

Interviews and Focus Groups

Written by E-International Relations

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<https://www.e-ir.info/2021/08/31/interviews-and-focus-groups/>

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An interview is typically a structured conversation where one participant asks questions, and the other provides answers, usually providing information. An interview may also transfer information in both directions. Interviews usually take place face-to-face and in person but the parties may instead be separated geographically, as in videoconferencing or telephone interviews. Interviews almost always involve spoken conversation between two or more parties. In some instances a “conversation” can happen between two persons who type their questions and answers. Text adapted from Wikipedia. A focus group is a group interview involving a small number of demographically similar people or participants who have other common traits/experiences. Their reactions to specific researcher/evaluator-posed questions are studied. Focus groups are used to better understand people’s reactions to political issues or participants’ perceptions of shared experiences. They allow interviewers to study people in a more natural conversational pattern than typically occurs in a one-to-one interview. In combination with participant observation, focus groups can be used for learning about group attitudes and patterns of interaction. Text adapted from Wikipedia.

The resources below have been curated by the E-International Relations team. You can find more resources on our methods homepage.

Fundamentals of Qualitative Research Methods: Focus Groups by Yale University (YouTube)

How do focus groups work? by Hector Lanz (YouTube)

Four videos on designing interviews by Alan Shaw (YouTube)

Differences, advantages, disadvantages of focus groups and individual interviews by IntoTheMinds (French, with English Subtitles) (YouTube)

Moderating focus groups by Richard Krueger (YouTube)

CPPR Talk Series | “Hinduism & Political Behaviour in India” by Ajay Verghese (YouTube)

Websites

Interviewing for introverts. (Rachelle Annechino). <http://ethnographymatters.net/blog/2012/03/22/interviewing-for-introverts/>

Some Strategies for Developing Interview Guides. Harvard University. https://sociology.fas.harvard.edu/files/sociology/files/interview_strategies.pdf

6 lessons from holding virtual focus groups during the COVID-19 pandemic. <https://r4d.org/blog/6-lessons-from-holding-virtual-focus-groups-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>