Codebook and Instructions for Coding Editorials on Covid19 in East Asia

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A. A brief introduction to the project
B. Procedure and editorial eligibility for study
C. Content variable operational definitions

A. Introduction to the Project

This codebook was designed to code how the media has covered the global Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. Specifically it focuses on studying editorials from East Asian newspapers in China, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. The data is used to understand the degree to which editorials have focused on the pandemic and how they have covered it in terms of tone and framing.

B. Procedure and Editorial Eligibility for Study

The following eligibility requirements were used to choose editorials.

- English Language Papers: Editorials were selected from English language newspapers published in China, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.
- Written by the Editors: The newspaper editorial must be written by the editors of the paper. Other op-eds (opinion editorials) written by opinion, staff, and guest writers are excluded).
- Main Focus the Coronavirus Pandemic: The editorial should discuss the pandemic or some aspect of it. Editorials that cover the pandemic in another country are also included. However, if the editorial only mentions the coronavirus in passing, and is on a different topic, it should be excluded. For example, we would exclude an editorial that talks of the merits of the new iphone, but the only mentions of the virus is at the end when it says the phone will be delayed by 2 weeks because of the virus.
- January 1 to June 30: The editorials should be written during the first six months of 2020, between January 1 and June 30th.
- Systematic Sampling of 55: From this set of editorials we randomly sampled 55 editorials for coding from each newspaper. Editorials were listed in the chronological order and using a systematic sampling method, every nth editorial was selected for coding.

C. Content Variable Operational Definitions

PART I. INDEX FIELDS

V1: **Index Number:** Unique number identifier for editorial.
V2: **Link**: Link to the editorial page (if on the web) blank if data from factiva.
V3: **Country**: Country where the newspaper is printed. Write in the name, title case.
V4: **Newspaper**: Name of the newspaper. Write in the name, title case.
V5: **Title**: Title of the editorial. Title case if possible.
V6: **Day:** Day the editorial was published. A number.
V7: **Month**: Month the editorial was published. A number.
V8: **Length**: Length of the editorial body text in words. A number.

PART II. ALARMING TONE

Every editorial is coded for whether the tone of the editorial is alarming or not. One code is given for the entire editorial.

Specifically, an ‘alarming' tone is negative, it refers to editorials that focus on the bad, dangerous, or frightening aspects of the pandemic, e.g. the rising numbers of infected cases and deaths, the uncontrolled spread of the infection, the lack of vaccines, a plunging economy, rising unemployment, or an increase political tensions etc. It leans towards making you feel things are bad and maybe going to get worse. It doesn’t have to feel totally disastrous; it just leaning towards the negative rather than the positive. You come away from the editorial a bit more fearful. For each editorial, ask yourself: Does the editorial make you feel things are, or can, get worse? This is an alarming tone and should be coded with 1.

If the tone is not alarming, it is usually reassuring. A reassuring tone has some positive messaging. For example, it might indicate that we are getting more control on the situation, that cases with infections and deaths are dropping, work on a cure/vaccine is making progress, that we can begin to open up slowly, the economy is beginning to rebound, countries are cooperating more etc. Things are getting, or about to get, better. You come away from the editorial feeling a bit more reassured. Finally, there are some editorials that are not alarming and not particularly reassuring. Often they are quite factual without evoking alarm or reassurance. These editorials, as well as reassuring editorials should be coded with 0.

V9: Alarming Tone: Code 1 for alarming. 0 if not alarming.

V10: What is Alarming?: If coded alarming, write in what is alarming. There can be more than one alarming aspect. Be brief. Leave blank if the tone is not alarming.

PART III. THREE FRAMES

We will be coding 3 frame categories—consequences, responsibility, action. Frames that appear in the editorial are coded with 1. If they do not appear, code them with 0. One code is given for the entire editorial. For each frame we do not count the number of times it appears. It is coded based on the idea of whether it appears at least once. For example, we code health consequences as 1 if it discusses deaths, OR if it discusses deaths, infections, rising levels of stress, and ventilator issues. Some frames might only be mentioned briefly, even so they should be coded. For example, if "washing hands is highly recommended" just appears once in a sentence you should code Personal Actions as 1 and type in 'washing hands'.

1. Consequences of the Situation

A focus on the (usually negative) effects of the Coronavirus on society and the economy. These consequences may have occurred or the editorial might discuss them as likely or potential consequences. We will focus on coding health, economic, social, and political consequences. Often there will be more than one consequence in an editorial. If so, code all of them. For example "The virus has caused extensive deaths and crippled the economy" would be coded with 1 for economic consequences and 1 for health consequences.

V11: **Health consequences:** Mentioning or discussing any aspect of health e.g. the number infected, deaths, spread of the virus; mental health, such as the rising levels of stress, anxiety, depression, domestic abuse; plus consequences related to medical services e.g. the lack of medical supplies/doctors/hospitals/ventilators etc. There may be economic aspects to, for example, buying ventilators, but the primary point is on the health concern.

