

APPENDIX 1C: INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP SCHEDULES

FIRST INTERVIEW

[NB recruiters will have briefed participant from information about the project, that will include the following description of its aims : *This project is interested in how different people across Britain, from all walks of life, understand their relationship to the public world. By ‘public world’, we simply mean those aspects of life that are of shared concern, not purely private concern.*

Different people may draw the line between public and private differently. For some, ‘public’ may mean neighbourhood groups and local organisations. For others, it may mean talking about issues with friends and people they work with, or it may mean political parties and election time. For some, by contrast, ‘public’ may refer to something they are passionate about with others, whether it’s a type of music, a football club, a TV programme, a hobby or a game they play; it could also mean a global issue or organisation, such as an international charity. Or it may be a mixture of these. But, however you think about this, we want to understand what makes up the public world for you. We are interested in hearing your reflections about what matters in that public world over a period of three months, and about what role media of all sorts play, alongside other sources including people you know or meet, in connecting you with that public world. From time to time we may send you suggestions of things of potential public interest that you might like to comment on. But throughout what you write or tell us about remains for you to decide.]

(A) Introduction

The purpose of today’s interview is:

- To run through some basic information about the things you do with your time, including the media you use.
- And to talk with you about the types of things you might be interested in telling us about during this project, and what for you would be the most comfortable format for doing this
- To explain and answer any questions you have on what this project is about

As mentioned in the letter you signed, interview will be recorded (to save time taking notes).

(B) Opening questions as warm-ups

1. [ask about occupation mentioned in info received from marketers.] How much of your time does that take up each week? what about family demands, domestic chores and so on?
2. How much time, if any, does that leave you with free for yourself? [follow-up briefly if appropriate]
3. What do you like to do with your free time?
4. Is there anything you always make time for in your week? [suggestions – TV show, news, going out to something local . . .]
5. Is there anything you’d like to do more of if you had more time?

C. Moving onto questions on media consumption

6. [ask re media access reported by marketers] In a typical week, how much time would you say you spent on media? [*prompt if necessary – TV radio press internet novels magazines – if asked, say exclude internet or other media purely for work purposes*]
7. [depending on what media they use most] What sort of [newspaper-reader] [TV viewer] etc would you describe yourself as?
8. Is there a particular form of media you couldn't do without?
9. How have the media themselves changed in your view over the past five years? [ie in a way relevant to your choices . . .]
10. Would you say your use of media has changed much over the past five years? If so, how?

[Note: if don't mention Internet/ Web and we know has online access at home, prompt . . . since may not include 'internet' as 'media']

(D) Questions on Public World/ Related Media Use/ Civic Involvement

as intro to this section, begin with brief recap of project description given by recruiters and then informally (in conversational way) explore with participant his/her idea of public/private boundary, for example

We're interested in how the public world looks to you – what sort of things and issues you think of as public, what sort of things and issues you think of as private – and where you would draw the line. So something may arise in your private life, but for you it raises issues or questions of public significance . . . So with that in mind can you give me an idea of

- what type(s) of things you think of as public, rather than private [if necessary, invent people and scenarios to give idea of what form responses might take]

. . . leading to more formal questions . . .

11. If we take the type of public issues or themes that interest you (and it could be anything that you consider is of common concern, rather than of just private concern), where do you generally get your information about it from? [if mention only media, ask re non-media – or vice versa. . .]
12. Are these things something you'd make a special effort to get information on [eg watching a TV programme, reading a press article, checking a website]?
13. Are these things you talk about with other people? Who with? [family, friends, people at work, people at college etc] Where do you talk about this and when, in what sort of situation?
14. Do you belong to any group or organisation linked to these issues ? [prompt: any charity, self-help group, national organisation, political party, online chatroom or newsgroup]
15. You think this issue is important – do you feel that your view of its importance is reflected in the media or not?
16. Do you think that your focus on these types of issue, rather than others, might tell other people something important about you?
17. Have you ever got involved in public discussion on such issues, for example written in to the newspapers, phoned-in to a radio or TV phone-in, taken part in a poll for a

- TV or radio programme, voted in an online poll? [if say no, prompt – eg so you've never voted on anything like Big Brother?!]
18. Obviously, it's no business of our how you vote in elections, but can you tell me whether you vote in elections? [if react negatively to questions, explain: we're not being judgmental about whether you should vote, we're just trying to get a sense of the public things that matter to you]
 19. If you had to name one recent issue that's been important to you, what would it be? [this allows for issue that they may be unsure whether sufficiently 'public' or not]
 20. Did you/ do you talk to colleagues/ friends/ family about that issue? [also come back to Qs 12, 14 and 17 here if time]
 21. Looking back, do you think you're more or less involved with public issues than in the past?
 22. Are there things which would connect with public issues like this that you would like to do, but don't? What are they and what is it that prevents you doing them?
 23. We'd like to finish off today's questions with a broader question on which we'd really like to know your views: we're often asked to think of ourselves as members of a democracy . . . Is that how you think of yourself? If so, do you feel you have the information you need to play a part in that democracy? [Explore: if not, why not? What else do you think you need? If yes, which media are most important here?]

