Field Manual

Instructions for Field Research

February 14, 2012

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1 GENERAL NOTES

- As researchers within the *Worlds of Journalisms Study*, we all would like to see that the data we use and disseminate to the academic community and beyond meet the highest methodological standards.

- It is vitally important to comparative research endeavors such as ours that the data obtained from the various countries are collected using standardized and therefore comparable techniques.

- All Principal Investigators are therefore kindly asked to adhere to the principles detailed in this document. Following these rules will ensure the reliability of the study's data.

- There may be instances in which you are not sure how to proceed, or in which the standard procedures may not work properly. In all these cases please consult with the Study's Central Coordination.

2 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

2.1 Population

- We will reserve the concept of *news media* only for media organizations that have their own news program or news section. Consequently, radio stations only broadcasting music programs are not news media.

- A good estimate of a country's news media and its population of journalists is critical to the success of this study. It is therefore essential to draw an *informed picture* of the national media system and population of journalists. For many of the countries included in the Study, this information might be known. For other countries, this information needs to be extracted from available sources (e.g. national media directories, official data on media, national associations of journalists and publishers, census data, etc.).

- The most *critical parameters* that one needs to know are: (a) the number and regional distribution of news media, (b) the structure of the media system in terms of ownership or other relevant parameters, and (c) the number of journalists. If there is no information available for the number of journalists in a country, the population should be estimated (e.g., by extrapolating the national population from news media for which the number of journalists is known).

- The Study will focus on *professional journalists.* A professional journalist is a person who earns at least 50 percent of his or her income from paid labor for news media and is involved in producing and editing journalistic content as well as in editorial supervision and coordination. Press fotographers are journalists by definition, camera operators only when they independently make editorial decisions.

- Respondents other than professional journalists should not be included in the data set submitted to Central Coordination. If collaborators want to include *amateur journalists*, such as bloggers and participatory/citizen reporters, this practice is allowable as long as it does not compromise the general framework.

- Journalists from *all kinds of media* should be included in the selection process: newspapers, magazines, television stations, radio stations, online media and news agencies.

2.2 Sample size

- The number of journalists interviewed in each country ultimately depends on three parameters: population size, confidence level and the amount of accepted sampling error.

- A common value for the confidence level is 95 percent, so this value should be used when calculating the sample size.

- In order to meet the highest standards in social survey research, national teams should ideally arrive at sample sizes with a maximum error margin of three percent. When this is not possible, a maximum error of five percent is still acceptable.

- The sample size can be conveniently calculated on the following website: http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm.

- The numbers tabulated below are intended as a rough indication (with a confidence level set to 95%):

Population	Sampling error		
	5%	4%	3%
1000	278	375	516
5000	357	536	880
10000	370	566	964
20000	377	583	1013
50000	381	593	1045

- The above strategy will almost inevitably lead to variance in sample size between countries. As a consequence, countries with larger samples will have more weight in a pooled data analysis than those with smaller samples. The final data set will therefore include country weights to account for these differences.

2.3 Sampling

- Broadly speaking, the *Worlds of Journalisms Study* strives to investigate samples of news media and journalists that *speak to* – or represent – their respective national populations.

- The strategy by which the individual national teams arrive at such samples may vary across countries. In general, it is most useful to select news media first and then choose potential respondents from these media.

- Central Coordination suggests a two-step procedure for the selection of media: In the first step, Principal Investigators construct a national sample of news media that reflects the structure of their country's media system. Useful for such purpose is a quota scheme specifying the national composition of news media with respect to such indicators as media type (newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, online and agencies), content orientation (e.g. "quality"/broadsheet vs. popular/tabloid), reach (national, regional and local) or primary ownership (public, private or state-owned). In the second step, Principal Investigators randomly or systematically select news media in proportion to the structure of the media system.

- Within the news media, journalists should be randomly or systematically selected. Every journalist in a chosen news organization should have an equal, or at least non-zero, chance to be selected for the Study. Principal Investigators should make sure that journalists from all editorial ranks are potentially included in the final selection from a given news organization.

- A differential is used in order to determine the number of journalists to be selected within each news organizations. Three journalists (or less if there are fewer journalists) should be selected from smaller newsrooms, and five from larger news media. What constitutes "large" and "small" newsrooms depends on the national context, so each country team should individually decide on this matter.