V12: **Social consequences:** The pandemic affects our daily lives and relationships. Dealing with living, eating, and working at home; as well as shutting down churches; and closing of schools/universities and homeschooling issues etc. These should not include physical or mental health issues, which are coded above.

V13: **Economic consequences:** Mentioning or discussing economic consequences, such as unemployment, stock market declines, businesses shutting down, GDP falling, economic sectors affected, deterioration of supply chains and decline in trade etc.

V14: **Political consequences:** Some focus on how the pandemic will affect politics, such as helping or hurting some politicians/parties, affecting elections, fostering or straining political relations between countries.

V15: **Consequences for foreign actor:** Write in if any of the consequences relate to a foreign actor. This could be a foreign leader, foreign official, foreign institute, foreign country etc. If, for example, the editorial relates to health consequences in the US, write in 'health

consequences for the US'. If it relates to political consequences between China and the US, write in, 'political consequences between China and the US'. If all the consequences relate to the home country, leave this blank.

2. Responsibility for the Situation

This is when an editorial attributes blame or praise to some actor for the cause or solution of the pandemic (or some aspect of the pandemic). Often the actor will be government representatives and health-care authorities, or it could be a whole country that is blamed. Often it will be more discrete actors such as other domestic politicians, other experts (researchers, professors, doctors), healthcare workers, businesses or their representatives, celebrities, journalists, international institutions authorities (e.g. WHO), foreign countries or leaders, ordinary citizens etc. With blame, the editorials might blame particular actors for the spread, handling, or other adverse consequences of the pandemic. In more extreme cases, they may be cast as villains.. With praise, actors are applauded, praised, or commended for their efforts. Taken to an extreme, these actors might be cast as heros.

Ask yourself:
Is any actor being blamed or criticized for wrongdoing?
Is any actor being praised or commended for doing the right thing?

V16: **Blame:** Is anyone being blamed in the editorial? If yes 1, if no 0.

V17: **Name the actor(s) blamed:** Write in who is blamed in the editorial. You don't need to use a list. Just be clear, precise and brief in who it is from your read of the editorial. Write in all actors blamed.

V18: **Praise:** Is anyone being praised in the editorial? If yes 1, if no 0.

V19: **Name the actor(s) praised:** Write in who is praised in the editorial. You don't need to use a list. Just be clear, precise and brief in who it is. Write in all actors praised.

3. Actions to Remedy the Situation

The action frame refers to things the editorial is telling us we should do. Editorials might advise on personal actions or societal actions. Another term is efficacy--the capacity to produce a desired result or effect. Editorials often talk of our capacity to improve the situation. Code with 1 if present.

V20: **Personal actions:** This is advice for individuals--ordinary citizens. It is information on what they can or should be doing. It includes actions we can do to protect ourselves (wash

hands, stay home etc.). It also includes information on symptoms that we can check to see if we need to go to a doctor. There is an emphasis on what you "should do" or "need to do".

V21: **Name the action(s) individuals need to/can/are taking:** Write in the action(s) the editorial is recommending for ordinary citizens. Just be as clear, precise and brief as you can from the editorial.

V22: **Societal actions:** Societal actions are about how society can/should/is responding to tackle the pandemic. It relates to actors like governments, experts, scientists, businesses, WHO, NGOs, church leaders etc. It focuses on what they are or should be doing. For example, expanding testing, obtaining medical supplies, providing unemployment aid, shutting down churches, curtailing disinformation etc.

V23: **Name the action(s) society, experts, authorities need to/can/are taking**: Write in the action(s) the editorial is recommending for society, experts, authorities. Just be as clear, precise and brief as you can from the editorial.

Most Prominent Frame

Every editorial is coded for the most prominent frame. One code is given for the entire editorial. After reading and coding the editorial, make a determination on what frame was most prominent. Usually the most prominent frame will appear in the title and/or in the first paragraph or two. Code as follows. You should be able to pick out the dominant frame by 1) identifying which of the 3 frames is discussed most extensively, 2) identify what the first few paragraphs discuss, and 3) paying attention to the title meaning. The length of the discussion on a particular frame is more important than what appears first in the editorial, which in turn, is more important than the title. Even if the frames were are focusing on are not particularly prominent, we are just trying to code the most prominent one.

V24: Most Prominent Frame: Select 0-3.

Options for Most Prominent Frame

1 = Consequences frame
2 = Responsibility frame
3 = Action frame
0 = None of the 3 frames appear in the editorial (unlikely, but possible)

PART IV. COMMENTS

V25: **Coding Issue:** Type in any difficulties you had in coding this editorial. (Optional)

V26: **Interesting Point:** Type in anything you found interesting in the editorial that might help in the write up of the research paper. (Optional)