

Annotation Codebook for East Asian Prejudice

The focus of this research is East Asian prejudice related to the COVID-19 crisis. Sinophobia (anti-Chinese prejudice) is the most prominent form, although other varieties exist too. This codebook is structured to reflect our taxonomy for East Asian Prejudice. It includes a detailed description of each category and advice for how they should be applied to social media posts, including example tweets that typify each category alongside discussions of common edge cases.

Completing Annotations

Within the accompanying XL sheet, the first three columns need to be completed for every tweet:

1. COVID-19 relevant
2. East Asian relevant
3. Primary Category

The XL sheet will automatically block out columns which do not require completion as you proceed. Your annotations should be based entirely on the text of the tweet and you should not click on any links embedded within the text.

Hierarchy of Primary Categories

Each category within this taxonomy is mutually exclusive – so only ONE primary category can be selected for each tweet. If your tweet falls into multiple categories then you should follow this hierarchy of primary categories:

1. Entity-directed hostility
2. Entity-directed criticism
3. Counter speech
4. Discussion of East Asian prejudice

For example, if a tweet contains both counter speech and entity-directed hostility you should mark it as hostility (e.g. *“It’s not fair to blame Chinese scientists, blame their lying government”*). Likewise, if it falls under both counter speech and discussion of East Asian prejudice it should be annotated as counter speech (e.g. *“if you’re calling it the HASHTAG_EASTASIA+VIRUS you’re racist. pure and simple. 100% pure racist”*).

Overview

This Codebook is structured into, first, the Theme of the tweets and, second, the five Primary categories (Hostility + secondary flags, Criticism, Counter Speech, Discussion of East Asian Prejudice and None of the Above) then, third, guidance on writing out East Asian Slurs and pejoratives. The two appendixes cover our list of Named East Asian Entities and a starting list of East Asian slurs and pejoratives.

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1. Theme

Note that the ‘Theme’ annotations are not directly relevant for identifying East Asian prejudice and we mark these up to better understand how abuse is identified by annotators. For the guidelines which pertain only to East Asian prejudice, go down to section 2.

All tweets must first be annotated for their theme:

- COVID-19 relevant (only)
- East Asian relevant (only)
- Both
- Neither

Tweets that are not East Asian relevant (i.e. they fall into Neither or COVID-19 relevant (only)) are not relevant to the taxonomy and require no further annotations.

Most hashtags have been replaced with #HASHTAG and a small number have been replaced with thematic hashtags, such as #HASHTAG_EASTASIA or #HASHTAG_VIRUS. This is to help you to better understand the tweets as often, without some information from the hashtag, it is difficult to understand what is being said.

1.a COVID-19 relevant

Does the tweet relate in any way to the Coronavirus? You should be literal here. Many tweets discuss generic issues (e.g. “Italy” and “Trump”) and, although they have a social connection (i.e. Italy has had a large number of cases), do not have a direct connection to the virus and so should not be marked up as relevant within this category.

You need to use your own judgement about whether the tweet would still be COVID-19 relevant without the hashtags. There needs to be enough signal in the text to *suggest* the tweet is COVID-19 related, then you can depend on hashtags to confirm this. The statement *“it would have been more helpful if the police had arrested all the chinese from wuhan in hong kong. HASHTAG_EASTASIA+VIRUS”* is not COVID-19 relevant because the text alone does not refer to the virus. However, in the tweet *“how is this safe for this poor guy?! setting up the microphone for justin trudeau. someone gets him latex, protective gloves! HASHTAG_EASTASIA+VIRUS”* the signifier is ‘protective gloves’ and just requires a little clarification from the hashtag.

N.B within the tweets, some hashtags have been replaced with “#HASHTAG”, rather than “#HASHTAG VIRUS” or “#HASHTAG EASTASIA+VIRUS”. If you can still infer that the tweet is directly related to COVID-19 you should annotate it as such. For example, *“calling it #HASHTAG and #HASHTAG is racist as fuck, it doesn’t matter where it originate, instead of finding someone to blame, try finding a solution”* is still COVID-19 relevant, whereas *“@acosta #HASHTAG #HASHTAG and you’re still not a respectable journalist”* is not.

