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News Narrative Strategies and Social Mobilization Effects on Educational Equity Issues: A Cross-cultural Comparison Based on Framing Theory

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Abstract: Employing a comparative cross-cultural analysis drawing from the theory of framing, this research explores the complex dynamics of news narrative styles and social mobilization effects on issues of educational equity. Analyzing strategic framing routines of media agents such as organizational communications, celebrity endorsements, and strategically devised content summaries that frame education policy debate, the research investigates the extent to which cross-cultural contexts affect social processes. Cross-cultural differences in political systems and media systems strongly influence the manner in which educational equity framing mobilize public support. Framework theory provides liberal concept schemes with which to examine how recipients' policy attitudes are framed when recipients' policy preferences intersect with different message frames and produce differential attitude change. The study finds that while ethnic media websites have high potential to impact group identity salience for strategic content embedding for the purpose of political mobilization movements, social media platforms remain mediating websites of note for world population in cultural adaptation initiatives.

Keywords: educational equity; framing theory; cross-cultural communication; social mobilization; media representation

1. Introduction

1.1. The Global Relevance of Educational Public Topics

Structural accounts of the underlying causes of inequalities of access and outcomes in education are central to education equity, a problem that is worldwide in its extension and cuts across national and cultural milieux. Educational disadvantage has been shown in recent studies to be associated with an interrelated cluster of factors: socioeconomic status, ethnic and racial group, gender inequality, and location. These interact to produce complex patterns of disadvantage through sophisticated analysis methods (Naim, 2025). While schools battle entrenched challenges in delivering equity to increasingly diverse populations, media reports of these systemic issues become a dominant force in framing popular opinion and social support for school reform (Penuel et al., 2025).

1.2. How Cross-Cultural Backgrounds Influence Social Dynamics

Strategic communicators, organizational actors, and media writers utilize sophisticated forms of framing public opinion regarding education issues in modern media cultures. Strategic content tactics, entrepreneurial organizational messages, and celebrity endorsement are also used by using journalists to communicate policy debates (Baroutsis et al., 2025). Democratic and prohibitive governance models differ owing to cross-cultural variation in political mobilization and media consumption. Depending on their perceived effectiveness of their political arrangements and opportunity structures of their political arrangements, citizens' use of offline and online communications media influence complex patterns of collective action (Arant et al., 2023).

Cross-cultural communication research confirms that cultural contexts significantly influence how audiences interpret media messages and get mobilized towards social action including online where global and local stories converge (Yuna et al., 2022).

2. Theoretical Foundation

2.1. Framework Theory and Journalism

Social media have emerged as primary channels of cross-cultural communication of education equity, with different cultural groups experiencing and interpreting media frames differently. Evidence shows that audience response to education policy narratives is primarily diverse in relation to culture and group identity, such that frame success depends on their congruence with dominant cultural schemas and values (Gaitán-Aguilar et al., 2022). Framing theory provides crucial analytical tools for understanding how contact policy attitudes interact with different message frames that prioritize economic well-being over social justice concerns to produce differential attitude change toward racial equity initiatives in educational contexts. (Quinn & Analysis, 2025).

2.2. Media Presentation of Educational Public Topics

Inclusive reporting from the ‘minority’ perspective results not only from the tension between institutional needs and individual reporters’ preconceptions, as well as attitudes towards the practice of journalism. Today’s journalists face systemic challenges when reporting on marginalized communities, including refugees, migrants, LGBTQ. + individuals, and people with mental illness. Reporters within education equity must straddle this tightrope between editorially defensible sourcing decisions—or not—and ethical ones, particularly when dealing with historically marginalized and stigmatized groups. Disaster capitalism narratives and clock-ticking doom are likely to compromise the depth and sincerity of the type of reporting we need if we are going to accurately paint a picture of systemic educational disparities. Allow me to explain what I mean here. (Kalfeli et al., 2025). The shifting media landscape has changed how issues of educational equity are conveyed to the general public because new media provide more captivating narratives and increased audience engagement. Journalists must modify their reporting methods in order to successfully inspire public awareness and action for school reform initiatives. (Ramos et al., 2025).