(E) Introducing the Diary

(1) General

We've touched on the type of public issues and activities you're interested in and think important (and it's your sense of what's important that we're interested in, not necessarily other people's) . . . The diary we'd like you to produce for the project should be about these sorts of things - the issues and activities from time to time that are of public importance in your view. Specifically we're interested in knowing:

- Things significant to you that you think of as having public significance
- what sources of information you have on these issues and activities (including media)?
- Whether you've talked about them to other people and what has come out of that?
- Any activities you've been involved in relating to them?
- How those public issues links with your choices of media to watch/ read etc?
- Plus Your general reflections about doing the diary

Any questions about the topics of the diary. . . .? [At this point, if questions not going well or interviewee uneasy, encourage again to ask questions. Make clear that we realise these are sometimes difficult questions without easy answers – that's why we're interested in people's views, reflections, uncertainties, doubts . . .]

Move on finally to discuss the format of diary

- Explain that we call it a 'diary' for convenience, but is quite flexible in format
- basic format = written sheets (NB hand over at this point initial letter indicating what's needed [WITH OUR CONTACT DETAILS] + 8 colour-coded pages of blank diary sheets (more to be sent) + floppy disc if says prefers)

- up to you how much you write in the basic weekly format (we provide you with this to help us keep some basic track of each participant, but as you can see it's quite open)
- please return weekly (by Monday of the following week) in SAEs provided or (if prefer) by email attachment.
- . . . with any additional information in a range of format to suit you: phone message, phone call; email message; record onto mini-tape. [discuss which would be likely to prefer: if definitely tape, then hand-over dictating machine and initial set of tapes]
- Contact with Research team: Tim is the main contact and will keep in touch with you through the project. You can always contact him by email/phone/letter.
- Run through timing – diary process, then follow-up interviews, discussion groups in autumn
- Payments arranged by market research company
- **ANY OTHER QUESTIONS?**

(F) General points For interviewers to keep in mind throughout...

- connections
 - Questions should allow for multiple publics, possibly conflicting – majority/minority, local/global etc.
 - Group narratives. If there are issues or groups which the interviewee cares about, ask: how did you first get involved in this? What made you interested? How do you keep up your interest? Will you always be concerned about this issue, do you think?
 - Discussion. If interviewee does talk about issues with others, ask: are these talks with people you agree or disagree with? If agree, do you seek out people you disagree with? Or do you see them in the media, and if so, how do you respond?
- disconnections/ disinterest in connection

Keep an eye on disconnection themes. Look for constraints – whether interviewees feel excluded, insufficiently supported or resourced, in connecting. Emphasise that we are not assuming 'everyone's connected' – we're interested also in feelings or thoughts about disconnection, or different views about how much 'connection' matters.

SECOND INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Note on overall style:

(1) more informal than first interview; (2) should not give impression of being dictated by us, although should aim to cover the following topics (but feel free to ask questions in more informal style); (3) where any specific issues/ questions need to be raised from diaries/ first interview, deal with as unobtrusively as possible and fit in where can in protocol

A Preliminary

A1 how have you been since the diary? [probe for any work changes etc]

A2 explain purpose of second interview (to receive feedback on diary process; to discuss issues coming out of doing the diary)

A3 say would like, if you agree, to ask a few questions on the build-up to the US elections for some US researchers who're doing a similar project to this one in USA – would you be willing to answer them? Answers to be passed on anonymously to those US researchers for research purposes only. If agrees to answer US questions, ask to sign extra consent letter.

B Warmup questions

B1 How was doing the diary for you? Did you enjoy it, did it get you down etc? [NB check any note of postcompletion telecon in J-drive and refer to this]

[follow-ups – eg 'other people did/felt this . . . did you?']

C Doing the Diary

C1 The time when you were doing the diary – what sort of time was it for you? Completely normal? Busier than normal? Quiet period?

C2 How was it finding time to do the diary – difficult? easy? depended on what was going on each week?

[follow-ups - did you have to cut it short some weeks, because other things came up?
- Did you go on longer than expected some weeks because got involved in it?]

C3 Were there any other difficulties in doing the diary which you experienced? [eg what happened if you didn't get time to follow media for a while? Did you sometimes want to talk/ write about things not in the media? . . . but feel you couldn't/ shouldn't?]

