

Project Name	Covid-19 and Society: Comparative Analysis of Risk Communication, Expertise, and Citizenship
Research period	from December, 2021 through November, 2024

Principal Researcher

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Research Summary

As Covid-19 has exerted an enormous impact on individual lives and wide-ranging aspects of societies – from the economy and politics to public health to lifestyles – worldwide, governing bodies at national, regional and municipal levels continue to take active measures to control the pandemic and address diverse challenges caused by it. The project is a comparative, multi-method analysis of responses to Covid-19 in the three intersecting domains: (1) risk communication via traditional/social media; (2) use and production of expertise; and (3) public understandings and responses. Studying their dynamics in Japan, China, Taiwan, South Korea, the United Kingdom, and the United States, we aim to identify deep-seated national differences in pandemic governance and propose ways to improve crisis governance in each societal context.

Perception of and response to technoscientific risks are significantly shaped by social and cultural factors, and therefore diverge widely across communities and societies even when expert consensus exists regarding such risks. This project examines how experts, regulatory bodies, media and the public have responded to Covid-19. Through international comparison of six cases using four languages, the project seeks to identify the dynamics among expertise, policy approaches, risk communication, and public response in each society, and to explore how we can build a stronger foundation to address next global risks both as a nation and as a global community.

To achieve the above goals, the project examines: (i) the diffusion of relevant information on Covid-19 through conventional and social media; (ii) risk perception by the public; (iii) policy and administrative responses to the pandemic; (iv) the production of expertise used in policy and administrative processes; (v) public response to policy and expertise; and (vi) dynamics among these interconnected phenomena in distinct cultural and political contexts.