News Consumption and Politics in CEE

**First Interview Protocol**

**In advance of the interview**

You will receive a long list of about 80 potential participants from Kathy – these participants should be narrowed down to 30 (which will be dependent on their willingness to participate). Select the participants following the guidance provided, ensuring to have equal numbers across three age groups (18-34, 35-59, and 60+), half-half men and women for each generation, half residing in large cities and half in small towns or villages, and a range of conservative and liberal respondents.

Once the selection of participants is completed, populate the Excel template for the List of Participants for your country, including relevant demographic information, date and length of interview, etc. (but no names or contact details). The Excel template will be provided by the time of the workshop in February.

Keep the list of identifying information (names and contact details) of all participants in a separate, password protected file. This document should also link each participant to an ID numbers/labels, which should follow the following format: country abbreviation-number, e.g. Pol-01, Cze-02, Hun-05, Ser-12. These labels should be used everywhere else, including in the file names of audio files, transcripts, and in the Excel list of participants (e.g. Interview-Pol-01, Transcript-Cze-03 etc.).

Please familiarize yourself with the procedures for data storage and sharing, as well as data protection, Guidance on that will be provided at the workshop in February.

Try to minimize the number of participates who are unable to fill in the diary in electronic form.

Please send the following to each interviewee in advance, and ask them to read through and prepare any questions so they can be address during the first interview session:

* Participant Information Sheet with Informed Consent Form
* Diary Form

Have a copy of the survey questionnaire with you as some of the questions relate to it. Ensure that you have the participants answers as well, as these will be necessary for several interview questions.

**Part 1 Introduction**

Length: Aim for about an hour on average across all interviews; some interviews cane be shorter, some longer as long as the average is around 60 minutes.

Go through the Participant Information Sheet (which the participants will have received in advance) and ask whether they need any clarification on that. Outline the structure of the interview, mentioning the key areas that will be explored in the interview. Ask to sign the Informed Consent Form now – if you feel this may alienate the interviewee, do it at the end of the interview. Explain that there are no correct and incorrect answers, everything they say is interesting and important, even if they say that they do not have much knowledge about a topic or if they do not engage in an activity mentioned in the interview - it is beneficial for the researchers to know all this regardless, and record all of their answers. (This is likely to be particularly important for interviewees who do not consider themselves particularly interested in, or knowledgeable about, politics.)

**Part 2 Daily and weekly routines** [*The aim here is to get a sense of how news consumption and media use more generally fit into daily and weekly routines, and how mediated public engagement is situated in everyday life.*]

1. Are you employed? [If yes] What is your occupation, and how much time does that take up each day/week?
2. Could you describe your typical daily routine on a weekday?
   1. How does media use and news consumption fit into your day?
3. How about your typical weekend routine, if it differs?
   1. How does media use and news consumption fit into your weekend?
4. ~~Is there anything you would like to do more of if you had more time? [If there is no mention of news, ask about that – e.g. Would they want to have more time to follow news?]~~

**Part 3 News consumption** [*The aim here is to get an in-depth sense of the participant’s ‘news repertoires’, the reasons for preferring some news sources and/or some devices over others (questions 1-7) as well as build a sense of practices relates to news consumption, such as sharing/discussing news with others, using multiple sources of information etc. (questions 8-11). Keep track of time, so you leave enough time (at least 20 min) for the last part of the interview. The questions are in order of priority, so you can drop the last few if you are running out of time in this part.*]

This Q-methodology/card-sorting exercise will focus on personal importance of the news source to the interviewee, with a follow-up question of “If we asked about frequency of use, would you change your answers?” Do ensure that participants are aware that the exercise should cover all kinds of news, not only political news.

Each participant will be given the main card-sorting sheet and a series of cards. There are three kinds of cards:

-5 listing media types (social media, TV, radio, print/newspaper, and online news media),

-about 20 or cards listing different media outlets in the country. These will be mixed, it is up to the participant to put them in the “correct” column (whatever that may be for them), and

-5 blank cards (and a dry-erase marker) in case the interviewee lists any media outlets we do not currently have a card for.

You should explain the ‘rules’ of the card-sorting exercise to the interviewee prior to the start of the interview (this ultimately aids in transcription, so that the transcriber does not need to transcribe the same set of rules 30 times). Participants are to first sort the media types in the first column by importance (from 1-5). Then, participants sort the remaining cards, rating them by importance on a scale from 0 to 5. They should place these onto the row of the media type where they consume the outlet (for example, many print media outlets also have online portals – they should choose whichever it is that they use). While they are sorting the cards, engage the interviewee and enquire why they place each outlet where they did. If they have never heard of the media outlet, that should go in the designated box. If they have heard of the outlet but do not use it, that should be rated as 0.