C4 Did anything make you angry doing the diary?

C5 Did you find yourself commenting on things you wouldn't have expected to comment on?

C6 What did other people say about you doing the diary? [Follow-up: what did you say to that?]

D Media Use as Reflected in Diary

D1 [interviewer should comment on sort of media use reflected in this diarist's diaries, ie what the diarist's key media are, and ask any necessary follow-ups - this is good place to raise issues about gaps between account of media use in first interview and diaries]

D2 [coming out of discussion on D1] Is there a particular type of media you take in right away when you get up each morning?

D3 Looking back, do you think there was anything unusual for you about your media use in that period?

D4 Has your media use changed for any reason since doing the diaries for any reason?

E Issues/Themes Specifically Raised in Diary

E1 [raise questions about specific issues commented on in diary eg]

- have you continued to follow this issue in the media?
- Is it [still] [not] something discussed with your [friends] [family] [workplace]?
- Has your view on this issue changed at all over the past few months? How?]

E2 [mention themes raised in diary – invite to comment on these]

F Current Issues

F1 what issues are you following closely at the moment?

[follow-up questions about social context for this, how links back to what said in diary and first interview about issues and media coverage – try to get discussion going]

G Media Responsibilities

There are some broader issues coming out of your diary and also other people's diaries which we're interested to know your thoughts on:

G1 Do you think media have responsibilities to inform you of certain things?

G2 How do you feel about the role media play in keeping you in touch with things that matter – Satisfied? Dissatisfied? Bit of both? [Follow-up: do media have their priorities right in your view?]

G3 Do you trust media? [in follow-up, ask if makes a distinction between newspapers/ TV/ radio/ Internet/ local]

G4 Do you sometimes want the media just not to be there? Do you ever want to get away from media?

G5 Do we maybe give too much importance to media – i.e. are other things (apart from media) just as important, maybe even more important, in keeping you in touch with what matters? [work, friends, church, other activities?]

H Politics/ Civic Action

H1 Do you think politicians have responsibilities to inform you of certain things and to consult you on certain things?

H2 How do you feel politicians fulfil those responsibilities? Satisfied? Dissatisfied? Bit of both?

H3 Do you trust politicians? [in follow-up, ask if it makes a difference which sort of politicians – local, national, international?]

H4 [if social discussion of issues mentioned in diary] You told us about how you discussed issues [at work] [with friends] [with family] [at church] [others]. Is it important to you – to be able to talk about things like this? If you couldn't do that, would it matter to you?

H5 did you/ were you tempted to take any action on any of the things mentioned in your diary? [eg join a group, write to newspaper, join/leave political party, contact MP/ council, take action through group/ church] [Follow-up: if yes, details; if not, why not?]

H6 Do you expect to follow the next UK national election [if so , how much]?

I Larger Reflections

I1 Has doing the diary changed your view about [eg]:

- The role media play in your life?
- What public issues are important?
- How much politics and public life matters to you? [you, as compared to other people – if this issue raised in diary, eg D4, D41?
- [Whether we live in a democracy? – don't ask if reference to democracy caused difficult in first interview]

I2 Has doing the diary changed your media use at all, do you think?

J US questions

[NB to help with transcription, mark clearly where these questions start and finish, so can form a discrete part of transcript]

J1 Are you following the American elections? [follow-up: why are they important to you?]

J2 If yes, where do you get your information about the American elections? [TV (ask which – might be CNN?), radio, UK newspapers, overseas newspapers, internet, film, other people]

J3 In relation to media sources about the American elections, how good a job do you think they do in providing you with reliable information about the elections? [any difference in reactions to US and UK media sources]

K Closing

K1 Any other feedback you wanted to give us about doing the diaries/ should we have arranged things differently etc?

K2 Discuss focus-group – still willing? [explain that this will mean that identity revealed to other local participants, but confirm that anonymity will be retained in all documents/ transcripts etc] Convenient times? Suggested convenient places?

FOCUS GROUP SCHEDULE

Note on style:

- (1) overall priority is to encourage people to talk; in some groups, age/gender/ethnic/class differences may make this difficult, so discussion should start out very informally from common ground. So suggest start with local issues and work towards more general discussion about orientation to public world

A PRELIMINARY

A1 Purpose of meeting: to talk about (1) some issues raised in people's diaries and also (2) about the more general question of people's sense of what types of thing really matter, what types of things it's important to follow outside our day-to-day life and those it isn't – which is the main question this project is trying to raise...

A2 Confidentiality: as always we will preserve this, so suggest use first names in the discussion. [NB no need to mention US researchers again as US consent form already covered focus group material]

A3 Go round room asking people to introduce themselves by first name (to help transcriber identify the different voices in the room).

