V Dem
VARIETIES OF DEMOCRACY

CODEBOOK
Pandemic Backsliding:
Democracy during Covid-19
(PanDem)

V3 - June 2020

Codebook

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V3, June 2020

Recommended citations:

Notes:

Contents

A. Background

Emergency provisions - such as the ones in place in many countries during the current Covid-19 crisis - enable states to temporarily limit personal freedoms and checks and balances to react effectively in situations of crisis. However, previous research shows that some leaders abuse such tools to foster more permanent autocratization by (a) imposing measures that are disproportionate to the severity of crises and (b) keeping emergency provisions in place once the factual situation improves (see `Lührmann and Rooney, 2020`). How can states effectively respond to crises without undermining democratic standards, freedom and human rights?

The Pandemic Backsliding Project tracks state responses to the Covid-19 pandemic as illustrative of the varieties of emergency measures and their execution, addressing how these decisions affect short- and long-term prospects for the political regime and democracy.

What are emergency measures?

Throughout, we often refer to **"emergency measures"**, which we use as a general term for all government responses taken with reference to Covid-19. These may include - but do not have to - the formal declaration of a state of emergency.

The variable *emlaw* provides information on the nature of the legal instrument used to adopt the main national-level emergency measures. Subsequent variables starting with *"em"* are coded specifically about the emergency measures adopted under this legal framework. Variables that do not begin with this prefix refer to measures that may fall outside the main legal instrument *emlaw*.

What about subnational variation?

We aim to capture the general condition or average at the national level. We recognize that for some countries, the response to Covid-19 has varied subnationally. For this reason and because we think such variation reflect limitations in executive authority, we also code an indicator of subnational variation: *subvar*.

Where does the data come from?

The full documentation of coding, data sources, and comments for each country and variable are accessible online at `www.github.com/vdeminstitute/pandem`.

The Pandemic Backsliding Project bases its coding primarily upon data collection by a team of trained research assistants. These include mainly official government sources, academic databases, trusted inter-governmental, state or independent organizations and trusted media outlets. The specific source used when making a particular coding decision can be accessed directly in the dataset through the corresponding variable with the suffix: *_source*. Specific comments on each coding decision are also available through the corresponding variable with the suffix: *_comments*.

A multistep strategy was employed to ensure that data validity. In general one coder was assigned to one country, but for some observations two coders provided input and

the principal investigators reconciled the information in cases of disagreement. Country experts, regional experts or the principal investigators have reviewed the coding that informs the indices (*pandem, pandem_alt, pandemdis, pandemdis_alt,* and *panback*) for most countries. Research assistants were instructed to change their coding if country managers, regional experts, or the principal investigators found errors.

Questions were designed in way that facilitated the collection of factual information. Nevertheless, they involved some judgement on the side of coders. If in doubt - coders were instructed to consult with others and code something as less (rather than more) severe. This means that if our data errs, it errs on the side of under- rather than overreporting. Violations might have occurred that we do not capture, but we are quite confident that the violations we report have occurred.

B.   Indices

Pandemic Democratic Violations Index (pandem)

Question: To what extent have government responses to the Covid-19 pandemic violated democratic standards for emergency measures?

Clarification: With this index, we aim to capture the degree to which democratic standards for emergency measures have been violated between 11 March 2020 and mid/end June 2020 by government responses to the Covid-19 pandemic. Specifically, we draw on international agreements about the democratic standards for emergency measures (e.g. ICCPR) to categorize violations (see Table 1). Emergency responses are then coded as no violation (0), minor violation (1), some violation (2), and severe violation (3) in each of these sub types.

Scale: Interval, from low to high (0-1).

Aggregation: This index is formed by taking sum of all violations recorded in Table 1. We then rescale into a 0-1 interval by dividing by the total possible additive score.

Note: Researchers using this index should be aware that it contains one expert coded indicator from the V-Dem v10 dataset - government media censorship effort (v2mecenefm_ord) - in order to reflect the structural conditions for media freedom that is also contained in the V-Dem higher level democracy indices.