2.3. Social Dynamics Mechanisms and Cultural Factors

Ethnic media companies have tremendous potential to increase the salience of group identities by strategically incorporating culturally relevant elements into their media products. Activating specific cultural identities within target audiences for political mobilization is profitable for ethnic agents. According to research, ethnic media outlets have a great deal of power to create a sense of collective identity and inspire collective action on issues of educational equity, especially when they strategically incorporate cultural narrative with reporting on school finance imbalances, achievement gaps, and access barriers that disproportionately affect minority groups. This transforms policy abstractions into culturally relevant calls for educational justice that can inspire long-term social action from a wide range of demographic groups (Lemoli, 2025).

3. Research Methods

This is the first comparative analysis to use a systematic content analytic method to examine how hegemonic media institutions in various cultural contexts report on education inequality and its subsequent implications for social mobilization. Three non-overlapping global sociocultural spaces—China, the United Kingdom, and the United States—that report on issues of educational inequality is sampled in this study.

Purposively, the samples were selected based on media systems, cultural orientation toward individual and group responsibility, and various contexts of education policy. The focus period selected by the book's author, Dalton, is January 2022–December 2023 because it contains enough data to support insightful cross-cultural comparison analysis.

Table 1

Cross-Cultural Media Sample and Analytical Framework

Country/Region	Media Outlets	Sample Size	Narrative Strategies	Social Mobilization Indicators	Cultural Orientation



United States	The New York Times, The Washington Post	98 articles	Individual success stories (42%), Policy critique (35%), Statistical analysis (23%)	Online engagement (High), Grassroots activism (Moderate), Policy response (Low)	Individualistic/Liberal
United Kingdom	The Guardian, The Times	92 articles	Institutional analysis (48%), Human interest (28%), Expert commentary (24%)	Public consultation (High), Parliamentary debate (Moderate), Community action (Moderate)	Mixed/Social Democratic
China	People's Daily, China Youth Daily	97 articles	Government initiatives (52%), Collective progress (31%), Model examples (17%)	Policy implementation (High), Social participation (Moderate), Digital discussion (Limited)	Collectivistic/State-led

Table 1 demonstrates how the analysis used qualitative discourse analysis and quantitative content analysis to capture manifestations of both overt and subtle aspects of media framing processes. The coding scheme is designed to trace the prevalence of the three main narrative strategies in cultural context and their relationship with concrete, measurable social mobilization. The tactics are narrative personalization through life stories, institutional critique through structural analysis and policy advocacy, and solution framing through policy proposals. For quality assurance, each message is independently double-coded by trained researchers and coded for major frame, supportive evidence category, emotions valence, remedies proposed, and blame assignment for fixing educational disparities as a standard procedure.

Effectiveness measures of social mobilization include social network interaction and commenting online engagement measures, follow-up reporting of policy responses such as administrative reform or legislative policy, and records of grassroots mobilization or civic action. Within comparative scholarship, in-country comparisons as well as inter-national comparisons are used to identify patterns of cultural variables mediating between media framing strategies and social mobilization effectiveness. The political constellations, education governance arrangements, and prevailing cultural values shaping equality, meritocracy, and social responsibility that define these dynamics are of specific interest.

4. Cross-Cultural Comparative Analysis

4.1. Cultural Differences in Narrative Strategies

There are marked variations in how issues of educational equity are described and reported to the public when one compares narrative practices in the three cultural settings. For instance, American media focus on individual success like wins of individuals over structural matters, whereas British media focus on institutional practice that scrutinizes organizational design and policy structures. It encourages meritocratic cultural interpretations of personal responsibility that are sensitive to systemic inequalities. The third characteristic template is Chinese media, which is characterized by collective narratives of progress that situate individual-level experiences within the larger national development agendas and highlight government initiatives as the primary drivers of education equity reforms.