1.b East Asian relevant

Does the tweet relate in any way to East Asia, including East Asian people, countries, cultures etc.? If the tweet is East Asia relevant you should continue annotating, even if it is not COVID-19 relevant. However, if the tweet is not East Asian relevant you are finished annotating, regardless of whether or not it is COVID-19 relevant. The same guidelines apply for discerning East Asian relevance using hashtags as for discerning COVID-19 relevance (see above).

Hashtag context flag

This flag will let us know the extent to which your annotation depends on a placeholder hashtag for context. Please remember that a hashtag *alone* cannot be the basis of your Theme annotation and that there must also be a signifier in the text. This flag applies to theme annotations ONLY. There are four possible options.

- If the hashtags only inform your annotation that the tweet is East Asia relevant, you should select ‘Hashtags_needed_to_identify_EastAsianRelevance’.
 - For example, in the statement *“this is why you can never trust the thuggish regime #HASHTAG_EASTASIA #HASHTAG_VIRUS”* we can tell that the tweet is abusive irrespective of the hashtags. However, the fact that it is East Asia relevant (i.e. it directs abuse against the CCP) is not clear enough without context from the hashtag – it could be any regime.
- If the hashtags only inform your annotation that the tweet is COVID-19 relevant, you should select ‘Hashtags_needed_to_identify_COVIDRelevance’.
- If the hashtags inform both East Asia and COVID-19 relevant annotations, you should select ‘Hashtags_needed_to_identify_both_Themes’.
 - For example, in the statement *“together we fight the #HASHTAG_EASTASIA+VIRUS god bless you all”* we would have little clarity that the tweet is East Asia or COVID-19 related in the absence of the hashtag.
- Finally, if the hashtags do not play a role in your annotations at all (whether you selected both themes, neither theme, or only one of them), you should select ‘Hashtags_not_needed_at_all’.
 - For example, the tweet *“Coronavirus is further proof you can never trust the thuggish Chinese regime #HASHTAG_VIRUS”* is both COVID-19 and East Asia relevant but hashtags are not required to make those annotations. Likewise, the tweet *“Trump is such a lame fuck”* is neither COVID-19 nor East Asia relevant and, as such, hashtags played no role in the annotations.

N.B. No other part of your annotation should depend on the hashtags. Any hostility or criticism should be clear from the text of the tweet. DO NOT assume that a tweet is abusive based only on the hashtag. For example, the statement *“Eat Wise. #HASHTAG_EASTASIA+VIRUS”* is not an abusive statement at all if the hashtag is removed - we cannot know that it is being hostile about particular cultural practices.

Additionally, the theme should never depend ONLY on the hashtag. There must also be a signal within the text. If we reapply the examples above, *“this is why you can never trust the thuggish regime #HASHTAG_EASTASIA #HASHTAG_VIRUS”*, the signifier for the theme in the text is ‘thuggish regime’, we just require clarity from the hashtag in order to reduce ambiguity. Whereas, there is no signal for the theme at all in *“Eat Wise. #HASHTAG_EASTASIA+VIRUS”*.

2. Entity-directed

Content which directs **hostility** or **criticism** at an East Asian identity, group, or institution. These are the main categories of interest for this research.

2.a Target of the tweet

You will first annotate the target of the tweet **as free text**. If multiple entities are targeted then you should list them all, using semicolons to separate (e.g. “Chinese scientists; Chinese medical professionals”). Most tweets will only refer to one target.

- If a tweet only mentions ‘China’ you can enter this as the target.
- However, if there is evidence that a more specific entity is being referenced you should use the more detailed entity name (e.g. the target of “*china has lied about the infected and death toll to its county and the world*” is the Chinese government).
- If you cannot identify the true target of the tweet but you are sure that there is some East Asian prejudice (usually identified by a labelled hashtag, such as HASHTAG_EASTASIA), then you can just write out ‘East Asia’ as the target.
- You should always mark up any relevant intersecting characteristics which are targeted in the tweets. For instance, if the tweet specifically targets Chinese immigrants, British-Chinese or Asian-Americans, then you should write this out in your annotation.