Alternative Pandemic Democratic Violations Index (pandem_alt)

Question: To what extent have government responses to the Covid-19 pandemic violated democratic standards for emergency measures?

Clarification: This index is an alternative version of the *pandem* index, but omits any expert-coded indicators from the V-Dem dataset.

Scale: Interval, from low to high (0-1).

Aggregation: This index is formed by taking sum of all violations recorded in Table 1, where Type 4 violations do not include criteria from the V-Dem expert coded measure of government media censorship effort (*v2mecenefm_ord*). We then rescale into a 0-1 interval by dividing by the total possible additive score.

Pandemic Democratic Violations and Disinformation Index (pandem_dis)

Question: To what extent are democratic standards for emergency measures violated by government responses to the Covid-19 pandemic, including government disinformation campaigns?

Clarification: This index builds on the *pandem* index, but includes additional information

Table 1: Pandemic Democratic Violations Index (PanDem) Construction

Type / Rating of Violations	None (0)	Minor (1)	Some (2)	Major (3)
Type 1: No time limit	End date ($emlimit = 1$)	No end date for the main emergency measures ($emlimit = 0$) but measures ended during the observation period ($emend$ is not empty)	No end date for the main emergency measures ($emlimit = 0$) and measures have not ended during the observation period ($emend$ is empty)	-
Type 2: Discriminatory measures	None ($discrim=0$)	De-facto minor ($discrim=1$)	De-jure minor ($discrim=3$)	Major, either de-facto or de-jure ($discrim = 2$ or $discrim = 4$)
Type 3: Derogation of non-derogable rights	No on all items of ICCPR provisions ($ndrights = 0$)	-	-	Yes on any item of ICCPR provisions ($ndrights=1$)
Type 4: Restrictions of media freedom	No de-jure ($melim = 0$) and no de-facto restrictions on how the media can report about Covid-19 ($merepfact = 0$), the government's response ($merepgov = 0$), or other issues ($merepoth = 0$); no verbal ($mevhar = 0$) and no physical harassment of journalists ($mephar = 0$); and no limitations in access to information ($meinf = 0$). *In addition, to meet this category, government censorship efforts of the media ($v2mecenefm\_ord \geq 3$) only indirect or rare according to V-Dem expert coders in 2019.*	No de-facto restrictions on how the media can report about the government's response to Covid-19 ($merepgov = 0$) and other issues ($merepoth = 0$); including no verbal ($mevhar = 0$) and physical harassment of journalists ($mephar = 0$), but there are some de-jure or de-facto limitations about how the media can report about Covid-19 ($melim = 1$ or $merepfact = 1$) or some limitations to access to information ($meinf = 1$). *In addition, this category is automatically coded if there are indirect government attempts at media censorship on especially sensitive issues ($v2mecenefm\_ord = 2$) according to V-Dem expert coders in 2019.*	No restrictions (de-jure or de-facto) on how the media can report about the government's response to Covid-19 ($melim \leq 1$ and $merepgov = 0$); no restrictions on media reporting about other issues ($merepoth = 0$); and no physical harassment of journalists who report on Covid-19 ($mephar = 0$). But there are widespread limitations to access to information ($meinf = 2$) or verbal harassment of journalists ($mevhar = 1$). *In addition, this category is automatically coded if there are direct attempts at government media censorship of especially sensitive issues ($v2mecenefm\_ord == 1$) according to V-Dem expert coders in 2019.*	Any of the following conditions are observed: de-jure limits on media freedom ($melim \geq 2$); de-facto restrictions on how the media can report about the government response to Covid-19 ($merepgov = 1$); de-facto limitations on how the media can report on other issues ($merepoth = 1$); or physical harassment of journalists who report on Covid-19 ($mephar = 1$). *In addition, this category is automatically coded if there are routine government media censorship efforts ($v2mecenefm\_ord = 0$) according to V-Dem expert coders in 2019.*
Type 5: Limitations on legislature	Few and only with direct reference to Covid-19 related measures ($leglimit \leq 2$)	-	The executive has the right to rule by decree on many issues, which may exceed Covid-19 related issues due to vague formulation in emergency laws, but the legislature still exists ($leglimit = 3$)	Completely. The legislature has been dissolved/suspended or equivalent ($leglimit \geq 4$)
Type 6: Abusive enforcement	No to very little reports ($pomviol \leq 1$)	Sometimes ($pomviol = 2$)	Often ($pomviol = 3$)	Widespread ($pomviol = 4$)

about government disinformation campaigns.

