

PANCOPOP – Pandemic Communication in Politics
ADULT PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Investigators Details:

Principal Investigator: Professor Sabina Mihelj, Loughborough University, School of Social Sciences, Ashby Road, LE11 3TU, Loughborough, E-mail: S.Mihelj@lboro.ac.uk
Co-Investigator: Dr Václav Štětka, Loughborough University, School of Social Sciences, Ashby Road, LE11 3TU, Loughborough, E-mail: V.Stetka@lboro.ac.uk
Local Research Assistant: Dr Ana Stojiljković

We would like to invite you to take part in our study, and we would like you to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Before data collection commences one of our team will be able to answer any questions you might have.

What is the purpose of the study? This research is part of a larger project that seeks to examine the nature of health crisis communication in the way it is influenced by the political context in different countries. The project focuses on four countries with different experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic: Brazil, Poland, Serbia, and the USA. Other strands of the project will investigate the impact on media policy, media coverage, and public attitudes during the pandemic.

Who is doing this research and why? This research project is led by Professor Mihelj and Dr Štětka. Both are experts in media, politics and culture in Central and Eastern Europe, and want to use this project to deepen their knowledge in this area, as well as to develop recommendations for professionals involved in health crisis communication, media practitioners and policy makers. They are collaborating with an international team of leading experts in Brazil, Poland and USA, and are assisted by several local researchers, including Dr Stojiljković in Serbia.

Are there any exclusion criteria? No. All individuals involved in health crisis communication in Serbia during the COVID-19 pandemic are welcome as participants. If you have suggestions for other suitable individuals with relevant experience, please pass them on to Dr Stojiljković.

What will I be asked to do? You will be required to participate in an interview between May and July 2022.

Once I take part, can I change my mind? Yes. After you have read this information and asked any questions you may have if you are happy to participate we will ask you to complete an Informed Consent Form, however if at any time, before, during or after the sessions you wish to withdraw from the study please just contact the main investigator. You can withdraw at any time, for any reason and you will not be asked to explain your reasons for withdrawing. However, once the results of the study are aggregated (expected to be by end of September 2022), it may not be possible to withdraw your individual data from the research.

Will I be asked to attend any sessions and where will these be? You will be asked to participate in one interview, which will take place either remotely via video, or in person, in a mutually convenient location.

How long will it take? The interview session will last up to an hour.

Is there anything I need to do before the sessions? Please read this information sheet and prepare any questions you might have before the first interview session.

Are there any disadvantages or risks in participating? No.

What are the possible benefits of participating? Your participation will play an important role in advancing academic knowledge and will also inform practical advice and recommendations for professionals involved in health crisis communication, media practitioners and policymakers, designed to inform health communication practices during future pandemics. We would welcome your comments on draft recommendations based on this research; please let Dr Stojiljković know if you'd like us to contact you when the draft recommendations are ready.

Data Protection Privacy Notice

Loughborough University will be using information/data from you in order to undertake this study and will act as the data controller for this study. This means that the University is responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. The University's Data Protection Officer can be contacted at: dp@lboro.ac.uk.

What personal information will be collected from me?

We will record your name and occupation. Given the nature of the study it is possible that you will want to mention sensitive personal information (e.g., political opinions, opinions on the government management of pandemic response in your country) in the interview.

Why is this personal information being collected? We are collecting this personal data to be able to understand the key actors and processes of health crisis communication in your country.

How long will my personal data be retained? Interview recordings will be kept for a maximum of ten years, while anonymised interview transcripts will be kept permanently (subject to consent being given). The UK Data Service (UKDS) and the Sao Paulo State University repository in Brazil will be used for the long-term storage of curated data (anonymized transcripts) from the project.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential? Measures will be taken to ensure anonymity of participants. Participants will be assigned a reference number and data will be stored against this number rather than against the names of participants. All interview recordings and interview transcripts will be anonymized, with all information that could directly or indirectly help identify interviewees removed to ensure that any risks are minimized. Interviews will undergo a further round of anonymization at the point of transcription.

How will the data collected from me be used? The results of the study will be used as a basis for different research outputs, including scholarly books, journal articles, reports and training material for health crisis communication professionals, media practitioners and policy makers, conference papers and similar. Data will either be presented in aggregated form or using anonymised excerpts from interviews.

What is the legal basis for processing the data? The project will follow a Data Management Plan which conforms to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and institutional codes of practice, including password protected files and secure online storage mechanisms. The legal basis under which we will processing personal data will be 'public task'. As personal data is processed on the basis of public task, individuals' rights to erasure and data portability do not apply. However, individuals do have a right to object. Under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), some of the personal data which will be collected from you is categorised as 'sensitive data'. The processing of this data is necessary for scientific research in accordance with safeguards. This means that study has gone through an ethical committee to ensure that the appropriate safeguards are put in place with respect to the use of your personal data.

Will my data be shared with others? Your data will be shared among research investigators involved in the study. Upon depositing data in the UK Data Service and the Sao Paulo State University repository, other researchers will be able to request access, subject to terms and conditions that are designed to ensure anonymity.

How long will the anonymised data/samples be retained? Interview recordings will be kept for up to ten years after the end of the project. Anonymised interview transcripts will be stored permanently in the UK Data Service repository and the Sao Paulo State University repository.

I have some more questions; who should I contact? You can discuss any other questions during your first interview session. If you'd prefer to do so in advance you can email Dr Stojiljković at ana.stojiljkovic@gmail.com. If you have any other questions regarding Data Protection, please contact the Data Protection Officer on dp@lboro.ac.uk or write to: Data Protection Officer, Academic Registry, Loughborough University, Loughborough, Leics, UK LE11 3TU.

What if I am not happy with how the research was conducted? If you are not happy with how the research was conducted, please contact the Secretary of the Ethics Review Sub-Committee, Research & Enterprise Office, Hazlerigg Building, Loughborough University, Epinal Way, Loughborough, UK, LE11 3TU. Telephone number: 01509222423. Email address: researchpolicy@lboro.ac.uk.

The University also has policies relating to Research Misconduct and Whistle Blowing which are available online at <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/internal/research-ethics-integrity/research-integrity/>. If you require any further information regarding the General Data Protection Regulations, please see: <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/privacy/research-privacy/>.