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In Prague, June 11, 2020

To whom it may concern:

We were asked by researchers (Michal Bauer, Julie Chytilova, Jana Cahlikova a Vojtech Bartos) to provide a clarification about the origin of an error that appeared in the data set that we have provided to them and which they have used to write an academic article „Covid-19 fuels hostility against foreigners". Below I will describe the implementation of the procedure of data collection, how the error occurred and what has been done to ensure the data are now accurate.

Original procedure how data (N=2186) were collected and handled, before the researchers received them:

- The Researchers provided PAQ with the experimental protocol for decisions how to allocate money to different types of recipients (social module). The protocol included instruction on randomization of the position of the social module – one half of respondents received it at the beginning, the other half at the end of the survey. Instructions on position of individual questions were also provided. The Researchers provided wording of survey questions.
- PAQ together with NMS was responsible for programming the survey and experiment. PAQ and the Researchers tested the questionnaire and approved it, before sending it out to respondents.
- NMS gathered the data, PAQ created labels of variables, based on the numbering of questions in the survey (that served as a codebook) and gave the data set to the Researchers.

Yesterday, we identified an error in labeling of the variables. Below, we describe where exactly the error occurred.

- The error occurred because NMS Programming team accidentally mixed question IDs of 3 questions (three types of recipients in the social module - living in Asia, living in CZ non-religious, living in CZ Christian) for respondents in the control sample who made the decisions in the task at the beginning of the survey. The IDs are assigned in the back-end of the online questionnaire, they are not visible in the front-end.
- However, PAQ used labels from original experimental protocol to label the variables. As the variable names are based on the back-end question IDs it caused mis-labeling of the three variables in the control sample. For those in the Covid-19 sample who made the decisions at the end of the survey, labeling of questions was correct.
- We understand this is a mistake in our procedures and in cooperation with our data collections partners. We are working to improve it in the future and strongly regret the problems this has caused.
- We want to stress that the Researchers provided correct materials (protocol) and they had no way to find out there is a problem in the question labelling.

We confirm that this error has now been corrected. As this was a labelling problem and the front-end of the questionnaire was correct it had no effect on experiment and interviewing itself.

We found out the mistake on 10th of June 2020 and immediately contacted the Researchers. We will employ special types of checks for preventing it in the future. In addition, we agreed with the Researchers that we will hire an external expert working for a different survey agency in the Czech Republic who will in detail inspect the data and questionnaire, in order to provide further assurance to the Researchers and other parties that the corrected data set is accurate. This expert will be Marti Buchtík PhD., director of STEM – Empirical Research for Democracy, one of the leading Czech research agencies (https://www.stem.cz/). I expect this inspection will be completed by 16th June.

With sincere apology,

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Daniel Prokop

director, PAQ Research, s.r.o.