Scale: Interval, from low to high (0-1).

Aggregation: This index is formed by taking the sum of all violations that go into the Pandemic Democratic Violations Index (*pandem*) and the government disinformation indicator (*govmis*). We then rescale into a 0-1 interval by dividing by the total possible additive score.

Note: Researchers using this index should be aware that it contains one expert coded indicator from the V-Dem v10 dataset - government media censorship effort (v2mecenefm_ord) - in order to reflect the structural conditions for media freedom that is also contained in the V-Dem higher level democracy indices.

Alternative Pandemic Democratic Violations and Disinformation Index (pandem_dis_alt)

Question: To what extent are democratic standards for emergency measures violated by government responses to the Covid-19 pandemic, including government disinformation campaigns?

Clarification: This index builds on the *pandem_dis_alt* index, but includes additional information about government disinformation campaigns.

Scale: Interval, from low to high (0-1).

Aggregation: This index is formed by taking sum of all violations that go into the Alternative Pandemic Democratic Violations Index (*pandem_alt*) and the government disinformation indicator (*govmis*). Type 4 violations on this index do not include criteria from the V-Dem expert coded measure of government media censorship effort (*v2mecenefm_ord*). We then rescale into a 0-1 interval by dividing by the total possible additive score.

Pandemic Backsliding Index (panback)

Question: To what extent has democracy receded due to government violations of democratic standards in response to Covid-19?

Clarification: This index estimates the amount of democratic backsliding during the covid crisis. It builds on existing scholarship showing that a country's vulnerability to democratic backsliding is non-monotonic in the level of democracy. At low levels of democracy, there is little room for backsliding; and at high levels, the institution of democracy are robust. The most vulnerable countries for backsliding are those in the mid-range, namely those that are neither fully democratic nor autocratic. The Panback index captures such inverted U-shaped vulnerability to backsliding by weighing more heavily violations recorded in countries in the mid-range of V-Dem's liberal democracy index (*v2x_libdem*) measured in 2019.

Scale: Interval, from low to high (0-1).

Aggregation: The *Panback* index is calculated as follows:
$Panback = 4\_alt \times v2x\_libdem \times (1 - v2x\_libdem)$
where the factor of 4 is included ensure the index ranges between zero and one.

C.   Identifiers and V-Dem variables

Time (time)

Question: When was the first version of the coding submitted?

Clarification: Time stamp provided by coders when first coding was submitted.

Scale: Date-time

Country name (country)

Question: What is the country name?

Clarification: Country name from the V-Dem data set.

Scale: Character string.

Source(s): `www.v-dem.net/en/data/data-version-10/`

Emergency measures legal instrument (emlaw)

Question: What legal instrument has the state used to adopt a national-level emergency response to the Covid-19 pandemic?

Clarification: Here we are interested in the primary legal instrument used to adopt and enforce the main national-level emergency measures with reference to Covid-19 since March 11, 2020. If the country has used multiple instruments, choose the one that most closely resembles a "state of exception", defined as a period during which one person or the government has enhanced powers and authority to limit rights and freedoms beyond what the law ordinarily allows (e.g. see `Agamben 2005`). Note that the emergency measures may have ended by the time of coding.

Scale: Categorical

1– Declaration of state of emergency, within existing legal framework.

2– Declaration of state of public health emergency, within existing legal framework that distinguishes between a public health emergency and a state of emergency.

3– Declaration of state of disaster / catastrophe, within existing legal frameworks where this differs from a state of emergency.

4– Other legislation, where this differs from a state of emergency, public health emergency, or disaster/catastrophe.

5– None, the state has a national-level emergency response without specific reference to legal instruments.

6– None, the state has no national-level emergency response.

