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Novel Insights from Social Media Data for Qualitative Legitimacy Research
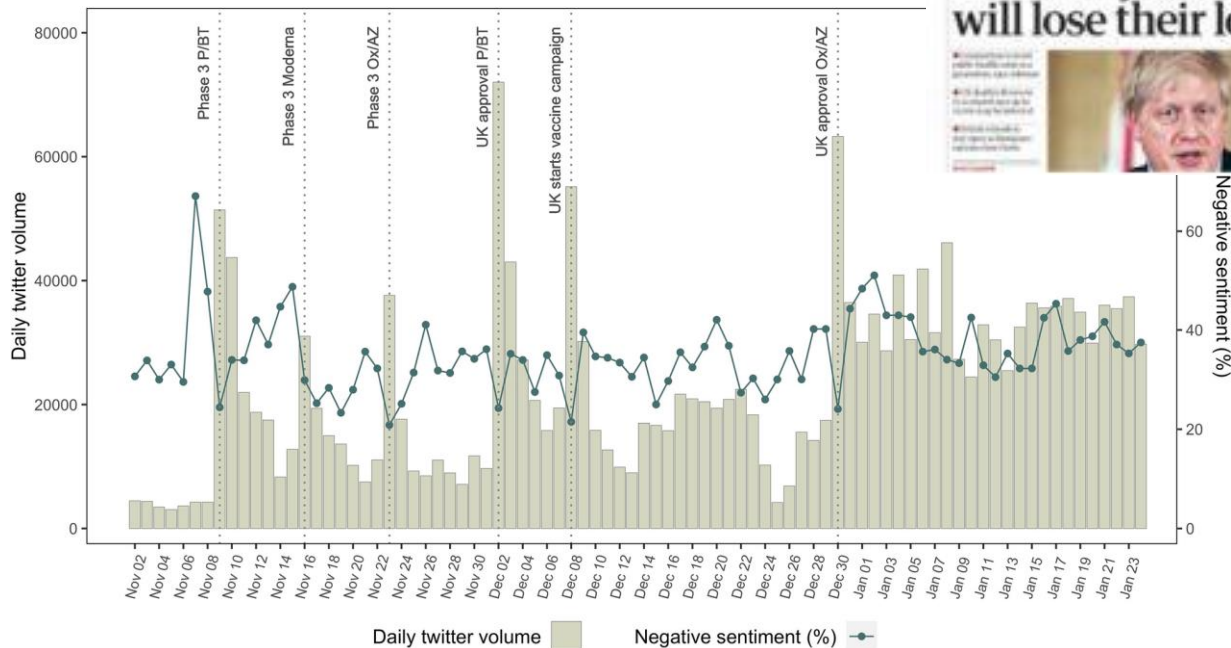
The Case of #UKLockdown

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Contested Legitimacy of UK Lockdown

Social Media as Data Source

- Empowerment of previously disenfranchised evaluators for public judgment expression (Etter et al. 2019; Haack et al., 2021)

- Based on individual experiences and opinions (Orlikwoski & Scott, 2014)

- Expressions based on heterogenous norms, expectations, values (Etter et al., 2018)

- Expression of emotions, raw, unfiltered (Etter et al., 2019; Haack et al., 2014)

- Interactions and negotiation processes (Suddaby et al., 2017)

- Interactions between different evaluators (Illia et al., 2023)

"A month ago today, on a ventilator & in a coma, I started to breath for myself! I am v disturbed by the increasingly blatant way ppl are treating the lockdown. With lack of answers around immunity, my family & I are going to remain shielding. I cannot go thru that again. #Covid19"

Persistence of Expressions & Interactions

- „Time machine", „frozen in time"

- Access to naturally occurring expressions and interactions as they have unfolded in the past

- Longitudinal research designs, access to any given point in time, zooming in on crucial events
  - Tipping points (Illia et al., 2023)
  - Change of validity beliefs (Haack et al., 2021)
  - Contestation over time, narratives, discourses (Suddaby et al., 2017)

- Advantage to conventional methods: retrospective bias of interviews and verbal accounts

16 March
PM says "now is the time for everyone to stop non-essential contact and travel"

19 March
PM says the UK can "turn tide of coronavirus" in 12 weeks

23 March
PM announces the first lockdown in the UK, ordering people to "stay at home"

25 March
Coronavirus Act 2020 gets Royal Assent

26 March
Lockdown measures legally come into force

10 May
PM announces a conditional plan for lifting lockdown, and says that people who cannot work from home should return to the workplace but avoid public transport

4 July
UK's first local lockdown comes into force in Leicester and parts of Leicestershire.

More restrictions are eased in England, including ng of pubs, ts, hairdressers.

thorities in gain additional to enforce social g

14 September
'Rule of six' – indoor and outdoor social gatherings above six banned in England

22 September
PM announces new restrictions in England, including a return to working from home and 10pm curfew for hospitality sector