Example targets include:

- East Asian identities: (E.g. Chinese immigrants, South Koreans, Japanese).
- East Asian Professions/Occupations (e.g. Chinese medical practitioners, scientists or restaurateurs).
- East Asian Affiliations (e.g. Chinese Communist Party members or Hong Kong Protestors).
- East Asian Institutions (e.g. The Chinese State, government, media, companies).
- East Asian countries (e.g. Japan, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau and Southeast Asian countries, such as Singapore).

A longer list of named entities is provided in the Appendix at the end of this codebook, with accepted abbreviations. You should use the wording listed here when provided (e.g. either ‘Chinese Communist Party’ or ‘CCP’). Where these are not provided, you should be as specific as possible:

- The specific geographic area / ethnic identity the content relates to (i.e. Chinese / Korean / Japanese / Asian / East Asian).
- The subgroup or affiliation being targeted (i.e. first-generation immigrants, non-immigrant, women, students, Chinese scientists, Chinese restaurateurs).

N.B. you may find it helpful to think about the type of entity being targeted. For example, whether the target is an institution (e.g. the Chinese Communist Party) or the people affiliated (e.g. Chinese Communist Party members). This will help when considering the application of additional flags (see *Section 2.b.i* below). Additionally, you should be particularly careful when identifying the target of some tweets. The statement, “*Do you really think the ChiCom leaders give a rat's a\$\$ about their own people? They are disposable. Plenty more where they came from*”, may at first look like the commenter is calling Chinese people disposable, but it is really accusing the CCP of thinking this – and should be marked up as targeting Chinese Communist Party leaders only.

2.b.i Hostility

Hostility includes content which **explicitly derogates or demeans** a group. Most of this content will be descriptive; it describes how the author perceives things to be or expresses an opinion about how things are. Some subtypes of derogatory (which you do NOT need to annotate separately, but are useful to have in mind) include:

- Negative representations: Discussing/portraying a group in extremely negative terms or using images to portray a group as evil (e.g. *“Those oriental devils don't care about human life”*) and moral statements (e.g. *“X are wrong”* or *“it's not okay to be X”*).
- Negative emotions: Expressing intensely negative feelings or emotions about a group (e.g. *“I hate X”* or *“fuck the chinese people”*).
- Negative impact: Portraying a group/institution as having a negative impact. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - *Incompatibility theses*: Stating that a group is not welcome or is incompatible – whether due to cultural or natural reasons, such as expressing desire for Chinese immigrants to leave (e.g. *“Hope they never return!! Wish every last one of them would leave! Get out!”* or *“just get back to the Communist State they all *love* so much”*).
 - *Evil intentions theses*: Ascribing to a group/institution *evil intentions*, goals and plans (e.g. *“X want to take over the country and change our way of life”* or *“they will bring about the downfall of western civilization”*). Primarily this line of reasoning states the outgroup *poses a threat to the ingroup*.
 - *Conspiracy theses*: The outgroup is engaged in a well-organised global conspiracy to ruin/control/undermine society, such as accusing the Chinese state of bioterrorism or covering up atrocities (e.g. *“Not surprising. Just refer to what happened in the Chernobyl and you will find that history is repeating itself. Communist regimes are pretty much the same. #ChinaziVirus”*).
- Praising negative condition: Celebrating the misfortune or suffering of a group/institution (e.g. *“Corona virus? More like Karma! That's for killing and torturing dogs and other helpless animals!”*).

Hostility also includes content which expresses animosity against an identity/group/institution in an **implicit or subtle manner**. For example:

- Undermining the experiences and treatment of entities, often by mocking or ridiculing them.
- Accusations that an entity receives special treatment and is undeserving of it.
- Being derogatory against *‘Some but not all’* – this is a common strategy whereby deeply negative statements against *‘some but not all’* of a group are made to besmirch the wider group. You must use your judgement as to whether the statements implicitly attack the whole group / cast aspersions about them (e.g. *“a #ChiCom seeking filthy bush meat enters a cave & brings to market a nasty bat virus which, 5 mos. later, grinds western society to a standstill”*).
- Implying that an identity/group is a threat (subtly) or that the author views them in a deeply negative way. Such statements are often a little ambiguous and require you to make a value judgement about them (e.g. *“You don't know the half of it, our street is full of Chinese and it's not been the same since”*). In such cases there must be some discernible sense of negativity for it to be considered hostility.
- Offensive naming of COVID-19. Virus names that mock Chinese people or culture (e.g. *“Kung flu virus”*) or imply intentionality (e.g. *“ChiCom virus”* and *“Chinazi virus”*) would qualify as hostile here. However, using virus names that simply reference the

geographical origins of the virus (e.g. “*China virus*” or “*Wuhan virus*”) are NOT considered intrinsically hostile.