7– Other

Emergency response name (emname)

Question: What is the specific name of the legal instrument that the state used to adopt a national-level emergency response to the Covid-19 pandemic?

Clarification: This refers to the legal instrument defined in *emlaw*. This may be the Constitution, law, executive order, or other legal mechanism, Give the specific proper name of the law as it is known in the country. This can be in the country's language or a translation if such is readily used and available. If the legal instrument is the Constitution, also provide the Article or section number wherever possible.

Scale: Character string.

Beginning of emergency response (emstart)

Question: When did the government first adopt this legal instrument in response to Covid-19?

Clarification: This refers to the date that the legal instrument defined in *emlaw* was first used to enact a national-level emergency response to the Covid-19 pandemic. If the exact date is unknown, the first day of the month is given. If unknown, leave blank.

Scale: Date format.

End of emergency response (emend)

Question: When did the implementation of this legal instrument end?

Clarification: This question refers to the date that the implementation of the legal instrument mentioned in *emlaw* ended. Leave blank if the implementation of the legal instrument has not ended time of coding. Please only consider the legal instrument mentioned in *emlaw*.

Scale: Date format.

D.   Indicators of violations of democratic standards

Time limit (emlimit)

Question: Does implementation of the legal instrument used as the main national-level response to Covid-19 have an officially declared time limit?

Clarification: This question refers to the legal instrument defined in *emlaw*.

Scale: Binary (0/1).

  0– No end date for some or all provisions.
  1– Yes.

Time limit end date (emlimitdate)

Question: What is the official end date for the implementation of the legal instrument used as the main national-level response to Covid-19?

Clarification: This addresses the legal instrument defined in *emlaw*. If the enhanced powers have no officially declared end date but have a natural sunset clause under the legal framework described in *emlaw* (e.g. every 30 days), code the date at which such an expiry would occur without review for extension. If the end date varies by provision, code the date when the final provision is set to expire. If there is no officially declared end date, leave blank.

Scale: Date format.

Law legislature approval (emlawapp)

Question: Does the law require that the national legislature approve the implementation of the legal instrument used as the main national-level response to Covid-19?

Clarification: This question refers to the legal instrument used to adopt the main national-level emergency measures as defined in *emlaw*. By national legislature, we mean the national body with powers to examine, pass, amend, or repeal laws.

Scale: Binary, (0/1)

  0– No
  1– Yes

Legislature approval (emlegapp)

Question: Did the legislature approve the implementation of the legal instrument used as the main national-level response to Covid-19?

Clarification: This question refers to the legal instrument used to adopt the enhanced powers as defined in *emlaw*. By national legislature, we mean the national body with powers to examine, pass, amend, or repeal laws.

Scale: Binary, (0/1)

0– No

1– Yes

Legislature limitations (leglimit)

Question: To what extent is the lawmaking role of the legislature limited due to any of the emergency measures taken with reference to the Covid-19 pandemic?

Clarification: By national legislature, we mean the national body with powers to examine, pass, amend, or repeal laws. The lawmaking role of the national legislature includes the de-jure and de-facto powers to introduce and pass legislation in all policy areas. This question asks specifically how the emergency measures have affected the lawmaking powers of the legislature. "Rule by decree" enables the government to pass laws without the approval of the legislature, through what is commonly referred to as a decree, regulation, or ordinance, but can also be referred to by other terms. If no legislature existed prior to Covid-19, code as 5.

Scale: Categorical, (0-4)

0– Not at all. The lawmaking role of the national legislature is not affected.

1– Very little. The legislature has given the executive branch the power to relatively widely interpret Covid-19 related laws, but not to rule by decree.

2– Somewhat. The executive branch has the right to rule by decree on several, narrowly Covid-19 related issues such as deciding on physical distance measures and measures to support the health system.

3– To a large extent. The executive branch has the right to rule by decree on many issues, which may exceed Covid-19 related issues due to vague formulation in emergency laws.

4– Completely. The legislature has been dissolved, suspended or equivalent with reference to Covid-19.

5– No legislature existed prior to Covid-19.