30 September
PM says UK at a "critical moment" in the crisis and would "not hesitate" to impose further restrictions if needed needed

5 November
Second national lockdown comes into force in England

24 November
PM announces up to three households will be able to meet up during during a five-day Christmas period of 23 to 27 December

4 January
PM says children should return to school after the Christmas break, but warns restrictions in England will get tougher

6 January
England enters third national lockdown

STAY HOME | PROTECT THE NHS

March | **April** | **May** | **June**
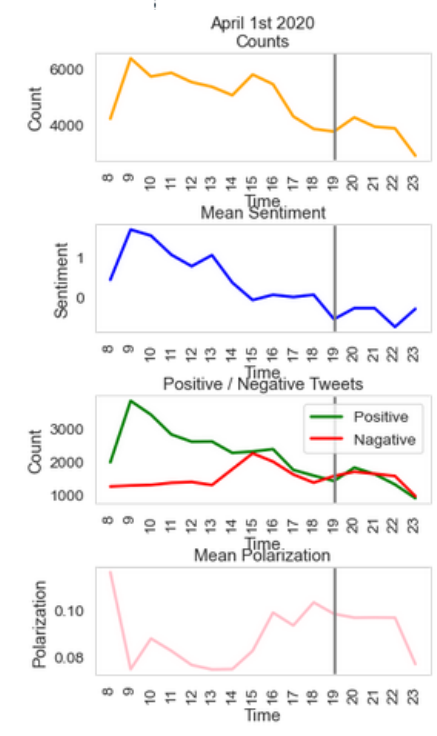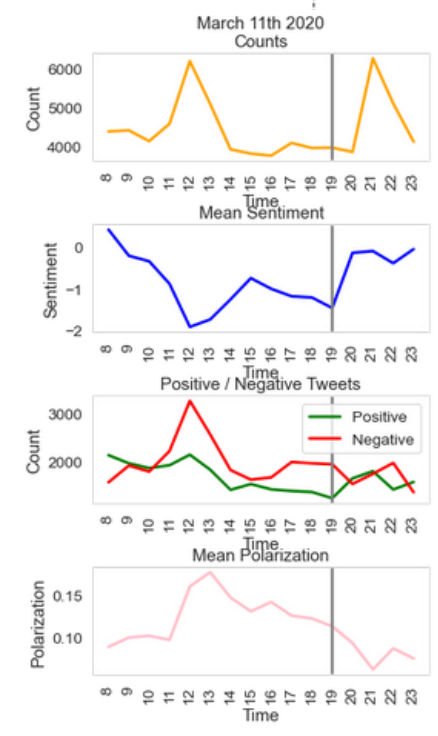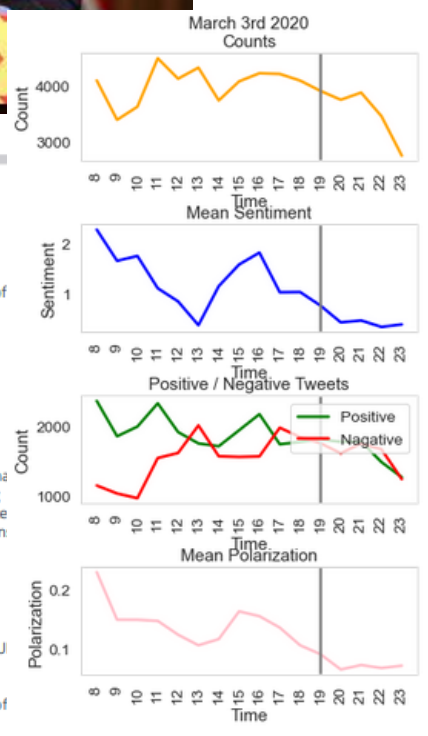
16 April
Lockdown extended for 'at least' three weeks. Government sets out five tests that must be met before restrictions are eased

30 April
PM says "we are past the peak" of the pandemic

1 June
Phased re-opening of schools in England

15 June
Non-essential shops reopen in England

23 June
PM says UK's "national hibernation" coming to an end – announce relaxing of restriction and 2m social distancing rule

29 June
Matt Hancock announces that the U first local lockdown would be applied in Leicester and parts of Leicestershire

March 3rd 2020 — Counts, Mean Sentiment, Positive / Negative Tweets, Mean Polarization

March 11th 2020 — Counts, Mean Sentiment, Positive / Negative Tweets, Mean Polarization

April 1st 2020 — Counts, Mean Sentiment, Positive / Negative Tweets, Mean Polarization

Access to alternative & unofficial Interactions

- Informal interactions, often beyond organizational/managerial scrutiny and influence

- Assessing informal, unofficial legitimacy judgments
  - Communities (Zavyalova et al., 2021)
  - Legitimizing discourses in online forums (Vaara et al., 2004)
  - „Everyday talk" (Lundgaard & Etter, 2022)