Different cultural contexts have different emotional and rational ways of persuasion. While British media demand more emotional detachment in the form of expert opinion and statistically validated analytic discussion addressed to the rational consideration of policy solutions, American media use dramatic narrative genres and emotionally charged personal testimony in an effort to evoke sympathy and moral outrage. While information needs and policy message conformity take precedence over emotional appeals, Chinese media straddle the line by fusing heartbreaking success stories with statistical evidence of national progress.

4.2. Social Dynamics Effectiveness Comparison

In contrast to American individualized storytelling, which generates high amounts of web traffic and social networking mobilization with relatively little carrying over to sustained policy activism, British institutional analysis is rooted in wider epochs of parliamentary discussion and policy consultation, even though it is less evocative to wide publics. This is evident from the comparison of the results of social mobilization, which unveil that narrative approaches provide significantly different public participation patterns in cultures. While news coverage is consistent with government agendas, the Chinese model possesses high policy implementation

as well as social coordination efficiency. But political and media organizations that mobilize the public through institutionalized avenues rather than independent civil society organizations still limit random grassroots mobilization.

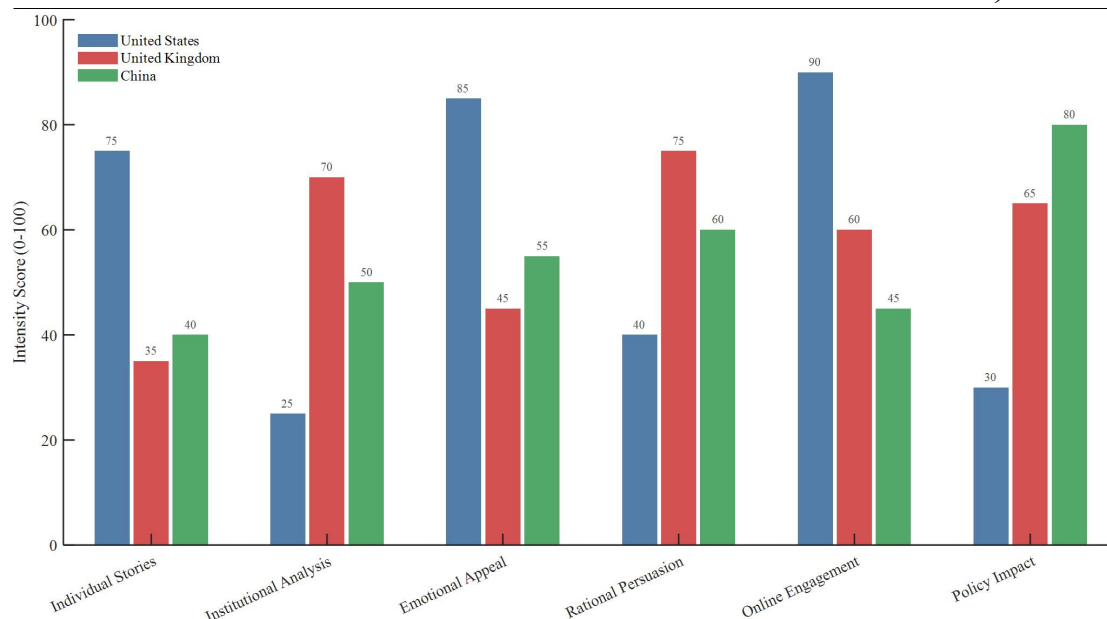
The American case demonstrates how powerful personal stories propel considerable social media attention and crowdfunding for the featured individuals but fail to sustain attention for systemic reform, in contrast to the British case where institutional critique is directly followed by parliamentary committees and policy review through traditional consultative processes. With issues of the state of affairs given official priority, the Chinese approach mobilizes resources by administrative machinery and produces public compliance by orchestrated media campaigns and translates rapidly into policy action. This top-down model constrains the process of developing alternative frames or bottom-up activities that have the capacity to oppose official accounts or offer alternative explanations for educational disparities.

