



INFORMING CONFLICT PREVENTION,
RESPONSE AND RESOLUTION:
THE ROLE OF MEDIA
IN VIOLENT CONFLICT

Work Package 1

Journalistic Productions Methodolgy

Infocore Meeting
Lissabon, 15-17 November 2014





Media:

- ❖ The media sample should include prominent media from the press, television and radio depending on the popularity of the media in respective conflict cases.
- The sample will include:
 - 25 journalists from conflict countries (including Palestine), consisting of 20 journalists working for national media and five reporters working for international outlets (such as *CNN International* or *Al-Jazeera*).
 - 20 journalists in each major European “powerhouse” (Germany, France, UK and Brussels).
- The selection of prominent media in the respective conflict countries should be based on media popularity and agenda-setting influence in the public arena.
 - The selected media should exert substantial agenda-setting influence on the national mediascape, and they should cover conflict issues and have a tangible impact on the conflict in one way or another.
 - Samples of journalists for the various conflict cases will be developed with the help from the respective INFOCORE teams responsible for conflict cases and countries.



Media:

Media sample distribution per conflict and country			
Country	National Media including local	International media	Total
Macedonia	20	5	25
Kosovo	20	5	25
Israel	20	5	25
Palestine	20	5	25
Syria	20	5	25
Burundi	20	5	25
Congo	20	5	25
Germany	20		20
United Kingdom	20		20
France	20		20
Brussels	20		20
Total			255



Journalists

- ❖ On the basis of the selection of the media sample:
 - Journalists within selected media that are primarily national and local news gatherers for the twenty interviews as well as including foreign correspondents for the five interviews.
 - The news gatherers are typical journalists who participate in the process of collecting and reporting the news for the media they work for.
 - The research teams will select prominent journalists who regularly cover conflicts for the selected media who who have recently published stories.
 - Along with the prominent journalists covering conflicts, the research teams should evaluate which international media is more important and relevant for the conflict they research on to select and interview five of the foreign correspondents.



Stories

- ❖ News items for reconstruction will be purposively sampled from the interviewed journalists' portfolios.
 - In each interview, we will reconstruct two stories.
 - Ideally, the reconstructed stories should be fairly recent, that is, be published up to three weeks before the interview takes place.
 - This will guarantee that journalists still recollect their decisions and the process by which the story came into being.
 - Selection procedures depend on the specific context and development of the conflict.
 - For one, a time frame of up to three weeks may not generate enough stories that lend itself to reconstruction when the conflict situation did not trigger any significant reporting.
 - In these (most likely) cases we recommend to select one more recent story (in order to reconstruct “routine coverage”) and another story that has left a substantive impact on public discourse (in order to reconstruct the “unusual” story).



Stories

❖ Checklist for story identification

1. Covers conflict of interest
2. Published up to three weeks before the interview or
3. represents a major conflict event from the past
4. Story has a structure (news, sources, facts, quotations)
5. Has a storyline (it is placed within conflict time)
6. Has elements of the story (who, what, when, where, why, how)
7. Has a “story” (material to reconstruct the story)
8. Is a real story that can be taken to the interview (photocopy, audio or video to be shown to the journalist)



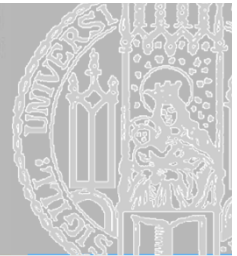
Interviewing Process

- ❖ The interview grid outlines the planned interview in three different phases that are to be taken in each phase.
 1. The first phase focuses on the generic influences on the news production where general questions will be asked.
 2. The reconstruction interview phase lets the interviewer to present the interviewee with the choice of stories to discuss. This phase of the interview focuses on reconstructing the story via discussion over the phases of news production such as story ideation, narration and presentation as well as looks specifically at the conflict related influences on the news production.
 3. The survey phase is the ending phase of interview where a small survey with closed ended questions is filled with important information regarding the interviewees.
 - *This whole interview will take up to 50-60 minutes.*



Reconstruction Interviews:

- The overall purpose of reconstruction interviews is to confront journalists with recent examples of their own work and to explore the processes of story ideation, story narration, and story presentation.
- This method in essence reconstructs the decisions by which each individual article came about. This qualitative method belongs to the group of semi-structured interviews.
- In the question-response mode the interviewer is imposing structures but allows the interviewee the freedom to explain his/her perspective.
- The reconstruction interviews seek to identify typical ways of how journalists generate the topics for their news stories, how they identify the story line, and how they present the story.
- News production is therefore reconstructed from the perspective of the journalist whose editorial decisions have led to the ultimate news account.
- The journalists will be asked to tell the stories behind their news stories. As news production varies between different media organizations and in different conflict cases, this method will be applied throughout conflict cases and with the media of agenda-setting power for the research period.
- The reconstruction of the 'biography' of articles is based on interviews with the authors of selected articles, asking them questions such as: ***What triggered this particular news story? Why was it published at this particular time? What sources did you approach?***
- Through this methodology, the process of the news production is put in the core of the interview, and not the content itself.



Process:



The process of reconstruction interviews explained in the chart along with expected outcome



Ethical issues

- All interviewees will be asked to sign an “informed consent” form or
- Oral Consent in presence of the researcher as witness.
 - **The Researcher/Witness can do a statement signing?**
- All interviewees will be assigned a code, and only the principle researchers will maintain the list of names that correspond to those codes.
- *No names will be used in any reports, articles, or books that are written concerning the results of the study.*
- *The original data will be stored on the LMU server, which meets all of the EU standards for data protection.*
- There will be two additional security procedures carried out to ensure that no one outside of INFOCORE gains access to the list that links the names of the interviewees to the codes that are used in the data set:
 - *First, when the initial lists are being created, all files that list the names will be encrypted in order to prevent any unauthorized access.*
 - *Second, after all the materials have been collected, these files will be destroyed and only two hard copies of the list (one for backup purposes) will be kept by the principle researcher.*