- Central Coordination should be consulted whenever country teams are not sure about procedures or when they are not able to comply with the overall sampling plan.

3 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

- The *Worlds of Journalism Study* requires the implementation of the common core questionnaire fully, faithfully and in its entirety.

- The master questionnaire is drafted in English. Principal Investigators are responsible for the translation of the questionnaire into their local language. The accuracy and equivalence of translations should be secured by systematic procedures, such as by using a translation-backtranslation procedure or by involving a multilingual team of researchers.

- As a general rule, functionally equivalent translation has priority over literal translation. In many cases literal translations might evoke connotations peculiar to a specific language context. National teams should therefore use a questionnaire wording that best reflects the contents of the original question and that follows the language-specific conventions.

- In principle, every question in the master questionnaire must be asked in every survey. The only exceptions are optional questions (marked in blue in the questionnaire). In exceptional cases, where a Principal Investigator feels a question is irrelevant or inappropriate for her/his country, s/he may seek the consent of Central Coordination ahead of time.

- National teams are free to add questions to the questionnaire. The additional questions, however, should not inflict on the content of and answers to the common core questions. The variables corresponding to these additional questions should be eliminated from the data set prior to submission to Central Coordination.

- For better orientation please print out the questionnaire with color ink. Questions in black ink belong to the core (denoted C1, C2, etc.). Questions and statements highlighted in blue are optional (denoted O1, O2, etc.). Parts highlighted in red are instructions for interviewers/questionnaire programmers and should therefore not be read out during the interview. In the online or e-mail interview modes, the parts in red should not be included in the questionnaire presented to respondents.

- Parts in italics should not be read out by the interviewer. These are usually answer categories that are already mentioned in the question wording. However, interviewers are allowed to repeat these categories if respondents have difficulties with recalling them. In addition, the response categories "Don't know" and "Refused" should not be mentioned in the interview and only be coded when respondents either indicate that they don't know the answer or refuse to answer the question. In the online or e-mail interview modes, however, the "Don't know" and "Refused" categories need to be presented to the respondent.

3.1 Explanations concerning individual questions

C1 *Which of the following categories best describes your current position in your newsroom?*
- Respondents should choose only one of the categories that they think provides the best description of their position.
- If a respondent assumes several roles at different points in time (e.g., sometimes the role of the managing editor rotates among senior editors), then she or he should list the role that applies most of the time.

C2 *Which of the following categories best describes your current employment?*
- "Freelancer" is different from "Full-time" and "Part-time" in that freelance journalists usually work on a *casual* basis, i.e., they are paid *by news item*.

C3 *For how many newsrooms do you work at present? Different news outlets produced by the same newsroom count as one.*
- Please note the difference between *news outlets* (newspaper, TV newscast, online news site, etc.) and *newsrooms* (understood as organizational units that may occasionally produce more than one news outlet). The newsroom is therefore the physical space, and outlet is the publication.

O2 *For how many news outlets do you work?*
- Please see the note on the difference between *news outlets* and *newsrooms* under C3.
- Here we count only those news outlets to which the respondent contributes. Media organizations increasingly cross-syndicate content, meaning that articles produced for one newspaper are shared with and reproduced by affiliated newspapers. Journalists are mostly not involved in these processes of cross-syndication. In these cases, the question refers to the number of news outlets to which the respondent normally contributes his/her works in the first place.

C5 *Do you belong to any organizations or associations that are primarily for people in journalism or the communications field??*
- These are usually journalists unions or national associations of journalists.

C6 *Do you usually work on a specific "beat" or subject area, such as foreign politics or sports, or do you usually cover different topics and subjects, more like a general assignment?*
- The question here is whether the journalist belongs to an organizational *sub unit* that focuses on a specific subject area and/or whether the journalist is *regularly* assigned to cover stories in a specific subject area.

C7 *Which beat or area do you usually work on?*
- Please note that the categories should *not be read out* to the interviewee but coded on the basis of the respondent's qualitative response.
- If a category is not included in the list, please code "Other" and specify.
- In the online or e-mail interview mode, C7 should be designed as an *open-ended* question.