Sub-national variation (subvar)

Question: Since 11 March 2020, to what extent have the emergency measures referring to Covid-19 varied de jure at the sub-national level?

Clarification: Coders should identify and cite sources indicating that subnational governments have implemented varying responses to the pandemic between 11 March 2020 until the coding date.

Scale: Ordinal, (0-3)

0– Almost no variation. The emergency measures are uniform or nearly uniform throughout the country.

1– A little. There are a few sub-national areas where the emergency measures differ.

2– Somewhat. There are some sub-national areas where the emergency measures differ.

3– Almost completely. The emergency measures vary across all or almost all of the sub-national areas of the country.

Discrimination (discrim)

Question: Since 11 March 2020, have any of the emergency measures that place restrictions on democratic rights or freedoms discriminated "solely on the ground of race, colour, sex, language, religion or social origin" (ICCPR Art 4)?

Clarification: This indicator captures whether the emergency measures have affected some groups' democratic rights and freedoms disproportionately based on their race, colour, sex, language, religion or social origin in ways that cannot be justified by concerns for public health. Democratic rights and freedoms are defined as freedom of movement, assembly, association, and expression. This includes, for instance, quarantines for specific social groups without explicit virological indication. If measures are applied to neighborhoods due to prevalence of Covid-19 cases, this does not count as discrimination. Do not code cases of discrimination dealing with access to medical care, testing, or supplies.

Scale: Ordinal, (0-3)

0– No, not at all.

1– Not de-jure, but minor de-facto discrimination.

2– Not de-jure, but major, systematic de-facto discrimination.

3– Yes, minor de-jure discrimination.

4– Yes, major, systematic de-jure discrimination

Non-derogable rights (ndrights)

Question: Since 11 March 2020, have any of the emergency measures de-jure violated non-derogable rights as defined by the ICCPR?

Clarification: This question addresses the text of the main national-level emergency measures (de-jure). Do not consider the extent to which such provisions have been enforced. Non-derogable rights include:

- – Right to life (Article 6).

- – Freedom from torture and cruel/inhuman treatment (Article 7).

- – Prohibition of slavery and servitude (Article 8, I & II).

- – Prohibition of imprisonment due to inability to fulfill a contractual obligation (Article 11).

- – No conviction for a crime which was not a crime at the time of commitment (Article 15).

- – Right as a person before the law (Article 16).

- – Freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 18).

The detailed ICCPR provisions can be found here: `www.ohchr.org/en/professiona linterest/pages/ccpr.aspx`. A temporary ban on religious services does NOT count as a violation of freedom of religion as long as all religions are targeted equally. Provide detailed information about the de-jure violations, including which non-derogable rights are violated in the *ndrights_comments* variable.

Scale: Binary, (0/1)

0– No

1– Yes

Media limitations (melim)

Question: Since 11 March 2020, to what extent do any emergency measures de-jure limit media freedom?

Clarification: This addresses the text of the main national-level emergency measures (de-jure). Do not consider the extent to which such provisions have been enforced. Coders should only consider how the emergency measures affect media freedoms within the country, not other laws or practices. For instance, a case may be coded as 0 - "Not at all" if the emergency measures do not de-jure limit media freedoms, even if the case already had low media freedoms in practice prior to the crisis.

Scale: Ordinal, (0-3)

0– Not at all. Media freedoms are not affected by the emergency measures.

1– Somewhat. The emergency measures de-jure allow the government to put some limitations on how the media can report on Covid-19. These provisions are explicitly limited to stopping disinformation on Covid-19, such as closing news websites that misreport on the origins or how the disease spreads (as a reference to "fact check" what is "disinformation", please use the WHO information on Covid-19 provided here: `https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/question-and-answers-hub/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses`).

2– To a large extent. The emergency measures de-jure put strict limitations on how the media can report on Covid-19. These provisions are not limited to stopping the spread of disinformation on Covid-19, but include any reporting on Covid-19 such as the prevalence of the virus and the government response (as a reference to "fact check" what is "disinformation", please use the WHO information on Covid-19 provided here: `https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/question-and-answers-hub/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses`).

