.e. a reflection on their career, their motivations and the different experiences in their workplace(s).*

1. Could you please speak a bit about your own personal history in your career?
   * Started working as a journalist (or in media) – how, when, where
   * why did you change workplace?
     + What are the differences of your workplaces?
2. What is your current job title and media outlet you’re working at?
   * clarify the chronology
3. What was the main motivation for you to become a journalist?

# Journalism

*In this section we collect reflections on the meanings of good journalism and on the key past and present transformations and their impact on media and journalism. We aim to assess how journalistic values and professional ethnics have changed during backsliding in the sample countries.*

1. How would you define your take on journalism?
   * Who is a journalist?
   * What does a journalist do?
   * What are the primary responsibilities of a journalist to society?
2. What do you think should be the most essential values and professional ethics for a journalist?
3. What kind of values and practices come to the fore when you look at journalism today?
   * Are the ethical values and norms you mentioned applied in real life?
   * How are these norms and values practiced today in your country’s journalistic circles?
4. What are the most important transformations and breaking points that journalism has gone through from past to present? In the different media outlets you worked

# News-making process

*In this section, we are asking about the processes of news-making to see if there is any other non-journalistic actor or any influence coming from the pressure groups –government, charities, companies, etc. on the news making processes.*

***Reporters:***

1. How would you define your strategy and technique to gather news and decide on the news value?
   * Did it change over time?
2. How do you decide to follow a news story?
   * Changes over time?
3. How would you define your signature in your news?
   * Angle, language and discourse
4. Once you decide to follow a story, how does the process proceed?
   * For instance, could you explain the daily communication between you and your peers as well as you and your line managers?

***Editors/managers:***

1. How would you define your strategy and technique to manage news, edit news?
2. How would you define your role in the news-making of your outlet?
   * If active role: how do you decide when your outlet needs to follow a news story and how your outlet will cover the story? Its angle, mode of language, discourse?
3. Once the reporters bring the stories, how do you decide to use or not use; edit the story?
   * Is there any other person, institution that you involve in the decision-making process of your outlet’s daily stories?

***Both:***

1. What was the most important news you have made so far?
2. What kind of problems and pressures do you face while making news? (Freedom of speech etc.)
3. What kind of news sources do you use?
4. What is needed to improve journalistic practices and news quality?
5. When you consider your own career from the beginning to today, is there anything you think as a remarkable or noticeable change in terms of news-collection and editing process?
   * Has there been any changes in terms of ‘news value’ as far as you remember and observe over all these years?
   * Is there any ‘new’ actors or processes today that shape the news production process?

# Work conditions

*The aim is to collect thoughts on how work conditions for journalists transformed over time, how and with what impact current digitalization processes influence journalistic work if compared to the past. A further aim is to gather reflections on professional and solidarity networks that help journalists to distance themselves from abrasive populism.*

1. When you think of working conditions for journalist from your early days in your career to today, has there been any changes?
   * how and with what impact
2. How do you evaluate the working conditions of journalists when you look at the media sector today?
   * What do journalists need to do their job better?
   * What are the most significant obstacles to the profession?
3. What kind of solidarity and safety networks are there to defend journalists' professional ethics and rights? (Unions, initiatives, etc.)

# Media ownership and law

*We aim at getting interviewees’ thoughts on how have changes in media ownership and law affected the media sector in general and specifically the work of journalists and their professionalism. We’re interested in the reflection on historical trajectories of these changes and their impact on democratic backsliding.*

1. Have you experienced any ownership changes whilst working at a media outlet? To what extent has this affected your journalistic work?
2. What are the most significant transformations and milestones in the media sector in terms of media ownership? What has changed and with what impact?
3. How would you assess the interactions between economic interests and the independency of editorial and journalistic work?
   * of colleagues, your own experience?
4. What you think of past and recent changes in the field of media legislation, how would you describe them? And how you think these changes impacted professional journalism?

# Media (authoritarian) politics interactions

*We aim at capturing the views on the relations between the media and the field of politics, i.e. the assessment of potential political pressure on the media or (specific) political mechanism obstructing media freedom, pluralism, and democracy at large. We’re interested to collect reflections on media-politics parallel in a historical perspective, including opinions on the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the media in the respectful countries.*

1. How have media-politics interaction routines changed over time? How would you describe past and recent political pressure exercised on media and media workers?

OR

What do you think about the relationship between media, politics, and political parties/actors in your country?

* + Change over time?
  + Impact of Covid-19 pandemic on this media-political actors parallel?

1. How do the political climate and media shape one another?
   * Has it changed over time? How and why?
2. Do media outlets' political and critical leanings affect their financial and journalistic freedom?
3. How does the relationship between media and politics reflect on society?
4. What are your needs and demands for a more pluralistic and liberal media landscape?
5. How do you see the future of journalism in your country?

# Concluding thoughts

1. Lastly, what would you like to add to our conversation?
2. Contacts who would agree to be interviewed