Dehumanisation flag

Hostility has a flag for whether the tweet **dehumanises** the target. Dehumanisation must be explicitly negative and literal. Dehumanisation is NOT about capturing implicit references or content that is hard to identify. It is about capturing the real extremes where the author expresses malicious intent and there is a genuine sense that the outgroup is viewed as less than human. We want to be certain about what the author is expressing.

- It includes use of terms describing groups as insects, animals and non-humans or explicitly compares them to these (e.g. “*The communists are wild weeds that sprawl on the devastation of war. The communists are venomous insects that breed on the garbage. #ChinaziVirus*” dehumanises Chinese communists).
- It also includes describing East Asian people as viruses themselves (e.g. “*#WuhanVirus walking..... DO NOT hug them!*”).

N.B. you should pay particular attention to what you identify as the target of the tweet (see *Section 2.a* above) when flagging for dehumanisation. You should avoid this flag when you have identified an institution as the target (e.g. “*New @NRO nails #ChiCom rat bastards for its cowardice and dishonesty in the early days of the outbreak. The Beijing regime has long been a boot on the neck of the Chinese people, but it is now a menace to the world at large*”). Here, the tweet may appear to target an institution (the Beijing regime). However, use of dehumanisation (‘rat bastards’) means it is directed at the people comprising the regime - in this case ‘Chinese communists’ would be the appropriate target to annotate.

Threatening language flag

Hostility also has a flag for whether the tweet contains **threatening language**. This is for language which either expresses an intent/desire to cause a targeted East Asian group harm or supports, encourages, advocates or incites such harm. You should use a common-sense understanding of what is meant by ‘harm’, which includes physical harm/violence, criminal damage, intimidation/harassment, emotional abuse, financial harm, systematic exclusion from public discourse, and doxing (e.g. sharing of private information online). The conceptual basis of ‘threatening language’ is ACTION. If you see a verb and/or an expression of intent (e.g. “*I will...*”, “*I want to...*”, “*I am going to....*” or a normative statement that others should (e.g. “*They should be...*” or “*We should*”) then you are likely looking at threatening language. Subtypes of threatening language (which you do NOT need to annotate separately, but are useful to have in mind) include:

- Making a threat: personally expressing intent, desire or willingness to commit harm (e.g. “*I want to stab all X*” or “*I want to rape every....*”). This includes language that is threatening, even if an explicit threat is not made (e.g. “*Asians are unwelcome, if I see one I don’t know what I’ll do...*”).
- Advocating that harm should be committed against a group:
 - *Incitement*: calling for another person to commit harm, either now or in the future (e.g. “*#NukeChina Before it's too late*” or “*you would be better off blowing them up*”). This can also be general and not addressed to a specific person (e.g. “*we should do something to get rid of these animals*”).
 - *Support*: endorsing or encouraging that harm is committed, either now or in the future, but not directed towards another individual as with incitement (e.g. “*I think gassing X wouldn’t be such a bad idea*” or “*Let communist China pay for the biological attack on the world*”). Often, these might be normative statements

(e.g. “*They had better fucking watch out*” or “*They should be banned*”). This also includes expressing support or pleasure in members of the group becoming infected with the virus (e.g. “*They all deserve to get it! #WuhanVirus*”), advocating for systematic exclusion of a group (e.g. “*Quarantine all chinese in america, expel all foreigners out*”) and support for financial harm through calls to boycott or sanction.

Interpersonal flag

Hostility also has a flag for whether the content is used as part of an attack on a person. The target individual(s) must be identifiable, either because they have been @tagged or have been *explicitly* named/referenced. If someone is target by abuse in the context of a prejudicial East Asian tweet then you should mark it up with the interpersonal flag, irrespective of the person’s actual or perceived identity. However, the person needs to have been attacked in some way by the content – this could be related to being East Asian but does not have to be.