3– Almost completely. The emergency measures de-jure require that all or almost all media reporting on Covid-19 reflect the government's position.

Media limitations start (melimstart)

Question: When were the de-jure limits on media freedom first adopted?

Clarification: This question addresses the text of the main national-level emergency measures (de-jure). Do not consider the extent to which such provisions have been enforced. Provide the exact date the emergency measures with de-jure limitations on media freedoms (*melim*) were first adopted. If the exact date is unknown, give the first day of the month. If there are no de-jure limits on media freedoms (melim=0), leave blank.

Scale: Date format.

Media limitations end (melimend)

Question: When do the de-jure limits on media freedom end?

Clarification: This question addresses the text of the main national-level emergency measures (de-jure). Do not consider the extent to which such provisions have been enforced. Provide the exact date the emergency measures with de-jure limitations on media freedoms (*medialimits*) are set to expire. If the exact date is unknown, give the final day of the month. If there are no de-jure limits on media freedoms (melim=0) or there is no defined end date, leave blank.

Scale: Date format.

Limitations on media reporting about Covid-19 (merepfact)

Question: Since 11 March 2020, has the government placed de-facto limitations on media reporting about the nature of the Covid-19 virus?

Clarification: Here we are interested in the de-facto limitation of media reporting on the virus, its origins, treatment, and prevalence. These limits may or may not be allowed by law. Provide specific references to sources and comments to justify coding.

Scale: Binary, (0/1)

    0– No

    1– Yes

Limitations on media reporting about the government response to Covid-19 (merepgov)

Question: Since 11 March 2020, has the government placed de-facto limitations on media reporting about the government response to the Covid-19 pandemic?

Clarification: Here we are interested in the de-facto limitation of media reporting about news on the government responses to Covid-19. If this includes limitations on reporting about the government's official messaging on the pandemic (e.g. its prevalence, treatment, or origins), code this and *merepfact* as 1- Yes. These limits may or may not be allowed by law. Provide specific references to sources and comments to justify coding.

Scale: Binary, (0/1)

    0– No

    1– Yes

Limitations on media reporting about non-Covid-19 related news (merepoth)

Question: Since 11 March 2020, has the government placed de-facto limitations on media reporting about non-Covid-19 related news, but with reference to the pandemic?

Clarification: Here we are interested in the de-facto limitation of media reporting about news unrelated to the pandemic, justified by the government under its emergency response to Covid-19. These limits may or may not be allowed by law. Provide specific references to sources and comments to justify coding.

Scale: Binary, (0/1)

    0– No

    1– Yes

Limitations on access to information (meinf)

Question: Since 11 March 2020, how often does the government and its agents limit media access to Covid-19 related information?

Clarification: Here we are interested in how often the government and/or its agents limit media access to information about the nature of the Covid-19 virus (i.e. its origins, treatment, and prevalence), the government response, and/or other matters related to the pandemic. Provide specific references to sources and comments to justify coding.

Scale: Ordinal, (0-2)

0– Never or almost never. There are no or almost no reports of the government or its agents limiting media access to Covid-19 related information.

1– Occasional. There are a few isolated reports of the government or government officials limiting media access to Covid-19 related information, but these are not systematic or ongoing.

2– Often. There are widespread and ongoing reports of the government and its agents limiting media access to Covid-19 related information.

Government media censorship effort (v2mecenefm_ord)

Question: Does the government directly or indirectly attempt to censor the print or broadcast media?

Clarification: This variable comes from the ordinalized measurement model output based on expert responses to v10 of the V-Dem dataset. See: `https://www.v-dem.net/en/data/reference-materials-v10/`

Scale: Ordinal, (0-4)

0– Attempts to censor are direct and routine.

1– Attempts to censor are indirect but nevertheless routine.

2– Attempts to censor are direct but limited to especially sensitive issues.

3– Attempts to censor are indirect and limited to especially sensitive issues.

4– The government rarely attempts to censor major media in any way, and when such excep- tional attempts are discovered, the responsible officials are usually punished.