- Advantage to conventional sources (e.g., archives, formal communication, interviews)
  - Power constraints
  - Formal, approved documents of digital archives
  - Reluctant organizational members in interview situations
  - Access to sites/interviews only through gate-keepers (representing powerful groups)

Poppy @greenhillzoner · 1d
Why do I feel guilty for wanting hazard pay? I'm directly exposed to patient's with COVID-19, because of improper PPE. #NurseTwitter

2   10

Fewer social Constraints

- Free expression, no active participation of researcher

- Studying interactions without interference, knowledge of researcher/observer
  - Glassdoor.com: anonymous employee ratings
  - Chatgroups, online forums

- Advantage to conventional sources (e.g., interviews, questionnaires)
  - Socially desirable answers of interviewees (questionnaire participants)
  - Impression management towards researcher
  - Influence of interviewer on interview situation and organizational setting

"This is the Tories Achilles heel, they panicked by media & terrible modelling, covid remains a mild disease for many & we need to shield elderly. But lockdown is draconian & people can see that now. Left should call for end of lockdown like Sweden not more restrictions"

Multi-Sitedness, various Communities

- Desktop research with remote access to virtual sites, less spatial constraints

- Studying intercultural differences of legitimacy judgments and their formation, differences across groups and sites
  - Subgroups (Illia et al., 2023)

- Advantage to conventional sources (e.g., ethnography)
  - Limited access to geographical areas
  - Dispersed organizational sites
  - No access to subgroups with no official organizational sites
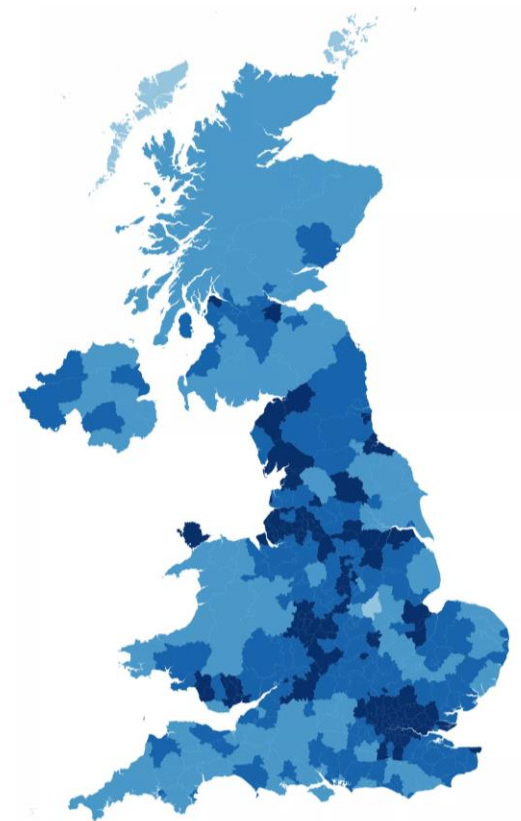
Map of emerging Tensions for #Lockdown

- For lockdown vs. against lockdown
- Health vs. economy
- Young vs. old
- Freedom vs. rules
- Individual vs. societal consequences
- Short-term vs. long-term consequences

"All those screaming for Britain to ease its lockdown for economic reasons need to take a long hard look at our real #coronavirus 'excess death' toll of over 60,000 people. "

"Lockdown is not a holiday. Kids get it, as these messages show. Now is not a time to get complacent. Listen to the kids and together we can help keep the tragic loss of life as low as possible"

"#lockdown is the new Brexit when it comes to folks opinions. You've got those who want it to remain and those who want no rules at all and everything to open back up. **You've really got to get the balance right.** If you've ever been ill the you know #HealthIsWealth"

"Doesn't matter what your age they can still transmit, and it's for these reasons why we will stay in lockdown for a while longer and good people like yourself are made to wait longer to get your businesses back up and running"

Considerations & Limitations (1/2)

- Persistence of interactions & expressions:
  - Dynamic websites, change over time, present themselves to the researcher in dynamic ways (e.g., Kallinikos et al., 2013)
  - Presentation of data dynamic and algorithmically conditioned (Etter & Albu, 2021)
  - Access not always granted, technologies discontinued

- Access to alternative interactions and discourses
  - Authenticity of data not always given
  - Emotions driven by algorithms, interactions are „manipulated" (Zuboff, 2019)
  - Access to online archives only through gate-keepers

Considerations & Limitations (2/2)

- New social constraints:
  - Various biases of expression on social media
    - Self-censorship, spiral of silence online (Clemente & Roulet, 2014)
    - Impression management, social identification, group norms (e.g., Madsen & Verhoeven, 2016)

- Digital divide and representation:
  - Who is represented, digital literacy (Hargittai, 2019)
  - Self-selection bias into conversations and interactions

- Resource constraints:
  - Enormous data sources, challenge of filtering and selection (Illia et al., 2023)

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