

Review of: "Bordering on crisis: A qualitative analysis of focus group, social media, and news media perspectives on the Republic of Ireland-Northern Ireland border during the 'first wave' of the COVID-19 pandemic"

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Potential competing interests: The author(s) declared that no potential competing interests exist.

I congratulate the authors of the article which examines a very important topic on the borders between the Republic of Ireland-Northern Ireland and the COVID-19 pandemic. I am very happy to read about a vital issue concerning political disputes and the pandemic. As the authors explored very successfully, politically contested borders between countries during a pandemic pose to a risk to public health. Constraining the spread of the virus depends on many factors such as border management policies, news media and well-informed citizens. This study reveals insufficient and inconsistent action to suppress the virus very well, however some points may be improved to strengthen the methodology:

1. The role of the news media and social media in shaping public perspectives and public awareness during health crisis could have been more elaborated by referring to previous studies (see Davis, M., Lohm, D., Flowers, P., Waller, E., & Stephenson, N. (2014). "We became sceptics": fear and media hype in general public narrative on the advent of pandemic influenza. *Sociological inquiry*, 84(4), 499-518.). Media effects literature may have been mentioned to boost the theoretical framework (see Agenda Setting Theory/Uses and Gratifications Theory/Cultivation Theory).
2. Media frames/framing theory may have been mentioned as well. Thematic news frames impact citizens' perspectives on social issues. Thematic frames differ from other types of frames such as episodic frames. Hence Shanto Iyengar and other prominent scholars analyzed different types of frames, the authors of this article may have explained the effects of those frames while drawing on thematic analysis. (See 1. Cacciatore, M. A., Scheufele, D. A., & Iyengar, S. (2016). The end of framing as we know it... and the future of media effects. *Mass Communication and Society*, 19(1), 7-23. 2. De Vreese, C. H. (2005). News framing: Theory and typology. *Information design journal & document design*, 13(1).)
3. Twitter's role in shaping public perception of COVID-19 pandemic may have been elucidated as well (see Boon-Itt S, Skunkan Y, Public Perception of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Twitter: Sentiment Analysis and Topic Modeling Study, *JMIR Public Health Surveill* 2020;6(4):e21978, URL: <https://publichealth.jmir.org/2020/4/e21978>, DOI: 10.2196/21978).
4. Focus group method is very suitable for this research. Using that method helped present clear results

about the effects of news media, Twitter, and border politics for the current research. However, patterns for building public perspectives during the pandemics (a theoretical argument) has not been stated. This research results can evolve into a more comprehensive and an encompassing theory, if it is elevated.

Best Regards,

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