Verbal harassment of journalists (mevhar)

Question: Since 11 March 2020, has the government or its agents verbally harassed journalists reporting about Covid-19?

Clarification: Here we are interested in the whether the government and/or its agents have verbally harassed journalists who report on the nature of the Covid-19 virus (i.e.

its origins, treatment, and prevalence), the government response, and/or other matters related to the pandemic. Provide specific references to sources and comments to justify coding.

Scale: Binary, (0/1)

   0– No

   1– Yes

Physical harassment of journalists (mephar)

Question: Since 11 March 2020, has the government or its agents physically harassed journalists reporting about Covid-19?

Clarification: Here we are interested in the whether the government and/or its agents have physically harassed journalists who report on the nature of the Covid-19 virus (i.e. its origins, treatment, and prevalence), the government response, and/or other matters related to the pandemic. Provide specific references to sources and comments to justify coding.

Scale: Binary, (0/1)

   0– No

   1– Yes

Government disinformation (govmis)

Question: Since 11 March 2020, how often does information provided by the government or its agents about Covid-19 related matters deviate from the official information provided by the World Health Organization (WHO)?

Clarification: This question is not about specific policies on Covid-19 or minor variations on how governments officially communicate about Covid-19-related matters (e.g. whether masks are recommended or not) but aims at capturing the dissemination of gravely misleading and false information by governments on key facts about Covid-19 such as what it is, how it is transmitted, or how it can be treated or cured. As a reference to "fact check" what is "false", please use the WHO information on Covid-19 provided here: `https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/question-and-answers-hub/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses`. Coders should document the source showing the information from the government or its agents and explain how this deviates from the official WHO information (using the *_source* and *_comments* fields).

Scale: Ordinal, (0-3)

   0– Never, or almost never. The information provided by the government and its agents' never or almost never deviates from the official information provided by the WHO.

1– Occasionally. There are a few reported instances where the government or its agents have communicated information on Covid-19 that deviates from the official information provided by the WHO, but this is not necessarily intentional.

2– Often. The government or some of its agents frequently disseminate information on many key issues concerning Covid-19 that deviates from official information provided by the WHO.

3– Always or almost always. The government and its agents systematically disseminate information on a wide range of basic matters concerning Covid-19 that always or almost always deviates from the official information provided by the WHO.

Physical violence by police, military (pomviol)

Question: Since 11 March 2020, how often have security forces, such as the civilian police or military, engaged in physical violence to execute the emergency measures?

Clarification: Physical violence refers to the use of force or intimidation to harm or kill another individual, forced unlawful confinement, or harassment (including physical, psychological, and sexual in nature).

Scale: Ordinal, (0-3)

0– Never or almost never. Security forces seem to have engaged in little to no violence to execute the emergency measures.

1– Rarely. A few isolated incidents of security forces engaging in some non-lethal violence have been reported.

2– Sometimes. There are several reports of security forces engaging in violence to execute the emergency measures, and/or reports of deaths at the hands of security forces in response to Covid-19 enforcement.

3– Often. There are widespread reports about use of violence, sometimes with lethal outcomes, by security forces when executing emergency measures taken with reference to Covid-19.

Military involvement (milinv)

Question: Since 11 March 2020, has the military been tasked with enforcing any confinement measures?

Clarification: "Confinement measures" refer to measures restricting citizens' freedom of movement. Such measures include quarantines, lockdowns, curfews and travel restriction within the country. "The military" refers to the set of armed organizations responsible for external security that are primarily composed of active-duty members (as opposed to reserve forces). We are interested in whether the military has been given the power to ensure these measures are respected using coercion. We are not interested in whether the military is deployed to deliver aid or provide help to healthcare facilities.

Scale: Binary, (0/1)

    0– No.

    1– Yes.

Other limitations (misclimit)

Question: What other emergency measures did the government pass or implement - not mentioned here until now - with reference to Covid-19, which limit the quality of electoral or liberal democracy?

Clarification: This includes for instance the ad-hoc removal of judges, jailing well-known opposition figures, use of financial responses to strengthen loyalists and weaken opposition, etc.

Scale: Character string.