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Framing COVID-19 as an Environmental Health Issue: Narratives in Europe and Their Interpretations¹

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Abstract

The COVID-19 crisis has been characterized by a rather intense “battle of narratives” presenting this pandemic as a threat to global peace and security, a threat to global food security, a “Chinese virus”, a “turning point for globalization” or even “a God’s punishment”. In other words, the COVID-19 pandemic has been described according to different frames that the audience received with varying frequencies. This study proposes to focus on one of these frames, namely the one which has emphasized the interactive link between COVID-19 and “environment”. This is the construction of COVID-19 as an “environmental health” issue that this article has studied through the qualitative news frame analysis of written media in four European countries – Austria, Belgium, France, and Germany – during the global outbreak. This research argues that newspapers in all these four European countries have emphasized the link between COVID-19 and the environment through a large number of articles and framed COVID-19 as an environmental health issue according to five specific frames, which have been produced by specific actors and had concrete societal impacts in these countries.

Keywords: COVID-19, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, environmental health, European newspapers

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構框 COVID-19 為環境健康議題：歐洲的敘事及其解讀

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摘要

COVID-19 引發了激烈的「敘事角力(Battle of Narratives)」，將這場大流行疫症描述為對全球和平與安全的威脅、對食品安全的威脅、一種「中國病毒」、全球化的「轉折點」，甚至是「天譴」。換言之，有各種不同的描述用來談論 COVID-19，大眾以不同程度的頻率接收了這些訊息。本研究聚焦於其中一種描述，即強調 COVID-19 和「環境」間的互動與連結。本研究將 COVID-19 建構為一個「環境健康」的議題，並透過分析奧地利、比利時、法國和德國這四個歐洲國家在疫情爆發時的文字媒體內容，發現這四個歐洲國家的報紙皆透過大量的文章強調 COVID-19 與環境健康的連結，並按照五個具體的描述，將 COVID-19 構框為環境健康議題，而這些描述是由特定的行為者所產出，且在這些國家中產生具體的社會影響。

關鍵詞：COVID-19、奧地利、比利時、法國、德國、環境健康、歐洲報

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