O3 *On average, how many news items do you produce and/or edit in a usual week?*
- Here we ask for number of news items to which the respondent has *contributed* in one way or another (writing, editing, etc.). Do not consider news items that were selected or approved by an editor without further editing.

- "News item" is meant to refer to the *single unit* that a journalist or a group of journalists produces: report, article, commentary, feature, photos, etc. – or more generically: "piece". "Producing" includes the writing, editing, assembling, etc., of a news item.
- If a respondent is not directly involved in the production of news items, please code "0".

C8   *Please tell me, in your own words, what <u>should be</u> the three most important roles of journalists in [add country]?*
- Note that the emphasis here is on the *normative* aspect, that is, how it *should be*.
- Please do *not provide examples* or hints.

C11   *How often do you participate in editorial and newsroom coordination, such as attending editorial meetings or assigning reporters? 5 means always, 4 means very often, 3 means sometimes, 2 means rarely, and 1 means almost never.*
- This question refers to any kind of activity that relates to the coordination, supervision and management of *editorial processes within* the newsroom. The most obvious part of these managerial activities are meetings where decisions about news coverage are made ("editorial meetings").

C12   *Please tell me how important each of these things <u>is</u> in your work. 5 means you find them extremely important, 4 means very important, 3 means somewhat important, 2 means little importance, and 1 means unimportant.*
- The emphasis is on how important things *are* in the respondent's *own* work – and not on how important they should be – note the difference from C8.

C13   *The following statements describe different approaches to journalism. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree. 5 means you strongly agree, 4 means somewhat agree, 3 means undecided, 2 means somewhat disagree, and 1 means strongly disagree.*
- The emphasis here is on the *normative* aspect of *media* (or general) ethics, that is, how it *should be*.

C14   *Given an important story, which of the following, if any, do you think may be justified on occasion and which would you not approve of under any circumstances? 1 means it is always justified, 2 means it is justified on occasion, and 3 means you would not approve under any circumstances.*
- In contrast to C13, the emphasis is on ethical *practice*, and not on the normative aspect.
- Answer 2 essentially means that there may be times and conditions when it is justified.

C15   *Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how influential each of the following is in your work. 5 means it is extremely influential, 4 very means influential, 3 means somewhat influential, 2 means little influential, and 1 means not influential. If a source is not relevant to your work, please choose 8.*
- Editorial supervisors and higher editors coordinate and supervise the work *within the newsroom*, "managers" in this understanding have responsibilities for the *entire news/media organization* beyond editorial content. Especially in small media organizations, however, these two types of roles may actually converge.
- Availability of news-gathering resources refers to all kinds of editorial resources used for active acquisition of information, such as money, personnel, technical assistance, work time, etc.

- "Religious considerations" partly overlap with "Your personal values and beliefs", but in the latter case the emphasis is on a person's *own* attitudes and convictions, while "Religious considerations" refer to any kind of influence that bear a connection to religions communities, institutions and values.
- If any of the specified types of influences does not apply to the respondent, please code "8". For instance, "Your editorial supervisors and higher editors" may not apply to editors-in-chief, and "Audience research and data" may not apply to news organizations that do not compile such data.

C16   *Here is another list. Again, please tell me on a scale of 5 to 1 how much influence each of the following has on your work.*
- Information access refers to the availability of information provided by authorities and officials.
- Government officials include anyone who is part of the government and state authorities in a broader sense.
- Public relations refer to PR people and activities in general, including, for instance, government spokespersons and corporate public relations.
- Personal relationships with news sources mean the development of a personal relationship with sources beyond the professional realm, such as becoming friends.

O4   *Please tell me on a scale of 5 to 1 how much you personally trust each of the following institutions. 5 means you have complete trust, 4 means you have a great deal of trust, 3 means you have some trust, 2 means you have little trust, and 1 means you have no trust at all.*
- By "parliament" is meant the *highest legislature* in a given country. In a parliamentary system the government is constitutionally answerable to the parliament. In nations with bicameral legislatures, the lower house should be selected (e.g., Germany: Bundestag; Spain: Congreso de los Diputados; UK: House of Commons). Presidential systems usually give more power to the government, which is the case, for instance, in the United States (Senate) and Russia (Duma).
- "Government" refers to the *highest level of the executive body* in a given country. The government usually consists of the head (Chancellor, Premier, Prime Minister – or President, for presidential systems) as well as a Cabinet and/or Ministers.