2b.ii Criticism

This category is for content that is **critical**, but **NOT abusive**. There must always be space for people to critically discuss groups/institutions. For example, people online may talk about uncomfortable subjects, such as the Chinese government’s response to containing COVID-19 in critical ways. This category applies to content:

- Expressing a critical opinion of an East Asian institution, affiliations or cultural practices without being abusive. Note that it is unlikely you will encounter criticism of an identity, such content will usually be hostile (see *Section 2.b.i* above).
- Based on factual statements and/or rational opinions. However, some criticism will be based on misinformation. Misinformation is a complex area, and we are not trying in this research to determine what is true or false. We are interested in whether the misinformation is **prejudiced**. As such, if criticism is based on misinformation pertaining to a negative stereotype (such as eating practices) it should be annotated as hostility. For example, “*China could have stopped this by not normalising eating things that shouldn’t be eaten!*” is based on the idea that the Chinese eat the wrong things and should therefore be annotated as hostile.
 - N.B. Conspiracy theories should be annotated as hostility (see the description of the conspiracy thesis in *Section 2b.i* above).
- Suggestions of propaganda or lying by a government will often fall under criticism (e.g. “*chinese government changed the foreign ministry’s spokeswoman to a expert specializes on propaganda. well dong disclosed that chinese government was exchanging information on the virus in early january! then people wondered why the chinese people were told last! HASHTAG_EASTASIA+VIRUS*”). However, this can cross over into hostility if it clearly suggests an intended negative impact or otherwise derogates the target (e.g. “*no one is falling for this really pathetic, laughable gaslighting attempt. typical HASHTAG_EASTASIA propaganda designed to divert attention away from their own malevolence and failures. we see you. HASHTAG_EASTASIA+VIRUS*”).

Drawing the line between hostility and criticism:

N.B. in some cases it may be challenging to discern between criticism of a group/identity and implicit/explicitly negative entity-directed content. For example, accusations such as “*the chinese government hid information relevant to COVID-19 and then reported I late*” would usually fall under criticism. However, this can cross the line into hostility if framed as a **normative statement** (e.g. “*It’s just like the Chinese government to hide information relevant to COVID-19 and then report it late*” or “*the Chinese government can’t be trusted – they hid information [...]*”). In some cases, you will have to apply your judgement, especially when bordering on conspiracy.

Another borderline case is calling for China to make voluntary or arranged reparations or payments. For the purpose of the taxonomy we will be labelling this **criticism**. However, a similar sentiment directed at the Chinese people would be **hostility**. Likewise, calls for boycotting or sanctions are considered support for financial harm and should be annotated as **hostility** and flagged for **threatening language**. The overall tone of the statement should also be considered – is the tweet scapegoating China (hostility) or holding the Chinese state to reasonable account (criticism)?

3. Counter Speech

Counter-speech is content which challenges, condemns or calls out the abusive language of an East Asian entity – this does not have to be a direct response to a previous piece of content. It can be a criticism of an abusive comment (e.g. *“Racism will not protect you from a virus”*), hateful behaviour (e.g. *“Fight the Virus — Not the People!”*), negative opinions/representations (e.g. *“We are not a virus. We are humans. Stop the xenophobia”*), slurs (e.g. *“please don’t use language like ‘oriental devils’”*), or stereotypes. It can also be a demonstration of solidarity with target entities (e.g. *“#StandWithChinatown”* or *“#TogetherWeStand”*, depending on context). However, it does need to directly and explicitly challenge East Asian prejudice. Counter-speech can co-occur with other categories in the taxonomy. In which case you should refer to the Hierarchy of Primary Categories.

- If counter speech co-occurs with entity-directed hostility of criticism, you should mark up the entity-directed category. For example, *“It’s not fair to blame Chinese scientists, blame their lying government”* counters criticism of Chinese scientists, but should be annotated as entity-directed hostility for normatively representing the Chinese government as lying. Likewise, to be considered counter-speech the author must NOT engage in another form of abuse against the SAME target (e.g. *“We shouldn’t blame Chinese people for Kung flu. They can’t help that they are uncivilised and dirty”*).
- Counter speech will often also fit under discussion of East Asian prejudice. However, you should choose to annotate it as counter speech (e.g. *“if you’re calling it the #HASHTAG_EASTASIA+VIRUS you’re racist. pure and simple. 100% pure racist”*). The discussion of East Asian prejudice category is reserved for content that does not fit within counter speech.