Also, while participants are sorting the cards, ask the following questions. They may also be asked after the card exercise is completed. Please note that question 1 is to be asked BEFORE the start of the card exercise.

1. **To be asked before the card exercise**: What is news for you?
   1. If respondent does not bring this up on their own: Do you follow celebrity news, sports news, or any other kind of news?
2. How do you usually find out about politics, do you have any particular sources of information you use on a regular basis – e.g. newspapers, websites, TV news bulletins etc.?
   1. ~~If this doesn’t come up, ask also about non-media sources of information – friends, family, work colleagues etc. [In all likelihood the interviewee will start by mentioning media sources, so this is just to make sure we ask about non-media as well.]~~
   2. If it isn’t clear from their previous answer, try to clarify which device(s) they sue to access news, e.g.: You mentioned the news portal XWY, do you normally access it on your PC, or your mobile phone, or in some other way? OR You mentioned the TV/radio news programme XYZ, do you normally watch it on TV set/listen to it through a radio receiver, or through your mobile phone, PC or tablet? [The aim here is to get a sense of the ICT they have at their disposal and how they use them to access news.]
   3. If they don’t mention a particular type of news sources (e.g. no mention of digital news, or no mention or TV news, or no mention of radio, ask whether they really don’t use these types of news, and why), e.g. You didn’t mention digital news sources – do you really never look for news online, either through particular websites or through apps on your phone? Follow up: Why yes/no?
   4. If they don’t mention public service media, ask whether they really don’t use them, and why. Cover broadcast PSM as well as PSM web portals and/or apps (if PSM have an app in your country).
   5. Do you follow any politicians on social media, for example on Twitter or Facebook? If so, why? If not, why not? [The question here is whether they believe this to be more or less biased than a news source.]
3. Why do you usually use these news sources, rather than others? [The aim here is to get a sense of the motivations for using particular sources, e.g. do they use a particular source out of habit, because they find it particularly reliable or entertaining, because it’s convenient to use, because someone else uses it and they have no other choice etc. The main focus should be on reasons for choosing particular news brands, but do pay attention also to the choice of devices or formats – e.g. reasons for reading an online app linked to a print newspaper/TV broadcaster, or reasons for choosing to follow TV/radio news over a smart phone vs. over a dedicated TV/radio receiver, etc.]
4. Do you currently pay to access news? For example, do you have a subscription to a newspaper or do you purchase newspapers? Do you have a subscription to an online news source or website?
   1. If yes, which news sources do you pay for, and why?
   2. If not, why not? Do this mean that you only use free news sources? Are you aware that you do pay for online media in other ways, for example through watching advertisements and through your personal data.
   3. Are you aware that if you use social media, you are being targeted by political adverts?
   4. Do you know how [local PSM] is financed? What is your opinion about having to pay for Public Service Media (TV and radio)?
5. Do you know who owns media outlets in [country]? Does it matter to you who media outlets are owned by?
   1. For example, do you know who owns [choose a media outlet that is controversial – for example one owned by the government or someone well-known]?
6. Can you think of any news sources that are biased and unreliable?
   1. Could you say a bit more about why you see this source as biased/unreliable? [Ask for each source if they mention several.]
   2. Do you tend to avoid such sources or not? Why?
   3. If this does not come up: Have you ever heard about, or used [list known disinformation sources for your country]?
7. Do you ever talk about news with other people? If yes, are there any particular kinds of news that you are more likely to discuss with others? Could you provide an example?
8. If the iterviewee uses social media to access news: Do you ever share news stories on social media, and/or comment on them, or like them? If yes, what kind of news stories do you tend to like/comment on/share? Could you give an example?
9. Do you ever compare news from different sources? If yes, could you give me a recent example when you compared news from different sources? If not, why not?
10. Do you ever come across news or opinions that you disagree with, and if yes, could you give an example? [If not, and if they don't provide any further interpretation or explanation, explore why that is, and whether they would like to change that and read more news/comments that they do not agree with, or whether they prefer to read only things they agree with.]
11. Do you ever watch films, TV series, or YouTube clips about politics and politicians? [If necessary, give a couple of examples of recent popular entertainment/fiction about politics, either domestic or imported.] Would you say you have learned anything about politics from such programmes?