C22   *What is your gender?*
- In cases where it is obvious you don't need to ask this question. Just code it silently.

O12   *In which of the following categories does your monthly salary fall, after taxes?*
- We standardize categories in order to arrive at results that are comparable across countries. Each national team will therefore define ten categories based on following standard procedure: *First*, consult your national statistical service (e.g., Brazil: IBOPE; SwitzerlandTurkey: Turkish Statistical Institute; USA: United States Census Bureau) for the average level of salary of a full-time worker (or full-time equivalent) in the category to which journalists belong. Let's say you find out that the monthly average salary is about 2080 Euros. *Second*, divide the average salary by four (520 Euros in our case) and round it (the closest 100 step in this example is 500). This should be the interval for the salary brackets. *Third*, now start constructing ten salary brackets using the interval you specified. Because of the shape of the income distribution that usually comes with a long tail, it makes sense to double the interval for categories 7, 8 and 9. In our example, this would look as follows:

1	0	–	500
2	501	–	1000
3	1001	–	1500
4	1501	–	2000
5	2001	–	2500
6	2501	–	3000
7	3001	–	4000
8	4001	–	5000
9	5001	–	6000
10	more than 6000		

T1   Interview code
- Assign consecutive numbers or codes to the interviews so that every interview can be identified, if needed.

T3   Interviewer code
- Every interviewer should be assigned a unique code that allows identifying interviews that have been conducted by the same interviewer.

T5   Rank of respondent
- Each respondent should be classified according to rank in three broad categories:
- Senior/executive managers have strategic authority. They are on the highest level as they have the power to shape the strategic goals of their news organizations. Their authority ranges across the entire newsroom or across large divisions within the newsroom (examples: editor in chief, managing editor).
- "Junior" managers have operational authority. They are on the middle level of the editorial hierarchy and make operational decisions on a day-to-day basis. They are typically responsible for smaller divisions within the newsroom, such as a department, a beat, a desk, or a bureau (examples: desk head, department head, senior editor).
- Rank-and-file journalists form the lowest level of the editorial hierarchy, consisting of journalists with limited authority. These journalists gather and produce the news and information, and they usually have no or very little editorial responsibility (examples: reporter, news writer).

T9   Ownership of medium
- Please exhaust all sources to gather information on media ownership.

4   THE INTERVIEW

- The *Worlds of Journalisms Study* allows the use of multiple modes of data collection – across and within countries. Preference is given to personal (face-to-face) and telephone interviewing. Online and e-mail interviewing are acceptable only if the former two methods are not feasible.

- For reasons of comparability, however, the use of multiple interview modes within countries should be kept to an absolutely necessary minimum. In case a multi-mode method seems unavoidable, Central Coordination should be consulted prior to data collection. In countries where multiple interview modes are used, an additional variable should account for the interview mode in order to allow for detecting mode effects.

- The period of data collection is March 1st, 2012 to December 31st, 2014.

4.1 Establishing contact

- Interviewers must establish informed consent by telling the respondent the following five items (see introductory script below): (a) the full name of the interviewer; (b) on whose behalf the interviewer is calling; (c) the purpose of the study; (d) the approximate length of time the survey will take, and (e) the fact that participation is voluntary and confidential.

> **Introductory script**
>
> Good morning (*afternoon, evening.*)
>
> My name is ....*(full name)*, and I am working for the ....*(institution)*. We are conducting a survey in order to better understand the state of journalism and the news media around the world.
>
> Let me assure you that the information you provide will be kept in strictest confidence. No one except authorized project staff will see your answers. Your information will be combined with answers we get from thousands of other journalists throughout the world. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you do not have to answer any of the questions you do not want to answer.
>
> The interview will take about 30 to 40 minutes *(or more, depending on the number of questions to be asked)*. I realize your time is valuable, and I will try to get through the questions as quickly as possible.
>
> Let me begin, please, by getting some information about your present job.

- If respondents hesitate to participate, interviewers may convince them to do so by referring to one of the following: (a) that they are not selling anything; (b) that they "really appreciate" the respondent's help; and (c) that the answers of the journalists really matter.

