News Consumption and Politics in CEE

**Second Interview Protocol**

**Part 1 Introduction**

Outline the structure of the interview, i.e. three parts. Aim to complete the interview within c. 40 minutes, and do not go over 60 minutes.

The protocol is divided into several section, and in each section, questions are organised in order of priority. Set yourself a schedule for each interview and note how long you want to spend on each part. If you are overrunning, drop some of the questions towards the end of each section, and move on.

**Part 2 General recollections of news consumption during diary period, and the impact of the coronavirus outbreak on news consumption habits.**

1. First, let’s talk about the diary itself … [This section is primarily aimed at establishing the quality of diary data; to what extent are they a true reflection of the participants’ news consumption?]
   1. How did you find writing the diary?
   2. Do you think it offers a reasonably thorough record of your news consumption during this period?
   3. Is there something that you omitted but think that is worth mentioning now?
   4. Do you think you would have followed the news in the same way if you weren’t writing the diary? For instance, is it possible that you were following news more because of the diary?
   5. Did you ever change anything in subsequent days? If yes, could you tell me what changes you made, and why?
2. How did news consumption change over the course of the diary period? [First, let the participant answer this open question, and the ask further sub-questions below, if these issues didn’t come up already, or were touched upon only briefly.]
   1. How did your news consumption change due to the coronavirus outbreak? If they don’t mention this, ask about the following:
      1. Did you start following the news more, or did you find yourself avoiding the news??
      2. Did you start using different sources, or a greater variety of sources, than you usually would? [Check the diary for frequently used sources, and compare them against those highlighted as most important in the card exercise in the first interview. If there is a discrepancy, ask why they started using a particular source more than they would have otherwise.]
      3. Did you start discussing the news with your family and/or friends more? [Wait for answer.] If yes, why do you think that is? [Wait for answer.] Can you give me a particularly memorable example? [Identify one example yourself in the diary – select one that you find particularly interesting or striking in some way, and ask about that example, if the participant doesn’t mention it spontaneously.]
   2. If your participant is employed or has children: How did your work and/or childcare situation changed due to the outbreak? How did this affect your news consumption?
   3. Was there a point when you started feeling overloaded with coronavirus news? [Wait for answer.]
      1. If so, when approximately do you think that was? [Wait for answer. Check the diary beforehand to see whether you can notice any changes yourself, e.g. a reduction in the volume of news on coronavirus mentioned in the diary, and then ask the participant if this change was indeed a result of overload.]
      2. What did you do as a result of this feeling of overload – for instance, did you try to limit your news consumption, or looked for news that were not about coronavirus?
   4. For participants who use social media: Did you start using social media more, or in a different way, due to the coronavirus outbreak? [If the following don’t come up, ask:]
      1. Did you become more engaged on social media, e.g. started commenting on reposting more? [Check the diary for any examples and refer to that in your question if you find anything. If possible/time permitting, ask for permission to make a copy/screen grab of any interesting examples – explain that it will be anonymised.]
      2. Did you change your profile picture to include a ‘stay at home’ banner or similar messages related to the virus outbreak?
      3. Did you intentionally try to post non-coronavirus related updates or images, or receive invitations from other to post such updates and images (e.g. posting happy photos of children, holidays.)
      4. Did you share more news inside any family/friends private group chats? If yes, could you give some examples? [If possible/time permitting, ask for permission to make a copy/screen grab of any interesting examples – explain that it will be anonymised.]
   5. Did you get in touch with relatives/ friends you’re not normally in touch with? If yes, how (using which media) did you do that?

**Part 3: Finding information about the pandemic**

1. Where do you go to find reliable information about the pandemic? [If they don’t mention, ask about the following, and ask to elaborate why they find this source of information reliable:]
   1. Have you listened to any official briefings live? (Only if such briefings are done in your country.)
   2. Official government website
   3. Information provided by medical/ health experts (e.g. information on the official national health website, interviews with health professional, their social media posts, YouTube videos featuring healthcare professionals)
      1. Would you say you trust the opinion of experts more than that of politicians?
   4. Friends and/or family whose opinion you trust
2. The government has been using different channels to reach citizens with information about the virus and measures imposed on citizens. Have you followed, or encountered, any such official government messages? [Wait for answer first, then ask about individual official channels as appropriate – please adapt the list depending on strategies used in your country, drop any forms of communication not used locally etc. Refer to any examples from the diary, if any.]
   1. Government-sponsored adds in print media, on television/radio, pop-up ads online (Ask about device/medium if not clear}
   2. Government website
   3. Live official briefings over television/radio/ streamed live through my phone (Ask about device used to follow such briefings.)
   4. Text messages to all citizens
   5. Personal letter to all citizens
   6. Targeted social media communication
   7. Other (add any other forms of communication used in your country.)
   8. Which of these channels of official/government communication did you find most effective, and why?
   9. Would you say that official information made you feel safer, or more in control of the situation?
3. Did you come across any information about coronavirus that you found suspicious, or that later turned out to not be true? [Wait for answer.]
   1. If yes, can you give me an example?
   2. If yes, what did you do with such information?
4. Did you receive any content relevant to coronavirus over email (this could be links to news stories, video, or even something funny? If yes, could you show me? [Ask for permission to record, ask them to forward, explain it will be anonymised.]
   1. What did you do with the email? (E.g. did you reply, forward?)
   2. Do you normally get emails with information on political/social events from this person? If yes, could you show me some examples [Ask for permission to record, ask them to forward, explain it will be anonymised.]
5. How would you describe the feelings generated by your encounters with news about coronavirus? [If this doesn’t come up:] Did these feelings change over the diary period? [Check the diary beforehand for any visible changes in emotional reactions, e.g. from anger and frustration to anxiety, or from no emotion to emotion]