... [Lead-in to B: people's diaries talked about lots of types of issues – national, local, international and global... since everyone here is from the area of [details], shall we start by talking about local issues, which might be ones you all share?]....

B LOCAL ISSUES

B1 have there been any issues this year of major importance or concern to this area? [if necessary, prompt with mention of local issues mentioned by these diarists] [try to pick up if anyone disagrees about whether these issues are important]

B2 Has it been easy or difficult to get the information you need on these issues?

B3 Do you see any opportunities to take any action on this issue? [Follow-ups: If yes, what sorts of things? If not, why not? And does this matter or not?]

B4 Among all the different public issues you think about, how important are local issues like these compared with other types of issues ie national, international?

C OTHER ISSUES RAISED BY DIARISTS

C1 Perhaps we can move onto some of those other types of issues that many people raised in their diaries [NB important to link initially into what people wrote, rather than purely open-ended issues of the day at the time of the focus group] . **One interesting thing was how varied people's choices of what to talk about in the diary were. ... [then introduce the following three issue areas in following suggested order – NB these should be the three issue areas we identify in our survey questions]**

- (i) Crime

- (ii) Iraq war
- (iii) Celebrity stories [Beckham, George Michael, others?]

On each issue, encourage people

- (a) to give their views
- (b) indicate how important (**or unimportant**) they think the issue is relative to others and
- (c) if discussion gets bogged down, suggest links to other issues made in diaries [viz Iraq War to general security issues; Celebrity not just around Beckham/sport (sport being mainly of interest to male diarists) but also George Michael (mentioned by a number of female diarists) ...; crime to quality of life, asylum, education]

C2 Don't lead people to discuss media coverage, but there is significant consensus/disagreement emerging on media coverage of any one issue, follow up and clarify. . .

D CIVIC ACTION

D1 Taking these issues we've just been discussing [recap], what do you see as our options for doing something about them? [Prompt if necessary – Write to MP/ council? Contact media? Visit website? Sign Petition? Go on protest? Consumer boycott? Join group?]

D2 Have you ever done any of these things?

D3 [If not,] What is your image of the types of people who do take such action?

D4 How much of a difference do you think doing these things would make?

D5 [If none or little difference], how do you feel about this? [explore people's feelings or thoughts on this]

[bring out any contrasts with discussion on B3]

E US ELECTIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES GENERALLY

E1 [LEAD-IN: As you know we're working now with some US researchers and we asked you all when we saw you last some brief questions about whether you had been following the US elections: some of you we met before, some after the election happened. In this project we aren't making any assumptions that you should be following what's happening in the US, but it would be interesting to touch on this...] Did you have any reaction to the result of the US presidential election?

E2 Do you think the result has any implications for us in the UK?

E3 How important do you feel it is to follow events outside the UK (whether it's in America or elsewhere)? (Is it very important or not important at all?) [NB use additional phrasing in brackets so people feel free to say if think not important]

[transition: . . . there are some wider issues coming out of all this that it would be good to talk about ...]

F PUBLIC AWARENESS [NB don't pose these as formal questions, rather as 'thoughts' to throw into discussion]

F1 Are there things which all of us, no matter what our interests, should follow/ keep up with? Or is this purely up to our personal interests/taste? [Follow-up: does this link to the question of where you draw the line between public and private that we raised when we first met you?]

F2 Some people in their diaries wondered about the point of keeping up with public issues – one person said 'My opinions won't count anyway – it's already been decided', so why follow the news and politics? Did you ever think that? [follow-up if people say yes – did this make doing the diary more difficult? – important for question of artificiality]

F3 If Britain's a democracy (and we discussed this with everyone in the first interview), how do you feel about the part you're able to play in this democracy? Are you clear about what your role is? Do you have the time to do this? Do you have the resources?

F4 The project's also raised questions about the importance to us of media and media's role in democracy . . . some might say (and people did in their diaries) 'The things the media cover have little to do with my life' - would you agree with this, disagree etc?

F5 Some people feel quite disenchanted with politics or with media or with both of them – do you any of you feel like that? [giving people to say if feel alienated from either, but perhaps might initially be embarrassed to speak about this]

G This is the end of the diary phase of our project and we're extremely grateful to all of you for staying with it and contributing so much to it. But the next stage for the project is to commission a nationwide survey taking up some of the insights that have come out of your diaries . . . One final, brief thing is to ask you if you'd mind taking a moment to complete this short list of questions [**hand it out**] that we're planning to ask in our survey . . . if you, after all the time you've given to this project, don't feel these are helpful or clear questions, then they're probably not very useful questions for us to ask anyone else . . . It should only take a minute or two, but if you have to leave immediately, please return it to us in this SAE...