4.2 Most frequently asked questions and answers (face-to-face and telephone mode)

- The following lists a few questions commonly asked by respondents, along with suggestions as to answer these questions.

  Question: Why don't you ask someone else?
  Answer: Because that would be faulty research. We have been very careful in devising a sampling strategy that allows comparing journalists from very diverse media systems. Your participation is therefore vitally important to ensuring valid and reliable information that can be compared across the nations.

  Question: How do I know that you are really from ....<institution>?
  Resolution: If the respondent expresses a strong doubt about who the interviewer really is, interviewers can give this person an institutional phone number.

  Question: How long will this take?
  Resolution: Interviewers should give an honest estimate of the length (30 to 40 minutes – or more, depending on the number of questions) and tell the respondent they will go as fast as possible, or offer to call back at a more convenient time.

4.3 Non-response

- In general, refusals should be kept to an absolute minimum.

- All refusals must be documented in the methodological report sent to the Central Coordinator.

- In face-to-face and telephone modes, all refusals responses should be probed once:

  Generally: *Everything you say is completely confidential and it is important that we get your opinions.*

For demographics: *I want to reassure you this information is all confidential. We are just making sure we are talking to a wide range of individuals.*

On income: *I want to reassure you we are not looking for an exact income, just a range... or These data are important for the surveys. We need to know from what social environment we got the answers.*

- In online and e-mail interview modes, journalists who have not responded to the survey should be sent at least two reminders. If possible, follow-up telephone calls should be made in order to convince respondents to participate in the Study.

- Preventing termination of interviewing in face-to-face and telephone modes:

  Situation: In the middle of the survey, the respondent asks, "Are we almost done?"
  Resolution: Interviewers should convey their appreciation and let them know you will move as quickly as possible to complete the survey.

  Question: I don't have time to finish the survey.
  Answer: I realize your time is valuable, and I'll try to get through the rest of the questions as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, your opinions will not be counted unless we complete the entire survey.

4.4 General standards for interviewers (face-to-face and telephone mode)

- Make yourself familiar with the questionnaire before you start working.

- Make sure that you are in quiet surroundings and will not be disturbed.

- Follow the instructions about procedures contained in the questionnaire.

- Do not hand the questionnaire to the respondent unless there are specific instructions to you to do so.

- Speak briskly but clearly. Be sure that you will be understood the first time. Read every question slowly so that the respondent can comprehend its meaning.

- Read every question exactly as it is written, even if you think it could be worded better.

- Do not explain and comment on questions in the questionnaire. If the respondent does not understand a question, repeat it another time.

- Ask all questions in the exact order in which they are presented.

- Don't leave out any questions that the respondent is supposed to answer.

- Do not suggest answers to the respondent unless they are explicitly specified in the questionnaire.

- Read aloud all alternative answers if the respondent is supposed to choose one of the predetermined alternatives.

- Write down exactly what the respondent says in answer to a given question if he/she has been given an "open ended question". If the respondent is going too fast, a good technique to slow them down is to repeat what they have said so they must wait for you to catch up with them.

- Write down in the margins of the questionnaire what the respondent says if it is impossible to choose a code that corresponds to what he/she says, and there is no "Other, specify" alternative.

- The arrow sign (➔) behind certain answer categories indicates a "go to" instruction to skip unnecessary questions.

5 DOCUMENTATION AND DATA

- Central Coordination will provide a SPSS template to all collaborators. Collaborators should not make changes to variables and variable descriptions in the template as this will complicate the merging of data files.

- After the completion of the survey, Principal Investigators should send a cleaned and complete data set – based on the template – to Central Coordination as soon as feasible.

- Data sets should be accompanied by detailed methodological documentation. This documentation should at least include the following:
    – Data collection period
    – Method of data collection
    – Information about response rates

- Explanations of all critical decisions made in the processes of sampling, field research, and the preparation thereof.

- Detailed methodological documentation is especially critical in cases where researchers decided to make use of procedures that differ in substantial ways from those specified in this manual.

- The data set will be compiled and cleared by Central Coordination.

- Shortly after the end of the data collection period, a consolidated cross-national data set will be made available to those Principal Investigators whose data sets were cleared by Central Coordination.