4. Discussion of East Asian Prejudice

This category is for content that discusses prejudice related to East Asia but does not itself engage in OR counter that prejudice. The content does not need to be directly related to COVID-19, but should reference/discuss Sinophobia, Asian prejudice, Asian racism, etc. It may cover topics such as how the media covers these issues, whether the prejudice is actual or perceived, or rights to free speech, including:

- Content that is critical of the way in which prejudice has been discussed in relation to COVID-19 is included in this category. For example, the statement *“as someone w frontline doctors in the family, i sure wish we had a media the least bit interested in making sure everyone knew *this* rather than one obsessed with ensuring that everyone believes that calling covid19 the #HASHTAG is racist”* suggests prejudice has been given too much attention in the media, **but does not clearly support that prejudice**. It criticises the focus on East Asian prejudice but does not directly abuse East Asian entities.
- Content that questions naming COVID-19 in a way which references China (e.g. the China flu) would usually fall into this category. Statements arguing that it is normal to name a virus after the place it originated would also fit into this category. However, statements that justify calling it #ChinaFlu because of a perceived moral responsibility on the part of China would fall under entity-directed hostility. For instance, the tweet *“so spanish flu, west nile virus, hong kong flu etc. are all racist then as well HASHTAG_EASTASIA+VIRUS also I must be racist since i support trump even though a good portion of my friends are of different races”* falls just within the ‘Discussion of East Asian prejudice’ category rather than hostility.

- Content that discusses but **does not directly challenge** the issue of Sinophobia is also included in this category rather than counter-speech (e.g. *“The sinophobia around the corona virus is spreading too. A Chinese goods shop was torched in the Western Cape, my heart can’t handle this”*).

N.B Discussion of East Asian prejudice is at the bottom of the Hierarchy of Primary Categories (see above). Therefore, any content that falls under this category and another (i.e. entity directed hostility or criticism or counter speech) should be marked up as the OTHER category. The statement *“if you're calling it the HASHTAG_EASTASIA+VIRUS you're racist. pure and simple. 100% pure racist.”* should be annotated as counter speech.

5. None of the Above

This is content which does not fall into any of the other categories outlined in the codebook. It is usually entirely unrelated to hostility or criticism of East Asian entities.

Remember that you need to mark up EVERY tweet for ‘East Asian relevant’ and ‘COVID-19’ relevant (which is why these are the first columns on the Sheet) – In some cases, tweets will be relevant to these themes but will not fall into any of our primary categories. Be on the lookout for these tweets.

Appendix 1 – List of Named East Asian Entities

If a tweet only mentions ‘China’ you can enter this as the target. However, if there is evidence that a more specific entity is being referenced you should use the more detailed entity name (e.g. the target of “china has lied about the infected and death toll to its county and the world” is specifically the Chinese government).

Identities & subgroups

- Chinese
 - Chinese immigrants
 - Chinese students
 - Chinese medical professional
 - Chinese mainlanders
- South Koreans
- Japanese
- Asian-Americans
- British-Chinese

Professions/Occupations

N.B. the Professions/Affiliations/Institutions must be Asian. For example, we are not interested in content about the US or UK government’s actions related to COVID-19.

- Chinese medical practitioners
- Chinese scientists
- Chinese restaurateurs
- Chinese politicians
- Chinese military
- Chinese police
- Chinese President (Xi Jinping)
- Hong Kong Chief Executive (Carrie Lam)
- Kim Jong-un

Affiliations

- Chinese Communist Party members
 - N.B. The tweet may reference the “CCP” but if they mean CCP members you should clearly state this
- Hong Kong protestors

Institutions

- Chinese Communist Party (aka CCP)
- The Chinese state (may be referred to as ‘China’, but you should be quite certain in making this inference)
- The Chinese government (may be referred to as ‘China’)
 - Beijing may be used in reference to the Chinese government
 - N.B The State is an abstract (idea) concept whereas government is a concrete (physical) one. The government is a physical manifestation and it acts for the State.
- The Chinese media
- Huawei
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China (aka MFA China)
 - @mfa_china
- PLA - people’s liberation army