4.3. Typical Case Analysis

Comparative examination of media reporting of the 2023 college admissions scandal in the three nations identifies how media framing and public reaction to crises of educational equity are shaped by cultural contexts. American media emphasized single culprits and victims and created wide social media outrage but little structural reform; British media emphasized institutional failure and class privilege and resulted in parliamentary inquiries and policy reassessment; and Chinese media depicted equivalent events as the misuse of meritocratic principles requiring greater government control and discipline of corrupt government officials. These cases exemplify how different media systems, political systems, and values intersect to produce characteristic patterns of problem definition, responsibility attribution, and solution advocacy, demonstrating how different coverage patterns and societal reactions to similar events ultimately influence the course and impact of public debate over issues of educational equity.

Figure 1

Cross-Cultural Comparison of Media Framing Strategies and Social Mobilization Effectiveness



A quantitative breakdown of mobilization effectiveness and narrative strategies in the three cultures, as shown in **Figure 1**, discerns distinct national patterns correlating with more profound cultural and structural determinants of media-society ties in each nation. The findings show that American media excel in using personalized narratives to mobilize strong feelings and online mobilization but not as much in affecting profound policy changes. The Chinese model, highlighting the implementation of policies through coordinated media-state action, registers high instrumental efficacy at the cost of minimal autonomous civic mobilization space. In contrast, the British model has institutional critique harmonized with moderate levels of public intervention and policy leverage.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

This cross-cultural examination of coverage of educational equality in US, UK, and Chinese contexts demonstrates how cultural contexts deeply influence journalistic framing strategies and the subsequent patterns of social mobilization. In contrast to collectivist settings that emphasize institutional and state responses that achieve policy implementation through collective agency but limit independent civic mobilization, individualist cultures favor personal anecdotal modes that initiate high levels of emotional investment but moderate structural change. On the basis of the study, it is imperative to know how media framing can produce social change by considering complex interdependence between political systems, cultural norms, and



persistent media-society relationship patterns mediating the translation of journalistic narratives into collective action. In addition to highlighting the importance of placing communication processes in particular institutional and cultural settings that influence the production and reception of media messages on social issues, the results negate universalistic assumptions about media effects.

Theoretical contribution of this research extends the theory of frameworks beyond its original Western-centric specifications by demonstrating how cultural environments serve as interpretive filters that modify the media frames-audience response nexus. It implies that alignment with deeply embedded cultural schemas regarding individual agency, group responsibility, and appropriate channels for social change is just as important to frame resonance as message characteristics. It is necessary to rethink framework theory to incorporate cultural variables as central rather than peripheral factors in order to understand how media affects public discourse and social mobilization around educational equity and other public issues. This is due to the fact that culture mediates framing effects.

Practical implications for communication strategists and policy advocates suggest that effective messaging about educational equity needs to be mindful of long-standing media-state relationships and civic engagement traditions that guide public participation through different institutional pathways. It also needs to adhere to cultural norms regarding appropriate narrative forms, emotional expression, and responsibility attribution. While acknowledging the structural limitations and opportunities presented by various media systems and political environments, organizations aiming to advance educational equity across cultural contexts should create differentiated communication strategies that make use of culturally resonant narrative forms. They should also recognize that tactics that are successful in igniting grassroots mobilization in democratic contexts might need to be modified in order to achieve policy influence in more centralized systems.

Study limitations include the focus on mainstream media, temporal constraints that preclude longitudinal analysis, and the difficulty of separating cultural factors from political and economic variables. Future studies should focus on how transnational media flows and global civil society networks produce hybrid framing strategies that blend cultural elements, extend the analysis to digital and social media platforms where cultural differences in communication patterns may appear differently, and develop more advanced methodologies for capturing the intricate



feedback loops between media framing, public response, and subsequent journalistic coverage that define modern media ecosystems.

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