**Part 4: Perceptions of responses to COVID-19 outbreak**

1. What do they think about the measures adopted in your country to tackle the epidemic? [Wait for answer.] Did they always think that way, or did your opinion on these measures change over the past few weeks? [check diary for any comments on this and use them here, asking whether the participant still thinks that way.]
2. In general, would you say that you trust your government and its approach to the outbreak? [Wait for answer.] Why?
3. Some commentators have argued that some of the measures introduced in [your country] go too far. Have you come across such views? Do you agree? [If they say no and don’t elaborate, ask whether they instead think that the measures are appropriate or perhaps even that they don’t go far enough.]
   1. What is your view on … [Please add specific question(s) for your country, about specific measures, such as e.g. the new law in Hungary, changes to electoral legislation in Poland, compulsory earing of masks in Czech Republic etc.]
4. Would you say that this crisis changed the way you perceive democracy? [Wait for answer.] For instance, would you say that democracy is the best type of political system, even in a crisis, or would you perhaps rather say that in a public health emergency, authoritarian rule might be better?
5. In the past few weeks, have you come across any news about EU responses to the crisis? [Refer to any instances in the diary, if any, and ask to elaborate.]
6. What are your views on China and its role in the epidemic? [If they start by mentioning positive aspects e.g. help, then ask what they think about the fact that Chinese local authority supressed news about the virus initially. If they start by mentioning negative aspects e.g. China being responsible for the pandemic etc., then ask what they think about Chinese aid.]
   1. Did you come across any news about China? [Alternatively, refer to any such examples in the diary, and ask for further detail on how they came across that piece of news and what they felt about it, if it’s not clear from the diary.]
7. There are different theories on the origin of the virus. Have you heard of any such theories? [Wait for answer, then ask where they encountered such theories, and if possible, ask them to show you the source, and ask for permission to copy.]
   1. Likewise, there are also different theories of why the virus spread so quickly. Have you heard of any such theories [Wait for answer, then ask where they encountered such theories etc.]

**Part 5 Selected diary follow-up items**

Items to focus on:

1. Look for any mentions of news items connected to issues that you know provoke disparate opinions (i.e. polarization) in your country. These will vary from country to country but are likely to include the following:
   * Migration
   * Attitudes to Russia (or maybe also China)
   * EU (also in relation to its response to coronavirus)
   * Etc.

Ask the participant to explain more about the news item, starting with an open question such as “I see that you read/heard/watched a news story about \_\_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ [date]. Could you tell me a little more about this?” Probe into the following:

(a) practicalities of accessing such items if this isn’t clear (e.g. which source/device did they use, when etc.)

(b) why they felt attracted to this item

(c) what they did with the news (e.g. did they share it further on- or off-line, did they comment – if it is on social media etc.).

(d) If the news item in question is in a form they are likely to still have access to, ask if you can see it (e.g. email or social media post), and then ask for permission to record it (e.g. take a photo with your phone at the end of interview, or ask them to forward if email, or do a screengrab and send to you)

1. Look for any mention of encounter with known sources of disinformation or news sources known for their hyper-partisan reporting (e.g. Parlamentni listy in Czech Republic, Sputnik or Informer in Serbia etc.). Probe into why and how they used this source, what they find attractive about it, whether they think it is reliable (all without mentioning yourself that this is an unreliable source), whether they spoke to somebody else about it or shared with anyone (on or off-line).
   1. If the news item in question is in a form they are likely to still have access to, ask if you can see it (e.g. email or social media post), and then ask for permission to record it (e.g. take a photo with your phone at the end of interview, or ask them to forward if email, or do a screengrab and send to yourself)
2. Look for any instances of comparing news on the same subject from more sources, and ask them to elaborate on the following if its’ not clear from the diary entry:
   1. Why did you compare?
   2. Which source did you agree with more?
   3. Did the comparison challenge your initial views on the topic, or reinforce it?
   4. Why did you choose these particular sources to compare?
   5. Do you often compare several sources, or did you compare more often during the epidemic?

**At the end the of the interview**

Explain how they will receive payment.

**After the interview**

* Insert date and length of interview into the Excel spreadsheet listing all participants.
* Also add a column to the Excel sheet listing who transcribed the interviews (for each interview separately.)
* File interview recordings using the following file name format: [countrycode]-Interview2Recording\_Participant[insert number].
* Collate and file all transcripts using the following file name format: [countrycode]-Interview2Transcript\_Participant[insert number].
* Upload recordings to One Drive ready for transcription, liaise with transcribers/translators as necessary
* Upload scanned receipts/pdfs of bank transfers or similar to OneDrive