

Cross-national Coverage of Mental Health Services: Community Structure Theory and “Buffered” Privilege

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Introduction

- 450 million people globally have a diagnosed mental or neurological disorder
- 2/3 of diagnosed people do not seek treatment
- Literature review on coverage of the subject yielded few relevant results in the field of communication studies

Community Structure Theory

- Connecting key demographics of communities to content analysis of variations in media coverage of critical issues
- Assumes that society sets media agendas. (Pollock, 2007, 2013, 2015)

Research Questions

1. How much variation is there in the cross-national coverage of access to mental health services?
2. How closely linked is variation in cross-national coverage of access to mental health services with demographic characteristics of different countries?

Hypotheses

- *Buffer*: privileged communities are linked to coverage supporting human rights claims
- *Vulnerability*: vulnerable populations are associated with media supporting human rights claims
- *Stakeholder*: greater proportions of stakeholders can be linked to more media support for human rights claims

Methodology

- 14 major newspapers, 231 total relevant articles coded
- Sample period: September 16th, 2010 – September 16th, 2019
 - UN Panel discussion on mental health crisis
- Articles blind double coded, scored based on article prominence and direction
 - Government vs. Societal responsibility

Statistical Analysis: Introducing Pollock’s Media Vector

- Media vectors combine measures of article “prominence” and “direction” into a single score.
- Pearson correlations and regression analysis
- Broadband use, literacy rate together account for 57.4% of variance, linked to coverage emphasizing “government responsibility” for access to mental health services.

MAJOR FINDING:
Cross-national analysis finds privileged countries “buffered” from insecurity are linked to reporting on mental health services as primarily a “government” responsibility

SECONDARY FINDING:
Cross-national analysis reveals relatively “vulnerable” countries are linked to reporting on access to mental health services as primarily a “societal” responsibility

Media Vector Scores

Nation	Newspaper	Media Vector
China	<i>The China Daily</i>	0.3827
United Kingdom	<i>The Times</i>	0.3448
Canada	<i>The Toronto Star</i>	0.2966
Germany	<i>Deutsche Press-Agentur</i>	0.2483
Australia	<i>The Sydney Morning Herald</i>	0.1522
Malaysia	<i>New Straits Times</i>	0.1382
Mexico	<i>El Universal</i>	0.1368
Uganda	<i>New Vision</i>	0.1111
Kenya	<i>The Daily Nation</i>	0.0993
Argentina	<i>La Nacion</i>	0.0964
India	<i>The Times of India</i>	0.0221
Chile	<i>El Mercurio</i>	0.0000
United States of America	<i>The New York Times</i>	-0.0100
Pakistan	<i>The Nation</i>	-0.0111

Significant Pearson Correlations

City Characteristic	Pearson Correlation	Significance	Hypothesis Category
Broadband subscriptions/100 people in a nation	0.54	0.023*	CP
Literacy Rate	0.492	0.037*	P
Military spending as a percent of GDP	-0.476	0.043*	PV
Percentage of immigrants in a county	0.533	0.046*	V
Hospital Beds/100000	0.451	0.053*	HP

Key: P = privilege, V = vulnerability, CP = communication privilege, PV = political vulnerability, HP = health privilege

Regression Analysis

Model	R	R ² Cumulative	R ² Change	F Change	Significant F Change
Broadband subs.	0.640	0.409	0.409	6.239	0.034
Broadband subs., Military Spending	0.823	0.678	0.268	6.653	0.033
Broadband subs., Military spending, Literacy rate	0.918	0.842	0.165	7.320	0.030

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