**Part 4 Political engagement and views on selected political/public issues** [*The aim here is to get a sense of the participant’s understanding of and interest in politics, motivations for following politics, and their interest in and views on potentially polarizing issues. Keep track of time - questions are in order of priority in case you run out of time.*]

1. In the survey you indicated that you follow politics … [complete sentence depending on answer in the survey] Can you tell me why you follow politics so often/ why you only follow politics once a week?
2. What things come to mind when you think about politics and politicians? [If they struggle to answer: Could you think of a few words that best describe politics and/or politicians from your point of view?]
   1. Do you think politicians care about you and people like you?
3. [Check how the participant answers the survey question V05 – i.e., which of the three statements about democracy they chose, and ask them to elaborate why. Have a copy of the survey questionnaire with you so you can remind them.] In the survey you were given a choice of three statements about democracy and you were asked to choose one, you chose the following statement: […] could you tell me why you chose it?
4. [Check how participant answered survey question V32] In the survey you indicated that you would place yourself at a number \_\_\_\_\_ between liberal and conservative, which is quite [liberal/conservative/in the centre]. Why did you choose this number? What does being liberal/conservative mean to you?
5. [Check how participant answered the survey questions V27 and V28 – who they voted for in the last national election and how close they identify to that party] In the survey you indicated that you voted for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the last national elections. Why did you vote for that party? Have you always supported that party, or has your support changed over the years? What about the party do you identify/not identify with? [If participant indicated that they did not want to disclose which party they voted for: Why do you not want to disclose this information? Would you tell your friends and family?]
6. Do you trust the political party that you voted for? Do you believe politicians to be trustworthy? Do you trust any of the other parties?
7. How important is it to you that you are [nationality]? What is it that makes you [nationality]? Do you identify with any other nationality or ethnicity?
8. In the survey questionnaire there were a few questions on specific topics. I’d like to go through some of them and ask why you chose particular answers for these topics, and also whether you follow these topics in the news. [Ask the full question at the beginning, but bear in mind that participants may initially answer the first part only (what they think about an issue/why they chose a particular answer in the survey) so you may need to remind them about the second (do they follow it in the news).]
   1. Migration [Survey V07 a-d, try to ask about each sub-question]
   2. EU politics
   3. Transition from socialism to democracy and market economy [Survey V15 a and b]
   4. Russian foreign policy [Survey V19 and V20]
   5. LGBTQ issues [Survey V13 and V14]
   6. George Soros for Serbia, Hungary and Czech Republic; Smolensk for Poland [Survey V09]
   7. NGOs [Survey V08]
9. [Check how participant answered survey question V16] In the survey you were also asked about whether you would like to have particular groups as neighbours, so I’d like to ask you a bit more about those answers as well. When asked whether you would like \_\_\_\_\_ as your neighbour, you gave it a value of \_\_\_ indicating that you are against the idea/not against the idea. Why do you feel this way about \_\_\_? [Note: if the participant refers to particular beliefs or facts to support their attitudes towards a particular group – e.g. saying that particular groups are more likely to engage in crime, or that they would bring the value of the property down – ask: ‘How do you know about this? Can you remember reading about that recently in the news?’
   1. Roma
   2. Muslims
   3. Immigrants
   4. Jews
   5. Russians
   6. Black people
   7. LGBTQ people

**Part 5 Introducing the Diary**

Go through the diary form with the interviewee: let them read through instructions (if they haven’t yet done that) and let them ask any questions. Clarify how they can get in touch if they have any questions.

Provide hard copy but encourage to use electronic version.

Thank the participant.

**After the interview**

* Insert key demographic data, date and length of interview etc., into the Excel spreadsheet listing all participants.
* Scan and file completed consent forms using the following file name format: Country abbreviation\_ConsentForm\_Participant ID number (e.g. Pol\_ConsentForm\_01).
* File interview recordings using the following file name format: County abbreviation -Interview1Audio\_Participant ID number (e.g. Cze\_Interview1Audio\_01).
* Ensure that the code assigned to the interviewee appears in all related material – interview recordings, interview transcripts, and diaries.
* Upload all files to OneDrive, ensuring you’re using the correct folder.
* Send batches of recordings out for transcription, along with transcription guidance, and collate and file all transcripts using the following file name format: County abbreviation -Interview1Transcript\_ Participant ID number (e.g. Srb\_Interview1Transcript\_01).